Interdisciplinary Research in Gender

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN ACADEMIA

INFORMING AN ETHICS OF CARE IN THE UNIVERSITY

Edited by
Erin Pritchard and Delyth Edwards

Sexual Misconduct in Academia

This book is about experiences of sexual misconduct in the everyday spaces of academia and what and how we can learn from these experiences to inform an ethics of care in the university.

By bringing a wide range of lived experiences of students, staff and researchers out of their current marginalised positions within academic discussions, the book offers a deeper understanding of sexual misconduct in the academy for both students and staff. Each of the chapters offers not only opportunities for conversation and reflection, but addresses and suggests what responses to academic sexual misconduct could and should involve. By presenting collective accounts of experiencing, witnessing, researching and writing about sexual misconduct in academic spaces, *Sexual Misconduct in Academia* examines how to develop ethical pedagogical practices, if an ethics of care is to be truly implemented or transformed.

This book is suitable for students and scholars in Gender Studies, Education and Sociology.

Erin Pritchard is a senior lecturer in Disability Studies at Liverpool Hope University and a core member of the Centre for Culture and Disability Studies. She has published a monograph for the Routledge Disability Studies Interdisciplinary Series, entitled *Dwarfism, Spatialities and Disabling Experiences*. She has previously published an article entitled 'Female researcher safety: the difficulties of recruiting participants at conventions for people with dwarfism' published in the *International Journal of Social Research Methods*. She is also a guest writer for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

Delyth Edwards is a lecturer in Inclusion, Childhood and Youth in the School of Education, University of Leeds, and was previously a lecturer in the Sociology of Childhood and Youth at Liverpool Hope University. As well as contributing a chapter to this edited book, Delyth is currently revising an article exploring her own experience of sexual harassment in ethnographic research.

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Contributors

Annie Bartos is a feminist political geographer with an interest in political agency, embodiment and relationality. She is a researcher at Penn State and has taught at the University of Auckland and the University of Washington in Geography, Gender Studies, Environmental Management, Global Studies and Comparative History of Ideas.

Poonam Bhagchandani is currently an assistant professor of Design, School of Architecture and Planning at the Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. She has a PhD in Clothing and Textiles from the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India. As a professional home science educator who is passionate about promoting real-life implications of Clothing and Textile design and pattern making, Dr. Bhagchandani enjoys collaborative learning engagements with diverse students and colleagues.

Anna Bull is a lecturer at the University of York. Prior to this, she was a lecturer/senior lecturer in the School of Education and Sociology at the University of Portsmouth (2016–2021). She is also a co-founder and director of The 1752 Group, a research and campaign group addressing sexual harassment in higher education.

Keri-Lynn Cheechoo (she/her) is an Iskwew from Long Lake #58 First Nation which is in Northwestern Ontario, Canada. She is an assistant professor specialising in Indigenous Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. Dr. Cheechoo is also the director of the Indigenous Teacher Education Program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Her research uses Cree Knowledge, arts-based methodologies and poetic pedagogy in the form of poetic enquiry in a good way.

María Coto-Sarmiento is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tübingen (Germany) within the ERC StG PALAEOSILKROAD Project. She completed her PhD in Archaeology at the University of Barcelona in 2020 where she used different techniques to understand cultural changes in pottery production during the Roman Empire. She applied

computational methods to explore social learning processes in potters behind the cultural transmission. In parallel, she is also interested in analysing how the culture of harassment can affect the women's environment in Archaeology.

Melanie Crofts is an associate professor in Law at De Montfort University and the Director and Vice Chair of the Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council. Melanie is a Fair Outcomes Champion for the Decolonising DMU project and her research expertise focusses on equality, diversity and discrimination in Higher Education. She is also a consultant trainer for the Football Association and sits on the Intersectionality Athena Swan Governance Committee subgroup for Advance Higher Education.

Lara Delgado Anés is a Geography and History teacher for schools at the Regional Government of Andalusia (Spain). She holds a PhD in History from the University of Granada. Her PhD thesis was titled 'Management, communication and social participation in the Cultural Landscapes. The MEMOLA project' and it received an extraordinary award from the University of Granada. She has specialised in Public and Community Archaeology.

Suzanne Egan's research focusses on the issue of sexual violence. Her interest in this field of research was initially stimulated by her work as a counsellor in the Australian field of sexual assault service provision, and her research remains closely informed by the work of field-based practitioners. A monograph bringing this work together, *Putting Feminism to Work: Theorising Sexual Violence, Trauma and Subjectivity,* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2020. More recently her interest has turned to the issue of sexual violence and sexual harassment in universities, with the primary aim of drawing attention to the silence surrounding sexual misconduct by academics (as opposed to students) in the Australian policy, research and practice context. To that end, she has conducted research on the issue for the Australian Women and Gender Studies Association (AWGSA) and with Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia (R&DVSA), one of Australia's most influential feminist organisations.

Poppy Gerrard-Abbott is a PhD researcher on sexual and gender-based violence in UK universities and a sociology tutor at the University of Edinburgh, teaching and lecturing on modules such as Gender in the Contemporary World, Sociological Research Methods and the Sociology of Sex Work. She is the principal researcher for a Scottish Government-funded Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Charter for further (FE) and higher education (HE) with the charity Emily Test. Poppy has been a GBV and feminist activist for a decade and runs peer support spaces for victims/survivors.

Kimberly M. Hill is an associate professor in Psychology at The University of Northampton and Deputy Subject Lead. Kimberley is a senior fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a chartered psychologist and an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society. Her research expertise involves promoting health and preventing health risk in young people. As a National STEM Ambassador, Kimberley is dedicated to improving access to and dissemination of psychological knowledge.

Sarah Ives is an anthropologist, researcher, writer and editor. She currently teaches Anthropology at City College of San Francisco, and she previously taught Anthropology and Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University from 2013 to 2018.

Catarina Laranjeiro, a Portuguese anthropologist, is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History of New University of Lisbon (FCSH-NOVA), where she is developing a five-year project on African vernacular cinema. She holds a PhD in Post-Colonialisms and Global Citizenship from the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, and she has researched in Guinea-Bissau, Cape-Verde, Cuba and Portugal. She directed the film *Pabia di Aos* (2013), and she has participated in several projects that interlace anthropology, cinema and visual arts.

Lourdes López Martínez graduated in History from the Complutense University of Madrid and has been a professional archaeologist since 2003. She is the manager of the company Lure Arqueología, and she has directed a large number of impact assessment projects, excavations and civil works control in different places of Spain since 2006, as well as research projects, enhancement and musealisation of archaeological sites. She is a member of the Feminist Archaeologists group of the College of Archaeologists of Madrid.

Natasha Mikitas is an educator and training manager for Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia. She is a passionate advocate for vicarious trauma management and research, having delivered many workshops and conference presentations for frontline staff and trauma workers all around Australia. She is especially interested in working with tertiary institutions to further their primary prevention efforts and put a full stop to sexual violence.

Simona Palladino is a lecturer in Social Sciences at Liverpool Hope University, interested in ageing and migration. From 2011 to 2012 she was a research assistant at the University of Portsmouth, where she explored the meaning of home in later life. Since 2012, Simona is a fellow of the Italian Psychological Society, Molise Region.

Ana Pastor Pérez is a postdoctoral fellow of Margarita Salas of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Barcelona (IAUB) and the Norwegian

Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU). She is a trained archaeologist and conservator with a specialisation in social heritage management, conservation and museology. She has broad experience in the application of ethnographic techniques for identifying and describing the interactions between different urban stakeholders in participative and bottom-up processes related to cultural heritage. Her current research is focussed on the ethics of care applied to cultural heritage management, participatory strategies and public archaeology.

Alexandria Petit-Thorne is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at York University. Her research focusses on performances of queerness and homonationalist formations in Toronto, Canada. She is also an anti-sexual violence activist and writes about sexual violence in academia.

Latika Raisinghani is currently a lecturer of Science and Environmental Teacher Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. She earned a PhD in Curriculum Studies with a focus on Science and Mathematics Education from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. As a learner, teacher and teacher educator, Dr. Raisinghani has engaged in teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in multiple cultural contexts, which include Canada, India and Micronesia.

Apen Ruiz Martinez is an associate professor of Anthropology and Qualitative Methodologies at International Education for Students and at the Master de Cooperación Internacional y Arquitectura de la UIC, where she investigates the interactions between gender, sexuality, development and socio-spatial processes. As a member of SIMREF, she is interested in rethinking fieldwork from a feminist perspective. She is also a researcher at SEGREVUNI www.segrevuni.eu/en/researchers/

Laura Thurmann is a PhD researcher at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester. Her PhD project examines women's security practices and gendered violence in fieldwork. Her Master's thesis at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz was based on a mixed-methods study on experiences of sexualised violence in fieldwork among German anthropologists. She previously conducted fieldwork on police and security measures in the DR Congo and Niger.

Miye Nadya Tom teaches Global Indigenous Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Beyond her academic publications, Dr. Tom is also an aspiring writer. She recently returned to graduate school to pursue MFA in Creative Nonfiction at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She graduated in Spring 2022. She blends the theoretical and creative, with the aim of publishing her dissertation and experiences into an accessible piece of literature.

Lieselotte Viaene, a Belgian anthropologist with a PhD in Law (2011), is a professor in the Department of Social Science at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain). Previously, she was a postdoctoral Marie Curie Individual Fellow (2016–2018) at the Centre of Social Studies, University of Coimbra (Portugal) with the project GROUNDHR – Challenges of Grounding Universal Human Rights. As a human rights practitioner, she worked, among others, at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) in Ecuador (2010–2013) where she was responsible for the areas of collective rights and transitional justice.

Lena Wånggren is a researcher and teacher at the University of Edinburgh. She works in the fields of Literature and Culture, Gender Studies, Medical Humanities and Social Justice, with publications in these areas.

María Yubero Gómez is a Talent Development and Work Environment officer at the Institute of Marine Science, CSIC in Barcelona. She holds a PhD in Spatial Analysis in Archaeology (2016) from the University of Barcelona. Currently, her work focusses on fostering and promoting healthy research environments.

Foreword

Sarah Ives and Annie Bartos

Over the past century, women have been slowly climbing the steep ladder that leads to the traditionally male-occupied space at the top of the ivory tower. Yet rising through the ranks of a white hetero-masculine culture does not come without significant challenges and, at times, seemingly impassable obstacles. Some of the rungs of the ladder appear broken: One of the most 'mundane' yet powerfully debilitating hurdles is the culture of sexual harassment and misconduct that permeates higher education and the everyday experiences of many faculty and students. That 'broken rung' became painfully clear to us when we embarked on a research project on sexual harassment and gender bias in higher education (Bartos and Ives 2019a; 2019b). Focussing on the experiences of graduate teaching assistants at major research universities in the United States, we were disappointed, if not surprised, by our findings: More than a quarter of female teaching assistants recalled examples of being made to feel uncomfortable by *their students*, not to mention the harassment they faced by their professors and colleagues (Ives and Bartos 2020).

It was the consequences of this discomfort that brought the issue into focus for us. Women described the toll on their mental and physical health. They discussed fear and feelings of inadequacy. They were tired; they were hurting; and some were choosing to leave higher education altogether. The cost of the loss of these potential researchers, teachers and mentors should not be underestimated. After all, harassment can serve as a 'mechanism for exclusion' (Voss 2021).

The #MeToo movement – and its global counterparts, such as #KuToo in Japan, #YoTambien in Spain and Latin America and #BalanceTonPorc in France – brought attention to the all-too-common sexual abuses women endure in their workplaces. Whilst the movements originated with previously underreported examples within the global film industry, they resonated powerfully with women around the world in diverse settings and sectors. Social media sites, such as The Everyday Sexism Project, became portals for women to post stories about their own normalised, yet horrifying, experiences. Collectively, these movements led to the increased visibility of the pervasiveness of gender-based harassment and abuse, contributed to

changes in sexual harassment training and policies in many industries and provoked high-profile firings and pricey lawsuit settlements. Despite small, if significant, disruptions to the status quo, sexual abuse in its various forms remains all too common. Perhaps, we argue, it is because current efforts are addressing symptoms and not causes.

Within higher education, scholars have written for decades about the toxic culture of academia and how it prevents women, especially women of colour, from excelling (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018). In a 2011 study, Turner et al. listed seemingly insurmountable experiences of marginalisation: 'subtle discrimination, racism and institutional racism, gender bias and institutional sexism, and difficulties with students who do not expect to be taught by women of colour'. Notably, this enumeration does not explicitly address the sexual assault and harassment documented in our research and in this volume.

Power dynamics are central to the toxicity of academia. Not only are curriculum and pedagogy laced with power relations, power is present and fluid across scale, geography and hierarchy in the ivory tower. As trained social critics, academics are primed to unpack and deconstruct systems of oppression, racism, sexism and ableism. Yet by normalising, perpetuating or simply ignoring gender bias and harassment, these same academics are complicit in fortifying the very structures they critique. Rather than pathologising individual perpetrators, as was common within the #MeToo movement, critical academics such as the authors in this volume are instead cataloguing and deconstructing the systemic nature of the problem.

Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an Ethics of Care in the University provides nuanced and eloquent caveats to this historical and cultural feminist moment. Unlike many of its predecessors, the book brings together contributions from across the globe and across disciplines to shed light on both how common, pervasive and mundane sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexism and misogyny are in higher education *and* how profoundly and intimately violent they are. The book centres experience as a form of knowledge creation by moving between multiple analytic and discursive registers: It pairs the persuasiveness of personal narrative and the power of vulnerability with traditional social science methods to demonstrate that regardless of the discipline, or the site, those who identify as women within academia are required not only to excel in their scholarship but also to develop a thick coat of armour to carry on their professional duties.

The chorus of chapters included in *Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an Ethics of Care in the University* suggest a needed reckoning with common assumptions about workplace gender-based violence. Whilst sexualisation and sexual conquest are absolutely fundamental to the problems women face in higher education, they also face a deep denial of dignity from their students, advisors, colleagues and administrators. This

lack of dignity hinders women scholars, students and leaders from contributing to their discipline and to the wider structures and systems of education in ways that would change the culture of white heteronormative patriarchy. Such a culture, in which cisgender women and sexual and gender minorities are excluded, ignored or muted, permits gender-based violence and harassment within the workplace and in institutions of knowledge construction.

In bringing together this collection of stories and research, *Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an Ethics of Care in the University* requires readers to pay attention. Not only are sexual harassment and gender-based violence and discrimination against the law, but current solutions to the problem have yet to change the systems of oppression that enable these violences to persist. The book suggests that there may be other ways to frame the problem, understand the issues and find alternative resolutions. It also reminds readers that there are stories yet to be told. Writing about violent or mundane misogyny, regardless of how horrific, is still a privilege some of us hold in the academy. Scholars in non-Western universities may have far more to lose when publishing their experiences of sexism, as the gates to the ivory tower are locked more firmly. Non-binary and transgender scholars may also have few opportunities to share what they have endured, since they face even higher levels of discrimination, harassment and violence than cisgender women do (Beemyn 2019; Lambda Legal 2021; Wood et al. 2021). The breadth and scope of harassment and assault will not be complete – nor the measures to tackle it sufficiently – until all these voices can contribute to dismantling the systemic nature of sexual violence. As places where knowledge is constructed and propagated, higher education is a key location to scrutinise this issue and begin to address it.

Like many of the contributors to *Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an Ethics of Care in the University*, both of us experienced harassment in the academy. Many of our friends and colleagues have as well. And the longer we have remained in academia, the more we have learned that we are part of what Barbara Voss (2021) has called an ‘open secret’, a ‘secret’ that harassment and assault occur ‘at epidemic rates’. Whilst Voss is speaking specifically about archaeology, the scholars in this volume show that archaeologists are not alone. We want to scream this ‘secret’ for all to hear, until our voices are hoarse, until no one can deny the issue and until everyone can feel safe.

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Introduction

Erin Pritchard and Delyth Edwards

Whilst men of privilege can regularly openly talk about omitting acts of sexual assault, victims of sexual assault are often forced to remain silent. The #MeToo movement has helped to give victims of sexual assault a voice and highlighted the commonality of sexual assault. However, whilst victims, who are mostly women, have been given more of a platform to speak out, the structures in place to convict sex offenders still remain problematic. Therefore, when victims are encouraged to speak out and even offered support, without appropriate structures and a change in attitudes, they are almost being set up to fail.

The founder of the #MeToo movement, Tahana Burke, wants to focus on the systems in place which have allowed sexual misconduct to exist and be kept hidden (Schwartz, 2019). #MeToo encouraged women who were brave enough and not impacted by a digital divide to share their experiences of sexual assault. #MeToo has put the focus back on the victims (Schwartz, 2019), but instead of blaming them it is empowering them to speak out. The movement has raised awareness in regard to the magnitude of the problem of sexual assault in a variety of professions, but like any movement, it can easily fade away. It can also act as a mask that suggests that sexual assault is being taken seriously, when in fact the problematic structures still remain. Whilst a few high profile celebrities have been named and shamed, nothing much has changed. Even the publically shamed and criminally convicted celebrities such as Harvey Weinstein have been defended on social media by men Laura Bates (2020) refers to as 'incels' (involuntary celibates). These individuals, the products of a toxic masculinity, drive the narrative that women are out to get men through vicious lies, including false rape claims (Banet-Weiser, 2021; Ging, 2019). Victims of sexual assault are still blamed and the same old laws and procedures apply. According to Sanyal (2019), the problem is that historical beliefs have shaped laws around sexual assault and have also allowed myths to remain. According to Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 134), myths concerning sexual assault are 'attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women'.

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Hashtag activism has become popular as a way for social movements to mobilise wider support, grow networks and create awareness of important issues online and to call for redress (Jackson et al., 2020). But it also allows for counter hashtags, with counter-narratives to be created and shared widely, as a way to mock, delegitimise, silence and offend social movements and the communities who they stand for and the individuals who stand with them. For example, in response to #MeToo, Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Bret Kavanagh (who was accused of rape), used the hashtag #HeToo to support the notion of false rape claims. However, according to Boyle and Rathnayake (2019), the hashtag, which gained popularity amongst conservatives, was quickly met with backlash, including from men, and challenged with the hashtag #IBelieveSurvivours. Yet, despite the support shown to the #MeToo movement and to survivors online, rape myths are still held as prominent beliefs in many communities in both on- and offline settings, including amongst students (O'Connor et al., 2018). This suggests the need to shift the focus away from online debates and discussions and to pay attention to what people are saying and doing about sexual misconduct in their everyday lives. The aim of this book is to keep this important campaign going, with a focus on academia.

#MeToo in academia

Over the past few years, we have seen #MeToo expose the experiences of sexual misconduct in several industries; Hollywood has already been mentioned, but we have seen sport, politics, art and music as other industries where sexual misconduct has been exposed. But the 'industry' we are focussing on here is academia, which too has been outed as a space that enables sexual misconduct to exist and where perpetrators do not face consequences. According to Tutchell and Edmonds (2020), sexual abuse is a serious problem in academia, and Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) suggest that sexual misconduct in higher education (HE) is a *global* 'epidemic'. In fact, sexual assault reports at UK universities have more than doubled in four years, with over 3,500 incidents reported since 2015 (Woolcock, 2021). How these are currently handled by the institutions is worrying. In the UK, the Al Jazeera investigation *Degrees of Abuse* (Howlett and Davies, 2021) revealed not only the worrying scale of sexual misconduct experienced at university campuses but also the low rate of investigations into complaints. This means that 'about 87 percent of complaints of sexual misconduct did not result in disciplinary action of any kind for the subject of the complaint' (Al Jazeera Investigative Unit and Howlett, 2021, n.p). One of the victims told Al Jazeera that coming forward and the subsequent investigation conducted by her university had been so distressing that she would never do it again (Al Jazeera Investigative Unit and Howlett, 2021). This suggests that there is something terribly wrong with complaints procedures and how victims

are supported, which has been known for a long time (Bull and Rye, 2018; and please see the ongoing research from the 1752 Group: *Examining institutional responses to sexual misconduct: Higher education after #MeToo*).

This exposure of the extent of abuse and the failings of universities to support students and staff who report sexual misconduct is a positive step because now more people are acknowledging it (1752 group; Germain, 2016; Hansen and Richards, 2019; O'Connor et al., 2018; Oliver, 2016; Towl and Walker, 2019; Tutchell and Edmonds, 2020). But we cannot pretend that it is a recent phenomenon, when it has been happening for many years but has been made (purposely) unknown (Tutchell and Edmonds, 2020). One of the reasons for this silence is that numerous universities try to cover up what happens at their institutions as they have a reputation to maintain (Oliver, 2016). This procedure of denial and cover-up stems from the marketisation of HE, in that universities have to be viewed as desirable places to study, especially when they are reliant on student numbers for financial purposes (Towl and Walker, 2019). However, research has shown that there is a recent increase in the interest in the seriousness of incidents of sexual misconduct and well-being (Oman and Bull, 2022, Page et al., 2019) from within the HE institutions themselves and from different political or organisational levels. For example, as a response to the growing concern about sexual assault on American campuses, in 2014, President Obama formed the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (O'Connor et al., 2018). Similarly in the UK, in 2015, the Universities UK Taskforce was established with the aim of tackling violence against women (Towl and Walker, 2019). Additionally, there have also been research and campaigns carried out by advocacy groups both within and outside the universities (e.g., the National Union for Students, the 1752 Group, and the University and College Union), which aim to highlight and make academic institutions in the UK address sexual misconduct on campus.

However, given that many victims who experience sexual assault do not report being assaulted due to the fear of not being believed, we have to question how accurate the reported incident figures are and whether we can really know how widespread the problem is. According to Rape Crisis England and Wales (2021), 85,000 women and 12,000 men (aged 16–59) experience rape, attempted rape or sexual assault every year. However, only 15% of those who are sexually assaulted report it to the police (Rape Crisis England and Wales, 2021). As Brownmiller (1975) argued, rape is part of patriarchal structures within society, and this impacts how we view and treat victims and perpetrators. Rape myths and the expectation of having to relay the whole experience in a courtroom full of strangers, only to be disbelieved, is enough to put even the strongest person off from reporting the incident. In *Why Women are Blamed for Everything*, Taylor (2020) explores how 'victim blaming of women is prevalent and normalised in society' because of misogyny and patriarchy existing in and structuring all facets of society.

Academia is not exempt from these patriarchal structures, for example, Oliver (2016) explores how male students are held in such high regard, especially those who excel at sports, that in numerous cases they often get away with sexually assaulting female students. It seems as if a sports scholarship is also a free pass to be sexually violent. This is mostly associated with US academic institutions whereby sports play a highly important role (Crosthwaite, 2017). Furthermore, Wade (2017: n.d.) states that 'on average, athletes are more likely than other students on campus to identify with hypermasculinity and to accept "rape myths" to justify sexual assaults'.

Whilst this research is needed and is important, there remain other experiences of sexual misconduct in academia that are still insufficiently reported, researched or even acknowledged. Jones et al. (2019) note that research and education in this area have tended to focus on the experiences of students rather than staff. But as this book will show, sexual misconduct is much more widespread, takes place beyond the campus and can happen to anyone. Through the use of different voices, this book explores the ethics of care that exists or rather *should* exist in HE to support universities and staff and students with lived experience. Drawing on the theory around ethics of care (Noddings, 1984, Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) and pedagogical practice (Burke et al., 2017), this book offers the different ways we can address, research and write about sexual misconduct. This includes empirical research on and autoethnographic considerations of the diverse ways sexual misconduct has been experienced and disclosed by staff and students on and off campus and addressed by the institutions in which they take place. But before we continue, it is important to clarify terminology.

Terminology

Sexual misconduct can be defined as an umbrella term that includes sexual harassment and sexual assault. Sexual harassment is a broad term, including many types of unwelcome verbal and physical sexual attention (Rainn, 2021), such as being sent sexually explicit images or being leered at. Kloß (2017) defines sexual harassment as 'as coercive behaviour, which may include gestures, actions, and other modes of verbal or nonverbal communication, with sexual connotations, which intimidate, humiliate, and exercise power over another person'. Sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behaviour, often physical, that occurs without the consent of the victim (Rainn, 2021). Rape is an example of sexual assault. Therefore, sexual misconduct is used here to include a broad range of behaviours (Page et al., 2019), from harassing statements to criminal sexual assault. It includes all behaviours that constitute misconduct including sexual harassment (Kloß 2017), assault (Pritchard, 2019) and gender-based violence (Anitha and Lewis, 2018). Please note that although we define what we mean by these terms in this introduction, each author will draw on their own references for defining key terminology in their chapters.

On editing this book

Both editors are victims of sexual assault and harassment, which occurred when we were conducting fieldwork at different UK-based academic institutions. How we came together was through sheer coincidence, whilst working at the same institution several years after our experiences. Edwards was working on an article draft about her experience of sexual harassment during ethnographic research and saw on Pritchard's email signature that she had published an article about her sexual assault during her doctoral research. We arranged to meet and after sharing our experiences over coffee, it led us to believe that incidents of sexual misconduct in academia were more prevalent than we both first thought, happened at different stages of an academic career and occurred in spaces *on* and *off* campus. There was something about sharing our experiences and acknowledging them that made us want to develop this book. As already noted, much of the existing research has focussed on staff-student professional misconduct on campus and its prevalence, with some work, particularly in the field of anthropology, on sexual misconduct experienced in the field. As a project, this book aims to build on this important work to consider wider experiences of sexual misconduct in the academy and what we can learn from them to inform a HE-wide ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982, Noddings, 1984). We want to make that important first step in exposing the problem of sexual misconduct in academia, with the hope that there will be less secrecy around the subject and that we can chip away at problematic myths.

The call for contributions was shared widely amongst numerous academic groups in order to gather varied accounts from academics with various identities and from a variety of academic fields and disciplines. Whilst the call for contributions was not restricted to only women, all responses came from women. This is not surprising since most victims of sexual assault or harassment tend to be women. For example, the 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales found that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16, equivalent to 3.4 million female and 631,000 male victims (Rape Crisis England and Wales, 2021). However, we recognise that men can be allies and in some places are becoming more involved in activism to fight against violence towards women (Westmarland et al., 2021). Of course, not all men are perpetrators and many would condone any form of sexual misconduct. However, sexual misconduct seems to be a product of sexism.

As the proposals came in, we soon came to realise the sheer diversity in perspectives and viewpoints: some proposals were based on first-hand experiences whereas others were based on previous research into this topic, some were from the perspective of students, others from staff both on and off campus. The contributors provide an international perspective on sexual misconduct within academia. From the UK to the Marshall Islands,

experiences of sexual misconduct are shared in order to explore the various structures which enable sexual misconduct in academia. We felt that it was an absolute privilege that people were wanting to share their writing with us, but also that we had a very sensitive subject that needed care and consideration. The day-to-day editing of this book, from the call for contributions to providing feedback, made both editors question our own actions and responses. Whilst we were excited to receive abstract proposals, we also recognised that this was only possible if someone else had experienced sexual misconduct. Whilst editors can expect potential contributors to drop out for a myriad of reasons, we had a couple of contributors dropping out as they found their experiences difficult to write about. We struggled with how best to support authors who were writing about their own experiences and to ensure that we ourselves were also OK during this process of re-telling. We did not want to push authors to share anything that may have upset them or that could have ethical implications for them, as we all know too well the problem of victim blaming when it comes to sexual misconduct. We made authors aware that we were always there to support and advise them, and we understood that deciding not to continue with the chapter was OK. Our overall aim for this book is to create a continued network or space of support for authors to share their experiences and for readers to acknowledge them.

Another area to consider during the process of editing this book was the ethics of writing about experiences of sexual misconduct. Just like with any empirical research, anonymity is provided throughout by attaching pseudonyms to people and not naming academic institutions. We felt that it was more important to provide anonymity for this topic, due to the fact that in cases of sexual misconduct people who speak up are often disbelieved. In the case of one of the editor's own experiences, she was threatened with legal action for speaking up about her experience of being sexually assaulted when recruiting participants at an event held by a UK-based organisation for people with dwarfism (see Pritchard, 2019). In no part did she blame the organisation, but that did not stop them from spending more time and effort trying to discredit what had happened to her as opposed to supporting her and reflecting on what they could do to make their organisation safer for its members. It does not seem uncommon that organisations are more concerned about their reputation than supporting victims of sexual assault. Pritchard's experience meant that she was able to advise the authors on the importance of anonymity in order to minimise any backlash from organisations or individuals discussed in their chapter.

Method/ologies of researching and writing about sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct can be both a subject of research and a personal experience. When telling people about this book, a common initial reaction was

to ask whether it was essentially a book on victimhood. To us, this implies a space where people who have been subjected to sexual misconduct have a space to share their stories and where others can learn about their experiences. In some ways, this is a key part of this book, but it is not what this book is about. As we, the editors, have carved out spaces to explore ourselves and our experiences, we wanted to provide a space for people to write about their experiences. Of course, we understand that not everyone is ready or wants to share their story, but we wanted to provide a platform for those who wanted to and a form of support for those who do not. But the victim, although integral, isn't the focus of this book. Instead, the systems and practices that allow sexual misconduct to continue in HE need the greatest attention and require drastic change. This is why, as you read through this book, you will see the diversity in approaches to researching and writing about sexual misconduct in HE. All of these chapters aim to discuss and also educate readers on the problem of sexual misconduct in academia.

In their systematic review of the literature, Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020, p. 410) conclude that '[g]enerally, quantitative cross-sectional studies on prevalence dominate the international research field'. This book moves away from presenting work on this subject using that model. Some of the chapters are written from a place of lived experience, through autoethnographic reflections and considerations. Some authors have used poetry as a way to share their stories and others have engaged in a duoethnography, a conversation between the two chapter authors. Other chapters are written by those who work in positions of support within and outside of the university, or who have researched the subject. This book presents to the reader the different ways that sexual misconduct in academia can be researched and written about, which offer pedagogical potential for learning and insights into how to start thinking about helping others to write about this subject in an ethical way.

Structure of the book

There are two key themes or intentions explored in this book: *ethics of care* and *pedagogical practice*. Ethics of care is grounded in the importance of voice and relationships. That is, in this theory and approach to ethical practice, it is considered important for everyone to have a voice and to be listened to. As we see it, HE institutions have reached an 'ethically important moment' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) with regard to how they listen to and respond to instances of sexual misconduct. It is at this moment that the book's second theme, pedagogical practice, is relevant. 'Pedagogies emphasise the contextual nature of teaching and learning practices and the ways that these contexts might be tied in with historical inequalities and exclusions' (Burke and Crozier, 2013, p. 7). If an institutional wide ethics of care regarding sexual misconduct is to be achieved, learning, reflection and reflexivity need to take place at all working levels within a university, from

policy and administration to counselling, teaching and supervision. This theme is offered as a way to think about the university as a place of reflexive learning and a site for self-improvement. These themes are explored through four pedagogical objectives on which the book is structured and areas that could inform an ethics of care:

Part I: The intersectionality of identities and recognition

The chapters in this opening section look at academia through the lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) to explore how sexual misconduct is experienced by different groups or communities of women. The chapters explore how systems of inequality and oppression such as sexism, colonialism, racism and classism can interlock and intersect to allow space for sexual misconduct. Whilst there has been some growing attention towards student to student cases of sexual assault, other forms of sexual misconduct, including towards academic staff, remain limited. The chapters in this section will educate readers on the wider experiences of identity and inequality. These chapters recognise that the different extent to which an individual's struggle is recognised by others is informed by their identity and status. These chapters raise questions about who is heard and who isn't.

In **Chapter 1,** Keri-Lynn Cheechoo navigates her own lived experiences of sexual misconduct during a significant celebratory milestone. Cheechoo does this through truth-telling poetics. In *Respectability Politics*, Cheechoo shows the 'journey of an Indigenous woman and scholar navigating the uncaring landscapes of scholarly spaces', where epistemological violence exists and ethical relationality is absent. In **Chapter 2,** focussing on staff to staff and at times student to staff sexual misconduct, Lena Wånggren examines how structural inequalities in university spaces increase the risks of harm and abuse for those working in precarious positions. Wånggren argues that precarity is intersectional and maps onto gendered and racialised structures of inequality. Wånggren concludes that a step in addressing and challenging exploitative structures and conditions can be best achieved through industrial and collective action. **In Chapter 3**, Latika Raisinghani and Poonam Bhagchandani engage in a duoethnography; they have a dialogue about their own experiences and that of others regarding gender disparity and sexual misconduct in academic environments across different countries. The authors conclude by sharing a '(trans-multi)culturally responsive education framework that may help us in creating inclusive, socially just, responsive education spaces by initiating complicated conversations to interrogate the inequities inherent in gender(ed) identities and social roles that often "normalize" sexual misconduct in many socio-cultural contexts'. In **Chapter 4,** Poppy Gerrard-Abbott departs from traditional approaches to understanding gender-based violence to consider the messiness of power and marginalisation. Drawing on experiences of 'non-paradigmatic events' and 'non-paradigm' forms of violence during research, Gerrard-Abbott

questions feminist epistemology and methodology, calling for a postmodern approach to feminist research design.

Part II: Fieldwork identities and pedagogy

Moving on from considering how intersectionality could offer a useful analytical perspective, the chapters in Part II turn to consider *research* identities and the relationships involved in research. It is known that '[p]rogrammes for sexual violence prevention have focussed historically on university, school or college students rather than staff working at these institutions' (Jones et al., 2021 p. 121). Additionally, little attention is paid to ensuring the same ethics of care for research staff. Research practices are ever-evolving, but the ethics and pedagogies related to them have barely changed. The emergence of research ethics remains mostly focussed on the safety of the participants and with good reason. However, given the nature of research and movements such as #MeToo, it is becoming increasingly important to include the safety of the researcher. The development of research ethics seems to have failed to take into account the experiences of female researchers, especially in research that requires a close rapport with participants. As well as considering the role and identity of the researcher *and* the researched, the chapters in this section touch upon the practices involved in liminal spaces in fieldwork (use of the body), the relationships involved in conducting fieldwork gatekeeping, power and trust, team work, with the aim to offer the best in 'applied' ethical solutions to the myriad of challenges facing contemporary research.

In **Chapter 5**, Laura Thurmann focusses on trust-based sexual violence in her autoethnographic reflection of an ethnography and argues that sexual misconduct is a methodological issue. Thurmann explores how emotions and power relations within the anthropological ethnographic field are shaped by academic pressure, vulnerability and trust. Thurmann wants readers to reflect on the positionalities, methods and dynamics of power that enable violence and for us to ask *how* such violence is possible rather than *why*. In **Chapter 6**, also based on encounters within the ethnographic fieldwork conducted as a PhD student, Simona Palladino looks at the 'unspoken experiences of ethnography'. Palladino proposes to foreground the role of the researcher when experiencing sexual harassment when interacting with participants and discusses the 'space of care' that was created through a workshop aimed at supporting postgraduate researchers to discuss their field experiences and emotions. In **Chapter 7**, Delyth Edwards continues with a focus on ethnography as a site of coercive behaviour from participants. She reflects on her identity as a working-class academic to explore how this position within the field can make researchers more vulnerable to harassment and how this impacts the researcher's sense of self. Apen Ruiz et al. focus on the problem of sexual harassment in the subject of Archaeology in **Chapter 8.** Drawing on survey data, the authors analyse the scale of sexual

misconduct in Archaeology and point to several particularities in this field. The authors conclude with several recommendations for the field and other fieldwork spaces shaped more widely by hierarchies of identities.

Part III: Disclosure, complaint and recognition

The chapters in this section consider the processes of disclosure and complaint. The chapters explore how sexual misconduct 'is composed of power relations in which multiple axes of differentiation are in play' (Goldschmidt-Gjerløw and Trysnes, 2020 p. 32). For example, how definitions and understandings determine whether instances are disclosed by students or where students know where to go to seek support and if the response from the institution is adequate. Centring experience as a form of knowledge creation, in **Chapter 9**, Alexandria Petit-Thorne asks important questions about liability and the role and responsibility of the academic institution when sexual misconduct takes place in the spaces that make up the 'social and political world of the academy'. In these 'liminal' spaces, instances of sexual misconduct are more likely to slip through the cracks of a formal complaint procedure because institutions refuse to claim authority over these spaces. The author reflects on what trauma-informed responses to academic sexual misconduct might involve. Kimberley Hill and Melanie Crofts in **Chapter 10** argue that whilst having a duty of care for students, a gap often exists between legal requirements, experiences and university responses. Drawing on previous mixed methods research on tackling sexual violence in UK universities, the authors consider the prevalence of sexual violence in UK HE and consider the perceptions of students, staff and university managers. They argue for increased awareness through campus-wide campaigns but acknowledge that real change is not possible when universities remain to have inadequate policies tackling sexual misconduct and fail to support those who come forward with inadequate disclosure and complaint procedures.

Part IV: First responders and institutional support

The chapters in this section shift to focus the gaze on HE institutions and how they respond to disclosure. The chapters in this section identify where institutional and cultural change is needed, by questioning whether the expertise of other agencies could be pedagogically useful in helping HE staff to learn and explore what the development of 'responsive education spaces' could look like and how it could be achieved. In **Chapter 11,** Suzanne Egan and Natasha Mikitas draw on a sexual harassment and sexual abuse prevention programme targeting early career doctoral supervisors. The programme was developed by Full Stop Australia, one of Australia's leading feminist violence prevention and counselling organisations. The authors provide an overview

and analysis of the programme and suggest that the doctoral supervision space needs to be seen and treated as a space of ethical pedagogical practice. Drawing on autoethnographic reflections collaboratively, in **Chapter 12,** Viaene et al. analyse their individual and collective experiences of sexual misconduct and gatekeeping and their research centre's violation of professional ethics and care towards early career researchers. They describe the network of characters who enable this violation and the 'whisper network' that tries to expose the misconduct.

What we want this book to do

As previously stated, research and education on the subject of sexual misconduct have tended to focus on students rather than staff (Jones et al., 2019). By bringing together in one book the experiences of students, staff and/or researchers, we can gather a broader understanding of sexual misconduct in the academy for both students and staff and how to develop ethical pedagogical practices, if ethics of care is to be truly implemented or transformed. As you read the book, you will become aware of how some of the themes present in one chapter are common across other chapters, such as how the marketisation of HE has allowed sexual misconduct to flourish; how power is embodied and exists intellectually; and how everybody knows about misconduct but does nothing about it. Most of all, the key message is that researching, writing about and tackling sexual misconduct are some collaborative efforts.

We want readers to see the problem of sexual misconduct as a HE problem rather than a school or departmental one. Only then can we start to think about embedding equal ethics of care institutionally. As you read the chapters in this book, we want you to think about the following:

1. *Is sexual misconduct openly discussed at your institution or place of work? Could sexual misconduct affect you or those you work with or support in your role? If so, are you able to discuss this with the person?*
2. *Are there spaces or relationships that exist where people are more likely to be targeted for sexual misconduct?*
3. *What policy or guidance is in place at your institution or place of work?*
   1. *Is it appropriate?*
   2. *Do people know about it?*
   3. *Do you know how to respond to and support someone who discloses their experience to you?*
4. *What is the procedure and policy around disclosure and complaints in your place of work?*
5. *Are you doing enough? What could you do differently in your role?*
6. *Is your place of work doing enough? What could your institution be doing?*

To conclude, this edited book brings together numerous voices within academia and the various relations that can involve sexual misconduct, such as staff to student, staff to staff, student to staff, student to student and participant to researcher. It provides an international perspective by drawing on experiences from academics within North America, UK, India, Australia and several European countries. But this book is not in any way exhaustive of the experiences of and research conducted about this issue. There is so much more work to be carried out on this issue, specifically around issues of racism, sexism and classism, and we hope that the chapters will contribute to work that tackles change in the future. Nevertheless, the broad perspective of this book opens up a pedagogical opportunity (Lundy and Sainz, 2018), where 'negative experiences of "lived injustices"' can be a key resource for reflection and learning in wider HE pedagogy (Goldschmidt-Gjerløw and Trysnes, 2020; Jones et al., 2019). However, the central focus of this book is not on victimhood. Instead, the chapters presented in this book traverse a wide range of lived experiences, perspectives and narratives that have largely been unacknowledged by fellow scholars, institutions and the general public. By presenting collective accounts of experiencing, witnessing, researching and writing about sexual misconduct in academic spaces, we can expand knowledge and bring such experiences out of their current marginalised positions within academic discussions. Each of the chapters offers not only opportunities for conversation and reflection, but addresses and suggests what responses to academic sexual misconduct could and should involve.

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Part I

The intersectionality of identities and recognition

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1 Casualties of colonialism

Indigenous women, systemic violence, and precarity

Keri-Lynn Cheechoo

Wachiye, greetings

I am a Cree woman, an Iskwew. My community is Long Lake #58 First Nation. I am a daughter, mother, grandmother, sister, auntie, cousin, and niece. They are my relations; they hold my history and are my memory anchors (Gadgil, Berkes, and Folke, 1993; Mitchell, 2013). I am a synthesis of the past, present, and future. My positionality as an Iskwew scholar makes space for me to situate my work in such a way that together, we are implicated in (re)membering the power of relationality, community, and the resilience of Indigenous womanhood. It is critical that I position myself because I am the daughter of people who have experienced the horror and atrocities of Indian Residential Schools (IRS). My father subsisted through his childhood in IRS, and my mother is the daughter of survivors of IRS. They both live what they know. The intergenerational trauma I experienced as a child contributed to my becoming well-educated in the poetics of marginalization, silence, and speech as a theme of subjugation vis-à-vis colonialism pervades my work. I want to disrupt ideologies about, as Dion (2007) indicates, the "Indians we have in mind" (p. 330) and instead emphasize the necessity of antiracism teacher education.

As a published poet, I use poetic inquiry (an arts-based methodology) in my work in a way that connects my spiritual aptitude for writing with educational research. Art/o/graphy, as Irwin (2013) makes clear elsewhere, is a "form of practice-based research […] a creative practice, and a performative pedagogy […]" (p. 198). Stepping into a space centred in "practice-based research" (Irwin, 2013), I craft and hold space for Indigenous voices. Similar to Leggo et al. (2011), I know that "my way of finding a place in the world is to write one" (p. 233). So, through a relational sharing circle as an Iskwew artist, researcher, and educator, I am situated in this space as an emergent Indigenous art/o/grapher. My work contributes to interrupting long-held colonialist practices of violence through silence in such a way that holds up the inherent resilience of Indigenous women and girls. I use my poetry to make space for Indigenous voices by interrupting and subverting Western

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constructs of academic writing. I also share narratives that speak to my lived experiences because it is necessary that we create community, dear reader.

This chapter examines the juxtaposition of existing epistemological violence and absent ethical relationality (Donald, 2009). For contextualization, Donald (2009) says that ethical space is a space of possibility that can only be created when we are dealing with two different worldviews, or knowledge systems. Ethical relationality does not deny difference but instead seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other. In other words, engaging in ethical relationality means recognizing that you are in a space with people who are unlike you, and respecting those dissimilarities enough to meet halfway, and learn from each other in the space where you meet. In contrast, this chapter will make clear that though Indigenous women are inherently positioned to be a threat to settler colonialism (Anderson, 2011a; 2011b), we are not inherently vulnerable. I will also speak to and through sexualized violence in academic spaces, and through my lens of being an Iskwew, or Cree woman, scholar, and storyteller, this chapter will navigate my lived experiences of collegial misconduct during a significant celebratory milestone. I hope that this chapter will ignite opportunities for conversation that will engage themes such as precarity, womanhood, and the academy through the (re)generative synergies of truth-telling poetics.

Truth-telling

Before continuing, you should know that there are over 5000 missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada (Radek, 2011). Indigenous women are often viewed through a sexualized lens, simultaneously seen as "Indian-Princess," and/or "Sexually Available-Sq*aw." Our very existence appears to produce violence, violation, and even extermination. Here Downe (2006) reminds us, "the abuses experienced by Aboriginal girls over the past 130 years are not isolated occurrences; they are connected through a pervasive colonial ideology that sees these young women as exploitable and often dispensable" (p. 3). In turn, Leanne Simpson (2014) stresses,

> white supremacy, rape culture, and the real and symbolic attack on gender and sexual identity and agency are very powerful tools of colonialism, settler colonialism, and capitalism, primarily because they work very efficiently to remove Indigenous Peoples from our territories and to prevent reclamation of those territories through mobilization.
>
> (para. 9)

Pervasive colonial ideology (Downe, 2006) governs a deceptive entitlement to land and resources, and this is conflated with a predatory entitlement to Indigenous women's bodies. In *The Sacred Hoop*, Gunn Allen (1986) revealed the connection between taking our land and destroying the value of

women in our communities. Sexual violence was especially directed against Indigenous women. I want to make clear that though Indigenous women are inherently positioned to be a threat to settler colonialism (because our bodies create a counter-narrative to resource extraction/depletion and land possession) (Anderson, 2011b), we are not inherently vulnerable. We are instead targeted, as Dr. Barry Lavallee explains,

> Indigenous women are not vulnerable... [they] are targeted in secular society for violence. There's a very big difference to [being] vulnerable... to be vulnerable in medicine means that if I irradiate your body and you have no cells, you are vulnerable to an infection. But, to be vulnerable... because of your colour [...] your positionality [...] just being Indigenous is targeting. It is an active form of oppression of Indigenous women.
>
> (p. 125)

As Anderson's (2011a) research makes clear, there are parallels between the settler's sense of entitlement to Indigenous land and, by extension, their sense of entitlement to Indigenous women's bodies.

The Government of Canada launched an independent national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in early 2016 in response to the demands for justice from families who have been disrupted by genocidal violence. An inquiry was called for by families and other survivors because "... [Indigenous] women find themselves at the heart of violent narratives that continue to sustain the North American colonial order" (Anderson, 2011a, p. 173). The commission was tasked with examining the "practices, policies, and institutions such [...] government policies/ practices or social/economic conditions... commissioners have been mandated to examine the underlying historical, social, economic, institutional and cultural factors that contribute to the violence" (AANDC website, 2016). After much heartwork and heartache, the *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* was released on 3 June 2019. It is both powerful and empowering in its calls to focus on rights and relationships at every level—from the individual day-to-day encounters that feed violence and discrimination to those larger institutional and systemic structures that need to change.

The *Final Report* is a culmination of heartwork by family members, witnesses, Elders, and Commissioners answering the 94 Calls to Action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The *Final Report* has also generated Calls to Justice and provides insight into the intersections and impacts of health, wellness, and violences that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women continue to experience.

Settler colonialism remains omnipresent; seeking to invade, conquer, and claim people, time, and space. "It is," as Arvin et al. (2013) remind us, "a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonisers/

settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous Peoples that are there" (p. 12). In response to such colonial omnipresence, I agree with Regan (2006) and contend that "[...] settlers must confront [their] own duplicity and hypocrisy... denial and guilt about the past that is not really past, but continues to define our relationship with [I]ndigenous peoples today" (Regan, 2006, p. 3). Moreover, as Arvin et al. (2013) confirm, "settler colonialism must be understood as a multi-fronted project of making the First Peoples of a place extinct; it is a relentless structure, not contained in a period of time" (p. 13).

Looking back

At the beginning of this chapter, I indicated I would speak to existent epistemological violence and absent ethical relationality. Having provided a *very* brief synopsis of the violences experienced by Indigenous Peoples, I would like to make space to engage you in ethical space and ethical relationality. It is necessary to engage mindfulness and build context, as I move forward to discuss the next piece of this chapter, which focusses on sexual violence.

Were you aware that authentic Indigenous scholars are a rarity in Canada? We are arriving "onto the scene," but it is not without some sort of violence. Whether that violence involves precarity, is hierarchical, institutional, or collegial is dependent upon the person and their inherent positionality. Our numbers are small, our collective presence is a mere fraction of those already in the Ivory Towers. It is important to highlight our presence, my presence, because it is not easy to both experience violences and flourish—the two are not mutually exclusive. Some Indigenous scholars are asked to do too much, to wear too many hats, and they burn out. I am pleased that our numbers are growing, but we need an increase in support from allies and accomplices to ensure that we are successful and not burdened by workloads made vulnerable by institutional ignorance.

I am going to share lived experiences that occurred during a significant celebratory milestone. I share because I want to destabilize the trope of acceptance, of rug-sweeping—and expose the prolific insidiousness of violences within academia.

My incident, mine—this is my lived experience. I own this story. I share it because what happened was not okay. I was defending my dissertation, and it was going well. My family was there, which included my partner and my three daughters. My committee, friends, and other interested parties were in the room, to both support and learn. Good medicine was present in that room, and this was a significant celebration.

The experience was good. Until it was not.

You know, my daughters journeyed with me throughout my academic journey, championed me, were witnesses to my success, and unfortunately, appallingly, became captive to an event that should have never occurred. What happened left everyone in shock. Speechless, everyone, including me,

shuffled out of the room and I—well, perhaps it is better if I share what happened through truth-telling poetic pedagogy. The following poem is titled *Respectability Politics*.

Respectability Politics
When it happened
I was reeling
Physically
Mentally
Destabilised
I did not ask for it
In this room
Of friends
Of family
Victimised
I watched
Everyone watching
What occurred
Should never happen
En*gross*ed
Everyone unknowingly
Took photos
Of me
Being
Assaulted
Pivotal moment
Indigenous woman and her daughters
Hard-won joy
And celebration
Defaced
Consent
Is mandatory
Every situation
Every living being
Denied
For 18 years
I had kissed my husband
Only
My choice
Negated
In that moment
I was forced to feel
Some other man's mouth
On mine
Violated

Split-second
Shutter-speed
My ancestor's celebration
Is marked
Disrupted
Forced into
Generational
Sexualization
My *agency*
Dissolved
Years
Decades
Working against
Fetishization
Tokenized
So, now
Now we work
Colleagues
Trauma
Unresolved
Did you know
When accused
You can simply
Just not respond?
Unhindered
My complaint faded
Not going to lie
My faith
In justice (injustice)
Vanished
And we are left holding
This *collective bag*
Of guilt and shame
Of photos and memories
Disturbed
Where?
Where can we put it down?
This bag
It is too heavy
Demoralised
(Cheechoo, 2021)

This incident was traumatic. Is traumatic. I am still processing it, and I look forward to the day that when the memory arrives for a visit, I can greet it, visit for a while, and then send it off. Send it back in a repackaged form

that acknowledges the space where heteropatriarchy thrives (and oh my, it lives, and it flourishes within the walls of post-secondary institutions) but also a form that holds space for restorative practices. I am working to help those who were forced to watch, to endure my unwilling participation in a nonconsensual embrace. Colonialism is unrelenting. In the end, there is no end.

Meegwetch, thank you

This chapter illuminated that though Indigenous women are inherently positioned to be a threat to settler colonialism (Anderson, 2011a; 2011b), we are not inherently vulnerable. I spoke to and through sexualized violence in academic spaces and through my lens of being an Iskwew, or Cree woman, scholar, and storyteller, and navigated my lived experiences of collegial misconduct during a significant celebratory milestone.

To conclude, Meegwetch, thank you for travelling with me throughout this chapter. Together we worked to engage the underpinnings and the juxtaposition of existing epistemological violence and absent ethical relationality (Donald, 2009)—yet we have barely made a dent in the intensive historical atrocities that continue to violate, to reverberate, to impact generations of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and girls.

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2 Sexual misconduct through inequality and precarity

Lena Wånggren

Introduction

The marketisation of higher education in the UK has brought amplified job insecurity and workloads, an increase in tuition fees alongside a 'customer-service approach' to education, and a number of individualised performativity measures. While sexual misconduct in universities is not a new phenomenon, feminist struggles against university complicity have in recent years become the subject of public debate, with instances of sexual misconduct by university staff and students noted in social and traditional media as well as in renewed feminist activism and scholarship, and student activism (Phipps 2017, 2018; Cowan McGlynn and Munro 2020; Bondestam and Lundqvist 2020).[1] Much has been written about 'lad culture' in universities (NUS 2011; Phipps and Young 2015; Jackson and Sundaram 2020) and its part in sexual misconduct among students or by staff towards students (Whitley and Page 2015), while staff experiences of sexual violence have been less discussed. Due to lobbying and internal feminist work, universities in the UK in 2015 formed a task force focussed on violence against women and hate crime, with the following reports and recommendations (such as training, improving reporting and disclosure procedures, and forming institutional task force groups). However, mostly superficial rather than material changes came out of this managerial-led individualising work, with the structural inequalities, hierarchies and silences that enable sexual misconduct in higher education remaining.

This chapter focusses specifically on staff-to-staff (or sometimes student-to-staff) sexual misconduct in UK higher education, considered in the context of wider de-regulation of labour protections and right-wing government anti-trade union measures as well as closures of women's shelters and other 'austerity' measures of recent years. Rather than individualising sexual misconduct as the work of a few 'bad apples', it highlights the material, structural inequalities, hierarchies and cultures that maintain rape culture in universities, framing these within the rising rates of job insecurity within the sector. Contractual and other forms of precarity are of central concern: there are clear intersections between precarious working conditions, gender, race

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and class discrimination (TUC 2014, 2016; UCU 2016c, 2019b, 2021a), with an increased risk of discrimination and harassment when employed on an insecure contract. The chapter considers the structures of intersectional inequalities and precarity in UK higher education, alongside the increased production of university policy on sexual misconduct. Critical of the 'non-performative commitments' (Ahmed 2012) of policy without practice, the chapter examines how precarity at work in university spaces creates favourable conditions for sexual misconduct, thus increasing the risks of gendered and other forms of harm and abuse, and prevents survivors and victims from speaking out. It notes the importance of industrial work and collective action to counteract exploitative structures and conditions.

Sexual misconduct in the context of anti-worker politics

The marketisation of higher education in the UK mirrors trends extending across nations and continents, a move intensified by right-wing governments since the 2007–2008 financial crisis. The university sector is now marked by job insecurity and overwhelming workloads, cuts in state funding and an increase in tuition fees, alongside a student-as-consumer or 'customer-service approach' to education, accompanied by individualised monitoring, metricisation and performativity measures (Canaan and Shumar 2008; Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion 2009; Gill 2010; Bailey and Freedman 2011; Ball 2000, 2012; McGettigan 2013; Brown and Carasso 2013). The speeding up of the marketising process of higher education has not happened in a vacuum; since 2010, a successive number of Conservative or Conservative-led UK governments have forced through de-regulation of labour protections, actions often disguised as getting rid of 'red tape' or in the name of an ideological 'austerity politics', where public sector cuts take place alongside tax cuts for the richest. As this section notes, such anti-worker politics are key to contextualising sexual misconduct in contemporary UK universities.

Alongside the sexist and racist impact of 'austerity' closures of women's shelters, as highlighted by feminist groups such as Sisters Uncut (Sisters Uncut 2019; Emejulu and Bassel 2015), UK right-wing politics has involved anti-trade union measures and weakened labour legislation. While not as obvious as the closure of women's shelters, or the lack of resources to public funds for many women leaving them unable to access crucial services, such specific anti-worker legislation as well as economic structures of insecurity enable a culture of sexual violence in workplaces including universities. Three specific legislative changes impacting the handling of sexual misconduct are the introduction of 'protected conversations', the removal of employer responsibility for third-party harassment and the (now abolished) fees for employment tribunals.

'Protected conversations' are a new legal category introduced in 2013 by the Conservative government, demarcating 'pre-termination negotiations' or

conversations that are not minuted and are held 'without prejudice', making it easier for an employer to get rid of an individual worker without evidence used later in employment tribunals (Jones 2014).[2] In terms of sexual misconduct, this legislation enables the employer to frame the issue as an individualised problem (the perpetrator), to be dealt with secretly and in silence, without addressing the power imbalances that allow sexual misbehaviour to continue. Non-Disclosure Agreements in particular and settlement agreements in general are often used in cases related to sexual misconduct and are made easier by the use of 'protected conversations'. Close to a third of UK universities have used Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) for student grievances since 2016 and campaign groups to end sexual misconduct lobby against their use (Croxford 2020). The process reduces accountability, as the perpetrator is told to leave (and is often paid off), with little or no transformative justice or structural change taking place to prevent further harm (Batty Weale and Bannock 2017; 1752 Group 2021).

The removal of employer responsibility for third-party harassment is a similar right-wing anti-worker and anti-feminist de-regulation of labour protections. Despite the fact that 70 per cent of respondents to the government consultation opposed these changes (TUC 2016), in 2013 the Conservative government repealed Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010, which had placed a duty on employers to protect employees from third-party harassment. The importance of being able to hold an employer accountable in such cases is noted in a major 2016 survey from the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and Everyday Sexism Project, where 7 per cent of women who had experienced harassment reported that the perpetrator was a third party (such as a customer, patient, client or student, rather than a colleague). There was some variation across sectors and age: 11 per cent of women in retail and 13 per cent of younger women were more likely to be harassed by a third party (TUC 2016). In a 2015 survey of the higher education sector, 27 per cent of university workers reported having been harassed by a student, that is to say a third party (UCU 2016a; Griesbach 2016). In a university context, the deletion of Section 40 of the Equality Act 2010 means that institutions cannot be held accountable if the perpetrator is a student, a visiting speaker or visiting colleague, or if the instances are online abuse by any third party. An example of how this plays out in higher education is seen in university policies and procedures such as a certain English university's 'Procedures for Dealing with Harassment' which states that the university 'does not have any jurisdiction over people who are neither students nor staff' and advises survivors to contact the police for investigation instead.

The introduction of employment tribunal fees, also in 2013 by the Conservative government, has received more criticism and media attention than the above legislative changes, and the fees were abolished in 2017. With the bringing in of employment tribunal fees – up to £1200 to obtain a hearing – women suddenly faced insurmountable financial barriers to challenge workplace harassment. Not surprisingly, the number of sex

discrimination cases fell sharply after the introduction of fees for employment tribunals, as did other workplace complaints reaching tribunal (Duffy 2016).

These anti-worker legislative changes are part of the changed framework of addressing sexual misconduct in the workplace; however, the precarisation of labour is possibly a larger factor. Over the past years, higher education in the UK has witnessed a rise in the amount of casualised staff, that is to say, workers employed on insecure hourly paid or fixed-term contracts, rather than in more secure forms of employment. While precarious labour conditions have existed across sectors in the UK, academia is currently overrepresented in its use of such contracts. According to figures by the University and College Union (UCU), the trade union representing academic and academic-related professional staff in the UK, more than half (54 per cent) of all academic staff are employed on insecure temporary contracts (UCU 2016b).[3] Indeed, UK universities and colleges are twice as likely to use zero-hour contracts (contracts with no guaranteed hours) than other workplaces (Butler 2013). Around 70 per cent of the sector's 49,000 researchers are employed on fixed-term contracts, and the majority of the 37,000 teaching staff on fixed-term contracts are hourly paid, in addition to which there are a further 71,000 teachers employed as 'atypical academics' (often hourly paid, sometimes in one-off arrangements) (UCU 2019a). The short-term and discontinuous nature of such work means that staff struggle to pay their rent outside of teaching time and to make permanent living arrangements. According to a 2015 UCU report, 17 per cent of respondents struggled to pay for food, 34 per cent struggled to pay rent or mortgage repayments and 36 per cent struggled to pay household bills: 'I especially dread the summer and Easter periods as I have no idea how I will pay the rent' (UCU 2015). Not surprisingly, contractual and financial precarity has a severe detrimental impact in other areas of life; health, relationships, professional development and teaching and research suffer (Bryson and Barnes 2000; Lopes and Dewan 2014; Morgan and Wood 2017; Wånggren 2018; UCU 2016b, 2020).

Adding to legislative changes, the precarisation of labour in universities and across workplaces, due to the marketised approach of deliberate understaffing and a 'just-in-time' system of resourcing, creates favourable conditions for sexual misconduct to take place, as seen in the next section.

Sexual misconduct and precarity

In media and much internal university work, the major focus has been on student-to-student or staff-to-student sexual misconduct. In this way, staff-to-staff and student-to-staff sexual misconduct is often overlooked. A 2015 survey of women members (three men answered the survey) showed that more than half (54 per cent) of respondents reported personal experience of some form of harassment at work (Griesbach 2016; UCU 2016a). Two-thirds

(66 per cent) of respondents reported having been harassed by a colleague, and – as noted earlier – just over a quarter (27 per cent) of respondents by a student (a third party). Fewer than half (47 per cent) of respondents had spoken to anyone – a colleague or line manager, for example – about their concerns, and among those who raised concerns, action was taken in less than half (40 per cent) of the cases. Similar figures are seen in a more recent UCU report: the majority of respondents (77 per cent) had been assaulted by a colleague or manager, 14 per cent had been assaulted by a student, and the majority (52 per cent) did not report the abuse to their employer (UCU 2021b; these figures echo findings in EHRC 2018).

Intersectional inequalities and precarity in university spaces increase the risks of gendered and other forms of harm and abuse and prevent survivors and victims from speaking out. The above-mentioned cross-sectoral survey found that more than half (52 per cent) of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace in the UK, including incidences of sexual and verbal assault and unwanted sexual advances. For women and girls aged 16–24, the proportion rose to nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) (TUC 2016). Crucially, the report found that *casualised workers, that is to say insecurely employed workers, are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work*: 'sexual harassment is more prevalent for younger women, and those in precarious forms of work such as zero hours contracts and agency work – precisely those who are much less likely to belong to a trade union', as the TUC General Secretary notes in the foreword to the report (p. 3). Women who are not on permanent contracts, particularly the most precarious variations such as zero-hours contracts, are more likely to experience sexual harassment. Further evidence on the correlation between casualisation and experiences of sexual misconduct notes that in the majority of sexual harassment cases taken to tribunal, the complainant had been working for their employer for less than one year (Equal Opportunities Commission 2002), and it is clear that women in precarious employment are more susceptible to sexual harassment (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). As one respondent in the most recent UCU report put it: 'precarity exacerbates sexual violence' (2021b, p. 31).

Even with the Equality Act's protection against victimisation when raising a complaint, the reality is often that Human Resources departments and managers protect perpetrators and see complainants as troublemakers. As Ahmed (2017, p. 6) writes: 'Even to describe something as sexist and racist here and now can get you into trouble. You point to structures; they say it is in your head'. Casualisation has a specifically gendered impact on women, as the heightened sense of vulnerability associated with the erosion of job security instils a fear of taking action against a colleague or an employer, because of possible negative repercussions in terms of pay and shifts (TUC 2016). Young women in casualised work and on short, fixed-term contracts are less likely to be unionised, and therefore less likely to call on the support of a union rep in challenging harassment. Four out of five women do not

report sexual harassment to their employer, and only one per cent of the respondents report having confided in their union rep (TUC 2016). While Freedom of Information requests sent to 120 universities found that students made at least 169 allegations of sexual misconduct against university staff from 2011–12 to 2016–17, with at least another 127 allegations made by colleagues (Batty, Weale and Bannock 2017), these figures do not include the many survivors and victims dissuaded from making official complaints, possibly withdrawing allegations or receiving an informal resolution – for example, through the use of 'protected conversations' and Non-Disclosure Agreements. Many never report harassment, fearful of the impact on their education or careers, or because they do not believe there will be any positive action taken by the employer. As one legal expert puts it:

> Young women are often terrified about the consequences if they make a complaint about a staff member. So often, when they do, the university's chief concern is to downplay any wrongdoing and protect its own reputation by keeping the whole thing quiet.
>
> (Batty, Weale and Bannock 2017)

Precarious contracts make it more difficult to speak out against injustice: 'You might feel you cannot afford to become alienated from those around you; not only might you lose access to material resources (references, scholarships, courses to teach), but you might lose friends, connections that matter' (Ahmed 2017). Sometimes the only choices are to stay and get used to the violence, to speak up and face repercussions, or to simply silently leave in self-preservation. This is the reality for precariously employed workers in the university.

Is a university space more likely than other workplaces to tolerate sexual misconduct and protect harassers? While the TUC report (2016) states that 52 per cent of women across sectors have experienced sexual harassment, the UCU report (2016) states that 54 per cent of university worker respondents have experienced it – a slightly higher number. The more recent UCU report (2021b) states that in the past five years, 39 per cent of respondents have experienced or witnessed sexual violence in their workplace. Noting that 80 per cent of respondents in the UCU (2016a) survey and 77 per cent in the UCU (2021b) survey were in permanent employment, we might surmise that – given the increased violence against insecurely employed workers, which now make up more than half of academic staff in the UK – even higher numbers would be reached in a survey of casualised university workers. Possibly the marketisation drive, with its focus on optics and image rather than substance – visual rather than structural politics – means that the bad press associated with sexual misconduct leads institutions to silence survivors speaking out, and relying on procedures such as Non-Disclosure Agreements and moving perpetrators around. As perpetrators of sexual harassment tend to be in a position of

power over the target of the harassment (Wilson and Thompson 2001), in the already hierarchical nepotistic character of universities, protecting line managers and those in senior positions enables a neoliberal system of rape culture. University workers with less structural advantage in this way face an intensified vulnerability: 'People choose not to call out behaviour because of the power dynamics, precarity and competitiveness of academia' (UCU 2021b, p. 32). Or it might be, rather, that universities are just like other workplaces and institutions, that is to say, steeped in rape culture – a culture in which sexual violence is normalised in institutions, media and relationships, often through silencing and victim-blaming (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Raphael 2013). In the vast majority of cases of sexual harassment at work, the perpetrator is a male colleague, with nearly one in five naming their direct line manager or someone else with direct authority over them as the perpetrator; there is a clear structural and hierarchical power imbalance (TUC 2016; EHRC 2018, 2020). It seems that the more unequal and casualised a workplace is – with universities high on the list in terms of employers using precarious labour – the more it opens up spaces for discrimination, harassment and misconduct.

The impact felt by precarity maps onto casualised staff according to pre-existing not only gendered but also racialised structures of inequality. As data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows, women are more likely than men to be employed on insecure contracts, and people of colour more likely than white people: 36 per cent of women are on fixed-term contracts, compared to 32 per cent of men; 31 per cent of white academics are on fixed-term contracts, compared to 42 per cent of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic academics (UCU 2019b; cf. 2021a). For hourly contracts, while 13 per cent of white academics are on such contracts, this figure rises to 18 per cent for Black academics. As for zero-hours contracts, Black academics are twice as likely (6 per cent) as white academics (3 per cent) to hold such positions. Combining racialised and gendered structures of inequality, we see that 28 per cent of white male academics are on fixed-term contracts, compared to 45 per cent of Asian female academics on fixed-term contracts (UCU 2019b; cf. 2021a). Precarity is thus intersectional: insecure working conditions, gender, race and other structures of oppression and privilege intersect, with an increased risk of discrimination and harassment for those employed on an insecure contract. The UCU (2021b) report confirms the increased risk of violence not only due to insecure employment but also for those belonging to other marginalised groups: LBGTQ+ persons are at higher risk (1.3–1.8 times more likely than non-LGBTQ+ persons), and disabled persons are twice as likely as non-disabled persons, to experience sexual violence. In UK workplaces across sectors, TUC (2021) finds that around seven out of ten (68 per cent) of disabled women have been sexually harassed at work, compared to 52 per cent of women in general (TUC 2016), reflecting the power imbalance faced by disabled women at work.

Insecure migrant status can be a further marker of precarity, playing into structures of gendered and sexual violence. UK right-wing governments have increased not only anti-worker legislation but also anti-immigration legislation and policy, creating a 'hostile environment' for international workers (Goodfellow 2019; Bonello Rutter Giappone and Wånggren 2023). When employed in a precarious situation, one is less likely to speak up; when one has an insecure migrant status, for example, on a time-limited work VISA bound to one's employment, one is less likely to speak up; when one is suffering from the multiple oppressions of structural and individual racism, sexism, ableism and LGBTQ phobia, one is less likely to speak up. Precarity thus breeds insecurity and fear and plays a crucial part in silencing voices against injustice, including sexual misconduct.

Neoliberalism and rape culture: Individual versus structural change

An intensification of individual responsibilisation in neoliberal capitalism, in which any outcome or event is seen as dependent upon the rational choices of an individual, rather than influenced by structural causes (Foucault 2008; Ball and Olmedo 2013; McLeod 2015), works together with rape culture to individualise the issue of sexual misconduct. Rape culture, that is to say, a culture in which sexual violence is seen as the norm, and in which this violence is reproduced throughout social, cultural, legal and political contexts, is a culture in which denial, distortion, victim-blaming and 'rape myths' structure narratives around sexual violence. Sexual violence is seen as inevitable, a fact of life (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Raphael 2013). The double bind of neoliberal individualisation and the workings of rape culture together bring a focus on the complainant, while framing the individual perpetrator as an anomaly. The neoliberal individualisation of university working conditions and culture, compounded with recent anti-worker and anti-feminist de-regulations of labour protections, thus creates favourable conditions for rape culture and sexual misconduct.

The 'institutional airbrushing' (Phipps 2018) of framing perpetrators as 'bad apples' to be got rid of, rather than examining and changing the structure that allows sexual misconduct to take place, allows the university to maintain its reputation: 'All it needs to do to address the problem is to censure or remove one individual' (Whitley and Page 2015, p. 47). Such institutional airbrushing out of alleged perpetrators requires secrecy, with university processes often requiring confidentiality. Non-Disclosure Agreements demanding confidentiality, agreements often reached through the functioning of 'protected conversations', play a key role in this individualisation of sexual misconduct. Alongside such agreements, some universities have paid compensation to survivors and victims (students and staff), and/or financial settlements to perpetrators to convince them to leave. One graduate student, pressured to drop her complaint against a member of

staff, gives an example: 'They offered me a settlement on the condition that I drop out of the programme and accept that no internal investigation on the member of staff would take place' (Batty, Weale and Bannock 2017) The marketisation of these institutions has furthermore granted extra layers of protection for perpetrators, as 'moral obligations are subordinated to economic concerns' (Phipps 2018, p. 230): it makes more sense in financial terms to keep on the professor who brings in big research grants, despite his widely known predatory behaviour.[4]

While the neoliberal individualising impulse is now built into the workings of academia, sexual violence prevention work is dependent on structural change and a 'bystander intervention' approach to change social norms (Berkowitz 2009; Fenton, Mott and Rumney 2015; Intervention Initiative 2021). Such collective and structural action involves all agents in a situation, not merely the perpetrator and victim/survivor. In many departments, sexual misconduct – in the form of harassment, grooming and violence – has been institutionalised: young female PhD students or precariously employed colleagues are seen as 'fair game', as one colleague expressed it, by male senior staff. One legal expert notes: 'Most universities have no effective mechanism to stop staff from pressuring students into sexual relationships, and when it happens, any sort of disciplinary action is pretty much nonexistent. Those in charge are often colleagues who have many incentives not to intervene' (Batty, Weale and Bannock 2017: n.d.). As one junior female member of staff, after repeated ineffectual attempts to raise concerns about sexual harassment, states: 'The worst thing is that there are many people who are suffering under this professor. Simply putting in a formal complaint will not do anything but make life hell for me and other women. He will never be fired. Everyone I have spoken to confirms this' (Batty, Weale and Bannock 2017: n.d.). Many young or insecurely employed female academics will recognise such situations, if not from personal experience than from that of colleagues and friends. Forms of sexual misconduct such as grooming, gaslighting, coercive control and predatory behaviour are commonplace, and often known about among colleagues (Howlett and Davies 2021). A respondent in the UCU (2021b) report notes the enabling behaviour of some colleagues: 'His boss said it was "just the way he was" without ever taking action' (p. 29). One reply from a senior colleague, when being told about the predatory and grooming behaviour of another colleague, is telling: 'Oh, I thought he'd stopped'. This silence of bystanders in university rape culture – the senior colleagues allowing sexual misconduct to take place, not speaking up on behalf of junior colleagues often in precarious work and sometimes protecting perpetrators – makes change in university rape culture difficult to address in a structural way. This is a structure in which precariously employed young women's concerns are not listened to, and in which colleagues wilfully ignore the misconduct of their peers.

The transformation of a rape culture demands 'a revolution of values' (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005), but it also requires attention to

structural and material concerns, such as intersectional inequalities and precarity. Due to the increased media visibility and feminist activism on the issue, there has been a significant increase in the production of university policy on sexual misconduct in UK universities. The *Changing the Culture* report (Universities UK 2016), and guidelines advising universities on how to handle alleged student sexual misconduct, demarcates an institutional change in universities, however late, against the backdrop of feminist activism and scholarship. There can definitely be useful political work done through improved procedures on sexual misconduct, with disclosure and relationship policies denaturalising systems of grooming by senior securely employed colleagues of junior colleagues in precarious positions. However, in most institutions, such policies have remained as 'non-performative commitments' (Ahmed 2012), as statements without actual change or means of implementation. In the 2016 UCU report, even when respondents reported that their institution has a sexual harassment policy, they often stressed that 'the policy was ineffective, or that is was merely "words on paper" and "not enforced"' (Griesbach 2016). The more recent UCU (2021b) report provides further evidence of such structural (and often calculated) inaction, especially in cases where the perpetrator is high up in the university hierarchy or bringing in grant money. A string of policy documents, however worthwhile, does nothing without implementation and action.

Scholars and activists (such as Ahmed 2012; Phipps 2017; Phipps and McDonnell 2021) have noted the increased market value of policy above practice, of the surface above structure, in neoliberal academia. While certain procedures are put in place for supporting students, emotional and unpaid work increases for female staff dealing with not only student disclosures but also the continued silence and inaction around staff-to-staff sexual misconduct. 'Non-performative' initiatives, such as reports produced or policy made, or individual perpetrators moved out of sight, are *seen* as doing something, rather than actually doing something. In the marketised university, solutions to sexual misconduct thus remain individualised and dealt with on an aesthetic rather than structural level: posters and campaigns rather than changed processes, power relations and economic structures. Instead, accountability on behalf of employers, and collective structural change, are needed.

Trade union work is one key way not only of holding employers accountable but also of collectivising individualised experiences in workplaces (Wånggren 2020). Safeguarding and improving labour protections and workers' rights are key to addressing sexual misconduct; there is a definite need for a specific feminist trade unionism against gendered violence and harm. Mirroring TUC (2016) research, the UCU (2016) report notes that most respondents (89 per cent) had not contacted the union in relation to their experience of sexual harassment. There is clearly more work needed when only a tiny minority of women seek the support of a union representative. Within UK higher education trade unionism, following the

2019 election of Jo Grady as the General Secretary of UCU, a sexual violence prevention task group was set up, and in addition to a detailed 2021 report, there is ongoing sexual harassment training for union representatives and members (UCU 2021b). In the wake of the #MeToo movement, over 30 UK trade unions and civil society organisations are taking part in the 2019 TUC-led #ThisIsNotWorking campaign, which frames harassment as a collective rather than an individual issue and demands employer accountability to ensure safe workplaces (TUC 2019). Alongside the activism of self-organised groups of staff and students, using policies to create accountability, and making internal demands for resources, tackling sexual misconduct should be core union business.

Trade unions at large continue to work for secure employment and improved labour protections, making workplaces safer. Unions themselves are not immune to sexism, however; despite their focus on progressive politics and on reworking the larger social order, many movements for social justice continue reproducing or reinforcing hierarchical systems of sexism, racism and other forms of oppression (Maiguashca, Dean and Keith 2016; Downes 2017; Grady 2021). Internal debates around sexism and misogyny within leftist and social movements have in recent years become the subject of public debate, with instances of sexual violence within movements such as Occupy, the Socialist Workers Party and the union GMB, highlighted via social and traditional media. Within higher education trade unionism, the work of MeTooUCU (2020) has noted internal structures of sexual violence. Indeed, respondents to the UCU (2021b) report note that the way perpetrators 'activate their networks and connections to protect themselves, discredit survivors, and enable their behaviour to continue' sometimes extends to local UCU branches. One respondent noted: 'When I have spoken about it, they [the branch] shut me down and diminished the issues I raised' (p. 32). Like employers, unions also have internal collective work to do. Crucial work is needed to make union structures more fit for feminist purposes.

Conclusion

Considering sexual misconduct through the lenses of anti-worker legislation, intersectional inequalities and precarity in academia, we who want change ask: how do we create functional learning and working environments in which those in positions of power do not abuse their status? The first recommendation to employers in the TUC (2016) report for eliminating sexual harassment is 'decent jobs', that is to say, secure employment: 'Given the particular vulnerability of women on casualised contracts highlighted by this research, employers should aim to employ staff on permanent, secure contracts which offer decent hours and decent pay'.[5] The same recommendation of secure employment is echoed by the TUC to the government, alongside no-fees employment tribunals, reintroducing a duty on employers to act

on third-party harassment and recognition and facility time for union reps (TUC 2016). The more recent TUC (2021) report reiterates these demands, adding also the introduction of a legal duty on employers to protect workers from harassment and victimisation. The UCU (2021b) report recommends employers to abandon the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements, disclose outcomes of complaints to survivors and increase transparency and justice in proceedings. Echoing the TUC (2016) report, it also calls on employers to recognise that casualisation exacerbates gender-based violence and work with trade unions to improve job security through collective agreements and policy change. Given that workers, and especially women, in precarious work are less likely to report harassment, for fear of repercussion linked to their contractual or other forms of precarity, providing full statutory employment rights for all workers regardless of their employment type is crucial to tackling the material economic structures which enable rape culture and sexual violence in higher education. Addressing sexual misconduct in universities requires material change, alongside shifts in social norms; this means improving workers' rights, specifically job security, in order to strengthen protections and the right to speak out against abuse.

Understanding the impact of marketisation and precarisation of labour, with its inbuilt silencing of voices, is key to addressing the systematic functioning of privilege, oppression and violence within academia and in other workplaces. Likewise, a collective and proactive approach is needed in order to counteract the individualising impulse of neoliberal rape culture. When a PhD worker or precariously employed researcher or teacher is not afraid of losing their job due to speaking up, and when bystander colleagues are strengthened to challenge systems of inequality, then the same hierarchical conditions for silencing, abuse and harassment will not be as powerful. Strengthening workers' rights and building safer feminist workplaces are intricately connected.

Notes

1 See groups and publications such as the 1752 Group at Goldsmiths; Changing University Cultures Collective; Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence; The Emily Test; Universities UK report *Changing the Culture* (2016); Goldsmiths and Durham policies on sexual violence and misconduct in 2017; Equally Safe in HE 'Guidance and Checklist for Implementing' (2018); 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarious 'Recommendations for Disciplinary Processes into Staff Sexual Misconduct' (2018); and renewed feminist work and visibility in relation to #MeToo activism.

2 The 'protected conversations' under section 111A of the Employment Rights Act 1996; see also ACAS, 2013.

3 The University and College Union represents over 130,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians and postgraduates in universities, colleges, prisons, adult education and training organisations across the UK.

4 An example of this is seen at Sussex University, where the university only acted once the case reached the media (the institution thus receiving bad marketing) (Westmarland 2017).
5 The recommendation of decent jobs is followed by training, clear policies and – crucially – implementation and enforcement of policies.

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3 Uncovering gender disparity and sexual misconduct

A quest towards inviting (trans-multi)culturally responsive education

Latika Raisinghani and Poonam Bhagchandani

The beginning turmoil: Giving voice to unspoken stories of gender disparity and sexual misconduct

Latika: I am the second oldest and Poonam is number four among five of us sisters. The stories that we share as sisters and co-authors of this chapter weave our past and present experiences of encountering and witnessing gender disparity, gender-based harassment, and sexual misconduct. Our dialogic narratives include the stories of many other sisters whose lives crossed paths with ours as colleagues, daughters, friends, neighbours, and students in multiple cultural contexts that include India, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Canada.

While we are hesitant to confine these stories to any methodological boundaries, we feel that this (re)search to enquire into our personal and professional gender(ed) identities and autoethnographic experiences as woman educators within specific socio-cultural contexts aligns closely with duoethnography (Norris et al. 2012). Our emphasis on making our stories transparent by utilising interactive dialogues and inviting the voices of all actors resonates with the polyvocality desired in the duoethnographic research. As such, by explicitly defining our roles and relationships and engaging with each other through these dialogic narratives that are informed and emerged through our lived experiences, we, the researchers, have become "the site of the research" (Breault 2016, p. 777). Our hope is that this transparency of our dialogic engagement will allow the readers to experience the transformative moments that have shaped our life journeys and invite them to join us in this "mutual and reciprocal" (Norris et al. 2012, p. 13) journey to question and examine the socio-cultural realities that continue to perpetuate gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct with women.

Many of these stories may seem too common, but we feel that it is in the common-ness of these stories that gender-based discrimination often goes

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unnoticed, and it is one of the root causes that may lead to normalising sexism and perpetuating sexual misconduct and violence in society and academia. So, by sharing these stories, we hope that you, the reader, will be able to see the ugly side of socially accepted norms that result in women's status as a "secondary" citizen, a "lesser" human being, and at times, just as a "sexualised object" to satisfy males' sexual desire as postulated in the objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997). We would also like to acknowledge that being women who have been raised in a patriarchal, male-dominant society in India, writing this chapter was very hard for us. Many times, we questioned and asked each other if we are really willing to take the "risk" of telling our stories about a "subject" that is often forbidden to discuss in Indian society. We knew that despite the growing incidences of sexual misconduct with women in academia (e.g., see O'Connor 2020; Wood et al. 2021; Young and Wiley 2021), we are taking the challenge of voicing our stories in a society where even imparting sexual education is still frowned upon by many people. Ironically, this is not the case only in countries like India that are often considered traditionally "backwards", but even in countries like Canada. One example of this is the controversies around the new sex education curricula in public schools in Ontario, Canada (please see, Jones 2019).

Hence, while writing, we needed to take pauses because there were times that we did not want to write more as the stories that were buried in the deepest corners of our hearts and minds still had the power to cause agony as they were being unearthed through our writing. While utilising the duoethnographic approach helped us in finding common threads in our lived experiences, living and working in two different parts of the world complicated opportunities for providing emotional support to each other. We also questioned how our act of telling these stories will be received by the academic institutions we work with because the focus of these stories does not fall within the traditional subjects that we teach. Our dilemma was similar to the perplexity of many female ethnographic researchers who wondered if including instances of sexual misconduct would be perceived as unprofessional and would dilute the significance of their research as noted by Hanson and Richards (2019). We wondered if any of these questions matter, or does it matter more to tell our stories as women who are given the privilege to do so and thus contribute towards empowering other women. We decided on the latter.

In the next section, we attempt to give "voice" to some of these unspoken stories as we take the risk of re-membering ourselves and all other women as equal members of one human kin. Although these stories are heartbreaking, we do not want to lose hope. Hence, we conclude the chapter by sharing a pathway of (trans-multi)culturally responsive education (Raisinghani 2018b; 2019), which we hope could help in bringing understandings that may empower all learners, and in the long run may transform our educational spaces and larger society into inclusive, just places where everyone can live, learn, teach, and raise their children in a dignified manner regardless of their gender(ed) identities and perceived gender-based social roles.

Continued agony: Recounting incidences of gender disparity and sexual misconduct

Latika: I begin sharing our stories with the first two lines of a song (in the Hindi language) that have stayed with me since I sang this song (as a chorus) during our college celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 1990. The lines are:

> Jis desh mei nariyan aaj bhe apmaan se nashaad hai ...
> Dil pe rakh kar haath kahiye woh desh kya aazaad hai?
>
> **Translated into English, the above lines mean:**
> The country in which women are despondent because of disrespect (they receive) ...
> Place your hand on your heart and tell is such a country is really free?

It is now 2022 and I keep returning to this song. Why? The answer lies in the unchanging situation of women and many of their stories that are often untold or even remain unspoken. To illustrate this, I would like to share the following three incidents that I experienced at various stages in my life:

Incident 1: It was the mid-1980s and the community of a veterinary college in Rajasthan, India, where my father taught, was gathered in a large lecture hall to watch a movie on a Sunday afternoon. As the lights of the hall dimmed, we heard the loud scream of a girl and the sudden laughter that erupted from a group of boys. It turned out that the boys had placed fresh tomatoes and red chilli paste on the girl's bench just before she sat to suggest that the red liquid smeared on her bottom was menstrual blood. I remember that the girl left the hall crying while the boys stayed to watch the movie after receiving only a few verbal reprimands from the audience. This incident that I experienced as a young girl is still horrifying as this was my first introduction to the menstrual cycle and associated gender disparity!

Incident 2: In grade 8, I recall visiting one of my friends' homes and seeing that she was not allowed to touch the matka (water pot), enter the kitchen and main bedrooms, or even sleep on the bed during her menstrual cycle. But she was still "allowed" and expected to mop the floor and wash the dirty dishes and clothes of the entire family.

Incident 3: As I read the Master's thesis of a student in a Canadian teacher education program in 2021, I am reminded of the gender disparity and sexual misconduct that many women in India continue to face. This student reported being trapped in a "hartal" (violent protests) while volunteering as a teacher in India. This hartal was organised to protest against the September 2018 decision of the Indian Supreme Court, which allowed the entry of women of all ages to the Sabarimala temple, where historically the entry of women of menstruating age (ages 10 to 50) was prohibited (Rautray 2018).

But these are just a few examples. The gender disparity cloaking itself within cultural or religious "values" continues to marginalise and dehumanise women as "unclean" and "less worthy". This inequitable treatment of women actually serves as a "societal force" that "normalises" the sexual misconduct and harassment of women in homes, in temples, in educational institutes, and in the larger society. Is it not unfortunate that a natural biological phenomenon, the menstruation cycle, has continued to serve as a discriminatory factor that makes women "untouchable" and places them as "lesser than" men in Indian society? Is this not a height of implicit sexual violence against women that is never acknowledged?

Poonam: It is really a very long way that women have to go to be recognised as humans and not just as a "body". When I was in 7th grade, I remember that our social studies teacher described weather conditions as one of the key factors of population growth in India. He stated that as it is too hot in the afternoons, people remain in their houses, which causes population growth. After that, he gave a very mischievous smile and asked me to explain why and how this happens. He was actually dragging me into an ugly conversation about sexual relationships and how sexual acts may lead to pregnancy and childbirth.

I had a similar experience when I was pursuing my doctorate at a reputed university in Punjab, which is considered one of the most progressive states in India (Abhinandan 2019). In the beginning, I found everyone in this university so encouraging that I forgot the gender(ed) biases that I experienced in my earlier institutes in Rajasthan. But the glances of one of the teachers often made me uncomfortable as I felt that I was inspected as a wanted "physical object of male sexual desire" (Bartky 1990 as cited in Szymanski et al. 2011, p. 8). As if his sexualised gaze was not enough, one day this teacher asked me to explain the meaning of "libido". I wish I could have given him a slap, but my first reaction was actually shame and shock as I noticed amused looks and slight laughter erupting in the class. It took me some courage to respond: "I know the answer and I also know that this word is not required to be discussed in this particular topic, so why are you asking me this?" After the class, this teacher told me that although I had not done very well on an exam, he was giving me extra marks so I should not discuss what had happened in class with anyone. At first, I was frightened that this teacher could affect my educational career negatively. But then I thought that I may not be the first female student who this teacher humiliated, but definitely I could be the last. So, I told this teacher that I did not need his favour and reported the issue to his superior. Later, I learned that the teacher was only given a warning.

Latika, you have rightly quoted the song stating that a country is not really free when it does not give an equitable place and respect to women. I feel that this inequality is more because of the societal mindset and the values that we give to children. We both have completed most of our education in Rajasthan, a state where girls' education was and is still very

low (Khan 2022). It is a state in which from 9th grade onwards, there are different schools for both boys and girls. As far as I understand, this is because of societal preferences to keep boys and girls apart from each other during their stages of puberty and grade 9 is the class where you actually start teaching about the reproductive system and the anatomy of the human body. So, I wonder if societal pressure drives this educational segregation or is it the mindset of policy makers who knowingly or unknowingly reinforce the gender disparities in the education system because of their own stereotypical understandings of the role and place of men and women in a traditional Indian society?

Latika: I agree that gender-based social roles and gender(ed) social identities are imposed on children right from the beginning of their life in India and also in many other countries. Hence, it comes as no surprise that boys raised with such a mentality would continue to grow up as individuals who do not respect women in homes, schools, and workplaces. Similar to India, sexuality, sex, and gender were considered as taboo topics in Micronesia, where I was engaged in teaching science and education courses to pre-service teachers and liberal arts students as an Associate Professor. Teaching a course on “Family Life and Sexuality Education” added another layer to the social dilemma that I faced as a “daring” woman who taught science subjects in a male-dominated faculty. Most of the students enrolled in this class were adult males whose dominance increased as the Add/Drop period came closer. The class began with 10–12 women and within the first two weeks, 4 of them submitted a drop-out request. Upon enquiring, one of them shared that they are dropping out because their brother or other male relative was in the same class. Their family had advised them to drop the class since it focussed on sexuality and sex education, issues that were culturally prohibited to be discussed openly among men and women. I knew that dropping this class would delay these women’s progression in their program and many of them were already struggling to complete their studies amidst the multiple responsibilities that they had to juggle as working mothers/daughters. I tried to take the matter to the instructional coordinator and student services, but I was told that nothing could be done as the matter is of family and cultural pride.

It was in this same course later in the term as I entered the class on the day when we were supposed to discuss family planning measures, I saw that the classroom was filled with condoms and gloves that were inflated as balloons, and many of the male students were “playing” with these by pretending the gloves were “breasts” or “udders” and condoms as “penis”. It took me a few moments to gather myself and ask the men to collect and dispose of the “objects” that they were “performing” sexual acts with. As I verbally reprimanded these men, I noticed that many of them were still laughing. Most of the female students in the class were sitting with their heads bent down and some were talking with each other as if they were totally oblivious to what was happening around them. That day I was angry

and also sad because it was implicit sexual violence and harassment that I and the female students faced. I found the incident so overwhelming that I did not report it to the instructional coordinator. However, I did discuss it with the college nurse who was also a friend and she suggested that we forget about it as such acts could be dismissed as culturally normalised "naughtiness" of men. Now when I recall this incident, those feelings of anger and sadness have returned more poignantly. I still wonder that by refraining from reporting the incident if I contributed to perpetuating unquestioned patriarchy and embedded gender disparity.

Challenging these is a difficult task because gender(ed) identities are encultured in the minds of children at quite an early age as evident in the experiences of one of the participating teachers in my doctoral research (Raisinghani 2018b). This teacher, who was involved in teaching a combined Kindergarten to Grade 1 classroom in one of the major urban centres of Canada, reported that often the boys of certain socio-cultural backgrounds disregarded her authority as a teacher because she was a female (please see Raisinghani 2018a, p. 20 for an excerpt from the interview with this teacher).

Such disregard for women's authority is also evident in many educational institutions in India where women hesitate to take leadership positions as they often have to face derogatory comments and discriminatory behaviours from male colleagues (Mayya et al. 2021; Appelbaum et al. 2003). I also witnessed this while doing my Masters in botany when many of the male professors and lab assistants passed derogatory remarks to the female Head of the Department. Behind her back, they even questioned her womanhood as they commented that despite being a widow, she wore coloured saris (widowed women, especially those of Hindu religion, are traditionally expected to wear only white clothes).

Poonam: I remember when we did our first fashion show in my college, one of the male students helped me to step up on the stage by extending a hand and one of the faculty members took a video of this. Later on, he showed that video to many people and joked about how friendly I am with male students, implying that I was having an intimate relationship with the student. Thankfully, he was reprimanded by the senior authorities, but I found the whole incident very insulting.

Latika: Such experiences are agonising. My daughter who is currently studying as an undergraduate student at a Canadian university was stalked by a male graduate student who led one of the welcoming sessions for first-year students. He misused the personal information collected during the session and started following my daughter on social media. The unwanted virtual invitations to meet for a coffee soon turned into forced stopping in the hallways. He even started unnecessarily showing up in the Peer Support Writing sessions where my daughter was volunteering. When my daughter complained about his continued presence in these sessions, the program lead responded that they could not take any official action as this person was

coming to seek writing support, which is a free service offered to any international student at the university. No one bothered to pause and think: why is a graduate student coming to seek assistance in a program which is run by undergraduate students? My daughter tried to tackle this situation by directly telling that man that she is not interested in him and that he should stop following her. But the stalking and cyber harassment did not stop until my husband accompanied my daughter to the university and told this man that we would file a police complaint if he did not stop following our daughter. This situation again brings forth the reality that many men do not respect the authority of women until they are confronted by another man. I also want to mention here that at that time we were new to this place, and no one told my daughter that the university itself had an office to report unwanted sexual advances and misconduct. This is also reflected in the experiences of many other new students, who are often unaware that such incidents of experiencing unwanted sexualised behaviours could be reported (Burczycka 2020). And this is not the case of only one university in Canada as according to a Maclean's survey of more than 23,000 undergraduate students from 81 Canadian higher education institutes, about 31% of students reported that no one educated them about how to report a sexual assault and 25% stated that they were not made aware of university services that are available for supporting students who have experienced sexual assaults (Schwartz 2018).

Moreover, as Burczycka (2020) reports, despite the availability of such supports, incidences of unwanted sexualised behaviours in Canadian postsecondary institutions are alarming and young women experience these in higher proportion than other people. As I read this report, I was reminded of the news in which the female president of a Canadian university stated that sexual assaults are often underreported and shared that her daughter was sexually assaulted on a university campus (Weidlich 2016). I also recall that in 2016 there were warnings issued advising students to avoid going out alone in the evenings as multiple sexual assaults happened in the university where I completed my doctorate as evident in the institutional Annual Security Report (The University of British Columbia n.d.). Moreover, there are incidences where the people placed at the highest positions in the universities might themselves be involved in sexual harassment (e.g., please see Chang 2021).

When I discussed these instances with one of my peers who is a doctoral candidate and an international student in Canada, she shared the "commonness" of sexual assaults in Nigerian universities and instances of male professors keeping a Queen-size bed in the faculty office, which they used to assault female students. The experiences shared by this peer resonate with the research of Kullima et al. (2010) who investigated sexual assault in four tertiary institutions in Nigeria, which included polytechnique, nursing, and medical teaching colleges. As per this study's findings, about 14% of female students self-reported being sexually assaulted as a student, out of which 7.1% reported being assaulted by their lecturers and fellow students.

This study identified that younger age at coitarche, history of forced coitarche, marriage, coitarche with relations and unknown persons were associated with the subsequent risks of sexual assault and suggested that improving security, promoting moral behaviours, enforcing a dress code for female students, and stiffer penalties for culprits could prevent sexual assault among the students. While some of the measures suggested by Kullima et al. (2010) may be helpful in preventing sexual assaults in Nigerian institutions, it is ironic to see the suggestion of enforcing a dress code for female students, especially when the authors themselves mentioned that the culprits mostly remained unpunished as the female victims were often blamed for these acts.

Poonam: I see your point about the dress code. I am a teacher of fashion design myself but at times I feel that such a practice may help young women in not becoming a target of ill-minded men. One example of this is an incident that happened a couple of years earlier in my college. I was invigilating a Jury Practical exam along with the external juror of senior students in my lab when suddenly one of the first-year students from another lab came and requested me to accompany her outside. I was surprised and wondered why the student was calling me because during exams the students were supposed to show their work to the external jury member and each class already had an assigned internal faculty member.

As soon as I came out of the lab, a girl who was standing outside held me tightly and started crying. After a few minutes of consoling and enquiring, she told me that the faculty member (who was the internal examiner of her lab) always passed sexual comments about her clothes, and now he had reported her as a bad student in front of the external juror because she resisted his sexual advances. When I heard this, I became confused because based on my previous interactions, this faculty member seemed to be a good person. I could not imagine that he could be sexually harassing a student. So, my immediate response was to ask the student if she might be confusing this. (Now I think, being a female, how could I question another female when I know how strong that ugly feeling is?) As I was trying to make sense of the situation, the accused faculty member came out of his lab and tried to pull and hold the girl closer to him. At that moment, I sensed that the girl was right. So, I stopped him and told him to leave right away. I came to know later that this teacher was reported previously also for misbehaving with female students, but no action was taken. I supported the student in filing a complaint to the University Grievance Cell. And since this time, I, a faculty member, was involved in filing the complaint, an enquiry committee was set up. It took 3–4 months but thankfully, this teacher was finally relieved from his duties as the investigation of this new incident also unearthed many previous complaints that were filed by other students. But I am not sure if punishing a few culprits like this on an individual basis would help in changing the situation for women. I remember, when I shared the incident with some of my female colleagues, they took the matter lightly. Many even placed the blame on girls by saying that it is not only men who are at fault.

As per them, the girls these days dress in a manner that they themselves call (unwanted) attention from men.

Latika: Yes, Poonam, it is unfortunate that many women do not realise that by blaming the girls in such instances, they are actually supporting men who victimise women. As Taylor (2020) notes, we live in a "complex, oppressive and patriarchal system" (p. 309) that promotes victim blaming and anything that can be used against women is used to blame them; women are even blamed for being trafficked and sold for sex. In the Marshall Islands, a college student was raped in the shared laundromat of a student dormitory. When the incident was reported, rather than questioning the safety of students in the college dormitory, the general reaction was that why did the female student go alone to wash clothes at the night? I also remember that a young girl was pulled out from her home while sleeping, raped, and thrown out in the forest in Micronesia. It was a very disturbing incident, but more devastating was the gossip that stirred in the college campus accusing the victimised girl of calling the attention of men as she had attended a party in the late evening. So, even though one may consider it oppressive, the reality is that many women follow the "social custom" of not going out alone, especially in the evenings or at night.

Poonam: A Hindi Bollywood movie "Pink" has also raised this issue that we confine the potential of women and girls in India as we restrict their choices of activities and advise them not to go out alone in the evenings or to come home early before dark. The movie asks why do we not begin teaching boys and men to respect women? Why do we not teach them that if a girl talks with you freely or wears western dresses, it does not mean that she is inviting you to establish a sexual relationship?

Latika: Raising these issues is definitely an encouraging step, but do you think having a few movies like Pink or opening a few grievance cells or offices where sexual misconduct can be reported, is enough? Especially, when the number of sexually inappropriate behaviours and misconduct is increasing alarmingly and only a few get reported in academia (Karami et al. 2020). For instance, as per the 2019 report of Statistics Canada, about "71% students reported experiencing or witnessing sexualized behaviours in a postsecondary setting—either on campus, or in an off-campus situation that involved students or other people associated with the school" (Burczycka 2020, p. 3). Out of these, 49% were women. This report also indicates that most of the students, which included 91% of women and 92% of men, did not intervene, seek out help, or take any action for at least one incident of sexual misconduct that they witnessed. The reasons for such bystanding behaviours by women included feeling uncomfortable to act (48%), fear of negative consequences (28%), and their own safety (18%). And this report is just one piece of evidence. There are many more instances where people do not report and even if the incident is reported, the victim is often victimised socially as we discussed previously. Moreover, as Partridge (2015) mentions, the lack of overarching policies to address sexual misconduct and

assault at the institutional level and privacy regulations could result in no or slow action against the perpetrators. There are many other instances where Canadian students reported that the university staff advised them not to contact the police or the media and suggested they resolve the situation informally through mediation sessions that are organised between the victim and the alleged assailant (Partridge 2015; Schwartz 2018). Such institutional practices require closer examination and a critical transformation as they may result in resolving the issues in some instances, but these services often fall short in reaching out and providing long-term care to victims. The biggest drawback that I find in such victim-reporting-mediation-support systems is that such an approach puts the onus of getting help and justice on the victim, and places them in a stigmatising, isolating, and self-doubting situation causing many to drop-out of the educational institutes. Thus, in addition to strengthening and transforming these support systems, I feel that we need to look for ways that may help in changing the mindset of the people in the society, starting at a very young age.

Lingering quest: (Re)searching (trans-multi)culturally responsive education

Latika: If we want to bring any change in society and academia, I feel that we must begin with interrogating and transforming the educational processes. Through my experiences of teaching and learning in diverse cultural contexts, I have come to conceptualise a framework of (trans-multi)culturally responsive education, which I believe could provide (k)new pathways to (re)educate us and help us in examining who we are and how we should relate with each other as human beings (Raisinghani 2018b; 2019). I have placed the letter "k" in parentheses to highlight that while such pathways could be new, they emerge from the pathways that may have been already known, and the plurality of these pathways emphasises the contextual nature of such learning discourses. This framework is informed by the critical and transformational multicultural education perspectives and culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2010; Keating 2007; Nieto 2000).

As you may have noticed, often culture is identified on the basis of ethnicity, race, region, and religion and people justify, or at times do not even acknowledge, the unequal treatment of women in their specific socio-cultural contexts because as Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) mention, oppressive practices of sexism become so inherent in the society like the "cultural 'water' [that] is difficult to see while we are swimming in it" (p. 103). Moreover, focussing on only isolated and extreme cases of sexual violence and misconduct may obscure the broader social patterns of gender-based discrimination. Popular culture in the form of media, advertisements, and even school curricula reinforce traditionally imposed gender-based roles forcing an individual's identity to become fixed, based on the gender with which they are born, and they are moulded into the rigid socio-cultural roles

that are associated with these specific gender(ed) identities. As such girls are often socialised into nurturing, caring, subservient roles and boys are encouraged to adapt aggressive, violent, dominant masculine roles.

A (trans-multi)culturally responsive education problematises such stationary, fixed notions of culture and individual's cultural identity and emphasises that culture is a way of life, and it continually evolves as one engages with others. Drawing upon Goodenough's (1976) notion of multiculturalism as a normal human experience and intersectionality of an individual's cultural identity (Egbo 2009), a (trans-multi)culturally responsive education calls for educational processes that recognise and value the dynamism of culture and the multiplicity of cultural identities that each one of us may hold. Rather than bounding one's identity with gender, sex, race, region, religion, or other stereotypical identifiers, this framework urges people to acknowledge the multiplicity of their cultural identities that are dynamic and learn how they could transcend the divisionary boundaries that divide them as "ourSelf" and "Others" and relate with people as equitable members of one human kin. The three key aspects of (trans-multi)culturally responsive education namely (1) critical cultural consciousness, (2) relational caring, and (3) empathetic relationships may help in transforming the educational processes, and thus, the mindsets of individuals and the larger society.

As Gay (2010) mentions, culture is at the heart of all educational processes. Hence, it is crucial that we deliberately initiate complicated conversations that may raise critical cultural consciousness among all learners. These conversations attempt to create dialogical transcultural spaces that may invite each individual to examine their own hidden biases and stereotypical understandings that may have caused them to treat others as "different" and oftentimes as "lesser" beings. One example of how such a reflexive practice could lead to identifying implicit messages that may perpetuate gender disparity, occurred during my doctoral research (Raisinghani 2018b). During my visit to an elementary classroom in a large urban city in Canada, when I interviewed a teacher about their perspectives regarding various dimensions of student diversity and how these may impact their teaching of science and mathematics, the teacher responded that they encourage all students to participate, especially the girls who often feel marginalised in these subject areas. However, when I looked around this teacher's classroom, I saw pictures of only four boys posted on the wall with the title "Math Geniuses". The conversation that followed was a reflective opportunity for us to discuss how such representations reinforce gender role socialisation and misleading understandings that present negative stereotypes of females having weaker math ability, which may discourage the girls from pursuing these learning subjects and thus further marginalise them, especially girls who are coming from low-income families and/or from the countries that have greater gender inequity (Nollenberger et al. 2016). Thus, if one looks deeper, one may see that such marginalisation of girls in the elementary schools could

eventually lead to their lower social status in academia and larger society, which in turn increases their chances of being victimised both physically and psychologically. Hence, it is crucial to unravel the socio-cultural-political-economic idiosyncrasies that continue to perpetuate gender-based disparities and discrimination.

Furthermore, guided by Nieto's (2000) levels of multicultural education, a (trans-multi)culturally responsive education calls for not only tolerating, accepting, or respecting but engaging with the "difference" with solidarity and critique. Relational care involves treating others as they would like to be treated and not as how you think you would like to be treated in a similar situation (Noddings 2012). As Noddings mentions, in relational care, the act of caring by the "carer" is incomplete or not really a "true" care, if it is not recognised by the person who is being "cared for". Empathetic relationships are formed when such relational care is provided without judging a person and by not reacting to their unruly or violent behaviour but by responding to them with care. Such understandings are critical as in many cases, victims of sexual assaults are further victimised by victim blaming (Taylor 2020).

Hence, if we weave these three key aspects of (trans-multi)culturally responsive education in all educational processes and translate these into the contexts of gender disparity, sexual misconduct, and harassment of girls and women, I envision that critical cultural consciousness may help people in acknowledging the multiplicity and dynamism of their cultural identities and in interrogating their understandings of Self and Others by critically examining the gender-based power hierarchies that exist in their specific socio-cultural contexts. This in turn may help them in identifying, acknowledging, and dismantling the gender disparity and sexual misconduct that they may be perpetuating knowingly and unknowingly in their homes, schools, and workplaces. Embracing relational care may allow people to identify when the care is imposed and not real. Such identification may also help in discouraging many culprits who disguise their acts of unwanted sexual advancements as "care". Empathetic relationships are crucial for supporting victims without victimising them. Embracing these principles of (trans-multi)culturally responsive education may help transform the existing support systems in the higher education institutes, many of which as Schwartz (2018) reports have callous counselling staff and faulty emergency hotlines that are partially staffed often resulting in bureaucratic delays in providing supports to students who are sexually assaulted.

The way forward … empowering our(self) to empower other(ed) women

In this chapter, we have shared the stories of experiencing and witnessing gender disparity, gender-based harassment, and sexual misconduct with girls and women in diverse cultural contexts and have attempted to raise the voices that often remain unspoken or unheard in largely patriarchal,

masculine societies. We have endeavoured to interrogate the current practices and policies that lead to marginalisation, gender-based disparity, discrimination, sexual violence, and assaults in academia and broader society, and have emphasised the need to bring change in institutional practices and also in the mindsets of the people.

We believe that there is a possibility to bring change in society and academia and have proposed (trans-multi)culturally education as one possible way to do so. However, to embrace this (trans-multi)culturally responsive education in a true sense, each one of us will need to begin a life-long journey of becoming a (trans-multi)culturally responsive human being. Such a discourse will require ongoing efforts to cultivate critical cultural consciousness, relational caring, and empathetic relationships among ourselves and engaging with others with three Rs: (1) Respect: Re-inspect Self and relationship with Others, (2) Relationality: Relate-intentionally by acknowledging the multiplicity of one's cultural identities and interlocking aspects of relations of power, and (3) Responsibility: Responsive-abilities for awareness of gender(ed) identities and social roles and adaptation of responsive approaches that may ensure a safe, inclusive, just society with a right to live and learn with dignity for all!

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4 Whose power?

Uncovering non-paradigm experiences of violence and abuse in feminist fieldwork

Poppy Gerrard-Abbott

Introduction

Discussing research *on* and *in* spaces where gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in UK universities, this chapter attempts to depart from traditional approaches to understanding GBV. This chapter addresses the discrepancies between classic theoretical outlooks relating to power and marginalisation and the 'on-the-ground' realities in fieldwork practices, discussing anomalies in the application of feminist theory as 'non-paradigmatic' events or 'non-paradigm' forms of violence and abuse. Speaking to unusually complex experiences of power and marginalisation in fieldwork, this discussion calls into the 'difficult conversations' of GBV research, ethics, policy and professional practice, taking seriously experiences and observations falling outside of theoretical mainstreams. By seeking to address gaps in current knowledge relating to forms of GBV less aligned with field frameworks, it is argued that more holistic, humanistic understandings of how power and marginalisation function in feminist fieldwork can be harnessed for the design of feminist research projects, especially those concerning the study of violence. The chapter will contemplate fieldwork learnings, concluding with the core takeaway being the need to shift research design from a classic social theory apparatus to feminist *postmodernism*. This contemporary approach aims to free the study of power and marginalisation from the epistemic and methodological 'done ways of doing' dominating current theory and practice, especially by transcending the borders between macro, meso, and micro epistemological planes. Shifting from epistemic purity to radical integrative understandings, this chapter advocates for feminist theorisation to take seriously GBV as having multiple truths, both overt and symbolic forms, and blended across the lines of normal institutional activities.

Established approaches

The meta-narratives of feminist theory are dedicated to structural analysis and indeed understanding structural social inequality lies at the heart

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of sociology in general (Hakim, 2015). Classic social science, however—which feminism and sociology branch from—practices disproportionately macrosociological approaches to understanding oppression. Constructing power and privilege as systemic global structures of inequality, subordinate groups are homogenously understood as exploited by dominant ones, framing oppression as static and top-down, and compartmentalising socially superior/powerful and inferior/powerless identities. Macrosociological empirical patterns in feminist research design can work to reproduce 'pure sociology' epistemic hierarchies and offer questionable meaningfulness to researchers when applied in practical fieldwork.

Feminist research is often dedicated to the study of violence, and consequently to issues of power and marginalisation, in accordance with mainstream theoretical traditions that violence arises from inequalities and constitutes acts of power aiming to marginalise. Research on violence both embodies and documents power and marginalisation, seeking to reduce harm in research practices and in outputs. Feminist researchers have therefore been leaders in promoting advocacy practices and 'emancipatory work' (Hales, 2019: 5) in research design, tackling inequalities throughout the entire research process and drawing on marginalised scholarship in order to inform how fieldwork is conducted and how data is analysed, as well as producing outcomes that better the lives of their research subjects.

PhD by profession: The situated insider

My research career has been dedicated to studying GBV in the education context, specifically in UK universities, through methods involving autoethnography: an 'anthropology', of my own social networks. Occupying the role of the 'situated' insider (Haraway, 2020) inter-professional fieldwork conditions provide unusually intense ethical terrain. In my case, this was simultaneously studying forms of (gendered) violence expressed towards me as a feminist researcher 'within the research' as well as towards my student participants 'outside' of the research, which they then entered the research to discuss.

Studying violence occurring in the same environment but from different angles—towards the research, towards myself, towards participants, and circulating the fieldwork environment—offers acute theoretical and ethical insights. By operating within the environment that it was studying, the research became a study of itself—a locus against which GBV was directed, mediated, and observed. Like all feminist researchers, I have countless testimonies of mistreatment as a woman in public-facing roles and when campaigning on issues of women's inequality. The commonality of abuse experienced in feminist researcher-researched relations offers opportunities to utilise violent encounters as a research method, especially where the research topic *is* the fieldwork environment, and vice versa, and where the

researchers possess a membership role within the setting studied (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Reflexive bodily accounts are gaining traction in feminist research as important methods for studying 'experiences of hostility … as forms of embodied subjective data' (Perrott, 2019: 1) on matters of gendered power relations in organisational and institutional studies. My fieldwork was uniquely positioned to practise observation-based approaches in that my employment, social, domestic, and fieldwork environments were one. Studying GBV in higher education (HE) as a PhD student meant that I occupied numerous roles in a Venn-diagram structure. These multiple states were both distinct and overlapping, operating as interactive relationships between self and social networks, as well as morphing across contexts, time spaces, and audiences. Being a GBV researcher, practitioner, and campaigner, as well as a friend, colleague, advisor, peer, and teacher to those in the fieldwork environment entailed a transitory self with no singular fixed truth, acting intentionally and unintentionally through multiple expressions, and with contextually shifting embodiment according to the situational "definition" (Goffman, 2002: 2).

Reflexivity, a core component of feminist research, facilitates the situating of the 'self' in theory and in the studied environment, constructing the researcher as an active epistemic organism simultaneously shaped by, and contributing to, their field. The researcher is revealed as inseparable from the research design, and the data collection process is inseparable from the findings. Consequently, by paying attention to scenarios falling outside of 'official' data collection, deeper findings on the study of power and marginalisation can be located, further revealing how the power relations between researcher and subjects act as a simulation of structural inequalities. By highlighting events appearing within and on the outskirts of the fieldwork as valuable data in themselves, observational approaches towards 'outer layer' events allow for embodied forms of feminist research. This furthers the case for the inseparability between the researcher, participants, fieldwork environment, the research 'off' (the research process) and 'on' (data and theory) paper, forming a cyclical, entangled relationship between data collection, analysis, and ethics, all of which are equally invested in issues of power and marginalisation and provide equally fruitful canvases for data.

Non-paradigmness

Within mainstream feminisms, standard 'paradigm' constructions of power and marginalisation are single rule and binaristic, separating out powerful/powerless and perpetrator/victim. Classic feminist theory is characterised by the assertion that the study of power and marginalisation in relation to *gender* specifically gives way to the study of multiple ideologies of hegemonic domination and oppression. Whilst the traditional focus is on

women's marginalisation, a focus on the masculine/feminine power relationship allows analysis of the 'very core of our social fabric … the blueprint for all other power relationships' (Scully, 2013: 49). Studying gender can therefore act as a gateway to the study of all power relations, and women's liberation can become seen as inseparable from that of men's, of gender non-conformity, and of class, disability, race, and sexuality liberation.

Feminism conventionally asserts that, pan-culturally, men are socio-culturally superior and women are subordinated (Ortner, 1972). Although there are many ontological and theoretical divisions across continuums of feminist thought, consensus does arise around the existence of a patriarchal global system whereby sexual violence constitutes an act of power rather than being 'sexually' motivated; that is, practised to maintain women's subordinate status and legitimising systemic gender-based stratification (Brownmiller, 1993; Groth and Burgess, 1977; Ellis, 1989). Gendered violence 'rewards men and victimises women' (Scully, 2013: 59), cementing social rankings of men inhabiting higher statuses than women.

Histories of medicalisation and pathologisation, as well as the expanding criminalisation of GBV, have propelled narratives of individualisation (Scully, 2013: 35) where GBV is constructed as located within two, dichotomous agents; the perpetrator party and victim, underpinned by and reproducing masculine/feminine binary, divide. Reflected in the dominance of statistical understandings of GBV, such as the popularity of recent '1 in 3'-type statistics, GBV is conceptualised as clear-cut: quantifiable, exceptional, conventionally violent, one-directional, and one-dimensional. Adversarial policy design, facilitated by the expansion of criminal justice practices into modern measures to tackle GBV 'carceral feminism' (Bernstein, 2007), further reproduces moralistic 'right/wrong' and competitive 'win/lose' binary frameworks, creating 'gladiatorial combat' between parties (Iliadis, 2020: 850) that homogenises the truths of GBV cases into epistemic categorical divides.

However, by centring experiences existing on the edges of, and falling outside of, meta-narratives found in mainstream feminisms, more cutting-edge constructions of GBV can free feminist theory from the restrictive historical narratives. By fully actualising around the messy realities of GBV's manifestations, the field can renegotiate more accurate understandings of how it functions: as spectrum-based, cross-cutting, pluralistic, and operating both within and outside of the neat binaries of male/female and perpetrator/victim. As contextual phenomena, GBV has multiple motivations and manifestations determined by structural and localised factors.

GBV in education

The study of GBV in education has emerged as a highly specialist field. Research has grown out of the postmodern discipline of gender studies and by the most recent fourth-wave of feminism, with its dedication to

spotlighting and understanding endemic abuse in *institutional* contexts, embodying 'postmodernism in practice' through simultaneously experiencing, observing, debating, epistemically constructing, and combatting social problems within the same institutional zone. In essence, researchers in universities are *studying* GBV *in* study environments. The field has both springboarded and been born from academic-activist attention that has 'galvanised … international exposes' (Lewis, 2017: 53) on GBV's prevalence in academia. The case for GBV in HE being interrogated in a specialist context relates to student populations having higher rates of GBV perpetration coupled with lower rates of reporting than the general population (Revolt Sexual Assault, 2018). GBV is well-known as endemic in educational institutions to the extent that it is 'a feature of life' (Lewis, 2017: 54), with UK university students three times more likely to be sexually assaulted than national averages (Lewis, 2022). Postmodernism, characterising the academic-political fields authoring work on GBV in universities, marks a turning point in feminism by conceptualising GBV as culturally heterogeneous, with multiple causes and materialisations, and contextually constructed—HE, as one of those contexts, unfolds 'its own versions' (Jefferies, 2020: 3) constituting a 'unique social … setting' (Garcia et al., 2011: 61) with a 'unique set of risks' (UN Women, 2018: 5).

Despite over a decade of change work, the most recent data reveals that GBV perpetration rates remain persistently high and reporting rates remain persistently low, with both at similar or worse rates now than when interventions began (NUS and 1752 Group, 2018; Brook and Dig-In, 2019). Multiple, prolific GBV cases have occurred years into reforms, indicating that the sector is still not meeting 'minimum … standards' (Towl and Humphreys, 2021) in safeguarding, a failure that constitutes one of the most serious public health issues in institutional contexts and an ongoing human rights issues 'blighting' equal participation in modern education (Women and Equalities Committee, 2018).

The core field output of my PhD was the authoring of the world's first GBV 'Charter' for education (EmilyTest, 2021a), a Scottish Government and third sector project to introduce minimum standards and best practice in GBV prevention, intervention, and support in universities and colleges. Colloquially known as 'Emily's Charter', the framework is named in memory of university undergraduate student Emily Drouet, who took her own life in 2016 after being subjected to a campaign of domestic violence from a fellow student. Her story entailed a non-linear hybrid of physical, digital, verbal, psychological, and sexual abuse occurring prior to, during, and after the points of coupledom and separation with her partner. Contrary to 'stranger danger' mythical constructions, GBV is rarely confined to one type, to one place, and to one time point in a relationship. Literature, for instance, is expanding on how coercive control can begin pre-intimacy and often continues, or even heightens to its worst and most prolonged 'wilful pattern of intimidation', post-separation (Spearman et al., 2022). GBV

operates fluidly across distances and relational boundaries, contravening heteronormative approaches to GBV occurring within the concrete and static relational statuses, conceptually and linguistically mirrored in policy and practice design around 'domestic' violence (DV), 'intimate partner violence' (IPV), and 'relationship abuse'. Emily's story also reveals how (abusive) relationships are often in non-linear flux (Scheffer Lindgren and Renck, 2008); entered, departed from, and re-entered relating to factors such as economics, contracts, housing, maternity, social life, and the episodic nature of abuse (Rakovec-Felser, 2014; Sani and Pereira, 2021). GBV in HE is psychosocial in nature, combining factors from before and during the HE environment, and highlighting the inseparability of psychological and sociological motivations.

Multiple events amounting to months of violence took place before Emily made a disclosure, demonstrating the realities of GBV as pluralistic across timelines rather than black swan 'sledgehammer' events (Lewis, 2017: 60): unpredictable, isolated, stand-out acts of brutality. Multiple events, spaces, and actors led to Emily's death, including bullying from fellow women, victim-blaming from other students, community enablement, and institutional dismissal (EmilyTest, 2021b). Her case evidences GBV as an umbrella spectrum, as diversely manifesting, as an enablement jigsaw, perpetrated by numerous people across boundaries of time and cultural sites (United Nations, 1993) and experienced in 'all levels' (Public Health Scotland, 2021) of social life. The contemporary field of GBV in education has led the application of the GBV *framework* over other theorisation approaches, such as narrowed focuses on sexual violence, encouraging scholars and activists to

> usefully address the full spectrum [of violence] that is a result of patriarchal norms, including intimate partner violence and violence against LGBTQI people. All of these kinds … are features of students' lives [and] … reflect the realities of life in the 21st century.
>
> (Marine and Lewis, 2020: 238)

Marginalised perpetrators

In order for GBV to be endemic in education, it needs to be upheld across entire communities. Patriarchal beliefs are internalised and performed across social groups with both higher and lower positions in gendered hierarchies, evident in the roles marginalised people play in participating in 'laddish' behaviours at the epicentre of gendered university cultures (Brown et al., 2018: 90), including the enactment of 'secondary victimisation' (SV) (Williams, 1984) from community members. SV traditionally refers to responses from the Criminal Justice System that stereotype, degrade, and alienate victims/survivors, leading to 're-traumatisation' (1984: 67). Used interchangeably with terms like 'judicial rape' (Lees, 1997), the 'second

assault', and the 'second rape' (Williams and Holmes, 1981), the concept describes how the lived experiences of events following on from, and/or running alongside the primary sources of GBV, become sources of violence and trauma in and of themselves. Born from criminology and socio-legal studies, the SV concept has also been bridged in the study of GBV in education, where the field has adapted the term to 'institutional betrayal' (Lorenz et al., 2021; NUS and 1752 Group, 2018). This reflects how recent theorisation of SV has become increasingly inclusive of the range of negative responses victims/survivors experience outside of state systems, acknowledging the existence of SV across cultural and institutional spaces, including sites of kinship, intimacy, labour, leisure, consumption, and digital life. These multiple micro and meso manifestations of SV accumulate and iterate to produce some of the most mechanistic aspects of the cultural scaffolding of rape culture (Gavey, 2018), deterring and punishing disclosures.

Postmodern feminisms promote 'poststructuralist … broader and more flexible subjectivities' to call inter-LGBTQIA* violence into GBV theorisation and innovate from 'the traditional feminist paradigm' (2019: 2331), whilst also acknowledging its distinct manifestations and the need for alternative frameworks outside of heteronormativity. This includes the need to expand from understanding GBV as purely attitudinally motivated, entirely arising from the hatred of women, and to bring together the variables identified from fields of psychology, criminology, and gender studies: intergenerational trauma, social isolation, deviance behaviours, masculinity crisis, and ruptured gender relations. 'Marginalised-to-marginalised' (MTM) GBV is a 'much ignored and overlooked issue' (Naidu and Mkhize, 2005: 34) in GBV studies, yet provides some of the most pertinent challenges to paradigmatic outlooks on GBV, like the 'believes women' activist mantra. 'MTM' experiences were first identified in fieldwork involving focus groups and interviews with LGBTQIA* students. Endemic abuse pervades LGBTQIA* student social and political spaces, with a developed body of literature evidencing IPV between same-sex partners at the same pervasiveness as within heterosexual relationships, and estimated worse than in male same-sex relationships (Subirana-Malaret, 2019). Asserting a feminist outlook on GBV to be 'heterosexual men as sole perpetrators' and 'heterosexual women as sole victims' was not only challenged by participants as inaccurate and exclusionary but was seen to fuel perceptions of liberation spaces as automatically safe in the supposed absence of patriarchal violence.

Community psychology was of significance, with participants discussing behaviours of defensiveness, protectionism, and territorialism among marginalised communities and associating these with histories of trauma that lock them into hypervigilant threat-assessment states (Erickson-Schroth et al., 2020). Past and present realities of structural oppression are imprinted on the contemporary lives of LGBTQIA* people, meaning the communities circulate unique traumas. Political and religious persecution, institutionalisation and incarceration, poverty, Human Rights denial, medical violence,

epistemic erasure, familial and community ostracisation, and 'everyday' assaults all characterise the collective lineage and memory. Violence arises from defensive-oppositional and gatekeeping behaviours, creating hierarchies between newly and historically established identities, with bisexual, intersex, trans, and non-binary people struggling for community membership, and white, able-bodied, gay, lesbian, and cisgender people dominating. This revealed how violence continues along pipelines of repeated events and/or aftershocks, whereby (fear of) loss of their counter-culture community can induce distress to those positioned on the gender and sexuality fringes of society, and indeed such social rejection from LGBT networks can be instrumentalised as a form of abuse in and of itself (Harvey et al., 2014: 12). The localised cultures of universities proved particularly meaningful, with 'anxious competitive' (Jeffries, 2020: 4) mindsets existing alongside limited power resources in the ambitious HE environment, demonstrating links between climates of meritocracy and power-rationing behaviours in marginalised communities.

My fieldwork observed widespread intra-gender sexism, an area of 'under-researched … hidden forms of gender in action' (Mavin et al., 2014: 1) whereby GBV-affected students and staff proved likely to engage in misogyny towards survivors for conscious and unconscious psychosocial reasons. Student victims/survivors observe compelling levels of buy-in into 'rape myths' or 'sexual violence myths' from both staff and fellow students, the most common being that victims precipitate and play roles in positioning themselves in their own victimisation. The beliefs underpinning these myths, and by inference the ideologies underpinning GBV itself, teach sexist stereotypes of male sexuality as innately active and conquering, and female as passive and enticing. Sexual violence myths aim to legitimise social orders such as gender roles and are culturally constructed as 'the way things are', 'the facts of life'. Hence, sexual violence myths can be known as 'control myths' (Lipman-Blumen et al., 1989) shaping language, thought, and behaviour in ways that serve to maintain the gender status quo and foster social patterns of behavioural convergence. The supposed 'laws of nature' codifying society frame social life as ordered rather than chaotic, unpredictable, and infinitely variable. Whilst GBV is complicated, sexual violence myths have high cultural buy-in (Barn and Powers, 2021) through possessing simplistic explanatory abilities. Furthermore, differences in foundational ontological outlooks—on whether systemic GBV exists and is indeed a societal and community problem needing tackling—provide some of the most significant obstacles to tackling GBV, especially considering the active proliferation of myths arising from victims and marginalised groups themselves: 'ingrained social assumptions … are reinforced by people in positions of power. These include role models' such as female elders who 'teach … young women … embedded ideas about what constitutes normal'. In some studies, women's buy-in into GBV-supportive beliefs has been recorded as even higher than that of men's (Yin, 2007). In fieldwork, the simplicity of control myths

proved attractive within university cultural environments characterised by high stress, competition, and multiple pressure factors. Disruption to a sense of order in community models where everyone has dedicated roles can create concern and resistance from its members. Marginalised students were often heavily invested in efforts to keep community membership, to retain their acquired community status, to preserve relations with powerful members, and to fulfil gendered roles towards the facilitation of cohesion and conflict de-escalation. GBV cases were often looked upon by fellow students and staff as theatrical and disruptive to peaceful institutional life; a selfish endeavour in a close-knit environment where coherence is expected and which is reliant on interlocking cooperation. Students speaking openly are frequently met with accusational community cultures that mirror community responses to alleged GBV itself. In choosing vocal responses to their own victimisation, victims/survivors risk being constructed as being a non-alliance to their community 'being socially labelled as overly sensitive, overreacting … self-serving … persuing trivialities and causing unwanted trouble' (Guschke, 2019: 13) that is viewed as disruptive and delaying to community cohesion and concordance.

VAWG, where women are disproportionately victims/survivors and men perpetrators, is a central concept to the GBV framework. Nonetheless, that framework marks a deliberate departure, advocated by fourth-wave feminists, from the mono-conceptual convention of 'VAWG' as having totalising explanatory ability for theorising endemic abuse in society. A postmodern outlook attempts to innovate from this silo by making sense of patriarchy theory across a range of theoretical approaches, social contexts, and identities, and at macro, meso, and micro levels of society. GBV is an umbrella concept drawing on traditional second-wave feminist ontology on the existence of endemic perpetration and victimisation, then merging this with postmodern concepts of intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and mixed methodologies. The GBV concept is therefore characterised by the calling in of under-represented experiences of violence to form a holistic, encompassing theoretical illustration, whilst still maintaining marked theoretical positions, like VAWG, as warranting dedicated focus within the umbrella. The case for the GBV framework is that it allows all experiences of violence to be analysed from angles of gender, making sense of patriarchy theory in societally wide ways. Redefining endemic violence, the framework refers to, and is inclusive of all 'harms … that result from power inequalities based on gender roles' (Wirtz et al., 2020: 227). Thus, it sees the social problem of violence and abuse as grounded in a *gender stereotypic* society, arising from the ideologies underpinning gendered hierarchies and norms. Socialised and propagated across all genders to enforce social stratification orders, GBV cross-cuts numerous hegemonic pillars maintaining the overarch of patriarchy, including compulsory heterosexuality, white supremacy, militarism, poverty, class oppression, and generational trauma (Dunkle and Decker, 2013), constituting 'ecosystems' and 'pipelines' of violence resulting

in gendered health outcomes *to* the violence. The international policy arena, including the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organisation, have recently recognised homophobia, transphobia, and violence towards children as GBV, characterised by motivations and logics along the same lines as VAWG (Friedman, 2003). Here, the defining attribute of the GBV framework relates to conceptualising systemic violence as targeting axes of *difference*: 'perceived adherence to socially defined norms' (USAID, 2014: 3) whereby identities deviating from standardised norms are 'denigrated and discredited as invalid relative' to norms standardised by the collective and the collective's institutions (Blondeel et al., 2018: 29).

Literature on GBV (in education) is expanding its scope to encompass men, but this remains limited. The most recent survey revealed that 26% of male students have experienced sexual violence (NUS, 2021), but this is probably an under-estimate due to the conceptual-linguistic resonance of the GBV framework among men. Most scholarship on men as victims focusses on conflict-related sexual violence, with findings suggesting that up to a third of male combatants have been subjected to sexual violence (Kiss et al., 2020) and similar figures of sexual violence are consistently reported by men in student populations. Male victimisation manifests differently from women's but remains fundamentally *gender-based*, coming from the same logics and source (of a patriarchal rather than a feminist society) and following the same 'prevailing gender norms' (Kiss et al., 2020: 2). Some of the male students who attended the focus groups and interviews stated that they had never told anyone of their experiences due to the shame and stigma attached to disclosure, with accessing help running in perceived contradiction to masculinity tropes of being stoic, tough, and unattached from self-introspection (Thobejane et al., 2018). Participants shared stories of forced sex from female partners propelled by sexuality constructions of men being always 'up for it'. Disclosing childhood sexual abuse, everyday violence from elders, street violence from male 'punters' in the night-time economy, participants' interpretations related to cultural endorsements that men are naturalistically inclined to, and competent at, violence, and that violence is 'character-building'. Gender stereotypes shape the manifestations of violence directed towards men, with female-to-male physical violence underpinned by stereotypes that male bodies can 'take it' and men can 'put up' with verbal abuse on the basis that they deprioritise and suppress emotions. The links between mental health and GBV were frequently discussed by participants as commonly arising in male-female interpersonal relationships, perhaps underlining societally wide chronic trauma from gendered violence: lacking gender liberation in a structural sense can trickle down into behaviours aimed at acquiring personal power within interpersonal relationships. Violent and abusive outcomes intersecting mental health problems can reproduce sexist belief systems by positioning women in rehabilitative roles and asserting men as possessing high endurance for pain.

Multiplicity of power

During the course of my fieldwork, I experienced numerous instances of (gendered) harassment arising from perpetrators with marginalised dimensions to their identities, presenting complex social orders where simultaneous possession and lack of power coexist with equal truths. An interplay continuously presented itself whereby participants' points of vulnerability—that is, the points where they lack structural power—came into contact with where the researcher possesses power. Power constructions in the research also held multiple angles in tension, undermining feminist standpoints yet viewing the research as influential, and me as a researcher in an authoritative light.

When conducting my first project on GBV in academia as an undergraduate in 2015, a mature, postgraduate ethnic minority student stalked me and other feminist activists on campus, writing sexist rants on social media, sending me harassing emails, drawing and posting anti-feminist cartoons, making gang rape jokes in shared political spaces, and filing 'reverse victimisation' complaints to the Students' Union to jeopardise political groups I ran. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, a local man known locally for anti-liberal beliefs and for multiple vulnerabilities, including recently acute psychiatric issues, saw my association with feminist campaigning collectives online. Emulating 'doxxing' behaviours, he shared some of my personal information on his social media channels accompanied by threatening rants. He wrote a 'manifesto' against feminist activists in the area, which was hung up in the window of his business and reappeared in threatening social media streams. Common to being a woman researcher in male-dominated environments, I experienced undermining, combative, and dismissive intellectual conduct during my staggered ten-year period in HE from male colleagues, students, and peers in knowledge-exchange environments, as well as in my capacity as their tutor or lecturer in student-teacher dynamics. One exchange student took photographs of me on his smartphone, whereby the end of his visa shortly after meant that intervention could not take place. Posting participant recruitment content on social media for my PhD research, I was met with sexist trolling from both manual users and from bots programmed to target feminist content. Before tightening security, a self-identifying disabled transman responded to a post, privately messaging asking for support and intimacy. After explaining the research purpose, I experienced aggression and was told I had failed my responsibility to help people.

Non-paradigmness shows when the margins of privilege and subordination collide, creating tension between points of power and oppression, especially where perpetration towards privileged women comes from ethnic minorities, the disabled, and/or socioeconomically deprived. Here, both the GBV and the *responses* to the GBV constitute acts of structural violence, such as leveraging authorities towards perpetrators at risk of isolation, institutionalisation, and deportation. In fieldwork, multidirectional allegations

of violence were significantly more common than the clear-cut perpetrator/victim dynamics that policy design allowed for. In one case during fieldwork, a young, white female staff member experienced unwanted sexual behaviour from an older male staff member on a visa. Long-lasting community distress arose between the legitimacy feminist-identifying members wished to give to her experiences, alongside concern over the (racist) institutional violence evoked from subsequent criminal justice interventions. When GBV cases occurred between community members during fieldwork, psychosocial tensions were widely observed—members were often pulled between various, balanced factors of empathy and friendship, wishing, on the one hand, to stand up against the trauma caused by sexual violence but also against that caused by punitive responses. Thus, often, community members are engaged in a tug-of-war in which they balance the 'severity' of cases on the sexual violence continuum against the worthiness of community disruption.

Victims/survivors and perpetrators simultaneously possess privilege and oppression, and these loci exist on longitudinal sliding scales whereby statuses of victimhood, perpetratordom, and enablement can be experienced at different points across lifetimes, or even at the same time and in different combinations. Mirrored in fieldwork, this gave rise to simultaneously acting oppression and power through the enhancing and concealing of aspects of identity. The adversarial nature of GBV policy and law forces the instrumentalisation of marginalisation and privilege in order to achieve case legitimacy in the community and in punitive systems. Predominantly, fieldwork observed this to entail the utilisation of (passing) whiteness, middle-classness, education status, and localised dialects to gain service access and navigate systems of authority. Power was revealed as two-way, relational, and cyclical—the performance of self-perception that is then interpreted by outside perceivers, who then project those perceptions back, and vice versa. Victims/survivors report over-performing, or hiding, traits of femininity, class, disability, and/or neurodiversity to appeal to ideal victim tropes, playing stereotypes up or down in order to trigger 'systems responses'.

As a situated insider researcher, colleagues and friends regularly came to the doorstep of my research with disclosures. University students and staff commonly turn to multiple actors outside of the 'paradigm' cultural value of penal systems, constructing para-professionals and community members with knowledge-authority on GBV as sites of grassroots justice, protection, and narrative-leadership in their social networks. Tensions existed between epistemic subordination whilst simultaneously being socially revered and endowed with an inflated institutional power status as a GBV 'expert', highlighting the power the researcher has both to admit or decline access to the research and to exclude, validate, and invalidate testimonies. Even if roles of gatekeeping and judgement fall within the remit of research ethics—one colleague put it as 'GBV research should not be a court'—the latter is commonly core to how participants construct GBV researchers.

GBV is predominantly experienced by gender-marginalised people, then mediated *by* gender-marginalised people *in* gendered roles, making gendered violence omnipresent in the feminist researcher world. My researcher role amplified all core characteristic sexist constructions: the multi-tasker, the soothing Mother, and the container of community emotion. Tropes of the 'good woman' were imposed on women participants dressed up in requests to be a 'good feminist' through requests to endorse their stories: to listen, believe, and defend them 'through' my research.

Although feminist epistemology teaches that power ultimately lies with the researcher, efforts to level-out power with participants can mean power is extracted to a point of deficit for the researcher, reinforcing stereotypic gender roles of women as unwavering facilitators, as publically accessible, and as limitless depots of reserves of emotional labour. Even in more radical settings, research still takes place in a culture where women are constructed as 'automatically designated as carers ... struggling on a practical, everyday level with the tension between caring and other values' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990: 35). Gendered labour replicating feminised care-work is deeply embedded in fieldwork, revealing symbolic and micro forms of violence through the reinforcement of stereotypic gendered roles. Feminist fieldwork and activism, which overlap, are filled with unseen precarity and unpaid labour. Feminist researchers are situated in care-work roles, experiencing laborious professional expectations to listen, validate, advise, and safeguard. The 'labour of change' is strenuous, requiring facilitation of space for marginalisation and vulnerability translating into intensive emotional work. Inclusivity labour is an obscure manifestation of social inequality, not only because it is purposed for the opposite (as advocating for marginalised people) but because it is often propagated by marginalised people.

Fieldwork reflections: A case for postmodernism

Defined by 'transversality' (Langlois, 2020), fourth-wave feminism from the 2010s onwards is more complex in discourse than previous waves: theorising from the standpoint of gender rather than biological determinism; mainstreaming inclusive identity politics such as queer theory, asexual and intersex participation; recognising gender and sexualities as spectrums; and developing linguistic and conceptual multiplicity to call in forms of GBV previously existing on the periphery, such as 'interpersonal' and 'honour-based'. The postmodern characterisation of the fourth-wave can be seen as somewhat interchangeable with interdisciplinarity, creating unions across fields of economics, cultural studies, and organisational studies to make 'hypervisible ... in recent times ... a range of contexts', developing specialist focuses on workplaces, the media industries, Parliament and university campuses to understand the multiple cultural localities of GBV (Sundaram and Jackson, 2018: 1). The shift from the second to the recent third and fourth waves is to some extent characterised by the balancing out of macro, meso, and micro

sociologies through the transcendence of boundaries between them, shifting from 'addressing big, obvious injustices' to much deeper 'nuanced' exploration (Brewster and Puddephatt, 2017: 2). Postmodern feminism arises from recent intellectual struggle to replace traditional biosocial constructions of GBV, promoting understandings of gender, race, and class as social processes 'working at all three levels' (Ferree, 2018: 127) of macro, meso, and micro, concerned with the interdependency of hegemonies old and new: capitalism, neoliberalism, colonialism, nationalism, heteronormativity, and patriarchy.

Like all GBV researchers, my PhD research design was informed by long-established feminist epistemology and methodology. This body of scholarship has propelled intellectual revolutions across a diversity of traditionally androcentric 'gender-blind' disciplines such as criminology, health, and law (Stacey and Thorne, 1985), rethinking historical approaches to knowledge production, and highlighting and departing from 'malestream' (O'Brien, 1981) biases. Feminist theory has produced its own orthodoxies, however. Normative paradigms dominate the policy narratives, research practices, lexis, epistemologies, and political cultures arising from mainstream feminisms, characterised by macrosociologies about (gender) inequalities; its key macrosociological assertion being that patriarchy—the universal subordination of women—is created and enacted by male violence towards women and girls (Miles, 1992).

Feminist theory has an ongoing tradition of analysing and articulating social life in generalist, large-scale ways, identifying patterns, ideologies, and orders on entrenched structural bases such as global capitalism, the informal/formal economy split, and VAWG (Boatcă, 2007). With origins in social(ogical) theory, common terms and concepts in feminist theory reflect the centrality of these macro approaches. Much like social theory—with terms like society, economy, politics, media, and class—feminist scholarship is disproportionately focussed on social phenomena on systemic levels, propelling global models of society to be produced, reproduced, and centred. Although the literature on meso and microsociologies is plentiful, macro perspectives possess clear field dominance to the extent that social and political scientific work has become characterised by its meta-theories, particularly those concentrated on power, labour, government, social stratification, and economics.

Macrosociology as a presiding knowledge practice in feminist theory has two key problems, however. The first is the production of single-rule paradigms about how power, experience, and identity operate. To streamline the immense complexities of power and marginalisation, social life is arranged into ontological schisms of oppressor/oppressed, and powerful/powerless. Paradoxically, even though macrosociology is a long-established vehicle for radical theory, the social scientific leaning towards big theory can reproduce conservative gendered frameworks of superior/inferior in research design. Large-scale approaches are associated with objectivity and epistemic wholeness, rooted in symbolic associations of quantitative approaches with

masculinity, reinforcing dominant/subordinate methodologies. In line with quantitative/qualitative methodological hierarchies, structural analysis can be seen to possess field dominance akin to research using quantifiable data. Microsociologies, on the other hand, are metaphorically associated with the femininity of qualitative approaches on the basis of their reduced size, small scale, subjective data, and storytelling dimensions. Highlighted by the contemporary feminist mixed methods movement, feminist theory has worked to preserve hierarchical epistemic binaries, ways of knowing that essentialise identity, and methodological norms concerning how power and marginalisation should be investigated. Modern transformative feminist epistemologies, running in parallel to postmodernism and growing in popularity since the 1980s, argue for framework disruption: the transcending of disciplinary silos, binaristic understandings of the social world, and deductive assumptions on the methodological 'natural homes' of feminist enquiry (Westmarland, 2001). Such epistemic virtues work to gatekeep power in knowledge production, excluding experiences and ways of doing that fall outside of epistemic and methodological orthodoxies. Common examples of this include the use of membership-based 'language games' (Davidson and Smith, 1999; Nelson et al., 2002) that can work in classist ways to exclude feminists with lower cultural capital, as well as moralistic belief dogmas about oppressive/liberatory behaviour failing to map onto women's experiences.

The second concern is that the dominance of macro thinking results in feminist theory lacking accessibility and tangibility. Practical issues arose in the on-the-ground application of feminist theory in my fieldwork; a common challenge experienced by GBV researchers when faced with the complex realities of their research projects, which tend almost entirely to the sociologies of violence, exploitation, trauma, discrimination, testimony, and emotions. Much of feminist theory can feel intangible, lacking a 'how to' element, and flowcharts for difficult ethical scenarios in fieldwork. Arguably one of the greatest tensions in feminist academia is that whilst being the home of frameworks for critiquing epistemic biases and inequalities, feminist scholarship can lack meaningful accessibility, appearing 'daunting or impenetrable … writing on feminist research can be difficult to navigate when designing a … study' (Wigginton and Lafrance, 2019). Feminist researchers often end up working with such a high degree of theoretical abstraction that it can translate into an absence of a manual. The meso and microsociologies of everyday life in given settings, which fieldwork is largely concerned with, raise the 'challenge of making macrosociological concepts fully empirical by translating them' (Collins, 1981: 984).

Macro and meso/microsociologies are often dichotomised as opposite approaches (Amzat and Maigari, 2021), with the latter focussing on the ground level of social life: the sociology of community and of localised, everyday experiences. They are, however, inseparable, with structural trends

actively shaping the lives of groups and individuals. Macrosociological structures such as patriarchy can be observed tangibly, such as in genderlect (Tannen, 2001). Here, we see the cyclical relationship of macro and micro, and how macrosociology has grounded empirical manifestation. When it comes to feminist research, however, seeing the equal capability to possess empirical weighting allows the translation of phenomena across multiple levels of social life. Although emphasising different scale levels, macro and microsociologies remain equally dedicated to creating social theory. Theory is 'scientific … if it [is] capable of being tested … to be testable, a theory must be … an empirical pattern—something observable' (Black, 1995: 831). Failing to recognise their shared explanatory abilities can practice austerity outlooks towards social research, selecting theoretical allegiance over the need for combined momentary mindfulness and structural theory to fully understand phenomena.

A postmodern approach to feminist research design is characterised by the mapping of lived experiences on to theory 'where theory meets empirical research in the twenty-first century' (Ferree, 2018: 127) taking seriously the multiple realities and meanings existing across cultural contexts. Furthermore, it interrogates the conceptual basis of there being a singular 'organisational culture' (Silver, 2003) by cross-cutting macro, meso, and microsociologies and combining multiple disciplinary lenses with equal explanatory potential towards social phenomena. Offering nuance to dominant sociological discourse that power is exercised in an overarching 'dispositif' (Foucault, 1977) and operating solely in legitimate/illegitimate and perpetrator/victim dichotomies, power and marginalisation can be seen in greater fullness through admitting their multiple modalities.

Power and marginalisation are messy. Pluralistic, multidirectional, and environmentally adaptable loci of privilege and disadvantage present as coexisting absence and presence of capital, operating in value-based ways, having different aims, logics, and bearings 'according to different weights to the various types of capital' (Hakim, 2010: 499) and shifting across cultural contexts. Gendered orders, enforced by gendered violence, arise from relations between actors and structures and interact across individual and collective, institutional, local, and global levels. Such a multidimensional schema speaks to the extreme entrenchment of gender orders in society, shaped by numerous cyclical and overlapping factors, including structural, psychological, situational, political, emotional, and environmental considerations. Hegemonic structures, group dynamics, and individualities are all at play simultaneously rather than one dimension of theory and social life having mono-explanatory ability. New ways of thinking towards power and marginalisation as theory, as research topics, and in research practices involve innovating from restrained attitudes making social scientists choose between the rules of macro, meso, and microsociologies and that of psychology and sociology. The abandonment of adversarial division between

theoretical practices allows for multiple hermeneutics and variables to be mutually true, allowing for the fullest possible understanding of GBV to be drawn up.

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Part II

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5 Predicaments of power

Trust-based sexualized violence in ethnographic fieldwork

Laura Thurmann

Introduction

During the last decade, but especially in the wake of the #MeToo movement, an increasing number of researchers started speaking out, writing about, analysing, and publishing their experiences of sexualized violence during fieldwork (e.g., Johansson, 2015; Kloß, 2016; Bjeren, 2017; Pritchard, 2019; Schneider, 2020). Such academic work shows the complexity and diversity of violent encounters and how they can impact research and researchers on different levels. It also contributes to making gendered risks in fieldwork more visible which provides a basis for finding new strategies to prevent or mitigate sexualized violence, or its consequences for researchers' well-being. Nevertheless, what has not been examined in detail are the individual and situational processes of power building that facilitate sexual assault, including rape, in the field and how they are connected to anthropological methodology and the expectations of fieldwork.

In this chapter,[1] I am going to propose a way to write about, analyse, and understand experiences of sexualized violence in research contexts. As I will explain below, many situations in which violence is exercised against anthropologists are based on trust, vulnerable positions, and pressure to collect data, which shape emotions and power relations in the field. In the following, I will focus on two cases of trust-based sexualized violence that I experienced myself during fieldwork in Niger. The first assault happened in the early explorative stage of my project and was perpetrated by a trusted gatekeeper. The second case occurred during a planned interview with one of my research participants who worked in the security sector.

Based on these cases, I will analyse situational power-building processes in acts of trust-based sexualized violence. By doing so, I want to distance myself from common perceptions of specific groups, people, or countries as generally dangerous or risky. Framing countries or research projects as "high risk" as it continues to be done by university ethics and safety offices or state authorities can lead to two problems: First, it can provide a basis to blame the victim of an assault, for example, by portraying their choice of topic as risky behaviour. Second, it can increase or reinforce generalizations

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and stereotypes about people living in our field sites, the majority of whom never engaged in acts of violence and often provided support for researchers after violent encounters. Therefore, I suggest examining the positionalities, methods, and power dynamics that played a role during acts of violence not in order to ask why the assaults occurred but how they became possible.

Trust-based violence in the field

According to Popitz (1968), many processes of power building start from a horizontal power relation that is based on consent between the involved parties. In order to exercise violence, however, there needs to be a vertical power-relationship, in which consent is not established between victims and perpetrators. That is to say, violence includes all acts that are based on vertical power relations and are exercised without mutual consent. Seeing power as a set of techniques rather than a manifested relationship between people (Foucault, 2002, p. 337) also means that it is not static, but always dependent on someone's capital to exercise power (Bourdieu, 2005a) in a particular situation. On a long-term basis, the stability of a vertical power-relationship can therefore largely depend on the pre-existing horizontal relationship and its underlying capital of power.

According to Putnam et al. (1993, p. 169), trust built between two or more people can be seen as one form of what Bourdieu (2005a) describes as social capital: the (im)material resources a person possesses based on their social status and interpersonal relationships. As such, it can also be transformed into and serve as a capital of power. Taking that into account, I define every trust-relationship that two or more people mutually consent to as a horizontal power-relationship which is based on the assumption that one does not wish the other any harm. However, once established, this horizontal relationship can be turned into a vertical one in order to exercise trust-based violence. By trust-based violence, I mean all acts in which a trust-relationship is intentionally built and/or used to exercise violence. The horizontal power-relationship is thereby turned into a vertical one which is stabilized by pre-existing capital of power built as an (alleged) trust-relationship.

The existing literature about sexual assault in anthropological fieldwork features more than one case in which violence is connected to anthropological research practice. Moreno (1995) writes about being raped by her field assistant; Schneider (2020) was raped by a gatekeeper in her research; Mahmood (2008) closely links her experience of rape to her research topic; and to state a less recent example, Franz Boas' student, Henrietta Schmerler, was raped and murdered by a man among the group she was studying (Steffen, 2017). Johansson, who was assaulted by her research assistant in Nigeria, explains how the relationships researchers build with people in the field can influence vulnerabilities to certain kinds of violence (Johansson, 2015).

Despite all the debates and crises in anthropology, fieldwork continues to be conceptualized as a rite of passage for every young researcher (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, p. 1; Stagl, 1985, p. 289). Participant observation in culturally different contexts, multi-perspectivity, and the use of one's "own body as a medium for knowledge"[2] (Krings, 2013, p. 274) are still considered central to anthropological methodology. Building trust-relationships based on compassion, friendship, and empathy is a fundamental and indispensable part of the anthropological research process. At the same time, these fieldwork expectations also constitute what Hochschild (1979) calls "feeling rules": A set of collectively shared ideas about which (expressions of) feelings are (in) appropriate in a certain situation and social framework. Compassion, open-mindedness, curiosity, and excitement towards our fields and participants are expected emotions that we learn to be appropriate during fieldwork. These feelings and subsequent trust-relationships give researchers an opportunity to gain insight into different societies, live with the participants, make lifelong friends, develop a profound understanding of the "other", and, eventually, write thoughtful and inspiring ethnographies or articles. However, viewed more critically, it becomes clear that building trust-relationships in a relatively short time in a foreign or unknown context also poses a risk of trust-based violence.

The two examples of sexualized violence during fieldwork that I examine in this chapter were based on such trust-relationships and closely linked to both my role as an anthropologist and the context of my research. In the following, I will explain how two men, whom I give the pseudonyms Moussa and Oumarou, used trust as a capital to build a vertical power-relationship. For this, I base my analysis on Popitz' observation that not all approaches to power building are successful but if they are, the processes of taking power often coincide as absurdly natural as if the lots had already been distributed before. This challenges mystifications and ideologization. It might still be possible to show that and why the actors who come into power have specific opportunities in the different stages of power building, which can then be used in an apparently natural way[3] (Popitz, 1968, p. 5).

I will examine in which stages of power building Moussa and Oumarou were able to use (or not use) their opportunities and techniques of power to transform our horizontal power relation into a vertical one, in order to exercise violence. I will not only show which power strategies the two men used to build and stabilize trust and power-relationships but also examine the impact of my role as an anthropologist. To analyse the two situations, I differentiate between four main levels of exercising power: The first one is the spatial level, that is, how and why specific spaces were chosen and used. The second level is the use of language to build references and influence perceptions of the relationship. The third level is the physical level, pertaining to the impact of physical superiority or inferiority. The fourth level refers to the role of emotions, influencing the power relation in and after the exertion of violence.

Case 1: Moussa[4]

During fieldwork in Niger, I lived in a studio apartment on the campus of a local research facility that was often rented out to students or young social scientists doing research in the area. As I was the only guest living in the studios at that time, the other people residing on the compound were members of a local family whose father worked as a housekeeper and security guard. The man and his wife were very welcoming and soon started inviting me over for a chat, tea, or dinner.

One of their sons, Moussa, was approximately my age and often around when I was on the compound. We talked a lot about anthropology, politics, life in Niger, and his "European friends" who had previously lived in the studio. As he told me, he enjoyed talking to foreign women living in the apartments as, unlike local women, they were able to be "just friends" with a man. He complained that his passion for music was not respected in his country; told me about his favourite bands and how happy he was to be able to share this with someone. When I responded by telling him about my difficulties finding research participants in the security sector, he offered to put me in contact with some of his friends, who worked as security guards or police officers and who in his view might be interesting for my fieldwork. I was more than grateful for his help and company. Around the second week of my research, Moussa took ill and his father told me he could not afford the medication. As I considered it a decent thing to do and I wanted to give something back to the hospitable neighbours, I gladly agreed to buy the medication for him.

Moussa's trust-building

As Moussa lived on the compound of a research facility and was used to being in contact with local and international academics, I thought of him not only as a nice and trustworthy person but also as a suitable guide and gatekeeper for my planned research. I had only three months to complete my research and felt under constant pressure to find participants. Due to his long-lasting closeness to the guests and the research facility's activities, Moussa was very well aware of young researchers' work and needs as they often lived in the studios for the explorative stage of their fieldwork. He might also have known that anthropologists, as Breidenstein et al. (2013, p. 62) point out, tend to establish trust in a short amount of time without having convincing reasons and that meaningful relationships with participants were part of an ideal image of fieldwork (Hanson and Richards, 2019).

His remarks about being interested in friendship and intercultural exchange made me believe that I could trust him as a guide and possible assistant for my fieldwork. My experience echoes Stodulka's (2014, pp. 122–123) observation that mutual empathy also influences the formation of trust. As I spent time with Moussa, I felt increasingly empathetic towards

his situation as a young musician who felt misunderstood by his society. At the same time, he expressed compassion for my research problems, which made me feel understood and less lost in the first weeks of my research. Subsequently, our allegedly shared empathy and compassion for each other's lives facilitated a trusting relationship even though we had not known each other for long.

This trust was stabilized by his father's good relationship with a German researcher who had told me about the hospitable man and his children. After many evenings spent in Moussa's family home, I deliberately accepted the allegedly horizontal power-relationship with him as it seemed to be useful and reasonable in order to conduct my research.

From horizontal power to violence

After he had recovered from his illness, Moussa invited me to a local bar for a beer and some fries to thank me. I accepted his invitation and we walked to a nearby garden-like outdoor bar to which we had been once before during my first week of fieldwork. Moussa chose a table in one of the far corners of the bar, because it was "less noisy and easier to talk there". After a few hours of friendly chat and one and a half beers, I said that I wanted to go home as we were almost the last remaining guests in the bar. I was fairly tired and also felt slightly uncomfortable about being alone with the man in a dark garden. He agreed, called the waitress, and told her something in Zerma, which I did not understand. Soon after that, she came back carrying three more bottles of *Bière Niger.* Moussa paid and placed one of the bottles next to my own half-finished one. "The waitress is going home now. I ordered some more beer so we can stay a bit", he said. I repeated, more insistently, that I would prefer to go home, but he told me not to be impolite and that we would not stay for much longer. "You are an anthropologist, you don't want to violate important local customs of hospitality", he told me. I was annoyed, but as I did not want to offend him, I agreed to stay for a few more minutes, but said that I would not drink another beer. He seemed content with my decision and went on talking about music.

Shortly later, I went to the bathroom and when I came back, Moussa had moved my chair very close to his. The other guests as well as the waitress had left. "I want to show you how we, the [ethnicity he felt belonging to], greet each other, as an anthropologist, you definitely have to learn that", he explained. I sat down reluctantly as I still did not want to be impolite and lose Moussa as a gatekeeper for my research. He seemed to notice that I felt uncomfortable and assured me that he would never do anything I did not want.

We talked for a few minutes before returning to his purpose for moving the chair. I asked him about the greeting and without any explanation he gave me a kiss. I was confused and felt torn between being repulsed and trying to accept what I was told (and naively believed) to be a form of

greeting. I explained my confusion, but he replied that it was nothing sexual before grabbing my arms and starting to kiss me again. I tried to push him away, making it very clear that I did not want him to touch me and that I wished to leave the bar immediately. He ignored me, held onto my body, and physically forced me to stay. At the same time, he explained his actions by repeatedly stating that "as an anthropologist", I had to understand the local customs in Niger. I was aware that at this moment his behaviour had nothing to do with research, local customs, or my role as an anthropologist anymore and that he was clearly exercising violence against me. I was shocked and overwhelmed when Moussa ignored my attempts to deescalate the situation and instead violently forced me to comply with his further sexual demands. It was not until much later that I realized that what I had experienced was an act of rape. A few days after the assault, he came to my studio and asked me for money, which I gave him for fear of another attack.

Power building and violence

Looking at the spatial level of Moussa's power building, it is quite clear that the rape would not have been possible in a public space. Therefore, it was important to create a private framework without the presence of anyone who could (or would) intervene. Since I trusted Moussa, I did not question his choice of bar. As we had been there before, I initially considered it a safe and public place. I had only been in the country for a few weeks and was used to garden-style bars in Germany. Furthermore, Moussa gave me a clear reason to join him, namely to thank me for paying for his medication.

Language played an important role even before the assault actually happened, as his explanations and remarks stabilized my trust in Moussa. By repeatedly mentioning his foreign friends and his frustration at not being able to simply be friends with women, he gave me the impression that he was neither interested in a romantic relationship nor in hurting me in any way. During the assault, many of his statements were requesting sentences, commencing with "il faut que" (you have to) or "il ne faut pas que" (you must not). To convince me to stay in the bar, he told me that I must not be impolite and violate local customs. He then persuaded me to sit down next to him saying that as an anthropologist, I had to learn his way of greeting. His remarks were a direct reference to my role as an anthropologist and using his knowledge of my work, he gave his statements a logical explanation. He was aware that I indeed wanted to learn about the cultural and social specifics of the local population and behave accordingly. He directly assigned me a role as an anthropologist, whose task is to understand and learn "foreign" behaviour. He also justified his violent acts by depicting them as allegedly traditional practices which I had to understand. With his explanation, he hit a bit of a sore point with me. In my methodological preparation, I had learned that finding an accepted role inside the local community is crucial for successful fieldwork and particularly in the first weeks,

I was constantly worried about making mistakes and accidentally behaving disrespectfully.

As the idea of learning everything about the field and the reference to my role as a researcher matched my self-image, Moussa manipulated me into initially believing that his behaviour was indeed something I had to learn and understand. At the time I realized that he was exercising violence and that his intentions were in no way linked to my work as a researcher, I had missed my chances to exercise resistance. By using physical violence, Moussa made sure that resistance in the form of an "exit option" (Scott, 1985, p. 245, referring to Hirschman) was no longer possible and he could enforce his will.

On the emotional level, Moussa used "emotives", understood by Stodulka (2017, p. 32) as such acts or narratives that (sometimes deliberately and strategically) provoke strong emotions or affect in the other. By referring to my role as an anthropologist, he initially made me feel guilty for not trying hard enough to adapt to the local customs and failing to be a proper anthropologist. He thereby profited from the feeling rules that are dominant in ideas of ideal anthropological fieldwork. Feeling uneasy, repulsed, and uncomfortable was not what I felt were appropriate or desired feelings towards a trusted gatekeeper who initially presented himself as very helpful and generous with his time and efforts to explain cultural differences to me.

During the attack, I was overwhelmed and confused and felt existentially threatened, but the emotional distress also lasted after the actual assault, since I decided to stay in the field and not to change the accommodation. As Hanson and Richards (2019) point out, successfully conducting solitary research, managing dangerous situations, and building meaningful relationships can still be seen as part of an ideology that defines "good fieldwork" within the ethnographic community. Consequently, I was worried that ending fieldwork because I felt scared and alone, after my attempts to build a good research relationship ended in a violent encounter, could be seen as a failure and impact my future career. The main reason I decided to stay, however, was that I simply felt overwhelmed by the situation. I was afraid of making a mistake that could result in another, more violent, attack or an act of revenge if I had reported him to either the police or my landlord.

My fear and ignorance of possible resistance led to an established, stabilized vertical power-relationship that lasted for the remainder of my stay. This can be seen as what Popitz (1968, p. 38) calls *Basislegitimiät* ("basic legitimacy"): The fear of aggravating one's own situation leads to the acceptance of the present oppressive order. Instead of making use of strategies of resistance, the suppressed individual tries to find the best position within the power imbalance.

Case 2: Oumarou

Approximately four weeks after the assault, I met Oumarou, a middle-aged police officer standing guard outside a government building. I told him

about my case study on recent uprisings in the area. He offered me a seat and a cup of tea at his post to talk about what had happened in the district. After a long and productive conversation, he gave me his telephone number and offered to talk to some of his friends who had witnessed the uprisings. I was grateful since at this point in my research, I had serious trouble finding security personnel who were allowed and willing to talk to a foreign researcher.

In the following days, we met several times at his post, and about a week later, I called him and asked him for an interview. Oumarou said his post had changed and told me to come to the main bus station, as he worked "right next to it". When I arrived, I found Oumarou sitting on a motorbike. He told me to get on his bike and assured me his workplace was only three minutes away. I felt torn between feeling unsafe and the pressure to finally get first-hand information about the uprising after weeks of trying. In the end, I agreed to take the ride.

Three minutes was a great understatement. After more than 15 minutes of speeding through the outlying districts of the town, we arrived in a remote residential area. He told me that he had taken me to his house as he thought that as an anthropologist, I might want to see a proper Nigerian household and meet his wife. Additionally, he emphasized that "you cannot talk profoundly about security in the streets. It's a touchy subject". The latter argument convinced me as I had become used to people in town telling me that they did not want to talk openly about security-related issues. So, despite feeling unpleasantly reminded of Moussa's behaviour, I agreed to the interview.

Oumarou's establishing of trust

Like Moussa, Oumarou was aware of his position in my research. During our previous conversations, I had told him about my research topic and the methods I used in fieldwork. Although we did not establish a profound trust-relationship, he presented himself as a key participant who could provide valuable data, which was difficult to access. As he was a police officer, he was also aware that my topic was barely discussed in public spaces and that it would be difficult to find participants.

The latter problem, however, was not merely a result of my sensitive topic. Throughout my research, I found it difficult to schedule interviews or talk to men in the streets without being confronted with unwanted romantic advances. Oumarou, on the other hand, had never made any verbal or physical advances during our initial discussions at his former post. On the contrary, he seemed to be aware of my strictly professional intentions when I asked him for an interview. Furthermore, despite initially being sceptical about being invited into his home, I felt reassured after he mentioned his wife. While I knew that it was inappropriate for a woman to be alone with

a single man, I had been invited into Nigerian family homes before to watch TV or have dinner without encountering any problems.

Oumarou's use of vertical power

I regretted my decision to agree to the interview immediately after I stepped into his living room, as he locked the door behind me and started to undress. He switched on the TV, sat down next to me, and bluntly told me that he did not have a wife. Since I knew I had little chance of winning a physical fight, I started a discussion. I told him it was a misunderstanding and that my professional interest had prompted me to meet with him. I stressed that I had not wanted to lead him on or be touched by him at all. I intentionally used very clear, formal language and kept the polite French form of address "vous". He did not accept any of my excuses, started to touch me repeatedly, and, while holding me down on the sofa, assured me that he knew "what every white woman wants". He told me to stop playing hard to get and, as he put it, "provide myself" to him. I noticed that the discussion only made Oumarou increasingly aggressive, and I was well aware that this man was capable and prepared to enforce his will violently.

A sheer coincidence eventually got me out of the situation. The TV was still on, and I saw an image of the pope appearing on a news channel. This led me to an idea: "I am very religious", I told him; "other Europeans might be like that but my parents raised me to be a good Christian. You must understand that, you are a good Muslim, aren't you?" It took a few more arguments to convince him of my invented religiosity. After I assured him that I wanted to meet him again and that I found him very impressive, particularly because of his religious decency, he finally let go of me. As he insisted on driving me home, I gave him the wrong address and took a taxi after he was out of sight. I ignored all of his phone calls afterwards and did not see him again for the remainder of my fieldwork.

From horizontal to vertical power

Like Moussa, Oumarou had to create a private framework to facilitate the situation. After telling me to come to his alleged workplace, he convinced me to get on his motorbike and enter his apartment which seemed like a safe place because of his (invented) wife. He also attributed a professional function to the private space, saying that it was better for talking about a "touchy subject". This resonated with what I had learned in my methodological preparation. Schlehe (2008), for example, stresses in a handbook on fieldwork methods that anthropologists often have to adapt to their participants' choice of place to conduct an interview, as some topics can only be discussed in certain places. Places in which sensitive and contested topics can be discussed, however, tend to be secluded spaces (including homes)

which can facilitate types of violence that do not happen in the public, including (attempted) rape. After entering his house, Oumarou intentionally deprived me of my exit option and made it clear that he could decide on my possibilities to leave. Thereby, he immediately made the vertical character of our power-relationship visible.

Compared to Moussa's successful use of rhetorical manipulation, Oumarou's use of language was significantly less effective. Although he, too, persuaded me to leave the public sphere, his use of language played a lesser role during the assault. This was partly because of the way he referred to my role as a white, European woman. As Pritchard (2019) shows, researchers and participants might share ideas about the researcher's identity, while expectations or assumptions associated with this identity might differ. Although being female and European is part of my self-concept, Oumarou's assumptions about white, European women deviated drastically from my own perception. As I did not identify with his stereotypical ideas of "what every white woman wants", I did not feel obliged to behave or act according to them.

Oumarou's physical capital of power was present right from the beginning. Even before using physical violence, he was able to exercise power simply because I had no exit option. I was aware and afraid of his physical superiority and ability to force his will on me. Additionally, he showed me physically that I was unable to push him away and made it clear that he was unwilling to accept my "excuses" for not participating in sexual intercourse.

As in the case of Moussa, the emotional level lasted both during and after Oumarou's attack. I felt threatened and experienced tremendous fear and disgust. What was different, however, was that this time, my experienced emotions were in accordance with expectations and feeling rules assigned to such a situation. Being locked in a room with a visibly aggressive man, was a situation in which, without doubt, feeling fear seemed to be an appropriate emotional reaction. Furthermore, and especially after the second assault, I increasingly got nervous in interview situations, could barely cope with "harmless" romantic advances and felt constantly torn between wanting to collect data and the reluctance to take another risk.

Successful power building and resistance

The two cases have some significant similarities. Moussa as well as Oumarou held important positions in my research. Due to the previously established trust-relationship, both men successfully convinced me to leave the public space and enter situations in which I was alone and unobserved with them. They used their physical superiority to exercise violence and caused strong emotions during and after the assaults.

However, a look at the processes of power building indicates clear differences between the two cases. Resistance, as Popitz points out, is most successful in the early stages of power building. Once established, it is far

more difficult to reverse the power-building process (Popitz, 1968, p. 42). In this respect, the difference between both situations is striking: While I felt subordinated to Moussa's exercise of power, I managed to exercise resistance against Oumarou. After the assault, Moussa established a long-lasting vertical power-relationship, whereas in the second case, I ultimately created an exit option by giving Oumarou a wrong address and ignoring his attempts to contact me again.

There are several reasons why Moussa's undertaking was more successful than Oumarou's. First of all, my initial trust in the neighbour's son was much stronger than towards the policeman. While my relationship with Oumarou was mainly research-focussed and transactional, my relationship with Moussa was based largely on assumed compassion and empathy which he used as a tool to build social capital in terms of trust (Putnam et al., 1993, pp. 169–170). This trust could then be directly used as a capital of power. Furthermore, while Oumarou operated mainly on the physical and spatial level, Moussa used all four levels equally. He created a suitable space, manipulated me verbally, and used emotives to make me doubt my own will. He then exercised physical power to take away my exit option, demonstrated his physical superiority, and ultimately used my fear and confusion to stabilize his power position and gain profit from the situation.

On the rhetorical level, there was a turning point at which I stopped thinking about resistance as I considered it impossible. In an earlier stage, resistance, particularly in the form of an exit option, might have been possible by leaving the bar or at least refusing to sit right next to him. However, in this situation, I was unaware of the already existing vertical power relation between Moussa and me. What I considered a horizontal relationship of trust can rather be seen as his attempt to use stories about friendship and compassion to create symbolic power, defined by Bourdieu as a form of power that functions as long as it is considered legitimate (Bourdieu, 2005b, p. 82). In such cases, as Peter (2004, p. 49) emphasizes, it is often difficult to see the repressive content of the power-relationship. I did not know that Moussa's position as a trusted gatekeeper was based on symbolic social capital which he drew from references to partly invented people or concepts. Therefore, it was barely possible to exercise resistance in the early stage of the power-building process.

Oumarou, on the other hand, did not establish any symbolic power and the vertical power relation was more visible from the beginning. Although he, too, manipulated me by talking me into entering his home, he made his intentions unmistakably clear by locking the door and undressing. He even admitted that he had used rhetorical manipulation by conceding that he had lied about his wife.

Moussa seemed to be well aware that he was using violence to create fear from which he could derive financial gain. Oumarou's behaviour, on the other hand, can rather be described as "habitualised practices of violence in

terms of 'doing masculinity' " (Koloma Beck and Schlichte, 2014, p. 157)[5] or as an attempt at what Willson describes as "correcting" the researcher: "A woman who tries to represent herself as being in control of her own sexuality can run the risk of violent attack to 'correct' the power balance" (Willson, 1995, p. 264).

Through my behaviour and my refusal to take part in any sexual acts, I disturbed Oumarou's perception of order in two respects: On the one hand, by rejecting his advances, I had not acted according to his idea of promiscuous Europeans. On the other hand, I had not behaved as he probably expected a respectable woman to do. Saidou (2014, p. 277), for example, mentions the common cultural norms in Niger, according to which women are expected to spend most of their time in their own homes; and during my research I was repeatedly confronted with the idea that "decent women" did not question male authority. My behaviour might have been a threat to Oumarou's role as a superior man who has the sole privilege of controlling female autonomy and sexuality. By using physical force, he tried to "correct" the imbalance of power and to assign me the role of an inferior woman. My successful resistance lay in using religion as another system of order that was well accepted by Oumarou.

Also interesting is the analogy between my verbal resistance to Oumarou and Moussa's use of language as an instrument of power. While I convinced Oumarou to question his intentions by referring to his role as a "good Muslim", Moussa convinced me to question my own will by referring to my role and work as an anthropologist. In both cases, power could be exercised by relating to an accepted and internalized social role that concealed other existing but less present roles, for example, Oumarou's role as a superior man or my role as an independent woman.

Concluding thoughts: Sexualized violence as a methodological problem?

Instead of looking at sexualized violence in fieldwork as something that can happen in dangerous places or among violent groups of people, I suggest treating trust-based violence as a methodological issue of ethnographic fieldwork. As the examples above show, sexualized violence can be closely linked to researchers' roles and methodology. This methodology can lead us to move quickly into relationships of trust that can make us vulnerable to certain types of violence.

Anthropologists might be less prone to kidnappings, burglaries, or blackmail for large sums of money than wealthy members of big international companies without a profound connection to the local population. Yet, by trying to find a place in a local community, we become more vulnerable to hazards and violence present in the group we are studying. As anthropologists, we tend to get closer to foreign societies than most

members of other professions, sometimes without initially being aware of the informal structures that, for example, protect local women from experiencing (sexualized or gender-based) violence.[6]

Regarding global, structural power relations, I was clearly privileged. I had (and have) the opportunity to write about both men, publish my findings, and had the financial means to afford a relatively decent lifestyle in the field. On the other hand, as a woman in Niger, I had a considerably lower status according to local gender norms. I was also visibly dependent on both men to conduct my research, as both held important positions among my participants.

Reflecting on one's own privileged power positions, accepting certain practices that at first appear strange or wrong, surpassing challenges, and understanding the participants' lives with compassion and tolerance are undoubtedly crucial for modern-day fieldwork and should remain an important part of fieldwork preparation. In the same way, it is important to take into account one's own boundaries, expectations, feeling rules, vulnerabilities, and risks; and to find ways to write about and discuss situations that cannot be met with compassion or understanding. Movements like #MeToo have led to a greater acceptance of speaking about experiences of sexualized violence. However, the taboo on speaking about rape and sexual assault in fieldwork and fears of negative impacts on one's academic career are still silencing researchers who want to discuss, analyse, and publish their experiences. Such publications, however, can contribute to a larger understanding of different kinds of violence and the ways in which they are connected to our discipline's methodology. To find strategies to mitigate the risks of such violent acts, it is important to make them visible, understandable, and thus more preventable. Therefore, I plead for profound analysis and open discussion of different kinds of sexualized violence in ethnographic fieldwork and the implementation of the topic in handbooks, syllabuses, workshops, and supervisory meetings.

Notes

1 This chapter is a translated, further elaborated version of a chapter of my Master's thesis (Thurmann, 2016).
2 This quote was translated from German by the author.
3 This quote was translated from German by the author.
4 The portrayals of violence in this chapter are shortened versions of detailed descriptions that I wrote down in my fieldnotes shortly after they happened in 2013. All direct quotes in these descriptions have been translated from French; all names are pseudonyms, and details about places have been intentionally left out or slightly changed to protect the identity of all people involved.
5 This quote was translated from German by the author.
6 This does not mean that local women are per se protected from these types of violence.

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6 The unspoken experiences of ethnography

Overcoming boundaries of (un)accepted behaviours

Simona Palladino

Introduction

Ethnographic research is idealised as an adventurous experience. Training, mentorship and fieldwork narratives construct the trope of ethnography as entailing travel to different cultural contexts to gain an understanding of a specific group of people or society from the inside (Malinowski, [1922] 2002). Scholarly norms and expectations shape the myth of the ethnographer as a 'brave and solitary adventurer' (Cohen, 2000), which persists in academic environments, especially amongst PhD students who are embarking for the first time on their long-awaited fieldwork journey. However, as the challenges of ethnographic fieldwork are rarely mentioned, early career researchers are more prone to putting their work before their own safety (Pritchard, 2019).

Expectations about fieldwork, as part of the research process, that only a few are able to master (Hovland, 2009) reflect a belief that to be a good ethnographer, one must be 'doing whatever it takes to get good data' (Hanson & Richards, 2019, p.14). This can often result in the researchers' behaviour becoming influenced, and potentially exposing them to risks. Hence, while conducting fieldwork, researchers might encounter situations they are unprepared for, or that are hard to walk away from. One recent example of this is the case of Giulio Regeni, an Italian Cambridge University PhD student, who in February 2016 was abducted and tortured to death while conducting his fieldwork in Egypt, and the call for truth and justice has yet to be answered (Roselli, 2017).

Although acknowledging the increasing diversity within ethnographic methodologies and the multiplicity of ways in which fieldwork is carried out, there are assumptions about researchers immersing themselves, as deeply as possible, into the social and cultural field in which the research takes place, while participating in the local life of the people explored. However, as the body is the most important scientific tool for mediating and acquiring knowledge in ethnographic research (Crang, 2003; Longhurst et al., 2008), long-term fieldwork might expose the researchers to risks and vulnerabilities.

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There are challenges that shape the research process, recruiting, gaining access and building relationships with people, generating data and ultimately analyses that are obscured and silenced in ethnographic narratives.

Methodological literature has identified 'dangerous' environments, unsafe areas and 'dangerous' subjects to work with (Lee, 1995; Kovats-Bernat, 2002; Huggins & Glebbeek, 2009; Tshabangu, 2009). Consequently, pre-fieldwork risk and safety assessment procedures are generally focussed on researching external factors that define certain fields as 'dangerous' such as zones of conflicts, or where civil freedoms are denied. However, it has been argued that dangers pertain also to the interpersonal relationships established with people in the field, and the expectations that structure these exchanges (Johansson, 2015). For example, Pritchard (2019) experienced unwanted attention and sexual advances while on fieldwork at a convention event, which was considered a safe space. Thus, limited attention has been paid to spaces that are considered not dangerous, from a safety point of view of the researcher (Sharp & Kremer, 2006; Hanson & Richards, 2019).

This chapter aims to highlight the often 'unspoken experiences of ethnography', by illustrating a case of sexual harassment that occurred during the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted for my PhD project. Sexual harassment, a term coined in the 1970s by feminist movements (Langelan, 1993), refers to verbal or nonverbal unwanted actions that violate local concepts and prevailing sexual norms (Mott & Condor, 1997). I adopt Kloß's (2017) definition of sexual harassment, as 'coercive behaviours, which may include gestures, actions, and other modes of verbal and nonverbal communication, with sexual connotations, which intimidate, humiliate and exercise power over another person' (p. 399). Its impact on researchers has been acknowledged by numerous scholars (Easterday et al., 1977; Williams et al., 1992; Kenyon & Hawker, 1999; Sharp & Kremer, 2006; Pritchard, 2019); however, these experiences have been marginalised within theoretical and methodological discussions of ethnographic fieldwork (Pollard, 2009; Congdon, 2015; Johansson, 2015; Kloß, 2017; Mügge, 2013; Sharabi, 2020).

This work has its roots in a series of conversations I had with some colleagues with whom I shared an episode of sexual misconduct. In particular, Elena, at the time a PhD student in Anthropology, contributed enormously to my thought process. Although she did not experience sexual harassment during her fieldwork, our conversations generated the arguments discussed at a Postgraduate Research event that we organised. The one-day workshop aimed at highlighting the role of emotions in ethnographic fieldwork. At the time, I was driven by the need to verbalise and share my challenges within a community of peers. Questions and insights from attendees were energising, providing what Lisiak et al. (2018) refer to as a 'space of care'. After the fruitful discussion and perceptive reflections, we concluded that sexual harassment in the field should be a topic that as reflective researchers, we must continue to include in our ethnographic writing. While the thinking process

that leads to this chapter is informed by colleagues, this work draws solely on my own experience of sexual harassment. This chapter offers practical implications for how to prepare for fieldwork, and how to manage some of the inevitably ambiguous relationships that researchers develop with participants.

Ethnographic intimacy and challenges

Qualitative methods, in general, and ethnography, in particular, have emerged as the most immersive research methodology within the everyday life of research participants (Appadurai, 1997). However, the double-edged sword of intimacy has often been underestimated (Hanson & Richard, 2017; 2019). In fact, 'fieldwork takes place at the intersection of the public and the private, opening up the possibility for violation of boundaries between the professional and the personal' (Hanson & Richards, 2019, p.14). As such, the relationships established in the field may impinge on levels of intimacy that are perceived to be inappropriate by the ethnographer.

The expression 'to grasp the native's point of view' (Malinowski, [1922] 2002, p.25) is considered a fundamental purpose of fieldwork for most ethnographers; it entails an effort to establish intimate connections with people living in that context and seeking to become part of their everyday life. Epistemological foundations of ethnography that inform the interactions between the researchers and the participants imply building a series of trust relationships over time (Hammersley, 2006). As such, the levels of intimacy and disclosures of narratives depend upon the developing rapport between the researcher and participants (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005). Therefore, relationship building is considered to be an integral and important part of the fieldwork process and should be taken into consideration for further analysis.

Since the researcher and participants are recognised as being equally involved in the production of knowledge (Geertz, 2008), the experience of social interaction should be treated with reflexive attention. Reflexivity, such as the 'reciprocal interplay of one's relationship with oneself and others' (Jackson, 2010, p.36) should embed the role of the fieldworkers' emotions in ethnographic descriptions and interpretations. Hence, as Davies (2010) argues, 'immersion in the field is essential to the generation of our disciplinary knowledge, we must enquire how far the human consequences of such immersion affect these very processes of production' (p.79).

Feminist approaches advocate for the erasure of power hierarchies between the researchers and the researched and have also stated the importance of closeness to achieving a deep understanding of the reality studied (Stacey, 1988). In particular, Burns (2003) endorses critical reflexivity, considering interviews as embodied interactions between the researcher and participants, which have implications at the physical level. Situated within this context, ethnography recognises the embodied nature of the fieldwork,

according to which the intimacies established within it shape the research process, access and outcomes.

Ethnographers, in fact, use the body as an instrument for research (Crang, 2003). This expression refers to the use of the self – feelings, moods, bodily reactions and gestures – to gain insights into the research (Longhurst et al. 2008). This also includes various aspects of the body, such as spatial relations – deciding where to stand – or clothing – deciding what to wear (Bain & Nash, 2006). However, exactly because the ethnographers' bodies are implicated in the research process, they can be exposed to risks.

In particular, the ethnographer's goal to become as intimate as possible with the social world explored risks of breaking down formal barriers between the researcher and participants (Gailey & Prohaska, 2006; Orrico, 2015). In this respect, Hanson and Richards (2017; 2019) argue that being intimate with participants might be subjectively interpreted and understood differently between researchers and participants. Thus, the researchers' bodies might be exposed to unwanted contacts and gendered and sexualised dynamics that are inherent in the research field.

This work discusses unwanted sexual contact in the fieldwork, showing how the physical proximity adopted by the researcher might have been understood differently from the participants' perspective. I use my own embodied experience through reflective writing to critique the production of gendered identities and expected attitudes, to illustrate how gender intersects with other systems of domination. To elucidate my argument, I will first present the research setting where participant observation was conducted, highlighting my positionality in the fieldwork (gender, nationality, age, etc.), and, second, describe the harassment I encountered.

The fieldwork context

My ethnographic experience comes from conducting research amongst older Italians in the North East of England, exploring a sense of attachment to places. Participants, both female and male, aged between 60 and 94 years old. This research was grounded in ethnographic fieldwork, which drew on in-depth interviews and extensive participant observation, over a period of 12 months, starting in June 2015 (see Palladino, 2019).

The main site for participant observation was a recreational centre for Italians in the North East of England, which hosted an average of 30–40 guests. This site is located in the city centre, and I used to attend it on a weekly basis, during the daytime, from 12 to 3, engaging in conversation, while enjoying a cup of tea. Therefore, my field site was relatively safe, as it was not classified as a high-risk environment and the subjects were not considered dangerous, according to the risk assessment procedures, prominent in the methodological and ethnographic literature.

Rosaldo (1980) illustrated how ethnographers are 'positioned subjects'. This position, he asserted, is defined by different aspects, such as gender,

age, personal biography, personal values and beliefs that play a key role in the research experience during fieldwork, thus 'enables or inhibits particular kinds of insight' (p.193). Treating the ethnographic experience with reflexive attention, I detail my positionality, by illustrating the role of some of these aspects that shaped the relationship I built with participants, and the data generated through conversations.

As this research has been conducted amongst older Italians, my Italian origin played a crucial role, as such I was considered an 'insider' (Ganga & Scott, 2006) sharing similar cultural, linguistic and national heritage. At the time, I was 30 years old, however, as I learned later on, I appeared much younger. The length of my residence in the North East – being a newcomer to the town – shaped the nature of the relationship I built with some of the participants. On several occasions, they passed on to me their knowledge about the city where I had just begun to live. Over time, I was designated the role of the adopted granddaughter. Aware of this dynamic of infantilisation, I felt I could only benefit from their attitude to 'educate the young newcomer' as it helped to build rapport.

In line with the critiques of the 'old' orthodoxy, claiming against the authorial status of the ethnographer in the field (Geertz & Marcus, 1986), I sought to avoid the process of distancing the 'other'. Therefore, I adopted a friendly and approachable attitude. Moreover, the intergenerational relationship established was further shaped by introducing myself as an unmarried, childless student. This was considered unusual for a person of my age – and rather subversive – according to the gender norms of the people I aimed to work with. This was expressed in comments about the fact that I should not only think about studying and working but that I should also seek to find a husband and 'settle down'. While during fieldwork, I did not perceive these comments to be oppressive, I do now retrospectively, considering these as expressions of patriarchal belief, as I elaborate later.

Gendered divisions in space

Gender, as produced through everyday performance in interaction (West & Zimmerman, 1987) had a significant influence on my data collection in determining access to the fieldwork. When I approached this community, I did not have gender in my mind, but it was brought up in the interactions, as a socially constructed category that grounded my participants 'identities'; the meanings they attached to it in everyday interactions; their expectations that I needed to conform.

The community setting was a highly gendered context, with rigid gender structures, accomplished and performed through social interaction and social arrangements. After standing and socialising, people took their seats at tables; although seemingly spontaneous, they were used to sitting more or less in the same place each meeting. This unwritten rule, observed by regular members for years, I learned afterwards, served to maintain an informal

segregation by gender and conversation topics. In one corner of the room, 6–8 men used to sit, their talk revolving around social, economic and political concerns. In their area, the women's talk was predominately about personal matters: grandchildren, and domestic activities, such as baking, cleaning and so on. Both women and men talked about health and news they had heard the previous days on Italian television.

The participant who introduced me to the centre was a woman, and at the beginning of my fieldwork I used to sit next to her, and so first became familiar with the women around her. Thus, I acted in line with established behavioural norms, which I had witnessed during initial occasions. However, after a few weeks, I felt the need to establish contact with as many people as possible, and to interact more with all the members. Therefore, I approached the 'man corner' to take a seat. On some occasions, women would call my attention, invite me to sit with them and suggest that I 'leave them alone, they are men'; I realised afterwards that it was considered *inappropriate* for a woman to be involved in the *men's area*.

Therefore, my gender played a role in determining the use of space in the setting for participant observation, and this intersected with my personal affective response to the gender role I needed to conform to or reject. Female participants supposed I should be interested exclusively in baking, cooking, cleaning; and male participants used to ignore my point of view when debating politics, or issues that they would define as 'men's issues' – from which women were often excluded. In both cases, I was motivated by an ambivalent desire: a desire for closeness and distance. Sometimes, I wished to conform to their gender expectations, enacting conservative femininity, remaining in the female corner and asking about their knowledge of these themes. I enjoyed performing this role, especially when they used to say 'you like to cook; you are like one of us', distancing themselves from those other women who 'are not into cooking food'. However, sometimes, I did not fit in with this role at all. Particularly, when it implied limitations.

As illustrated by Butler (1997), gender does not exist outside of performance, discourse and symbolic logics, as it is 'a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actor themselves, come to believe and perform in the mode of belief' (p.402). However, gender performances can also be contested and reinterpreted (West & Zimmerland, 1987), and researchers may engage in performances that challenge these roles. I did not want to adhere to hegemonic femininity; I wanted to challenge the norms and expectations that structured the social world I was studying.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is paramount to highlight that I, as a researcher, transgressed the boundaries of the gendered division within the setting. To gain insights into the research, I used my body, such as its movement in space, as an instrument for knowledge (Crang, 2003). From performing gender in expected ways for the local context, I decided to present myself in a non-hegemonic feminine way, wanting to 'mix with men's businesses'. Unaware of the consequences that this might provoke,

I challenged and violated the unwritten rules of gendered interactions within the social world of the community. This retrospective interpretation might suffice to explain – not to justify – the harassment experienced.

Sexual harassment

Community members used to gather spontaneously outside the building's entrance, sharing small talk, before entering the centre. It was a common practice to kiss each other on the cheeks, as Italian people generally do, which implied physical proximity. That morning, as usual, I spent some time at the entrance, talking with one female member, when one of the male member and his wife came along.

> *They joined us and I didn't even have the time to ask how are you doing. Suddenly, I found myself having a pinch on the bum. I felt unprepared to handle such a situation.*
>
> (Extracted from fieldwork diary, September 2015)

Bum pinching has to be contextualised in the rhetoric of relationship building that occurred on the previous occasions I was engaged with the community. A few weeks prior to that morning, I learned something that was a significant feature of the group of people I was working with. Described as embedded in practices of socialisation, bum pinching referred to an experience several members of this community could relate to, as I learned from them: bum pinching used to be a way to show appreciation of a lady's esthetic, amongst members of the Italian community during the 1970s in Italy, as well as in the UK. The Italian men I spoke with, who had migrated to the North East in the 1970s, used to navigate Neweldon Street[1] and, as the sidewalk roadway was restricted, people had to walk quite closely together. Italian men of my community reminisced about former days when they – or other men they knew – would have fun by 'accidentally' groping the bottom of ladies they found sexually attractive. As such, bum pinching was an example of the history they represented. These conversations, which took place in the man's corner, also involved some women, who confirmed that this had happened to them and added funny anecdotes. Only one-third Italian generation had a contrasted version of the history. She said:

> *When I say my grandparents are Italians and I spend the summers in Italy, people of that generation, who could remember bum pinching, ask me: 'Does it still happen in Italy?' I answer: 'It has never happened to me', but I don't know if I should take it as a compliment. Maybe my butt is not attractive enough.*
>
> (Extracted from fieldwork diary, August 2015)

Understanding the self-humour of her statement, I smiled. However, upon reflection, in line with Kloß (2017), sexual harassment has often been

misunderstood as based on sexual attraction, but instead 'it is largely an expression, exertion, and recreation of (male) power to control the recipient's behaviour' (p. 399). Kloß (2017) asserts that by continuing to label sexual harassment as a form of courtship, it risks masking the abuse of power involved. The participant above might have not interpreted bum pinching as sexual abuse; she seemed concerned that her body met male standards of beauty.

At the time, I thought I should consider myself fortunate to have formed close relationships with my participants, disclosing to me their memories of themselves in their younger days, and offering insights about their common history. So, I continued to smile when listening to these stories, and attributed meanings, as rich informed data for my place-based research. However, I started to 'learn from the inside' and gained an experiential understanding of the life of the community only a few weeks later.

That morning, instead of the usual good humour, the interaction between some of the community members and myself was characterised by an escalation of negative emotions, when at the entrance of the building I found myself being pinched on the bum.

> *This came as a surprise to me and I looked at [the gentleman] very annoyed. I said: 'Excuse me! This is not acceptable!'*
>
> *Withdrawing his hand, he said: 'Well, you are here to know our past, aren't you? In the 70's Italian women enjoyed you pawing at them, English women too'*
>
> *With incredulity, I answered: 'I'm not sure who enjoyed this in the past, but, this is not acceptable any longer nowadays' I looked at his wife, hoping she was going to intervene in my defence, I said: 'Have you seen what happened? Can you, please, tell him that I'm not happy with that?'*
>
> *She was evidently embarrassed, but she didn't say anything. Not a word. She just looked somewhere else.*
>
> *The gentleman continued: 'What, are you sore for a little slap? You were the one approaching our corner, sitting amongst men, and now? Don't be such a fusspot! You know, when you play with fire you might be burned. Well, you don't like it? Then, go away, don't enter this Club. You are not one of us, then'*
>
> *His wife didn't express her opinion, assuming a stoic stance. I hesitated to respond or take any action. The other lady who witnessed the episode came closer to me and led me to the interior of the building. That morning, I barely wanted to cross the entrance threshold.*
>
> (Extracted from fieldwork diary, September 2015)

This experience had an enormous impact on the way I regarded my fieldwork context. To adopt Davies' (2010) expression, it was 'as if with such severance the beautiful veil that one draped the imperfect reality [was] suddenly torn off' (p.87). The harasser made me think that being physically

'closer' to some of the community members came with emotional and psychological costs, and, as a woman, I should have envisioned the risk of proximity. So, it was my fault because I had established an intimate relationship with the men of the Club. This brought to view asymmetries of relational power to the surface. Hence, the core of this behaviour reinforced patriarchal beliefs and attitudes, regarding the role of the female ethnographer within the field. It sounded as if I wanted to obtain information from them, I had to accept and conform to their rules.

Johansson (2015) discusses how one of her participants would grant her access to information by asking for 'something' in return – referring to sexual favours (p.57). In my case, the asymmetries of power within the fieldwork were communicated by the expression: 'being one of us'. On the one hand, as I mentioned above, cultivating the desire to be accepted in the field, I was pleased to hear this inclusive expression, by those who emphasised affiliations, such as the women of the community did. On the other hand, in this situation, I felt blackmailed, as I was asked to accept the compromise to be considered part of the community. Otherwise, I should decide 'not to enter the Club' reminding me that, as ethnographer, I was an 'uninvited guest' (Crapanzano, 2010). I did not want to be an outsider in the community, but still I was not happy to let my body be violated. I found this humiliating. The sexual harassment that I experienced, later elaborated through ethnographic reflection, was a source of insight, worth reflexive attention, and also for understanding how this was perceived by the women involved, as I articulate next.

Silence and power relations

As I climbed the stairs to enter the community centre, I walked alongside the woman who had witnessed the incident. She tried to calm me down by saying that the gentleman commonly joked in that way; I did not know him very well. I shared with her my annoyance, and also my surprise at the lack of any reaction by his wife, and she said:

> *Come on, we are good Italian women, sometimes we prefer to remain in silence, to avoid trouble, don't we? Be omertosa (be silent) as we all are'.*
>
> (Extracted from fieldwork diary, September 2015)

I was advised to align with the gendered code of behaviour in that social context, as an 'omertosa' lady. I was asked to accept and act according to the prevailing local norms and silencing the account of that experience in order to be considered a 'good Italian woman'. I wondered how the internalisation of such norms about gender might have contributed to the enforced conspicuous silence surrounding experiences of sexual harassment – and violence in general – from the perspective of the people I worked with.

This episode and the way the female participant handled it, by dismissing him as a joker, confirm the pervasiveness of patriarchy within the community. The self-imposed silence demonstrates the degree to which women marginalise their own experiences and internalise that sexual harassment should not be taken seriously, as the witness informed me, 'he was joking'. In fact, the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity historically worked to the advantage of those who were in power, contributing to the silence surrounding these issues. The same silence that reproduces values, standards and norm that delegitimised women's own experiences. Hence, in line with Crapanzano (2010) 'the unsaid, the silenced (…) can be more forceful than the said' (p.68). In fact, why the harasser's wife remained silent and pretended not to have witnessed her husband's sexual assault on my body is still a question that remains unanswered.

However, in light of the events that occurred, I was not able to acquiesce to sexual harassment according to the understanding of what 'counts' neither as a 'good Italian lady' nor as a 'good researcher'. Hendry (2008) suggests that researchers need to accept and replicate the rules of the participants we are observing

> if the people they are concerned with get up early, they get up early; if they stay up all night, the anthropologist should do the same. […] the idea is to experience what it is like to be a member of the world under study, for otherwise one could not begin to understand how it looks and feels.
>
> (p.324)

So, to adhere to the notion of what counts as a 'good ethnographer' and to adopt the same behavioural norms of the other women, I tried for a while to be the '*omertosa*' Italian lady, who had experienced sexual harassment and chose to remain silent about that experience.

That day, I continued to be agitated, trying to repress my troubling emotions. Worries formed in my mind about what I was supposed to do, as an early career researcher. On the one hand, I was wondering: shall I accept the harassment as 'a joke' and remain in silence without reacting? Shall I ignore it for the sake of the research? On the other hand, what implications might my acceptance have in the future, in terms of risks? What if my silence encouraged him or other male community members to repeat the groping? As such, would it be best to confront the perpetrator?

I felt this confusion on both personal and professional levels, and this allowed me to reflect on the blurred border that oscillates between the personal self and the researcher. Similar to Kloß (2017), 'I felt obliged to consider the potential backlash that any impulsive behaviour might have on my research and relations to informants' (p.401). I feared that responding to the harassment could be detrimental to my access to the community. However, in the aftermath, I felt a sense of repudiation for the context I aimed to

research. Therefore, even if it meant putting my fieldwork relationships at risk, I could not continue to smile and go along after this experience. So, I decided to act as I would out of the field, and to confront the harasser.

Confronting the harasser

There is no agreement in the literature on how to handle sexual harassment in the field given the diversity of specific local contexts (Kloß, 2017). Nonetheless, a few scholars have tried to expand on this, especially, regarding whether or not directly raising the issue of such incidents with the harasser. Some suggest confronting the harasser (Congdon, 2015), however others chose otherwise, out of fear that this would impact the professional relationship in the field (Pollard, 2009; Mügge, 2013; Johansson, 2015). Both Kloß (2017) and Pritchard (2019) did not directly confront their harassers; instead, they made changes to their research plan, changing the locations, and only recruited women. On the other hand, confrontation might not be easier either, including the risk of an escalation (Kloß, 2017).

Not confronting the perpetrator might have had long-lasting effects on me. I would think about abandoning the project, modifying it, or suffering through it. As stated by Langelan (1993) 'women who have ignored harassment in the field might deal with the emotional repercussions of victimisation: fear, humiliation, feelings of powerlessness' (p.98).

I chose to confront the gentlemen, asking if we could have a private chat, in the same venue where all the other members were. So, I was visible to the others, in case of an escalation, but far enough away to allow privacy. I expressed my disappointment and re-stated my research intentions, by saying:

> *I'm here to work, and I want to be seen as a researcher. Imagine I was your daughter, beginning a new work experience and being treated like you did with me by an older man? Would you be happy about it?*
>
> (Extracted from fieldwork diary, September 2015)

I wanted to be assertive, to incite his empathy by adopting a father-daughter relationship and to be treated with respect. I provided some space for dialogue, and most importantly, built professional barriers for my physical and psychological safety. I do not know if I had hurt him, but he looked embarrassed, apologised and respected me, from that moment onwards.

Discussion

The narrative that constructs fieldwork as adventurous journeys shapes how ethnographers produce knowledge and seek to align their tales within certain standards, avoiding discussing incidents that might sound 'transgressive', to avoid being labelled 'overly emotional and by extension, irrational and

incompetent' (Hanson & Richards, 2019, p.11). For a few years, I conceived the sexual misconduct illustrated above as 'awkward surplus' (Fujimura, 2006), to be excluded from the main research writing. However, with some distance from the fieldwork, I became aware that narratives illustrate that not everything went as expected, and the emotional impact of those are equally important. This chapter, broaching the interplay of method and emotions, is the result of a reflection as an ethnographer and it demonstrates how these incidents can also be used to generate understanding for ethnographic writing. Reflecting upon the emotional effects of intersubjectivity challenged the view that emotions are secondary to ethnographic insights.

First, I discussed how from the ethnographer's perspective, the boundaries between what is acceptable or not, might be often blurred, raising issues that oscillate between the 'field' and the 'self'. There might be situations that undermine the researchers' personal sense of security, that they may not know how to handle 'in an ethical and anthropologically correct way' (Kloß, 2017, p.402). However, in line with Crapanzano (2010) 'to be good fieldworkers – and none of us are always good fieldworkers – [we should not] lose our own identity, our point of view, the confidence of our position' (p.58). Paying attention to what happens to our bodies in the field can inform how we understand situations, the people we interact with and how to write about our field sites. Hence, my experience of sexual harassment and the confrontation that followed immediately afterwards, became a way to access knowledge and an important part of relationships built with the harasser and the community.

Second, this chapter discussed issues of identity, access, and challenges of conducting research through ethnographic fieldwork. It provided an understanding of positionality as a researcher, reflecting on the way my personal characteristics and attitudes facilitated or created challenges for managing fieldwork relations. This chapter gave consideration to conducting community-based fieldwork when I realised that trying to conform to the gender role expected of me limited my ethnographic fieldwork. This revealed how meanings attributed to gender by myself and the participants were different. Hence, I interpreted the patterned social arrangement within the social context and its dichotomous structure, as a way to reproduce and reinforce inequalities. I deliberately wished to introduce ruptures to hegemonic narratives related to gender roles. Therefore, I chose to approach the 'men's corner', expressing my voice even in 'men's type of conversations' – and being treated with both deference and respect by females and males alike.

However, the incident of sexual harassment revealed that the use of my body in the setting was interpreted as 'out of place'. As a researcher, I received signals (implicitly or explicitly) that some considered my physical proximity to the 'men corner' as an act of transgression. According to Hanson and Richards (2019), sexual harassment incidents 'were usually explained as having been caused by the allegedly immodest and promiscuous behaviour of the victimized woman' (p.402). My intention to get

physically closer to the 'man corner' for a research purpose was misunderstood. Physically approaching the men's corner might have caused a shift from being infantilised, as the granddaughter; instead, I became sexualised in the field.

Initially after the assault, I thought that I should have expected it, and engaged in self-blaming for having crossed the gendered boundaries, and self-doubting about my role in trying to disrupt dominant narratives, and not interiorising the code of behaviour of the reality I wanted to study. Having been told by the harasser that I should have considered the risks of getting closer to men, I immediately believed that I had actively provoked the harassment, and this generated a feeling of inadequacy on a professional level. Only at a further stage, I realised that I was doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing, as an ethnographer!

Third, this chapter discussed the emotional, psychological and social dimensions of the harassment experienced by the researcher. A difference between some of the people I was working with and myself pertains to the acceptance of sexual harassment. I considered taking men's actions as an unquestioned way to reproduce gender inequalities. Instead, the submission of the female subjects present at the scene was justified by the apparently 'Italian nature' of women that consider *omertá*, such as the silence, as a virtue. However, this is a value with which I do not identify, as belonging to a different generation (and I would like to believe no one of my generation would identify with that value, any longer).

The insights generated through the emotional domain enable me to critically reflect on how being a woman in the field comes with drawbacks and potential weaknesses, especially, when expectations about gender roles are inextricably linked with the culture of the people the female ethnographer works with. In fact, as the case discussed above has revealed, asking why women silenced themselves, according to the values shared by a group of people, might put women in academia in danger, due to the need to conform to these expectations, by not talking openly about the vulnerabilities they experienced, or not confronting the harassers, trumping the need for safety awareness. Although the previous literature has established that there are no safe places for research (Prichard, 2019), as well as that risks are embedded in the relationship established with participants (Johansson, 2015), the expectations assigned to each gender within the cultural setting might expose researcher's vulnerability, and place them at risk.

As defined by Kitzinger and Thomas (1995), sexual harassment is 'something which women need not passively endure, but can actively protest against, and resist' (p.32). Confronting the harasser, in my case, proved to be useful in increasing the understanding of the participants and study group. Kloß (2017) explains

> harassers may count on their status to silence the women they victimise and may (threaten to) use their authority to try to discredit any woman

> who dares to speak up. As they often do not expect women to confront or reject their behaviour, the element of surprise forms the effective aspect of confrontation and assertiveness.
>
> (p.403)

In my view, in that determined historical context, in that specific place, with those particular social dynamics, the way I handled the incident might be interpreted as a way to show its subjects how they could overcome the conditions of their own oppression.

Having stressed my role as a researcher helped in building a respectful relationship with the perpetrator from the moment that I confronted him, and I did not ever encounter further problems. I am aware that trying to establish professional boundaries is sometimes very difficult. Nonetheless, I believe this is an important aim to pursue. Since that moment, inevitably with scepticism, I assumed a different code of behaviour in the field: for example, I made clearer my research intentions through verbal interaction; I wore my university student lanyard, to indicate that I was working; I invited my 'boyfriend' to participate in evening social events.

Raising awareness of the risks of ethnography is particularly important amongst early career fieldworkers, generally new to the socio-cultural context in which fieldwork is conducted and who might lack a personal support network, leading to additional stress (Congdon, 2015). In line with Pritchard (2019) to be safer in our professional spaces, as academics we should demand that risk of sexual harassment towards the researcher be a form of procedural ethics and risk assessment. In addition to that, to prepare new ethnographers to better experience their upcoming data collection, pre-fieldwork trainings must also include the risk of sexual harassment.

Finally, this is the first time I am able to articulate this experience in academic writing, as I needed distance from the research setting. Although my supervisors were aware of the incident, I was not able to write about it, as my 'performance', as a doctoral student, was under examination at the time. Having successfully completed my PhD, I feel confident, now, to reflect upon the sexual harassment experienced. Nevertheless, support should be in place amongst institutions for these kinds of challenges within the research field. Especially, early career researchers should be provided with opportunities for encounters, where to share challenges experienced amongst peers and co-construct 'space of care' (Lisiak et al., 2018). Hence, the initiative of the workshop, illustrated in the introduction, proved to be a good practice in this respect.

Conclusion

The 'unspoken experiences' of ethnography that have not been sufficiently addressed in the methodological literature refer to risks of sexual harassment, sexualisation and violence more broadly occurring in the field. This

chapter has highlighted the necessity of prioritising the safety of the ethnographer on fieldwork, by illustrating the porous boundaries between secure and insecure spaces and providing evidence of the challenges of working in a community setting in a closer contact with research participants. Although I consider ethnography as a highly valuable research method, it is important to raise awareness of how contact with research participants might expose the researchers to unwanted attention. This chapter aims to avoid the researcher from being unprepared, to acknowledge and to address sexual harassment when it occurs in the field. Thus, unexpected obstacles or uncomfortable topics should be reported within the academic communities, shared amongst peers and written up rather than written down, to reduce dangers in research.

Note

1 This is a pseudonym for one of the main streets of the City Centre, currently a pedestrian area, but accessible to cars at the time.

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7 'No, you're not doing your research today. This is us spending some nice time together'

Coercive behaviour, sexual harassment and being 'working class' in the 'field'

Delyth Edwards

Introduction

It has been known for decades that the ethnographic field can be a space where sexualised harassment can occur (Easterday et al 1977). This chapter explores my experience of conducting participant observation with an older middle-class population and how I encountered coercive behaviour and sexual harassment from a participant during my observational work. The aim of the project I was employed on was to investigate the types of social and cultural activities people like to do in 'everyday' settings. This involved me finding and recruiting participants. I spent large amounts of time with them, observing, interviewing and participating in the activities that they valued the most (such as walking, singing in a choir, going to the pub or volunteering in a charity shop). As an early career researcher (ECR), a first-generation working-class academic (Crew 2020) who was unsure about my place in the academic world and worried about failure and disappointing those I worked with, I was willing to put myself in uncomfortable situations in order to recruit participants and to keep them. It was only years later that I was able to accept that what I experienced was more serious; it was a form of sexual harassment, where a participant used coercive behaviour to try and exercise their power over me to engage in a relationship that had sexual connotations. It's alarming that it is only recently and in writing this chapter that I am able to accept that experience for what it was and the reason for this is worth exploring, which is what I intend to do in this chapter.

Definitions of sexual harassment can differ. Defining or labelling an experience as sexual harassment is not something that is easily done, even for the person who has experienced it. After my encounter of being sexually harassed during ethnographic fieldwork, I struggled to understand my experience and therefore define it as such for a very long time. A reason for

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this could be because sexual harassment can 'involve a range of behaviours that elude simplistic definitions', is a 'subjective' experience and is 'structured by race, class, gender, nationality, citizenship, age and so forth' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 13). To add to the confusion there are legal, behavioural and psychological definitions of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al 1997) that I knew of, yet was unable or rather reluctant to locate my experience within.

I want to make it clear that the meaning of sexual harassment being defined in this chapter is something that is particular to me and my experience. But as I have read the work of those who have gone before, it is clear that there is shared experience and understanding and I have been able to draw on the reflections of others to help me return to and recognise my own experience. Like Hanson and Richards (2019), I find Kloß's (2017) definition of sexual(ised) harassment as a useful starting point for reflecting on my experience:

> Sexual(ized) harassment is defined as coercive behavior, which may include gestures, actions, and other modes of verbal or nonverbal communication, with sexual connotations, which intimidate, humiliate, and exercise power over another person.

Sexual harassment can involve verbal as well as physical behaviours of a sexual nature. But the key facet that emphasises the coercive element is that such behaviours are unwelcome and 'unwanted interaction' (Pritchard 2019). And a key drawback that needs to be addressed here is that many researchers, including myself, have felt unable to handle or deal with such coercive behaviours when out in the ethnographic field. In our ethics training, we are coached in ways to look out for our participants' well-being. However, we are not educated on how to recognise or deal with coercive behaviour from the participants. This is an issue that needs to be attended to within ethnography and across disciplines, because sexual harassment in ethnography is a marginalised subject in methodological discussions, yet it is an interdisciplinary and ethical problem.

The first part of this chapter introduces my lived experience of sexualised behaviour aimed towards me, from a middle-class man of retired age (which is aged 65 in the UK) who was taking part in participant observation. This was an encounter I was not prepared to deal with then and even now I am unsure how to address it. The second and third parts of this chapter explore why this could be the case by discussing the conjuncture of my identity as a woman, an ECR, a working-class academic and the consequences of when my instinct regarding my own well-being clashed with the demands of academia. The conclusion of this chapter makes suggestions for an all-round better 'ethics of care' (Gilligan 1982, Noddings 1984) for the researcher.

Coercive behaviour at the karaoke

> *This evening at karaoke, which was in the pub not far from where he lived, he tried to ply me with alcohol. I reminded him that I was working, this was part of the ethnography. But he refused to accept that. So, he continued to pester me to drink, asking whether I had ever had alcohol before like I was a child. He also started to violate my personal space, touching me inappropriately. This made me feel incredibly uncomfortable for many reasons as a woman and as a researcher.*
>
> (Field notes, 2016)

It took me two years after finishing my PhD to get a job in academia. During those two years, I moved back home to live with my mum in our council house in Cardiff. I had to get a job to help pay the bills and so I fell back on the industry I had worked in most of my life and which I always returned to when I was unemployed, retail. I worked as a sales assistant in a shop, when eventually after nearly two years post-PhD and numerous unsuccessful applications, I was employed as an ECR on a UK research council-funded project. The key aim of this research was to explore the values people place on their everyday social and cultural activities, 'in order to re-evaluate current understandings of cultural participation and cultural value' (Edwards and Gibson 2017, pp. 70–71). I was so grateful and felt extremely fortunate to be offered this position. In this postdoctoral role, it was my job to locate communities in which to do the four different ethnographies, and it was my responsibility to recruit participants. I recruited participants mostly via local community groups, and I used a plethora of ethnographic methods: interviews, informal conversations and of course participant observation, when I would be present in their chosen activity.

The above opening excerpt is from my research journal from one of the ethnographies I conducted on this project. This encounter was with Roger,[1] a retired, middle-class man in his early 70s. I use middle class here, based on Rogers's previous occupation, and therefore his assumed economic and cultural capital such as his income, wealth, health, education and social networks (Bourdieu 1984, Roberts 2001). All of these points along with his biography and his membership in the community organisation I was working with suggest that he was middle class, and this is also how he self-identified during our conservations.[2] I met Roger at a concert in the city where I was conducting participant observation. It was a classical music event that was free to the public. Other participants who I had recruited via the community group, of which Roger was a paid member, were also there, because it was part of their 'everyday participation' in retirement. Roger approached me after the concert and we got talking. I told him about the project I was working on, and he wanted to know more, so we shared a cup of tea. He was extremely friendly and demonstrated a genuine interest in

the research. From my perspective, he ticked all the boxes of the participant population I wanted to work with. He was the correct age, a member of the organisation I was focussed on and showed a willingness to take part. I was working under a time constraint and needed to recruit participants fast. I asked Roger if he would like to participate in the research, and he agreed. I went through all the formal channels of providing information and gaining verbal and written consent from him to participate in the research. Roger was 'central to the events that I, as an ethnographer, hoped to understand' (Hoffman and Tarawalley Jr 2014, p. 296), so when I received an invite to join him at a karaoke (something that he did frequently and was part of his 'everyday participation') event that same day, I agreed to join him. At first, I was slightly taken aback by the thought of karaoke being his 'taste' for culture (Bourdieu 1985) but remembered the idea of cultural omnivore's whose consumption tastes encompass 'both elite and popular forms' (de Vries and Reeves 2021, p. 292).

Later that day, I met him at the pub where the karaoke takes place. It was early evening, and it was busy. I expected it to be starting at the time we met; however, the singing wouldn't be starting for an hour or so. So we ordered drinks to take and sit outside. He ordered a beer, and I ordered an orange juice. I insisted on paying because I was grateful that he was helping me with my research. But when I ordered a non-alcoholic beverage, he seemed disappointed and was insistent that I drink with him, trying to intimidate me into consuming alcohol. The situation became uncomfortable, and he became forgetful. As my notes suggest, I reminded him that I was working, and that I was observing, but he acted like the research did not exist. We talked outside for what felt like hours about all sorts, his life, his family and his participation. He invited me to 'participate' with him again the following day and it's here where I thought we had turned a corner, and he was fully accepting of the research and my and his role within it.

We eventually moved to sit inside to enjoy the karaoke. I got the impression that people singing pop and rock songs was somewhat of a spectacle for him, and he kept asking whether I knew the songs, which of course I did. We sat on stools at the bar, him moving in rather close, and this is where he physically began to touch me in a way that I was not comfortable with but also not to the extent I felt that I could confront him. I knew I had to leave, or rather I wanted to leave. Again, after what felt like hours of listening to people sing, I said it was time for me to go. He said he wanted to walk me back to the hotel I was staying at, and I refused. But he kept insisting, refusing to take no for an answer and the situation became somewhat hostile. I eventually had to say that I had to call my partner (as a reminder that I was in a relationship) on the walk back and can recall running out of there and leaving him standing at the pub door.

Yet, despite this interaction, we met the following day, as we had arranged for me to observe his participation again. As well as visiting the local museum, we went on a walk to a community garden where he likes to spend some of his time. I reminded him again that this would be so interesting

for the research. This was my way of reminding him that our time together was part of the research. He responded with 'no, you're not doing research today. This is us spending some nice time together'. At one point during our walk he grabbed my hand, to cross the road like I was a child at first but then held onto it in a romantic and intimate way. I didn't know what to do, except pull my hand away in a manner that was not confrontational. When we were at the community garden, he asked if he could take a photograph of me. I refused, stating I did not like my photo being taken. But as I turned my back for a minute, I caught him taking a picture anyway, even though I did not consent to this. Again, I didn't confront him about it. As we continued walking down a busy high street and talking about the project (my consistent reminder that I was a researcher, and he was a participant in that research) Roger said something to me that I will never forget: 'I agreed to take part because I thought you were beautiful'. After this, I knew I could not see Roger again. I decided to email the project leads to let them know what had happened. I told them that I had had an 'awkward' encounter with Roger and that he had made me feel uncomfortable, but I did not go into detail. They assured me that my safety was of the utmost importance and that if I feel it necessary, to no longer have Roger participate in the research. I messaged Roger and thanked him for his participation and said that the research had come to the end. This is how I ended our acquaintance. As others have experienced (Pritchard 2020), he messaged back several times, even weeks after the project had finished asking how I was. I chose not to reply. Like Kloß (2017, p. 402) 'I was unsure how to handle the situation in an ethical and "anthropologically correct"' way. This response, I feel, was the best for me (Kloß 2017).

During that second day with Roger, I did feel conflicted. I knew from my previous encounter the night before at karaoke that something was not right. Yet I chose to spend time with him again. I questioned whether I was to blame and was I encouraging it by spending (ethnographic) time with him. I mulled over whether I had made it clear that we were not on a date, but he was helping me with research. These are all the questions that spun through my mind over and over again immediately after I experienced these events and for many years later. It took time for me to come to terms with what I had encountered with Roger. This suggests that there is something very worrying about my reluctance to call out this behaviour from the night before. If this had not been a research situation, I would certainly not stand for such behaviour. In the remainder of this chapter, I consider why I had not confronted the incidents as sexual harassment (Pollard 2009) to myself or to my line managers.

Was it just an awkward encounter?

The answer to the question posed in the subtitle is no, what happened with Roger was much more than an awkward encounter, and it is only now that I can see and admit how I experienced it. I am not alone in this; Hanson

and Richards (2019, p. 6) note how Hanson introduced her experience of constant sexual harassment in her fieldwork as 'awkward situations' in a joking manner to her mentors. It's that word again: Awkward. Koning and Ooi (2013) describe an awkward encounter as an event or situation which causes embarrassment and something not easy to handle or deal with. My experience with Roger encompassed both of these. It was humiliating in the sense that I was tricked into spending time with him and it was something I felt unable to manage as an ECR. But it was much more. There were unwelcome sexual overtones in Roger's behaviour towards me, and he entered into our research relationship under false pretences in order to try to coerce me into a situation that would satisfy his sexual need. This behaviour is nothing but predatory.

There are three reasons why I immediately brushed this off as an awkward. The first relates to defining sexual harassment (Kloß 2017). I was familiar with the term, but pinning down an exact definition is challenging. Hanson and Richards (2019, p. 13) note that interviewees in their research 'often struggled with how to define harassment and other sexualized interactions in the field, noting that they left them feeling "uncomfortable."' This is what I did, which is not surprising given the fact that women have always had to live with sexual harassment as part of their everyday lives (APPG for UN Women 2021, Taylor and Shrive 2021).

Second, professionally I still felt an ethical obligation towards *him* as a participant (Kloß 2017, Hoffman and Tarawalley Jr 2014), despite, him trying to change 'footing' (Goffman 1981) intending to change the situation into something that he wanted. At the start of my relationship with Roger I felt like I had all the power, he was the one who had to provide consent. I received from Roger what all ethnographers hope to get and that is a warm and friendly encounter (Koning and Ooi 2013, p. 19–20). However, the covert predatory nature of his giving consent lured me into a relationship I did not consent to and the ethics of this needs to be addressed. As Harries (2022, p. 11) notes '[w]hilst the practice of getting to know someone can be mutually positive, intimacies are never neutral. The doing and making of intimacies also tests boundaries and exposes hierarchies'. I argue that Roger used coercion during my short time with him to change the nature and intimacy of our relationship. Coercive behaviour and control are known to be key factors in intimate partner violence. Dutton and Goodman (2005, pp. 746–747) state that '[c]oercive control in intimate partner violence is a dynamic process linking a demand with a credible threatened negative consequence for noncompliance' and 'that individuals enter intimate relationships with different levels of vulnerability to coercion' (Dutton and Goodman 2005, p. 750–751). With achieving intimacy (Harries 2022) as a key part of ethnographic relationships, looking to the literature on coercive behaviour in relationships, of which there is a plethora mostly within domestic violence research, could be useful for ethnographers. Having knowledge of coercive behaviour could help us to understand and identify problematic types of

behaviour from potential participants. For example, when I kept having to remind Roger that I was at the karaoke, the museum and the community garden with him because it was research, he would insist that it was not research and that we were simply spending time together, like we were on a date. However, when I kept refusing Roger's sexual advances towards me, he would be the one to remind me that he was helping me with the research, such as when at karaoke he invited me to spend time with him the next day at the museum to help with my research. The power of this relationship had irrefutably and quickly shifted in Roger's favour.

Finally, in relation to these notions of power and shifting power dynamics, self-blame plays a significant role in how people respond to harassment and coercion. I felt like I was terrible at ethnography because Roger kept forgetting that I was 'doing' ethnography. I also didn't want to admit that I had failed to manage that fine line (Owton and Allen-Collinson 2014 pp. 301–302). I didn't want to display or own up to my vulnerability (Koning and Ooi 2013) because if I did, I would be exposed that I was out of my depth, revealing how inadequate I was. I had an 'ethnographic fixation' (Hanson and Richards 2019) on doing and presenting meaningful fieldwork and good research. I questioned whether I had made the mistake of creating a situation of 'over-rapport' (Oakley 1981 cited in Bell 2019, p. 13), being too friendly. This experience exacerbated my own feelings of uncertainty and low self-worth in the academic field, which largely stem from my identity as working class.

On being working class

Through our conversations, we discovered very quickly that Rogers' biography contrasted greatly with my working-class background, of growing up on a council estate in Cardiff with my mum who was a single parent. I would consider myself to be in group three of Binns' (2019) categorisation of a working-class academic, that, '[d]espite acknowledging [my] social mobility, I still consider myself to be working-class' (Crew 2020, p. 106). As Crew (2020, p. 20) purports, research on working-class academics proves that 'the academy is not a welcoming environment for scholars from disadvantaged backgrounds'; it can be a space where we can experience microaggressions, ridicule and exclusion. And I am arguing in this chapter that this can extend into the research field. I have had several experiences when participants in research have 'talked down' to me or tried to take advantage. I am arguing that Roger saw my class background and my insecurity, along with my gender as a vulnerability that he could use to manipulate and coerce me to do what he wanted. Dutton and Goodman (2005, p. 748) inform us that 'vulnerabilities increase a victim's susceptibility to certain forms of coercion'. It should not be surprising that many working-class academics, including myself have what 'Yosso (2005) calls "aspirational capital", a form of capital that refers to the ability to maintain dreams and the tireless commitment to pursue

those dreams despite countless structural and institutional barriers' (Crew 2020, p. 23), and I add injustices aimed towards ourselves.

Additionally and as previously mentioned, working-class identity has been tied into feelings of 'not being good enough' and to imposter syndrome (Crew 2020),[3] the feeling a person has, who despite being successful in their career, feels like a fraud which often leads to feelings of not belonging (Clance and Imes 1978, Ferrari 2005). Crew argues that (2020, p. 70) 'Breeze (2019) explains it well when she describes imposter syndrome as being "a public feeling" that is intersectional and situated with those without power'. Cisco (2020 cited in Crew 2020, p. 70) 'explains that these feelings of IS can have tremendous consequences for the sufferers, from insomnia, and severe depression, to an inability to enjoy one's own success'. In fact, Yao (2021) has written about the dyad of 'Impostor-Syndrome-Inducing Sexual Harassment'[4] in her field of computer science research. Imposterism can significantly affect a person's confidence, to the point of severe self-doubt and self-blame when sexually harassed (Yao 2021).

Imposter syndrome and its affects are an under-explored area in ethnographic literature.[5] However, self-doubt has been well documented in cases where the researcher has felt that disclosing instances of sexual harassment orally or through publication will result in a threat to their professionalism because inevitably, a 'good researcher' would not have been in this situation (Moreno 1995, Clark and Grant 2015, Sharp 2020). Hanson and Richards (2017 and 2019, p. 4) argue that we are so fixated on what constitutes a good ethnography (one that is solitary, dangerous and intimate for instance) that we leave no room for any experiences that sit outside of what is considered 'good' (Koning and Ooi 2013). Fundamentally we have a 'hegemonic way of collecting data' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 4) and can only place deviated experiences in a 'black box' (we write about them in our personal journals). This is not to say that I have come across accounts of anyone being ridiculed for sharing traumatic encounters. But that, I suppose, is the problem. Interactions around sexuality have been trivialised and the butt of jokes (Markowitz and Ashkenazi 1999 cited in Hanson and Richards 2019) and anything remotely sexual is trivialised as 'romantic relations', which downplays the seriousness and lack of consent from the researcher. Knowing this would silence anyone from disclosing experiences of a traumatic nature.

Furthermore, the culture of self-blame shines a light on the patriarchal undertones of ethnography and the wider academy. Some researchers like Haddow (2021) suggest that gender can be beneficial in accessing and recruiting participants. But as her article demonstrates, this has come at a cost to her own well-being. Hanson and Richards (2019, p. 2) argue that focussing on harassment as simply being something that happens to women 'out there' in the ethnographic field only masks the fact that academia itself is 'structured by patriarchy'. Academia does not exist in a vacuum, but in a society where, according to Taylor (2019), women are blamed for the

violence perpetrated towards them, so it is inevitable that this will be the case in an academic setting. Not only are women blamed by others, but we have also been conditioned to blame ourselves.

Whilst imposter syndrome has been intriguingly explored in autoethnographic accounts to explore self-posed questions around legitimacy as a lecturer (Wilkinson 2020), there needs to be a more critical gaze on why it exists in the first place (Tulshyan and Burey 2021), why certain groups in academia experience it and how it leads to such detrimental outcomes. Wilkinson (2020) argues that attributing it as something 'comedic' or downplaying it as a 'fact of life' conceals the very real lived consequences it has for many academics. As the title of their article 'Stop telling women they have imposter syndrome' suggests Tulshyan and Burey (2021) astutely argue against using it as a label because doing so puts the onus of blame for self-doubt and subsequent negative consequence on the individual and fails to account for the structural oppression and discrimination at play.

I struggle to label my feelings of low self-worth in the academy as imposter syndrome, because I know the responsibility here is on wider social systems of inequality and discrimination (Tulshyan and Burey 2021). I refuse to pathologise myself and my experience. However, as a first-generation, working-class woman, I already doubted my place in the academy, like others with similar positions and identities have (Morley 1997, Vaughn et al 2019, Crew 2020). I found that this academic role and this encounter with Roger steered me to look inwards and blame myself, rather than towards the systemic disparities that exist for me because of my gender and my class.

Fortunately, there seems to be a cultural turn occurring. We are beginning to see more female researchers bringing into question patriarchal edifices and reducing the 'shock' (Kleinman and Copps 1993 cited in Owton and Allen-Collinson 2014) by being up front in their publications about their craft and the gender-based harassment and violence experienced in the field. This shift is a welcome one, yet despite researcher well-being being raised as an issue by those who have encountered sexual assault and harassment in their ethnographic work in unfamiliar settings (Johansson 2015, Kloß 2017) and in settings closer to what we know (Pritchard 2019, Hanson and Richards 2019, Haddow 2021), there remains little to no institutional or practical guidance that can be empowering for an ethnographer if you find yourself in a similar situation.

Sexual harassment as an interdisciplinary and ethical problem: Sexual misconduct pedagogy in methods teaching

In their book *Harassed*, Hanson and Richards (2019, p. 4) suitably ask 'why do discussions about sexual harassment remain marginal in methods classes?' The marginalisation of these 'embodied' experiences 'in the canon' (Hanson and Richards 2019) means that bodies are obscured in

ethnographic narratives. This of course has theoretical and methodological implications, but more worryingly it has practical consequences, it means there is little guidance for researchers on how to cope when such incidents are experienced and how to seek support afterwards (Mugge 2016, Kloß 2017, Pritchard 2019, Hanson and Richards 2019, Harries 2022). This was evident from the reading I did when writing this chapter. First, I had to go 'looking for' such experiences, as in I had to search specifically for articles or books about sexual harassment, rather than them being in the mainstream methods or even ethics texts I had read to help me 'prepare' for ethnographic research. Second, when I did eventually locate the literature, where (female) researchers shared their lived experiences of sexualisation and objectification, sexual harassment and/assault, a common observation was that all the researchers felt ill-equipped with how to deal with their experiences during and after (Mugge 2016, Kloß 2017, Pritchard 2019, Hanson and Richards 2019, Haddow 2021).

Hanson and Richards (2019) conducted in-depth interviews about 'sexualised fieldwork' experiences with 56 participants, who were at different stages of their academic careers. Findings from their research illustrate that when it comes to fieldwork preparation and training, students 'are almost never provided with guidelines in their ethnography and other methods courses for how to handle these behaviors when they occur in the field' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 14). This is not just applicable to students, but to seasoned ethnographers also and we need to explore the causes. There are three reasons why such experiences are not 'written into' or taught in these conventional spaces. The first is because these embodied experiences are written about in secret, in other words, they are relegated as 'awkward surplus' rather than seminal texts (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 3), hence why I and others had to purposely go looking for them. Second, because we are 'told that being a "good ethnographer" means "sucking it up" and doing "whatever it takes" to get the data' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 14). So when something like sexual harassment is experienced, the researcher experiences a state of self-doubt (Kloß 2017). Finally, because the field has always been structured and dominated by men and unequally governed by the male sociological gaze (Smith 1974), women's experiences are considered to be 'sites of transgression' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 5).

Haddow (2021) suggests it has been left to individual female ethnographers to decide how to deal with sexualisation in the field in their own unique ways. For example, Haddow (2021 pp. 5–6) describes how she employed 'a mixture of tactics sometimes being evasive or challenging any sexual comments by laughing them off or attempting to change the subject'. Pritchard (2019, p. 507) 'had tried to drop subtle hints' that she was not interested in a man who had showed a sexual interest in her during the participant recruitment stage of her research. How a researcher reacts to an encounter depends on the context of that encounter and who is involved (Haddow 2021). The important thing to note here is that female researchers, who work on very

distinct projects and across different disciplines, ultimately face similar issues and this 'speaks to the need to discuss embodiment, danger, and sexual harassment with all students of qualitative research, regardless of their area of research or the amount of time they will spend in the field' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 6). As well as being a methodological problem, sexual harassment is still largely seen as an Anthropological one. Yet, the tools of Anthropological methodology, ethnography, for example, is widely used within other disciplines, with an obvious one being Sociology, the discipline in which I sit.

The fact that experiences of sexual harassment are widespread, not just across disciplines, but also across field sites and methods (Hanson and Richards 2019), means that we must break the silence and move discussions out of the margins. But as well as reflecting on and reconfiguring methodological discussions and teachings, we need to critically deliberate and find ways to embed the lived experiences of sexual harassment in ethics and how researchers are trained to 'do' ethnography. It's simply not enough to expect female researchers to rely on their instincts and draw on their agency when dealing with sexualised encounters in the field. Instead, harassment must become an orthodox topic 'for study and training in ethnographic fieldwork' (Sharp 2020, p. 2). I argue that sexual harassment is not just a methodological hazard of ethnography or interdisciplinary problem, it is also an ethical problem. Ethics needs to be at the centre of discussions about sexual harassment in ethnography. But particular attention should be paid to the ethical obligations towards participants (Kloß 2017, Hoffman and Tarawalley Jr 2014) that researchers feel they have or should have.

Conclusion

When I reflect on my experience with Roger, I can see that he approached me from a perspective of both my gender and his assumptions about my sexuality (Clark and Grant 2015), rather than as a researcher. Additionally, I purport that alongside my gender there were two other identities at play that made Roger feel comfortable in trying to hijack the research for his own agenda (Koning and Ooi 2013, p. 27). The first is age. I thought there would be more of a daughter-father-like relationship between Roger and myself, if any sort of relationship outside of participant-researcher were to evolve (Haddow 2021). Yet, he told me of his romantic interest in younger women and chose this part of my identity to try to engage with. The other part of my identity that made me vulnerable was my position as an ECR, and this played out in two ways. First, it is related also to my class identity and my feelings of inadequacy, and 'aspirational capital' (Yosso 2005). Roger of course would not have directly known or had any influence over this as it was more of an internal struggle, but his knowledge of my class background and I undoubtedly must have revealed my insecurities in our conversations. Second, it is known that 'early career researchers are often most vulnerable to

the pressure of abiding by hegemonic standards in the field' and internalising them as the norm (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 9 and p. 24). As well as doubting our abilities as ethnographers, when our ethnography deviates from these standards, these 'norms' also make us particularly vulnerable to the mentality of 'getting data no matter what' (Hanson and Richards 2019, Kloß 2017). ECRs often have to have to deal with the anxiety of the processes of research, rather than the research itself. For instance, Pritchard (2019, p. 507) discloses her anxiety about 'approaching new people'. This is always a point of anxiety for me, of having to use my 'body as a tool to insert [myself] into the worlds of others' (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 35). In this example with Roger, this insertion was exacerbated by the fact that I was employed on a research project that had an incredibly small timescale, meaning I had the pressure of recruiting people quickly. This means placing your trust in the process and those you meet.

I agree with Tulshyan and Burey (2021) that diagnosing my feeling as 'imposter syndrome' is not getting to the underlying problems here. Instead, we need to look at 'what role workplace systems have in fostering and exacerbating it in women' (Tulshyan and Burey 2021, n.p). In this case, what structures and practices in ethnography intensify feelings of self-doubt, self-blame and feelings of not belonging? What I love about ethnography is that it is people and relationship-focussed. What I don't like is the illusion that all ethnographers enter the field equally. We learn about the different ways an ethnographer's identity or social position may impact the research. But we seldom discuss the negative consequences it can have on the researcher. I am not the first, and I won't be the last ethnographer who is an ECR, female and from a working-class background. I've just never read accounts by anyone like me before. More diverse and honest accounts and testimonies of when things go wrong or don't go according to plan are needed. We need lived experience as pedagogy and to acknowledge in the literature those experiences that sit outside of the perfect ethnography, so that we can widen the remit of what constitutes a 'good' ethnography. It was only after my research that I made the decision to delve into the literature on sexual misconduct in the field. It was never a part of any of the reading I did to prepare myself for doing ethnography, only after the event and this is something that I think needs to change.

Suggestions

1 Institutions should develop a specific policy for supporting researchers

With many universities now having a policy around sexual misconduct on campus, the research field, whether that is ethics committees or research organisations, would greatly benefit from following suit and having a clear policy that supports the researcher (particularly the ECR), the ethnographer

or any researcher method or approach that involves developing relationships with people. This in part would involve organisations educating themselves about the diversity of ethnographer identities and providing the necessary changes and support for potentially vulnerable groups. This could be achieved by working with and drawing on the knowledge and experience of important groups such as the 1752 group and Fieldwork Initiative.

2 Rewrite the rules of what constitutes a 'good' ethnography

Rewriting requires a contribution to knowledge production, and this will not be achieved if researchers continue to write about experiences of sexual harassment in the margins. Kloß (2017, p. 399) writes of breaking 'the continuing silence' and Haddow (2021) suggests making the hidden ethnography less hidden. This can be done by dismantling the hegemonic and dominant ideology of what constitutes a good ethnography (Hanson and Richards 2019, p. 7, p. 17). Allow researchers to know that experiences that sit outside of the 'perfect' ethnography are important, valid and are in fact ethnography. By writing honest accounts from our unique positions and identities we can expand the knowledge of our field. We can demonstrate to others what ethnography looks and feels like from our particular positions and identities, such as my own, as a female working-class ECR, for example. This suggestion is to change how the method sees itself and is seen by those who use it and not to fix the individual researcher. Writing new rules must become part of our reflexive practice, our shared reflexive practice.

3 Learn about coercive behaviour in research and incorporate this into methods of teaching and learning

The tension between research opportunities and ethics has always been identified in ethnographic work but is mostly in relation to the researcher being the one to overstep the ethical line (Schiltz and Büscher 2018, Bell 2019). However, as Haddow (2021, p. 7) acknowledges, given that it is widely known that fieldwork sites mirror the gender inequalities of society and we know that sexual harassment is real and is widely experienced by female researchers, it is seldom considered 'how this inequality can be played out in fieldwork and in our relations with participants'. In other words, we cannot continue to ignore gender (Pritchard 2019, Haddow 2021) or class (Crew 2020) but instead explore how embodied characteristics influence experiences in the field (Sharp 2020, Hanson and Richards 2019, Koivunen 2010). Related to this, more theorisation on coercive behaviour in research settings and in research relationships is needed. As ethnography is relational and depends on creating intimacy with others, it is important to explore the wealth of literature in this area to help researchers understand coercion.

4 Reconsider research ethics procedures and in particular rethink the process of consent

More theorisation around the process of consent is needed, and this is something I explore further elsewhere (Edwards forthcoming). It would be helpful to reimagine a process that reinforces for researcher, participant and institution that consent is a two-way process. Consent is currently set up to account for power imbalances between the researcher and researched, with the former seen as the more powerful. However, the aim of ethnography is to observe the lives of people, groups or communities as they naturally exist in society; this includes working within systemic structural discrimination and inequalities (gender, ethnicity, class). We strive to minimise the effects these disparities have on our participants but fail to consider how they could affect the researcher. A consent process that is two-way would ensure that the participant is clear on the boundaries of research relationships. There is a clear absence of care for staff in these situations and therefore thinking around and implementing an institutional 'ethics of care' (Gilligan 1982, Noddings 1984) could be a way to support staff.

Notes

1 Roger is a pseudonym.
2 The issue of social class needs more discussion than what I can do here in this chapter. Please see Savage (2015) for more recent research within 21st-century UK and Crew 2020 for a summary of social class in the UK.
3 Crew clearly states that 'I do not mean to imply that imposterism is something experienced only by working class academics, as we know that an estimated seventy percent of high achievers report these feelings at some time in their career (Buckland 2017)' (Crew 2020, p. 70).
4 Yao's (2021) article illustrates that sexual harassment is not just an ethnographic or Anthropological problem, but a wider systemic problem faced by women.
5 There are online blogs discussing imposter syndrome in ethnography, but they focus more on feeling like an imposter in the research setting. For example: www.epicpeople.org/imposter-ethnographer/.

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8 Unveiling sexual harassment in Spanish archaeology

Apen Ruiz Martinez, María Coto-Sarmiento, Lara Delgado Anés, Lourdes López Martínez, Ana Pastor Pérez and María Yubero Gómez

Introduction

The spatial expressions of gender inequalities and sexual violence have been mostly explored by urban planners, geographers and feminist architects interested in highlighting the relations between gender, sexuality and space (Moser, 2017; Ortiz Escalante and Gutiérrez Valdivia, 2015; Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina, 2018; Spain, 2014; Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 2010; Valdivia, 2018). While archaeology is more concerned about time than space, we barely think about the spatial dimensions of knowledge production in the discipline. Moreover, though archaeological work is largely associated with explorations and adventures in remote spaces (usually non-urban), archaeological learning practices and academic niches (universities and research institutions) are often located in urban spaces with specific spatial configurations. In addition, "the field" as the space where archaeologists dig the past is not scrutinised as a place where social relations, power hierarchies and complex human interactions occur (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). Thus, in this chapter we want to bring the spatial manifestations of sexual harassment and misconduct in archaeology to the forefront. This work emanates from the impact of feminism in archaeology, and the pioneering work of Nancy Parezo and Susan Bender, who twenty years ago denounced that for women, universities and other research institutions were already glacial or frozen spaces, what they called *chilly climates* (Overholtzer and Jalbert, 2021; Parezo and Bender, 1994). At that time, the question of sexual violence and harassment was not even considered a crucial expression of structural power relations that inhabit these institutions.

In this respect, in this chapter, we argue that the impact of different forms of sexual violence in archaeology should be seen through the lenses of its spatial manifestations in the field. Different from other humanistic fields of study, archaeology views fieldwork practices as marks of identity of the discipline and in which most practitioners find their self-definition as archaeologists (Ruiz, 2016; Tomásková, 2007). Thus, we believe that a reflection on the construction of "the field" as the spatial location where archaeology has historically defined its scientific practices and knowledge

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production may illuminate not only our understanding of gender discrimination and violence but could also provide us with avenues to prevent it.

In Spain, the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence in disciplines such as archaeology, palaeontology or biological anthropology has been revealed, and some institutions, universities and organisations have begun to elaborate questionnaires to collect data and design protocols to prevent sexual misconduct and harassment in the field (Comisión Feminista, 2018; Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, 2020). Behind these findings, what we are beginning to see is that in scientific disciplines or practices such as archaeology, sexual and gender violence often have to do with patriarchal understandings about workplaces and fieldwork environments. Indeed, academic institutions and fieldwork spaces are inherently patriarchal, hierarchical and highly unwelcoming for women and non-conforming genders (Heath-Stout, 2019; Voss, 2021b).

The case study that structures our reflection is data from a survey about sexual harassment in Spanish archaeology conducted in 2018 when a group of researchers from various universities in Spain collaborated in an online survey in order to generate data about the prevalence of sexual harassment in archaeology (Coto-Sarmiento et al., 2020). The objectives of the survey were (1) to highlight cases of sexual harassment and this problem in the archaeological field, particularly in Spain, (2) to detect similar patterns of sexual harassment behaviour and (3) to reflect on the methods used to prevent sexual harassment. Our main results show a pattern where frequent episodes of sexual harassment are correlated to highly hierarchical contexts validated by the impunity of the harasser.

In this chapter, we start with a brief discussion about the construction of the field as the spatial location where archaeology builds knowledge and how the inclusion of gender as a topic in the discipline has not fully embraced a discussion about gender discrimination in archaeological practices. Then we analyse the presence of sexual misconduct and harassment in Spanish archaeology offering data collected through the survey. We finish the chapter with some recommendations (a few of them specific to archaeology) that mostly emerge from the experiences expressed in the answers to the survey. We believe that these recommendations could be important for helping members of academic settings (faculty members, researchers, students and staff) learn how to cope with situations of sexual misconduct.

Engendering the spatial dimensions of archaeological practices

In this section, we contextualise sexual harassment in archaeology considering two themes: the historical construction of the field as a gendered and racialised space and the consolidation of gender as a subject matter in archaeology. It is suggested in this section that the slow and timid conversation about sexual harassment in Spanish archaeology has to do with the incorporation of a gender perspective in the discipline more interested

in questioning gender relations and identities in the remote past than in deeply transforming archaeological practices in the present. That is, gender has become a *new topic* for archaeologists but barely incorporating feminist perspectives and actions.

Twenty years ago, in answering the question of how has feminism impacted archaeology, Margaret Conkey listed a few issues raised starting from the incorporation of the concept of gender in archaeological research (Conkey, 2003). More than simply incorporating women in the historical process, the underlying objective of the genre archaeology has been humanising the past, paying attention to women, men and other possible genders, in order to reveal that gender relations were crucial to the functioning of ancient societies. Gender perspectives have transformed our understanding of the prehistoric societies, and thanks to this, today we know a little more about the organisation of household units in ancient societies (Hendon, 1997), the role of women in food production (Hernando Gonzalo, 2005; Lozano Rubio, 2011), about the involvement of women (their co-option but also their resistance) in the production of ceramic figurines and textiles and how this was fundamental for the emergence of the State (Brumfiel, 1996; Costin, 2013; Lull et al., 2021); and we also know that sexual identity was not fixed in certain ancient societies but was a performative identity that it was transformed according to the life cycles of people (Joyce, 2000; Meskell and Joyce, 2003).

Current gender research in archaeology is on the one hand wondering how and if we can engender the material culture of the past, while placing the question of how the sexual and gender identity of the researchers intervenes in the study of the past (Conkey and Gero, 1997; Sanahuja, 2002; Conkey, 2003; Gero, 1996). Thus, the past is a product (in the sense of production of knowledge) both of men and of women and therefore feminist archaeology should not be just a process of adding women to ancient societies, but also an endeavour that highlights the active role that we have as creators of our discipline and of the human past. However, as some authors have also suggested, few of the topics that have appeared after the incorporation of the category of gender in archaeology have questioned the discipline as a science (Conkey, 2003; Cruz Berrocal, 2009; Tomášková, 2007; Wylie, 2007).

This is particularly the case of archaeology in Spain. The interest about gender in archaeology emerged as early as the 1980s, in a period of political upheaval in the country's history after the death of the dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 and in a context where universities were clearly androcentric in terms of academic discourses and highly structured around male figures who controlled research teams and funding (Cruz Berrocal, 2009; Díaz-Andreu, 2014; Díaz-Andreu and Montón-Subías, 2013; Montón-Subías, 2014). The emergence of Second Wave feminism after the end of Franco dictatorship influenced the pioneers in the field of feminist archaeology. In this context of political turmoil, changing academic demographics and opening of academic discourses, the first papers dealing with women of past epochs

were written from a politically engaged and openly feminist perspective. However, even though it has been argued that Spanish archaeology was a pioneer in incorporating gender perspective (Cruz Berrocal, 2009, p. 26) compared to other European countries, we consider that there has been a sort of institutionalisation of the topic without really incorporating a deep and critical analysis of how gender discrimination and power structures in university contexts mediate and shape archaeological practices and thus processes of knowledge production.

Archaeology is far more dependent on tools, technology and teamwork than other humanistic disciplines, it also functions in fieldwork settings in which leadership in teamwork and competence are common and often framed as a priority. These fieldwork structures are highly gendered (Heath-Stout, 2019, 2020; Moser, 2007; Tomášková, 2007; Voss, 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, archaeological fieldwork is "both literally grounded in the locality where it takes place, and intimately embedded within larger social and political landscapes and places" (Tomášková, 2007, p. 273). In these archaeological contexts, there is a constant negotiation of power in everyday social relations and gender dynamics that are situational and not always predictable. Archaeology has often involved physical, manual labour of a variety often seen as inappropriate for middle- and upper-class women. On the other hand, there is a common perception of "the field" as a loose social environment characterised by constant parties, casual sex and alcohol (Voss, 2021b).

Along these lines, Laura Heath-Stout (2019) argues that archaeology prizes fieldwork and physical strength that has sometimes highlighted great differences among bodies in the field. According to interviews she did, women archaeologists told her stories about how

> men (…) refused to let them carry their own buckets. This was often framed as an attempt to be helpful but had the effect of being patronising as it implied that women were physically weak. In a field that prizes the intrepid explorer and excavator, being allowed to literally pull one's own weight is a sign of respect and belonging that is denied when women archaeologists have heavy buckets taken out of their hands constantly, while men do not. Unfortunately, in our insistence that we can carry the buckets ourselves, many women fall into the trap of committing ableist microaggressions.
>
> (Heath-Stout, 2019, p. 272–271)

It has been argued that Spanish contract archaeology[1] does not carry a tradition of relevant male figures or experts in the field as happens in university contexts. In Spain, contract archaeology emerged in 1985 (Parga-Dans, 2019; Zarzuela Gutiérrez et al., 2019) and at a moment when the discipline was already clearly feminised (González Marcén and Sánchez Romero, 2018). Moreover, in Spain we can find many companies whose founders or co-founders are women and in which there are mostly female archaeologists

working. However, as recent research indicates, commercial archaeology is not immune to patriarchal attitudes and a prevalence of sexual harassment (Zarzuela Gutiérrez, 2022). As will be seen later in the analysis of the case study, sexual harassment and violence occur in both private and public institutions in Spain.

Sexual harassment in archaeology: The Spanish survey

In 2018 a group of five researchers from different universities decided to assess the question of sexual harassment in archaeology. At this moment, our idea was to break the silence and visualise the prevalence of sexual violence in Spanish archaeology. In this sense, taking advantage of the fact that in September of 2018 the Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) was going to be celebrated in Barcelona, we decided to design and conduct a survey to evaluate the prevalence and impact of sexual harassment in archaeology. For most of us, different forms of harassment and violence had been realities that were kept private but never expressed in public. The idea of the survey was to give voice, in a preliminary way, to a situation that was repeating itself, that had continuity and that we had experienced at various times during our academic backgrounds (Coto-Sarmiento et al., 2020). Taking this into account, the survey is more of a strategic political tool (in the sense that it provides quantitative data) than an instrument to explore the complexities and impacts that multiple violences have on the personal and professional lives of people. Surveys have been effective in detecting harassment patterns (Clancy et al., 2014; Kelsky, 2018). However, in this chapter we have adventured ourselves not only to display the quantitative data obtained through the survey but also to explore qualitative aspects that appear in the narratives of the respondents.

We presented some of the results of the survey in a panel at the Annual Meeting of the EAA, but we also decided to do a performative action to make the results more public. We filled the walls at the University of Barcelona with a series of posters that reflected some of the anonymous testimonies and graphs of the data collected in the survey. Posters were written in Spanish and English and posted throughout the floors and hallways so that students and assistants of the congress could read them and even interact with them by leaving their messages (Figure 8.1). At first, the university managers asked us to remove them, but eventually many of them survived throughout the congress and subsequent weeks.

The online survey reformulated some questions from pre-existing surveys, for instance, the one that Karen Kelsky designed for “The professor is in”[2] that had been used in similar studies and were objectively selected and adapted (Kelsky, 2018). The main objectives of the survey were (1) to detect the existence of sexual harassment in archaeological contexts, (2) to make visible the specificities of sexual harassment in archaeological fieldwork practices and (3) to make public the results of the survey so they could be used as a preventive measure.

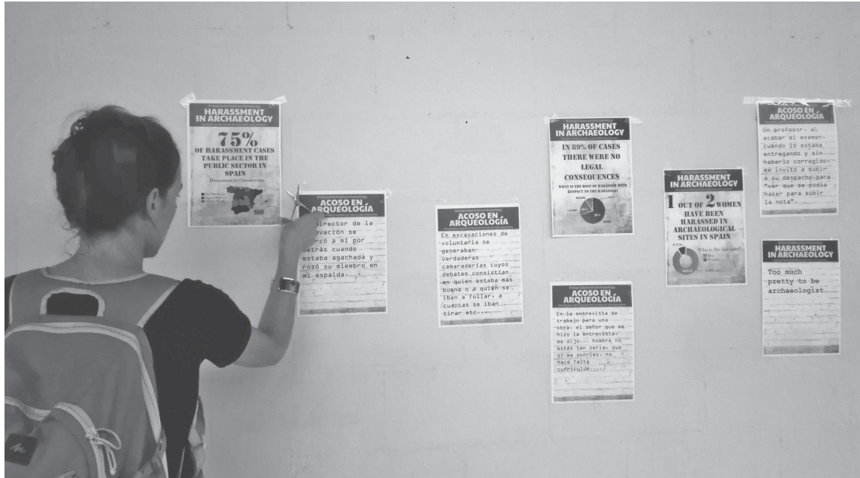

Figure 8.1 Performance to denounce sexual harassment in archaeology. 5 September at the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Barcelona.

Source: Authors.

The survey was made in Google Forms (only in online format), and it was open from June to the end of August 2018. Two surveys were created in Spanish and English with the idea to reach more international researchers. We circulated it in different social media networks (Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram groups and organisations of archaeology students). We finally selected data from Spain for our research to analyse specifically this area using the responses of the survey and to compare with the data from other countries. We received a total of 358 individuals but finally selected a total of 321 individuals according to participants based in Spain. This allowed us to elaborate quantitative and qualitative analysis with the aim of detecting and knowing the existence of patterns of sexual harassment in Spanish archaeology.

The survey was divided into 17 questions, organised around the following themes: demographic data (location, gender and age), research institution, power relationships, types of sexual harassment, contexts where violence and harassment occur and consequences. In addition, an open question was added to allow respondents to share experiences or comments. The anonymisation of the participants was respected, keeping data confidential, but at the same time leaving the option to provide a contact choice for the future. The possibility of not answering some questions or avoiding telling detailed testimonies was also facilitated, so as not to refer to traumatic episodes. Some responses were discarded for possible manipulation. Even so, it is understood that there may be a bias when it comes to an online survey, being only possible to treat its veracity through a one-step verification of the Gmail account.

Analysis of results

Numbering and quantifying harassment in archaeological contexts

In this section, we present the quantitative results of some of the questions asked in the survey.

1) Have you ever suffered sexual harassment during the development of your archaeological career?

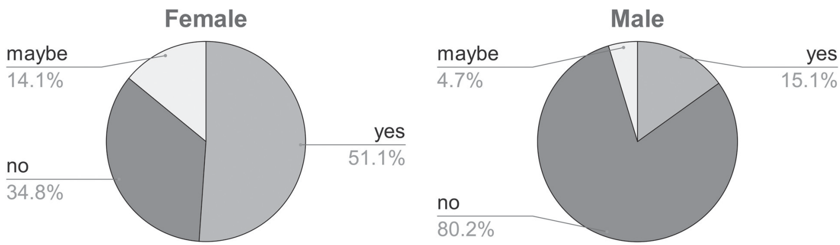

Figure 8.2 (a, b) Participation by gender. Other genders were not included due to insufficient information.

2) Types of research institutions where sexual harassment occurred (public/private institutions)

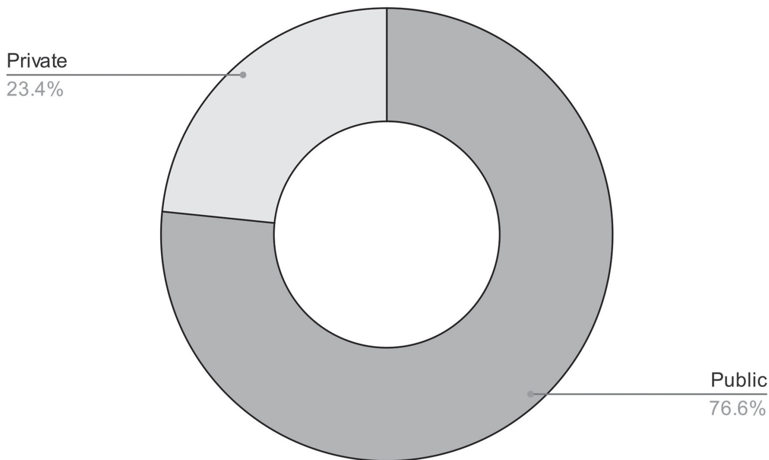

Figure 8.3 Type of research institution (public or private) where the harassment occurred (N: 201).

3) Gender of the harasser

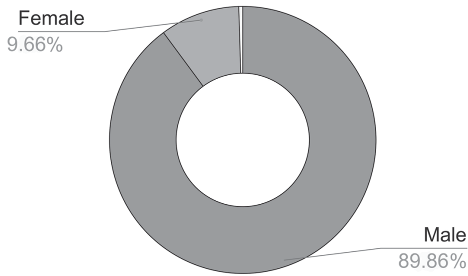

Figure 8.4 Gender of the harasser (N: 207).

4) Status/position/role of the harasser

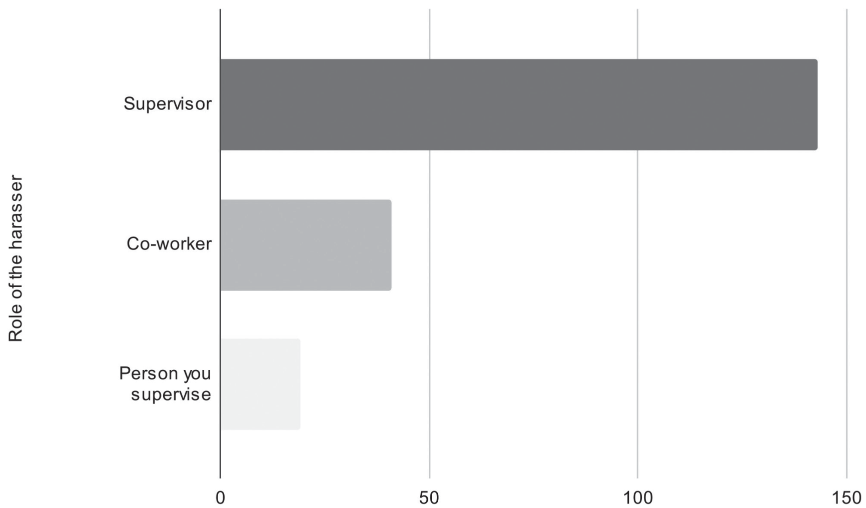

Figure 8.5 Role of the harasser (not in percentages) (N: 203).

5) Have you ever heard about any episode of sexual harassment (in the field of Archaeology)? Did you talk with someone about it?

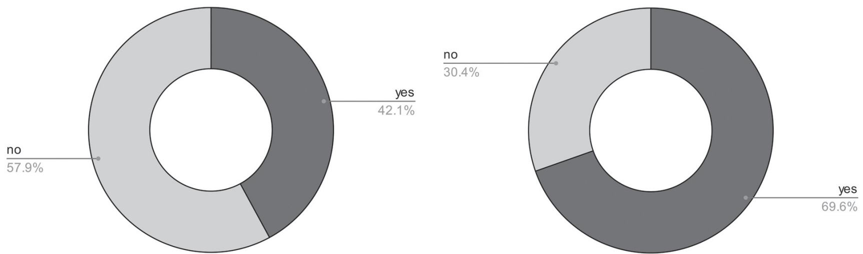

Figure 8.6 (a, b) People who knew someone who had been harassed (N: 164) and whether they reported the episode to someone (N: 204).

6) Were there consequences after the harassment?

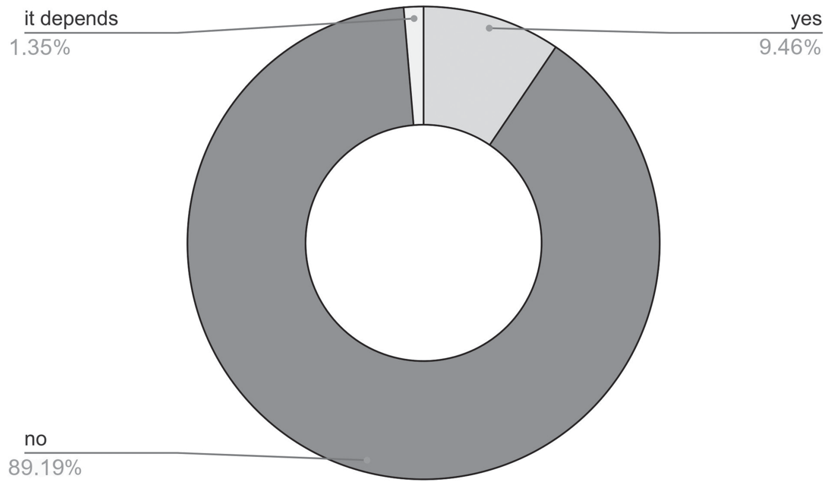

Figure 8.7 Consequences of harassment (N: 148). This does not only include respondents harassed but witnesses.

7) Types of sexual harassment

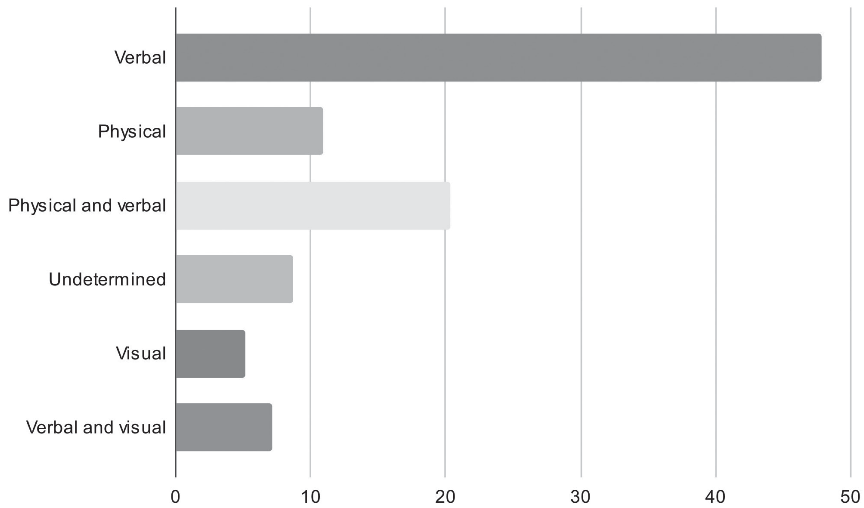

Figure 8.8 Types of harassment extracted from the survey (N: 138 clear cases of harassment detected; other cases were discarded as inconclusive). Note: Cyber-bullying was mostly counted as verbal bullying.

8) Impact of harassment

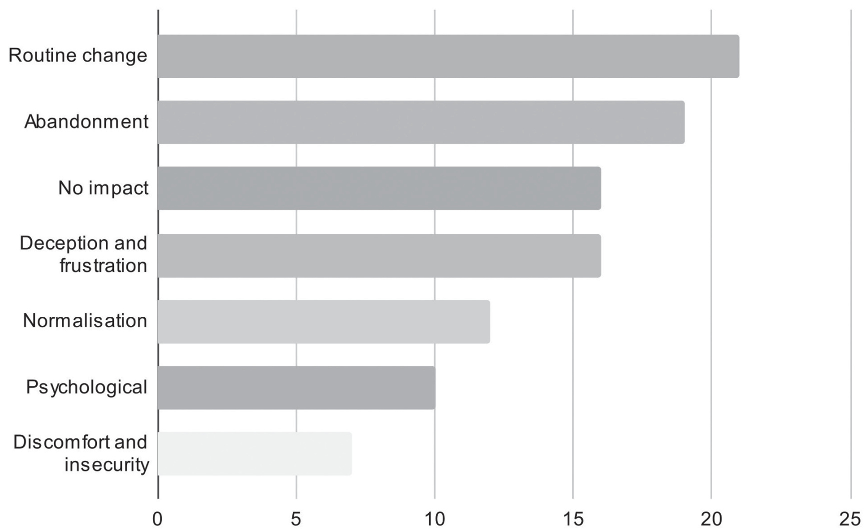

Figure 8.9 Respondents' reactions to harassment (N:122). Based on respondents that clearly identified a type of harassment. Other cases had to be discarded as inconclusive.

9) Cases of sexual harassment reported (direct and indirect) at Spanish universities

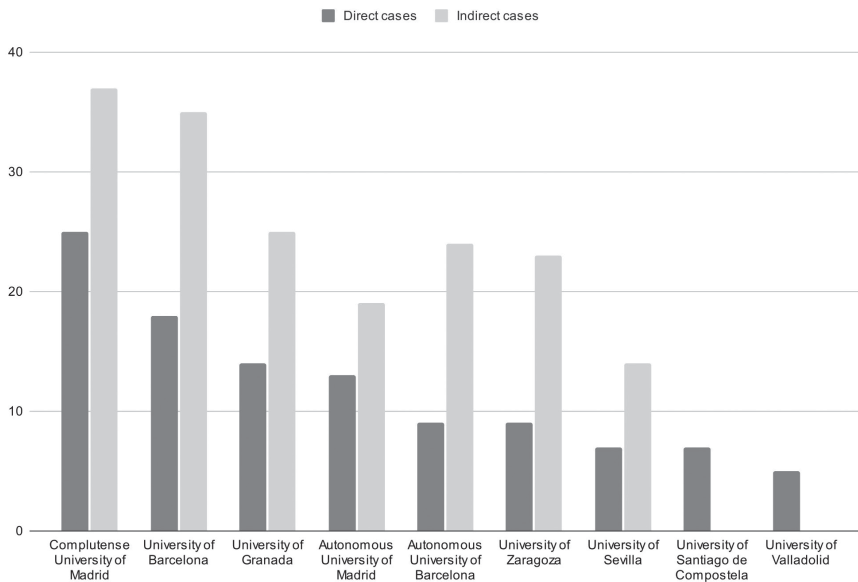

Figure 8.10 Direct and indirect harassment cases per university (N: 277). Direct cases correspond to cases directly reported by a person on the survey while indirect cases correspond to cases where someone heard about a harassment case.

The analysis of the survey results (see Figures 8.2–8.10) enabled us to draw a series of indications and patterns:

1 The participation in the survey and the cases of harassment reported were predominantly female. Most participants who reported harassment were in the early to mid-career stages (25–30 years), suggesting a couple of trends, such as a concentration of harassment cases at this age and a decrease at later ages. It could also suggest two possibilities: (1) higher awareness of reporting harassment publicly and (2) a high concentration of sexual harassment cases in these ages.
2 Respondents shared their testimonies mainly with people within a close and safe environment.
3 There is a clear indication that harassment occurs in highly hierarchised contexts: In Spain, archaeological contexts are often pyramidal in their structure, and men often occupy positions of power (as directors or leaders of research teams). In these contexts, they are signalled as the perpetrators.

4 Most of the harassment episodes occurred in public institutions. In the case of private-commercial excavations, detection and reporting mechanisms were found to be more effective than in public-funded institutions (such as universities).
5 Most respondents stated that there were no consequences after their harassment. Many of the respondents did not know how to act and what mechanisms they could use to make a report. We found that they were afraid of reprisals due to relationships of dependence and power with the harasser.
6 The harassment was mostly verbal. A gradual increase from verbal harassment to more physical harassment has been detected, especially in the contexts of archaeological fieldwork.
7 Regarding the subsequent impact, most of the respondents changed their routine after being harassed (stop attending classes, abandon excavations, change their clothes, etc.). A severe normalisation or assimilation (non-impact) of this type of harassment was also detected in a significant number of respondents.

The data reinforce one of our assumptions that episodes of harassment take place in places historically characterised by power relations and impunity such as archaeological fieldwork settings and university campus (Coto-Sarmiento et al., 2020, p. 48).

Exploring the narratives: The spatial dimensions of violence in archaeology

The results of the survey we presented in the previous section go along the lines of quantitative studies carried out in Spanish universities and thus allow us to understand the scope of sexual violence in academic contexts (Navarro-Guzmán et al., 2016; Puigvert et al., 2019; Vidu Afloarei, 2017). In this section, we aim to go beyond the alphanumeric results and analyse the narratives of the people who responded to the survey explaining their experiences of harassment in the open questions of the survey. These questions allowed us to better understand the perceptions of the social environments in which harassment occurs, the brutality of its impact and lasting personal and professional consequences, as well as the frequent impunity for the people who exercise them. Moreover, it is important to highlight that it is in the narratives where we can better grasp the impact of sexual misconduct in archaeology (both in university and excavation contexts). In this section, we focus mostly on sexual misconduct that is evident in everyday routine.

As other studies point out, we understand sexual harassment not as an isolated case or a question of inappropriate behaviour, but as a mechanism of control and coercion that works to produce and reproduce the distribution of power in highly heteropatriarchal structures (Biglia and Cagliero,

2019; Cagliero and Biglia, 2019). The narratives delineate some patterns about how sexual violence works in archaeological contexts, mostly related to fieldwork contexts (Voss, 2021a, p. 257). Through the analysis of the narratives, we want to explore if the sexual harassment that is exercised in archaeology has certain characteristics that can be understood within the history of the discipline itself: the sexism or male chauvinism that is symbolised and exercised with the figure of the male archaeologist. It is possible that in the current context of greater feminisation of the discipline, the traditional *status quo* of power is in danger, and therefore women who work in the fields or/and who hold management positions will be punished even more (Lazar et al., 2014).

On the one hand, the analysis of the responses reveals a series of complex manifestations of violence. These manifestations take place in archaeological excavations that are complex spaces in which social relations are clearly interfered by engendered relations of power. On the other hand, the open interviews allowed us to highlight some aspects that we believe are clearly specific to the practices and places where archaeology is practised. To summarise our analysis, we have grouped the narratives into four themes that we will analyse below.[3]

The body in the field

It is during fieldwork that most instances of sexual misconduct are present. According to the survey women often receive inappropriate comments about their bodies from people who hold positions of power within the context of archaeological excavation. The type of narratives we obtained in the survey, for example, are: "the director of the excavation put the girls in positions so he could look at their ass or breasts with freedom". For example, one of the members of the team mentioned "there is nothing sexier than a woman standing up after digging, taking her panties off the crack of the ass". These are examples of how women's bodies become objects of harassment through an array of behaviours that in the case of archaeology are manifested not only in classroom, offices or meeting on campus but also in the everyday places where archaeology takes place: in the field. As we explain now, the respondents of the survey expressed how these spaces become "dangerous spaces".

The social dimensions of fieldwork practices

As mentioned earlier, archaeological excavations are complex scenarios in which social relations are intense and long periods of cohabitation and shared intimacy occur. Sexual harassment is a frequent protagonist within the context of archaeological excavations. There are examples in which the director of the excavation spent time "touching my ass", wrote a woman in

the survey. As mentioned earlier, offering alcoholic beverages are common during fieldwork, especially because students and professors are cohabiting for long periods of time. An archaeologist narrates that "when I went home at night, the director of the excavation offered me alcohol, and told me to sleep with him. The director of the excavation, who was a professor himself, even told me that if I allowed him to do a massage, he would tell my professors to give me good grades". These types of attitudes are in many cases silenced by the group, and it is not surprising that it becomes a shared secret, everybody knows but nobody says anything.

The group: Hierarchies and power in fieldwork practices

Another characteristic of archaeological work is that it is usually carried out in highly hierarchical group contexts and in which power relations are generated and perpetuated. These contexts, in many cases, tend to normalise sexual violence expressed physically, visually or verbally. For example, in most of the excavation's conversations, jokes or anecdotes are heard with a clearly *macho* and heteronormative tone, which facilitates an environment that is not only uncomfortable for women (and undoubtedly for some men) but also normalises verbal violence as something that is part of the daily life of relationships and social dynamics. These types of comments show an environment in which female archaeologists are clearly marked as outsiders. As another person who shared her experience tells us: "I had a partner who kept making disgusting jokes about women". Therefore, and citing another testimony, the excavations become spaces in which "true camaraderie are generated whose debates consist of deciding who was hotter or who they were going to fuck, etc".

In most cases, it is men who hold the position of director of an excavation, and it is quite common that violence is used as part of this exercise of power. For example, a student who participated in excavations mentions that "the director of the excavation put the girls in tasks that allowed him to look at their bottoms or cleavage freely". In addition, these narratives allow us to see a series of violence that aimed at maintaining an established order and perpetuating power structures. This archaeological hierarchy reminds women to perform specific tasks during fieldwork delimited by gender mandates.

On other occasions, the comments are clearly aimed at questioning the role that some women have in spaces of power. For instance, one of the women who answered the survey tells us that she was told "by the director of the excavation: beautiful, girl, precious, charming, etc. and having to remind them of your name, surname and position in that intervention". In some cases, women have been clearly prevented from being part of the research team because "since I was beautiful (a colleague told me), it was better to find a husband to support me".

The silences and the voices

Another aspect that the narratives visualise is the issue of the consequences of violence and harassment. To speak of sexual violence is to break with a historical silence in archaeological practice and confront a strongly stagnant power structure. It is quite common that there are no consequences when silences are broken. In this sense, when we asked in the survey about the consequences for the harasser, a common response was: "None, it was the director, how could there be consequences?". In this sense, abusive relations and harassment are often normalised, and harassers are rarely retaliated.

In the survey, we were also interested in knowing if the survivors of harassment have done anything, and how they considered the harassment had affected their lives. The fact that there have been no complaints does not imply that the survivors have not shared their experiences with other people. It is mostly documented that the victims spoke with people close to their environment or, to a lesser extent, that they had made a type of formal complaint. Judging from the responses, people who have suffered harassment, whether in public or private settings and despite its traumatic nature, feel better when they are able to speak about it. However, sharing experiences has positive effects on women. For example, one of the women who works at a private archaeological company told us "Because I felt stronger to fight and complain if I was again in similar situations, in part, because I had a lot of support and understanding from the company and colleagues. But now I felt very angry, and I felt disgusted towards that person". Even though no complaints were made, and that the issue of harassment is surrounded by a lot of silence, in the responses it is glimpsed that bonds of solidarity are created between equals and in contexts where sexual violence occurs at a structural level.

Conclusion

This work seeks to be one small step or stem in a larger rhizome that has emerged in different academic fields and scientific practices: denounce structural violence that has shaped university settings. The survey was mostly evidence-driven, that is, we wanted to obtain recent data to make visible a problem that was until now invisible in Spanish archaeology and in this way start a conversation. We believe that we were modestly successful, as the survey has propelled an interest to document sexual harassment in archaeology in Spain. In Spain, for example, we were invited to participate in a presentation of the survey in Madrid and at the Catalonia Museum of Archaeology. We also participated in the cycle of conferences organised by the national association of students of archaeology – CONADEA (Perú).

As discussed earlier, the data collected in the survey points to several particularities of archaeology as a fieldwork-based discipline that has also been underlined by other scholars (Heath-Stout, 2019; Ross, 2015; Voss,

2021a, 2021b). For example, the historical configuration of the discipline as an adventure that attracts mostly strong, western and rich, white cis men in search of great treasures from the past has configured scenarios of a clearly inequitable character, which can be magnified during field practices. This study highlights that those contexts are not neutral and that violence, in this case sexual harassment, takes place mainly in a series of spaces where power and control are promoted and desired. The collected testimonies situate us in a scenario of structural gender discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, which has visible repercussions on the development of the professional careers of many individuals, especially women, ethnic minorities and members of the LGTBIQ+ community. After all, as the survey indicates and other scholars have also suggested, "the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault has shaped the culture of the field and led some archaeologists to see weathering harassment as a kind of price of entry for... doing archaeological work" (Heath-Stout, 2019, p. 286; see also Voss, 2021a).

In the last few years, we have witnessed an outbreak of initiatives that report harassment in academia at an international and interprofessional level. Another symptom of progress is the crystallisation of official and unofficial protocols and its presence in academic sessions at conferences, congresses or talks at institutions, but its connections with the critical currents of gender and feminist archaeology will still have to be explored. We hope that this phenomenon is here to stay and not be phagocytosed by those in power. Projects such as SeGReVUni[4] have also emerged, bringing together the trajectory of studies rooted in intersectionality and approaching the task of mitigating the disparities of the most vulnerable groups in academia. One of the future challenges for us as activists will be to guarantee that these works have a positive and long-term impact, broadening the scope towards more intersectional practices that gradually democratise and depatriarchalising archaeological practice. Moreover, we are also compromised to build academic environments where feminist ethics can be injected and where care is seen as a radical political compromise (Mountz et al., 2015). In the specific case of archaeology, surveys such as the one presented here aim to bring to light data about sexual harassment in the discipline, but we are also particularly interested in highlighting its spatial dimensions by unveiling the gendered dimensions of fieldwork as a scientific practice. To conclude, besides providing data, some of the issues that we should address in the future are: how do we build inclusive and safe workplaces, school environments or public spaces within academic settings? To what extent does gender violence work to define or reaffirm the existing hierarchies in fieldwork spaces that have historically been designed as masculine and privileged spaces? It is important to acknowledge that we are facing a problem of endemic and structural violence, and to mitigate it we need every actor involved to recognise its existence. To conclude, we provide some recommendations that can be implemented in academic contexts to address the prevalence of sexual misconduct.

1. Foster alliances with feminist movements and organisations within or outside of universities.
2. Setting up support networks that go beyond the official or institutional ones, so that victims do not feel alone at any time.
3. Universities need to invest in hiring professionals who work on a permanent basis in education and whose work is particularly increased during periods when fieldwork is carried out.
4. Elaborate protocols that consider the particularities of archaeology (considering the periods of fieldwork outside the universities) and make a public dissemination campaign.
5. Create systems in fieldwork scenarios for addressing harassment: design a person (with sensitive training in issues of sexual harassment) in each site.
6. In congresses and conferences create a protocol of safety and designate people who can be reference persons to listen and give support to victims.
7. Enforce negative consequences for harmful behaviours. Put pressure on institutions to stop protecting aggressors, to take a stand and be able to enforce the laws and punishments proposed in it in an absolute and unbiased manner.
8. Take into consideration that individuals experiencing violence may not recognise their experiences as abusive, particularly because of the prevalence of abuse and often acceptance of such behaviour.

Notes

1. Contract, rescue or commercial archaeology is defined in Spain as the archaeology developed outside the scope of a research project developed by a university or scientific institution. Contract archaeology endorses the archaeological works carried out and, in many cases urgently, driven by private companies and in connection with development works, reuse of spaces, roads or trains, for instance.
2. https://theprofessorisin.com/ (accessed on 29th November 2021).
3. The full narratives are in the published report by Coto-Sarmiento et al. (2020).
4. www.segrevuni.eu/

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Part III

Disclosure, complaint and recognition

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9 Sexual misconduct in academic liminal spaces

Autoethnographic reflections on complaint and institutional response

Alexandria Petit-Thorne

Introduction

In 2018, I was sexually harassed on- and off-campus by a fellow graduate student. As I pursued the complaint process at my university, I quickly learned that the off-campus nature of many professional events that I entered as a student and employee of that institution did not fall within the purview of the university's sexual violence policy. This chapter approaches sexual violence in academic spaces from an anthropological perspective, reflecting auto-ethnographically on my own experiences of sexual violence as a graduate student in off-campus spaces occupied exclusively by academics. These spaces, which I term *academic liminal spaces*, include those off-campus or unofficial events where academics socialize, network, and work with one another outside of the technical purview of their home institution, including student organizations, labour unions, conference spaces, and social events. These spaces exist outside of the institutions that make up the campus but are component parts of the social and political worlds of the academy. With no formal institution claiming liability or authority over these spaces, incidences of academic sexual misconduct in these spaces slip through the cracks in institutional sexual violence policies.

Taking up my own experiences navigating sexual misconduct in these spaces, this chapter asks how we might make such spaces – which we enter as academics to work, network, and socialize with our colleagues and which are crucial to our professional lives – safer? And how, too, might we better support community members who are victimized in those spaces? Looking specifically at the Canadian context in which no standardized reporting or overseeing bodies (like Title IX offices in the US[1]) exist and in which institutional responses to sexual violence complaints tend to resolve complaints privately and informally, this chapter offers examples of what a trauma-informed and survivor-centric approach to addressing sexual violence in academic liminal spaces might look like. This chapter begins with contextually situated autoethnographic reflections on my own experiences of sexual violence in academic liminal spaces. This chapter then explores academic

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sexual misconduct from an anthropological perspective, highlighting how the structure of the academy enables and maintains conditions ripe for sexual violence. Finally, this chapter examines what it would mean to work towards trauma-informed interventions, proposing that both individuals and institutions alike center care in our responses to academic sexual misconduct.

On writing-as-complainant[2]

In the tradition of other anthropologists who have written about their experiences of sexual violence in academia or academia-adjacent settings (i.e., off-campus, the field), I engage theory through autoethnographic reflections on reporting sexual violence at a Canadian university (see Berry et al. 2017; di Leonardo 1997; Moreno 1995; Pandey 2009; Winkler 2002; Winkler and Hanke 1995). Autoethnography privileges the subjective, the emotional, and the personal; in that right, I understand it to be an inherently feminist and unsettling practice. Giving voice to subjective experiences of interpersonal and structural violence chips away at the structural silences surrounding that violence (Jones, Adams, and Ellis 2016, pp. 35–36). Likewise, as a critical practice, privileging subjective or experiential knowledge unsettles academic notions of the objective researcher who produces knowledge about the other while remaining separate and apart from them (Abu-Lughod 1990; 1991). Moreover, to speak and to write of our personal experiences of harm and violence within the academy is an inherently political endeavour. As Ahmed suggests, giving voice to these stories is a form of witnessing (2021, pp. 13–14), a way of recording an alternate history of our universities (2021, pp. 184–185). In speaking about violence from a personal position, we demystify the structures which enable, maintain, and produce violence and which construct silences around that violence (Feldman 1993, p. 17). However, as a researcher and a survivor of sexual violence, I am constantly mindful of the ways in which confessional narratives of violence and trauma are so often captured and reproduced as a spectacle for consumption and theorization in the academy (Smart 1989). I am, therefore, committed to not reproducing my own trauma narrative in a state of apprehension here; rather, I offer these reflections and autoethnographic testimonies as "a coming to voice, an insistence on speaking and not being silenced or spoken for" (Feldman 1993, p. 17).

I am a white genderqueer bisexual doctoral candidate at a large Canadian research university. I entered my doctoral program in the fall of 2017, just as the Harvey Weinstein sex abuse stories broke and as the #MeToo movement went viral. A few months later, in March 2018, the labour union representing teaching assistants at my institution went on strike. Among our many bargaining issues was the establishment of a fund for survivors of sexual violence, and it was this issue that motivated my involvement with the strike. Ironically, it was during this strike and its aftermath that

I experienced sexual harassment, stalking, and other forms of sexualized and gender-based violence from another graduate student. My abuser was in the leadership of that labour union and my complaint against him would eventually be shared with the entire union membership; this led to months of retaliatory harassment and bullying from students and faculty who felt I was damaging the union's progressive reputation. Some of this violence occurred within the bounds of campus – on picket lines on university property, in offices, and in buildings on campus. Other incidents occurred very clearly off-campus, at bars, and at social gatherings of graduate students and contract faculty. Others, still, occurred in union offices and spaces that were politically demarcated from the university but still physically part of the campus.

At the heart of my writing on sexual violence is a deeply personal fascination with the silences that form around sexual violence and the structures which enact and maintain those silences within the academy. I write this in the tradition of activist anthropology, meaning that solidarity with survivors, victims, and complainants in academia is at the core of this endeavour. This solidarity is an ethical necessity when reflecting on experiences and consequences of violence – as Hale (2006) and Smith (2015) argue, there are more than just theoretical implications at stake when we talk about violence. This solidarity or alignment is, of course, the product of my own experiences of violence, complaint, and legal proceedings. As a complainant, a junior academic, and an activist-anthropologist, I occupy a space that is politically compromised and yet, as Hale (2006, p. 98) argues, incredibly generative. It is this unconventional positioning – this experiential knowledge – that offers a basis for critical analysis and feminist storytelling that, hopefully, locates the personal within larger political contexts of academic sexual violence and rape culture more broadly.

Sexual violence in the Ivory Tower

I define sexual violence as a continuum of sexual acts targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression which are committed, threatened, or attempted against a person without their freely given consent. This definition includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, stalking, sexual exploitation, and indecent exposure, to name but a few (Petit-Thorne 2020). This conceptualization of sexual violence is grounded in Liz Kelly's (1988) *Surviving Sexual Violence*, in which she proposed continuum thinking as a way to establish connections between acts of violence and to make clear broader patterns of structural violence. Continuum thinking further subverts hierarchical thinking about sexual violence, in which some might consider some acts, like harassment or stalking, to be less violent and therefore less serious offences (Boyle 2019; Petit-Thorne 2020). Sexual violence is inextricable from structural violence; it is, at its core, a violent enactment of power inequalities wielded most often

against those bodies that are deemed different or challenging to those who are empowered within a particular social structure. Sexual violence does not merely occur between individuals in the private sphere, but rather it is a cultural and political act that "attempts to remove a person with agency, autonomy, and belonging from their community, to secrete them and separate them, to depoliticize their body by rendering it detachable, violable, nothing" (Mayer 2018, p. 140).

In discussing how sexual violence manifests in the academy, one must first discuss how the academy itself is structured. Violence encompasses more than just physical force; it has social and cultural dimensions which give it meaning and power (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). Decoupling violence from physical force alone enables us to examine how violence is exerted indirectly through social structures and institutions, which Farmer (2004, p. 307) terms structural violence. The academy does not exist outside or apart from structures of violence; the organizational structures of campuses, departments, and academic training lend themselves to potential abuses of power. Campuses have fragmented organizational systems; they are made up of schools and departments, which themselves may be nested within independent colleges or faculties. Each may have its own administrative structure and hierarchy, resulting in diffuse structures of governance (Dzeich and Weiner 1990, p. 46). Departments and organizations within the larger campus are designed to be hierarchical and dependent on the insular politics of gatekeeping, self-censorship, precarity, and dispossession to survive funding cuts and institutional pressures (Quinlan 2017, pp. 61–65). The academy writ large is bureaucratic, hierarchical, and an inherently conservative institution designed to protect itself from the challenge, but its social power structure often remains ambiguous, shifting, and poorly defined (McDowell 1990, p. 329).

Ahmed (2018) theorizes academia as a network of connections. Institutions, administrators, and scholars invest in connections with one another, with other institutions, and with external bodies, constituting a rhizomatic formation of intertwining connections. The more one becomes connected through promotions, accolades, publications, and grants, the more their colleagues and their institutions become invested in them. Power is unequally dispersed through this network and concentrates in the hands of the most connected. The connected become what Ahmed (2018) calls "important men"; resources, letters of recommendation, fellowships, and employment opportunities come to flow through them like currency, rendering students, early-career researchers, contingent faculty, and the precariously employed dependent on them. "Important men" come to occupy central roles within academic institutions, which in turn are designed to insulate themselves from the challenge; this means that those who complain about abuses of power, particularly abuses by "important men", are likely to be perceived as disruptive, threatening, or a problem. In turn, this leaves the most precarious members of the academy increasingly vulnerable to abuses

of power; the least connected are the most unprotected and their complaints are likely to be minimized, dismissed, or seen as a threat to the institution. This compounds in insidious ways; "important men" come to be gatekeepers for funding, recommendations, and career prospects, making students and contingent faculty reliant on their goodwill and complaint potentially self-destructive. Not complaining about abuse is similarly destructive, albeit in different ways. Attempts to avoid abusers or spaces where they might congregate (i.e., certain conferences, professional associations, departments, labs, field schools, etc.) are potentially destructive to one's own career. The structure of academia makes responding to abuse in any way impossible to do without cutting oneself off from networks of connections.

In the Canadian context, neoliberal discourses and techniques of risk management inform institutional responses to sexual violence. Neoliberalism emphasizes individual responsibility for one's own well-being or lack thereof, effectively denying the effects of structural violence on that well-being. Neoliberal techniques of risk management shift responsibility for violence prevention and response onto potential victims who ought to avoid risk-taking behaviours (Baxi 2014, pp. 146–147; Hall 2004; Petit-Thorne 2020, p. 330). Within this framework, sexual violence is constructed in relation to risk, risk avoidance and risk-taking behaviours, and risk management – this effectively shifts responsibility for preventing sexual violence onto the individual who engages in risk-taking behaviour. This individualization of responsibility for sexual violence effectively decouples incidents of violence from the structures which enable and produce them and further renders victim/survivors responsible for preventing violence against themselves. In practice, this may look like community safety campaigns encouraging potential victims to "do their part" to prevent sexual violence (Gray, Pin, and Cooper 2019, p. 71). In my own experiences, this individualization of responsibility manifested as campus security creating a "safety plan" for my time on campus that instructed me to refrain from visiting campus whenever possible and to not be on campus after dark, despite the tutorials I taught that term ending after those early winter sunsets. It was the prerogative of campus security that they could not and would not be liable for my safety on campus either in my role as a graduate student or as an instructor. To be told that I ought not come to my place of work and study was devastating. It was effectively a statement that I was the cause of and responsible for the lack of safety in my workplace.

This reflects larger neoliberal discourses of responsibilization and individualization; in approaching sexual violence as an individual rather than systemic issue, the university deflects responsibility for violence onto potential victim/survivors and individual perpetrators while simultaneously divorcing acts of violence from the structures of the academy (Colpitts 2019; Petit-Thorne 2020; Quinlan 2017). This individualization is further designed to insulate the institution from responsibility for (re)producing and maintaining conditions of structural violence (Petit-Thorne 2020,

pp. 329–331). For both logistical and strategic purposes, institutional sexual violence policies have limited scope and jurisdiction. While a clearly defined scope and jurisdiction is practically necessary for a functional policy, such policies at Canadian institutions tend to limit which behaviours the policy may apply to and the locations in which those behaviours may occur. In limiting the scope, these policies effectively demarcate which spaces constitute the institution or the campus and which spaces do not. I contend that this limiting of scope is strategic in that it limits institutional jurisdiction and in so doing limits potential institutional liability for the behaviour of its staff and students. Moreover, in individualizing sexual violence – that is, in rendering it the sole responsibility of the perpetrator – the institution further absolves itself of responsibility for sexual misconduct between academics and in academic spaces.

Liminality in academic space

Within the academy, there are numerous spaces that exist in a liminal space between formal institutions. That is, there are spaces in which institutional jurisdiction or responsibility for sexual violence prevention and response becomes purposefully murky. I am referring specifically here to social events (both off- and on-campus), student organizations, labour union events and spaces, and other events and spaces where academics gather officially and/or unofficially proximate to campus, off-campus, or on-campus without official university sanction. These spaces exist apart from formal academic institutions but are component parts of the social and political landscapes of the academy. Moreover, they often exist apart from or outside of the purview of institutional sexual violence policies, with no formal institution claiming authority – and therefore refusing liability for – these spaces populated by academic colleagues.

These spaces exist in ambiguous spaces apart from, or perhaps betwixt and between, governing institutions; they are characterized by elements of ambiguity, disorientation, and the appearance of stepping outside of the hierarchies of the everyday academic workplace within a limited time and space. Turner's (1969) formulation of the liminal is useful in describing the role of these spaces within academic structures and culture – they are spaces that suspend the norms of everyday life, which arise on a sort of cyclical calendar to maintain social structures, and which are given culturally specific meaning. Social events, student organization meetings, and labour union meetings and events, for example, exist in a form of suspension – they exist just outside of the jurisdiction of the university proper but exist because the participants in that space are connected to the university. My own experiences of academic sexual misconduct, for example, occurred in union spaces. As I quickly discovered, despite some of these events occurring on-campus, the university had no jurisdiction over how their staff and students behaved in union spaces. Likewise, the union's only

response to sexual violence was to defer to the university or to launch a grievance against the university for unsafe working conditions. Registering a formal complaint became a bureaucratic impossibility, and I slowly slipped through the cracks between institutional jurisdictions. Moreover, as a witness to other forms of sexual misconduct at the same institution in a student organization space, a similar pattern repeated itself – neither the university nor the organization hosting the event was prepared to be liable for the behaviour of these students, nor did they have appropriate procedures or mechanisms in place to prevent or respond to such incidents of violence. These experiences as a graduate student compounded what I had already witnessed during my undergraduate education at another Canadian institution, where a sexual assault in a fraternity house during an official (and school-sanctioned) Orientation week event was outside the jurisdiction of the university and likewise determined not to be a police manner by the respective authorities. Nor did the student organizations who organized the events – for which I was one of many coordinators – have any official authority over the response to these events.

The aura of suspension in these spaces has practical roots; social and political spaces that make up the social life of the academy exist betwixt and between the rules and jurisdictions which govern behaviour in our respective institutions and the associations or organizations to which we belong and whose events we participate in. The liminality of these spaces is by design; an element of separation from the everyday life of the academy is crucial to their existence. In practice, this means that the rules governing our personal and professional conduct become malleable and less clearly defined. This raises questions about responsibility and liability then, namely, who *exactly* is meant to prevent and respond to sexual violence in these spaces? To whose behavioural standards are we being held in these spaces? Under whose jurisdiction, mandate, or policy does sexual violence which occurs between students and/or staff in these spaces fall? It is my experience that sexual violence in these spaces simply falls outside institutional boundaries, between policies and procedures, and through the cracks.

With gender-based and sexual violence in particular, it is well established that academia has long fostered an institutional “chilly climate” for women, which is further exacerbated for queer, disabled, and/or racialized women (Hall and Sandler 1982; Fitzgerald et al. 1988). The concept of the chilly climate links directly to campus rape culture, or the persistent institutional culture which minimizes the severity of sexual violence, maintains the structures which produce it, and maligns complainants as disruptive or threatening to the institution. Peggy Reeves Sanday’s (1981) conceptualization of rape-prone cultures is another useful framework here. Sanday (1981) defines rape-prone cultures as those where the incidence of rape is high, where rape is excused as an expression of masculinity, and/or in which rape is an act by which men are allowed to punish or threaten women. These cultures exist in opposition to rape-free cultures, in which sexual aggression is either absent

or socially disapproved of and therefore punished severely. Sanday (1990; 1996) extends this theorization to her study of campus rape culture as it manifests in fraternities and power imbalances. Faced with myriad forms of insecurity that a campus situation might create or exacerbate, men struggle to retain or gain control over their environment and to reinforce their superiority by subjugating and controlling women (Sanday 1996). That behaviour is exacerbated in bonding situations, where insecure men attempt to display their superiority to one another. If we understand environmental insecurity to also include the endemic job insecurity, funding precarity, and ever-shifting social power structures that constitute the academy, then the workplace culture of the academy maps easily onto Sanday's model of student culture and behaviour.

It is not difficult to then extend this idea of exacerbation and environmental insecurity to other aspects of academic culture. Take the academic conference as an example; conferences are important sites and spaces for academics which offer opportunities for networking, developing a sense of community, and presenting and promoting one's work. The consequences of not attending conferences, therefore, have professional implications and can severely reduce career and networking opportunities (Flores 2020, p. 2). And yet, conferences exist in a form of suspension between participants' home institutions and their respective organizing associations. They are spaces that pop-up cyclically in the academic calendar, which suspend the norms of everyday life and everyday work for a predetermined amount of time; they maintain and reinforce social and professional structures within the academy writ large, and which are given culturally specific meaning. The time-space of the conference is arguably liminal. And, like these other academic liminal spaces, conferences provide unique opportunities for bonding with colleagues and scholars from other institutions; they create opportunities for solidarity; and they also create opportunities for displaying scholarly superiority through self-promotion, bragging, and targeted critiques of other presenters. Like Sanday, I contend that opportunities to display superiority or social prowess in these settings are ripe for exacerbating environmental insecurities endemic to the academy.

When we are dealing with spaces that exist in this liminal time-space that is necessarily connected to the academy and yet simultaneously separate from it, we see similar opportunities for bonding with one's colleagues and fostering a sense of community. However, the need to build that community and to create recreational opportunities emerges from the academy itself – were we not academics, we would not be in these spaces. Simply put, academics do not leave academic culture at the door; the environmental insecurities and innate precariousness of academic life inevitably enter one's social life. When we enter social spaces with other academics, the opportunity to display scholarly superiority through bragging, self-promotion, or targeted attacks and/or critiques of others' work still presents themselves. This is particularly true when we enter social spaces that have a social

hierarchy reminiscent of professional hierarchy and which may feature the consumption of alcohol or other substances. I draw this comparison to rape-prone cultures not to suggest that these spaces have a higher rate of sexual violence than other academic spaces or that these spaces inherently breed violence – we do not have comparable data through which to make that assessment, nor do I think that such an assessment would be particularly useful in addressing these iterations of academic sexual misconduct in practice. Rather, I am attempting to highlight the myriad cultural, spatial, and structural aspects of such liminal spaces which may further exacerbate the environmental insecurities endemic to the neoliberal academy and which may, therefore, (re)produce, encourage, and abet the perpetuation of sexual violence against those who are always already vulnerable within the hierarchies of the academy.

In attempting to complain about sexual violence that occurred mainly within such liminal spaces, I encountered three major obstacles: structural violence, institutional violence, and lateral violence. In my case, structural violence manifested through misogyny, heterosexism, and transphobia in the complaint process as my sexual history and my identity as a genderqueer person was called into question. Incidents of violence related directly to my gender identity and sexual orientation were summarily dismissed by the external investigator as "misunderstandings", despite my abuser having explicitly said that he targeted me – in part – because he thought I was a lesbian. There is an insidious compounding of harm here that manifests through the institution's refusal to acknowledge that victims/survivors are human beings that necessarily exist at the intersection of multiple identities. It seemed to confound the system that I would complain of sexual harassment *and* homophobic/transphobic harassment in the same breath. This refusal to understand the realities of violence against queer people left me with a deep sense of betrayal and abandonment by my supposedly progressive institution. I likewise experienced institutional violence, or violence enacted through departments and organizations that constitute the academy. Institutional violence may include the withdrawal of professional and/or material support for a victim/survivor, abandoning them to the figurative, scholarly, and sometimes literal death worlds. Institutional violence might also include the failure to prevent or respond appropriately to violence committed by individuals within that institution, a phenomenon termed institutional betrayal (Ahmed 2021; Quinlan 2017; Smith and Freyd 2014). Watching my own complaint fall between the intentionally narrow purviews of two institutions – the university and the union – was one such experience of institutional betrayal. Lateral violence was further layered onto these structural elements; by lateral violence, I mean the conscious and unconscious withdrawal of solidarity, support, relations, and resources, from one's peers. Ahmed (2018) makes the astute observation that when an individual, program, or organization is framed as innovative or radical, the complaint is treated as a threat to that innovation. The perceived progressiveness of

a space or person – in my own case, of the union and activist networks to which I and my abuser belonged – can be used to dismiss complaints as reprisals or as reactionary. Resentments and vitriol to such a threat brew laterally, across peer networks, in the face of a perceived threat. If institutional violence enacts silences through material forms of reprisal, lateral violence enacts silences by causing emotional and mental distress to the complainant through the withdrawal of support and social ostracization.

These forms of violence exist on a continuum, not a hierarchy; however, it was the lateral violence, for me, that was the most unsettling. In the weeks following my complaint, colleagues, friends, and supporters began to distance themselves from me or cut off support altogether. Even those who suggested to me privately that they supported me and that they believed me to be doing the right thing made a public show of distancing themselves from me and ending our personal and professional relationships. Ironically enough, it was the friends and colleagues who had convinced me to pursue a complaint that withdrew their support when that complaint began to inconvenience them. The social ostracization, coupled with institutional betrayal, was an unbearable burden to carry; over the course of the complaint, I became suicidal and was subsequently hospitalized. More often than not, I wanted to give up – every day brought new obstacles and every step of the complaint process brought new violence. This is by design; the complaint process is designed to stop complaints in their tracks and to wear complainants down (Ahmed 2021, p. 93). Ultimately, the process of complaint was traumatizing in and of itself.

Towards trauma-informed interventions

Trauma is an inherently individual experience; it impacts everyone differently. We do know, however, that trauma is often accompanied by feelings of powerlessness, shame, and distress, as well as academic struggles (Craig 2016; Craig 2017; Harrison, Burke, and Clarke 2020). It is my contention that responses to academic sexual misconduct ought to be trauma-informed. By that, I mean we ought to recognize the impacts of trauma on individuals and communities and integrate that knowledge into pedagogy and institutional structures so as to promote healing and prevent re-traumatization (Carello and Butler 2014; Harrison, Burke, and Clarke 2020). To do so would necessarily require interventions at the structural level – meaning that we must seriously address how structural and institutional violence manifests in academia – as well as individual efforts to reimagine the academy. Currently, the responses of Canadian institutions to sexual violence often create spaces of institutional abandonment which leave victims/survivors to wither and die, both figuratively and literally. It is my contention that a trauma-informed approach to academic sexual misconduct which centers on victims/survivors' experiences of harm and recovery could work to unsettle these larger structures of violence. Given that victims/survivors

are not a monolith and our needs are varied, I will not endeavour to offer an all-encompassing proposal for what this might look like in practice. I do, however, offer some general recommendations at the individual and structural levels. I do not mean to suggest here that these actions alone can counteract structural violence – that premise is an inherently neoliberal notion and the need for structural change in how academic institutions conceptualize, approach, and respond to sexual violence is self-evident. Nonetheless, there are still ways that we can begin to disrupt the (re)production of cycles of violence and (re)traumatization in our institutions.

At the interpersonal level, we need to prioritize care in how we handle disclosure and the various bureaucratic processes victims/survivors may go through. Care is both an embodied experience and a social action (Black 2018); we often think about care in the medical sense, as something that sustains physical life, but it also serves to sustain social life (Buch 2015, p. 280). I understand care to be a relational process that emerges when people are socially, politically, or materially connected and called into relations of providing and receiving a socially recognized need (Thelen 2015, p. 509; Tronto 1993; Mol 2008). From my first disclosure, my dissertation supervisor acted to prioritize my health and well-being. She was understanding when I needed extra time to reach certain milestones and offered to meet me off-campus when I felt unsafe on campus. Likewise, my graduate program director and dissertation committee members never questioned the delays in my progress through degree milestones. The instructors for whom I worked as a teaching assistant made arrangements when necessary to prioritize my safety, including helping to move my assigned classroom out of a building my abuser worked in and covering for my occasional absences. These individuals were not required to show me these kindnesses and the majority of these acts were informally initiated. These small acts of care enabled me to continue in my program and my employment while prioritizing recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder without taking a formal leave of absence or abandoning the program altogether. This prioritizing of care at the individual level helped me to navigate bureaucratic structures that expressly compounded the harm I had experienced.

Academics need to integrate knowledge about trauma into their professional practices in order to promote healing and growth while preventing re-traumatization. While there has been increasing attention to trauma-informed pedagogy in post-secondary education, we must also integrate trauma-informed practices into mentoring relationships and the myriad of other informal ways that we teach students and early-career researchers. Women-identified faculty members gave me space to talk personally and freely about my experiences throughout the complaint and recovery process, without judgement or suggesting that to do so was unprofessional. They also gave me space to continue to work when I was able. That I could simultaneously exist as a complex person and as a researcher who could be trusted to meet my obligations was a major relief; there were many times

when working as usual became untenable, but there were so many times when I needed normalcy. I needed to be taken seriously as a professional, as a student, as an academic, and not be reduced to a victim. I was also given space to write about and research sexual violence without changing my dissertation research or my research specializations – I am a queer anthropologist who studies performance and storytelling and that brings me deep joy and satisfaction. But I have been nurtured and supported in doing both without being pressured into making my entire life revolve around violence. This is one iteration of trauma-informed mentoring; these faculty members gave their time and effort to ensure that I continued to succeed professionally while minding my evolving needs throughout this process.

Given the structural nature of sexual violence, there is a clear need for academics of all ranks and disciplines to advocate – and at times agitate – for policy change within their own institutions and respective overseeing bodies. To do so, we must first educate ourselves about the realities of academic sexual misconduct. All of us, but particularly faculty with tenure protections, ought to be aware of our institutions' policy on sexual violence (if one exists at all). To be clear, that also means fully understanding how that policy functions in practice. While many of my professors knew to direct me to the appropriate offices upon receiving my disclosure, none had an accurate understanding of what complaint and investigation processes, obtaining accommodations, and accessing mental health resources actually entailed until I shared details of my experiences with them. I contend that we have an ethical obligation to understand these realities and to advocate for policy change within our own universities – particularly given that faculty, teaching assistants, and staff are often the first to witness, experience, receive disclosures of, and respond to academic sexual misconduct. Furthermore, we need to reimagine our notions of responsibility in academic liminal spaces. We need to hold conference organizing bodies, professional and student organizations, labour unions, and other organizations equally accountable for prevention and response to sexual misconduct in their spaces. That violence continues to fall between mandates and jurisdictions is intentional – this will not change without considerable activism and advocacy work.

Conclusion

I offer these examples of trauma-informed responses from individuals not to suggest that individual actions can upend structural violence, but to demonstrate that continuing to contribute to cycles of violence is not necessary. We can imagine different ways of treating each other within the academy, with the caveat that individual behaviours will never be enough without systemic transformation and divestment from the rape culture upon which our institutions are built. Likewise, we must ask ourselves, our programs, and our institutions: who is responsible for those liminal spaces that permeate the academy and why must those spaces be predicated on insecurity, volatility,

and competition? I vocalize my reflections and my experiential knowledge because voicing these subjective experiences of violence chips away at the structural silences surrounding sexual misconduct in the academy. To speak about our experiences of harm in the academy is both a critical and political exercise; I give voice to my experiences as an act of witnessing and as a way of recording an alternate history of my campus. It is my hope that when we speak about violence in this way, we demystify those structures which enable, maintain, and produce it and that we deconstruct those structures which indemnify silence.

Notes

1 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, commonly referred to simply as Title IX, is the statute that prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools or educational programs which receive federal funding in the United States. Sexual harassment and sexual violence fall under the scope of Title IX, meaning that publicly funded institutions are legally required to respond to and remedy gendered and sexual violence complaints. Campuses receiving federal funds have an office or coordinator responsible for the enforcement of Title IX, including the remedying of sexual violence complaints.

2 I personally identify with the terms survivor and complainant. Throughout this chapter, I use the term victim/survivor to refer more broadly to those who have experienced sexual violence.

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10 Sexual violence

Challenges in changing campus culture

Kimberly M Hill and Melanie Crofts

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of our research that focusses on tackling sexual violence within UK universities. In this research, we consider sexual violence and misconduct as involving any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, where there is an absence of consent. For example, behaviours can include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour. This can be between students, staff and students, or between staff within universities. Our work provides an essential insight into areas such as experiences of sexual violence and harassment within UK universities, report and support-seeking behaviour, key recommendations for practice and an evaluation of how we have embedded consent conversations into university curricula. In 2016, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) released Catalyst funding for 63 projects and initiatives, to address sexual violence on UK campuses. As part of this, we conducted a mixed-method, cross-disciplinary body of research to review existing practices and policies in this area, developing student partnerships and providing an evidence base of these issues. The use of these approaches allowed us to innovatively triangulate the perceptions of sexual violence on UK campuses by university managers, staff and students, providing much-needed, in-depth and new insights into sexual violence perceptions, experiences, support-seeking knowledge and reporting preferences. In this chapter, we consider the prevalence of sexual violence within UK universities, as well as the legal implications and in-depth perceptions from students, staff and university managers, which is rarely the focus of work in this area. Based on these findings, we suggest that active, campus-wide campaigns increase awareness, but explain how changing the culture will not be possible if universities do not address barriers to disclosure or have inadequate policies and procedures in place. We also provide key recommendations for practice that should be adopted by decision makers in this area. We argue that sexual violence is a pressing, prevalent issue, but within under-resourced and changing Higher Education landscapes, this will remain a low priority without

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joined, campus-wide approach, driven by university managers, to embed long-term, cultural change.

Sexual violence is prevalent within UK universities

Sexual violence on university campuses is a global, long-standing and widespread issue, with far-reaching detrimental impacts, for example, impacting student health, well-being and academic achievement (Association of American Universities, 2015; National Union of Students (NUS), 2010; Towl, 2016; UUK Taskforce, 2016). Unfortunately, as reports of drink spiking have further highlighted, many women do not feel safe on a night out (Hill and Towl, 2021). According to our work, these experiences are replicated within university contexts and students often report that verbal and physical harassment are part of a normal night out, with many also experiencing derogatory comments or images shared online without their consent. This has been associated with misogynistic banter and lad culture which, it has been claimed, are prevalent within university culture (NUS, 2010; 2014; Hill et al., in review). Coupled with long-standing, embedded norms, sexual violence is a complex issue, and widespread cultural change is required to address these issues.

While sexual violence and harassment are major concerns and have a higher profile in universities and colleges within the US, these issues are just as prevalent and widespread within UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Lewis et al., 2016; NUS, 2010; Phipps and Smith, 2012; Phipps and Young, 2013). However, it is only within the last decade or so that research has highlighted the widespread scale of the issue within UK HEIs. While the action taken in UK HEIs has been long overdue and gradual, much progress has been made in the last few years. For example, pockets of good practice, recommendations and guidance have recently been collated and have provided important insights (Public Health, 2016; Universities UK (UUK), 2016; Office for Students (OFS), 2021). However, there remains a discrepancy in action taken, variation in practice and long-term, sector-wide evaluation of work in this area can be limited (Humphreys and Towl, 2020; Crofts et al., 2018).

Our own research supports the unfortunate prevalence highlighted above. For example, in a short-answer, mixed-method online survey distributed to students within a centrally located English university, 25.73% of all students we surveyed (N = 171) had experienced unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted sexual touching or groping (Hill and Crofts, 2020). However, even more of our sample, 60.82% of students were bystanders often witnessing these incidents happening to others. This included observing sexual comments (32.75%), verbal harassment (23.39%) and group intimidation (16.37%) directed to others. One element key to achieving cultural change is having accurate information about prevalence. However,

universities continue to not have appropriate mechanisms in place to collect this data or lack dedicated reporting processes (Humphreys and Towl, 2020; Crofts et al., 2018). While local police data can be useful, universities must take ownership in collecting their own data to understand the true scale of these issues. This is particularly important as the under-reporting of these issues, particularly to external bodies, also means that prevalence is also likely to be higher than reported.

Importantly, due to normative university cultures, when describing the prevalence of sexual violence on university campuses, students responding to our open-ended qualitative survey questions explained that unwanted touching or harassment as a student 'is simply a part of life' (Hill and Crofts, 2020). Other students appeared to hold these perspectives in place, explaining that their peers should not 'overreact' and report these behaviours, as sexual comments, touching and sharing images online were often 'just jokes'. This normalisation of sexual violence within both face-to-face and online university contexts was further highlighted as some students explained these were 'not important issues' for universities to be focussing on and 'there are more serious issues to be dealt with'. For students, the police would be even less interested in these issues, as one explained: 'when you are in a club and someone is inappropriate, you are not going to call the police'. The suggestion that comments are just 'banter' and should not be reported not only normalises sexual violence but further prevents changes to university culture, reducing the likelihood of students from reporting or seeking support.

In one of our studies, involving qualitative focus groups and interviews with staff, students and University Managers (UMs) (including Deans, Directors and Vice Chancellors, for example), it appears there may exist a disjunction between perceptions of prevalence (Crofts et al., 2018; Hill et al., in review). For example, despite the high number of occurrences and harrowing experiences reported by students, some UMs in our research appeared more concerned about creating a false impression of sexual violence prevalence on their campuses:

> Well I'd like to see the evidence that it's even happening... I'm not convinced that it is ... without sounding complacent ... I'd be reluctant to sort of start putting a whole bunch of bureaucratic machinery in place for a problem that don't exist or is marginal.
>
> (University Manager)

Two-thirds of UMs in our research did not feel sexual violence was an issue at their university. When asked why, some UMs articulated that universities were different from the 'outside world' possibly suggesting that, as more enlightened and tolerant places, there was less of a problem with sexual violence and harassment in campus environments:

> I've worked in factories and transport and retail, you know, where there's a constant stream of abuse … whereas in universities, I've never seen anything approaching what it's like in the so-called real world outside.
>
> (University Manager)

Worryingly, sometimes the 'blame' for these incidents was located on the victim, for 'misinterpreting' the situation. The connection between victim blaming and the problematic conception of the 'ideal victim' must always be addressed, as this holds victim blaming in place and further suggests a victim's own sexualised behaviour or appearance, for example, could encourage sexual violence against them (Roberts, Donovan and Durey, 2019). Research suggests rape victims tend to be viewed as more promiscuous, particularly by males who can view male perpetrators as less culpable (Donovan, 2007). Such issues continue to deny women the agency to make choices about how they respond to sexual violence, which will be discussed further on in this chapter.

When considering perpetrators, findings suggested narratives focussed on the 'type' of students who would engage in these behaviours. Some UMs suggested that a perceived increase in the level of violence was due to an increase in Black or other racially minoritised students, as well as students from lower socio-economic backgrounds:

> We have more BAME [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic] students now than we did 25 years ago, we draw students from a wider area, I think there are more incidences of violence and that some of those arise from students from quite deprived backgrounds joining the university.
>
> (University Manager)

As has been suggested in existing work, this perpetuates racist rape myths, such as the stereotype of Black males as sexual predators, as well as attributions towards rape victims (Donovan, 2007). Such stereotypes and racist attitudes might further explain why action in this area might have been limited, but must be addressed.

Legal implications of inadequate action

The delay in UK HEIs taking action to tackle sexual violence on campus has been related to a number of complex reasons. For example, the potential suppression or under-reporting of incidents may be due to reputation preservation in ever competitive and UK HE landscapes, or because UK HEIs have, what they believe are, more pressing priorities (Lewis et al., 2016; Phipps and Young, 2013; Smith and Freyd, 2013; Towl, 2016; Hill and Crofts, 2020; Humphreys and Towl, 2020). Due to the competition between

neoliberal institutions, it is argued that there is a tendency for HEIs to 'institutionally airbrush' the impact of sexual violence and disclosures to protect their reputations (Phipps, 2020). Tensions between institutional responsibilities, duty of care and self-preservation may explain why adequate action has not yet been taken sector-wide. As already discussed, this is also likely to be due to wider social attitudes towards sexual violence and violence against women which are replicated within universities. Furthermore, the combined restructuring and centralisation of university services, including a reduction in external support services and charity funding, further prevent victims from seeking support, as the visibility and availability of these resources becomes more limited (Hill and Crofts, 2020). Not only does this further undermine offences and increase barriers to reporting, but such inaction also contributes to a culture of complacency. It may also re-traumatise and increase the suffering of victims by failing to investigate, or by pushing matters externally for the police to investigate if no internal policies, procedures and resources exist.

It is absolutely essential that universities act to tackle these issues, aiming to change such attitudes and norms embedded within the fabric of campus culture. Work in this area must also be adequately resourced with appropriate processes in place to collect prevalence data. Universities not only have a duty to provide safe and positive university experiences for their students but are important sites for taking preventative action. Importantly, taking action must be a necessary step to protect students over university reputations. As a public authority, universities should be proactive in promoting gender equality (under the Public Sector Equality Duty s149 Equality Act 2010) and protect university staff and students from discrimination and harassment based on sex (in relation to the Equality Act 2010). When dealing with student misconduct, universities often refer to the so-called Zellick guidelines (formerly The Final Report of the Task Force on Student Disciplinary Procedures) produced in 1994, which provides advice on handling circumstances where a student's alleged misconduct may also constitute a criminal offence. The guidelines were introduced to provide clarity on how universities should respond to allegations of sexual misconduct and what action must be taken, including when to suspend students. However, it has been questioned as to whether they are fit for purpose (NUS, 2015).

In October 2016, Universities UK published new guidance for HEIs on how to handle alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence (UUK Taskforce, 2016). The guidance states that the enforcement of disciplinary actions and the handling of student misconduct should be dealt with in a contractual context, given that students are recognised as consumers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015. The report advises that institutions should publish a code of conduct (in accordance with further recommendations from the report) and a disciplinary procedure. There are various legal obligations a university has to adhere to in relation to its students. For example, the institution must exercise a duty of care, perform

various contractual obligations and abide by the principles of natural justice. These duties and obligations must also comply with equality and human rights laws. Despite the publication of new minimum standards, which shall be discussed further on in this chapter (OFS, 2021), it remains unclear how UK HEIs adhere to legal obligations in relation to its students, such as exercising a duty of care and balancing the rights and interests of students in cases where allegations are made by one student against another.

We suggest that there is a gap between the requirements of the law and HEI policies and procedures to address sexual violence (Crofts and Hill, in review). This has been demonstrated by the absence of appropriate and effective policies and procedures, accompanied by a lack of action and prioritisation to address sexual violence and harassment (Crofts et al., 2018; Humphreys and Towl, 2020). The impact of this is that there are potential breaches in the adherence to the legal requirements.

In our research, while some UMs acknowledged that there was a problem in relation to sexual violence and harassment on their campuses, the extent of the issue appears largely underestimated, or there were other matters more pressing (Crofts et al., 2018; Hill et al., in review). For example, the focus is instead on drug offences and other criminal offences on campus. If UMs fail to acknowledge the extent of the problem, or believe that there are other priorities, but they are key to driving forward the equality agenda, how can the institution demonstrate that it is having due regard for the need to eliminate harassment on the basis of sex? How can an institution be proactive in eliminating discrimination where it fails to recognise the extent of the problem? It is therefore surmised that UM perceptions may be a significant factor in there being a gap between the requirements of the law under s149 EA 2010 and the implementation of it. Additionally, institutions could potentially be in breach of their human rights obligations. A lack of adequate policies and procedures means there may be a failure to ensure that survivors are properly protected and have avenues for redress. There is also likely to be a failure to balance the rights and interests of both parties in cases where allegations are made by one student against another. UK universities must take action and this action must be consistent, governed, sector-wide and regulated.

Active campus-wide campaigns increase awareness

Some UK universities have implemented prevention interventions or awareness-raising campaigns. For example, bystander intervention workshops or week-long consent-related initiatives provide information about consent, healthy relationships and support services. Such approaches can be effective in increasing knowledge about support or reporting procedures, without focussing explicitly on sexual violence, instead focussing on building respectful and active campus communities (Hill and Crofts, 2020). Consent-focussed initiatives are also important because young

people have difficulty negotiating consent (Hill and Crofts, 2020; Phipps and Smith, 2012; Phipps and Young, 2013).

While consent-related initiatives can help change the normative culture, impacting negative normative behaviours, attributions and harmful stereotypes, they can be viewed by students as an add-on and poorly attended, unless embedded into the university curricula. Our own work has focussed on implementing and evaluating consent-related initiatives embedded into university curricula (Hill and Crofts, 2020). For example, students attended sessions as part of their usual timetabled classes, or in other subjects, on topics such as: legal implications of an absence of consent (Law), bystander intervention (Psychology), historic crimes (History) and depiction of sexual violence in films (Media). Students found sessions focussed on the legal aspects of consent and bystander training particularly useful, in both recognising what has happened and then knowing how to take action:

> You know what, when someone asked me previously if I was ever sexually harassed or assaulted I would say no, but now [after this class], I've had a comment made to me. I found that as sexual harassment.
>
> (Female, student)

Staff feedback for these curricula-embedded consent initiatives was also extremely positive. These sessions allowed tutors to tackle sensitive issues without explicitly focussing on sexual violence, while creatively embedding consent conversations into existing curricula. University lecturers enjoyed integrating these topics into their classes and having the flexibility to test out new teaching techniques, including technology-enhanced learning (e.g., anonymous live class surveys). However, staff did notice a drop in normal attendance during these weeks, as some students did not see the sessions as 'relevant to them' and were separate from their usual classes. This further highlights the importance of embedding consent conversations into wider university life and ensuring content is viewed as an ongoing, important part of the existing curricula.

As young people view consent as complex and multi-layered, staff and students also felt that short-term, week-long initiatives may not be enough to unpack these understandings:

> Consent week, like that's effective but I think it needs to be constant and throughout the year, like not just at the start of Fresher's either, people need to be like reminded of these things.
>
> (Female, student)

Consent-related initiatives help raise awareness, but consent conversations must also be situated within wider campus life (Hill and Crofts, 2020). Short-term prevention initiatives or campaigns potentially suggest these issues are

'only important for that one week'. Ongoing work in this area at universities is essential, for example, running targeted campaigns within Open Days, Fresher's Weeks, Personal Tutorials, taught sessions and social events.

Academic staff lecturers also voiced concerns over the amount of preparation required for such events and the lack of resources available. Staff recognised these initiatives can be resource intensive, particularly as line managers did not always recognise them as a workload activity, unless they took place as part of usual classes:

> I don't think we do much of this [at university], again I think just because we haven't got anybody who would really lead on that sort of thing.
>
> (Female, staff)

As staff were from different subject areas, manager support, resources and practices also varied. For example, some staff felt programmes were too tightly packed to add additional content or were unsure how to justify changing class content to module or programme leads.

Importantly, while raising awareness about these issues, appropriate policies, support and other mechanisms must be in place to support reporting and disclosures, which will increase as awareness is raised. This must include appropriate policies and processes, which map every possible route of support for students. Our review of existing policies and procedures in this area suggested these may not always exist, or they may not be in a format that is accessible for staff and students (Crofts et al., 2018). The Office for Students has also pressed UK HEIs to urgently review their sexual misconduct and harassment policies, finding many of these to be inadequate (OfS, 2021).

Universities must address barriers to disclosure

While putting adequate policies and procedures in place may help to change the culture, this may not be enough. Non-reporting is further normalised through limited knowledge of available support services and inaccessible or limited reporting mechanisms at UK HEIs (Hill and Crofts, 2020). Furthermore, as will be discussed, a culture of not-believing, reporting stigma, uncertainties about how to report and limited faith in university reporting processes appear to force students to individualise responses to sexual violence and harassment. This leads many to manage these issues alone through self-protection and resistance, or justify non-disclosure.

In our research, most students who experienced sexual violence or harassment did not know where to seek advice (64.91%) and some did not know where to report it (14.04%). Many felt unwelcome sexual advances should be reported to relevant university support services (48.54%), the Students' Union (29.82%) and the police (26.32%). When asked about

other disclosure routes, students would most commonly report or seek advice from their 'personal tutor', an assigned pastoral member of staff, or a 'trusted tutor'. While internal support structures were often mentioned (e.g., Students' Union, residential teams, support services, student helpdesk), surprisingly, few students were familiar with external organisations, charities or other university support services. Others would seek help from their friends or would browse the internet to look for advice.

In explaining why students might not report incidents experienced themselves, or those they observed directed at others, students individualised their responses, referring to their own self-management skills, the stigma of reporting and safety concerns. For example, many students did not see the need to report because they felt that they possessed the skills to manage if this happened to them. As one female student explained, if someone groped them: 'I can deal with it', another added they would 'deal with it my own way'. However, for some of these students, it would 'depend on the severity' and many distinguished between 'proper rape', which they would seek support for, compared to unwanted sexual comments or harassment, which are 'only words being said'. This suggests that the low rates for reporting sexual violence may be further impeded by a perceived hierarchy of severity, as students only reported certain types of sexual assault, such as physical violence. This, coupled with individualised, self-management strategies for self-preservation or resistance further reflects a normalisation of experiences of sexual violence victimisation, which many students believed replaces the need to report.

A separate sub-group of students in our research did not feel they could draw upon self-management skills, feeling they did not have the 'knowledge' or 'confidence' to protect themselves or report these incidents. These students had collective concerns, for example, fearing negative connotations of and stigma of reporting. While students were aware they would be protecting both themselves and others by reporting, they did not want to be judged by others in this way. Seeking help required 'owning up' to and 'facing' the issue, as one female student explained: 'I would not want to turn it into a big deal'. Others explained that it was 'too stressful' to have to recount or relive what had happened, and many would 'feel embarrassed', or 'silly reporting it' due to the stigma attached to such behaviours. For these students, their concerns over the stigma of reporting, coupled with the uncertainty of what would happen once they did, further impeded their intentions to disclose. Worryingly, in many cases, this involved a fear of repercussions from others as 'it might make the problem worse'. One female student added: 'I would be scared I'd become a target' by the perpetrator or others. This 'fear of backlash' and potential threat to personal safety appeared to be a common theme within student narratives, which many described as preventing them from speaking out. This has also been widely documented within other published literature (e.g., Ghani and Towl, 2017, Humphreys and Towl, 2020).

Students also described external influences which prevented them from reporting, which they had less control over. This included issues with existing reporting mechanisms and the normative nature of sexual violence at UK universities. For most students, there was a genuine lack of knowledge about how these incidents were handled. Many students did not 'know how' or were 'unaware of where to go or who to speak to' in order to report or obtain support. Many also described their loss of faith in their institution. Reporting was viewed as a 'waste of time', while others assumed the university was 'powerless' to do anything. As one female student explained: 'no point, as nothing would be done', another added that, even if students do report, 'I don't think anything would happen as a result of it', as 'most people get away with it'. Fostering a culture of belief and autonomy in decision-making processes will be key, while strengthening the voice of those impacted throughout complaints procedures. This is particularly important as a gap appears to exist between what should happen when complaints are made and the realities of these processes (Ahmed, 2021). Trust for institutions within the wider student body will only be built as universities are seen to be taking appropriate action.

Adequate policies and processes must be in place

The issue of not knowing where to access advice and support did not just affect students. In our research, interviewed academic and professional services staff (N=13) were also unaware of their university's policies and procedures when it came to advising students on what steps they could take and where to access support:

> I don't know the formal processes because no one's ever told me. These are things that I've done myself within our team to best support the student.
>
> (Female, staff)

Staff were also unclear about what training there was available to them. Many felt unable to adequately support their personal tutees or other students who disclosed sexual assault, violence or related incidents to them. As the preferred contact method, many staff Personal Tutors felt pressured to deal with disclosures without necessary training or support:

> For us to be able to inform students about the right direction, the right facilities available ... to support them, if they raised any of these things … we need to be trained, not every academic can support and give the information to students ... personal tutors [need] to know how to deal with these sensitive situations with the students.
>
> (Female, staff)

This had become more challenging due to the centralisation of support services and the rise in the number of sexual violence disclosures. Students, while feeling supported by tutors, strongly recommended that specialised, trained staff who sat outside of their existing academic pastoral support were introduced to deal with disclosures and that Personal Tutors could signpost students to these.

Staff and students often mentioned that dedicated policies and processes did not exist, or were inaccessible, which further impeded vital support opportunities. Many disclosures appeared to be dealt with through staff grievance policies, local knowledge or informal routes, such as staff discussions. In contrast, UMs were confident many processes were in place to tackle these issues:

> If someone comes up and makes a complaint about another student's behaviour towards them … the process in place is that it will be investigated, again we have internal processes for investigation. Similarly with staff, we have internal processes for complaints about sexual misconduct.
>
> (University Manager)

However, unless directly involved in developing these, many UMs appeared to not be able to identify those that were specifically for sexual violence. Some UMs spoke honestly about their detachment from existing policies, reporting procedures and how the limited training to support their staff worried them. Additionally, many discussed how their own reporting experiences were often informal, long-winded, confusing and involved a range of different services. This highlighted an important distance between their role and that of student-facing staff, with the need for a clear outline of processes:

> I think I'm a bit distanced from that if I'm being honest, I think it would only really come to my attention if it was being escalated … I suspect what I would call ... frontline academic staff, there may be a number of disclosures made to them that they may be responding to, dealing with, referring on, giving advice ... There would be some disquiet for me about that in that a) I wouldn't necessarily know what the extent of this type of behaviour is or how many disclosures people might be dealing with … and secondly, I wouldn't know whether people were responding appropriately actually.
>
> (University Manager)

Most UMs agreed that compulsory, tailored staff training conducted alongside other annual training would be beneficial, provided adequate resources and priorities were in place.

Our recommendations for practice

Our combined work in this area, including our evaluation of existing policies and processes and input from students, staff and UMs has provided important recommendations for practice for tackling sexual violence and harassment in UK HEIs and changing the culture. The following section provides our key recommendations for practice, based around: (a) raising awareness, (b) providing support, (c) policies and procedures and (d) safe spaces and security.

a) Raising awareness

1. Universities must create dedicated and joint University and Students' Union campaigns focussing on encouraging respect and awareness, equality, openness, pro-social behaviour and other key messages at all levels, forming part of the wider campus culture. This should be introduced in Welcome Week and ongoing throughout the year. There should be a particular focus on sports clubs and societies within the Students' Union, given our research has also identified issues within these areas specifically. These campaigns should be clearly marketed on all sites, with dedicated webpages, branding and social media presence, emphasising the campus-wide zero tolerance approach, while signposting support and report services. This might include external support services for institutions while internal processes may be put in place.
2. Joint University and Students' Union workshops focussing on challenging victim blaming and encouraging people to disclose incidents must be implemented. Work in this area should also tackle related myths, attributions and stereotypes, with a focus on enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion.
3. Consent-related initiatives and interventions focussing on increasing awareness, confidence building and training should be created, exploring when consent may be withdrawn and implicit bias. Such initiatives must be driven from the highest level of the university, with centralised university support, resources, administration and workload recognition, to ensure consent conversations are situated within all university programmes and wider campus life.
4. Universities must continue to ensure sexual violence, assault and hate crime is embedded across subjects within the curriculum, linking to real world problems and changing the culture.
5. Universities must involve students at all stages, including in developing and reconfiguring Fresher's week activities, while tackling existing notions of lad culture, intoxication and excess. This includes increasing the inclusivity and sense of belonging of induction and welcome events.

Such work would tackle prevailing attitudes, norms and expectations. Action taken should be promoted at Open Days and on recruitment documentation, to begin to change the culture before students start university.

6 Universities must enhance partnership working, ensuring students and staff work with local councils, police, licensing authorities and other organisations. This includes working with local premises within and around universities that students may frequent (e.g., nightclubs, bars, other community spaces) to develop partnerships and initiatives in this area (e.g., report and support options, street pastors, etc.) and promote existing campaigns. Ongoing work to build on the relationship between the student community of practice and local community will be required.
7 A clear section relating to sexual assault and harassment should be present on front pages of university websites and student-facing website hubs. This should contain all information required for reporting incidents, what will happen following a report, as well as available support and referral mechanisms (internal and external). This central hub for staff, students and UMs should be clearly signposted with a dedicated Uniform Resource Locator and not just link to sexual violence policy documents, but present information in a clear and accessible way.
8 Training for UMs, students and other staff to address biases/discriminatory assumptions regarding the student population and sexual violence and harassment with appropriate mechanisms to deal with discriminatory perceptions when expressed.

b) Providing support

9 Universities should implement a joined-up approach to identify communication channels and processes of referral, as well as ongoing well-being or support following disclosure. Work is required to ensure disclosures are handled sensitively and effectively by university faculties, staff, student services, mental health teams, Students' Union and external agencies (e.g., Police, Rape Crisis and others).
10 Dedicated, specialised and expertly trained teams focussing on disclosures and referrals should be resourced, including case managers, to support students and liaise within key teams. These individuals should liaise both internally and externally to reduce the repetitive telling of traumatic incidents.
11 Personal Tutors must be given sufficient time in workload allocation to deal with disclosures effectively and be appropriately resourced, as they are key to student disclosures. Universities should also consider the impact of changing HEI landscapes and the centralisation of support services on staff roles and available support.

12 Compulsory disclosure training for Personal Tutors and other frontline staff dealing with disclosure should be developed. This should be related to other roles, such as student representatives. Staff development days should deliver compulsory training.
13 Frontline student services, such as mental health and counselling, should be adequately resourced and joined-up to provide support for students disclosing incidents of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime.
14 Support for staff which recognises the impact of dealing with disclosures and distressing information should be provided and communicated widely.

c) Policies and procedures

15 Work is required to review and update existing policies and codes of conduct to include sexual violence, assault and misconduct at universities. This includes ethical frameworks which cover both face-to-face and online student-student interactions. Student codes of conduct should set clear expectations on unacceptable behaviour, and policies must address student-staff interactions and power differentials.
16 Universities should ensure policies are clearly available in a wide variety of locations (e.g., online). The production of accessible documents for staff and students which outline key aspects of policies and guidance will be required. This includes a signposting document or web-based resource outlining what happens following disclosure and involved parties. As above, policies must involve student-student as well as staff-student conduct and signpost to processes from disclosure and cover all potential outcomes.
17 Policies and procedures should clearly state that complainants will be believed.
18 The implementation of an online, anonymous reporting mechanism for internal anonymous reporting and disclosure, as well as a range of reporting mechanisms, is essential for collecting accurate data on these issues is essential. It is also recommended that this data is collected sector-wide by governing bodies. University structures for reporting on this data at the highest level will need to be in place, which will ensure UMs are aware of the prevalence and can adequately resource action in this area, with decisions guided by both accurate institution and sector-wide data.
19 Universities must develop processes and procedures for collecting information and data regarding disclosures of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime, as well as ensuring preventative measures can be targeted according to findings.
20 Universities must develop an action plan to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, s149 Equality Act 2010, using data collected as per point 18 above to inform SMART objectives in

dealing with sexual violence, harassment and hate crime on campus. This should include issues relating to both staff and students.

21 Universities must ensure that policies and procedures clearly state that the university can investigate complaints and disclosures of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime whether or not the matter has been reported to the police. This needs to be effectively communicated to staff and students, with handling processes following equality and protection principles.

22 Universities must establish a policy framework that clearly identifies the rights of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.

23 Universities should also create clear referral processes where reports can be made externally to the police, Rape Crisis or local sexual assault referral centres. Options should be made available to the complainant and their decision making and choices must be reinforced throughout this process.

24 Appointing and training specialised investigators for incidents involving sexual violence who understand the issues and impact of trauma will be key.

25 A Sexual Violence working group and/or Safeguarding advisory group should be created to address these crucial issues, enhancing partnership working and recording of incidences. This will aid the longevity of the work around these issues and include colleagues from across the university. Student consultation at all stages will also be necessary.

d) Safe spaces/security

While outside the scope of this chapter, our research in this area has also focussed on contextual determinants and aspects of campus spaces related to sexual violence and harassment.

Recommendations from this aspect of our work include:

26 Due to our research identifying many existing incidents taking place within halls of residence, universities should conduct a review of security measures on all campuses and halls of residence. This must involve security processes, access to support services, responses to incidences, as well as environmental measures related to conceptions of safety, such as lighting and CCTV. All security measures and responses must be proportionate and necessary, not interfering with the right to privacy.

27 Increasing safety measures during the night time within social spaces is also important and creating local partnerships between those involved in the nightlife economy (e.g., paramedics, police, local proprietors, business owners), University safety/welfare teams and the Students' Union should be established. Social media campaigns between the Police, Students' Union and University should provide links to support services.

28 Clear signage around campus to indicate who to contact in an emergency.
29 Consider 'student only' spaces on campus and provide safe spaces where students can seek refuge, or talk to staff they trust without the fear of being judged.

Putting research into practice

Our research findings reflect the first part of addressing these issues, and we have been active in putting research into practice. Locally, our research has led to some successes within the UK HEI involved in our research. For example, our research findings and recommendations have informed key policies, practices, support services and related campaigns. This includes new dedicated staff and student-facing sexual violence and misconduct policies, staff e-training for responding to disclosures, Personal Tutor training sessions and the implementation of trained Sexual Violence Liaison Officers. Key student and staff resources have been developed, outlining important processes, with dedicated student response and staff support webpages now explicitly highlighting internal and external reporting processes. In addition, a range of different reporting options have been introduced to ensure students are supported at many different opportunities. An active, cross-university working group also meets regularly for ongoing reporting, action and updating of guidance and policies. This cross-university team includes staff from Student's Unions, Student Services, Academic Staff, Professional Services Staff and UMs at the highest level, as well as key partnerships to external support such as Rape Crisis and the Police.

Collaborative campaigns have also been created and informed by this work, including an institutional #NeverOK campaign that focusses on changing the culture and showing that these types of behaviours are not tolerated. Work is ongoing to ensure a joined-up approach with links to the campaign and related resources occurs both internally (e.g., Open Days and Fresher's Week, Students' Union or sports events) and externally within the local community (e.g., community partnerships). As well as dedicated marketing and branding for these campaigns, this information is accessible (e.g., available, presented in a variety of formats, through QR links on posters and Student Apps), continually reviewed and updated.

Nationally, our work has also contributed to HEFCE and OfS reports and recommendations in this area, informing suggestions for best practices and government consultations. This includes the minimum safeguarding practices highlighted in the evaluation of Catalyst Fund projects, which has informed the most recent minimum standards (OfS, 2021). While this statement of expectations is a good starting point and will hopefully prompt universities to take action, based on the challenges we have outlined in this chapter, it is unlikely to be enough without addressing many of our above recommendations.

Summary and concluding points

Universities have a duty of care for their students, as bound by law, and continue to be key sites for prevention work in tackling sexual violence, which remains a widespread, prevalent and complex global concern. Our mixed-method, cross-disciplinary research in this area has evaluated existing processes, policies and interventions. It has also triangulated student, staff and university manager perceptions, experiences, knowledge, report and support-seeking behaviour to provide innovative insights. While interdisciplinary, cross-campus consent-based interventions and active campaigns increase disclosure and help to embed consent conversations into the curriculum, such approaches must be appropriately resourced. Awareness-raising shares key messages and improves support service knowledge, but many policies and procedures do not exist to signpost students to available support when disclosure increases. Furthermore, our work suggests that not only do many students not know where to report, but frontline staff rely on informal knowledge-seeking routes to support their students. UMs are also too detached to truly be aware of the prevalence and how staff are responding. Therefore, sector and institution-wide prevalence, as well as continued monitoring of case numbers and outcomes, are essential in collecting consistent and accurate information. In building a culture of response and change, this information will be essential in ensuring adequate action can be taken, resourced and progress can be measured.

Universities must also work together to reduce the stigma associated with reporting and communicate to staff and students that sexual violence will not be tolerated. We suggest that our recommendations are adopted by universities, but also by the universities' regulator and made mandatory. For example, only a comprehensive, institution-wide approach will build an on-campus culture of awareness, empathy, respect and equality, with active bystanders and appropriate support. Having adequate reporting structures in place might then begin to tackle long-standing norms, particularly if action is driven from the highest level. Addressing sexual violence on campus, therefore, requires meaningful and responsive involvement from all areas of the university community, with sector-wide monitoring and partnership working with local specialist organisations.

We hope our work and key recommendations will continue to help ensuring that universities are safer places to live, work and study, so no student or staff member is subject to sexual violence or harassment. Future work should also further investigate the nature and extent of sexual violence between staff within universities and ensure appropriate processes are in place to support this. Despite challenges, changing the campus culture is possible, and we look forward to contributing further work in this area, ensuring we can create mutually respectful campus communities which aim to stand together against sexual violence and harassment.

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Part IV

First responders and institutional support

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11 Developing Ethical Pedagogical Practices

Exploring violence prevention work with academics

Suzanne Egan and Natasha Mikitas

Introduction

In 2016, following years of activism by student leaders, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), at the request of Universities Australia, surveyed students about their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in university settings. Predictably, the research found high prevalence rates and poor responses by universities. In reply, the AHRC report (2017) recommended significant changes, including implementing education programmes and policy review and improving complaints processes. These recommendations are central to Universities Australia's Respect Now Always initiative, which aims to prevent sexual violence and improve how universities respond to and support survivors (Universities Australia n.d.).

However, despite the AHRC research (2017) finding that postgraduate students are most likely to experience sexual violence from their supervisor, not another student, this is mentioned only in passing. As such, recommendations and education programmes rolled out across Australian universities 'frame' sexual violence as a 'problem' that exists only within the student body (Egan 2018). Consequently, while the report has certainly generated – and indeed required – substantial responses by both individual universities and Universities Australia (the peak body representing Australian universities), there has been little attention accorded to sexual harassment and sexual abuse as a problem of the academic community. Perhaps because of this, a focus on the structures, norms and cultures of the academy that enable and support sexual harassment and abuse has been largely absent.

Full Stop Australia (FSA), until recently known as Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, one of Australia's leading feminist violence prevention and counselling organisations, successfully advocated for the development and implementation of a sexual harassment and sexual abuse prevention programme, targeting early-career PhD supervisors. Building on Moira Carmody's (2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2015) influential approach to violence prevention, and grounded in the Australian national best practice standards for violence prevention education developed by Carmody

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and used by Australian sexual assault services, the Ethical Pedagogical Practices: Respectful Supervisory Relationships programme aims to promote systemic, cultural and individual change by approaching academic sexual misconduct as an ethical as well as a legal issue. Moreover, by focussing on early-career academics the programme targets those not yet fully enculturated into the norms of the academy and can be thought of as still transitioning from their own status as higher-degree students into fully fledged members of the academic community. As such, we believe the programme holds much potential as an early-intervention strategy. To date, the programme has been successfully facilitated in two major Australian universities, with significant interest from academics and administrators across several other universities.

In what follows, we introduce the organisation that developed the programme, explain the history and context of higher-degree research supervision, lay out the rationale for an ethical approach to sexual misconduct and provide an overview of the modules.

A note on terminology

Sexual misconduct

Through this chapter, we adopt Page et al.'s (2019) use of the term sexual misconduct to encapsulate a range of behaviours, including sexual harassment, sexual coercion, grooming, sexual assault and promises of access to resources or favourable treatment in response to sexual access. Some of these behaviours, while not constituting a criminal or legally recognised offence, are part of the pattern of boundary blurring and incremental transgressions that enable and are part of the dynamic of sexual violence. The term misconduct draws attention to the fact 'that this is a matter of professional behaviour in the workplace' and aims to 'ensure that the focus remains on the responsibility of the staff member, and their employer, for maintaining professional conduct in their dealings with students' (Page et al. 2019, p. 1311).

Ethics

Ethics can be thought of as the set of rules, principles or ways of thinking that guide, or claim authority to guide, the actions of a group (Freakley and Burgh 2000; Singer 1993). Ethics and ethical decision-making thus encompass individuals, groups and institutional contexts. Institutional ethics, which focusses on the ways people behave in institutional and organisational contexts, is of particular significance in this chapter and draws attention to the powerful role that organisational culture and norms play in either enabling or constraining individual responses to an ethical issue. Accordingly, an institution's ethics are built into and enacted through day-to-day procedures, policies and decision-making processes (Ehrich et al. 2012).

Similarly, professional ethics, the beliefs and values that provide guidance to professional groups in their interactions with others, typically hold considerable influence over the behaviour and actions of individual members of those groups, including sanctions against transgressions.

A feminist understanding of sexual violence

Feminism is not, of course, a monolithic entity; there are many 'versions' of feminism, with points of convergence and divergence across feminist scholarship, practice and activism. Likewise, there are a range of nuanced feminist theoretical approaches to sexual violence (Canan and Levand 2019; Egan 2020). There are, however, several common themes that run across these approaches, which we refer to as a feminist understanding of sexual violence. At its most basic, a feminist analysis works from an understanding that while sexual violence happens to individuals, these individual experiences are indicative of and need to be understood in the context of broad patterns of gendered inequality. Sexual violence is understood as an abuse of gendered power that both reflects and is enabled through a patriarchal system that privileges some groups of men and forms of masculinity (Bevacqua 2000; Gavey 2019). Importantly, we recognise the ways that gender inequality intersects with other structural inequalities, such that survivors may be targeted because of their race, their disability, their sexual preference or non-binary gender identity (McPhail et al. 2007).

Scoping the problem

Unlike student-to-student abuse, the problem of sexual harassment and abuse perpetrated by academics has received little research attention within universities (Page et al. 2019). This does not mean that universities are unaware of the problem. In the United States, for example, universities have begun to pay for insurance to cover financial settlements from sexual harassment and sexual assault cases (Cantalupo and Kidder 2018). Moreover, in the wake of the #MeToo movement public recognition of the issue of academic sexual misconduct is gaining momentum. High-profile cases in the United States and the United Kingdom have garnered considerable media interest and drawn attention to a culture of both sexual harassment and sustained institutional inaction (Bull and Rye 2018; National Union of Students [NUS] 2018). Furthermore, research conducted by the UK NUS found that 41% of higher education students had experienced sexualised behaviour and conduct from a staff member with whom they felt uncomfortable. Based on an online survey of 1,839 current and former students, the research found most perpetrators were male and most were academic staff members with female respondents much more likely than male respondents to have been subject to sexual misconduct. For example, twice as many women (22.9%) compared to men (7%) reported experiences of sexual touching. Further, postgraduate

students were almost twice as likely than undergraduate students to report experiences of staff sexual misconduct (NUS 2018).

Similarly, Australian research conducted by Ellinghaus et al. (2018), focussing specifically on the experiences of academics, found sexism, sexual harassment and discrimination appeared to be almost the cultural norm in Australian universities. Based on an online survey completed by 159 Australian academics, over 90% of whom were female, the study found almost half had experienced sexual harassment or abuse in their workplace, while almost 70% reported being subject to sexual or gender-based discrimination. A recurring pattern identified by the researchers was of doctoral students or junior academics being coerced into sexual relationships by supervisors or senior male colleagues. This is consistent with Rosenthal et al.'s (2016) US study of specifically postgraduate students, which found that almost 40% of female and almost 25% of male participants had experienced sexual harassment from faculty or staff members.

Full Stop Australia

Like many sexual assault centres, FSA has its origins in the second-wave feminist movement. Known initially as the Sydney Rape Crisis Collective, the organisation was founded in 1971 by a group of feminist activists in direct response to the lack of any support for survivors of sexual assault (Carmody 1995; FSA n.d.). While FSA is now a large, national organisation, the twin strategies initiated by these women – direct support to survivors and working to prevent sexual violence – remain foundational. FSA remains an explicitly feminist organisation, with a feminist understanding of the causes of sexual violence foundational to all areas of work. In recent years, the organisation has played a leading role in the uptake and implementation of the trauma-informed approach to feminist practice now more widely adopted within the Australian sexual assault services sector (e.g., Burke et al. 2014; Burke and Dombrowski 2009). The organisation employs highly qualified and experienced social workers, psychologists and educators, providing an ongoing professional development programme.

Much of the organisation's recent work with the tertiary education sector followed the release of the Change the Course report (2017). This work includes providing training in responding appropriately to disclosures, facilitating student-focussed workshops on ethics and consent, sexual assault policy review and working with university-based counselling services to implement survivor-centred best practice principles. The invitation to develop the Ethical Pedagogical Practices programme represented a unique opportunity for the organisation to extend this work from the student body into the wider academic community and was developed by the authors Natasha Mikitas, training manager at FSA and facilitator of this programme, and Suzanne Egan formerly Research Officer, FSA.

Prevention of sexual violence through education

FSA's suite of violence prevention training programmes draws closely on the approach developed by Australian academic Moira Carmody, with whom the organisation had partnered with in research and education projects, until her premature death in 2020. Carmody, who had begun her working life in the New South Wales sexual assault services sector, went on to become a national expert on sexual assault prevention education that culminated in her influential research targeting young people and promoting the development of ethical sexual practices as a key factor in violence (2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2015).

Carmody's work drew attention to the limitations of a risk management approach, common in much of the early feminist prevention work. She was critical of the way these interventions positioned all women as (potential) victims and the focus on teaching women to minimise risks of sexual victimisation (by carrying mobile phones or by taking care their drinks are not spiked; Carmody 2006, 2009; Carmody and Carrington 2000). Such approaches, she argued, make women responsible for avoiding sexual violence, rather than putting the onus on perpetrators. Her work has been instrumental in promoting a 'whole of community' approach, with a particular focus on engaging men and boys in prevention work.

Carmody concluded that 'awareness raising' and/or 'knowledge transfer' approaches to prevention do not necessarily lead to change. She advocated for the adoption of programmes based on adult learning principles, which promote critical reflection, actively engage participants and provide multiple opportunities for attitudinal changes and skill development (Carmody 2009, 2014; Carmody et al. 2009). In 2009, Carmody and colleagues codified these key ideas into a set of national standards as part of a research project undertaken by the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence. These standards, designed to guide the development and implementation of Australian sexual assault education prevention programmes, underpin the Ethical Pedagogical Practices programme, with each of the three modules measured against each of the six standards. Briefly, the standards specify that programmes use a clear conceptual framework for understanding why sexual violence occurs (with a gender analysis as foundational); address the needs of specific population groups; are based on relevant literature, research and practice knowledge; ensure educators have access to training and professional development that includes both skills development and the moral/ethical stance to their work; use a theory of change to link programme aims with attitudinal change and skills development; and use effective evaluation strategies (Carmody 2015; Carmody et al. 2009).

Utilising the standards meant that we took particular care to develop an appreciation of the higher-degree supervisor's history, context and current role, including the types of challenges that may be encountered and an

understanding of the types and forms of professional development and training usually provided.

History and context of higher-degree supervision

Traditionally, supervision of doctoral students has been a markedly private teaching space with, until relatively recently, little research into or theorisation of the pedagogy of doctoral supervision (Halse and Bansel 2012; McWilliam 2002; Thomson and Walker 2010). Australia inherited a UK-based supervision pedagogy based on the Oxbridge tutorial system characterised by an intense individual relationship between the supervisor (master/guru) and student (disciple/protégé) (Manathunga 2005). The practice of working with only one supervisor increased the privacy of the pedagogical relationship and process, with some supervisors treating their students as if they 'personally owned them, becoming hostile to the notion of their students talking to other colleagues about their research' (Manathunga 2005, p. 19). Until the 1990s, universities provided little education to academics about their supervisory role, with knowledge of how to be a supervisor based largely on their own experiences as a supervisee (Manathunga 2005).

In the 1980s, concern about non-completion and long completion times focussed research attention on the PhD and, by extension, on the practices of supervision (Lee 1998). Substantial reforms beginning in the 1990s resulted in an 'opening up' of the supervisory process. This included a move to appointing supervision panels rather than a single supervisor, external monitoring of doctoral students' progress and instituting a confirmation of candidature process (Halse and Bansel 2012).

Despite the above changes, the one-on-one model of supervision remains the default model of doctoral education (Halse and Bansel 2012; Hemer 2012; Lee 1998). Indeed, Löfström and Pyhältö (2012) argued that whether in a student–supervisor dyad or in a research group, an implicit apprenticeship model remains the 'signature pedagogy' of doctoral training. Supervisors continue to hold substantial power in doctoral education. Supervisors act as gatekeepers to a discipline; they and their colleagues approve a student's research proposal, routinely influence the direction of the research, can recommend termination of candidature and are charged with ensuring the candidate is ready to submit their thesis (Hemer 2012). Regardless of any national or disciplinary differences in doctoral education, supervision is recognised as one of the central determinants of a successful doctoral outcome (Halse and Bansel 2012; Hemer 2012; Löfström and Pyhältö 2012). Conversely, problems with supervision, such as conflict or a lack of supervision, are recognised as a cause of problems such as insufficient progress and degree attrition.

Most universities in Australia now provide some form of supervisor training and professional development, some at the departmental level

and others through centralised units (Guerin et al. 2017; Manathunga 2005). Until recently, such training was framed as an administrative and 'policy compliance' process and as such part of the 'quality assurance' process required by the government (Guerin et al. 2017). Consequently, many programmes were limited to the provision of information and resources, with little in the way of skills development (McCormack and Pamphilon 2004, cited in Manathunga 2005). Little was known about the extent to which such programmes addressed pedagogical issues such as power relations and the cognitive and emotional aspects of supervision. Indeed in some universities, programme implementation has been left to administrative staff with measurable outcomes limited to recording participant numbers. Perhaps not surprisingly, some academics have resented the intrusion of such programmes into what has been regarded as a 'private pedagogical space', with some cynically referring to them as 'frequent flyer programmes' (Manathunga 2005). However, some supervision programmes go beyond the administrative framework and the transmission approach to education. Examples include approaches that actively engage supervisors in reflective practice about their supervisory pedagogy, use teaching and learning strategies such as video presentation, role play and small-group discussion, and provide ongoing support rather than the limited one-off workshop formula (Manathunga 2005).

Exploring doctoral supervision as an ethical pedagogical practice

While the ethical issues routinely encountered in research are accorded significant attention in universities, this has not extended to other arenas of academic life. This is despite the multitude of ethical dilemmas experienced and the complex ethical decision-making required in both teaching and academic leadership roles (e.g., Ehrich et al. 2012; Gullifer 2018; Löfström and Pyhältö 2012, 2017). Research conducted by Ehrich et al. (2012) with Australian academics found that while most had observed or felt pressured into unethical practices including bullying and exploitation of casual and junior staff, most felt powerless to act despite being troubled by these experiences. The types of reasons given included the administrative barriers encountered when trying to take action, fear of legal action being taken against them and other negative repercussions, including from senior managers. This research in particular informed the development of the ethical bystander module within the programme.

Löfström and Pyhältö's (2012, 2014, 2017) Finnish research, which focussed specifically on doctoral supervisors, highlighted the types of ethical issues and dilemmas routinely encountered in this role. Overall, they found the potential for abusive and exploitative supervision relationships to be the most frequent ethical issue discussed by their participants. Examples included ambiguities in the boundaries of the supervisory role and in the relationship between the supervisor and their colleagues. As the authors

highlighted, these types of issues are exacerbated when the supervisory relationship remains dyad or private as this can act as a barrier to other members of the research team or department unit from stepping in to address the issue or of being utilised as a resource. Moreover, the research made clear links between the ethical issues encountered at the individual level and more systemic issues.

Based on their research, Löfström and Pyhältö (2012, 2014, 2017) made a number of important observations that have informed this training programme. First, the ethical issues supervisors encounter are complex and multifaceted, frequently requiring problem-solving on multiple levels. Second, it is insufficient to limit understanding of ethical problems to the individual supervisor or student given that individual problems are frequently reflective of wider norms and practices in the academic community. Finally, the authors suggested that pedagogical and supervision training provides an important avenue through which supervisors can come together as a community to critically scrutinise their practices and work towards collective solutions to ethical problems. This lays the groundwork for approaching sexual misconduct as an ethical issue.

Approaching academic sexual misconduct as an ethical issue

Substantial commentary in the higher education scholarly literature highlights the limitations of approaching sexual harassment in universities only as a legal issue (Tenbrunsel et al. 2019; Young and Wiley 2021). Concerningly, such an approach has resulted in universities focussing on reducing their civil liability rather than on student well-being or addressing either the conduct of the harasser or the broader cultural context that facilitates such behaviour. For example, it has been argued that the impetus of institutional policy directives such as sexual harassment and conflict of interest policies is largely to guard against potential civil lawsuits in response to claims of sexual harassment rather than to protect students (Wagner 1993, cited in Gullifer 2018). Indeed, Cantalupo and Kidder (2018), in a discussion of the broader US context, pointed out that while most organisations have had sexual harassment policies and training in place for the last 30 years, there has been no commensurate decline in the prevalence of sexual harassment. The legal framing of these policies and training provided have been identified as major factors in this arena of policy failure. For example, a recent US task force concluded that a primary reason for the failure of sexual harassment training (more broadly) over the past 30 years has been due to the focus in such training on avoiding legal liability (Feldblum and Lipnic 2016). Considering the failure of the legal focus on prevention, there is a growing number of scholars calling for academic sexual misconduct to be understood and addressed as an ethical problem (Gullifer 2018; Tenbrunsel et al. 2019).

Some commentators, for example, point to the need for an ethical code of conduct to protect students from sexual harassment and abuse by academics rather than the more typical practice of managing misconduct through institutional policies – for example, sexual harassment and conflict of interest policies (Gullifer 2018). While a code of ethics alone will not prevent sexual harassment from occurring, it is an important strategy in conveying a message from leadership about acceptable workplace behaviours (Ehrich et al. 2012) and as such forms part of a whole institutional approach to responding to and preventing sexual harassment and sexual abuse. To that end, it is important to note that Universities Australia (2018) released a document, Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships, designed to guide higher-degree supervisors' behaviour and conduct towards their students. Comprising eight key principles, the document clearly outlines the inherent power imbalance between supervisor and student, explicitly prohibiting sexual harassment and all forms of gender-based violence and highlighting the harm and inappropriateness of staff engaging in sexual or romantic relationships with students.

However, while such codes do set important general standards, they are generally removed from the contexts and everyday situations that individuals encounter. As Ehrich et al. (2012, p. 11) highlighted, academics need a clear understanding of ethical reasoning and opportunities to practise applying this reasoning to concrete situations. In developing the programme, we found the concepts of ethical climate and bounded ethicality (Tenbrunsel et al. 2019), coupled with the feminist analysis of sexual violence, most applicable in enabling us to develop activities and tasks that required participants to critically reflect on their own pedagogical practices as well as accepted practices in their organisational environment.

The organisational context is one of the most influential in producing the type of ethical climate in which sexual harassment flourishes. The types of organisational factors known to enable sexual harassment include male-dominated organisations, competitive reward systems that lack transparency, pronounced power differences and job structures that favour casualised employment (Tenbrunsel et al. 2019). Consequently, the university's organisational structure, with its pronounced power differences, competitive faculty promotions system and high levels of casualisation, lends itself to sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel et al. 2019; Young and Wiley 2021). Understanding these organisational factors are crucial given that, in prevention work, we are looking at the systems that allow sexual harassment and sexual violence to happen. The concept of bounded ethicality proved crucial in enabling us to make explicit the links between individual actions and these systemic and organisational factors.

Bounded ethicality refers to the 'systematic and predictable ways in which individuals engage in unethical behaviour without their knowledge' and includes processes such as ethical fading, motivated blindness and the 'slippery

slope' in which progressively more unethical behaviour becomes acceptable over time (Tenbrunsel et al. 2019, p. 184). Ethical fading captures the process whereby harassers – and those around them – become unable to see the ethical implications of their behaviour. Key factors contributing to ethical fading include the tendency of those in positions of power to have difficulty in taking the perspective of those with less power, with the social distance that accrues with power as a barrier to seeing or acknowledging the harm they are doing. Motivated blindness denotes the tendency not to register behaviour as unethical if it is not in our best interests to do so. For example, observers may also not 'see' the behaviours if they have a close relationship with or are part of the same privileged group as the harasser. Likewise, registering their experiences as abuse can be difficult for the victim/survivor if the harasser is someone they trust or are dependent upon. Finally, the slippery slope refers to the way unethical behaviours can come to be tolerated when they are introduced gradually in small, almost indiscernible, ways.

An understanding of bounded ethicality, and ethical organisational climates, enabled us to devise learning activities specific to the institutional context in which higher-degree supervision occurs. Applying these concepts through the modules is designed to encourage participants to reflect on their own decisions, actions and beliefs as well as the broader organisational ethical climate that enables and constrains individual action. It enabled us to situate gendered violence in the university's specific organisational context and to draw attention to processes, cultures and structures of academic life that facilitate academic sexual misconduct. We used these concepts as pedagogical tools through which we could implement the foundations of a feminist understanding of sexual violence – that in working to prevent sexual violence, the issue needs to be understood in the broader social and political context in which it occurs.

The training programme

The programme aims to help decrease academic sexual misconduct by enabling supervisors to increase their knowledge of and skills in ethical supervisory practices. To promote ethical practice, supervisors critically reflect on and develop an informed understanding of

- appropriate boundaries and power in supervisory relationships,
- ethical frameworks used in supervision,
- consequences, dynamics and prevalence of sexual assault and harassment,
- environments that enable assault and harassment, and
- ethical bystander role in the academic context.

The programme consists of three modules, as well as pre- and post-surveys, and runs on a fortnightly basis over nine weeks. The modules are based on

adult learning principles (Carmody et al. 2009; Nichols 2002) promoting participant interaction and critical reflection using a combination of case studies, quizzes, online discussion and small-group work. Participants provide process feedback at the end of each module via a short feedback form and to allow space for further reflection, they complete a final survey one-week post-program completion. A final report is collated and provided to the university providing de-identified feedback, observations and recommendations.

Prior to Module 1, participants are asked to complete an anonymous survey with a Likert scale ranking using questions adapted from the Australian National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (Webster et al. 2018). The outcomes provide a barometer for participant attitudes and allow facilitators to tailor discussion items and questions for the following modules. Prerequisite readings are provided, drawn from the literature cited above, that focus on student–academic relationships, sexual harassment by supervisors and the place of ethics in higher-degree research supervision. Each reading is accompanied by a series of questions designed to prompt critical reflection. For example, participants are asked for their views on Manathunga's (2005) analysis of supervision as a private space and to consider the range of ethical problems that Löfström and Pyhältö (2012) found supervisors routinely encounter.

Module 1: Establishing the framework

This module aims to promote critical reflection on ethical dilemmas that may be encountered in supervisory relationships and to explore complex power relationships that typify university workplaces. Participants are given a series of short scenarios and asked whether each scenario constitutes sexual harassment. The purpose of this activity is to promote thinking about what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual assault and allows facilitators to tailor further content and discussion.

Participants are asked to explain which ethical framework they draw upon in their academic work and anticipate using it to guide their supervisory responsibilities. To date, these discussions have illuminated the lack of a cohesive ethical framework and highlighted participants' unsureness about what principles they ought to be using. After this question is posed, another short quiz engages participants in thinking through the ethics of various situations known to be common in higher-degree supervision. For example, students and supervisors frequently attend the same conferences or conduct fieldwork together. Is it okay for them to share accommodation during such trips? Is it okay for supervision to occur outside the university – in the supervisor's home, for example? Participants are asked to explain their thought processes.

The module ends with the introduction of a case scenario involving a supervisor and doctoral student, which is revisited and added to in the next

two modules. The case study was devised to explore the issues laid out in the readings, illustrating the progression of predatory behaviour and the slow breach of boundaries. Participants identify patterns of behaviour that are enabled by institutional and cultural norms and reflect on what factors enabled the scenario via a discussion forum.

Module 2: Power, boundaries and cultural climates

Building on the readings and reflective questions posed in Module 1, the facilitators introduce the ethical supervisory framework to participants, which is then used to guide engagement with the module activities. The framework asks participants to consider a series of questions when faced with a decision; the questions focus on critical reflection – how each action advances a student's doctoral studies, balanced with the supervisor's pedagogical role and the student's welfare.

A powerful part of this module is a second case study based on the experiences of a former PhD student ("Mikaila")[1] subjected to sexual violence by her supervisor. The case study is set up so that participants read a synopsis of Mikaila's experiences and are asked to consider how she may have been affected. This is followed by the presentation of the immediate and ongoing psychological, emotional, social, educational and career consequences recounted in Mikaila's own incisive and emotionally eloquent words. Feedback has shown this to be one of the most powerful learning experiences encountered. Considerable time was spent ensuring that "Mikaila's" experiences are represented accurately and in a way that she felt comfortable. While wishing to remain anonymous, we nevertheless wish to acknowledge and thank her for the profound insights she brought to the programme.

The final part of this module reintroduces the case study from Module 1, this time viewed through the lens of perpetrator tactics. Participants consider which of the supervisor's actions were for the benefit of the student and which caused harm. Facilitators then explain how perpetrators use grooming and intimidation tactics to exert power and control (Beauregard and Leclerc 2007; Bull and Page 2021; Lussier et al. 2011), allowing participants to understand the cumulative way that subtle boundary blurring and breaches form part of an ongoing pattern of abusive and exploitative, though largely hidden, behaviour.

Module 3: The role of ethical bystanders

This module continues the case study from the previous two modules, this time introducing the associate supervisor who is utilised to explore the role of the bystander. Often, a junior academic takes on this role. We anticipated that this would be the figure participants would relate to most closely and deliberately incorporated the complex web of collegial and hierarchical

relationships surrounding the key players. The associate supervisor, for example, has just been invited onto a large grant application led by the primary supervisor who enjoys a close working relationship with the head of school.

Participants are first asked to use Keltner's (2017) theory of power to identify the power transgressions the associate supervisor has witnessed. They then draw on the concept of justice violation to help evaluate the extent to which the associate is likely to have 'registered' these transgressions. Briefly, Keltner (2017) posits that the types of empathetic and supportive behaviours that are a necessary part of how we acquire power are the very qualities and behaviours that not only dissipate but are often replaced by their opposites (e.g., the person who was once concerned for others becomes focussed on themselves, putting themselves above the rules they expect others to abide by). The justice violation model works on the premise that an observer is more likely to notice and register an incident of injustice if they perceive themselves as similar to the target of the injustice. The observer's decision about whether to take action is significantly influenced by the organisational culture and environment and by their understanding of the respective costs and benefits in that environment (Goldberg et al. 2011, cited in McDonald and Flood 2012).

Participants are asked to identify and discuss the types of bystander actions the associate supervisor could take, the costs of action versus inaction and to whom. The module concludes with participants being asked what might prevent them from being an ethical bystander and to provide ideas on how their university could best support bystanders. Interestingly, the responses given by participants as to why they may not intervene are reflective of the research conducted by Ehrich et al. (2012) and discussed above in *Exploring doctoral supervision as an ethical pedagogical practice*.

At the conclusion of this module, participants are expected to have gained an understanding of the critical role of bystanders in interrupting and preventing academic sexual misconduct to have developed skills in behaving ethically as a bystander in ways that minimise harm to the survivor and to themselves, and to have critically reflected on the factors in their own work environment that prohibit or enable ethical bystander behaviour.

Concluding comments

Participant discussion throughout the programme and in the post-programme surveys has showcased a significant increase in understanding of power dynamics within supervisory relationships, as well as a clearer understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and assault and the impacts of this type of violence. Many also expressed relief, particularly during informal discussions during the face-to-face workshop at being given the opportunity to discuss these issues. Most acknowledged a need for a unanimous framework governing supervisor–supervisee

relationships, making it clear that supervisors need and want a framework and education around ethical dilemmas. Universities Australia has developed Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships; however, this has yet to be adopted by faculties, departments and individual supervisors as a guiding document. To wit, when asked which ethical framework participants drew on in academic work to guide supervisory responsibilities, the responses varied from personal values to professional discipline-based guidelines.

The programme holds strong potential as the academic equivalent of an early-intervention strategy if run as part of orientation training for early-career academics. The broader challenge in working to prevent academic sexual violence will require a sector-wide response. This can happen; we have seen it happen with the sector-wide, student-focussed prevention initiatives and institutional changes that have flowed from the Change the Course report (AHRC 2017). A recent extension of this existing initiative, Respect Now Always (Universities Australia n.d.), appears to hold some promise. Framed as a whole-of-university response to preventing gendered violence, the strategy 'Change the story at your university' (Our Watch n.d.) does refer to staff as well as students and requires universities to consider gender inequality across all domains of the institution (Universities Australia n.d.). To date, the strategy has received little public attention and has only recently appeared on the organisation's website. We remain hopeful that the promising ideas outlined in the strategy will come to fruition and that Ethical Pedagogical Practices may play a role in supporting this cultural shift.

Note

1 Pseudonym.

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12 The walls spoke when no one else would

Autoethnographic notes on sexual-power gatekeeping within avant-garde academia

Lieselotte Viaene, Catarina Laranjeiro and Miye Nadya Tom

Introduction

The #MeToo movement entered the public sphere with its hashtag buzzed throughout international news and social media. In the years since, several articles focussed on prestigious academic institutions and professors. What you are currently reading was drafted by three researchers[1] who recognized themselves in the many situations that women have bravely described. Even while finishing the final draft of "writing-out" our experiences, another high-level scandal about Harvard "Star Professor" John Comaroff, a well-known expert on African Studies and postcolonial Anthropology, reached the established newspapers in the US. Just as we will analyse in our chapter, this scandal reveals – once more – how academia often works: institutional cover ups to protect "Star Professors" who favour abuses of power towards young women researchers who depend on the academic approval of these individuals to build their careers. Instead of our names, we will use our institutional positions at that time – The Former National Ph.D. Student, the Former Post-Doctoral Researcher, and the Former International Ph.D. Student – to better underline the asymmetrical power relations we faced. Two of us – the Former National Ph.D. Student and the Former Post-Doctoral Researcher – met for the first time in a bar close to the train station of the city where our research centre was based. A few months before, a common Ph.D. colleague introduced us via email because she thought that we should talk to each other. This encounter was transformative for each of us. After months of internal self-blame, our suspicions and doubts were confirmed, giving our narratives a different angle. We realized that our experiences were neither isolated nor exceptional. Rather, we faced our institution's violation of professional ethics, especially its inexistent safeguards for young women striving to build their graduate or post-doctoral academic careers working in a precarious labour environment. We realized that our experiences of

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institutional abandonment happened for the sake of preserving the prestigious reputation of the research centre and its “Star Professor.”[2]

After our first meeting, we continued to exchange media articles. We understood that we would have to cope with concepts such as “grooming,” “gaslighting,” “academic incest,” “Star Professors and their institutional backing,” and “whisper network” to analyse and understand better our individual and collective narratives. While each of us has a unique story, there are also many connecting dots shared among each of our experiences. For instance, the Former International Ph.D. student came at 23 years old to develop her doctoral research in one of the newly created Ph.D. programmes. The Former Post-Doctoral Researcher came through an international mobility research programme funded by the European Commission. Both were new in the country, did not master the language, and knew no one upon their arrival. The Former National Ph.D. Student arrived at this research centre where she was integrated into a program with other colleagues. Additionally, she was in her own country. All three went to this international recognized research centre to learn about (de)colonization, emancipatory, and transformative social sciences.

When we shared our stories with non-academic friends, it was common to face questions on why we did not scream from the rooftops or write open letters to denounce the institutional harassment and the silently accepted practice that sexual access to young researchers and intellectual extractivism is part of the “compensation package” (Theidon 2022) to be part of the club of the Star Professor. As with many victims, few understand their reluctance to speak out. In the case of academia, few understand how institutions and their internal dynamics might constrain young female academic researchers from standing up and talking out publicly. This chapter will examine and unfold different layers of the complexities and ambiguities to find possible answers.

In this context, Alexandro Portelli’s (2013) work on oral history writing resonates with the authors. Twenty years ago, he wrote that the history of harassment has never emerged due to its private domain. Therefore, it was seen as having no historical significance; that which has not been spoken of will not be found in official historical accounts. So, it would be an ungrateful task to look for traces of sexual misconduct through the usual historical sources, such as archival or court documents. In the last couple of years, however, stories of harassment breached the floodgates of silence and even reached the international spotlight. To understand how this tradition of abuse has survived from *jus primae noctis* times until the present day is a too complex endeavour for this chapter. However, a critical analysis of our experience may advance some clues about why the academic world is such a fertile context for this kind of continuous abusive behaviour. Specifically, we attempt to unpack the different layers of power entanglements within an institution that promotes itself – and is internationally recognized – as progressive, transformative, anti-patriarchal, and de-colonial.

We draw upon autoethnography, "a form of inquiry, writing, and/or performance that puts questions and 'issues of being' into circulation and dialogue" (Bochner 2013, p. 54), as the main research method for analysing our individual and collective experiences in this chapter. Granted that memory is the primary source of our analysis, it is essential to highlight that the truth of any autoethnography is not stable since memory is active, dynamic, and ever-changing (Bochner 2013 and Giorgio 2013). Additionally, we reflect on situations of institutional abuse, which tend to happen in private settings with no witnesses. They might become known through survivors' voices,[3] naturally subjective, emotional, or even resentful. We are writing from these voices. Reflecting on a traumatic event brings with it the repetition of its violence, making it difficult to describe coherently. Therefore, we argue that demanding objectivity to a survivor's description is also an act of violence. It is also important to recognize that these situations are incredibly nerve-wracking, generating memory errors or deformations. Commonly, survivors cannot remember apparent details of the abuse or can even mix up two cases of abuse in the same. Nevertheless, these errors can be psychologically true and that truth can be more revealing than any factual record. They are essential for understanding abusers' patterns precisely because instead of describing facts, they strive to make sense of them (Portelli 2013).

We did not interview any institutional actors. We inquire into their behaviours and attitudes based on our perceptions and lived experiences. If abusive situations can include multiple realities – whose credibility should not be considered exclusively on their agreement with the facts – it is better to assume that we do not share the same reality with abusers and their enablers. We interweave these three types of observations in the analysis that follows: first, our personal experiences and memories; second, personal experiences in relation to others who supported us or even shared with us the same burden; third, our collective observations to make sense of the abusers' behaviours. As Tomaselli, Dyll-Myklebust, and van Grootheest (2013, p. 576) observe, autoethnography is a "political/personal intervention." Moreover, as Ahmed (2021, p. 32) has pointed out regarding sexual misconduct in academia, "Telling the story of a complaint can feel like telling a life story." As such, the main goal of this chapter is to contribute to opening a much-needed debate in academia about institutional responsibilities by reflecting on analytical concepts such as "whisper network," "sexual-power gatekeepers," "academic incest," and "intellectual and sexual extractivism." Although our academic careers went ahead, we are aware that for many colleagues, the same obstacles lead to dropping out and the end of their academic careers.

Surrendering to the Star Professor: Some reflections about power structures and cult-like dynamics

The Star Professor at the centre of our chapter established an academic school of thought, which appeals to Ph.D. students and junior researchers

from all around the world. The institution is based in a country where little public funding is attributed to scientific research but, thanks to his international profile, it was able to attract a lot of national and international research funding, which made it grow very fast (see also Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion 2009 and Brown with Carasso 2013). He held the main power and academic position at the institution, which in practice means a personal identification between both. There are few Ph.D. fellowships, even fewer post-doc positions, and a permanent job contract can be considered a mirage. So, many researchers worked in very precarious conditions, which made them vulnerable to institutional abuses of power, as will be described in the next section.

Besides the Star Professor, there were two crucial figures to understand its power dynamics: the Apprentice and the Watchwomen. The Apprentice was considered by many as the Star Professor's intellectual right hand and his successor. He was quickly rising in the Star Professor's shadow by having prominent roles in national and international research projects, in Ph.D. programmes, and in key power governance bodies. The Apprentice usually welcomed foreign Ph.D. students and other young post-doctoral researchers who came as part of international mobility programs. For those who just had arrived, he first appeared as an intelligent, successful, caring, and extremely helpful senior researcher. The Watchwoman had many academic and key institutional responsibilities: co-coordinator of a Ph.D. programme, part of power governance bodies, principal investigator of research projects, and supervisor of Ph.D. students, among others. The ones who arrived to work with the group of the Star Professor were welcomed by the Apprentice and the Watchwoman, who played the role of gatekeepers, "individuals who smooth access to the group … key people who let us in, give us permission, or grant access" (O'Reilly 2009, p. 123) for new researchers who wanted to be involved in the several research activities of the group around the Star Professor – seminars, summer schools, publications, among others.[4] The academic activities of research groups were in the hands of these two crucial figures since the Star Professor spent half of the academic year at a prestigious university in another continent. Two other crucial figures at the institutional level were men in key positions of the crucial power governance bodies, both long-term intimate friends of the Star Professor.

The three authors had unique academic mentoring relationships with each of these Star Professor's gatekeepers. The Former International Ph.D. Student was the first Indigenous doctoral researcher to come through the programme under the mentorship of the Watchwoman. The Former National Ph.D. Student was the Apprentice's first mentee who was enrolled in one of the doctoral programmes created by the Star Professor and co-coordinated by the Watchwoman. While the Star Professor was the Former Post-doc Researcher's official grant supervisor, he appointed the Apprentice as one of the two members of her Advisory Board, together with the Watchwoman. When she arrived at the research centre, the Former Post-doc Researcher was

made aware by someone from the Project Office about the long-standing intimate relationship between the Star Professor and the Watchwoman.

As time went by, we became more aware of how these personal relationships shaped institutional dynamics, including the production and reproduction of academic incest. In these dynamics, the role of the Apprentice and the Watchwoman is not limited to the more traditional reading of the concept of gatekeepers (a well-known concept among ethnographers). Here, the gatekeepers to the institution's power structures rely upon the nonexistence of ethic safeguards regarding academic mentoring. Such dynamics have enabled these two people to play the role of sexual-power gatekeeper where in many situations a clear line between coercion and consent is difficult to draw. Moreover, the institution has cultivated both cult-like dynamics and friendship dynamics of loyalty, as will be described below. The concept of "loyalty" is crucial and widely used by the Star Professor in institutional meetings, while "school" and "community" are also often used.

From academic incest to intellectual and sexual extractivism

Academic incest, as described by Basak (2013), occurs when someone is hired because of participating in clientelism dynamics at the university, involving asymmetric power relationships. The Star Professor and the Watchwoman might see in his Ph.D. students an opportunity for vocational reproduction, namely spreaders and defenders of his conceptual avant-garde decolonial framework (Corey 2018). Numerous are the stories about how the Star Professor obliged his students to quote him extensively, using his conceptual and analytical framework as the main academic reference in their work. At the same time, when threatened by other investigators' work, he might make his assistants and students the perfect victims to vent his frustrations. These kinds of academic relations generate tensions of exclusivity, elitism, and consequently jealousy and competition among early career researchers. Academic incest has even darker sides: despite the well-known discourse about the importance of collaborative and participatory action research with research participants as a way to transform the academia, the Star Professor could be seen as an expert in intellectual extractivism. Stories of research assistants whose work and knowledge were used in his books and being poorly paid are numerous. Assisting the Star Professor might be regarded as an informal in-between job while waiting (and hoping) for a research grant, fellowship, or job contract. As far as we know, he had three assistants from a Latin-American country, where the Star Professor's work has a vast social and political impact. They became privileged academic and political bridges for his ongoing research. However, being based in a foreign country, where they do not know labour legislation, his assistants find themselves in very vulnerable social and labour positions. Some of them even got fired without receiving due pay for all of their work. Their names might only appear in the acknowledgements or in the footnotes, not being recognized

for their intellectual authorship. This misconduct explains how this kind of Star Professors could write dozens of single-authored articles and book chapters per year while giving conferences and masterclasses across the globe. None of these young scholars dare to publicly denounce this misconduct and abuse of power for two main reasons. The first is being discredited by their peers, becoming isolated, and consequently in a difficult situation to restart their careers. Second is perceiving their positions as prestigious and promise to bring career advantages in the future no matter how distressing the present is.

At this institution, these kinds of imbalanced power relationships were frequently cloaked by social events part of the institutional culture, such as dinners in restaurants and private houses, where closer personal relationships between researchers from different hierarchical positions were encouraged. After Star Professor's yearly series of masterclasses, it is an unwritten rule that all researchers gather in a specific restaurant. In fact, in a personal meeting with the Star Professor, he instructed the Former Post-doc Researcher that she should go to these dinners to integrate herself better into her new research institution. The Former National Ph.D. Student received the same recommendation from both coordinators of her doctoral program.[5]

The restaurant was emblematic because of its homages to the Star Professor from students of different generations. It was a ritual to take group and individual photos with the Star Professor during these dinners and recite his poems. It involved a lot of drinking and dinners typically finished at dawn with everybody dancing or singing. During one of these dinners, the Former National Ph.D. Student and another female colleague were hugged by the Star Professor. This gesture, apparently innocuous, took too long, inviting closer familiarity. A male Ph.D. colleague realized what was happening and alerted them that this kind of inappropriate behaviour was usual. Moreover, he warned his female colleagues that they should remain careful. However, these inappropriate behaviours towards students are usually underestimated through humour or denial. Once, the Apprentice invited his students to party at his place. Laughing about it, they said that he was probably planning "an orgy party." This joke unfolds an ambivalence: his students felt empowered to be invited to his place in the sense that they belonged to the inner circle. Some were even aware of its dangers, which they then denied through humour. In his informal talks, he even questioned closed and monogamous relationships, creating grey zones about how to handle professional boundaries when there were implicit "friends/colleague/student with benefits" expectations to the researchers that he mentors. Inviting students and young researchers to spaces outside of the research centre made them more vulnerable.

Moreover, young researchers were sometimes very isolated, which was the case of the Former International Ph.D. Student and the Former Post-doc Researcher who became aware of the Apprentice's habitual grooming and sexual extractivism behaviour too late (Hanson and Richards 2019). As a

result, those who afterwards claimed non-consensual or intimidating sexual approaches would be questioned. They might hear back: "You went [to his house] because you wanted it!" Overall, this behaviour raises key questions about to what extent consent and coercion could easily have been separated towards the outer world when a power-structured mentor relationship flows towards a close friendship but turns out to be a manipulative move towards sexual extractivism.

An unbalanced swing: Anonymous graffiti and the whisper network

In midst of the international #MeToo movement, the walls at this institution began to speak. Graffiti shouted what no one dared to denounce. The Former Post-doc Researcher first saw the graffiti at the entrance of the institution's building saying "*Beat it or go away [name of Star Professor]. We [females] all know it.*" She was shocked and confused, but the whole conflict situation at her host institution started to make sense. While she felt as though she stood completely alone, she realized that other colleagues were bearing the same burden. The graffiti encouraged her to speak about her serious conflict with another female Ph.D. colleague. The Former Post-doc Researcher explained that a few weeks before, she was obliged to leave the Latin-American country where she was conducting fieldwork and return immediately to the institution. One of the key institutional governance bodies pressured her to change the research progress report she had to submit to her funding agency, in which she described inadequate supervision and institutional support to implement her research. She refused to do so because she was not able to meet the core objectives of her grant without this institutional support, which was part of the grant agreement. She had the gut feeling that she was not receiving this necessary support because she did not enter the "being friends/colleagues with benefits" scheme that the Apprentice had insinuated a year ago. She felt that he literally shut the doors: she was never invited to any meeting with the Star Professor's research group she was supposed to collaborate with, and an invited book chapter for the Star Professor's book on her field of expertise was no longer needed, no research contacts nor networks were shared, the training opportunities established in the grant were not created. Now she was being threatened with a disciplinary process of dismissal. This female Ph.D. colleague shared that the graffiti the Former Post-doc Researcher saw on the walls was not the first, the graffiti kept reappearing. She suggested the Former Post-doc Researcher talk with the Former National Ph.D. Student, who was having issues with the Apprentice – a supervisor they both shared. This colleague also shared that she had heard that the Apprentice frequently pestered female students, flirting with them anytime they casually met at parties, bars, or other informal situations.

The whisper network started to take shape and we (the authors) became aware of another incident: another international Ph.D. student who decided to conclude her doctoral research in her country-of-origin instead at this institution. She only told another female colleague the valid reason for this change: her supervisor, the Star Professor, had touched on her knee, inviting her to "deepen their relationship" as a "payback" for his academic support. The Star Professor was already in his late seventies. This female colleague kept that secret for a while, but after knowing that the Former National Ph.D. Student felt harassed, she told her about this incident. The Former National Ph.D. Student, who knew this latter student, sent her a photo of the front door of their centre, where someone graffitied: "[name of Star Professor] had raped a student." Someone erased these graffitis, but in the months that followed, similar ones appeared: on the facade of the research institution, on the walls in front and at the entrance of this institute, and on a wall of a neighbouring faculty building, among others.

The Former National Ph.D. Student learned about the graffiti through a colleague, who supported her initially when she decided to advance an institutional complaint about her Ph.D. supervisor's misconduct without knowing to whom or much less how. Yet, she later advised the Former National Ph.D. Student to back down. In her opinion, the Apprentice was raising problems about her thesis as a form of retaliation because he had not succeeded in sexualizing their relationship. The Former National Ph.D. Student had never realized her supervisor had any sexual intentions towards her, but she had previously noticed sexual intentions towards other female colleagues. In the first year of her Ph.D., for instance, a good friend of hers was sexually involved with him. The Former National Ph.D. Student had never understood what had happened that night, but her colleague was anxious for the rest of the semester. Concerning the Former National Ph.D. Student, he just attacked her academic work. First, he over-criticized her fieldwork, arguing that she had not found empirical evidence to corroborate her dissertation's hypothesis. Later, he stated she did not hold "dissertation thinking," forcing her to revise, again and again, her dissertation's structure. Naturally, this situation set in motion a cycle of low self-esteem, late work, and less polished writing, which might prove that it was the Former National Ph.D. Student and not her supervisor, who was the crux of the problem.[6]

The Former National Ph.D. Student felt that he badmouthed her to other senior researchers, diminishing the possibility for her to collaborate with projects related to her research topic. A senior colleague even once joked about hearing that she would not finish her Ph.D. For two years, they had established a fruitful collaborative professional relationship but suddenly this senior researcher stopped inviting her to participate in seminars, conferences, or workshops related to her topic. The Former National Ph.D. Student assumed that his behaviour was a sign that the institution would not protect

her. Believing that she would lose any complaint against the Apprentice, she decided to remain silent. Confronted with these microaggressions and hostility, slipping out was a matter of mental health. Like the Former Post-doc Researcher, she felt that the institution tried to isolate and silence her. The graffiti broke that isolation and silence.

To date, the authors do not know who was behind the graffiti.[7] While anyone has yet to claim responsibility, the writing on the walls enabled female researchers to start whispering and talking in confidence to share their suffering and struggles. As Carrie Rentschler (2018) described, a whisper network among female researchers creates a mutual aid linkage, enabling them to talk in confidence and meet others suffering similar circumstances. It made sense of a safe invisible container where women can connect and share. At the same time, this network breaks the mental and emotional isolation in which many women find themselves facing institutional abandonment. Isolation, lack of peer support, institution's accusations about "a rumour mill" or "witch hunts," gaslighting, and misinformation are some of the faces of institutional harassment. Suppose sexual misconduct might be a single assault. In that case, institutional harassment is the fertile ground that legitimizes this sexual misconduct, makes it grow, and enables it.

Whisper networks boast a sense of justice. Even if whispers might not always be entirely true, the people who spread them search for truth. The truth can take different shapes, and whispers belong to what can be labelled as hidden transcripts (Scott 2008). For instance, the Former National Ph.D. Student heard that other two post-doctoral female researchers made an institutional complaint against her supervisor. Yet she never found who these researchers were and if the accounts she was told actually happened. When she first realized about a sexual assault involving the Apprentice, she shared it with a colleague. This colleague told her that she already knew about it, adding some details. Later, both realized they have been talking about two different cases believing that they were the same one. So, if half-truths combine to generate multiple truths, the absence of a single and exclusive truth is the primary institutional argument to discredit the voices of women who were targets of harassment and sexual abuse/violence. Because of that, whisper networks may trap those who see them as a gateway for righteousness; they may work for and against victims of sexual misconduct, harassment, and even sexual violence.

Another practice that we observed is the existence of ambiguous drawbridges between the whisper networks and institutional sexual-power gatekeepers. We consider a drawbridge as a person who hears and supports victims but who also withdraws from acting against the institution in order to maintain his/her institutional position to continue to belong there. For instance, as soon as one senior researcher realized that a former Ph.D. student had publicly denounced the Star Professor for sexual abuse, she contacted her, expressing her support. She had done the same with some

other Ph.D. students who faced similar situations. Nevertheless, this senior researcher did not confront her colleagues or supervisors on the student's behalf. Indeed, a bolder stance might imply facing her peer's hostility. Under a competitive work environment, very few will risk losing their position, even if that means disregarding unethical misconduct. Inside the institution, the drawbridge can additionally use the information without the victim's control. Then, who benefits from drawbridges in this type of situation? Those who substructure them and, consequently, control them. Even though the anonymous graffiti (we counted eight) did not provoke a public (inter) national scandal, it enhanced the aforementioned whisper network, which allowed us to connect, share, and co-write this chapter.

Self-proclaimed radical feminists: Drawbridges where one expects support

As described earlier, the Star Professor's extractivism is not limited to the intellectual level. His sexual extractivism was well-known among his female feminist researchers and reproduced by the Apprentice without a problem. In fact, in certain circles, the rumours of the Star Professor's affairs around the world seem to be tolerated as part of the prestigious status of a Star Professor. Some female researchers even saw these sexual interactions as a stepping stone for upward mobility in the academic hierarchy. So, this is another example of "a more familiar story of deeply fucked up institutions where star professors hold too much power to determine the future of their protégés" (Wang 2018).

Critical feminist studies are an important research field within the institution, which also hosts a renowned Ph.D. programme on the subject. Over the years, this programme has created a group of feminist researchers who conduct remarkable work and publications with and about sex workers, transgendered immigrants, and Indigenous and Afro-Descendant women. One of their research topics is harassment, including in the workplace. Some of these feminist researchers even belong to the institution's scientific and ethics governance bodies. However, these positions are assigned to people trusted by key power people of these institutional bodies. We witnessed that, instead of protecting female researchers and students who were targets of harassment and sexual abuse, these governing bodies might become instruments of repression. For instance, some ethics commission officers – at the time of our tenure – were influential public voices on L.G.B.T.Q.I.A.+ rights. However, their background did not encourage us to denounce any abuse that had happened while they were presiding over the ethics governance body because they were a long-term friend of the Apprentice. On the contrary, we felt that they could use their position to discredit us. Given these circumstances, the absence of complaints did not signify the lack of abuse in this institution. During our tenure, this committee did not even have a protocol about sexual and labour harassment.[8]

Consequently, the institution's approach to bullying, manipulation, coercion, and control is worsened by the fact that its theoretical principles about a decolonial, inclusive, and reflexive academia convince others that they face injustices and abuses if they ever run across them in real life (Amienne 2016). This huge theory-practice gap enhances abusive relationships, through which one can control others. As already exhibited in other research in this context (Ahmed 2021), men who are publicly feminist and privately abusive are increasingly common. They usually keep close relations with women and non-binary people, who would protect their reputation if accused of sexual misconduct. The gesture of one of the most well-known feminists in this institution may illustrate this situation: she covered one of the above-mentioned pieces of graffiti with her jacket while waiting for someone to clean it.[9] One could ask why these self-proclaimed radical feminists are not openly supporting victims and demanding institutional change. The fact is that abusers become experts in creating strategic enablers through manipulation, such as playing with their labour vulnerabilities.

From whispers to quelling voices: The institutional witch hunt

The graffiti triggered more reactions: months after they appeared and several years after being sexually assaulted by the Apprentice, the Former International Ph.D. Student, living on another continent, decided to denounce him in her social network, explicitly calling him out as a "sexual predator." She also warned in the same post that the Apprentice was "not the voice of anti-racism or social justice."

The social media post was picked up by people linked to the institution and started to circulate quickly. The Former International Ph.D. Student received emails from the Apprentice's lawyer, one of the research institute's lawyers, requesting she delete that post from her social media. If she would not delete it, the lawyer threatened that the Apprentice would criminally charge her for defamation. Under this pressure, she removed that post. Despite this fact, the Apprentice made a criminal complaint against her.

As analysed in other cases of academic power abuse and sexual misconduct, the "hierarchical power structure offers rewards and protection to those at the top and enacts a steep price on those with little institutional clout" was also prevalent in this research institution (Wang 2018).

Even if our individual stories are unique, a connecting dot is how the institutional machinery sought to set in motion and gain full speed to oppress and silence people who publicly denounce abuse through social media (here, the Former International Ph.D. Student) or to their funding agencies (such as in the case of the Former Post-doc Researcher). The previously mentioned two key power figures of governing bodies were crucial in institutional oppression. The main focus was clearly protecting the good name and the institution's international fame at all costs, including the Star Professor and his Apprentice.

This same threatening pressure technique was used towards the Former Post-doc Researcher when the institution, through one of these key power figures, requested that she abort her fieldwork to return to the research institution within seven days. If not, she would face a disciplinary procedure for immediate dismissal with just cause. The Former Post-doc Researcher complied with the request, which meant cancelling her research activities and flew back to the country and complied with the obligation to go to the office every day. Nevertheless, a few weeks later, the research centre started a disciplinary procedure despite the fact her two-year labour contract was three months short of ending with a Disciplinary Charge Sheet for Dismissal of 59 pages long. Notably, it was the first time in the almost 40 year's existence of the institution that the Labour Code was used against a researcher.

Another similar pattern is that the institution deliberately used the fact that both women were foreigners and do not know domestic law nor master the national language in their favour. In the case of the Former International Ph.D. Student, it took her a couple of months to find someone who could give her the necessary legal advice about what criminal complaint entailed for her. In the Former Post-doc Researcher's case, she learned from the union's lawyer, hired upon returning to the country, that such a disciplinary process usually takes a couple of months and that an immediate termination was legally not possible.

A third pattern is how these key power institutional actors mobilized everything in their power to pressure, threaten, and exhaust emotionally not only these two women but also the Former National Ph.D. Student. At the time of the Former Ph.D. International Student's public post, the Former National Ph.D. Student was contacted to talk about her admission to the next stage of public defence, which had been delayed for several months. During that meeting, she was asked if she felt like a victim of harassment by the Apprentice. Unable to confirm, she used this unexpected opportunity to describe the abuses she had been subjected to during the past few years. During this conversation, she did not perceive that this institutional key power figure was trying to clarify what happened; but that he could use her vulnerability to protect the Apprentice. In fact, a couple of days later, her Ph.D. defence was suddenly postponed without any justification.

The Former International Ph.D. Student was invited by a senior researcher to teach in a summer school. Once this program was known, one of these key institutional figures, called this senior researcher explaining that this Former International Ph.D. Student was under criminal investigation by the police and that she would be detained for interrogation once arriving in the country. This key power institutional figure publicly stated that it was a private issue between the Apprentice and the Former International Ph.D. Student. At that moment, we – the three authors – were already in contact through the whisper network. We knew that this key power institutional figure's research area is the national justice system and judicial operators, therefore he has very close contact with the judicial system. Moreover, he

was a member of a research group working on the country's justice system which implied regular meetings with local judges, attorneys, and so on. The Former International Ph.D. Student was fed up with this blank threat and cancelled her participation.

On the other hand, the Former Post-doc Researcher once back at the institution, she entered into a burnout and had to take a sick leave prescribed by a psychiatrist. In midst of this burnout, the disciplinary procedure she had to face became an emotional exhausting and nerve-wracking legal calvaria mountain: among others, she had to present written English testimonies to support her case, her sick leave was inspected by the Verification Commission of the Social Security Institution upon request of the institution. According to her lawyer, this procedure was completely unnecessary and even illegal.

A final pattern in all cases is that, contrary to the Star Professor's research discourse of social and restorative justice, there was a complete absence of positive and constructive ways to deal with the voiced discontent and complaints of all young female researchers. Before her refusal to change and lie in her report to the funding agency, the Former Post-doc Researcher had voiced on several occasions her grievances; though, the institute did not undertake the necessary steps and initiatives to restore the situation and avoid a complete rupture. Reflecting upon this exaggerated institutional witch hunt, the Former Post-doc Researcher realized that the institution probably did not want to run the risk that she would amplify her original complaint, also considering the graffiti sprayed upon the institution's walls in midst of the international #MeToo movement.

In the case of the Former National Ph.D. Student, her grievances were ignored and were never taken seriously. Several years prior, the Former International Ph.D. student had informed the Watchwoman about her concerns, expressing her weak emotional state and fears after the sexual abuse by the Apprentice, who continued to contact and sexually harass her despite her requests to be left alone. The Watchwoman did not respond. In light of this, removing the Apprentice from the National Ph.D. Student's supervision, coordination, and teaching positions was never proposed as an institutional solution.

While in the cases of Former National Ph.D. Student and Former Post-doc Researcher, the Apprentice completely disappeared from the scene once the institutional machinery took over, in the case of the Former International Ph.D. Student, the Apprentice did the necessary public and private manoeuvres to de-legitimize her complaint to regain his face and reputation. A few days before her public post, police forces attacked people in a neighbourhood on the country's capital's outskirts. Afro-descendant citizens, frequent victims of political abuse and institutional racism, are the majority of this neighbourhood's inhabitants. Reacting to this attack, a demonstration to denounce and protest police violence took place in one of the capital's main avenues. This pacific demonstration was also violently repressed by the police forces. Identifying himself as Afro descendant, the

Apprentice wrote a long and eloquent text in his social network, which allowed him to position himself as a victim, escaping the place of oppressor where he had been placed by the Former International Ph.D. Student's public denunciation, who is an Indigenous woman. Hundreds of people shared his text, expressing their appreciation for him. Additionally, he also contacted several colleagues to counter-explain his version of this reported assault, arguing that physical assault was warranted and that the sexual assault was consensual. By positioning himself as a victim of defamation and racism while racializing the Former International Ph.D. Student as white, he won the support of many, including some colleagues who months before were involved in the whisper network. For those abused by him, this was a moment to step back: all drawbridges stood up at the same time.

Final reflections

The anonymous graffiti did not provoke the scandal those who had risked painting the walls had expected to. Nevertheless, without them, we would not have connected the dots, much less have co-written this chapter. The Former National Ph.D. Student and the Post-doc Researcher would not have met at the bar at the train station. The Former International Ph.D. Student would not have denounced the Apprentice on social media. Both the National Ph.D. Student and the Former International Ph.D. Student were living abroad when the graffiti appeared. Both of them received photos of most of them no matter how quickly the graffiti was erased once it was discovered since employees of the institution kept erasing the writing on the walls. One day, we received a photo of graffiti, and the next day, we received a photo of a white square covering it. The day after, a photo of another graffiti was painted on the white square. The photos were circulated to us and others. Unlike the walls, it is impossible to erase the images from all of the devices they were sent to.

The graffiti was (and still is) an epicentre of resistance. The underlying message in each graffiti was: you are not alone. We felt empowered each time we received a photo of the graffiti. This empowerment, in turn, helped us to pursue our careers, arriving at a point where we can write about it in hopes of contributing to transforming a professional field that is very dear to us.

Despite the empowerment the graffiti and the whisper network offered each of us, the personal and professional ramifications must not be underestimated. It is beyond the scope of this chapter – all women have been dealing with combinations and different degrees of burnout, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder reaching out to professional support which marks us up to date. This gives us an even more bitter taste because, as mentioned above, the Star Professor's research agenda seeks social justice and deep social transformation. However, practice contributes to the degradation of female young researchers' mental health.

At the same time, the institutional witch hunt came with high reputational costs, the gaslighting strategy of marking young female researchers as "difficult," "aggressive," and "unrespectful" is something we take with us while building further up our academic career in other places, even in distant countries. Those gaslighting labels "got under our skin" (Ahmed 2021, p. 27), and we experience challenges in building up new, healthy and trusting professional relationships due to the feeling of constantly walking on a tightrope: in a simple stumble to keep balance, everything can eventually be used against you. Disagreements and tensions are part of every labour environment, but once a researcher has this kind of public label, every new conflict is easily framed by the other parts to scapegoat, reproducing this gaslighting strategy.

Revisiting our central question on what might inhibit young female academic researchers from taking a stand and openly speaking out against sexual misconduct and sexual abuse (or even sexual violence), there are several complex layers and factors at play. Perhaps the biggest factor is what one researcher in the underground solidarity network commented:

> The research centre IS the Star Professor, so if the Star Professor falls … the whole institution falls with him. Therefore, there is no critical mass inside towards this kind of misconduct and abuse. Nobody wants to fall and be branded as someone of that fallen centre [which is nationally and internationally renowned].

Another factor is that depression or burnout might result from not denouncing these matters in order to avoid legal, public, or professional repercussions. This was evident in the case of the Former National Ph.D. Student, who followed the advice of her psychotherapist: "Not denouncing is not about cowardice, but about mental health."

As this chapter shows, figures like the Apprentice were invested not only in carrying the name and work of a Star Professor, but his legacies of abuse. Each was sheltered by figures such as the Watchwoman and the self-proclaimed feminists who also see their work and names invested in a globally renowned institution. As recently analysed "Abuse of power is not incidental to these men's 'greatness'; it is central to it" (Täuber and Mahmoudi 2022). Under a competitive and precarious work environment bullying becomes a career tool for Star Professors. And this competition and precarity turn peers into their enablers.

The method of autoethnography has given us a valuable analytical tool to critically unpack the different interconnected layers of power and how cult-like and family/community dynamics around a Star Professor have enabled a research culture where its reputation should be untouchable. Many researchers at the centre surrender to that power logic. Having the opportunity to co-write this book chapter has been a very healing process at

the individual and collective level for the three of us. At the same time, it has triggered many emotional scars and fear. Despite those triggers, we join the growing critical call from within academia for an urgent paradigm shift in this professional field and strive towards a more collaborative, transformative, and interdependent community.

Notes

1 We would like to recognize the invaluable support of many colleagues and friends (women and men). Unfortunately, we cannot name as the current academic settings we work in do not offer enough emotional and physical safeguards in order to continue our research harassment-free.

2 We borrow the concept of "Star Professor" from Esther Wang who critically analysed the sexual harassment scandal around Avital Ronnell, New York University Professor, and considered a Super Star Professor in academic field: feminist literary theorist. See Wang, E., 2018, *What are we to make of the case of scholar Avital Ronell?,* Jezebel. Available at: https://jezebel.com/what-are-we-to-make-of-the-case-of-scholar-avital-ronel-1828366966?utm_medium=sharefromsite&utm_source=Jezebel_facebook&fbclid=IwAR38HZjsvxYcbm_02N-BxkqKM47nvSd8f1faFr1Tso-35QDcF6kcCVf3uBQ. Since this article of 2018, the coined term of "Star Professor" has become widely used in academic reflections about #MeToo in academia. See Susanne Täuber and Morteza Mahmoudi, 2022, "How bullying becomes a career tool," *Nature Human Behaviour* https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01311-z.

3 Instead of using the term "victim" in this context, we prefer to use the term "survivor" to stress the active role of those persons who have faced similar situations to deal and overcome them; the term "victim" may have a too passive connotation.

4 Sarah Ahmed in her recent book "Complaint!" uses the term "door holders" to refer to the same institutional power this kind of people have (Duke University Press, 2021).

5 The Former International Ph.D. Student did not partake in these dinners due to her age and disconnect with older members of her cohort; however, she was later invited to a gathering organized by the Apprentice, at which point she was physically and sexually assaulted.

6 Many people who suffer from gaslighting do not realize that they mistake their confusion for legitimate feelings against themselves, leading to lowered self-worth and possible situations that make it more challenging to deal with gaslighting. Often, gaslighting occurs between two individuals who trust each other, with one subtly manipulating the other. Because it often occurs within intimate interpersonal relationships, manipulation can be complicated to spot.

7 When the graffiti appeared, there were feminist assemblies in that town. Some researchers who attended these meetings were easy targets of the "witch-hunt" accusations. Meanwhile, these feminist meetings weakened and became residual. However, probably, at that time, those who painted the graffiti felt sheltered by them. One senior female researcher also reduced this institutional oppression's weight a bit less thanks to her underground solidarity and unconditional support.

Things did not change as much as we expected, but there is now an ombudsman position at this institution. And we have learned some pathways to forward.

8 The centre has now a Code of Conduct, but it is very unlikely this will be activated for this kind of issues as people in the centre are aware of the institutional culture which does not favour a systematic change.

9 This information was obtained through the whisper network.

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Afterword

Anna Bull

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) occur in the everyday spaces of academia. This statement should be a truism, but as the chapters in the volume attest, it can still be risky to state that GBVH happens in academia, in everyday spaces, as a normal occurrence. The focus of the volume on 'everyday spaces' is a crucial intervention to move away from common sense assumptions and myths about where, how, and to whom GBVH in academia occur, and as Alexandria Petit-Thorne describes (in this volume), it is crucial to include 'liminal academic spaces' such as student organisations, labour unions, and social spaces within the understanding of 'everyday spaces'. Chapters in this volume also reveal how GBVH intersects with violence and harassment on the basis of gender identity, 'race', sexuality, and disability, and is upheld by legacies of colonial violence. The book also serves as a reminder of the value of autoethnographic accounts such as those from Lieselotte Viaene, Catarina Laranjeiro et al., as well as Simona Palladino and Laura Thurman in this volume. Such accounts form their own genre, forming a lineage that includes Elizabeth Stanko (1995), Deborah Lee (2018), and Whitley and Page (2015), among others, in making visible the experiential level of how abuse occurs.

In addition to its contribution to this lineage, an under-examined area that this volume contributes to is the specific logic of how GBVH occurs within the cultures and norms of different disciplines, as outlined in this volume by Simona Palladino as well as Laura Thurman in anthropology, and Apen Ruiz Martinez and colleagues in archaeology. Other accounts of disciplinary cultures and norms in relation to GBVH include Bradford and Crema (2022) and Voss (2021) also on archaeology; Aycock et al. (2019) in physics; Bull (forthcoming) on music; Cardwell and Hitchen (2022) on geography; Fernando and Prasad (2018) on business schools; Clancy et al. (2019) on astronomy and planetary science; and a relatively large body of work in medicine, including National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018). As Laura Thurman notes in relation to anthropology, publishing such accounts 'can contribute to a larger understanding of different kinds of violence and the ways in which they are connected to

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our discipline's methodology'. They can also allow academic disciplines to see beyond their own siloes or cultures and examine the similarities (and differences) across different contexts where GBVH occurs (Kelly, 2016), avoiding an approach whereby GBVH is seen as an issue particular to a discipline and instead focusing on the structural factors that create a conducive context (Bull, forthcoming).

As such, the detailed, empirical, context-specific accounts of GBVH that this book includes are of great importance and contribute towards unveiling hidden histories – and present-day accounts – of GBVH in the academy. My ongoing research and activism, carried out primarily within UK higher education, has shown the need for such accounts. As a co-founder and director of The 1752 Group, a research and campaign organisation addressing staff/faculty sexual misconduct, it is clear that GBVH is still minimised and invisibilised in higher education institutions (Jackson and Sundaram, 2020; Whitley, 2022). The 1752 Group was formed in 2016 by Tiffany Page, Heidi Hasbrouck, and Chryssa Sdroulia, and myself. Tiffany, Heidi, and Chryssa had all spent several years fighting (as part of a larger group) to have their 'complaint collective' (Ahmed, 2021) taken seriously and acted on by Goldsmiths, University of London. As outlined in Page et al. (2019), as part of a wider institutional reluctance to address this issue, Goldsmiths was willing to commit only £1752 to support the group of PhD students attempting to make a change in the institution. Our name therefore serves as a reminder that sticking-plaster solutions will not be sufficient to address GBVH in academia, and indeed, some months after this gesture from the institution, Professor Sara Ahmed resigned in protest at Goldsmiths' failure to tackle sexual harassment, leading to headlines around the world. Goldsmiths then saw fit to appoint a member of staff to a full-time strategic role to lead this work.

Such detailed, context-specific accounts are needed to combat 'common sense' assumptions and myths around what GBVH is and where and how it occurs. Such myths still abound, despite increasing public knowledge of this issue. One of these common sense myths is around why and how people report GBVH. Institutional policies still tend to work within the assumption that reporting occurs on an individual basis: that reporting will involve a single incident, a single person being targeted, and this incident will be carried out by one other individual within their academic community. Instead, reporting is just as likely to occur through a 'complaint collective' (Ahmed, 2021) whereby a group of (usually) women will find each other – often by chance, or through the 'whisper network', or other forms of direct action such as graffiti as outlined by Lieselotte Viaene and colleagues, in this volume as well as Whitley and Page (2015) – and then may support each other to come forward to their institution. Indeed, this collective approach should not be surprising when evidence shows that many of those who engage in abusive behaviours target multiple people

(Cantalupo and Kidder, 2017; Bull and Rye, 2018). This reality – made visible through empirical research as well as first-person accounts – also calls into question the common sense notion of 'barriers to reporting' as it is often outlined in research and policy. While there is a large literature on such 'barriers', there is much less research looking at the other side of the coin: reasons why people *do* report (Bull, 2022). In qualitative interviews with students and early-career staff/faculty who did report – or attempted to report – GBVH to their institution or to the police, it was clear that the overwhelming reasons they reported were to protect themselves and others (Bull, 2022). In some cases, this was at a great cost to themselves. This collective, mutually supportive approach needs to replace the myth that reporting usually occurs on an individualised basis.

Another widely held assumption is that people will recognise sexual violence or harassment when it happens to them or when they witness it. Some survivors have found that the idea of 'grooming' is helpful in making sense of their experiences as it helps to make visible the ways in which abuse may occur in ways that are difficult to recognise. While in the criminal justice system, within English law, this term refers only to actions taken by an adult towards a child, it is gaining traction in explaining a pattern of 'boundary-blurring' behaviours over time between people in positions of unequal power (Bull and Page, 2021). Being subjected to 'grooming' behaviours means that it may take a long time for survivors to recognise how unequal (usually gendered) power dynamics are creating a situation where they are not in control; these dynamics can also lead to victim-survivors feeling complicit in their abuse (Bull and Page, 2021). Part of the work that this volume is doing, therefore, is to help make visible to readers the myriad ways in which GBVH can occur, and how it can compound wider social inequalities or legacies such as those occurring due to colonialism (see Keri-Lynn Cheechoo's chapter in this volume).

When it comes to institutional responses to GBVH, as Lieselotte Viaene et al.'s chapter attests, many victim-survivors do not have faith that their institution is safe to report to. And yet within institutional policies, the common sense assumption prevails that if complaints processes are followed, they will provide justice and safety for complainants. This assumption overlooks, as Ahmed (2021) describes, the reality that the complaint is being made in the same context where discrimination or harassment occurred. As various authors have outlined, the wider conditions of marketised higher education and historical and contemporary inequalities within institutions shape how institutions handle complaints (Phipps, 2018; see also Lena Wånggren in this volume; Shannon, 2021). But it is not simply policies' implementation within unequal, discriminatory, marketised HEIs that impedes complainants' ability to obtain justice; there are also issues to be tackled on the level of the structure of policies. As Tiffany Page, Georgina Calvert-Lee, and I have outlined, staff-student

complaints processes in particular (but also to a lesser degree in staff-staff or student-student processes):

> fail to offer similar protections and privileges to the student complainant and the responding staff member and, as a result, students are often excluded from the process purporting to resolve their complaint
>
> (Bull et al., 2020)

Indeed,

> In a society where vastly more sexual misconduct complaints are made by women against men than vice versa, a process for investigating sexual misconduct complaints which gives those responding more rights than those complaining might well be thought to place women as a group at a particular disadvantage and so to amount to indirect discrimination, in breach of the Equality Act 2010.
>
> (The 1752 Group and McAllister Olivarius, 2020, 4–5; see also UN Women, 2018, 8)

While this example refers to UK policy and practice, similar structures for institutional complaints exist in other jurisdictions where the process of making a grievance or complaint against the institution is separated from the disciplinary process against the reported party, or where the legal framework favours perpetrators (such as in Spain (Lombardo and Bustelo, 2022)). Therefore, a fundamental lack of parity of rights within complaints is normal practice. In our Sector Guidance, we have suggested an amended process to address this issue (which also applies to other discrimination-related complaints) (Bull et al., 2020). The question of whether GBVH-related complaints processes should follow the same structures as other forms of disciplinary processes within higher education (Brodsky, 2021), or whether bespoke systems need to be devised to address this issue (Witwatersrand University, 2015) remains open, and this is one area where international sharing of research, experience, and activism is needed.

Also relating to institutional responses to GBVH, a further assumption that needs to be called into question is the idea that complainants can obtain a satisfactory outcome to their complaint under current mechanisms. In some contexts, such as the UK and Canada, unfortunately this is not (yet) the case (Busby and Birenbaum, 2020). In a qualitative study of students and ECRs attempting to report GBVH in the UK, we found that only 4 out of 15 reached the end of the process and were able to obtain 'remedy' or redress for their complaint (Bull and Page, 2022). For two of these, obtaining this outcome required taking legal action or going to the higher education adjudicator to attempt to hold their institution to account. Even then, the remedies offered were, for the most part, not what complainants

were seeking – which as above, was to protect themselves and others from the reported parties.

Such reflections might leave readers despairing about the possibility of obtaining justice or safety within academic spaces. However, it is also important not to hold to solely negative assumptions about GBVH and institutional responses. In an ongoing research project with Erin Shannon, 'Higher Education After #MeToo', we have found very great differences between the resources, expertise, and institutional willingness that different UK higher education institutions are committing to tackle this issue (see also Chantler et al., 2019). Some institutions appear to have put high levels of investment into this area and are drawing on trauma-informed, specialist expertise to provide support and to handle reports. These are by far the minority, and even these (few) institutions still have a long way to go in this work or risk having it overturned by a change of leadership or dedicated personnel leaving. Nevertheless, for activists, survivors, and researchers in this space, these differences in approach are important; in the Australian context, a large-scale survey of 43,819 students has shown that two-fifths of those who reported sexual harassment to their university were satisfied with the process. Of those who reported sexual assault, nearly one in three were satisfied with the formal reporting or complaints process (Heywood et al., 2022: 45). This of course means that over two-thirds of those who reported sexual assaults were dissatisfied – an unacceptably high number. Nevertheless, there is space for hope within these findings. While such quantitative studies cannot convey the complexity of experiences and responses that survivors describe (see, for example, Bull and Page, 2022), they serve as an important reminder that it is worth fighting for change within individual institutions as such activist and change-making work can and does make a difference.

Related to this point, another common sense assumption can be that 'the university' or 'the institution' acts as a monolithic entity in responding to reports or disclosures of GBVH. Against this assumption, it is important to be alert to disjunctions between different levels and areas within the institution. Staff within institutions, perhaps with their own experiences of GBVH, are in many cases pushing their institutions to do better and doing their best to support survivors as far as they are able. This can lead to a pattern of 'institutional listening while silencing' (Oman and Bull, 2022) whereby 'individual staff members within an institution are attempting to provide care but this care is not connected to the wider policy framework' (2022: 31). The effect of this, for those attempting to disclose or report, is to feel initially supported then progressively confused and let down when the early response turns into institutional 'brick walls' (Ahmed, 2021), or even institutional harassment (Bull and Page, 2022; Bull and Rye, 2018). Nevertheless, these disjunctions within institutions can work to the advantage of complainants, such as where committed and knowledgeable staff find creative ways to find ways to obtain justice, support, and safety for complainants.

In conclusion, over recent years we have seen an enormous shift towards institutions across society being required to take greater responsibility for preventing and responding to GBVH. Higher education institutions are just one site of this wider shift towards moving beyond criminal justice responses as the sole or primary mode of addressing GBVH in society (Cowan and Munro, 2021) and demanding that perpetrators and institutions are held accountable. The common sense assumptions outlined above reveal a snapshot of the progress to date and the areas where we still need to do work to change our institutions and disciplines. As this book outlines, this broader sense of accountability also needs to extend to 'liminal' and everyday, as well as mainstream academic spaces.

Challenges abound: new generations coming into academia still find they have to break the silence over and over again; institutional responses too often take a gender-neutral approach rather than recognising the ways in which gendered power creates a context that enables abuse (see, for example, Jackson and Sundaram, 2020); survivor-centred approaches are not the norm (Bull, Page, and Bullough, 2019); and evidence-based prevention programmes – such as in Egan and Mikitas's chapter in this volume – need much more attention and resources. Nevertheless, it is important to remain hopeful that the work we are doing – even if the pace of change remains infuriatingly slow – is making a difference. Rebecca Solnit reminds us that hope is an indispensable resource for activists:

> Hope is a gift you don't have to surrender, a power you don't have to throw away. […] Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act. When you recognise uncertainty, you recognise that you may be able to influence the outcomes – you alone or you in concert with a few dozen or several million others. Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists.
>
> (Solnit, 2016, n.p.)

Let's hope for change, and in making changes, find hope.

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