

MEANING STRUCTURES WITHIN CAMPUS POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE: CONSIDERING THE FRAMING OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: Meaning Structures Within Campus Policy Regarding Sexual Violence: Considering The Framing of Mental Health Care Resources

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This study examines how the sexual violence policies of universities and colleges are imbued with meaning regarding post-sexual violence mental health care. The use of Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 2004; 1979) provided a tool by which the multiple types of meanings regarding post-sexual violence mental health care imbued within policies could be discerned and evaluated. In this study, a content analysis was conducted upon 81 universities currently undergoing Title IX investigations in order to identify which types of meaning structures were shared between texts, and which types of meaning structures were in competition. Results suggest that there were shared textual and interpersonal meaning structures, as well as competing textual and interpersonal meaning structures. The identified shared meaning structures point to a tendency for universities to narrowly focus on the value of a legal resolution to sexual violence, while the discovered competing meaning structures raise questions about the need for universities to consider sexual violence as a social concern.

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Chapter 1

Rationale

As the morbid reality of on-campus sexual violence has become more visible, so, too have the strategies universities adopt to cope with such violence (Yung, 2015). University policies and practices are under close scrutiny, and the cultural norms and assumptions they support and dismantle are surrounded by heated debate. Of particular interest to the public is the process of law and order that survivors of sexual violence are exposed to— and whether that process is just and equal. While the discussion of equality and justice for survivors of sexual violence is invaluable, it is imperative that the policies dictating the procedures for reporting and investigating instances of sexual violence become part of the discussion regarding the quality and consistency of university responses to sexual violence. Of equal importance are the policies that communicate and control the availability of post-trauma mental health care, which, unlike prevention and reporting, has largely gone unexamined in the process of critiquing university responses to sexual violence.

Organizations are social entities; their policies dictate the behaviors, interactions, and goals of all those who exist within them (Daft, 1986; Osher & Quin, 2003). The policies of a university can legitimize or delegitimize behaviors, define authority, and instill subtle but powerful social norms. These norms, although the result of the organizational structure, are not always congruent with the organizational identity being performed in the social realm. Policies of diversity, gender, and equality are often structured in ways that conflict with the social identities of organizations (Wallace, 2003), and the conflict between social identity and reality can impede productive organizational practices (Rowe & Brass, 2011). Therefore, for the

productivity of the organization and the safety of its members, it is of utmost importance to investigate whether the organizational policies and processes of universities regarding sexual violence reflect and enact the social identity they wish to portray, or conflict with that identity. Of particular importance to the success of the student is an investigation into campus policies regarding mental health care post-sexual violence, because of the unique way in which post-traumatic mental health interacts with classroom environments.

Sexual assault can have an extreme and immediate negative mental health effect on victims. It can cause intense anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and paranoia, along with a myriad of other mental health disorders that can be debilitating if left untreated (Murphy, Shevlin, Houston, & Adamson, 2012). Often, survivors of campus sexual violence experience these mental health issues in ways that complicate their performance as students. The effects of significant trauma can impair a survivor's performance on memory or intelligence-based tasks (Nixon, Nishith, & Resick, 2004), can lead to poor performance and attendance, and, ultimately, force many survivors to withdraw from higher education (Krebs, Linquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009). However, survivors who have access to mental health care and the ability to consistently utilize these facilities are better equipped to deal with the complex and difficult experience of navigating everyday life after their trauma (Hossain, Memiah, & Adeyinka, 2014).

Because the access to mental health care can have a tremendous impact on the classroom performance of students who have experienced sexual violence, investigating if and how universities communicate their policies regarding post-sexual assault mental health care to survivors is valuable and warranted. Identifying policies that conflict with the social identity of the university as an organization that values the wellbeing and academic performance of students will bring to light an aspect of sexual violence that still lays unaddressed within university

organizational cultures. In order to identify if and how universities communicate post-sexual violence mental health care to victims in their policies regarding sexual violence, I will conduct a content analysis of the sexual respect policies of 98 universities currently under investigation for Title IX violations. Title IX is a federal law which prohibits any form of sexual discrimination in federally funded education programs. These protections extend beyond ensuring equal representation in athletics (the facet of this law that is most well know), into the realm of student welfare. If, for example, a female student is at a higher risk for danger on a college campus than a male student, the ability of the female student to access a fair and equal education is diminished, thus violating Title IX. These universities are already in a critical dialogue regarding the policies governing their reporting and investigating procedures, an in-depth analysis of the policies at those institutions will allow us to learn what meaning structures are at work within these policies, and help us to understand how those institutions conceptualize sexual violence within their policies. This analysis will provide insight into how survivors at those institutions would learn about the rights and services available to them at the institution, and whether there are competing meaning structures that may make these policies less effective. Moreover, this research may show Systemic Functional Linguistics as a tool adept at providing nuanced interpretations of policy meanings, which may benefit future studies of organizational policy construction and evaluation.

Sexual violence is not resolved when a perpetrator is prosecuted— the psychological effect on survivors remains, and that effect interacts uniquely with the college environment. Limited access to mental health care can significantly decrease a student’s chances of succeeding or remaining in the college classroom post-trauma. Conducting a content analysis on sexual

respect policies can identify if and how post-sexual violence mental health care is communicated to survivors. University organizations present a social identity that values the health, safety, and academic performance of their members, and if this social identity is not reflected in organizational policy, organizational goals and individual futures are at risk.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The policies of education organizations are irrevocably intertwined with the issues of sexual violence and mental health. Sexual violence and mental health issues are particularly prevalent and problematic on college campuses, and in a best case scenario, university policies can be influential in curbing and addressing these issues. However, the unfortunate reality is that university policies do not always curb or address sexual violence and issues of mental health, but rather, they problematize them and ostracize those who experience them. While the explicit value of educational organizations is asserted in text to be the wellbeing of students, in action, this value is sometimes obstructed by other values, hidden in meanings distributed through the text. In order to understand how these value conflicts arise, in this chapter, I will explore the complex relationship between campus sexual violence, mental health, and policy within educational organizations.

Sexual Violence on College Campuses

Sexual violence is a pressing issue at large, but one with special significance for college campuses. In the general population, 15 - 30% of women experience attempted or completed sexual assault by adulthood, and women who have experienced sexual assault are then more likely to experience further victimization (often referred to as re-victimization) (Messman-Moore & Long, 2000; Russell & Bolen, 2000). In comparison, one in five women will be sexually assaulted while in college (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wiesniewski, 1987; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009). Victims are most often within their freshman or sophomore year of college at the time of their first assault (Krebs et. al, 2009), and nearly 23 percent of these victims of on-campus sexual violence will be assaulted or raped more than one

time while enrolled (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). While male survivors report less often than females, there is a similarly worrying population of male survivors, with 6.1 percent reporting attempted or completed assault, higher than the general population average (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). The reliability and impartiality of university action responding sexual violence on campus is constantly under scrutiny, due to continued and systematic failures to properly report or respond to issues of sexual violence. Regrettably, many universities significantly under-report rape incidents on campuses and audits have shown little lasting effect when universities do respond to sexual violence (Yung, 2015).

College campuses' extreme disposition towards sexual violence arises out of what many scholars refer to as a *rape culture*, or a culture which supports rape (either implicitly or explicitly) through social structures, values, or practices (Brownmiller, 1979; Estrich, 1987; Herman, 1984). This culture arises through a circular silencing of rape victims in individual, interpersonal, situational and cultural contexts (Burnett & Kahl, 2009). Before a rape occurs, potential victims are focused on properly avoiding the persistent threat of sexual violence, and afterwards, society fixates over what more survivors could have done to protect themselves. In this cycle, which is representative of many world cultures, victims are held responsible for their own rape, as their peers project blame from the perpetrator of sexual violence onto the victim. Either for their failure to adequately protect themselves or for inviting sexual attention, victims are often portrayed as instigators of their own attack. This logic is often employed by the rapist themselves, as their actions are rationalized to limit blame and shame towards themselves, instead redirecting it at their victim. This strategy is displayed most clearly when victims are questioned on their moral and social behavior, rather than the incident in question. In this line of

questioning, the victim's actions are portrayed by the perpetrator as morally corrupting incitation, and the fault of the rape lies not with the rapist, but in the irresistible seduction by the victim. In the college culture, the prevalence of acquaintance rape is compounded with the issue of victim blaming, because the pre-established relationship between the perpetrator of sexual violence and their victim provides ample suggestion to peers of intentional seduction. These rationalizations of rape result in the development of *rape myths*, or widespread beliefs about the nature, actions, and impacts of rape that are not representative of the true reality of the crime (Herman, 1984).

Unlike victims, organizations and perpetrators are not often prescribed fault in cases of sexual violence. Take, for example, the case of *Nero v Kansas State University* (1993). In this case, a male athlete was recruited and integrated into a school athletic program despite multiple prior complaints of sexual violence. Unfortunately, as most perpetrators of sexual violence are continuous offenders, the athlete victimized another student. The student, who later sued, argued that Kansas University, knowing of the male's prior complaints, had been negligent by recruiting the student despite the known risk. However, the appellate court ruled that the prior actions were only related to the male athlete and his previous university, not Kansas University, and therefore that the risk was not the responsibility of the university. Through this reasoning, organizations are released from responsibility for policies (in this case, the nature of recruiting) that contribute to the larger social acceptance of rape. Having known that multiple prior incidents of sexual violence had occurred, and having contributed to a known offender's perpetration by electing to overlook that history of violence, the university was malignantly indifferent to the impact of their athletic recruitment policies on the health and safety of their students. However, these policies and practices, according to Parent (2003), which ruled in favor of the university, cannot legally

be blamed. Meanwhile, the accused is protected, as rape (and especially acquaintance rape) is so hardily ingrained into important aspects of campus cultures, such as Greek organizations and athletic programs, that the perspective of the perpetrator often dominates the social recollection of the incident (Parent, 2003).

Masculinity is equated with competence in these cultures, and as such, performances of masculinity largely revolve around the degradation of women (Herman, 1984). Rapists rarely possess outwardly abnormal or antisocial attributes (Amir, 1971), and the expression of masculinity is deeply dependent on the expression of control and dominance and the expulsion of displays of fragility and femininity (Estrich, 1987; Herman, 1984). Unfortunately, as many world cultures are subject to power structures that have privileged the perspective of the masculine for centuries, these violent expressions of masculinity are socially expected. Campus cultures are not free from this expectation. The legal system, dependent on its historically masculine operators, has built its laws regarding sexual violence to protect the defendant, rather than the victim. Most seminal rape laws were initially designed to protect men from the loss of value a sexual violation incurred on a woman, rather than as a protection for the woman against trauma.

Nearly 68% of rapes go unreported (U. S. Department of Justice 2013a; 2013b). This is not unsurprising, if we consider the way blame is parsed out in rape cultures. Holding women responsible for the socially expected act of sexual violence has contributed significantly to the low reporting rate of sexually-based crimes. Victims of sexual violence often describe feelings of mistrust towards others with information of the incident and towards the legal system at large (Kay & Schwartz, 2010). In a telling description of the state of justice for victims of sexual violence, many victims also reported being unwilling to report their attacks because of a lack of

faith in the resolution of their complaints. Indeed, they are right to be displeased with the treatment sexually-based offenses receive in the justice system: for every 100 rapes (32 of which are reported), only three will reach prosecution, and only 2 will see their defendants sentenced with time in prison (Department of Justice 2013a; 2013b; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012a; 2012b).

Rape cultures refuse to indicate the culture, the perpetrator, or the context as a precipitating factor to rape. The only remaining vessel for blame is the victim, ripe for scapegoating away the inevitable result of a system which breeds contempt for women and femininity. This logic removes the responsibility for rapes from the culture that perpetuates them, placing it solely on the shoulders of the perpetrator, and by the inevitable process of rationalization, upon the victim. The student identity of the survivor is complicated by the close proximity they are in within the environment (and, in the worst cases, participants) of their assault (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2000) found that seven out of ten campus sexual assaults were perpetrated by classmates. Additionally, studies have consistently determined that survivors are more likely to be victimized in their own residences (including dorm rooms and on-campus residences) than anywhere else (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Krebs et. al, 2009). The prevalence of rape in spaces important to the victims of such crimes is incredibly relevant to posttraumatic mental health care on the college campus, as research suggests that survivors who were attacked in areas they considered safe and controlled experienced more extensive and more severe symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), regardless of the brutality of the attack (Cascardi, Riggs, Hearst-Ikeda, & Foa, 1996).

Social experiences, private experiences, and even educational experiences are tainted by the assault because, in the campus culture, they exist in the space where the assault occurred (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). This environment, where the legitimacy of the rape is in question and the environment is inescapable, can cause extreme psychological duress in survivors, impacting their personal health and social and academic performances. This environment is especially dangerous considering the likeliness of survivors to turn towards friends for social support (Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Kieta & Russo, 1994). However, Filipas and Ullman (2001) postulate that somewhere between 58 and 80 percent of rape survivors who seek social report experience negative social reactions from their confidants, including lack of acknowledgement, active discouragement from discussing the rape, and minimization of the rape's severity.

Minimization is a strategy often used to placate victims while simultaneously denying the legitimacy or severity of their rape. In a particularly potent example, one 18-year-old rape survivor told interviewers that "[the college dean said] 'well since it wasn't your first sexual experience, it's not that bad of a thing'" (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). While the dean did acknowledge the rape's occurrence, he or she then minimized the rape by asserting that it could have occurred under worse circumstances. Filipas and Ullman (2001) further suggested that these negative reactions are related to increased negative psychological symptoms within survivors, furthering the argument made by many in the field that social reaction plays a significant part in the development of posttraumatic psychological symptoms (Ullman, 1996). Symonds (1980) explains this secondary victimization occurs as a result of the negative social reactions such as blame and disbelief that victims experience upon disclosing the rape. Victim-

blaming practices or rape myths (such as rape's normalcy) in these spaces can make survivors feel "disempowered and alienated from their college experiences" (American College Health Association, 2011).

Sexual Violence and Mental Health

Although there is a consistent and growing number of research studies dealing with preventing sexual assault on campus (Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Perry, 2007; Lonsway, 1996; Orchowski, Berkowitz, Boggis, & Oesterle, 2015; Potter, Moynihan, Stapleton, & Banyard, 2009), there is very little research into campus-provided post-assault care, especially when considering mental health care. This is a particularly alarming research gap, considering the consanguine nature of sexual assault and mental health. Violent crime often has immediate and disruptive effects on the mental health of survivors. Sexual violence has been linked to a myriad of posttraumatic psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, paranoia, and many others, which, if left untreated, can be debilitating (Murphy, Shevlin, Houston, & Adamson, 2012). Along with these psychological impacts, victims are more likely to rate their own health as fair or worse than fair, and suffer health issues more often than the general population (Cloutier, Martin, & Poole, 2002). Depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances such as nightmares and insomnia, as well as intrusive thoughts or images can plague victims of violent crimes for extended periods of time post the traumatic event (Calhoun, Atkeson, & Resick, 1982; Frank & Stewart, 1984; Kilpatrick & Veronen, 1984; Kilpatrick, Veronen, & Resick, 1979; Nadelson, Notman, Jackson, & Gornick, 1982).

While one in five women will be sexually assaulted while a college student (Krebs et al., 2007), what is even more alarming is that women with disabilities are significantly more likely to

be assaulted than their non-disabled counterparts (Martin, Ray, Sotres-Alvarez, Kupper, Moracco, Dickens, Scandlin, & Gizlice, 2006). Sexual violence may even have a greater negative impact on those already suffering from a disability (Andrews & Veronen, 1993; Tyiska, 1998). In addition to the extreme threat sexual assault poses to each and every survivor's mental health (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Krebs et al., 2009; Nixon, Neshith, & Resick, 2004), those at extreme risk for sexual assault are also at extreme risk for post-sexual assault psychological duress (Tyiska, 1998).

The posttraumatic experiences of rape survivors are well documented, and have been described in various ways throughout history before finally being definitively described as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the 3rd edition of the Diagnostics Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1980 (American Psychological Association, 1980). The most recent edition of the DSM, the DSM V, describes PTSD as a trauma-related illness that manifests after the experience of "actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence," (American Psychological Association, 2005, pp. 147). This effect can be immediate (known as acute PTSD, occurring in the six months immediately following the trauma) or occur after time has passed (known as delayed PTSD, occurring more than six months after the traumatic episode), but these symptoms must persist for more than a month following the trauma. Symptoms are separated into three clusters: re-experiencing trauma, avoidance or numbing, and arousal (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998). These clusters each include a variety of symptoms. The primary trait in the re-experience of trauma cluster is flashbacks which manifest with anxiety and panic-like symptoms, a symptom unique to PTSD (Burstein, 1985; Macfarlane, 1988; Mellman & Davis, 1985). Avoidance or numbing symptoms manifest as the tendency of survivors to seek emotional or physical distance from

aspects of the trauma. This avoidance can occur regardless of a real hazard, because these behaviors are formed out of the survivor's perception of threat, which is often exaggerated (Foa, Franklin, & Herbert, 1996; Foa & Kozzak, 1986; Foa, Steketee & Rothbaum, 1989). Arousal symptoms are less strictly defined, but largely include a low sense of self-worth, mood swings, diminished energy and changing sleep behaviors, as well as diminished cognitive ability (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998).

While many crimes do result in posttraumatic symptoms, highest rates of this disorder are found in rape survivors (APA, 2013). In addition rape survivors are more likely to experience severe symptoms of PTSD and are more likely to have those symptoms persist over time (Foa & Riggs, 1993). While 9 - 15% of the general population experiences PTSD (Breslau, Davis, Andreski, & Peterson, 1991; Davidson, Hughes, Blazer, & George, 1991), estimations for survivors of sexual assault range from around 50% to as many as 76% (Rothbaum, Foa, Riggs, Murdock, & Walsh, 1992). The wide range in these figures is most likely the result of the high rate of misdiagnosis of posttraumatic syndromes as acute stress reactions, which display similar anxiety and avoidance symptoms (Brewin, Andrews, & Rose, 2003). Rothbaum et al. (1992) conducted a longitudinal study of survivors of sexual violence and found that survivors of rape experienced PTSD symptoms for longer than victims of other crimes. In addition, participants who persisted in being symptomatic past the three month interval were also more likely to develop chronic symptoms of PTSD (Rothbaum et al, 1992). This finding is fairly consistent with other research indicating that the presence of symptoms past the four month interval indicates a chronicity in the disorder (Macfarlane, 1988).

Some authors separate the posttraumatic stress experience of rape survivors into a separate disorder described as Rape Trauma Syndrome (Walker, 1994). This syndrome was developed by Burgess and Holstrom (1974) after they analyzed interviews of 96 female rape patients in a city hospital over one year. Through this analysis, they developed a linear description of the three stages of rape trauma syndrome: the acute stage, the stage of outward adjustment, and the renormalization stage (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974). The first of the three stages, the acute phase, is the immediate aftermath of the rape, including behaviors reminiscent of the avoidance behaviors of PTSD, such as numbing and anxiety (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974). The second stage, social adjustment, describes many of the coping strategies that survivors use to process and understand their trauma (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974; 1976). The final stage, renormalization, is characterized by the readopting of pre-assault lifestyles (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974). Major opponents of legitimizing this disorder point out that Burgess and Holstrom's descriptions pathologize the coping strategies of survivors, and rephrase traditional PTSD symptoms, removing power and downplaying the growth and strength of victims (Stefan, 1994). For example, while the DSM V diagnosis for PTSD includes intense fear (APA, 2013), Burgess and Holstrom replace this term with phobia, subtly indicating irrationality and lack of control (Burgess & Holstrom 1974; Stefan, 1994). Additionally, rape trauma syndrome has not been as vigorously tested as PTSD, so the boundaries and diagnostic criteria are ambiguous and not falsifiable (O'Donohue, Carlson, Benutoa, & Bennetta, 2004). For these reasons, most research pertaining to post-rape trauma uses the diagnostic criteria of posttraumatic stress disorder.

The irrevocably intertwined nature of sexual assault risk and psychological risk makes posttrauma mental health care absolutely essential for every survivor. Survivors who have

reliable access to mental health care are better equipped to navigate the impacts of their trauma on their everyday life (Hossain, Memiah, & Adeyinka, 2014). Thankfully, The Campus Save Act of 2012 amended existing Clery Act texts in many ways (Clery Center, 2012) including requirements dictating that survivors who report to the university must be made aware of existing counseling and mental health services. However, the articulation of mental health care to survivors is questionable at every level. We do not yet know if universities articulate post-trauma mental health care to survivors — it is possible that universities have not considering that this requirement is an addition to the Clery Act as recently as 2012 (Clery Center, 2012). We do not even know how universities currently articulate post-trauma mental health care to survivors. History shows us that policy reform and operational change regarding sexual violence are not always correlated. For example, despite a drive to bring justice to victims of sexual violence during the 1970's, and subsequent legal reforms to make that justice possible, reporting for crimes of sexual violence only minimally increased in the 1980's and 90's (Horney & Spohn, 1996; Bachman & Paternoster, 1993). Additionally, while arrests were slightly more likely in these crimes, prosecutorial habits had no evident change; with stranger rapes being most likely to be pursued (Chappell, 1982), and charges of rape (a felony) often pleaded down to sexual misconduct (often misdemeanors). Convictions, likewise, increased only slightly (Caringella-MacDonald, 1984). Despite a decade of pushing for justice for victims of sexual violence, and apparent progress in legal and policy reform, there was little actual impact from these reforms on the day-to-day operations of the legal system (Caringella, 2008). Although there is a difference between legal and organization policy, the parallel holds; change is not an efficient process if left to its own devices, it must be monitored and sustained.

Change is not an expedient process, so knowing if and how universities articulate mental health care within their organizational policies is necessary in order to identify current issues and develop a starting point for evaluating the impact of future changes. The policies of an organization are much more than verbose and archaic texts. Policies are living documents that influence the everyday operations of organizations, and understanding those policies can help us change everyday practices for the better.

Sexual Violence, Mental Health, and Academic Performance

Sexual violence can have extreme negative effects on academic performance (Meilman, Manley, Gaylor, & Turco, 1992), including survivor's ability to perform on memory or intelligence-based tasks, such as tests (Nixon, Neshith, & Resick, 2004). In Blanco, Okuda, Wright, Hasin, Grant, Liu, and Olfson's (2008) study, within the top ten impediments to academic performance at least four are recognized symptoms of PTSD: stress, difficulties sleeping, anxiety, and depression. Depression, for example, significantly decreases levels of cognitive functioning (Kessler & Walters, 1998).

The survivors' perception of personal incompetence due to the daily experiences of such symptoms may lead to maladaptive strategies to control these symptoms, such as isolation or paranoia (Dunmore, Clark, & Ehlers, 2001). For example, neurologist Flaherty (2005) describes writer's block as an avoidance strategy, where authors subconsciously submit to their fear of exposing themselves to others. Grayson and Meilman (2006) extend upon Flaherty's description and interpret how a survivor of sexual assault may experience this barrier. According to their analysis, the survivor may be hindered by subconscious habits of avoidance, distracted by self-blame, preoccupied with self-defense against feelings of shame, guilt, anxiety and pain, or

focused on their own incapability. Flaherty (2005) and Grayson and Meilman (2006) agree that the author then becomes preoccupied with their inability to produce work, a focus which, combined with the canonical symptoms of PTSD, may result in extreme avoidance of situations that precipitate such feelings, and the subsequent development of problematic coping strategies in the absence of more appropriate methods (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998; Ullman, Starszynski, Long, Mason, & Long, 2008; Ullman, 1996).

The academic barriers and environmental stress culminates in many survivors choosing to withdraw from higher education (Krebs et al., 2009). In Meilman et. al.'s 1992 study, depression accounted for nearly half of all academic withdrawals. Unfortunately, while there is no current research evaluating the mental health reasons for withdrawal in a population of sexual violence survivors, the prevalence of depression and similar psychological effects among survivors does not provide a promising outlook.

Policy in Educational Organizations.

While schools and universities are considered formal organizations (March, 2013), these entities have unique organizational characteristics that make them difficult to explain and research, particularly their low level of control and cooperation as compared to other formal organizations (Hedges & Schneider, 2005). Although educational systems deal with mass participation, which should predisposition them to bureaucratic processes, Bidwell, Frank, and Quiroz (1997) argue that the amount of autonomy and flexibility necessary for effective teaching are hindered by bureaucracy. As a result, educational organizations are "loosely coupled" which provides the university the flexibility it needs to survive; however, this structure is challenging to those who develop and maintain educational organizations (Hedges & Schneider, 2005). While

education reform inevitably attempts to limit this flexibility (Elmore, 2000), the necessity of autonomy in teaching prevents a truly bureaucratic system from developing. However, organizational member autonomy is particularly damaging to educational institutions if left uncontrolled, as it puts established rules and policies at significant risk for circumvention, and less explicit and informal rules may develop (Hedges & Schneider, 2005). Although these rules are not formal, their impact on the everyday operations of an organization is equal to that of explicit policy statements.

In the case of new policies it is possible that a contradiction exists between organizational policy and existing structures or practices (Cunningham, 2000). However, conflicts between new policy and existing structures can be resolved constructively if addressed before implementation (Canary, 2010). Canary (2010) describes the stages of policy construction, including orientation, amplification, and implementation, ultimately concluding that conflicts are not easily resolved during the final stage (implementation) because of the systematic barriers in place in existing policies (Canary, 2010). In contrast, the two beginning phases provide valuable opportunities for intercepting and transforming problematic policy constructions. Orientation introduces members of the organization to policies, explaining and clarifying them and identifying the organizational priorities that they represent (Canary, 2010). After the initial orientation to the policy, the amplification stage builds on pre-knowledge of the policy and identifies possible conflicts. Identifying conflicts at this stage can lead to system transformation, where the organization or policy is changed in order to more accurately represent the beliefs, values, or actions of the organization (Canary, 2010). In order to successfully achieve reform, however, both the professional (faculty, staff, student) and bureaucratic (administration) perspectives must be

recognized and synthesized (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Larsen & Valentine, 2007). This could be a compromise between pragmatic and idealistic policies, a renegotiation of the essence of the organization, or an overhaul of everyday operations and responsibilities. These kinds of sweeping, extensive changes involve both the structure and the actors of the organization, and are most successful when the concerns of both the administration and the workers are acknowledged and incorporated. Without both ingredients, change is unachievable.

While many universities are currently in a stage of amplification (identifying conflicts and transforming policies and systems regarding sexual violence to remedy those conflicts), it is an ideal time to investigate the articulation of sexual violence policies and mental health resources available to sexual violence survivors, before the stage of implementation provides a large barrier to reform. One way to investigate sexual violence policies is to do an in-depth analysis of the meaning systems, explicit and implied, within the text of current policy statements. This analysis can provide policymakers with insight into the implications of the language choices made when crafting policy documents.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Meaning Structure

Halliday (1979, 2004) and Halliday and Matthiessen (1999) argue that different types of meaning are communicated using different patterns of organization or meaning structures. The concept of meaning structures is featured heavily in Halliday's earlier works (Halliday, 1968; 1977; 1979), and is developed further in his later theories of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 2004).

Halliday (1979; 1981a; 1981b) argued that textual English is made up of structure-generating systems and cohesive relations systems. Structure-generating systems deal with the

lexicogrammatical aspect of text creation, which are thematic systems and information systems (Halliday, 1981 a; 1981b). Thematic systems are systems that dictate the organization of clauses, while information systems are systems that govern how information is unitized and organized into structures (Halliday, 1981a; 1981b). Cohesive relations systems deal with the semiotic aspect of text creation where systems belong to one of four groups: referential, substitutive-elliptical, conjunctive, and lexical. First, referential cohesion systems deal with semantic relation of one subject to another, which is a consideration of how the meanings within a system relate to one another. Second, substitutive-elliptical cohesion systems deal with the use of assumed references in the stead of explicit references and how these utilize assumed meanings, and attempt to understand how relationships are articulated through shared meanings. Third, conjunctive cohesion systems deal with the use of conjunctions to indicate an ideational (idea based) or interpersonal (interaction based) meaning in a text, based on the structure and logical connection of independent and dependent clauses within the text. Fourth, lexical cohesion systems are based upon collocation and reiteration, which indicates how often a lexically similar concept appears in the text, and what relationship this concept has to surrounding terms. These four cohesive relations systems, Halliday (1968) argues, provide texture and contextual meaning to text.

Halliday (1994) further explains how meaning structures operate within his theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL is a multi-perspective model designed to provide researchers with multiple perspectives to evaluate meaning within language use (Martin & White, 2003). In Halliday's (2004) model of SFL, there are three types of generalized meaning: interpersonal meaning, which provides the basis for social relations; ideational meaning, which

provides the basis for institutional activities; and textual meaning, which organizes the distribution of information (Martin & White, 2007). These generalized meanings are referred to in SFL as metafunctions (Martin & White, 2007), and each type of metafunction is associated with a particular structure (Halliday, 1979). Ideational meaning is associated with a particulate structure that operates employing orbital or serial patterns in information relationships (Martin, 1995; 1996; Martin & White, 2007). Interpersonal meaning is associated with prosodic structures, which Halliday (1979) explains as “a continuous motif or colouring” (p. 66) that cumulatively affects the text through distributed meaning, rather than localized meaning. Textual meaning is associated with a periodic structure, which organizes meaning into hierarchical waves, based upon the generality of the information (Martin & White, 2007).

Halliday (2004) argues that textual meaning packages both interpersonal and ideational meaning for dissemination, indicating that all three types of meaning can be discerned from textual meaning, and thus that multiple meaning structures may operate within the text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Language and language-in-text are more than just an arrangement of symbols; they are the foundation for human interactions within cultures, social groups, and organizations (Gee, 1999). Text, likewise, is more than language-in-text, but a semantic choice made in a specific context, which Halliday (2002) describes as a sociological event laden with information about culture and social dynamics. The text-forming resources of language are partly structural (lexicogrammatical), and partly meaning-based (semiotic). Thus, meaning structures in text are partly governed by the rules of the language in which they are written, but also by the meanings they are trying to communicate (Halliday, 1981a; 1981b; 2002). By integrating both

perspectives (lexicogrammatical and semiotic), researchers are able to discern how structure communicates meaning and how that meaning dictates the structure.

Like Martin and White (2007), I am particularly interested in how textual voice is positioned in the text and in reference to other positions and voices, along with the “construction by text of communities of shared feelings and values” (p. 1). Organizations are social entities; their policies dictate behaviors, interactions, and goals of all those who exist within them (Daft, 1986; Osher & Quin, 2003). Educational organizations, likewise, use policy to construct their desired communities, and thus, identifying the meaning structures within these policies will illuminate what these desired communities value, how they orient themselves in relation to others, and how those feelings and values are enacted.

Sexual Violence Policies in Educational Organizations

Despite the best intentions of established campus sexual violence policies, it is possible that disparate or malfunctioning policies can create a substantial barrier for victims of sexual violence seeking mental health resources. In order to account for the disparity between policy and reality, institutions must consider the importance of outside accessibility of organization policies, as well as information on how to utilize policies (Anagnostopolous, Buchanan, Pereira, & Lichty, 2008) Accessibility is not simply an issue of being able to physically acquire the policy, but it is also an issue of being able to understand the policy. Inaccessible policies can make acquiring knowledge of organizational policy and resources difficult for survivors of sexual violence.

Without the ability to consume the policy themselves, the survivors must default to communicating with members of the organization, which introduces an issue of actor orientation

absent from individual consumption. In extreme situations, organizational practices allow administrators or managers to provide “ambiguous or inadequate information” regarding policies to inquiring members of the organization (Liu & Buzzanell, 2004, p. 338). In an ideal system, each person would be afforded accurate and useful information about policies pertaining to them. However, in situations where administrators feel that the policy is not relevant, or that it may cause too much loss, risk, or conflict, they can provide information that is unclear and/or sterile, preventing employees from utilizing policies to their own benefit. In addition to mere personal bias, employees’ actual knowledge of organizational policies can be very poor, even when dealing with concrete procedural processes (Hargie & Dickinson, 2007). Lichty, Torres, Valenti, and Buchanan (2007) make several suggestions to universities attempting to correct for these issues, including having handbooks available in multiple student hubs on campuses, giving copies of policies and resources to each student every year, as well as making the policy available online. Moreover, effective policies can sometimes create perceived invulnerability. Even where environments are effectively designed to prevent sexual harassment, it can still occur (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004). However, the effect of strong sexual harassment policy may be a feeling of invulnerability, where reports of sexual violence are disbelieved or otherwise invalidated. This type of invulnerability treats the policy as a binary system, switching between either total success or total failure. Thus, circumstances which transpire to expose failures of an ostensibly successful policy are disregarded merely by virtue of the policy’s success: a system cannot malfunction if it is working.

Mental Health Care Policies in Educational Organizations

In the last 20 years, the number of college students with disabilities has doubled on college campuses (Kay & Schwartz, 2010). The 2002 National Epidemiological Study on Alcohol and Related Illnesses found that over half of 18-24 year olds reported having a psychiatric disorder within the last year (Grant, Hasin, Stinson, Dawson, Chou, Ruan, & Pickering, 2004). The incidence and severity of mental illness on college campuses is growing, and the services provided to meet the needs of these students falls far short of the necessary provisions. In an optimistic evaluation, Iarovici (2014) suggested that *only* 22% of college campuses within the United States provide minimally adequate mental health care (which they described as care including both psychotherapy and psychopharmacology). Alternatively, The National Survey of Counseling Center Directors (Gallagher, 2010) found that only 64% of all college mental health care centers have access to psychiatric consultations, leaving nearly half of all mental health facilities on college campuses incapable of providing diagnosis and long-term psychiatric treatment. Psychiatric care focuses on bio-psychological and social aspects of mental illness, not simply symptom management, and without these considerations in treatment, a fully functional care plan is unlikely to be developed.

The ethical and legal concerns regarding campus mental health care revolve around the autonomy and the privacy of the student, and while these concerns have been under review for decades, little consistency has been reached between institutions. Many university mental health policies punish students for seeking help, especially for self-injurious thoughts or behavior. Such students are often subject to policies involving discipline or involuntary leave (Capriccioso, 2006). The effect of these policies on individual autonomy and the ability to access education

have been the subject of extended legal debate, questioning the appropriate balance between privacy, autonomy, and public and personal peril (*Doe v Hunter*, 2005; *Jain v State*, 2000; *Scheiszler v Ferrum*, 2002; *Shin v M.I.T.*, 2005; *Tarasoff v Regents*, 1976).

While the number of students with mental health needs have skyrocketed in recent years, the policies of most universities operate as barriers to these students, rather than supporting substructures. The *Tarasoff* rulings (*Tarasoff v. Regents*, 1974; 1976) put the privacy of the person seeking mental health care in a position of priority, but ruled that this privacy can be violated if there is a threat to members of the public. As an unfortunate result, many mental health professionals employed at colleges do violate expected privileges much more liberally than their non-university counterparts do (Grayson & Meilman, 2006), primarily a result of the pressure of financial loss (from liability) to the university if such threats do predicate dangerous behaviors (Bower & Schwartz, 2008). Threats of such actions became more immediate after a marathon of violent college crimes, including the Virginia Tech Massacre in 2007 and a string of student suicides at New York University in 2003. Both incidents were consistently integrated with issues of mental health policies and safety, spuriously relating mental illness and public peril. In response to a rapid succession of such cases, many universities enacted administrative changes to the assessment of and response to risks developing methods and teams for threat assessment, paneled by deans, faculty, counselors and lawyers. In Virginia and Illinois, such teams are required by law. However, as Monahan et al. (2001) note, there is no consistent or reliable method to evaluate the veracity of threat, essentially dissolving the expectation of privacy between a patient and his or her caregiver from an essential component of health care into a moving target, dragged behind a university-mandated attempt to limit financial liability.

While the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects students from the dispersal of personal and educational information to non-privileged individuals (20 USC §1232g[b][1][A]), these protections are often subverted through the loopholes of the act itself. For example, schools are permitted to release non-directory information to “official officers” with “legitimate interest”— while both of these terms are defined and determined on a case-by-case basis by the university (20 USC §1232g[b][1][A]). Similarly, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) protects health information from dispersal in many of the same ways that FERPA protects educational information; however, HIPPA has explicit exceptions for emergency situations (45 CFR § 164.512[j]). However, these protections require that the dispersal information allow the receiver to prevent or decrease imminent threat, a protection not afforded to academic information through FERPA (20 USC §1232g[b][1][A]; 45 CFR § 164.512[j]). The academic and personal health information gathered through university resources is, however, treated with a subtle detachment from FERPA and HIPPA protections—the fear of preventing liability lawsuits from harm resulting from mental health issues (e.g. suicide, self-harm, and violent behavior) has led many universities to amalgamating education rights and health rights into a single consideration. While no school has been found liable as a special party to the harm or injury of another student as a result of mental health care failures, many schools over-police students with mental health issues in order to prevent such losses (Kay & Schwartz, 2010).

Through extreme means, including expulsion, evictions, discipline, or educational constraints, students are often subject to extensive retribution and manipulation in order to ensure that the student is unlikely to behave in a way that presents risk to the university. However, these

policies substantially limit the ability of students with mental health issues to access fair and equal education. For example, in 2005 Jordan Nott filed a complaint against George Washington University (GWU) for a policy that, when he voluntarily surrendered himself for hospitalization following a bout of depression, resulted in a suspension, an eviction from the campus dormitories, and a threat of arrest for endangering behavior. Nott's legal team argued that the GWU policy ruling self-injurious behavior as a violation of the student code resulting in eviction and suspension violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) because it resulted in an inaccessible and unfair educational environment for students with mental health issues. The case was settled out of court, and after the settlement, GWU redesigned their policies regarding students who seek mental health services, but similar policies are still widespread (Nott v GWU, 2005).

Universities often place prescriptions upon students who formally report mental health issues to university officials, resulting in an extended exclusion even after their mental health care issues are resolved or controlled. In the 2004 case of Doe v Hunter (2005), a student filed a complaint against the City University of New York (CUNY) after she was denied access to her dormitory following a suicide attempt. This case, too, was settled out of court, and the many cases it resembles also result in out of court settlements. However, these settlements result in a list of grievances for universities to fear with no protections or rulings provided to soften the resulting unease educational universities hold against those with mental health issues. Because of this unease, universities have continued to develop policies that create undue restrictions for those who seek mental health care on college campuses, while simultaneously failing to

recognize the responsibilities that they hold regarding students who do report mental health issues.

There are a litany of cases seeking damages from colleges who failed to adequately respond to reports of imminent threats because of mental health issues. *Schieszler v Ferrum* (2002), for example, describes a case in which a university dean and residential assistants (RAs) prevented a student from entering the dorm room of her boyfriend, Michael Frentzel, who had previously been reported for suicidal behavior. Despite knowledge of his intent to harm himself, and previous reports of self-injurious behavior, neither the dean nor the RAs referred Michael to mental health assistance, and neither intervened in his suicide. In the case of *Elizabeth Shin v. M.I.T.*, the family of a student who had committed suicide in her dorm pursued damages from M.I.T., citing the institution's failure to provide adequate, coordinated mental health assistance (*Shin v. M.I.T.*, 2005) as a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, among other complaints. Shin had been treated for suicidal ideation by the school counselor, and had a history of mental health issues dealing with suicidal behaviors and thoughts. Despite this, when Shin made suicide threats on April 10, 2000, the behaviors were not reported by the Dean or Housemaster who witnessed them to any mental health provider or any family members (*Shin v M.I.T.*, 2005). She later committed suicide by self-immolation. Her family filed a wrongful death claim, citing the university's failure to provide adequate resources and failure to prevent Elizabeth's suicide. Every one of these cases, all alarming and telling about the state of the university's response to cases of mental illness, was settled out of court or the court ruled in favor of the university (Kay & Schwartz, 2010). There are no instances of judges finding a

special relationship between universities and their students which required immediate intervention in imminent threat situations (Kay & Schwartz, 2010).

To summarize, universities, to this day, are not responsible for the impact (or lack thereof) that their staff and environments have upon students with mental illnesses, but for fear that they one day could be, they over-police and ostracize students who do report mental health issues to campus resources. Students who disclose such issues often report feelings of betrayal, and the perception that cases which do require more care or extensive assistance will result in expulsion or suspension significantly decreases the likeliness that students will access their much needed mental health care resources (Di Benedetto, 2007). Universities and colleges are at a crossroads, but they insist on speeding through the intersection of mental illness and campus cultures without inspecting the impact that their policies have on students. Mental health care is a necessity for the current college student, but one which is not provided with thought or intention of long-term, comprehensive treatment. Of utmost priority is not the student, but the organization and its financial responsibilities.

Because sexual violence is particularly prevalent on college campuses, and because mental health is inextricably linked to sexual violence, university sexual violence policies should ideally address issues of sexual violence and acknowledge that there may be psychological ramifications. University policies are the expression of organizational attitudes and values, thus the language of these policies should reflect the meaning the organization is communicating in text—the meaning of the policy should largely be in line with organizational attitudes and values. However, as policies regarding sexual violence and mental health are interrogated on a national scale, it is becoming clear that sometimes, organizational ideology and organizational

policy are not aligned. Because the language of these policies should largely represent the meanings being communicated by college institutions, but many times fail to do so, it is possible that the explicit meaning structures within the text may be clouded by competing structures. For this reason, I have developed two research questions. First, what shared meaning structures operate within the policies of universities? Second, what competing meaning structures operate within these texts? In order to answer these questions, I plan to perform a quantitative content analysis, a methodology I will explain in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In light of the literature, it is clear that many universities have similar ideological and pragmatic complications when implementing policies regarding post-sexual violence care. Many times, these complications are the result of shared meaning structures, which create similar understandings and misunderstandings of established policies. Considering the ongoing evaluation and modification of such policies through Title IX investigations, identifying such shared meanings may be incredibly valuable, as it could assist administrators engaged in policy reconstruction by providing an exemplar of meanings within particularly effective policies, or serve as an illustration of shared meanings within particularly ineffective policies. However, the body of research has yet to identify shared meanings regarding post-sexual violence mental health care, which leads me to my research questions for the study at hand: First, what shared meaning structures are operating within these policies? Second, what competing meaning structures exist within these texts? In order to address these research question, I will conduct a content analysis of university policies regarding sexual violence in hopes of identifying recurrent physical and textual characteristics within such policies.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method of analysis that creates contextualized interpretations and inferences from the physical properties of a text (Berelson, 1952), which can be dissected through quantitative or qualitative analysis, for symbolic or literal content, as a whole or as a set of independent units. The utility of content analysis enables many communication researchers to identify, describe, and evaluate messages. Berelson's (1952) initial definition of content analysis

described the process as a tool for the “systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (p. 489), and subsequent research has reinforced the use of content analysis to evaluate a variety of communication modes for manifest and latent content (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Because content analysis allows researchers to select their own contexts of inquiry, it is possible to use multiple constructs of inquiry on a single text over time, making it a particularly apt tool for discerning multiple implicit and explicit meanings within the same text. However, the wide realm of applicability of content analysis does provide several difficulties for its use as a method of research, including difficulties with devising reliable coding schemas, and the largely unchecked process of drawing inferences from physical characteristics of a text. These issues, although pressing for qualitative content analyses, are largely accounted for if a piece of research subscribes to a quantitative approach to content analysis (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Rigorous quantitative research design includes barriers to inconsistent unitizing and categorizing, and processes of generalization that include evaluations of measurements and testing of procedures. The process of quantitative content analysis described by Berelson in 1952 includes six steps which reflect a thoughtful and reasonable research design: designing, unitizing, sampling, coding, drawing inferences, and establishing validity.

In the initial step of Berelson’s (1952) process, *design*, researchers establish the context and framework of the proposed study. If this step is properly executed, the characteristics of the artifact are specified (Berg & Lune, 2011), and the reasons for gathering data from the artifact should be clearly articulated. The researchers should, at this point, be able to clearly identify what their artifact is, what data they will gather from that artifact, and what they wish to infer

from their data. This step informs the decisions researchers will make regarding measurement, interpretation models, and validity thresholds that they will make throughout Berelson's (1952) process (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). The second step in this process, *unitizing*, is the stage in which researchers identify and define their units of analysis, essentially identifying the units which represent the data and inferences they aim to gather (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). These units can be as small or as large as the researchers require, from independent words or sentences to concepts and semantics (Berg & Lune, 2011). The process in describing and applying these constructs is largely informal and undocumented, prompting Crocker and Algina (1986) and Cronbach (1990) to criticize this trend and call for a more transparent approach when deriving these categories and units of analysis. This transparency allows for outside evaluation of the categorization and unitization, allowing experts to establish their representativeness and relevance to the phenomena under study (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). What is most important for quantitative content analysis is that these units are wholly representative and relevant to the phenomena under consideration, and that no unit is excluded that should be included, or vice versa (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). The most common method of exhaustive investigation to identify relative units is through literature review (Curtis & Lawson, 2001; Rourke & Anderson, 2004), where an iterative approach is often adopted, moving between the two methods to develop representative and relevant units. Such methods are useful to considerations of manifest content (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999), but are not as useful when evaluating latent content.

Once the *design* and *unitizing* steps are complete, the researchers must execute the *sampling* stage. The *sampling* step is one in which the body of artifacts is collected, with specific mind to avoiding sampling biases within and outside the sample, creating a normative pool of

data (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004a). The most appropriate sources of data collection for content analysis are texts which have conventional meanings afforded to them, occur in large numbers, and remain reasonably stable over time (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). Once the *sampling* step has been completed, researchers are prompted to the *coding* step in Berelson's (1952) process. In this step, recorded units are classified into the prescribed categories (Krippendorff, 2004a). Most quantitative content analysis uses nominal scales in coding schemas, where numbers are used to categorize units, but reflect only existing differences between units, rather than scaled values (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). For example, if I were coding colors appearing in advertisements that communicated particular emotions, 1 could represent the color yellow, 2 represent the color red, and 3 represent the color green. In this case, a coder assigns a number representing difference, but without representing a difference in value between the colors. There are two major strategies for coding: human-coding and non-human coding (Krippendorff, 2004a). Qualitative content analysis largely uses human-coding, and is unreliable when the subjectivity of human coders is not accounted for (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). However, human coders are more apt to understand linguistic nuances or semantics within texts (Krippendorff, 2004a). This makes them more useful in latent content analysis, which interprets the physical data as well as identifying it (Berg & Lune, 2011). Content analysis most often incorporates formulaic and predictable readings of multiple texts, rendering it less vulnerable to reliability issues (Weber, 1990). This is largely achieved by programmed computers (Krippendorff, 2004a). The strength of non-human coding lies in manifest content analysis, which only identifies and quantifies data (Berg & Lune, 2011). Holsti (1969) debates this point, arguing that manifest content analysis is able to be interpreted adequately by human

coders if objectivity is upheld (where interpretations must be supported by evidence). A human-based quantitative coding schema can code for both manifest and latent content, if the explanation and interpretation of the concepts is supported by its frequency and context within the text, and vice versa (Berg & Lune, 2011).

The fifth stage in the process of content analysis is *drawing inferences*, in which the relationship between the data and the research question is stated, with extended and explicit explanation (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004a). This explicit statement of the relationship between data and conclusions allows data to speak independently of researcher interpretation (Kaplan, 1964). However, the explanation is often curtailed, and assumptions driving interpretation of the data are largely unspoken (Rourke & Anderson, 2004). To adequately support the validity of conclusions drawn from largely non-replicated coding schemas, Messick (1989) asks researchers to evaluate and assess the degree to which their theoretical rationales and empirical evidence support such interpretations. This process is represented in the final step of Berelson's (1952) model, *validation*. This is the step in which the conclusions and inferences drawn from the content analysis are evaluated for their veracity. Rourke and Anderson (2004) are particularly concerned with challenging researchers who fail to evaluate the reliability and validity of content analysis results, especially as the process of inference often excludes explicit explanation. To account for such failures and to prevent them, Rourke and Anderson (2004) advocate that content analyses be expected to test and measure for validity. To do this, they argue, researchers must develop rigorous protocols for administration, interpretation, and scoring of their coding schemas, with information about interrater agreement (Tinsley & Weiss, 1975, 2000). Crocker and Algina (1989) argue that incorporating validity measurements is a

fundamental part of testing coding protocols, followed by the investigation of empirical data to support validity (Messick, 1989). Such investigations can evaluate group differences, use correlations, or execute experimental manipulations to evaluate if data represent what is purported by the researchers (Anderson & Rourke, 2004; Messick, 1989).

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of the texts of web pages articulating campus policies and resources regarding post-sexual violence procedures. To be included, the text had to meet three requirements. First, universities or subsidiaries of universities that receive federal funding or support must publish the policies online in order for their policies to be included within the study sample. Second, policies must be from universities who have current ongoing Title IX violations. Third, policies must be explicitly identified as including information on sexual violence, sexual respect, or Title IX. If links are made available to readers in the text of policies for on-campus services dealing with post-sexual violence care, these web-pages were included in the individual university's pool of data. Web pages from 94 higher education institutions, collectively representing 117 Title IX investigations, made up the initial sample. Several schools within the sample had multiple title IX violations pending against them at the time of this study, bringing the sample above the expected 94 violations. Of this sample, 11 policies were unavailable to the public, and 2 policies were removed from the sample because their policies were shared with another school within the sample. This resulted in a final sample of 81 policies.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to identify *what shared meaning structures* exist regarding post-sexual assault mental health care in university policies, I coded each policies across two factors: physical characteristics and textual characteristics.

Physical characteristics. The physical body of the text has a notable affect on the accessibility, ease of consumption, and possibility of implementation for a particular policy. In the case of the policies at hand, whether the policies were assessed through three features: *presence versus absence* of a post-sexual assault mental health care policy, the *on- or off-campus* nature of mental health care resources, the *depth and readability* of the policy articulating such resources.

Presence versus absence. I evaluated if mental health care resources were articulated within the relevant campus policy. This required university policies to use enough specificity that a student could functionally identify an agent of assistance. For example, if a university policy stated, “healthcare resources are available to survivors,” this would not have met the threshold of specificity required, as a student could not have identified a specific agency to seek assistance from. A policy that stated, “the University Health Center provides emergency care to survivors,” however, provides enough information that a student could identify this resource.

On- or off-campus resources. This factor assessed whether articulated resources were available on- or off-campus. To assess the status of articulated resources, I identified a relationship (or lack thereof) between the individual agency and the university at hand. Agencies that bear the name, official seal, or letterhead of associated universities were considered on-campus resources. Resources that did not carry any of these markers, or did not otherwise

identify themselves as being subsidized, supported, or partnered with the relevant university, were considered off-campus resources.

Depth and readability. The factors of *depth* and *readability* were measured using word count and readability statistics, respectively. For the research at hand, *depth* did not necessarily indicate complexity, but instead indicates the extent of explanation as to the purpose and availability of resources. The size of description, measured through word counts, indicated the amount of explanation occurring. To supplement this factor, however, I used readability statistics from two measurements: Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, & Cai, 2004), and the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975). Coh-Metrix measures for syntactic simplicity, term concreteness, referential cohesion (how words and concepts overlap throughout the text) and deep cohesion (how a text uses causality, chronicity, or connectives), while Flesch-Kincaid measures reading level and reading ease (these are negatively correlated; a low reading ease indicates a high reading level). Together, these tests measured for *depth* through recording word count and assessing textual cohesion, while also measuring for *readability* by discerning the grade level of the text, reading ease, the simplicity of syntax, and concreteness of terms within the text.

Characteristics of the text. The content of policies is as important as their ease of consumption, and to identify the ideas or concepts they may perpetuate, I have selected several variables that were coded as characteristics of the content. These variables included *reference terms*, *prevention assistance*, and *emergency assistance*.

Reference terms. For this research, reference terms were the terms that policies or resources used to refer to those who are affected by sexual violence. The two major references of

interest were references to *agency* and references to *sex*. References to *agency* used terms characterizing those affected by sexual violence as *survivors* or *victims*, terms which qualify individuals seeking care as either having agency in their trauma or being non-agentic, respectively (Gupta, 2014). If a policy has no instances of either term, references were coded as *neither*, while policies which present instances of both terms were coded as *both*. References to *sex* categorized individuals seeking care as belonging to one of the two biological sexes (female or male), thus implying the other sex does not experience sexual violence, or terms that are inclusive of both males and females. It is possible, for *sex*, that none of the specified terms manifested within the policy, or that both reference terms are utilized. In this case, references were coded as either *neither* or *both*, respectively.

Prevention assistance. Texts may have contained the characteristic of *prevention assistance*, which were tools, resources, or suggestions provided not to address the impact of sexual violence, but to prevent its occurrence. Examples of *prevention assistance* include references to sexual assault awareness groups, ‘tips’ for avoiding or intervening in situations of sexual violence, and information about training programs on campus. If this characteristic was present, it was coded into one of three categories: *intervention training*, *avoidance training*, or *awareness efforts*. Items coded into the first category, *intervention training*, were meant to inform bystanders on how to interfere in instances of sexual violence. Items within the second category, *avoidance training*, attempted to teach individuals how to avoid becoming entangled in instances of sexual violence. The third category, *awareness*, included items that aim to increase the overall awareness, understanding, or action towards sexual violence.

Emergency assistance. In contrast to *prevention assistance*, it is possible that policies displayed characteristics of *emergency assistance*. This characteristic manifested through the articulation of resources used to address the immediate aftermath of sexual violence. Examples of *emergency assistance* are lists of contact information and location of emergency intake centers, information on legal assistance and evidence collection, and emergency contact information for psychiatric services. If this characteristic was present, it was coded into one of three categories: *medical services*, *legal services*, or *psychiatric services*. Items coded into the first category, *medical services*, involved addressing the trauma that occurs to the physical body during sexual violence. The second category, *legal services*, included items that involve legal rights, responsibilities, and options. The third category, *psychiatric assistance*, included items that address the negative impact that sexual violence has upon mental health.

Latent Analysis

While manifest content is crucial to the investigation of what shared meaning structures exist within these policies, the latent content within these policies may also offer information that can discern what conflicts exist between these meanings structures. In order to capture this latent data, I have kept a research journal in which I recorded any latent information of interest within the policies. Within this journal, I recorded my impressions and general thoughts regarding each policy, and noted recurrent ideas or implicit meanings within the policies. These results were discerned from in-depth reading of the policies; this research journal allowed me to identify conflicts within the meanings of a text that were not made explicit in the coding schema.

Developing and Testing Codes

In order to develop the coding categories, thirteen policies within the pool of data were selected to pilot test preliminary coding schemas. The policies were coded using these schemas, and the schemas were modified to reflect items that were unintentionally excluded, to intentionally exclude data not relevant to the research at hand, and to allow multiple types of data to be drawn from the same set of items. This process was used to ensure a thorough and systematic reading and coding of the policy. While I remained the primary coder for this study, a trained external coder applied developed codes to a ten percent subset of policies to establish intercoder reliability. After the initial intercoder reliability session, Scott's π was measured at .02, indicating fair agreement, and agreement percentage was at 66%. Scott's π was chosen because it built for the evaluation of reliability between two coders, and is particularly well formatted to content analysis (Craig, 1981; Krippendorf, 2004b; Scott, 1955). In order to establish a greater reliability, four more sessions were held, and during the final session, agreement percentage was at 100% for all variables.¹ Once this set of codes demonstrating adequate intercoder reliability had been developed, in order to maintain impartiality throughout this project, those coding schemas remained stable. Focusing solely on textual data that fits the predetermined coding schemas facilitates content analyses of large bodies of extensive texts, as it simplifies and minimizes texts while retaining the integrity of the desired data (Carley, 1993). This minimization also establishes limitations between conceptual connection -- as the whole body of the text is fundamentally connected to all parts of the text. Carley (1993) argues that

¹ Reliability statistics for the final intercoder reliability session were run, but due to invariant data and 100% agreement, the equation resulted with an invalid result, results returned as "undefined" for both Scott's π and Krippendorf's α , rather than as perfect agreement.

continually interactive coding may lead researchers to investigate concepts not of primary interest to their studies. For these reasons, all policies were coded using identical schemas, and no further schema development was made after coding had begun.

In Review

In order to identify what shared meanings exist regarding post-sexual violence mental health care, I investigated through content analysis the policies of 81 universities currently undergoing investigations for Title IX violations. I identified recurring physical and textual characteristics within these policies. This investigation is particularly beneficial to those schools whose policies are currently under investigation, because it provides information that can be used to assist in effective reconstruction of campus sexual violence policies, and particularly concerning policy issues regarding post-sexual assault mental health care.

Chapter 4

Results

In this study, I attempted to answer two research questions; First, what shared meaning structures are operating within university sexual violence policies? Second, what competing meanings structures exist within these texts? To answer the first research question, I set out to understand what shared meaning structures operate within campus sexual violence policies. To address this question, both manifest and latent content of the policies were coded using the coding practices set forth in the methodology (a copy of this coding practice can be found in Appendix A). Frequency data for each factor was used to establish the consistency of structures and ideas across the sample, allowing me to identify the recurring explicit and implicit meanings shared between texts. Because meaning structures are made visible in recurring linguistic and morphological choices (Halliday, 1979), using frequency data allows this study to identify recurring meanings by isolating patterns, either via numerical frequency or the repetition of ideas and concepts within the text. The factors were identified to contextualize and investigate the articulation of resources within these policies that may reveal implied meanings within the text, while also attempting to establish a physical and morphological standard for the text.

Presence versus absence. With regards to the articulation of mental health care resources, while a majority of the sample (65.4%) had such resources present within the text of the policy, a significant portion (34.6%; $\chi^2 [1, N = 81] = 7.16, p = .005$) of the sample did not articulate mental health care resources in the text of their policies.

Depth and readability. The average word count for policies within the coded sample was 6814.54 (SD = 5690.73). The average Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level and Reading Ease measurements for the sample were 16.03 (SD = 3.62) and 19.57 (SD = 11.97), respectively. No relationships between length and readability were discovered within the sample ($r_{(79)} = .111$, $p = .322$). Table 1 provides the means of word count, Flesch-Kincaid reading level, and Flesch-Kincaid reading ease, which were used to establish the standard for *readability* within the sample.

Table 1

Means for Word Count, Reading Level, and Reading Ease

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Word Count	303	30116	6814.54	5690.73
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level	9	31	16.03	2.621
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease	0	49	19.57	11.98

Pertaining to the Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor, Table 2 details the findings for the components of this measure. The findings of this study indicate a relatively standard Syntactic Simplicity quality, with the coded policies averaging within the 51st percentile (51.86, SD = 23.89). This would indicate that the sample contained texts which used moderate-length sentences with fewer words and traditional syntactic structures, as Syntactic Simplicity measures the occurrence of unfamiliar and complex syntactic structures. For example, a complex syntactic structure may use many connectives and several modifiers, such as “*the bitter, howling wind blew and the house shook*”, in contrast to a more simple syntactic structure, using fewer

connectives and modifiers for the same message, such as “*The wind shook the house.*” The average quality of Referential Cohesion and the quality of Deep Cohesion both landed within the 52nd percentile (52.93, SD = 28.20; 52.10, SD = 28.92). As Referential Cohesion measures the use of overlapping words or ideas to create emergent threads that readers can follow, and Deep Cohesion measures the causal connectivity and logical relationships within the text, these findings indicate that the sample had obvious internal themes and ideas that were structured with reading-level appropriate logic. However, the sample did seem to be marginally above average when considering the average quality of Word Concreteness, which landed within the 63rd percentile (63.22, SD = 25.65), and the average quality of Temporality, which landed within the 64th percentile (64.17, SD = 26.3). Because Word Concreteness measures the use of visually concrete vocabularies (words which are easy to conceptualize and/or represent visually), these findings indicated that the sample used vocabularies which were somewhat easier to visualize than comparable informational texts. The findings for Temporality, which measures the presence of cues, such as verb tense, that construct a reader’s situational modeling of a text, indicated that the sample would be easier to process and understand than comparable informational texts, especially in an action-oriented text. Verb Cohesion within the sample was markedly low, however, landing in the 13th percentile (13.2, SD = 17.17), indicating that the sample used significantly less recurring verbs, indicating an unclear structure of events within the texts. Statistics for Connectivity were also remarkably low, landing within the lowest percentile (0.09, SD = .35). This finding would indicate lower logical relations within the texts, as Connectivity measures the use of connectives to express relations within the text. For example, the word “*and*” indicates that the phrase that precedes it and the phrase which follows it are connected.

The use of “*and*” indicates a logical connection, and texts which use more connectives such as “*and*” are likely to have clearer logical connections. However, the findings of this study are likely due to the 15,000 character limit that the Coh-Metrix imposes on text analysis, which would result in lower connectivity through the unforeseen fracturing of the text’s body. The use of bulleted lists and traditional policy numbering may have also influenced the Connectivity outcome.

Table 2

Means for Coh-Metrix Measurements

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Syntactic Simplicity	1	96	51.86	23.89
Word Concreteness	5	99	63.22	25.65
Referential Cohesion	2	100	52.93	28.20
Deep Cohesion	6	100	52.10	28.92
Verb Cohesion	0	92	13.62	17.17
Connectivity	0	3	.09	.352
Temporality	4	99	64.17	26.30

On- or Off-campus resources. For the articulation of on- or off-campus resources, approximately half of policies articulated both types of resources (55.6%), while 27.2% of policies articulated only on-campus resources, and 17.3% of policies articulated neither type of resource. There were no policies that indicated exclusively off-campus resources.

Characteristics of the Text

Reference terms. Considering the reference terms for sex, the sample consisted primarily of policies that either referenced both sexes (male and female) (56.8%), or neither sex (39.5%). While a small portion of the sample did contain only reference terms for the female sex (3.7%), there were no policies within the sample that used only reference terms for the male sex.

With regards to the reference terms “victim” and “survivor,” which reveal underlying meanings regarding agency embedded within the policies, the most common reference term used within the coding sample was “victim” (46.9%), followed by the use of both “victim” and “survivor” (38.3%). The final two reference term categories, the use of solely the term “survivor” and the use of neither term, each occurred in 7.4% of the policies. The findings regarding the prevalence of the use of both terms within the sample were in line with qualitative observations made during the coding process, which indicated a rise in the use of a hyphenate term, “victim-survivor”, to refer to persons who have experienced sexual violence.

Prevention assistance. Slightly over two-thirds of policies (69.1%) did not articulate prevention-oriented resources, while 30.9% of the sample did include prevention resources. This category included subcategories which were not exclusive, meaning that a single policy could articulate multiple types of resources. This means that final percentages of the subcategories may not equal a perfect 30.9%. Of those policies that did articulate prevention resources, the most common type of articulated resource was an awareness-focused resource (19.8%), followed by avoidance resources (16%) and intervention resources (9.9%), respectively.

Emergency assistance. The majority of the coded sample (79%) articulated one or more emergency resource within the text of the policy. Emergency legal assistance (e.g., 911, police

departments) was the most commonly articulated resource (72.8%), followed by emergency psychiatric resources (64.2%) and medical resources (61.7%), respectively.

Latent Analysis

In order to answer my second research question, which attempts to discern what competing meaning structures exist within these texts, I analyzed latent content within the policies through note-taking during the coding process. These notes included my own impressions and interpretations of the policies during coding, and allowed me to discern the subtle ways in which the meanings operating within the policies were at conflict with one another. This analysis raised two major questions: First, who are these policies meant to serve; second, what is the best location for these policies; and third, what is public or private information?

Who are these policies meant to serve? Throughout the coding process, an obvious tension arose between the framework of policies that were presented as legal documents meant to serve universities and policies that were framed as living documents meant to serve students. In the case of the former, it became clear that many policies were written from a perspective that both privileged and enforced a legal approach to post-sexual violence care, most likely present to prevent liability issues or policy complaints from being filed against the university. Much of the sample contained policies that used burdensome legal language, and many policies spent excessive space defining and explaining these legal terms within their policies. For example, one policy contained four pages of definitions, covering not only the definitions of consent and descriptions of relevant criminal behavior, but providing definitions for thirty-five terms in total. Furthermore, several policies contained multiple pages of back-matter intended to help clarify

the legal and legislative context of the policy, such as references to and description of state and local court rulings and laws, as well as federal interaction with such laws. These supplements made the policies, on the whole, more difficult to navigate and understand during a single read-through, as the dense language was not easily understood until definitions were provided, and nearly all of the definitional and contextual matter came immediately following the conclusion of the policy proper.

In addition to this, in most instances of the articulation of legal resources, policies would use forceful linguistic and morphological choices to enforce the protection and care of bodily evidence, such as using uppercase letters or bolded text along with firm negative cues, such as the phrase “do not” and the use of declarative statements. This was exemplified in one policy, which articulated emergency action plans under the heading “evidence preservation: what to do if you or your friend were sexual assaulted,” under which 8 out of the 13 suggestions dealt directly with evidence collection and preservation, including commands such as, “If concerned about date rape drugs try to save your drinks or the containers”, “Don’t brush your teeth”, and “Don’t urinate or use the bathroom.” Further, emergency medical and psychiatric help was used as a tool to promote evidence collection, with the same policy suggesting that those who experience sexual assault must “Go to the hospital for treatment and evidence collection.” Such phrasing implicitly communicates that these actions are not choices, but rather, that they are required of survivors, regardless of their intent to pursue legal action. These commands were rarely connected with any clear intended outcome—rather, they were incorporated into emergency resources without any indication of the role they play within post-sexual assault care.

As a comparison, policies that were framed in a way that served survivors used layman’s

language, and contained exhaustive lists of resources available to survivors. One policy, for example, had 6 pages of actionable resources within the text of the policy. This framework is at odds with the legal approach of the policies meant to serve the university, as the purpose of the policy is not to prevent liability or complaint, but to address sexual violence in situ or after the fact. Take for example, the framing of evidence collection; whereas the framework of those policies serving the universities demanded evidence collection from survivors, in the living document framework, survivors were given information that articulated the importance of evidence collection while still indicating the survivor had choice in the collection process, with one policy stating, “Any individual who has experienced an act or acts of Sexual Misconduct or Relationship Violence is encouraged to take steps to preserve evidence, as doing so may be necessary to the proof of a criminal act or to obtain a protection order from the court.” In this case, the same suggestion of evidence preservation is given, but the use of the term “encourage” implies that the survivor may choose not to preserve evidence. Furthermore, the purpose of evidence collection is clear for those who read this statement—it helps with obtaining prosecution; whereas in the first policy, survivors are commanded to preserve evidence with no solid reference as to the purpose of evidence collection. The ultimate example of a student-oriented policy is one which used language that referred to the reader directly, predominantly using the term “you” to refer to readers and to introduce resources, explicitly articulating that this policy was meant to be read by survivors of sexual violence.

What is the best location for these policies? While undergoing the coding process, a trend emerged wherein sexual violence and misconduct policies were housed underneath or within the larger Title IX policy for many universities. Alternatively, many policies were

independent of other university policies, and were housed separately from related Title IX issues. This geographic difference affects the framing, depth, and accessibility of sexual misconduct policies as a whole.

Within Title IX policies, issues of sexual violence and misconduct were inherently framed as issues of gender and sex equality, as they were seated within the university's larger policy regarding these issues. However, independently, sexual violence was treated as a separate, issue, operating independently from issues of equality. Despite the seemingly preferable choice to connect issues of sexual violence with Title IX, a factor that adds complexity to this choice is the issue of depth, policies whose sexual misconduct policies were within Title IX policies often did not provide descriptions of policy processes or articulate resources. This is most likely because it fit less with the articulation of the overall Title IX policy. Additionally, accessibility may also be a concern in choosing where to house the policies, as I had difficulty locating policies of sexual violence that were housed under Title IX headings during policy collection, because their contents were not easily found during a search on the universities' websites including terms for sexual assault, rape, or sexual misconduct.

Alternatively, policies that were housed separately from Title IX policies articulated sexual violence as an issue of violence, and rarely included issues of gender and sex equality. However, because they were not constrained by the norms of a larger document, these policies were allocated space enough to develop an appropriate depth in describing policies and exhaustive resource lists. They were also the most readily accessible policies for survivors, as they were easily obtained during a search of universities' websites using terms for sexual assault, rape, or sexual misconduct.

What is private or public information? During data collection, several policies were not included in the sample because they were unavailable; a significant portion of these policies returned search results, but were only available to enrolled students or employees of the related university. These policies are the clearest articulation of the third question that arose during the course of this study—what is private or public information? The tension between public and private information was seen at two levels; first, at the policy level, when policies were either made public or private; and second, at the resources level, when the policies often expended significant effort to articulate which resources were confidential, and which had mandated reporting responsibilities.

Although unavailable policies were not included within the sample, the reason for the absence warranted inclusion in the latent analysis. Universities which receive federal funding are required to provide a Title IX policy to students, but this does not require that they make this policy available to members of the outside public. In several cases, the policies were password protected, indicating only members of a given university could access them. This limited access prevents members of the public at large from engaging with the policy, evaluating it, or utilizing it. Despite the problematic nature of making a policy private, it is not in violation of the federal Title IX statute unless reporting statistics are also unavailable. Because reporting statistics were outside the purview of this study, the question of the legality of the private policy will be set aside in favor of a question regarding what information should be made public: why are reporting statistics required to be made public, when the policies that dictate reporting practice are not?

Furthermore, policies that were available spent a notable amount of space explaining the

processes of reporting, and paid special attention to explaining the definition of confidential and non-confidential psychiatric resources, especially in reference to the initial outcry (the first time a survivor of sexual violence discloses the experience to another person). These policies were careful to list and delineate these resources, and to explain what type of reporting each resource was mandated to provide the university, as well as any legal entities they report to. This focus portrayed a choice regarding information that belonged to the person who had experienced sexual violence; either they could engage with a resource where the information would be made public, or they could engage with a resource where the information would remain private. Information shared with a confidential resource belonged solely to the survivor, and could not be shared with others, making it private. Alternatively, information shared with a non-confidential resource was required to be shared with other universities and legal entities, regardless of the survivor's desire of how the information be handled— removing control of the information from the survivor, and giving ownership of the information to the public.

Summary

In this study, content analysis was used to analyze the manifest and latent content of 81 university policies regarding sexual violence in order to discern what shared or competing meaning structures exist within the texts. Analysis of the manifest content provided results which detail the length and readability of these policies, the reference terms which were most common within the texts, and trends within the articulation of resources. Analysis of the latent content of these policies gave rise to three questions; *who are these policies meant to serve; where is it best to house these policies; and what is public or private information?* In the next chapter, I will use these findings to answer my research questions, discuss the implications of these findings, as

well as providing directions for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this chapter, through presenting and interpreting the study results, and pairing them with relevant literature, I will answer my two research questions: *what shared meaning structures are operating within these policies*, and *what competing meaning structures are operating within these policies*? I will then discuss the theoretical and organizational implications of these findings, before identifying the strengths and limitations within my study. Finally, I will provide suggestions for future research that may be warranted based on the findings of my own study.

RQ1: What shared meaning structures are operating within these policies?

In Chapter 2, I introduced the three types of meaning structures: interpersonal meaning, which provides the basis for social relations; ideational meaning, which provides the basis for institutional activities; and textual meaning, which organizes the distribution of information (Martin & White, 2007). Each of these meanings is associated with particular organizational patterns and types of meaning, but all three types of meaning may exist in a single text, indicating that multiple meaning structures may be operating in a single text at one time. This brought me to my first research question, *what shared meaning structures are operating within these policies*? Answers to this question were found in both the manifest and latent analysis. Within the analysis of manifest content, the factors of *readability*, *presence versus absence*, *emergency assistance*, and *prevention assistance* contributed to answering RQ1, while within the analysis of latent content, the questions of *who are these policies meant to serve* and *what is public or private information* contributed to answering this research question. Together, the

manifest and latent content analysis suggest that these policies share two meaning structures, textual and interpersonal. Together, they build a larger meaning structure, which I have labeled as *the university policy as an artifact of legal value*.

Textual meaning structures are structures that organize the distribution of information (Halliday, 2004). Nearly all policies within the sample used a type of hierarchical organization consistent with Martin and White (2007)'s findings, which indicated that textual meaning was associated with periodic structures that organize using hierarchical waves based upon the generality of information. In the sample at hand, this translated into a shared hierarchical organization that began with a statement of policy, provided context for the policy, and then provided more details as the context became more specific. The textual meaning structure is reflected in this study's findings for *readability*, which found that policies exhibited higher-than average Word Concreteness (63.22, SD = 25.65) and Temporality (64.17, SD = 26.3), indicating a text that uses language and situational modeling that refers to a clear, concrete sequence, likely related to this hierarchical modeling. As these texts exhibited Deep Cohesion and Referential Cohesion that was average in comparison to similar informational texts (52.93, SD = 28.20; 52.10, SD = 28.92), the presence of themes and logical relationships within the text indicates these shared structures do not belong to an interpersonal meaning structure, which relies on heavy prosodic structures (Halliday, 1979).

Additionally, as textual meaning also includes semantic considerations, it is of note that one consistent meaning was also communicated via organizational and lexicogrammatical choices; that these policies are meant to serve universities as a public record of practices. Within the findings of my latent analysis, the question of *what is public or private information* exposes the interrogated choice universities make to display records of policy to the public. By the mere

merit of making their policies available to the public, it can be assumed that these universities believe that the public should have access to these policies. However, in contrast to the intuitive meaning of such a gesture, which would indicate the public should have access to these policies because it benefits them, much of the lexicogrammatical and organizational strategy within the sample indicates that the quality of being public benefits the university, rather than those members of the public who would have access to the policy. The average Flesch-Kincaid reading level of the sample was a 16.03 (SD = 3.62), indicating that in order to comprehend these policies, readers must be at a post-baccalaureate reading level. Moreover, the Flesch-Kincaid reading ease for these policies was remarkably low, averaging 19.57 (SD = 11.97) out of a one-to-one hundred range. This suggests that student interaction with the policy is a consideration not heavily privileged during policy construction. The sample also exhibited remarkably low Verb Cohesion (13.2, SD = 17.17), which indicates that, as a result of using fewer recurring verbs, policies had an unclear event structure, which obstruct a reader's ability to act on presented information. As the public are not easily able to consume and utilize the policy, the purpose of the text must then be related to how its existence benefits the university, rather than its use by the public. For example, a policy could be of use to universities as a means to meet federal requirements, rather than as an active document meant to assist students in navigating their college experiences.

In addition to the shared textual meaning structures between policies, these texts displayed shared ideational and interpersonal meaning structures. Interpersonal meaning structures provide the basic structures for social interaction, and are heavily associated with prosodic structures which manifest as “a continuous motif or colouring” (Halliday, 1979, p. 66),

that affects texts through distributed meaning. For example, interpersonal meaning may manifest through the repetitive expression of a singular meaning or a set of related meanings in varying ways (word choice, subject positioning). The results of this study indicate that the interpersonal meaning structure shared between these policies communicates the social value of legal resolution. The multiplicity of locations in which legality was a concern, priority, or theme within these policies indicates a “colouring” which is distributed throughout the sample, as these policies present multi-faceted meaning regarding the value of legal recourse with regards to sexual violence.

Within the latent analysis, the question of *who are these policies meant to serve* probes the relationship between university policy and how the pressure to pursue legal retribution post-sexual assault may be related to university responsibilities. Beyond the motivations of each university, the sample as a whole demonstrated a repeated attention to legal resolution, even in reference to non-legal resources. Legal resources were not only the most common type of resource articulated in policies, but medical and psychiatric resources were most often articulated in a way which located them in the legal process (for medical resources, this was as evidence collection; for psychiatric resources, this was as an outcry witness or mandated reporter). Furthermore, emergency assistance was articulated significantly more often than prevention assistance, largely because of the stress that was placed upon the legal process following sexual violence, which prevention services could not interact with. Although interpersonal meanings are heavily associated with prosodic structures (Halliday, 1979), these types of structures were not particularly present in the policies. However, the university’s communication of the legal value of these policies may be simultaneously communicated by the *lack* of prosodic structure, which

is heavily associated with legislative and judicial documents in the social realm. Policies went through great lengths to provide legal context and to use legislative language, even when this language was a detriment to the user-friendliness of the policy, indicating that the organizational structure of policies may operate as a segment of both the textual and interpersonal meaning structures within these policies.

While no shared ideational meaning structures were found in response to RQ1, this is largely because the ideational meaning between texts was inconsistent. Ideational meaning structures are associated with particulate structures that use serial or orbital organization (Martin, 1995; 1996; Martin & White, 2007). These types of organization rely on the relation of an initial concept to subsequent concepts within the text—either through direct cause and effect or through logical relationships, respectively. This particular organization structure is used to provide the basis for institutional activities (Halliday, 2004); however, these foundations were inconsistent throughout the sample, and no shared meaning structures could be determined. The inability to establish a shared meaning structure within the sample is largely the result of the unclear serialization of information; this can be seen most clearly through the low average percentile of Verb Cohesion (13.2, SD = 17.17), which interferes with the ability of the text to create clear causal relationships.

Together, the textual and interpersonal meanings shared between the policies create a larger meaning system I have labeled as *the university policy as an artifact of legal value*. The meaning structures within the sample indicate that the value of these policies is contingent upon their relationship with the university, and that this relationship to the university is connected to the social value of legal resolution of sexual violence. Therefore, I argue that the shared meaning

structures which operate within these policies communicate an association between the cultural value of legal resolution of sexual violence and the university in a public sphere. By cementing an association between a widely-held social value, these policies serve universities by positioning their organizational ideologies in a way that aligns with the public. The public may then feel as if they share a common goal or belief with the university. While universities are unique entities, previous research on organizational commitment has shown that the perception of justice can improve organizational commitment and performance from members (Safi & Arshi, 2016). This may be a motivating factor for universities to engage in strictly legal assessments of a complex issue, as those who perceive a legal resolution as justice (which, by merit of the policy, appears to be a widely-held social value) may be willing to commit more fully following the successful legal prosecution of a sexual violence case than the enactment of alternative resolution strategies.

Despite the benefit to organizations to engage in associations with the legal resolution of sexual violence, the literature I provide in Chapter 2 of this study is enough to trouble the singular goal of legal resolution of sexual violence issues within these policies. Universities have a unique relationship with sexual violence, and students who experience sexual violence may not wish to pursue a legal resolution because of these intricacies. Once a student has entered into the complex process of pursuing a legal resolution, their school performance, mental health, and personal wishes may be marginal concerns in comparison to the outcome of a successful prosecution. Furthermore, a legal resolution may not provide closure for those who experience post-sexual violence trauma. This is not to say that universities should not provide resources or assistance for students seeking a legal resolution, rather, I am arguing that it is important to

recognize that other pathways to resolution that survivors may choose should be given equal credence within these policies. Considering that a mere 65% of policies articulated mental health care resources, the impact of legal framing upon these resources should be seriously contemplated, as the lack of overall representation of psychiatric resources coupled with their tendency to be articulated as tools for legal recourse presents significant limitations to their accessibility and effectiveness. When psychiatric and medical resources are framed as tools to provide a legal resolution, it may discourage survivors who do not wish to pursue a legal option from seeking assistance, regardless of any continuing physical or mental health effects. By privileging these policies as artifacts of legal value, the benefits that these policies can provide survivors regarding their ongoing health and post-trauma experience are significantly constrained.

RQ2: What competing meanings are operating within these structures?

My second research question asked *what competing meaning structures are operating within these policies?* Answers to this question were found in both the manifest and latent analysis. The results of this study indicate that these policies contain two competing meaning structures; textual and interpersonal. These competing meaning structures can be seen most clearly through the examination of the questions raised in my latent analysis *what is public or private information, and where is the best location to house these policies?* Together, these two competing meaning structures create a larger competing meaning system I have labeled as *the university policy as a response to a social concern*.

Although key textual meaning structures within the sample were shared, there was a major difference in the dissemination of policies which displayed the characteristics of another,

competing meaning structure. In contrast to the shared meaning structure explicated in response to RQ1, a competing meaning structure found within the sample used an alternative strategy of dissemination, which packaged policies within the texts of Title IX policies, using less specific hierarchical waves in organization. Within the latent analysis, the question of *where is the best location to house these policies* discussed the publication of sexual violence policies within the Title IX policy of the relevant organization, rather than as an independent document. These policies connected issues of sexual violence to issue of gender and sex equality, and relocated sexual violence from an independent policy to a confined space within a larger policy. Furthermore, these policies, although using a hierarchical organization, do not become more specific, as the space available to each policy is constricted. Instead, they engage in semi-prosodic structures that involve descriptions of organizational attitudes, but refrain from describing procedures or resources. The lack of development of processes prevents these policies from exhibiting the consistent semantic meaning found within the shared meaning structure discovered in RQ1, that these policies were meant to serve universities as a public record of practices, as the explanation of processes does not occur due to the constrained space. The language of policies contained within Title IX policies was also more accessible to the reader, as the terms were more generalized and did not use the burdensome legal language discussed in the latent analysis question *who are these policies meant to serve?* When considering the question of *what is public or private information*, these policies do not focus on the dissemination of this policy to the public, in contrast to the shared meaning structure explicated in RQ1, as these policies were significantly more difficult to locate during data collection. This difficulty in finding policies located within larger Title IX documents suggest that the availability of these

texts to the public was not a main motivation in their publication. In summary, this meaning structure operates as the antithesis to the meaning structure described in RQ1; policies using this meaning structure employ a semi-prosodic hierarchical structure, and they do not serve as a public record of university procedure, as they do not pursue public interaction with the policy, nor do they describe university processes. Instead, this meaning structure includes policies which serve the university and the public by providing contextualization to issues of gender and sex inequality.

In addition to a competing textual meaning, the result of this study identified a competing interpersonal meaning within these policies, which was most obvious in the conflict between the competing terms of *victim* and *survivor*, and through an alternative hyphenate, *victim-survivor*. Because these terms include suggestions of agency within trauma, with the term *victim* implying non-agency and the term *survivor* implying having agency, the prevalence of a single term, *victim* (which occurred in 46.9% of the policies) indicates a predominant interpersonal meaning within a significant portion of policies that categorizes those who experience sexual violence as non-agentic in their trauma. The next most common reference to agency within the policies was the use of both terms (which occurred in 38.3% of the policies), which indicates that policies may exhibit a recognition that persons can be *either* non-agentic or agentic, depending on their own self-identification. However, in my latent analysis, I discovered that the rise in popularity of a hyphenate term, *victim-survivor*, may display a problematic alternative which indicates policies may categorize those who experience sexual violence as *both* agentic and non-agentic. This established a competition between two interpersonal meanings within the text; the first categorizes those who experience sexual violence either as having or not having agency within

their trauma; the second categorizes those who experience sexual violence as both having and lacking agency in their trauma simultaneously. Neither competing interpersonal meaning structure was prevalent enough to be described as a shared meaning structure, but both were prevalent enough to be considered in strong competition with the other.

Together, the competing textual and interpersonal meanings found within these texts represent a larger meaning system I have labeled as *the university policy as a response to a social concern*. The major component of the competing meaning systems identified in this study is their effort to consider sexual violence as occurring in multiple contexts, in multiple ways. By situating sexual violence in relation to gender and sexual inequality, policies attempted to contextualize the experience of sexual violence as an issue with multiple contributing forces; meanwhile, the effort to either combine or keep separate the terms of *victim* and *survivor* displays a tension between the assumption that all survivors share similar experiences, or that the experiences of survivors may differ. While this competing meaning structure appears to provide a more nuanced, accessible approach to university policy, this approach must also be critiqued for its lack of functionality, and its attempts to attribute qualities to survivors regardless of self-identification. Because the means of contextualization that this meaning structure employs is one which constrains the ability to articulate resources or create clear processes for readers to follow, this approach may create a sense of recognition of a problem, but it is not particularly suited to addressing a problem. Furthermore, the attempts to recognize the multiplicity of experiences sexual violence can cause is noble, however, the attribution of all of these experiences onto survivors (as is the case with the term *victim-survivor*) ultimately results in the same restrictions on agency as with a singular term (either *victim* or *survivor*). It also complicates self-

identification for those who interact with the policy, as it forces those who consume the policy to identify with *both* terms, whereas a singular term gives the reader an opportunity to reject a term which may not represent their experience.

Organizational Implications

The findings of this study provide several key suggestions for organizational policymakers to consider when constructing university policies regarding sexual violence. These recommendations include reframing policies in a way that serves both universities and students, and the articulation of medical and psychiatric resources as health-oriented services rather than legally-oriented services. First, universities should pursue policy evaluation from both members and outside auditors during policy construction and after the publication of the policy. While it is not certain that universities are building their policies with this particular goal in mind, it is clear that the existing policies are not made to be consumed or applied by students. This is particularly problematic, as these policies can greatly affect the experience of students at universities. To address this, university officials must integrate both administration concerns and the concerns of professional and non-professional university members during policy construction (Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010; Larsen & Valentine, 2007). While the university may be attempting to meet federal or state requirements, it is possible to incorporate the needs of students and the needs of the university into a document that serves both its purpose as a record of policies and as a tool for students, if both voices are present and equally validated during policy construction.

Second, in the process of policy construction, universities must be careful to articulate resources as pathways to outcomes other than legal resolution. While a legal resolution could validate those who experience sexual violence on a societal level, these prosecutions are by no

means a guarantee (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012a; 2012b; U. S. Department of Justice 2013a; 2013b). By limiting the reaction to sexual violence to the legal realm, the psychological and physical side-effects of rape are not recognized as their own traumas, and attention is diverted from the equally pressing matters of psychological and physical care. Because sexual violence is especially prevalent on university campuses (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wiesniewski, 1987; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2009; Meilman, Manley, Gaylor, & Turco, 1992), and because sexual assault has a particular relationship to post-traumatic stress (APA, 2013; Rothbaum, Foa, Riggs, Murdock, & Walsh, 1992), universities have a responsibility to address post-sexual violence psychiatric care. However, current policies skirt this need in order to pursue legal resolution, and frame psychiatric and physical health care in a way that predominantly encourages students to pursue legal action—and may discourage students from reaching out to these resources if a legal case is not their goal. In order to avoid this, those individuals constructing policies must actively investigate their framing of mental and physical health resources. Given the universities in the study sample are currently undergoing Title IX investigations, this may be a particularly opportune time to improve their policy framing, as they are likely already undergoing critical evaluation of the policies at hand, and as Canary (2010) points out, if problematic policy orientations are discovered and addressed in the beginning stages of policy construction, transformation is possible.

Methodological Implications

In addition to organizational implications, the findings of this study also provide implications for organizations wishing to use Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 2004) as a theoretical tool for policy evaluation. While SFL has, until this point, largely been

used in applied linguistic studies, this study has shown the utility of SFL to map the meaning structures of policy documents, and this particular tool may be useful in the study of organization communication, particularly in the process of policy construction and in the evaluation of policy.

While many scholars, such as Canary (2010), have offered us perspectives on the process of policy construction and evaluation, very few theories have arisen with which we can actually discern the meanings of policies, both manifest and latent, as they are communicated in text. It is important to note that this tool can offer use a unique method with which to evaluate the text absent of the intention of those constructing it, promising a neutral tool for policy evaluation, as well. Because SFL investigates the relationships between information organization (textual meaning), the ideals that the text relies on (ideational meaning), and the social interactions that the text implies (interpersonal meaning), the use of this particular theory to evaluate policy is beneficial, as it can evaluate both the explicit and implicit content of policies. This allows researchers to investigate each policy on multiple factors, and creates a more nuanced way with which to evaluate the implications and effectiveness of policies.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study indicate that a more complex association between organizational patterns and meaning structures than Halliday (1968; 2002; 2004) has previously described within SFL. In this study, a question was raised regarding the potential impact of social constraints and motivations upon organizational pattern when the expected prosodic structure of interpersonal meaning was not present despite inherent interpersonal meaning. The prosodic structure had been previously associated at large with interpersonal meaning, but these findings

indicate that such associations may be moderated by tertiary forces acting upon the source of information.

Limitations

Although this study provides valuable findings on the shared and competing meaning structures within university policies, there are a few limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. First, because the use of Coh-Metrix (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, & Cai, 2004) is controlled by its creators, this study was only able to utilize a version of the Coh-Metrix software which impose a 15,000 character text limit. This may impact the final readings for some of the outcomes within the Coh-Metrix matrix. However, it is unlikely that the bodies of the texts which were fractured were significantly different from the portion of the text that was able to be analyzed, meaning this limitation is unlikely to have greatly affected the outcomes of this study. Second, only universities which were currently undergoing Title IX violations were considered, because of the benefits this study could offer their ongoing policy evaluations. However, this choice may have skewed the sample towards a negative bias, and it is uncertain if these findings are representative of universities outside of this sample. Finally, although intercoder reliability was established at 100% agreement, I did remain the primary coder for the study. A larger group of coders may have found a more varied set of latent content, or may have slightly altered the findings for manifest content. However, as reliability was established, the likeliness of significant differences based on the amount of coders taking part in this study is low.

Directions for Future Research

This study provides a foundation for further studies of university policy in a myriad of ways. First, research should renew a focus on both the effectiveness and accessibility of policy to

organizational members. Readability scores and latent analysis in this study both indicated that, while these policies provide a record of university procedures, they would be largely ineffective if a student or a member of the outside public attempted to navigate them. For this reason, it may be of benefit for scholars to investigate the gap between organizational policy construction and implementation, and the role member accessibility plays in the implementation of new policies. Additionally, this study exposed a tendency of universities to focus on the legal resolution of sexual violence. Future research may investigate how the legal discourse related to sexual violence interacts with policy construction and implementation. Research in this vein may expose an interaction between a societal pressure to ensure fair legal services and the articulation of non-legal resources in a legal frame. Finally, further research should be done using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 2004) to establish its functionality in assessing the content of policy during and after policy construction. This study was able to inspect the content of each policy with a nuance previously unattainable, and future studies should attempt to validate or problematize the use of SFL as a theoretical tool for policy evaluation.

This content analysis inspected the meaning structures within the policies of universities with pending Title IX investigations, attempting to discern both shared and competing meaning structures within these policies. After the analysis of both manifest and latent content, the findings indicated shared textual and interpersonal meaning structures and simultaneous competing textual and interpersonal meaning structures. I utilized these meaning structures to answer the two research questions, discuss the organizational and theoretical implications of these findings, and discuss the limitations of this study, as well as directions for future research based upon these findings. This study has provided a clearer understanding of how shared or

competing meaning structures may be a source of problematic application or utilization of policy, and how these meaning structures become visible within these policies.

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Appendix A Coding Practices

1. Open the provided flash drive.
 - a. Open the corresponding .sav file, located in the main body of the drive.
 - b. Within the folder “Policy Word Documents”, select a single policy.
 - i. In Column A of the Policy MS.sav file data view, enter the associated school identification number (found on the provided “List of Schools” document) for the policy.
 - ii. In Column B of the same view, enter a value to indicate the presence of a policy regarding mental health care resources. These resources must be clearly identifiable organizations, agencies, or programs meant to be of use to the student, and all information must be actionable. To be actionable, a resource must be articulated in a way that the student could visit or contact the resource. Descriptions of resources, explanations of the purpose of resources, and/or plans for the explanations of resources **do not** qualify as actionable resources.
 1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
 - iii. In Column C, enter a value for the campus status of any articulated resources regarding sexual violence.
 1. Agencies that bear the name, official seal, or letterhead of associated universities will be considered on-campus resources.
 2. Resources that do not carry any of these markers, or do not otherwise identify themselves as being subsidized, supported, or partnered with the relevant university, will be considered off-campus resources.
 - a. 1 = on campus
 - b. 2 = off campus
 - c. 3 = both
 - d. 4 = neither
 - iv. In Column D, enter a value for the reference terms used to represent sex in the policy. Using a word search, search the word document for the term “she” and the term “he” to ensure all terms are identified.
 1. 1 = female
 2. 2 = male
 3. 3 = both
 4. 4 = neither
 - v. In Column E, enter a value for the reference terms used to represent agency within the policy. Using a word search, search the word document for the term “Victim” and the term “Survivor” to ensure all terms are identified.
 1. 1 = victim
 2. 2 = survivor
 3. 3 = both

4. 4 = neither
- vi. In Column F, enter a value to indicate the presence of prevention-oriented resources within the policy. These include tools, resources, or suggestions provided not to address the impact of sexual violence, but to prevent its occurrence.
 1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
- vii. In Column G, enter a value for the presence of intervention oriented prevention services. These services would train or inform individuals how to stop a sexual assault in progress, such as self-defense training, or bystander intervention training.
 1. 1 = presence
 2. 2 = absence
- viii. In Column H, enter a value for the presence of avoidance oriented prevention services. These services would train or inform individuals how to prevent sexual assault as a whole, including tips for avoiding sexual assault.
 1. 1 = presence
 2. 2 = absence
- ix. In Column I, enter a value for the presence of awareness oriented prevention services. Awareness oriented services attempt to raise awareness or consideration of the issue of sexual violence, but do not directly address the process post-sexual assault.
 1. 1 = presence
 2. 2 = absence
- x. In Column J, enter a value to indicate the presence of emergency oriented resources within the policy. This characteristic manifests through the articulation of resources used to address the immediate aftermath of sexual violence.
 1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
- xi. In Column K, enter a value for the presence of medical oriented emergency resources. These services involve addressing the trauma that occurs to the physical body during sexual violence.
 1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
- xii. In Column L, enter a value for the presence of legal oriented emergency resources. These resources include items that involve legal rights, responsibilities, and options.
 1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
- xiii. In Column M, enter a value for the presence of psychiatric oriented emergency resources. These services include items that address the negative impact that sexual violence has upon mental health.

1. 1 = present
 2. 2 = absent
- xiv. In Column N, enter the value of the page count found on the Word Document associated with the policy.
- xv. In Column O, enter the value of the word count found on the Word Document associated with the policy.
- xvi. In Column P, enter the value of the Flesch Kincaid Reading Level found on the Word Document associated with the policy.
- xvii. In Column Q, enter the value of the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease found on the Word Document associated with the policy.
2. After entering the above values, return to the main body of the hard drive, and select the “Coh-Metrix Link” file. Follow the link within the file to arrive at the Coh-Metrix Web-tool.
 - a. Using the copy tool, copy the text of the policy into the provided text selection box. Select Submit.
 - i. In Column R, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Synactic Simplicity of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - ii. In Column S, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Word Concreteness of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - iii. In Column T, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Referential Cohesion of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - iv. In Column U, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Deep Cohesion of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - v. In Column V, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Verb Cohesion of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - vi. In column W, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Connectivity of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.
 - vii. In Column X, enter the value provided by the Coh-Metrix Tool for the percentile of the Temporality of the first 1000 characters of text of the policy.

