Innovations in Research and Scholarship Feature

Sorority Women's and Fraternity Men's Rape Myth Acceptance and Bystander Intervention Attitudes

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Sorority women and fraternity men are more likely than other students to be survivors and perpetrators of sexual assault, respectively. The present study examined sorority and fraternity members' rape myth acceptance, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness to help in potential sexual assault situations. Sorority women were more rejecting of rape myths and were more willing to intervene than fraternity men. However, no difference in bystander efficacy was found. Implications of this contrast are discussed.

Although the prevalence of rape and incidents of sexual assault in the general population is concerning, studies focused on college campuses are particularly alarming. The National College Women Sexual Victimization study (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2006), funded by the National In-

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stitute of Justice, used a randomly selected, national sample of 4,446 female college students and found that 3.5% of female college students reported a rate of rape or attempted rape at 3.5% over a six-month period. Prior to college, 10% reported rape and an additional 11% reported attempted rape, yielding an overall prevalence of one in four.

Rape, defined as "unwanted penetration by force or threat of force" (Fisher et al., 2006, p. 8) and attempted rape, defined as "unwanted attempted penetration by force or threat of force" (Fisher et al., 2006, p. 8), are infrequently reported to law enforcement officials (Fisher et al., 2006). In fact, it is approximated that only 5% of completed and attempted rapes are reported to the police, making rape the most unreported crime on college campuses (Fisher et al., 2006). Issues with underreporting have stimulated considerable public concern and have led to a proliferation of rape prevention and awareness programs on college campuses nationwide in addition to legislative efforts taken by the U.S. Congress that require universities to provide prevention programs to students (Fisher et al., 2000; Rennison, 2002). Although it should be noted that prevention programs in general have not significantly reduced the prevalence of sexual victimization or influenced the reporting behavior of sexual assault survivors on a national scale (Fisher et al., 2000; Rennison, 2002), studies suggest that other factors may be responsible for the lack of sexual assault incidence reduction, such as the type of program implemented in university settings and the lack of continuous support provided by university officials (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

The purpose of the present study was to identify characteristics of fraternity and sorority members that contribute to and attenuate rape culture so that models of practice can be targeted toward areas where education can have the greatest impact. The primary research question for this study was: Are there differences between fraternity men and sorority women in their bystander efficacy and bystander willingness to intervene in a sexual assault situation? A secondary research question explored whether there was a difference in the rape myth acceptance (RMA) between fraternity men and sorority women. Based on prior research, we made the following hypotheses: Fraternity men and sorority women will differ significantly across the dependent variables, with women reporting lower RMA, a greater efficacy to intervene as a bystander in a potential rape situation, and greater willingness to intervene as a bystander in a potential rape situation. These hypotheses were based on prior research showing relationships between gender and attitudes toward rape-related variables (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004; McMahon, 2010; Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2008), and the belief that gender will prove to be a greater influence than Greek subculture socialization on acceptance of rape-supportive beliefs and bystander behavior.

The Bystander Model

Programs implementing the bystander intervention model for sexual assault prevention have reported success on college campuses with multiple populations including fraternity members, sorority members, and athletes (Banyard et al., 2004; Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2005; Coker et al., 2011; Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Moynihan & Banyard, 2008). The bystander

intervention model is a community approach to prevention that teaches bystanders safe and appropriate ways to intervene prior to or during sexual assault situations, provides information regarding the many societal beliefs that promote sexual violence, and promotes a community responsibility to assume an active role as a primary prevention method (Banyard et al., 2004; Coker et al., 2011; Moynihan & Banyard, 2008).

According to proponents, the success of programs that implement a bystander intervention approach, as opposed to those that focus only on education and risk reduction, is due to their focus on altering community norms that contribute to sexual violence (Banyard et al., 2004; Coker et al., 2011; Moynihan & Banyard, 2008). Such variables, which are often used to measure the level of success in outcome studies, are bystander willingness, the level of motivation to intervene in potential or active sexual assault situations and efficacy, and bystander efficacy (the degree to which individuals believe they can effectively prevent a sexual assault). Multiple studies show that programs utilizing bystander intervention as a principal component are effective in increasing empathy towards survivors, knowledge of sexual violence, and the ability to identify ambiguous situations as one that may lead to an incident of sexual assault (Banyard et al., 2004; Foubert et al., 2010). Furthermore, male participants in such programs have reported significant declines in the likelihood of committing sexual assault, likelihood of raping, and acceptance of rape myths when compared to control groups (Banyard et al., 2004; Foubert, Newberry, & Tatum, 2007).

Due to a focus on the alteration of community norms that contribute to sexual violence, the effectiveness of a program in decreasing acceptance of rape myths is an important consideration according to the bystander intervention model. The term *rape myth* refers to stereotypical beliefs regarding sexual assault victims, sexual assault perpetrators, and the situational variables that distinguish sexual assault from consensual sex. These myths are used to transfer accountability from perpetrators to victims of rape (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Commonly endorsed myths include "it only happens to 'certain' women," "any healthy woman can resist a rapist if she wants to," "she asked for it," and "rape is often falsely reported" (Burt, 1980; Franiuk, Seefelt, Cepress, & Vandello, 2008; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Although rape myths are false, people often believe them and use these beliefs to justify violence against women (Edwards et al., 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Due to the acceptance and influence of rape myths, the common societal perception of rape is often much more restrictive than typical legal definitions (Comack & Peter, 2005). Further, several studies have suggested that the acceptance of rape myths is correlated with the degree of accountability an individual will assign to the victim (Buddie & Miller, 2001; Comack & Peter, 2005; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011) and lower levels of bystander willingness (McMahon, 2010).

Attitudes Toward Rape

The relationship between acceptance of rape myths and the degree of self-blame experienced by sexual assault survivors has been the topic of multiple studies (Moor, 2007; Peterson

& Muehlenhard, 2004; Sheldon & Parent, 2002; Ullman & Najdowski, 2011). Due to the narrow cultural definition of rape as influenced by rape myths, often discounting acquaintance rape and incidents involving alcohol, many victims blame themselves or mistakenly believe the assault does not meet the legal definition of rape (Iconis, 2008; Moor, 2007; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Therefore, many women avoid reporting the incident to police.

In addition to the self-blame women experience following an incident of sexual assault, recent studies have suggested acceptance of rape myths leads to the creation of a culture that blames a victim's behavior or lifestyle for the perpetration of rape (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005; Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Acceptance of rape myths leads to the creation of a male-dominated ideology where female victims are often blamed for sexual assaults. The lack of an egalitarian view of male and female contributions in a male-dominated ideology leads to the creation of a "rape-prone society" where sexual aggression displayed by males is celebrated, and women are held accountable for their own rape (Sanday, 1996).

The classic theory identifying a rape-prone environment identifies four belief systems (i.e., acceptance of rape myths, gender-role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence) as core aspects of a culture supporting sexual assault (Burt, 1980). According to Kalof (1993), there is evidence that variables associated with increased sexual victimization, such as rape-supportive attitudes and sexual aggression, are learned and rendered legitimate in peer group cultures such as those found in fraternities and sororities.

Fraternity Culture

Research has shown that fraternity men are significantly more likely than other college men and the general population to approve of coercing women to engage in sexual behavior (Boeringer, 1999; Foubert et al., 2007; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). That fraternity membership coincides with sexual assault perpetration is consistent with several related lines of research. For example, research has shown that fraternity men report greater adherence to traditional gender roles (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007) and support for antifemale behaviors (Sanday, 1996). Hypermasculinity, which involves acceptance of aggression towards women, belief in male dominance, and sexual callousness, has been shown to be the strongest predictor of sexual aggression (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2003). Murnen and Kohlman (2007) conducted a meta-analytic review and found, a statistically significant correlation existed between hypermasculinity and fraternity membership, in addition to other variables associated with sexual aggression such as RMA.

Traditionally, researchers have focused on analyzing individual attitudes, preexisting psychological traits, and perceptions as predictors of sexual assault perpetration among fraternity men. According to multiple studies, fraternity men endorse rape-supportive attitudes at a significantly higher rate than nonfraternity members (Bleecker & Murnen, 2005; Boeringer, 1999). Theories suggest rape supportive attitudes may be cultivated prior to young adulthood through traditional gender-role adherence (Murnen et al., 2003) and inadequate moral development (Wil-

son, Goodwin, & Beck, 2002). Theorists who focus on individual characteristics of perpetrators often argue the single-gender exclusivity of all-male organizations may appeal to men who harbor exaggerated views of masculinity, values commonly associated with such organizations, where acceptance of sexual aggression is anticipated (Kilmartin & Berkowitz, 2005).

Other theorists identify the organization as the catalyst for sexual aggression (i.e., Sanday, 1996). Although individual risk factors related to the perpetration of sexual assault have received considerably more research focus, an increasing number of studies have focused on the influence all-male institutions impress upon members' morals, values, beliefs, attitudes, and the dynamics that lead to the social construction of a rape-prone environment (Boswell & Spade, 1996; Godenzi, 2001). Male support theories suggest that legitimization of violence towards women is prompted by male peer attachments and conformity to subculture norms. In accordance with male support theories, one explanation for such a disproportionate representation is the development of a culture that encourages sexually aggressive behavior through the promotion of views that support female subordination, male dominance, and overt displays of hypermasculinity (Goldfarb & Eberly, 2011; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).

Exaggerated views of masculinity supported in all-male, peer group cultures such as fraternities, view exhibitions of masculinity as desirable and may socialize men to behave according to such standards, leading to the creation of a hypermasculine subculture (Goldfarb & Eberly, 2011; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). In subcultures, norms are group-specific and often deviate from generally accepted, societal norms. Therefore, in such cultures, individuals who fail to conform to certain standards of masculinity are viewed as deviant. Given that acceptance is a primary motivation for joining social groups such as fraternities, members may feel compelled to assume beliefs and engage in behaviors that aid in the development of social bonds, even if this leads to justifying actions considered deviant in any other context.

Sororities

Given fraternity men's disproportionate representation in rape statistics and the frequent social interaction between fraternity men and sorority women, the potential for sorority women to experience sexual assault is concerning. Women in sororities are 74% more likely to experience rape than other college women, and those who live in the sorority house are over three times as likely to experience rape (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Weschler, 2004). The prevalence of sexual assault incidents among sorority women may be the result of greater interaction with fraternity members and a decreased recognition of dangerous social cues that occur during such interaction.

Studies suggest women perceive a greater risk of sexual assault when interacting with strangers than with acquaintances (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1995; Nurius, Norris, Dimeff, & Graham, 1996), although more sexual assault incidents are perpetrated by persons known to the survivor including ex-significant others, classmates, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and signifi-

cant others (Fisher et al., 2000). Therefore, women tend to be less vigilant in the identification of certain danger cues when in a familiar environment populated by acquaintances as opposed to a novel environment with strangers. According to Nurius et al. (1996), cognitive schemas and beliefs influence an individual's expectations during social interaction and guide an individual's responses. Individuals often draw on expectations regarding the safety of interactions with an acquaintance, leading to a lower degree of vigilance and a greater reliance on automatic thoughts (Nurius et al., 1996). Given that sorority women value interaction with fraternity men and regularly engage in such interaction, cues may be ignored or interpreted in an expectant-congruent fashion, leading to engagement in risky behaviors such as excessive alcohol or illicit drug use.

Multiple studies have identified greater alcohol use as a cause for the staggering prevalence of sexual assault incidents involving sorority women (Abbey, 2002; Benson, Gohm, & Gross, 2007; McCauley et al., 2009). Even after controls are included for alcohol consumption and attendance of Greek-hosted parties during which alcohol is served, research has shown that sexual assault experiences are reported by sorority women at a rate four times that of nonsorority women. Additionally, despite widespread use of alcohol among the female college population, sexual assault incidents remain higher among sorority women (Minow & Einolf, 2009).

Sorority women's overrepresentation in sexual assault statistics is consistent with other research correlating sorority affiliation and variables commonly associated with victimization. Compared to nonsorority women, sorority women report stronger adherence to traditional gender roles, male dominance, and adversarial sexual beliefs (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Kalof, 1993; Kalof & Cargill, 1991). Furthermore, sorority women report a high degree of RMA (Kalof, 1993; Kalof & Cargill, 1991), a finding that contradicts studies that identify gender as a strong determinant in the development of such beliefs. Such differences suggest sorority women are socialized to attribute sexual assault perpetration to victim behavior and assume exaggerated views of femininity. However, despite the alarming statistics, relatively little research investigates the role of sorority culture on sexual victimization, the development of beliefs commonly associated with rape-supportive environments, and the reciprocal influence between fraternities and sororities with regards to cultural development (Kalof, 1993). This leaves several gaps in the literature, one of which regards the extent to which constant interaction with fraternity culture influences sorority women's acceptance of rape-supportive beliefs and bystander behavior. The present study sought to shed further light on this culture by identifying how select attitudes of members of fraternity and sorority relate to whether they will help prevent sexual assault.

Method

Participants

The sample in the present study consisted of 796 undergraduate students who were active sorority and fraternity members for at least one semester at a large public university in the

Midwest. Out of the population of 902 sorority women on campus, 307 (34%) volunteered to participate and completed usable surveys for this study. Women in the sample were 89% Caucasian; 4% Native American; with the remaining participants being African American, Asian, Latino, and mixed race. The mean age of participants was 19.7 (*SD* = 1.02); 100% of participants were between 18 and 23 years old. Participants included 41% first-year students, 28% sophomores, 26% juniors, and 6% seniors.

Out of the population of 787 fraternity men on campus, 489 (62%) volunteered to participate and completed usable surveys. Men in the sample were 90% Caucasian; 5% Native American; with the remaining participants being African American, Asian, Latino, and mixed race. The mean age of participants was 20.3 (*SD* = 1.3); 99% of participants were between 18 and 23 years old. Participants included 5% first-year students, 36% sophomores, 34% juniors, and 25% seniors. In total, 47% of the entire fraternity and sorority population on this campus participated in the present study.

Instrument

Several scales were administered to participants to measure the variables in the present study. They included the following.

Bystander Efficacy Scale. Perceived ability to intervene as a bystander was measured by the Bystander Efficacy Scale developed by Banyard et al. (2005). The efficacy scale measures participants belief that they could perform each of 18 bystanding behaviors by indicating their level of confidence in performing this bystander behavior. Participants rate items on a scale of 1 to 100%, indicating the percent to which they believe they know how to intervene in the given scenario. Criterion validity of this scale was established through a significant correlation between bystander efficacy and actual bystander behavior (r = .30). Construct validity was established with a significant correlation between bystander efficacy and RMA (r = .24), (Banyard, 2008). This scale yielded an alpha reliability of .91 in the present study.

Bystander Willingness to Help Scale. The Willingness to Help Scale was developed by Banyard et al. (2005) and measures participants' degree of likelihood of engaging in 12 bystanding behaviors on a 7-point scale ranging from not at all willing to intervene to very willing to intervene. Items for the scale were developed from the research literature and discussions with advocates and professionals working in the field of sexual violence. Criterion validity of this scale was established through a significant correlation between bystander willingness to help and actual bystander behavior (r = .37). Construct validity was established with a significant correlation between bystander efficacy and RMA (r = .32) (Banyard, 2008). The alpha reliability for these 12-items was .85 in the present study.

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. Participants' attitudes toward sexual assault were measured using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Payne et al. developed this scale through six studies including a factor analysis

for construct definition and item pool selection, a complete-link cluster analysis to determine the structure and dimensions of the scale, item pool selection based on fit to a hierarchical model, and a construct validity study correlating the IRMA to seven similar measures (r = between .50 and .74, $p < .001$). Payne et al. also conducted a study where groups known to differ in RMA scored differently as predicted on the IRMA ($p < .001$) and a validity study correlating IRMA scores with a content analysis of open ended scenarios written by participants that were analyzed for rape myth content ($r = .32, p < .05$). The alpha reliability in the present sample for this scale was .90.

Procedure

Research protocols were submitted to and approved by the institutional review board for human subjects. Data collection was conducted in two waves during the same year. Prior to each wave of data collection, a member of the research team attended a meeting of the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council to request volunteer participation from each Greek chapter. Fraternities and sororities were told that if 75% of the active members of their chapter completed the surveys for this study that their national office would be sent a check for $50 to help defray the cost of their chapter's insurance bill.

Members of the research team visited each chapter house up to three times to distribute and collect surveys for this study. After receiving a briefing about the nature of the study and an informed consent document, surveys were distributed at chapter meetings. Participants anonymously completed surveys and returned their survey in a common return envelope with no identifying information. Survey results were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 17.

Results

A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance was computed to determine whether participants in the two groups (fraternity, sorority) differed on the dependent variables (RMA, bystander efficacy, and bystander willingness). Consistent with hypotheses, participants differed significantly at a multivariate level, $F (3, 731) = 45.21, p < .05$. Also consistent with the hypotheses, univariate effects emerged for RMA, showing that sorority members ($M = 2.10, SD = .76$) are more rejecting of rape myths than fraternity members ($M = 2.64; SD = .75$). This difference was statistically significant, $F (1, 733) = 91.51, p < .05$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = .72$). Sorority members were also more willing to intervene in a potential sexual assault situation ($M = 4.17; SD = .66$) than fraternity members ($M = 3.89; SD = .64$), $F (1, 733) = 31.84, p < .05$. The effect size for this difference was in the medium range (Cohen's $d = .43$). By contrast, no difference emerged between sorority members ($M = 78.39; SD = 16.25$) and fraternity members ($M = 78.55; SD = 16.07$) for efficacy to intervene as a bystander in a potential rape situation ($p > .05$).

Table 1

Rape Myth Acceptance, Bystander Willingness, and Bystander of Efficacy of Sorority Women and Fraternity Men

Variable		M	SD	Cohen's *d*	P-value
RMA	Sorority	2.10	.76	.72	***
	Fraternity	2.64	.75		
BW	Sorority	4.17	.66	.43	***
	Fraternity	3.89	.64		
BE	Sorority	78.39	16.25		
	Fraternity	78.55	16.07		

Note. RMA = Rape myth acceptance, BW = Bystander willingness, BE = Bystander efficacy.
* = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of fraternity and sorority members (bystander efficacy, bystander willingness to intervene, and RMA) that contribute to and attenuate the rape culture. Though it was consistent with prior research in finding that sorority women were more rejecting of rape myths and were more willing to intervene to prevent sexual assault, it stood in contrast to remaining results that fraternity men and sorority women reported the same level of perceived efficacy in knowing how to intervene to prevent sexual assault.

Bystander Willingness

Consistent with previous findings that have identified a negative correlation between RMA and bystander willingness (Banyard et al., 2004), sorority women reported a greater willingness to intervene in sexual assault situations than did fraternity men. The medium effect size of the difference between the willingness of sorority women and fraternity men to intervene suggests that there is a motivation gap between how much these two groups will get involved to prevent a possible rape situation from occurring. An unwillingness to intervene during sexual assault situations may be explained by those in all-male peer groups, the result of hypermasculinity and female objectification often found in fraternity culture (Sanday, 1996). The hypermasculinity valued in some all-male peer groups such as fraternities often involves acceptance of aggression towards women and sexual callousness; therefore, intervening in sexual assault situations is often not viewed as socially desirable in such a culture (Murnen et al., 2003).

Bystander Efficacy

Although bystander willingness among fraternity men was significantly lower than sorority women, bystander efficacy was the same. This finding suggests that although fraternity men state that they will less frequently intervene in sexual assault situations, they believe they know how to do so just as well as sorority women do. Fraternity men's sense of efficacy could simply be tied to a belief in their ability to exercise control and power in many situations, two variables most commonly associated with traditional male gender roles that research has suggested are exaggerated in all-male peer groups (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). The differences between bystander willingness and efficacy found in fraternity men may also be the result of a difference in the apprehensions about preventing sexual assault when comparing the general population to all-male peer groups. In other words, in the fraternity subculture, acceptance from peers and the development of social bonds with fraternity brothers may be a much greater concern than preventing sexual assault (Murnen et al., 2003). Fraternity culture often includes hypermasculinity, a distorted and negative view of femininity, and a focus on loyalty and secrecy (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Fraternity men, thus, may fear being ostracized by their brothers if they intervene to prevent sexual assault. Such rejection can be devastating to men who have used fraternity involvement as a vehicle for social acceptance and as a manner to mitigate feelings of insecurity and anxiety (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).

RMA

Sorority women were more rejecting of rape myths than fraternity men at a significant rate with a large effect size. This result confirms past research exploring gender differences in this area (Anderson, Simpson-Taylor, & Herrmann, 2004; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, & Vyse, 1993), and raises questions as to whether RMA among sorority women has changed over time (Kalof & Cargill, 1991). Prior research found greater acceptance of rape-supportive attitudes among sorority women when compared to nonsorority women, including greater acceptance of rape myths and interpersonal violence (Kalof, 1993). Future research might explore whether sorority women now have levels of RMA that are similar to other college women.

Implications

Numerous implications of the present study are apparent in the realms of both scholarship and practice.

Implications for practice. Student affairs practitioners, particularly professionals who work with members of fraternities and sororities, and those who educate students about sexual assault, are likely to find the present findings useful in their day-to-day work. Fraternities and sororities are indeed unique cultures on the college campus. Yet, they are one of many contexts on the campus where exaggerated gender norms exist and some of the negative norms of single-sex

organizations can be amplified. To the degree that these norms translate to other single-sex campus environments such as single-sex student organizations, teams, residential environments, clubs, cloistered and other intact communities—student affairs professionals should consider if members of the all-male groups on their campus are willing to intervene to stop a sexual assault before it starts, or if there are organizations where there is a heightened expression of rape myths, and thus, an indication of need for sexual assault education. One might conduct a student affairs assessment project, attach items to an established measure (e.g., the Core survey, Cooperative Institutional Research Program) being distributed to students that identifies subgroups where programming can be targeted.

The most meaningful implication for the present study lies in fraternity men's lack of willingness to intervene to prevent a potential rape situation relative to their peers in sororities. What makes this finding stand out is that the two populations report equal efficacy to intervene. Thus, both fraternity men and sorority women believe they could intervene, but sorority women are much more likely to do so. What practitioners who interact with and program for fraternity members should focus on is targeting their willingness to intervene to prevent a sexual assault, which also indirectly addresses their potential as a perpetrator without prompting defensiveness (Banyard et al., 2004). Willingness to intervene is likely a complex cultural issue that relates to loyalty to one's chapter brothers (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). What is a present challenge is how to see intervening to prevent a potential sexual assault as loyalty, for example, taking the attitude that "I'm not going to let you make such a bad decision for yourself as to harm someone else by doing something sexual with another person under the influence of alcohol." Casting that message as one of loyalty rather than as disloyalty may be a critical step in improving bystander education efforts on our campuses.

An additional implication for practice suggested by this study is that fraternity men remain much more likely to believe false or stereotyped beliefs about rape, rape survivors, or rapists. Although all students can benefit from receiving accurate information to contradict false beliefs, fraternity men seem to be a population that could particularly benefit. In doing so, it is important to present such information in a manner in which it is likely to be received (Scheel, Johnson, Schneider, & Smith, 2001). For example, detailed interviews with college men have shown that if they are approached with a message of "you are a potential rapist" or "you might be raped too," then the message will be summarily dismissed by men, given its lack of perceived relevance. Programmatic interventions that provide men the opportunity to be allies and engaged bystanders help men be part of the solution in a manner in which they receive the information presented as personally relevant (Banyard et al, 2004; Foubert, 2011). Personal relevance has been shown to be a pivotal factor in leading to long-term attitude and behavior change (Grube, Mayton, & Ball-Rokeach, 1994).

Implications for future research. This study showed that compared to sorority women, fraternity men have higher RMA, lower willingness to intervene in a sexual assault situation, and the same bystander efficacy. Given that past literature suggests sorority women may be

more accepting of rape myths due to frequent socialization with their fraternity counterparts and a desire to adhere to the cultural norms of a male-dominated Greek life system (Kalof, 1993; Kalof & Cargill, 1991), future research could involve a comparison of sorority women and nonsorority women on the variables measured in this study. A comparison of sorority women and nonsorority women would serve several functions by providing insight into the impact of subculture norms on the designation of attitudes as either socially desirable or undesirable, the mechanisms sorority women use to navigate through high-risk situations, and the level of protection from pressures to conform that an all-female peer group affords its members.

In order to best inform rape prevention programs, it would be useful to explore the differences found between fraternity men's willingness to intervene and perceived efficacy when intervening during a sexual assault situation. This gap between efficacy and willingness may be due to men's acceptance of rape myths or the hypermasculinity often perpetuated within fraternities (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). A pretest/posttest design, comparing bystander variables and RMA with adherence to traditional gender roles, administered prior to and after association with a fraternity or sorority, would provide information regarding the role such participation plays on gender-role stereotyped characteristics. This information would provide valuable insight into the process by which rape-supportive attitudes are developed and the function they serve, and allow researchers to understand if attitudes are developed prior to induction into a peer-group environment or are the reason individuals seek out such groups. Future research should also compare the bystander efficacy and willingness to help among men who live in fraternity housing and men in the general university population, men in other forms of all-male housing, and men who live in coeducational settings. Such research could help determine the environmental factors that have an influence on men's bystander intervention attitudes.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was due to the personal nature of the variables that were evaluated; the self-report measures used may have been insufficient to provide accurate estimates of the participant's attitudes, beliefs and intentions. Participants may feel compelled to answer in a manner that conceals personal attributes deemed socially unfavorable such as sexist beliefs. Future studies would benefit from the inclusion of a scale that measures participants' desires to conform their answers to those considered socially desirable, a step that could aid in the mitigation of bias in the results.

The second limitation was due to the location from which participants were obtained; the sample lacked ethnic and environmental diversity. This can be expected with the nature of historically White fraternities; however, the lack of diversity prevents further exploration of the impact of ethnic and regional characteristics on the variables measured and limits the generalizability of results.

Conclusion

Components of the bystander intervention approach to sexual assault prevention, such as those included in this study, have been increasingly included in programs implemented on college campuses across the United States. Despite the findings of several studies that have indicated successful alteration of individual attributes (Banyard et al., 2004; Foubert et al., 2010), the long-term effectiveness of bystander intervention programs to persistently alter rape-supportive environments is relatively understudied, and not enough time has passed to fully determine their long-term effectiveness. This study is merely a step in the direction of distinguishing the impact of gender from that of the cultural norms created in single-gender peer groups. As already discussed, fraternity men account for a disproportionate number of sexual assaults, and sorority women report higher rates of victimization, thus the alteration of fraternity and sorority culture will greatly aid in creating safer campus environments.

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