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Do football programs foster a rape supportive culture?
A review of literature

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B.S. Child and Family Studies; Addiction Studies 2011

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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In America, every 107 seconds, an act of sexual violence occurs. While a widespread problem, on US college campuses, sexual violence occurs at an increased rate. Student-athletes in particular are at a greater risk for sexual violence perpetration.

Past research positively correlates the aggression, physical dominance, and hyper-masculinity exhibited in football with the propensity for football players to commit sexual violence. Despite the fact that male collegiate football players are being accused of sexual violence at a rate higher than their male peers, research indicates that football players are charged and subsequently convicted at disproportionate rates.

Through an in-depth review of literature, this paper seeks to determine whether collegiate football programs are failing to reprimand football players accused of committing sexual violence. Furthermore, given the evidence which depicts an environment in which football players are committing sexual violence at a higher rate than which they are being convicted, this paper seeks to determine on whether collegiate football programs are responsible for fostering a rape supportive culture.

Key findings determined that collegiate football program foster a rape supportive culture and uncovered a number of factors that influence the perpetuation of rape among collegiate football players. These factors include: the correlation between sports and aggression, male bonding, athlete entitlement, and a university level failure to comply with federal regulations on sexual violence response.

In conclusion, we recommend that collegiate football programs develop a curriculum in which coaches are informed about the importance of setting and enforcing standards for behavior. Future research should address the likelihood of formerly accused collegiate football players to commit sexual and/or domestic violence in the future.

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Executive summary

Sexual violence is a public health issue because it both directly and indirectly affects the health and livelihood of a widespread of individuals. According to The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in 2010, an estimated 27.2% of women and 11.7% of men have experienced unwanted sexual contact (CDC, 2015e). Moreover, many of the resulting physical and emotional impacts of sexual violence such as those outline above amplify sexual violence as a national public health problem.

In universities across the United States, sexual violence is prevalent (Kroshus et. al., 2015). Risky behaviors associated with campus life only further escalate the issue, as drugs and alcohol, factors associated with sexual violence (CDC, 2015b), are commonplace in college parties (Kroshus et. al., 2015). Researchers have identified a number of factors that influence a male's likelihood of becoming perpetrators of violence. Most of these factors are linked to a man's adherence to the traditional roles associated with the male gender: masculinity, aggression, power, strength and dominance (Murnen, S.K., Kohlman, M.H., 2007). Misogyny, or prejudice against women as well as rape supportive ideologies, which are defined as the behaviors and beliefs which support misogyny and violence against women are also linked to a propensity to commit sexual violence (Boeringer, 1999).

Student-athletes, particularly those that participate in aggressive sports such as football, are at an increased risk for sexual violence perpetration (Gage, 2008). Evidence indicates that the hyper-masculine nature of football, in which physical dominance is a necessary component of the sport, may actually breed males with a propensity for sexual violence (Murnen et. al., 2007; Melnick, 1992). Furthermore, the all-male environment in which players pledge an allegiance to

one another and to the misogynous and rape supportive ideologies associated with football's hyper-masculine sports culture, escalates the innate sexual predatory tendencies of collegiate football players (Murnen et. al., 2007; Melnick, 1992).

Publicized accounts of allegations made against college football players depict a campus culture where university athletic departments are failing to adhere to the Title-IX Dear Colleague letter. Title-IX mandates schools to immediately investigate accusations of sexual violence for or by a student (Ali, 2014). Instead, in many of the publicized incidences of sexual violence by college football players, members of the athletic department are protecting their players from the investigation in an effort to preserve their brand (Fagan, 2014).

Universities, to include their accompanying athletic departments, have an obligation to create, maintain and enforce a safe and healthy environment for their students (Ali, 2014). Given this obligation, which has been undermined by an increasing number of accusations of abuse made against collegiate football players, this paper sought to uncover whether or not collegiate football programs foster a rape-supportive culture. Findings from this paper determined that university football programs foster a rape-supportive culture by allowing the status of their football teams to outweigh their obligation to immediately investigate accusations made against their players. Moreover, by allowing this false sense of entitlement, universities are validating the sexually disruptive behaviors of their football players as acceptable and tolerated.

Chapter I: Introduction

Problem Statement:

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)'s 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey found that in the United States, approximately 12.6 million women and men were victims of sexual violence (CDC, 2015e). On college campuses, rates of sexual assault among women are reported to be as much as two to three times higher than that of the general population (CDC, 2015); over the course of a college career, the chances of a woman becoming a victim of sexual violence will increase by up to 25% (RAINN, 2015). Similarly, the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN, 2015) reports that in the U.S. someone is assaulted every 107 seconds; yet, 98% of perpetrators will not receive jail time (RAINN, 2015). The above statistics indicate more than a public health problem; they indicate inconsistencies and shortcomings in the public safety upheld by the United States legal system.

Amongst college students, prior research suggests that college men admit forced intercourse at a rate of 5-15% and college sexual aggression at a rate of 15-25% (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, and Tanaka, 1991). In fact, a study on male sexual coercion uncovered that 23% of college men admitted to getting a date drunk or stoned to engage in sexual intercourse (Edwards et. al., 2014), though they may not have identified their actions as being sexually coercive or abusive. For example, when survey items described behaviors rather than labeling them, men were more likely to admit to sexually coercive behaviors in the past and more women self-reported victimization, highlighting the fact that there are some discrepancies in the ways in which men label their own sexually coercive behavior (Edwards et. al., 2014). One of these ways is supported by the notion that a woman subjected to an unwanted sexual experience while under the influence does not constitute rape because rape can only occur once a woman labels it as

such (Edwards et. al., 2014). The tolerance of non-consenting sexual encounters normalizes sexual aggression as a part of the male gender role and highlight the sexual powerlessness of the female gender role.

Theoretical Framework:

In the early 1990s, researchers began examining the relationship between intercollegiate athletic participation and sexual violence by male student-athletes (Boeringer, 1999). Studies show that there are several indicators that predict rape-supportive attitudes and sexually coercive behavior (Boeringer, 1999; Flood, M., Dyson, S., 2014). The CDC and many other researchers consider environmental factors that influence violence/violence prevention in the form of the social-ecological model (CDC, 2015c). The social ecological model posits that contributing factors to violence may come from the individual, relationship, community and societal levels of a perpetrators communities, as shown in the graphic below (CDC, 2015c). The individual level may refer to a collegiate football player's propensity for sexual violence as a result of playing an aggressive sport. The relationship level may refer to the bonds existing between players as well as the bond existing between player and coach. The community level may refer to academic institutions and the accompanying football programs. The societal level may refer to the establishment of policies and regulations that address proper response to sexual violence allegations made against football players. We consider all of these potential contributors to the culture of violence surrounding collegiate football, as discussed in chapter two.



Figure 1. Social Ecological Model (CDC, 2015c).

Early research suggests that male athletes have a greater likelihood of becoming perpetrators of violence against women than other men (Flood, M., Dyson, S., 2014). More specifically, participation in an aggressive sport has been found to be an indicator of a rape supportive attitude (Flood, M., Dyson, S., 2014; Boeringer, 1999). It has been argued that it is the very nature of team sports that supports male hegemony, debases, objectifies and encourages physical and sexual aggression against women (Forbes, G., Adams-Curtis, L.E., Pakalka, A.H., White, K.B., 2006). Researchers Murnen and Kohlman further support this argument by suggesting that the success in male team sports is associated with control, domination, competitiveness, physical strength, and aggressiveness (Murnen, S.K., Kohlman, M.H., 2007), all of which can lead to sexual misconduct (Melnick, 1999).

In his 1992 study, Melnick identified five reasons for the occurrence of student-athlete sexual violence perpetration, these include: (1) male bonding, or the peer pressure to remain loyal to the team. Athletic teams particularly foster feelings of solidarity and comradery in which an unwillingness to participate in or disclose any acts of sexual misconduct can arouse suspicions about one's loyalty to the group. (2) Sport as a masculine-proving ground, whereby the aggressive nature of sports like football breeds an environment in which each player's masculinity must be proven both on the field and off. On the field, players must prove their masculinity by being tough and dominating against the opponent. Off the field, Melnick argues that sexist language and attitudes demonstrated in the locker room are ways that players prove their masculinity to one another (Melnick, 1992). This need to prove one's masculinity off the field, according to Melnick, can predispose athletes to violence and hostility in their personal lives. (3) Combative sports and violence refers again to the combative nature of contact sports in which violence, aggression and control are important elements of the game. (4) The athletic

justice system refers to the different set of rules and standards which govern athletic communities, often dismissing accusations of sexual misconduct made against athletes. In turn, athletes acquire the last of Melnick's suggested reasons why athletes commit sexual violence (5) big man on campus syndrome, in which athletes are held in such high esteem that they may believe that every woman that flirts with them wants sex. Furthermore, some athletes may not accept "no" from a woman following their sexual advances because they've grown accustomed to the notion of sex being easy due to their status on campus (Melnick, 1992).

Humphrey and Kahn (2000) determined that while some fraternity or male athletic team members were found to be more likely than their classmates to commit sexual assault, this is not the case for all fraternities and athletic teams (Humphrey, S.E., Kahn, A.S., 2000). This discrepancy has to do with the level of aggression associated with the type of sport, as well as, the athlete's propensity for aggression (Forbes et. al. 2006). To further investigate this theory, Humphrey and Kahn (2000) created a risk assessment questionnaire in which study participants ranked 17 fraternities and 16 male athletic teams (both varsity and club). The study findings uncovered a positive correlation between members of perceived "high risk groups" and sexual aggression towards women.

Purpose Statement:

Prior research studies positively identified the existing relationship between athletes in highly aggressive sports, such as football, and a propensity for sexual aggression (Flood & Dyson, 2015). The special status football players hold in collegiate environments can further exacerbate this propensity in that it can foster attitudes of entitlement and protection from reprimand should they commit sexual assault on a fellow student, (Murnen et.al., 2007). This

paper seeks to determine whether or not football athletic programs (i.e.: coaches, administrators, players) foster a rape supportive culture.

Research Question:

Do collegiate football programs foster a rape-supportive culture?

Significance Statement:

The emergence of a campus culture that tolerates male sexual aggression against women was established long before the occurrence became publicized. In the early 1990s, researchers such as, Boeringer and Murnen, began gathering evidence in an effort to identify the reason college athletes commit sexual assault. A number of programs, including The Men's Program (Vladutiu, C.J, Martin, S.L., Macy, R.J., 2011) and the Empowered Bystander model (Vladutiu et. al, 2011) were developed and later implemented on campuses in an effort to discourage misogyny and rape supportive behavior by empowering athletes to use their special status on campus to model health sexual behavior.

President Barack Obama's administration has formulated The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (theWhitehouse Fact Sheet, 2014). Obama has called for universities to investigate reports of such incidents and take swift action to prevent the act of violence from happening again. Additionally, under the directive of the task force, universities are expected to provide victims with information on how to access the necessary support and services they need (theWhitehouse Fact Sheet, 2014). Obama reportedly gave the taskforce 90 days to increase public awareness of each school's track record and enhance coordination among federal agencies to hold schools accountable if they don't confront the problem (theWhitehouse Fact Sheet, 2014). With federal urgency to create and implement programs around the topic of

sexual assault, this is an opportune time to investigate how universities athletic programs may foster a rape supportive culture.

Key Terms:

The following terms describe the core elements of my thesis research:

Collegiate Football Players: Member of a college football team; this term refers to all members of the team whether they receive playing time during games or not.

Rape-Supportive: Ideologies, behaviors and beliefs which support misogyny and violence against women.

Misogyny: dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

Consent: Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something

Sexual Violence: The CDC defines sexual violence as “any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone's will” (The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC; 2015d). The range of sexual offenses defined under the term “sexual violence” is not confined to physical penetration; acts of sexual violence include a number of offensive acts. The harm in such behavior really lies in the victim’s refusal and/or inability (i.e.: under the influence of alcohol and drugs, unconscious, sleep) to consent.

Conclusion:

Positive outcomes from sports participation are dependent upon constructive adult behaviors and supervision as well as an athletic program that focuses on skills building (TrueSport, 2014). In the absence of these things, sports participation can have negative outcomes and, as noted in the recently publicized accounts of athlete perpetrated sexual violence.

Collegiate athletic program officials are thus in place to cultivate and mentor young athletes into more than football stars, they are positioned to positively influence the behaviors of their team members both on the field and off. Given the evidence indicating a potential for negative behavioral outcomes from playing college football, collegiate football programs play an important role in the personal development of their players and should be held accountable for both the constructive and destructive behavior displayed.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Introduction:

Football, a popular American sport, is founded on the principles of America's historically patriarchal society. Football epitomizes hyper-masculinity by requiring the physical domination of an opponent to win the game. Gage (2008) found that compared to non-athletes or men who competed in marginal sports such as track and field, football players scored significantly higher on the hyper masculinity inventory, a scale consisting of 30 items to measure macho characteristics using 3 components: (a) calloused sex attitudes toward women, (b) violence as manly, and (c) danger as exciting. Football players also had lower attitudes toward women, and showed more sexual aggression and sexual activity (Gage, 2008).

Shielding athletes from reprimand has been associated with encouraging a sense of entitlement (Melnick, 1992). Evidence suggests, however, that this increased sense of entitlement among student athletes varies by division (Gage, 2008). The divisions are characterized by how much funding a school allocates to their athletic programs and how much attention they command, with division I schools on average, composed of a larger student body and providing a greater amount of funding to the athletic program budget as well as athletic scholarships. Division I football games, for example, are usually nationally televised with some teams and players achieving the same level of celebrity as professional athletes (Kroshus et. al, 2015) while Division II and III athletes are usually much lower profile. Entitlement has been associated with aggression, disrespect for other's needs, and has even been implicated in the perpetration of sexual violence (Melnick, 1992; Kroshus et. al, 2015). Kroshus (2015) identified a positive correlation between entitlement and perceived lack of disciplinary consequences related to

sexual violence as well as a correlation between entitlement and less likelihood to intervene to prevent sexual assault.

The National Coalition against Violent Athletes (NCAVA) reports that one in three college sexual assaults are committed by athletes (NCAVA, 2015). Given the increased attention on sexual violence on collegiate campuses, particularly involving athletes, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has publicly denounced non-consensual sexual acts committed by or against any student-athletes, coaches or administrators associated with the NCAA (NCAA, 2014). The NCAA has in turn created a set of regulations mandating an immediate response to incidents of sexual violence committed either by or against NCAA student-athletes or coaches as well as developed guidance which recommends effective prevention and response strategies for reported incidents. On August 6, 2014, the Executive Committee of the NCAA, unanimously approved a resolution addressing the obligation collegiate athletic departments have to maintain a safe and violence-free campus (NCAA, 2014). In the resolution, the Executive Committee states that under the constitution, NCAA members are expected to protect both the health and safety of student-athletes and to uphold student athletes to the same level of fair and ethical treatment of non-student-athletes at their respective institutions (NCAA, 2014).

Federal regulations directing the university's response to sexual violence allegations are also in place, though evidence indicates that universities are non-compliant (National Survey on Campus Sexual Violence Report, 2014). The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Title-IX's 2011 Dear Colleague letter on sexual violence issues guidance addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence response and prevention on campus (Ali, 2014). The Title-IX Dear Colleague Letter requires immediate and effective response to sexual

violence claims. The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act) furthermore defines sexual misconduct that must be reported to authorities.

As we consider potential contributors to campus sexual violence, we refer back to the social-ecological model referenced above (CDC, 2015c) and the idea that stimuli can come from multiple levels of influence. We consider each of these below.

Individual Level: Athletes and Rape Support

Boeringer (1996) not only uncovered a link between athletic participation and sexually aggressive behavior and actions, but he also found that student athletes were more likely to report agreement with the following 14 rape-supportive myths than did non-athletes:

1. Must lay down law to women
2. Women pretend not to want sex
3. Women who initiate sex are probably “easy”
4. Women secretly want to be raped
5. Wife should not contradict her husband
6. Women are sly and manipulate men
7. Women are out to take advantage of men
8. Any woman can resist a rapist if she really wants to
9. Women are sweet until they have you, then their true self shows
10. If a woman goes home with a man, it implies she wants sex
11. Women should be virgins when they marry
12. Drunk women at a party are fair game
14. Women’s own fault if partner forces sex on them

Agreement with rape supportive ideologies can be linked to sexual misconduct (Boeringer, 1999). A three year study conducted from 1991-1993 further supports this linkage. According to the NCAVA, the study found that while only comprising 3.3 percent of the collegiate population, student-athletes represent 19 percent of sexual assault perpetrators, 35 percent of domestic violence perpetrators and that 20 percent of college football recruits have criminal records (NCAVA, 2015).

Relationship Level: Team-members and Coaches

Significance of the player-coach relationship

Kroshus et. al. (2015) asserts that athletic departments may need to provide a framework within which coaches are made aware of the importance of setting and enforcing standards for their player's off-field behavior (Kroshus et. al., 2015). In the absence of a healthy home-life, coaches represent a valuable and positive relationship with adults (TrueSport, 2014). TrueSport asserts that in order to reinforce positive outcomes from sports participation, coaches must maintain a relationship in which boundaries and behavioral expectations are enforced. Adversely, when coaches fail to set expectations for acceptable player conduct, sports participation can lead to risky and delinquent behaviors (TrueSport, 2014).

Significance of relationship among teammates

In Melnick's 1992 study, he proposed five reasons for the perpetration of sexual violence by student-athletes. One of his proposed reasons, male bonding, refers to the relationship between the players and the display of loyalty displayed between teammates both on and off the field. While a critical element of team cohesion, the loyalty displayed in tightly knit male groups may both heighten sexism and create an environment in which players allow their loyalties to their team to override their personal integrity (Flood & Dyson). The 2013 conviction of two

Vanderbilt football players perfectly depicts Melnick's theory of "male bonding." One member of the football team was convicted of raping a female classmate while two of his teammates took pictures and videos, smacked her butt and even urinated on her (Luther, 2015). Another member of the Vanderbilt football team who wasn't present during the incident received a photo-message of the unconscious female Vanderbilt student being sodomized. Rather than report the incident to one of his coaches, the text message recipient promptly deleted the message and is reportedly text back: "...tell ur boys to delete that [expletive]. I'm looking out for your ass... and tell your roommate he didn't see [expletive]" (Luther, 2015). It was later learned that at least four other student-athletes witnessed the assault and failed to both intervene and report the incident. In this example, the members of the team bonded over the assault as well the protection of the secret. While they were later dismissed from the team and convicted of rape, many speculate that because unlike the Notre Dame and Florida State assailants, the Vanderbilt students accused of rape were second and third string players, they were essentially disposable members of the team (Luther, 2015).

Players as role models in sexual violence prevention

Recognizing the positive leadership potential athletes have, researcher and founder of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program, Jackson Katz, recommends that sexual assault prevention models should include athletes as role models. The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program was founded in 1993 at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society. The program was designed to teach male college and high school student-athletes as well as other student leaders how to use their influence to speak out against all forms of gender-based violence (i.e.: rape, battering, sexual harassment, gay-bashing, sexist abuse). Selection of facilitators for the MVP program originally focused on athletes as role models and leaders

(Moynihan et. al., 2010). Male athletes are often time seen as the prototype for strength and masculinity. Through his program design, Katz urges male student-athletes to use this influence to be a positive representation of healthy gender attitudes and behavior.

Community Level: Athletic Departments

National Survey on Campus Sexual Assaults

In 2014, Senator Claire McCaskill released the results of a national survey on campus sexual violence. The results of the survey, while not specific to either athletics nor to football programs, identified a number of shortcomings in institutions that promote an environment in which sexual violence has no consequence, such as: 1) a failure to encourage reporting of sexual violence 2) a lack of adequate sexual assault training and 3) reported sexual violence going uninvestigated. The results also uncovered many institution's failure to comply with law and best practices in how they respond to sexual violence among students-athletes. According to McCaskill, this failure to comply with laws and best practices at the institutional level is further exasperated by a failure of school administrators, local law enforcement and prosecutors to hold student-athletes to the same legal standards as other citizens. Rather than report the cases to local authorities, more than 20% of institutions in the national sample were found to have given the athletic department oversight of sexual violence cases involving student-athletes (Sexual Violence on Campus Report, 2014). Given the examples cited in the Notre Dame and Florida State University incidents, allowing athletic departments oversight over cases involving accusations of sexual abuse against their players gravely undermines the safety of both the female students as well as the campus as a whole. It's also in direct violation of the NCAA's Executive Committee mandate, which states that athletic departments should cooperate with but

not manage, direct, control or interfere with investigations into accusations of sexual assault against student-athletes.

The following section highlights recent examples of sexual assault committed by college football players.

The University of Notre Dame, 2010: Allegations against a Notre Dame Football player made headlines when his alleged victim, Lizzy Seeberg, committed suicide just 10 days after reporting the incident (Henneberger, 2012). The local prosecutor chose not to press charges and only investigated the incident five days after Seesberg's death. Seeberg was a student at St. Mary's College and, in her statement to authorities, reported that after two other students left the room of a Notre Dame football player, he began sexually assaulting her. In her statement, Seeberg reports that despite her crying and resistance to his advances, her attacker continued to grope her and unbutton her pants. After reporting the incident, a mutual friend of Seeberg and her attacker sent Seeberg a series of text messages discouraging her from pressing charges. One text message in particular read: "messing with Notre Dame Football is a bad idea" (Henneberger, 2012).

In an article published by the National Catholic Reporter, Pat Cottrell, a retired Notre Dame security officer, states that the University's policies significantly deter efforts to investigate allegations of misconduct against Notre Dame athletes by prohibiting police from going through the athletic department when investigating reports of misconduct (Henneberger, 2012). On the contrary, Cottrell says that access to non-athletes at Notre Dame requires little to no effort. The Notre Dame Football player received no reprimand following Seeberg's report. In fact, her alleged assailant testified during his closed hearing that he was not made aware of the investigation against him until two weeks after Seeberg's report. His identity was not disclosed.

Following her suicide, Notre Dame carried out an investigation in which Seeberg's mental stability, and reported discrepancies in her statement were questioned. Her alleged assailant was eventually found innocent of all charges against him.

Florida State University, 2012: A New York Times investigation uncovered a number of errors during an investigation against the Florida State University (FSU) star player, stating that "there was virtually no investigation at all" (Bogdanich, 2014). According to the New York Times investigation, two weeks after the report was filed, the police had still made no attempt to interview the assailant, nor did they obtain his DNA. Furthermore, the detective handling the case abruptly suspended the investigation after waiting two months to write his first report; key evidence, such as a video recording of the sexual assault disappeared. This same detective is reported as telling the accuser's lawyer that because Tallahassee is a big football town, her client would be "raked over the coals" if she pursued the case (Bogdanich, 2014).

In her statement, the victim described a black out experience in which she came to a bar with her friends and left, reportedly by cab, with a member of the Florida State football team. Upon regaining conscious, the accuser recalls a man being a top of her, sexually assaulting her; he pinned her down when she fought back and according to the accuser, carried her into the bathroom, locked the door and continued assaulting her after an onlooker told him to stop. Afterwards, the accuser told investigators that he dressed her and dropped her off at an intersection near her dormitory. Following the incident, there were several opportunities for a thorough investigation of the victim's assailant. Yet, after waiting two months to file the initial report, the investigator assigned to the case claimed he had no real leads. He waited another nine months to interview the witness of the assault and obtain DNA from the victim. Both the University administrators and the athletic department were made aware of the accusations

against their star player, yet, failed to adhere to federal regulations which obligates the University to promptly investigate sexual assault claims. Instead, a representative of the athletic department is said to have inquired about the pending investigation on their player shortly after the incident occurred and subsequently allow the player to play the full season (Bognadich, 2014). It wasn't until after the season came to a close that the athletic department questioned the player about the accusations against him. Even still, following a positive DNA match to that of the DNA on the accuser's clothing, the Florida State University football player accused of sexually assaulting his female classmate was found innocent of all charges against him (Bogdanich, 2014).

Sexual Violence Allegations against Athletic Department Official

Penn State University, 2011: In addition to a failure to respond immediately to accusations, there have also been allegations of abuse made against prominent football coaches. This highlights an even greater issue: players cultivate a very influential relationship with their coaches, one which is founded on obedience and a commitment to adhere to their coach's vision in order to have a successful season. When coaches are accused of sexual assault, it sets a standard for tolerable behavior for the rest of the team. In one of the more recent publicized cases, Penn state's defensive assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky was charged with 40 counts of sexual abuse against young boys (Viera, 2011). Sandusky was widely thought to be an altruistic presence in the community, founding the Second Mile Foundation for needy children and even both fostering and adopting children over the years. Sandusky, however, reportedly abused at least eight young boys from his foundation. Both a top university official and Penn State's athletic director were charged with perjury and failure to report to authorities what they knew about the sexual abuse allegations (Viera, 2011). The number of Penn State officials with some

level of awareness of the allegations prior to his indictment underscores a commitment to Penn State's football legacy over the mental and physical safety of vulnerable youth.

Societal Level: NCAA

In 2014, the NCAA released an official handbook addressing sexual assault entitled: "Addressing Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence: Athletics' Role in Support of Healthy and Safe Campuses." According to the handbook, "athletics has a unique platform on most campuses from which it can visibly and vocally support its colleagues across campus who are working to make the campus safer for all students"(NCAA, 2014). The handbook outlines a wide array of topics including general statistics on sexual violence, federal laws and compliance and the need for prevention education within university athletic departments amongst other things. The purpose of the handbook is to create a standard for all US colleges and universities to follow with hopes of ensuring an equally safe atmosphere for students nationwide. While the handbook is a start, the NCAA has not released any actual policies targeting sexual violence. The absence of such a policy has sparked a number of questions and concerns from news outlets (Axon, 2014) regarding the validity the NCAA's commitment to addressing and rectifying the increasing number of NCAA athletes accused with sexual assault.

At a Senate Commerce Committee hearing in July 2014, Mark Emmitt, NCAA President faced a line of questions regarding the NCAA's failure to properly respond to sexual violence incidents. Mark Emmitt, NCAA President, responded to questions about the lack of NCAA standard policy regarding sexual assault by stating that first and foremost, it is the responsibility of the institution itself to set and enforce a set of protocols for handling disciplinary matters (Bella, 2015). The NCAA violation, according to Emmitt, occurs when a school fails to hold student-athletes to the same disciplinary standards as non-student-athletes and maintains that the

association gets involved by trying to determine what the appropriate ramifications should be. Emmitt explains that the obligation to create and enforce policies addressing sexual violence reside with the university (Bella, 2015). The problem is that of the schools sampled in a national survey, more than 40% have failed to conduct a single investigation over that past five years (National Campus Sexual Assault Survey, 2014). The NCAA handbook does not make recommendations or comments on any one particular sport, nor does the NCAA acknowledge that football may be a sports team where sexual violence is a particular problem.

Summary of Current Problem and Study Relevance

Some of America's leading college football programs bring in millions of dollars to their schools, making the players an important asset and their alleged victims a liability. Schools are conflicted between the responsibility to protect the welfare of their students and the competing interest of protecting the lucrative brand of their athletic departments (Farga, 2014). College and university athletic departments have failed to abide by federal mandates which require them to launch an investigation following any allegation of sexual assault committed on or by one of their players (National Campus Sexual Assault Survey, 2014). Similarly, the players themselves fail to act as empowered bystanders, or teammates who not only step in and intervene when they are witnesses to a sexual assault, but where they too report the incident and cooperate fully during an investigation. Creating recommendations or announcing mandates that publicly portray a commitment to ending sexual violence is the easy part – the challenge, and the clear shortcoming of the NCAA and academic institutions alike is the fair and equal enforcement of these rules for student-athletes.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

A literature review was performed to determine if collegiate football programs foster a rape supportive culture. A comprehensive review of the literature on this topic (see Chapter 2) returned several studies, with evidence indicating a correlation between collegiate athletes and sexual assault. Very few of these studies, however, focused solely on athletes and none of these studies focused specifically on football. The bulk of the studies identified were conducted and published in the 1990s. Yet, as the incidents of sexual violence continue to rise on college campuses across the United States, so does the need for a greater understanding of the many contributing factors.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This research paper focuses on all collegiate football departments, to include the players, coaches and department administrators which fall under the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The University football department became a population of interest due to both the results from previous studies which indicate that athletes account for a considerable number of rape allegations as well as the media coverage on several high profile cases in which male collegiate football players were accused of sexually assaulting female students.

All searches that yielded results from studies conducted within the US were included. Due to the narrow scope of this paper, studies which focus on both student-athletes and fraternity members were included. Eligible full text articles were then read and included in the qualitative review if they met the population criteria (i.e.: males, male college students, student-athletes, student-athletes and fraternity members).

Objectives

All research conducted focused on sports culture and sexual violence committed by athletes and football players to uncover how collegiate football programs may foster a supportive environment.

Eligibility and Criteria

All articles which focused on male athletes, male college students, male football players and sexual violence were included in this study to provide a holistic depiction sexual violence on college campuses as well as collegiate football player's likelihood to perpetrate violence. Additionally, studies which focused on current intervention efforts targeting collegiate athletes were included.

Research design

Utilizing the Emory University library, the following database were searched: PubMed, CENTRAL until November 19, 2015. For a holistic analysis of the sexual violence occurrences on college campuses, the search strategies were based on major themes and keywords related to: sexual violence; rape; rape culture; student-athletes; football players; college.

The database was searched for primary investigations using the following search terms for the outcomes, interventions, and population of interest: "sexual violence AND athletes; sexual violence AND college campus; rape culture AND athlete"; rape AND football; college football AND sexual assault. Relevant systematic reviews were identified in the PubMed and CENTRAL databases. The abstracts of studies included in these reviews were screened to evaluate if these studies were relevant.

Secondary Data Sources

To fully describe the full spectrum of the issue of sexual assault on college campuses, information was drawn from secondary data sources. These sources include Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN), National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), ESPN, national newspaper articles, National Coalition against Violent Athletes. Eligible evidence was then read and included in the qualitative review if they met the inclusion criteria.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will summarize the findings from information and data gained from research studies in the literature review. Again, we use the social ecological framework to organize our findings,

Individual Level: Sexual aggression and athletes

Gage (2008) argues that not all sports have the same effects on men's attitudes and behavior. Gage (2008) categorized sports as "marginal," or non-revenue sport and "center," often characterized as a high revenue popular sport. The study took place at a large, public, Division I school in Northeast United States. The center sport used in this analysis was football (n=75), the marginalized sports were tennis (n=8) and track and field (n=23). Gage (2008) identified a positive correlation between high revenue, popular sports and propensity to commit sexual violence. Similarly, Forbes et. al. (2006) asserts that an athlete's likelihood to commit sexual assault has to do with the level of aggression associated with the sport itself, as well as, the athlete's propensity for such aggression (Forbes et. al. 2006). The aggressive nature of sports like football breeds an environment in which each player's masculinity must be proven (Melnick, 1992). On the field, players must prove their masculinity by being tough and dominating against the opponent. Off the field, Melnick (1992) argues that sexist language and attitudes demonstrated in the locker room can predispose athletes to violence and hostility (Melnick, 1992).

Melnick's 1992 essay entitled: "Male Athletes and Sexual Assault" presents five recommendations, which may reduce the likelihood of such incidences: 1) Abolish special residences for athletes 2) Eliminate all sexist talk from the sport environment 3) Impose tough, swift punishment for athletes who are found guilty 4) Educate athletes for greater sensitivity to

the problem and 5) Reformulate the male sport experience. Melnick (1992), furthermore, suggests that future research should discuss the ways in which the dominance demonstrated on the field may influence interpersonal behavior (Melnick, 1992).

Relationship Level: Male Bonding

The strong group bonds existing within collegiate football teams might reinforce and intensify the values present in the groups (Murnen et. al., 2007). Given Boeringer's findings, indicating that student-athletes are more likely to agree with rape supportive sentiments (Boeringer, 1999), team bonds may only intensify the ideologies, behaviors and beliefs which support misogyny and violence against women (Murnen et. al., 2007; Melnick, 1992). Group loyalty might lead football players into engaging in activities to please one another, perhaps even gang rape (Melnick, 1992). Flood and Dyson (2015) discovered that this level of loyalty may outweigh one's own personal integrity.

Community Level: Athletes and Entitlement

Kroshus (2015) identified a positive correlation between entitlement and a perceived lack of disciplinary consequences related to sexual violence as well as a correlation between entitlement and less likelihood to intervene to prevent sexual assault (Kroshus, 2015). Living in special residences as some collegiate athletes do, can create strong group bonds, (Melnick, 1992) which may insulate athletes from outside forces (Murnen et. al., 2007). The special status of collegiate football players in relation to sources of funding, institutional ties, and social tradition may create a perceived "closing of the ranks" type of protection from reprimand (Murnen et. al., 2007; Gage, 2008). Gage (2008) found that athletes are often immune to, or protected against,

external reprimand because of the money their teams produce for the school as well as their historical prominence within collegiate settings (Gage, 2008).

Societal Level: University Level Failures to Comply

Drawing on results obtained from a survey of over 400 four-year institutions of higher education, Claire McCaskill determined that many institutions have failed to comply with the law when responding to sexual violence on campus. Additionally, best practices, such as, providing a hotline or confidential website portal for students to file sexual violence reports were not widely implemented. Despite federal law requiring every institution to conduct investigations into accusations of sexual violence, in the last five years, more than 40% of school included in the sample have failed to conduct a single investigation (National Survey on Sexual Violence, 2014). Moreover, more than 20% of the nation's largest private institutions conducted fewer investigations into incidents of sexual violence than that which they reported to the Department of Education (National Survey on Sexual Violence, 2014). Such findings confirm Melnick's concept of an "athletic justice system," in which he asserts that athletes are susceptible to a different set of rules and standards (Melnick, 1992).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Summary of Findings

The literature review uncovered a positive correlation between football and sexual assault and, moreover, determined that collegiate football programs foster a rape supportive culture. Based on the literature, the correlation can be supported by a number of factors on the social ecological continuum. The first level, individual level, is demonstrated by evidence linking athletes and aggression. The second level, relationship level, factors in male bonding as a perpetuation of sexual violence. The third, community level, is represented by the entitlement athletic departments bestow on their student-athletes. And the last, societal level, is best understood via the university's lack of compliance with federal regulations mandating the immediate and effective response to sexual violence accusations.

Individual Level: Athletes and Aggression

The aggressive nature of football in which opponents are charged after and violently pinned down to win the game is linked to sexually violent behavior. On the field, football players are celebrated for their physical demonstration of male domination, but off the field, sexual domination by collegiate athletes is occurring at an alarming rate. While research dating as far back as the early 1990s indicates a positive correlation between athletes and aggression, recent cases such as those occurring at Florida State University and Notre Dame indicate that the issue has been identified and accepted as component of college life. From a mental health perspective, more should be done to differentiate collegiate football players from the violent nature of the sport and violence against women. Furthermore, given the correlation between athletes and sexual violence, schools should identify an athlete's predisposition to violent behavior prior to

playing aggressive sports as and factor their mental health and personal ideologies into player eligibility.

Relationship Level: Male bonding

Male bonding is a critical component of a team's success on the field. Team cohesion relies on a genuine trust and loyalty displayed between the players – an ability to work together in unison. A harmonious team supports one another during the highs and the lows of the season, encourages one another and looks out for their own; Flood and Dyson (2015) discovered that this level of loyalty may even outweigh one's personal integrity. For college football players, team loyalty off of the field could potentially motivate sexually exploitive behavior, in which several team members participate in sexual violence against a female student as depicted in the Florida State case. Or as seen in the Vanderbilt case, male bonding can lead players to lie and cover up incidents of sexual violence in an effort to support one another and keep them on the team. Furthermore, the desire to function as one can stifle the willingness of players to stand apart from their teammates by denouncing the sexually disruptive behavior of their teammates. Current interventions leverage team relationships to incite change in sexual violence prevention approaches, however, given the recent media attention on cases of sexual violence at the hands of collegiate football players, it is clear that more needs to be done. From a regulatory perspective, team members found to be in any way involved in an incident of sexual assault, be it as a participant or a bystander to the abuse should be held equally accountable. Those who are found to have any knowledge of an incident, yet who failed to report to authorities or to cooperate with an investigation should also face reprimand. Just as teams are held accountable for all mistakes made on the field by their counterparts, the same should hold true off of the field. Team loyalty as it stands has led players to support their teammates by standing behind them or

lying for them in the face of sexual violence allegations, but loyalty should be measured by a team member's compliance with rules which prohibit sexual misconduct. Their allegiance to the team should be measured by an unwillingness to put the success of their team at risk for player dismissal by committing sexual violence. This message can only be made once teams and universities begin reprimanding their students for sexual violence.

Community Level: Athlete Entitlement

School pride is often demonstrated through the allegiance of a campus community to major sports teams. Schools that invest heavily into their football teams through both the recruiting process and the healthy allocation of funding to the campus football program, in turn have created an environment in which to be a football player is likened to that of a local celebrity. For some of the largest football programs in the country, many of the top players are nationally recognized and have a fan base which supersedes the campus community. The literature review uncovered athlete entitlement as a factor which promotes sexual violence by football players in that failure to reprimand athletes because of their status. As schools pour money into their programs, the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the unpaid college football players on the field results in a gross revenue of millions of dollars. While playing does not result in a salary as it does for professional athletes, college football players are instead inflated with an increased sense of entitlement and celebrity over their non-student athlete counterparts. Research proves this entitlement to be potentially dangerous in that football players are comforted by the fact that they can get away with a number of violations on campus – including sexual violence. This entitlement furthermore undermines the safety of college women in that it sends a message which clearly entitles football players to all female student – whether she consents or not.

Societal Level: Lack of Compliance

Although there have been some improvements made over the last decade, there is clearly still much work to be done in the area of federal compliance (National Survey on Campus Sexual Violence Report, 2014, 2014; Axon, 2014). Evidence furthermore suggests that there may need to be additional efforts made to enforce federal laws and increase the implementation of best practices.

Limitations

Given the large gaps in research on this topic, there are a number of limitations that further research studies can address. Prior research on the topic of athletes and sexual violence focuses on the holistic perspective of sports and athletes. But as Gage (2008) uncovered in her study, there are a number of characteristics of sports which differentiate the propensity for players to commit sexual violence. Much of the literature review focused on tendencies of athletes as a whole, which could result in biased findings.

This literature review called on a number of National news outlets to depict the totality of the issue of sexual assault by collegiate football players. While from reputable sources, the inclusion of news outlets can increase reporting bias.

Interpretation of Results

The bulk of this chapter highlights university athletic programs and their misuse of this power and influence in their campus communities. But on November 7, 2015, 30 black Missouri football players demonstrated how football teams can use their influence positively when they announced that they would no longer participate in football related activities until The University of Missouri President stepped down. This announcement followed numerous incidents of overt

racism at The University of Missouri and the perceived failure of the university leadership to respond. On November 9th, Tim Wolfe, The University of Missouri system's president resigned, underlining the level of power and influence that university athletic programs possess in their campus communities. According to the NY Post, had the team missed their upcoming game, The University of Missouri was contractually obligated to pay their opponent one million dollars (Nocera, 2015). Students all across campus staged protests, filed complaints and took to social media to no avail. It wasn't until the university's football team, of which is mostly black, stepped in and threatened to tarnish the school's lucrative brand that the school responded. The celebrity that football players possess can undoubtedly be used to promote positive change.

Rather than address the issue head on through the proper socialization of their athletes into the campus community, they choose to protect their athletes and their brand. As a result, student-athletes are empowered by the notion that they are untouchable in the eyes of the university judicial system. This inflated sense of value and perceived position above the law will only reinforce sexual misconduct and may lead to escalated predatory behavior both on campus and beyond.

The findings evince that when coaches and athletic departments fail to clarify expectations for off-field conduct, and fail to sanction violations conduct, they may be indirectly encouraging team members to engage in sexual misconduct. In essence, universities and their football programs may serve as breeding grounds for sexual predators by turning a blind eye to sexually deviant behavior. Once graduated, it can be hypothesized that collegiate football players may go on to commit elevated levels of violence against women. Furthermore, by condoning a campus environment in which alleged survivors of sexual abuse are forced to see their alleged attackers both on campus and in some cases, on television, university officials are failing their

students. If actions speak louder than words, then the actions of university and athletic officials are clearly stating, through inaction, that no student life stands a chance against the highly coveted school brand.

Recommendations

The enforcement of federal regulations is arguably more significant than the establishment of federal regulations. To that end, it will be imperative to explore the ways in which federal mandates, such as Title IX, can be implemented into university protocol. Similarly, the NCAA should consider sanctions, which penalize schools for Title IX infractions involving student-athletes.

Football programs may need to develop a curriculum in which coaches are informed about the importance of setting and enforcing standards for behavior. It may also be useful to provide coaches with educational tools on how to facilitate communication with their players about sexual violence. Football programs should hold their coaches accountable for the sexual misconduct of their players to further incentivize athletic programs to adopt and implement behavioral standards for their players. Similarly, football programs should be rewarded for the good behavior of their players.

Future research should address the likelihood of formerly accused collegiate football players to commit sexual and/or domestic violence in the future. That is, how does the lack of reprimand enforced by universities affect the future actions of collegiate football players? How is their ideology of women impacted when they themselves or their teammates get away with various degrees of sexual misconduct? Most importantly, what impact do the future actions of former collegiate football players have on society after being cultivated in an environment in which their status dictates the tolerance of misogyny and sexual violence against women?

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