Contested feminisms:

The challenges facing feminist organizations working against sexual violence at a Quebec university.

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ABSTRACT

Contested feminisms:

The challenges facing feminist organizations working against sexual violence at a Quebec university

This thesis examines the challenges facing feminist community-based organizations that work with universities to end sexual violence on campuses. It asks what kinds of validation of feminist community organizing and knowledge are taking place on campus. Among feminist community organizations, collaboration as a whole, and partnerships with universities specifically, are viewed as rich vectors of knowledge creation and provide multiple ways to build bridges between stakeholders.

Bringing a critical race feminist framework, and through in-depth interviews with nine participants working in community-based feminist organizations and on campus at an English-language university in southern Quebec, I consider actions starting prior to and continuing on into the #MeToo era. Unpacking accounts of diverse experiences of institutional positions, processes and policies using interviewing with a counter-story-telling approach, the narratives describe partnerships that are often difficult to build and maintain on campus, as well as tensions between white feminism and intersectional feminisms.

This research found that sexual violence at this university can be understood clearly within the frame of white supremacy. This work outlines tensions, contradictions and controversies that exist within a generalized commitment to "end rape culture", particularly for Queer and trans, Black, Indigenous and people of colour on campus. I examined these narratives

by considering the feminist goals, specifically intersectional, of community groups and the institutional goals of universities. My analysis of these accounts considered contradictions between explicit goals to support culture change and practices that entrench oppression and protect white supremacist power as well as considering sites of resistance that maintain their own troubling power dynamics. The findings of this research offer a view into what goes on behind the scenes when developing sexual violence remedies for campus. My conclusions invite those involved in institutional culture change collaborations to consider the potential for transformative feminisms, beyond a liberal white framing, to provide survivors with what they say they need, create sites for unlearning white supremacy and make some inroads into ending rape culture.

Féminismes contestés :

Les défis auxquels sont confrontées les organisations féministes œuvrant contre les violences à caractère sexuel dans une université québécoise

Ce mémoire examine les défis auxquels sont confrontées les organisations communautaires féministes qui travaillent avec les universités pour mettre fin à la violence sexuelle sur les campus. Il demande quels types de validation de l'organisation et des connaissances féministes de la communauté existent sur le campus. Parmi les organismes communautaires féministes, la collaboration, et les partenariats avec les universités en particulier, sont perçus comme de riches vecteurs de création de connaissances et offrent de multiples façons de créer des ponts entre les partis prenants.

Avec un cadre féministe « critical race » et à travers des entretiens approfondis avec neuf participantes travaillant dans des organisations féministes communautaires et sur le campus d'une université anglophone du sud du Québec, j'examine des actions commençant avant l'ère #MeToo

et se poursuivant depuis. Déballant les récits de diverses expériences de positions, de processus et de politiques institutionnelles à l'aide d'entretiens avec une approche de « contre-récit », les récits décrivent des partenariats souvent difficiles à construire et à maintenir sur le campus, ainsi que des tensions entre le féminisme blanc et les féminismes intersectionnels.

Cette recherche a révélé que la violence sexuelle dans cette université peut être comprise clairement dans le cadre de la suprématie blanche. Ce travail décrit les tensions, les contradictions et les controverses qui existent dans un engagement généralisé à «mettre fin à la culture du viol», en particulier pour les personnes queer et trans, noires, autochtones et de couleur travaillant et étudiant sur le campus. J'ai examiné ces récits en tenant compte des objectifs féministes, avec une perspective spécifique sur l'intersectionnalité, des groupes communautaires et des objectifs institutionnels des universités. Mon analyse de ces récits a pris en compte la contradiction apparente entre les objectifs explicites de soutenir le changement de culture et les pratiques qui enracinent l'oppression et protègent le pouvoir de la suprématie blanche, ainsi que les sites de résistance qui maintiennent leur propre dynamique de pouvoir troublante.

Les résultats de cette recherche offrent un aperçu de ce qui se passe dans les coulisses lors de l'élaboration de remèdes contre la violence sexuelle sur le campus. Mes conclusions invitent les personnes impliquées dans les collaborations institutionnelles de changement de culture à considérer le potentiel des féminismes transformateurs, au-delà d'un cadrage blanc libéral, pour fournir aux survivants ce dont ils disent avoir besoin, créer des sites pour désapprendre la suprématie blanche et faire quelques incursions pour mettre fin à la culture du viol.

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Dedicated to my mother, Asha Marion, whom I lost while going through this writing process, a working-class white woman who became a teacher. And to my father, Yashpal, whom I lost many years ago, a high-caste Indian with multiple degrees. Traveling in what they experienced as the postcolonial world, they met on Independence Day in Nigeria, October 1, 1960, and created many beautiful stories.

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I wish to acknowledge that the land on which McGill stands, where I live, study, work, and play, is land stolen in the colonial process I explore in my work. For thousands of years, before settlers arrived, this island was an important meeting place for many peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. It included several villages with hunting and fishing lands, stewarded by the Kanien'kaha:ka. Tio'tia:ke (now called Montreal), is the site of oppression and sexual violence, and part of making right with this history is to name it.

To everyone working to end sexual violence, thank you.

Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is far from a new issue; it has been tackled, defined and interpreted differently historically, politically, legally and socially. #MeToo movements in North America, as well as #MoiAussi and #CestAssez in Quebec, and intense long-term ongoing student-focused and public-facing pressure for universities to act on allegations of sexual violence combine to create a multi-tiered and wide definition on what constitutes sexual violence and how it should be addressed. Contemporary definitions of sexual violence situate it in feminist theory (Johnson & Dawson, 2011) describing it as nonlethal gendered sexual action without consent that may occur between intimate partners, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and strangers of all genders (Cahill, 2017). As a gendered experience, these actions are often directed towards women, trans and nonbinary people and others that are marginalized (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.) because they are rendered less powerful than men (Katz, 2019) according to their social location. I draw on these understandings as I consider sexual violence on campus at McGill University.

Rape Culture and the iMPACTS project at McGill

Within sexual violence discourse, the term rape culture is used to describe pervasive behaviour that includes rape and assault, catcalling and non-consensual touching, demeaning jokes and comments, as well as insistent pursuit, stares and gestures (E. Quinlan, 2017). In recent years, critical race and intersectional scholars and activists have brought to light important debates that a largely white, middle-class, feminist movement has left uncovered (Bourassa et al., 2017; Crocker et al., 2020). These scholars, and others, consider sexual violence to be a function not only of gender but also of sexuality, race, class and other intersecting and interlocking identities. As a further exemplification of increasingly complex social and political

understandings of these identities, feminist praxis evolves through and within multiple movement**s** as well as in organizations, institutions and organizing spaces (Rentschler, 2017; Gay, 2014; Incite!, 2017; Bilge, 2013). As a result, feminist knowledge about organizing, advocating for change, naming how issues manifest and finding ways to remedy harms is also spread through many spaces. As an educational institution, McGill is one such space existing as a site of teaching, learning, activism and research about feminisms and sexual violence. This includes the McGill iMPACTS project, led by Dr. Shaheen Shariff, James McGill Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education. She is the principal Investigator and Director of iMPACTS, funded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) "to unearth, dismantle and prevent sexual violence within universities, and ultimately in society, through evidence-based research that will inform sustainable curriculum and policy change" (Define the Line, n.d.). This seven-year SSHRC Partnership multi-sectoral research project aims to unravel and define complex policy considerations, to break down silos and share sector-specific expertise and knowledge, including policy, media, community organizations, scholars and administrators. From the mid 2010s onwards, iMPACTS and other projects have explored the potential to dismantle rape culture on campus, and professors, institutions and partners have researched policy, education and media-based remedies.

Positioning the Author

My interest in examining sexual violence approaches in the McGill context is connected to my personal and professional history, and being involved peripherally in the iMPACTS project, as well as my contributions to knowledge creation and transfer on evolving feminist and intersectional frameworks. I am employed full-time at Canadian Women's Foundation and have worked there for the last 15 years; and been President of the Conseil des Montréalaises for three

years while pursuing my master's at McGill part-time since 2017. As a critical race feminist researcher and practitioner, I have worked in this field for close to 20 years, supporting multiple feminist community-based organizations, making me an insider to their knowledge, structures and approaches to sexual violence as a practitioner and an activist. I have insider knowledge of the university as a student and worker. As a woman of colour and an immigrant to Canada, I interrogate my assumptions of race, class, sexuality, and other intersecting identities as they arise in my research. I choose to focus on McGill as the local institution where I have worked and studied, as well as a site for contestation and rich discussion.

Because of my experience in this field, I have had the opportunity to hear about organizations working in several parts of Canada, and bring my participation in community discussions, policy round tables, research projects, and casual conversations to this exploration. I am committed to the values of transformative change as I engage with this exploration and uncover challenges, while constantly being aware and wary of responses based only in scientific or empirical knowledge, problematizing the university's framing of actions, policies and processes as being neutral, objective and based in best practice. I recognize that this framing does not mean that the university is ignoring the subject, and I must hold together these different realities. It is in this contested space that encompasses intersectional activist transformation and institutional practice and policy on sexual violence that I believe there is much to be uncovered. Broadly, I am interested in drawing on my knowledge to consider how feminist organizations work with the researchers, policy makers and the administration in the university to address sexual violence and what the impact has been on both.

History and Background of McGill

McGill, an English-language university in Montreal, Quebec, was established more than 200 years ago and is one of the oldest institutions on Canada, with a particular reputation for teaching and research related to medicine and law. It is an important institution for Montreal, Quebec, and Canada; French is the official language of Québec and Canada promotes its bilingual federalism, making language, identity and space all important factors of what makes up this institution. Like many universities in North America, until the early 2000s its Principals and Vice-Chancellors had been white men of high public standing. During my time at McGill as a student, Suzanne Fortier held this role, from 2013 to 2022, the first Francophone and the second woman. Both her appointment and the student body help McGill carefully balance itself as being of Quebec – stating that 20% of its 39,000 students consider French their first language. At the same time, the university must prove its reputation outside of Canada – welcoming international students who make up 30% of the students. McGill fiercely maintains an international standing as an academic institution, and as such is currently ranked 49th university in the world (McDevitt, 2022). To hold its place on the international stage, it actively pursues such rankings; using the QS World University Rankings as an example, the measurements reveal a positivist and neoliberal process highlighting six factors – 1. Academic reputation, 2. Employer reputation, 3. Faculty/student ratio, 4. Citations per faculty, 5. International student ratio and 6. International faculty ratio (QS website, n.d.). None of the measurements consider wellbeing or equity, student satisfaction or community connectedness, teaching methods or access to services, and none refer to safety or any number of other factors that influence the institutional environment. In this respect, McGill presents itself as successful on the academic stage, and ready for investment on the international stage – both functions of logics of neoliberal globalization within education. The action it takes in terms of sexual violence prevention is governed by these same logics of

governmentality, capitalism and neoliberalism, where its primary focus is on policy creation, and adherence to standards and laws to attain student safety rather than on cultural transformation.

Actions to Address Sexual Violence on McGill's Campus

In addition to the iMPACTS project, McGill has implemented several policies and procedures on the last decade. This period is significant because the Quebec National Assembly adopted Bill 15, *An Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions* and passed it into law in December 2017 to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions. This legislation required all post-secondary institutions in Quebec to adopt policies to prevent sexual violence by January 1, 2019. This bill came about largely because of the Canada-wide student-led pressure to end sexual violence, after several high-profile cases on Canadian campuses. Like Quebec, other provinces adopted similar legislation as they also attempted to prioritize the safety of students and survivors in post-secondary institutions. In line with the messaging of the #MeToo movement (Fidelman & Phillips, 2018), students at McGill and other universities condemned the gap between official reports and recorded incidents of sexual violence and what they called an open secret – that some professors routinely engaged in sexual relationships with students, using their position to aggressively pursue some students and protect themselves from legal repercussions.

At McGill, other institutional measures to address sexual violence have been put in place. The Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (OSVRSE) was established in 2016, offering a full range of services for survivors of sexual violence, as a result of an earlier policy against sexual violence. The *Guidelines on Intimate Relationships Between Teaching Staff and Students*, adopted in 2018, were contested by student union Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) because they did not disallow relationships between teaching staff

and students, and though reviewed, no changes were made reflecting calls by students for it to prohibit these relationships, (Campbell, 2018). As part of the iMPACTS project, and in her role as chair of the ad hoc committee on sexual violence, Shariff carried out a climate survey on sexual violence and filed the first report on this survey to Senate in 2018, a process that is supposed to continue with regular updates but has not yet been repeated. The most recent version of the *Policy Against Sexual Violence* was adopted in 2019, even though student Senators at the time continued to protest that it was not sufficiently stringent because it did not prohibit all relationships between professors and students. "It Takes All of Us", a training program on sexual violence, was adopted later in 2019 and became mandatory for all students, staff and faculty. In addition, there are numerous research projects and many forms of education at play in different departments, in course offerings and within the student body.

In spite of these institutional actions, students protested throughout 2018 that measures McGill had put into place were insufficient and accused professors had not been suitably sanctioned or disciplined. Survivors claimed that reporting procedures were unclear and inconsistently applied and that they were unable to receive the support they had demanded. Because of this perception of institutional inertia, an open letter from SSMU was launched in April 2018 calling into question the university's handling of complaints against professors, and this was followed two weeks later by an open letter signed by faculty. Student activism demanding a sexual violence policy goes back to the 1990s at McGill (Notwehr, 2022) and an important archive, the Student News and Protest Archive, now exists as a public record of activism on this and other issues. My Masters research project explores the tension between institutional action and largely feminist and intersectional activism to try to bring forward

multiple voices to consider how intersectional transformation can be centred to end sexual violence.

Contributions and Interventions from Feminist Organizing

My research examining these relationships centres on the university because education of all forms constructs, connects to, justifies and replicates power structures within wider society and the state, and within the frameworks I choose, this power structure is named as white heteropatriarchy (Ahmed, 2018). Ostensibly an institution established to provide a public good, McGill operates like a corporation, showing neoliberal mechanisms such as protectionism, branding, consumeristic relationships and for-profit pursuits (Slaughter and Rhodes, 2004). It further replicates the power structures of the wider settler colonial system funded at least in part by the state and has been named as a training ground steeped in white privilege and institutional racism (Siddiqui, 2010). Equally, it is a site of learning for young feminist activists, through both course content and opportunities for increasing connectivity with community organizations (Naples, 2002), either through community work experience and internships or in projects run by researchers, professors and departments engaged in community organizing. Addressing sexual violence on campus has been and continues to be a matter of policy, programming, organizing and activism within McGill University (Rentschler et al., in Bergeron et al., 2019). Community organizations continue to provide space for survivors and allies to develop, share and amplify each wave of activism that protests unacceptable levels sexual violence, and these activists continue to form and shape emerging movements and feminist approaches on how to address this.

In the last decade, several books published have outlined research and potential solutions related to sexual violence on campus (Crocker et al., 2020; Fileborn & Loney-Howes, 2019; E.

Quinlan et al., 2017), and a number of reports on federal and provincial policies and frameworks; there is considerable knowledge being developed that can be drawn upon. Much of this knowledge emerges from feminist praxis, and from organizations with overtly feminist roots. Feminist community organizations working within the university context, and particularly at McGill, are usually regional or national organizations that may or may not offer front-line services but have sufficient capacity to engage in policy and advocacy. They offer in-kind staff to consult on policies, support research projects like iMPACTS, join committees and dedicate resources to strengthening communities. Not all of them are large, but they all have a particular focus on gender-based violence intervention and prevention. It is rare for small grassroots organizations to have the capacity to dedicate resources to these projects. Organizations involved in national and provincial projects to end gender-based violence often start from shared feminist values to develop concerted action, and here I refer to collaborations like Courage to Act (couragetoact.ca), the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-based Violence (nationalactionplan.ca) and the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability (femicideincanada.ca). Co-creating and exchanging knowledge as a feminist praxis is a form of collectivization central to how many organizations work.

Most feminist community organizations are funded through a mix of federal, provincial, municipal and private donations and some have service contracts with governments to provide front-line and emergency services for gender-based violence. These include Sexual Assault Centres, service agencies sharing feminist values focused on individual and group support, services, advocacy and activism related to sexual violence, which in Quebec come under a provincial association - the RQCALACS. Shelters offer housing, legal advocacy, immigration support, psycho-social family care and counselling (Maki, 2019), and include YWCA's and

provincial and national shelter associations like Women's Shelters Canada. Knowledge creation and advocacy also emerges from community-based education and prevention centres like the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence (METRAC) in Toronto and feminist organizations dedicated to law reform and public legal education like West Coast Leaf in Vancouver. There are community-strengthening organizations that support social justice goals by offering training, such as The Centre for Community Organizations in Montreal and the Ontario Nonprofit Network in Ontario. Larger groups like YWCA Canada or RQCALACS are associations, mandated by their membership to work on specific projects with pre-approved policy positions. Other organizations are not governed by a membership structure and their work may be directed by community consultation. In this research, I refer to national and regional feminist community organizations and associations, and front-line services that I am familiar with through my professional and volunteer engagements exploring how they contribute within McGill to ending sexual violence on campus, and how this is perceived.

Within the context of Montreal and Quebec, Quebec's largest and most recognized feminist rights organization is the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) founded in 1966, a contemporary of the shelter and sexual violence organizations. These organizations formed a significant movement, empowering women to end the violence they faced, breaking taboos and stigmatization and opposing the conservative power of the Catholic Church. Understanding these groups within Quebec requires an appreciation of the sovereigntist politics that emerged in force in the 1950s. Quebec sovereignty as a movement caused a recasting of Quebec society around the values of secularization and nationalism, that was led by mostly white men and some notable white women whose ancestry dated back to the first colonizers of this region of North America (*québecois* and *québecoises de souche*). They rejected domination caused by conquest by British

colonial powers and Canadian federalism, culminating in the specific localized historic shift, known as the Quiet Revolution starting in 1960. Ousting the Catholic Church's power over Quebec morals, the recognition of women's rights was an important aspect of this movement. Quebec feminism defended reproductive bodily autonomy largely framed within liberal understandings of equality, such as access to contraception and abortion, as well as employment and property rights. Thus, secularism and feminism are imbricated in the nationalist or sovereigntist alliances in Quebec.

While I was in the process of doing this work, in the summer of 2020, demonstrations and protests broke out in Quebec, community focused more than student led. Quebec's #MoiAussi movement was re-animated with a series of online anonymous posts and websites denouncing sexual violence in music, arts and media (Pineda & Boutros, 2020). After the brutal murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the ensuing protests (Feith, 2020), Black Lives Matter was painted in huge letters on the asphalt of Ste Catherine Street in downtown Montreal in June 2020 and then quietly removed by city workers in October. Together, Black Lives Matter, anti-fascist activists and intersectional feminist leaders in the city revitalized the anti-carceral movement, under the Defund / Désinvestir platform. These spaces are all vectors for informal knowledge production on the intersections of violence whereby activists strive to inform and influence Montreal and its institutions and services. While I am focusing on McGill's interactions with feminist community organizations, it should be noted that this experience of broad anti-racist and anti-violence social protest are often only possible beyond the "non-profit industrial complex" (A. Smith, 2017) and therefore I remain attentive to context and happenings as well as activism, movements and organizing. My research explores tensions experienced by community workers and advocates in feminist community organizations as they interact with

different parts of McGill university, and the graduate students and faculty also supporting shared goals to end rape culture. As stated, there are many forms of feminist action, and I am interested in taking these into account as I examine McGill's action on sexual violence, the policies and procedures, prevention activities, reports and campus survey data. In my research project, I aim to identify possible gaps, omissions or erasures within knowledge creation and feminist action with an intersectional lens. I am deeply interested in how feminist community organizations and universities interact to tackle sexual violence on campus, what both groups contribute to what end (Shragge, 2013), as well as what form the knowledge creation takes and how it is mobilized (Choudry, 2015).

It is stressful to intervene and prevent sexual violence, and it is well documented that working in this sector brings with it vicarious trauma (Rossiter et al., 2020). Much of my research took place after March 2020, the date of the start of multiple health measures, lockdowns, curfews and protests that swept through Quebec and the world at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had disproportionate effects on racialized as well as gendered groups, with data indicating that COVID-19 cases were 1.5 to 5 times higher among racialized versus non-racialized populations (Etowa et al., 2021). Khanlou et al. (2021) state that racialized women are experiencing a: "2020 Syndemic: a convergence of COVID-19, GBV (gender-based violence), and racism pandemics, placing their wellbeing at a disproportionate risk" (p.1). This is the context in which I spoke to anti-violence BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ people working in communities as advocates, researchers and activists. Because of the disproportionately negative impacts of violence on BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ communities, I am interested in exploring how campus approaches consider this inequity. Sara Ahmed's discussion of how pressure and oppression act on women, and especially Black women and women of

colour (BIWOC) and 2SLGBTQ+ people, to restrain and restrict them (2017, p. 50), is crucial as I examine how framing and positionality affect McGill's actions and the ways feminist community organizations exist in the campus space. I am interested to uncover what is happening within McGill, community feminist organizations and activists' circles to see what more there is unsaid, unheard or unacknowledged.

In the following chapters, I outline the frameworks I used and how they apply to Canada, the academy and McGill. Then I review recent literature in the last decade related to studies in North America, Canada and Quebec on sexual violence, including a brief discussion on feminism in Quebec specifically. I describe next the interviewing and critical race methodology that informed my conversations with graduate students, faculty and community workers tacking sexual violence at McGill, and how I used constant comparison to analyze these one-on-one interviews. In the final chapters, I present my findings, outlining the contradictions between explicit goals to tackle sexual violence and practices that entrench oppression and protect white supremacist power as well as considering sites of resistance that maintain their own troubling power dynamics. Finally, I discuss the findings in light of the existing work I reviewed, and point the way to future work, continuing the process for unlearning white supremacy so as to make some inroads into ending multiple forms of gendered and racist violence.

Chapter 2 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

I am interested in the theory and praxis created within and among feminist community efforts to end sexual violence on campus and how this is received within McGill University. I approach this with a critical inquiry position as I am concerned with the tensions, challenges and contradictions that arise within movements and organizing relationships, as well as the potential for transformative ways of working together that name and address underlying oppressions in such a way that both resistance and culture change can take place. My work is informed by anti-racist, postcolonial critical feminist theory.

In this chapter, I begin with an examination of the feminist engagement with sexual violence, continuing to explore commonly used theories of rape, arguing that while they are important, like many theories and praxis that emerged in second wave feminism, they leave out lived experiences of race, sexuality, class, and disability, missing or creating important risk factors and barriers. I explore the concept of rape culture, how it has been used, outlining some of the tensions with the term and within feminisms about the term. This is why I turn to critical theories of race and intersectionality, as well as the insights of postcolonial theory. I examine intersectionality as the main theoretical framework that is used within activist circles I investigate. Tracing some of the tenets of critical theories of race, as an important means of understanding structural oppression, I explore the work of Indigenous scholars who connect sexual violence to colonialism, showing its manifestations at both a structural level as well as an intimate, personal scale. Finally, I review power and knowledge creation in the academy, creating a bridge to feminist organizing inside/outside the academy. In this section, I analyze institutional power as well as the university as an agent of violence within considerations of different approaches to ending sexual violence.

Feminist Framing for Rape / Activists Commitment to Ending Rape / Sexual Violence

Feminist theories connect sexual violence to power and control and characterize male aggression or the threat of aggression as the will to dominate or a system of domination (Brownmiller, 1975; Katz, 2019; Combahee River Collective, 1977; Johnson and Dawson, 2011; the Duluth Model, n.d.; Crenshaw, 1991); gendered roles of passivity and aggressive pursuit are other factors, or put another way, "Man proposes, woman disposes" (MacKinnon, 1989, p.174; Gotell, 2018; Santana et al., 2006). Many societal perceptions of sexual violence are influenced by underlying rape myths, rape scripts and rape culture, meaning that rape is commonly only considered as such if it includes violent perpetration, usually by a stranger, on a woman who is deemed virtuous, sane, sober and believable. These commonsense rape stereotypes also affect societal understanding of sexual harassment and other manifestations of gender-based violence, governed as they are by sexual and gender stereotypes that are held by white, heterosexual, patriarchal, capitalist and imperial societal structures. These need to be uncovered and understood, not only in the context of how feminist and intersectional theory attempts to overturn oversimplified explanations of this nonconsensual act, but also in how they can interfere with understanding victims and survivors, in such a way that, for example, only white middle class 'respectable' women are seen as victims.

Victimization is also frequently understood through numbers of those affected. A Statistics Canada 2014 report states "A higher risk of sexual assault was noted among those who were women, young, Aboriginal, single, and homosexual or bisexual" (p. 3). Holly Johnson and Myrna Dawson explain additional vulnerabilities to sexual violence for "those whose skin colour, accent, religion and other visible attributes mark them as other" (2011, p. 98). This higher risk of sexual assault is associated with levels of power and social standing and communities that

have historically been "othered" or marginalized. Within what is typically understood as feminism, these facts about violence have too often been deemed peripheral in organizations led by white, middle-class, able-bodied women. My intentional broad framing of violence also makes room for experiences that are overlooked or considered not to be sexual violence, even though they are gendered or gender-based violence (Dunn, Bailey & Msosa, 2020 p. 122). These include racialized comments, homophobic and transphobic slurs, and attitudes that reveal anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, because they are connected to the framing of the university within the settler colonial state and sexual violence within white supremacy.

Activists on and off campus have chosen to label conditions that lead to the risk of sexual violence on campus as "rape culture" (Vemuri & Garcia, 2017), a term connected to second-wave radical feminists and particularly Susan Brownmiller (1975), who theorized that women's subordination in society is deeply connected to violence, because male power is predicated on fear - all women fear all men because of the threat of rape. Catherine MacKinnon (1989) discusses rape in the context of heterosexual intercourse questioning if any sex can be consensual within patriarchy because women's subordinate position makes all sexual relations coercive acts. She states that: "The law of rape presents consent as free exercise of sexual choice under conditions of equality of power without exposing the underlying structure of constraint and disparity." (p. 175). In this theory, since all women are subordinate to all men, all forms of sexual violence are as much sex as they are violence. She describes a state of compulsory heterosexuality that names both white and male supremacy as the context and conditions that make rape not only possible, but inevitable. She represents legal systems as regulating rape; they do not prohibit it (p. 179), explaining that for men, these differentiate rape from sex (p. 174). This is important when it comes to policies and procedures, also largely developed within the

neoliberal state structures that MacKinnon critiques. Rape is a weapon used to control insubordination and legal remedies do not prohibit but regulate it.

The policies and procedures to tackle sexual violence at McGill emerge in second wave feminism (Law, 2020), offering legal structures that regulate it for who are most deserving of protection, which within heteropatriarchal white supremacy are able-bodied, sane, straight, virtuous and so forth. These underpinnings are frequently brought into question in contemporary feminist spaces that have taken up intersectional approaches. Community organizations and grassroots activists have mobilized critical race theory and intersectionality to render a version of rape culture that accounts for the oppressions of a settler colonial state, but this is rarely present in common understandings of what rape culture encompasses (Kessel, 2022). Rape culture as a term has been used to draw attention to how sexual violence is normalized and, at times, celebrated in all forms of media – films, music, and jokes. It is so much a part of our cultural imagery that it seems that our society condones it, but this often misses the critical race framing, ignoring the connection of rape to empire building and invisibilizing why some bodies are deemed more "rapeable" than others (Loney-Howes, 2019). Depending on how rape culture is explained, it may overlook different aspects of rape myths – for example, that some women are considered so promiscuous that they cannot be victimized or raped, and that aggressors are treated more harshly if they are Black, Indigenous, or working class. Rape culture is useful as a term in that it explains the normalization of sexual violence, and the ways stereotypes about respectability permeate cultures, but it only becomes applicable to my analysis when its explanations clearly articulate analyses grounded in intersectionality, as I will explore in the next section.

Considering Rape Culture

Rape culture has been considered a helpful lens and, in this section, I analyze some of the complexities and dichotomies within feminisms around this term to open the way to a more robust engagement with the way race works within the context of sexual violence. Rape culture, with its roots in second wave feminism, describes the ways that mainstream culture normalizes sexual violence. However, this paradigm betrays an implicitly liberal framing, unless there is an explicit effort to outline the ways that rape culture also sustains heteronormativity and white supremacy. As I suggest below by analyzing several models – the Rape Culture Triangle, young women's appropriation of the term and the Black Women's Triangulation of Rape, it can encompass underpinnings of race, class and sexuality as well as gender if these are made explicit in its conception and contextual reality.

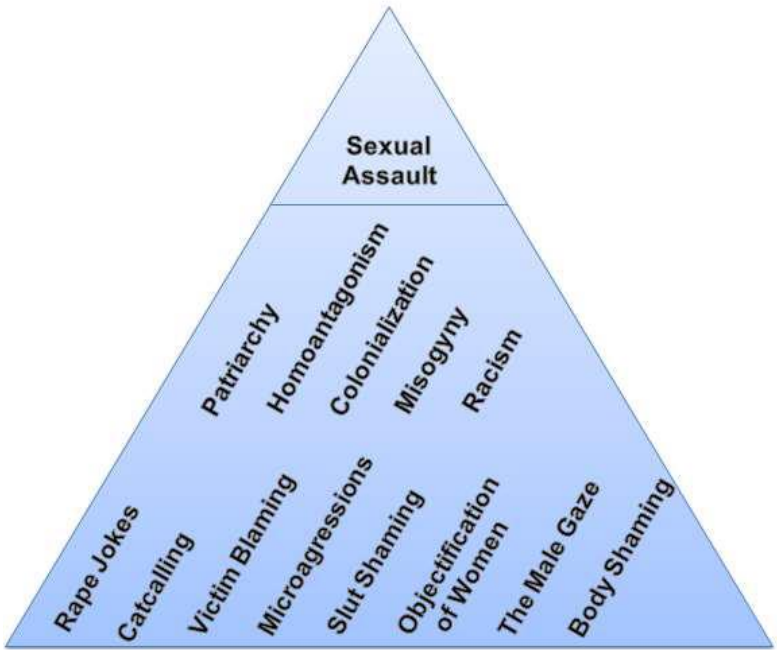
a. White liberal feminist framings

Much of the current outlining of sexual violence as a phenomenon on campuses uses the term rape culture, including McGill's iMPACTS project. Student activists continue to refer to rape culture, including reports from the Our Turn team (SSMU, 2017). Recent publications problematize it more than previously which I will touch on shortly (E. Quinlan et al., 2017; Crocker et al., 2020).

In 2016, the Houses of Parliament Standing Committee on the Status of Women released a report on violence against women and girls, *Taking Action to End Violence against young women and girls in Canada*, containing an illustration of the "Rape Culture Pyramid" and statements from expert witnesses, Kenya Rogers and Paloma Ponti, representatives from the Anti-Violence Project of the University of Victoria Students' Society. They explain the rape

culture pyramid as “a visual way of looking at the ways in which sexualized violence is upheld in our society” (p. 11). The words “floating through the triangle are the things that uphold spaces where sexualized violence can happen. In the middle of the triangle, [the words represent] some of those systemic and root causes we're talking about. This can be gender expectations, race, class, and sexism” (p. 11). Federal and provincial government policy documents and reports include rape culture as a term, and often in ways that are designated by largely white institutional feminist bodies. Policies and reports reproduce the term without problematizing its hegemony, probably because this is easiest for them to do, in terms of resources and capacity, but possibly also because of the tendency to avoid overt conversation on racism and racialization by majority white groups (Almeida and Lopez, 2021; Gorski and Erakat, 2019).

Figure 1. Rape Culture Triangle From the Government of Canada Standing Committee on the Status of Women report *Taking Action to End Violence against young women and girls in Canada* (2017, p. 12)



Source: Adapted from the On-Campus Sexual Assault Centre at the University of Victoria, *Anti-Violence Rape Project – "Rape Culture Pyramid,"* 21 October 2016.

Most feminist activists and scholars who use the term agree that it describes a collection of actions, attitudes and processes that make sexual violence seem insignificant (It's just a joke! / It's a compliment. / Don't take it so seriously!), so banal as to not warrant special attention. In other words, rape culture is present when misogyny is normalized within a community (Jiwani & Berman, 2002; Wolfe & Chiodo, 2008). Rape culture takes the attention away from the individual perpetrators or victims to focus on the societal conditions under which sexual violence flourishes, highlighting that it is connected to many other utilizations of power and control exerted over women. That we are swimming in a culture based on rape also helps explain the lack of action to address sexual violence as a systemic issue. Even though MacKinnon (1989) and other theorists mention race, class and disability, in practice, these are frequently glossed over within the overwhelming centring of gender in the discourse.

b. Young women

Young women have picked up and used the term rape culture in the last decade particularly in online spaces, including within it a new and potentially fresh stream of feminist understanding. Theorizing on rape culture is useful for young women educating each other about feminism as well as transferring some of those learnings into online spaces. As Carrie Rentschler notes: "For a recent generation of young activists, rape culture is being defined across a variety of online sites" (2014, p. 67). These sites and the definitions represent a space for informal and transformative learning about feminism outside any classroom or academic structure. Rentschler shows how activists and feminist community organizations are taking up the term, combining embodied knowledge and feminist scholarship in a way that is especially rich in context for activist aims. She states, "Today feminist bloggers utilize social media in order to respond to

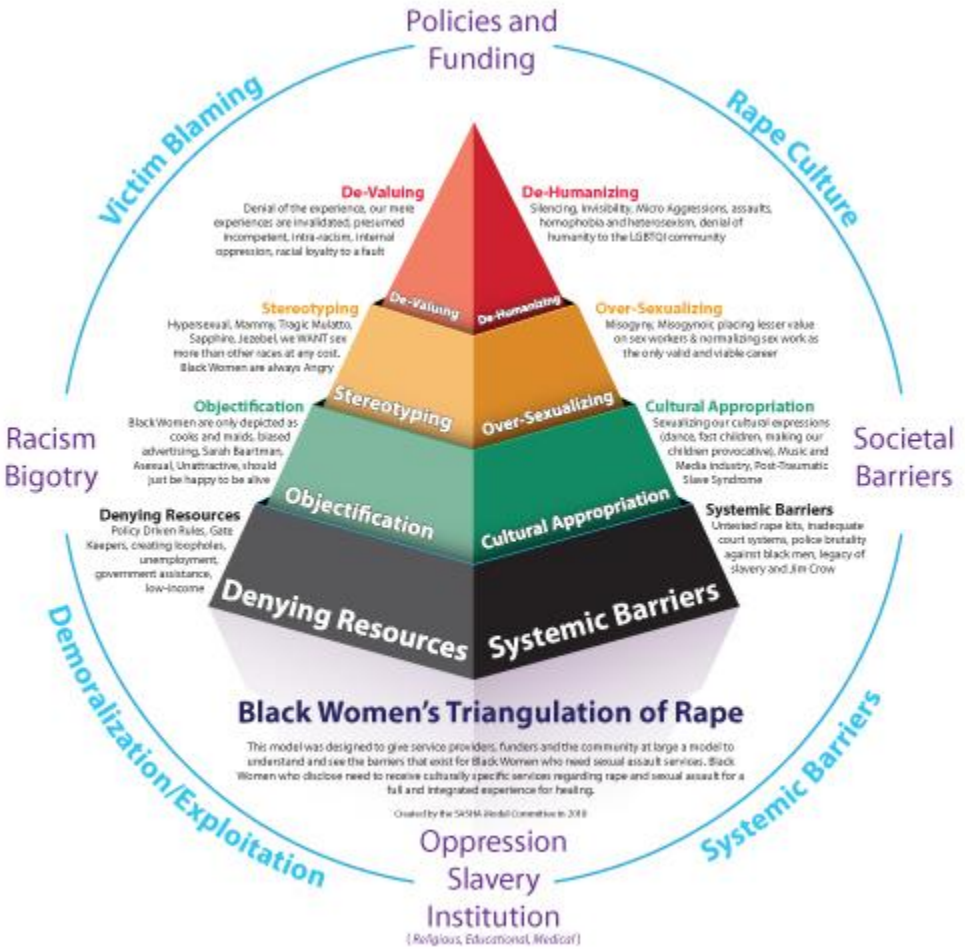
rape culture and hold accountable those responsible for its practices when mainstream news media, police and school authorities do not" (ibid). She shows how young feminists use various channels to address accountability in ways that police-reporting and internal human resources practices, especially in campuses, have failed to do. For these young women, an important feature of rape culture is that it explains not only why women are abused, but also the lack of action to address it. Ayesha Vemuri and Chloe Garcia (2017) review young women's varied use of rape culture discourse in Youtube videos and note in their conclusions that "Discussions of intersectionality were largely absent from our sample, although many interviewees were people of color" (p. 36). For young women, exploring rape culture in informal ways is an opportunity to call into question existing structures and offer education on the nature of sexual violence. However, there are still gaps in understanding racialization and other intersecting identities in how these young women are mobilizing the term rape culture.

c. Critical race explorations

Black activist Kalimah Johnson is founder of the Sexual Assault Services for Holistic Healing and Awareness (SASHA Center), a community space specifically for African American survivors in Detroit and she developed the Black Women's Triangulation of Rape in 2018, a public education tool that identifies many of the root causes of rape culture in critical race and intersectional scholarship. This model represents racially embodied knowledge that is especially rich in social justice grassroots considerations. It is an example of how critical race and intersectionality can frame gender-based violence, yielding a more nuanced understanding of how interlocking oppressions influence how that issue is addressed – personally, politically, socially, economically, psychologically, spiritually, and psychically. This version of rape culture involves misogynoir, a term coined by Moya Bailey in 2010, and developed to describe "the

uniquely co-constitutive racialized and sexist violence that befalls Black women as a result of their simultaneous and interlocking oppression at the intersection of racial and gender marginalization." (2021, p. 1). Johnson's explicit outlining of how racialization and anti-Black racism permeate the experiences of Black women has not always been included within feminist explorations of rape culture. This model goes further than any of those previously mentioned in its conception and theorizing to introduce systemic issues in a three-dimensional context that reflects the complexity of the ways that sexual violence affects Black women and their communities.

Figure 2. The SASHA Model: Black Women's Triangulation of Rape



Source: Johnson, Kalimah. 2018. The SASHA Model: Black Women's Triangulation of Rape. PDF. SASHA Center-Model Committee, Detroit. August 29, 2018. Facebook SASHA Center Page. www.sashacenter.org

In comparing the two figures, it could be argued that the Rape Culture Triangle (Figure 1) produced by university students in 2016, comes historically or theoretically earlier in the process of unpacking and understanding the meanings and impacts of sexual violence, while the other, Black Women's Triangulation of Rape from 2018, reflects a later comprehension of deeply intersectional understanding of the conditions under which Black women experience sexual violence. The fact is, they are both emerging in the same period, both conceptualized and outlined in the #MeToo era, and while they are deeply reflective of the communities and lived experiences of those who were producing knowledge in these activists and interventionist contexts, one invisibilizes unique experiences of rape connected to anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

As mentioned, rape culture emerges from second wave feminism, that has been dominated by white conceptions of gender and race, as well as the respectability politics of middle-class women – or as Tuulia Law (2020) names them: "earlier feminist theories otherwise problematized in contemporary feminism" (p. 264). Law carefully outlines the limitations of rape as it was conceptualized first by Brownmiller (1975) and then differently by MacKinnon (1989) and finally by Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth (1993) when they used the term rape culture to explain "a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women" (quoted by Law 2020, p. 267). For Law, the term holds "to the power of feminist orthodoxy, this operationalizing retains a heterosexual, cisgendered focus and a framing of sexual assault as something men do to women" (p. 267). Rape culture then, as a term, maintains a powerful grip in discourse both because of and in spite of its heteronormative and

white feminist conceptions of sexual violence. The different attempts to re-cast unhelpful generalizing within the term, to my mind, are essential to deal with any erasures. At the same time, there can be a trap in being concerned with the term *rape culture* over the substance of the sexual violence pervasiveness and its operationalization to exert dominance not just through gender, but also through race and class. Using rape culture then demands that the point of reference is not specific individualized violence and how this permeates campus culture, but how structures of power continue to be used within academic institutions, to exert dominance and maintain control over those deemed as "other". Scholars who describe sexual violence with an intersectional or race critical frame highlight regional and national histories of colonization, where sexual violence has been and is still used as a tool of repression, possession, control and erasure – of Indigenous women, of slaves, of Black women, of women of colour, and of working-class women. Anne McClintock outlines these intersections in her 1995 book *Imperial Leather*, where she explores how power is exerted through this violence, and power is maintained through fear, erasure and denigration.

Taken together, these different viewpoints reveal, in my opinion, the importance of a continued reflection on what race critical and intersectional analyses bring to understandings of rape culture specifically and how to seek out the areas where terms used fail to account for more expansive perspectives. I am interested in probing this in my research to consider the tensions within feminist community organizations and on campus, among those that attend to the contested nature of second wave feminism while also using terms like rape culture.

Critical Race and Intersectional Frameworks for Sexual Violence

By using race and intersectionality, I am able to expand and illuminate sexual violence, focusing on contemporary thinking that takes up multiple forms of analysis, including that of

Black-feminist scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Malinda Smith and Robyn Maynard, as well as critical postcolonial feminists such as Shereen Razack, Sara Ahmed and Sunera Thobani. To complexify insights into sexual violence as a tool for colonial / imperial and patriarchal power against Indigenous women, Ruana Kuokkanen and Sarah Deer are essential to consider. Among race critical theories, CRT theorists focus on racism within society often invisible to a white majority in the overwhelmingly white culture that produces privilege and respectability for those deemed to be within whiteness and oppression and dis-ease for those marked as "other" (Gillborn, 2015). Grounded in both civil rights scholarship and activism largely in North American contexts, this theory rises out of praxis and is not created by and for the academy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), making it especially useful in my research on activism and community organizing to end sexual violence. In critical race analysis, it is important to focus on the social construction of race as well as that of white-ness, while recognizing that they do not always align with racialization characteristics (Zamudio et al., 2011). Further, different categories of racialization are constructed and upheld by centuries of colonialism, imperialism, global capitalism, and contemporary immigration processes (Thobani, 2007). Current understandings of anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Black racism in Canada are informed by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and Robyn Maynard, while intersectionality emerges from theorizing led by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who developed and utilized the term to account for dual subordinations – race and gender. Crenshaw described the use of intersectionality briefly in an interview in 2017 at Columbia Law School as follows: "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects". Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge offer this description: "As an analytical tool, intersectionality views categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, ability, ethnicity and age – among others - as

interrelated and mutually shaping one another." (2021, p. 2). For critical theories of race, the technologies and mechanisms of othering, white supremacy, and violence based in racism are central to creating and upholding settler colonialism in states like Canada (Goldberg, 2002; Razack, 2007), and combine when considering these factors within sexual violence.

Intersectionality offers the structure in which to examine class / gender / race, critical race foregrounds deep exploration of the effects of racialization through settler colonial structures and white supremacy. They come together in my examination of McGill, in the context of its role within a state structure with settler colonial aims, considering how the processes to address or perhaps more specifically govern sexual violence name, tackle, and account for these oppressions.

a. Racialization in the academy

Race scholars (Razack, Smith, M, & Thobani, 2010; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) note that racialized communities within the settler colonial state are oppressed and controlled in ways that ultimately prop up the legitimacy of the founding of this nation that is called "Canada." The university, as an institutionalized structure of power that participates in knowledge creation, arguably exists to continue to propagate knowledge in service to this same settler colonial project (Zamudio et al., 2011). The institution exerts power based in historic and present inequity that enacts multiple levels of discrimination and surveillance on Black students and scholars throughout the institution, as students, as teachers, and as researchers. As Yumna Siddiqi points out, universities have a "tendency to maintain the status quo of white privilege in an unquestioned way" (2010, p. 87). The lack of questioning about white supremacy situates BIPOC faculty and students as questioners and disrupters in the academy (Douglas, 2012), if they choose to take on this role, in a context where they experience racial denial and erasure by

white feminists (hooks, 1994). BIPOC faculty are expected to represent, to stand up for their communities (Howard, 2019), or to adopt and espouse critical theory in their scholarship. In both cases, they face additional burdens white colleagues do not, and often violence, and this extends through their academic endeavours, activism, community organizing and beyond. For too many BIPOC students and faculty facing constant refusal, silence and invisibilization are a threat to their wellbeing and existence (Douglas, 2012). The Canadian Race Relations Foundation's 2000 report *Unequal Access* explains that school completion and university graduation differ from one racialized group to another. For example, in Canada and the US, Asians have an overall higher education level compared to non-racialized groups. Black students have above-average high school completion rates but below-average university completion rates (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2000, p. 10 quoted by Siddiqi, 2010, p.84).

Gendered & racist violence in university & beyond

Andrea Smith (2016) describes the pillars of white supremacy as being Genocide, Slavery and Orientalism – and they are enacted through colonialism, capitalism and war – all intertwined realities that often happen together, implicating Black, Indigenous and racialized communities. Reading sexual violence as structural violence connected to the technologies of oppression implemented by the state against those who are othered is a powerful tool, casting rape and assault within the overall genocide of Indigenous peoples. Solidarity and inclusion around the effects and the responses to sexual violence are not easy to form unless this understanding of its roots is more commonly shared and accepted.

a. Anti-Black racism

In the toxic mix of racism and sexual violence, it is appropriate to compare the white supremacist atmosphere in higher education across institutions. In her memoir, *they said this would be fun*, Eternity Martis (2020), discusses how hard it was to stay at the university she attended amid the wall-to-wall sexist racism she experienced. She describes that: "Men treated me with a mix of hypersexuality and animalistic aggression, pushing me around like I was less than a woman, less than human." (p. 118). In her memoir, she portrays her life as a Black and racialized cis-female student at university, experiencing not only higher levels of sexual assault, but also racialized violence of all kinds, surveillance, and decreased access to justice, conditions of life of Black women in Canada that Robyn Maynard (2017) outlines very clearly: "Black women and gender-oppressed people are not only over-policed, but are also enormously under-protected." (p. 153). In this, Maynard is referring to policing and legal measures, additionally it is certainly true in that services offered for victims of sexual violence often fail Black victims and survivors.

Anti-Blackness in race analysis is connected to the history and ongoing global effects of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and delineates that the terms of slavery that endorsed the dehumanization of Black persons are still present. Saidiya Hartman describes this as the "afterlife of slavery" a term she coined in 2008, and Maynard gives a historical analysis of this in Canada, detailing enslavement, segregation and violent organized white nationalism, including membership of Ku Klux Klan of up to 25,000 Canadians in several provinces (2017, p. 42). For Black women, Maynard demonstrates that fallacious representations of sexual depravity and promiscuousness were and are used to justify rape, and there has been little legal recourse for Black women; until recently the white male perpetrators of rape were rarely sanctioned, while

Black women were harmed by legal inaction (p. 45). This is especially important in the later sections of this paper, when I am concerned with anti-Black racism within rape myths, or policies and procedures on campus that ignore or worse propagate anti-Blackness. Malinda Smith (2010) provides a detailed exploration as a critical race feminist, of how women of colour, especially Black women, are controlled as workers within the university. She uses Foucault's theory of governmentality to describe how "neoliberal orthodoxy and the corporatization of the academy have reinforced the divide, with gender equity increasingly pitted against "diversity"" (p. 39). She recounts her embodied experience working with diversity policies within Canadian universities that created conditions privileging white women's entrance and acceptance into the academy, at the expense of Black, Indigenous, and racialized others, or what she names as "other Others". Smith focuses her analysis largely on equity measures for faculty, outlining how narrow white framing of feminism keeps understanding and knowledge of and by Black and racialized women out of the academy. She characterizes diversity attempts that have this effect of putting white women ahead of other Others as "erasing practices and forms of symbolic violence" (2010, p. 54). Her conclusions about the effects of power and the institutional weight brought to bear on women of colour in the academy are important when looking at sexual violence in the McGill context.

The experiences and scholarship of race critical theorists relating to equity work is relevant to sexual violence because policies to address sexual harassment are often undertaken by the same internal departments that enact diversity policies. At McGill, the sexual violence policy is created and managed under the auspices of the Associate Provost, Equity and Academic Policies, the same office that deals with racism and harassment based on sexual orientation or disability, an office dedicated to policymaking. Whether the subject is equity or sexual violence,

critical race feminists have explored the pitfalls for Black women for decades of increased policy-ing. Maynard (2017) provides analysis on how education institutions extend the governmentality of the state in the ways they try to control and police constituents – especially when the constituents are Black - that is important when considering McGill and the extent to which it is engaged in the "neoliberal orthodoxy" that Malinda Smith (2010) names. Without the critical race framing, sexual violence prevention and intervention risk entirely missing the needs of Black women and racialized women, as described by Crenshaw in her early field work on domestic violence and rape crisis supports in Los Angeles:

> "The fact that minority women suffer from the effects of multiple subordination, coupled with institutional expectations based on inappropriate non intersectional contexts, shapes and ultimately limits the opportunities for meaningful intervention on their behalf." (1991, p. 1251)

Not much seems to have changed in the ensuing years, as this statement could be written here and now regarding many feminist community organizations offering services and supports to survivors.

b. Asian Racialization

Gendered racism also includes processes of racialization for people originating from regions of Asia mostly colonized by Europeans from England and France. Race critical theories built on the insights offered by postcolonial theorist Edward Said under the term "Orientalism" (1978). Orientalism names romanticization and exoticist stereotypes about Asian and Arab peoples and cultures that were put in place by colonial administrators. His insights helped identify different but related technologies of the state that explain the logics of labour introduced

and exploited in Western Europe from former colonies in North Africa, the Indian sub-continent, and other parts of Asia, highlighting simplistic, stereotyped, and demeaning conceptions of Arab and Asian cultures generally held by Western scholars. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these conceptions came to the fore in the significant increase in racism towards Chinese or other East Asian-appearing residents and citizens in former imperial states like UK and France and in settler colonial states like the US and Canada (Li & Nicholson, 2021). This anti-Asian sentiment sparked by scapegoating and racial profiling representing the corona virus as originating from China led to fatal shootings in an Asian massage parlour in Atlanta (Nguyen, 2021), gender-based violence that was a dangerous combination of racism, xenophobia, and whorephobia.

In Canada, some members of these differently racialized groups are associated with hard work and academic excellence that then justifies their increased wealth and social status when compared with a white majority (Day, 2016). By adopting respectability as a value, acquiring education and wealth, they provisionally access middle class status and are considered "model minorities", as long as they maintain the racial status quo and uphold Canada's self-professed and fiercely defended multiculturalism (Razack, 1995). In fact, they are as likely to encounter racism because of this success (Day, 2016), in a common pattern of racial scapegoating. Other communities may not be considered model minorities, because of changing technologies concerned with globalization and relations between nation states, usually based on imperialism, capitalism and shifting colonialist perspectives (Thobani, 2007), leading to Muslims facing increasing levels of Islamophobia. Islamophobia has long been present in Canada and Razack presents multiple manifestations of this violence in her 2010 examination of how women of colour, particularly Muslim women, are policed and controlled. Razack argues that anyone not of European descent is not understood as sharing the humanity attached to being European, and

therefore is seen as being undeserving of the laws or protections that they might expect to benefit from. While she is specifically referring to the "war on terror" in post 9/11 global context, she describes different communities – many of them migrant – but also citizens in their own country – "denied the right to have rights" (p. 7). In 2021, in London Ontario, the vehicle attack that killed the Afzaal family is one of the most extreme examples of this racist and gendered violence (Tobah, 2021), and although it is the worst example, this is not an isolated attack.

In Quebec and elsewhere, Islamophobia manifests in a particularly virulent form against women who choose to wear the hijab or niqab. Muslim women experience frequent violence through attacks on their clothing and bodies, a form of gendered and racialized violence that is overlooked and ignored in many institutions, because of orientalist assumptions about Muslim women (Jiwani, 2010). This is significant in my examination of sexual violence in the McGill context with a critical race frame, as there is legislation in Quebec that effectively extends protection to Quebec culture with a decided Orientalist framing (Larochelle, 2020). Bill 21, *An Act respecting the laicity of the state*, prohibits government workers from wearing religious symbols, including Muslim head coverings, and is understood by the government and some feminists in Quebec as "saving" Muslim women from violent patriarchy and supposed shared cultural values from the influence of foreign customs and traditions, as I explore more fully in the literature review.

c. Anti-Indigenous Racism

Sexual violence is used against women who fall outside the realm of whiteness according to race critical theorists, and as a tool for colonization and oppression. In Canada, the relentlessness of this violence is recorded in the report on the inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit people, *Reclaiming Power and Place*. This report was

published in 2019 with 231 Calls for Justice, and clearly states that acts of gender-based violence and oppression carried out against Indigenous women in Canada are a form of genocide (p. 5). This is a very specific form of sexual violence that harms Indigenous women, that Rauna Kuokkanen (2008) explains as playing out in the following ways in institutions:

> "Oppression of women is systemic in society and it is manifested in multiple ways at multiple individualized and institutionalized levels. Direct physical and sexual violence are the most severe manifestations of this oppression, which cannot be fully understood if not analyzed as part of the larger framework and ideologies of oppression". (p. 221)

Kuokkanen is making the case to connect sexual violence to the overarching colonial structures that deliberately control Indigenous women's lives. In Canada, this would include the Indian Act, the legacy of Residential Schools, the actions of the RCMP, child protection services' policies, and the judicial system, and everyday encounters with white and racialized settlers. This includes settler women who defend their moral, social and racial purity through othering Indigenous women, and men who abuse and rape these othered subjects (Razack, 1995). The education system is one institutionalized level that Kuokkanen is referring to. There is a necessary relation between these frameworks that must be highlighted while the differences between them bring clarity to my overall survey of how feminist organizations collaborate with McGill.

Feminist groups centering the margins

As noted earlier, I acknowledge how intersectionality emerges from the work of critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and appreciate the way that Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2020, p. 37) track its historical arc to critical inquiry. They acknowledge its status as a highly influential analysis as well as its variability as a developmental and emerging

framework. The term is very frequently used by feminists and social justice activists to explain that they are "working at the intersections" of race / class / gender (p. 42), and I am concerned with their positioning of intersectionality as both an approach in praxis, as in a way of undertaking action and activism, and an analytical technology. Yet as Nancy Naples explains in her 2009 essay, the methodology by which it is applied is often assumed, rarely made explicit (p. 567), and sometimes this poses issues with understanding its application, something that I will remain sensitive to throughout this examination. Naples points out that intersectionality helps bring to light contradictions and tensions within the analytical process as well as through the examination of the intersections. Since I am interested in the relations within, among and between different stakeholders or communities working on sexual violence, this aspect of one of the core ideas of intersectionality will be important to my exploration. As explained by Naples in her essay, my examination talks about intersectionality intersectionally, which means attending to positionality, different frameworks within intersectionality throughout analyses and explaining how methodology takes up intersectional praxis, which I will clarify in following chapters. There are also numerous critiques that outline voices, experiences and analyses that intersectional explorations may potentially miss, (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020, p.49). and frequently these are disability, queer and trans communities, and although I am not part of these communities, I remain aware that my research could affect them and thus must be explicit about interconnectedness of these issues.

Neoliberalism within the academy

Critical scholarship signals that the governing rules of the university find their values in the neoliberal state, in processes that confirm patriarchy, heteronormativity and imperializing standpoints (A. Smith, 2016; Goldberg, 2002; Maynard, 2017; McClintock, 1975). In this sense,

I use neoliberalism as a political concept that promotes capitalist considerations, particularly free market, deregulation and globalization. For a critical race or intersectional reading of neoliberalism within both feminism and academic institutions, Bilge (2013) associates neoliberal assumptions with depoliticization and corporatization, that contaminate feminism and intersectionality, identities, institutions and policies. She argues that: "The neoliberal recomposition of power alignments between state, capital, and academy subvert unprecedented forms of minority visibility by valorizing difference without consequences, recognition without redistribution." (p. 409). In universities, their vision and mission to innovate and educate remain in the fore, but they are governed by restructured logics of capital, profit and consumerism, and cannot therefore fully promote social justice aims of equity and inclusion. Radical educators argue that the process of schooling and education is designed to reproduce social inequality (hooks, 1994; Giroux, 1983). Some institutions are more likely to be influenced by transgressive theories than others, depending on their role and their established vision, adding to the complexity of power among institutions.

Within the neoliberal institution, power functions by and for the propagation of profit through capitalism and this may have a co-occurring effect on how the university responds to sexual violence. To further examine this, it is useful to turn to Giroux (1983), who outlines three ways that education reproduces the dominant neoliberal framing for society: 1. Educating to maintain class position based on class-race-gender; 2. Distributing and legitimizing culture and values from and by the dominant group's interest and 3. Reproducing the state powers so as to legitimate them (p. 258). This form of reproduction of capitalist values to maintain the status quo affects the ways that the university interacts with feminist knowledge and intersectional praxis in terms of sexual violence intervention and prevention.

Neoliberalism does not focus on the welfare of the citizens, but on their capacity to be economic actors (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004, p. 20). The neoliberal logic behind institutional protection is corporate and mercantile. With this analysis, it can be said that the university only takes action when the potential for profits, or the "brand" is threatened. Negative publicity drives away donors, as well as potential paying students and disrupts the public representation / performance as a safe place for the brightest and best young people.

Discursive violence and knowledge in the academy

In understanding and addressing sexual violence, a white liberal world view maintains its hegemony and dominance intellectually, partially because BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ faculty and students' knowledge creation – as well as that of external partners – remains undervalued or coopted. Nirmal Puwar (2004) describes how Black and racialized bodies, so often unseen in academia, when they are seen, are met with doubt, infantilization, super-surveillance and have to take on the burden of representation. She also describes that racialized women, and especially Black women, are expected to only represent for race, as if gender were not part of their identity. Describing other binds that tie up BIPOC knowledge, Dreama Moon and Michelle Holling (2020) describe the discursive violence of white feminism in a few ways, including that it "inhibits recognizing the concerns of gendered-racial populations unless they are framed in ways already in alignment with white ways of knowing." (p. 257). In other words, as Giroux also states, the university reproduces existing power structures in how knowledge is made legible to itself, and deliberately blocks or coopts other ways of knowing. As Moon and Holling go on to outline, and I am especially concerned with, white feminism plays a role holding off intersectional feminism, so that discursive violence: "emerges in the marginalization of direct violence committed against women of color" (ibid). In this, I see the critique that white liberal

feminism is complicit by blocking liberatory epistemologies or feigns / masquerades its solidarity with all women while still centering whiteness. Puwar (2004) outlines that BIPOC knowledge is considered relevant only for BIPOC people, and she, like Moon and Holling (2020), outlines that white is read as universal.

This is not to say that there are no efforts to acknowledge the harms created by sexual violence and offer policy direction, support as well as accommodations; as described in the opening chapter, McGill has fulfilled the requirements of federal and provincial laws. There are many ethical, service-centred administrators, staff and faculty who work to maintain the wellbeing of students. At the administrative level, there is a tension between the reactive action taken by institutions as they experience the threat of various public scandals versus evidence and advocacy that they need to take up systemic ways to prevent sexual violence. Professional and personal commitment to wellbeing is one thing, but what I am concerned with is that these efforts are tweaks in an existing inequitable system and far from the transformation viewed as necessary within the critical race and intersectional framings.

Reflecting on how critical race and intersectionality lend themselves to my examination of a complex space like McGill's campus and the various interlocuters who work together and apart to end sexual violence, I propose that my work will be influenced by the relationality of intersectionality. As I set out to explore how relationships between and within groups identified by race, gender, sexuality, class and disability can be examined, I am aware that within these categorized groups inequalities exist that potentially create tensions and contradictions and that I will likely not encompass all these intersections. Even with my aim to carry out an intersectional examination, my research is limited by the research questions, the interviewees' concerns, and the scope of this paper. These limitations can in turn affect how sexual violence policies,

programs and initiatives are implemented, who they are designed to help and what the outcomes are. By focusing on a part of the overall picture, this research adds to an intersectional analysis of how sexual violence is tackled.

Chapter 3 – LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I examine existing literature on the phenomenon of sexual violence, how it manifests on campuses in North America, in Quebec and then specifically at McGill. I include research by feminist and intersectional researchers, based either in community organizations or at the academy on the same subject, and analyze their approaches and related methodologies. This leads me to consider the tensions in feminist and critical race framings that concurrently shed light on interventions from diverse activists and community organizers on different campuses, as well as looking at particular concerns that exist within the Quebec context of McGill.

I conclude this chapter with an outline of how my areas of interest emerge from this literature, where my purpose is to describe interactions between and within feminist community organizations and different sectors of McGill. These interactions have the potential to reveal the extent to which feminist organizing and attendant knowledge are validated, taken up or contested within McGill's various academic and administrative units and explore the ways they influence understanding of sexual violence, as well as potential for future work.

Sexual violence as a field of study: tensions within the academy

Feminist community organizations established largely in the 1960s and 1970s in Canada have confronted and sought to end the high levels of violence, as the rape crisis centre movement and the shelter movement came into being (Johnson and Dawson, 2011). Most established an overtly second wave feminist mission (Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009), so that alongside offering direct support and intervention to survivors, they embarked on education and policy initiatives. Largely as a result of the advocacy and activism of survivors who were the pioneers, levels of

violence and victimization are regularly measured in Canada by Statistics Canada and serve as a tool to understand their prevalence and their effects (Johnson & Dawson, 2011). In August 2022, Statistics Canada released their report on 2021 data, showing that police reported sexual violence had increased (Statistics Canada, 2022), one of the few violent crimes that is still on the rise. Debate continues around whether this is because of increased reporting or increased incidence and until now, there has been no consensus. Race, age, and disability are factors commonly measured in federal victimization data, showing that women aged 18-24 have the highest rates of victimization, representing 56% of all police-reported victimization for sexual violence (Statistics Canada, 2018), and this number is much higher for Black, Indigenous and women of colour (Gunraj, 2014) and for gender diverse communities (Martin-Storey et al., 2017; Bergeron, Paquette et al., 2019).

Ending sexual violence is not a value-neutral proposition, especially when understanding its root causes takes account of analyses derived from critical race theory, intersectionality and feminism (Wooten, 2017). Yet linkages between violent victimization and racism, ableism and /or colonialization are criticized by conservative media, commentators and leaders who contest this analysis as biased by political standpoints (Paradkar, 2022) and promote their own views as factually accurate in a tactic to protect the status quo that privileges their viewpoints. This also manifests in academic and administrative circles on campus, where there is a tradition of viewing the "feminist work" of theorizing on, educating about and preventing sexual violence with suspicion (Naples, 2002; Orr, 2002; Senn, 2011; Lalonde, 2017). Since contributions to knowledge made specifically by feminist community organizations in university are based on, at the very least, feminist perspectives, and more often than not, an intersectional lens, it is possible that this analysis leads administrative or conservative sections on campus to dismiss feminist

contributions. This in turn causes distrust among feminist groups because of invisibilization of their knowledge (Lalonde, 2017). Failing to understand the ways in which suspicion and distrust may be connected to the root causes of violence also leaves important knowledge untouched and unexamined.

Women's Studies departments and courses hold space for overtly feminist examinations of violence within the academy (Naples, 2002; Orr, 2002), and social science departments (e.g., psychology, social work, education) actively research sexual violence and prevention. Some scholars identify lingering tensions when promoting feminist approaches, as Charlene Senn explores and highlights in her 2011 evaluation of prevention programs and pedagogy. Contemporary community-based research on gender-based violence is often situated within a feminist, critical framework, relying on participatory methodologies, or mixed methods (Crocker et al., 2020; E. Quinlan et al., 2017; Bailey et al., 2019). There are also significant research and policy evaluation contributions from feminist legal scholars who work in the academy and with community organizations (West Coast LEAF, n.d.). Yet within this context of collaboration among feminists, the capacity for feminist organizations to play an active part in campus efforts has been overlooked or downplayed within university administrations (Lalonde, 2017; Senn, 2011). Julie Lalonde (2017) and Senn (2011) identify that these tensions arise from university structures that do not accept a feminist analysis, and this is the starting point to outline important contestations that I explore next.

Feminist theory in multiple disciplines provides enriched knowledge to institutional efforts and by including feminist scholars in writing policy, measuring efforts, providing consent education or any number of activities, universities can include important nuance and texture. Different scholars have been involved in these efforts, and Ann Cahill (2017) argues that the

theoretical underpinnings by which to understand sexual violence provided by feminist faculty members are important and hold promise to transform culture beyond compliance with law. She goes on to outline the considerable barriers to overcome. Like Lalonde (2017), she points to political opposition and recalcitrance about adopting overtly feminist principles, stating that faculty and scholars may be seen "as biased rather than expert" and that "a feminist analysis that connects sexual assault to other forms of gender inequality is often perceived as "going too far," precisely due to its more systemic and holistic analysis" (2017, p. 287). So even while theoretical knowledge exists, it has been overlooked by some institutions. Cahill argues for faculty and scholars to be included in on-campus efforts, as well as survivors, so that they can all "participate in the creation or revising of those policies and procedures" (ibid) but does not place emphasis on grounding feminist knowledge and context offered by feminist community organizations. External voices are needed to disrupt, resist, and bring a spotlight to invisibilities. Because Cahill does not push her analysis into interlocking and intersecting forms of inequality, her analysis focuses mainly on understanding gendered realities, pointing to patriarchy but missing its deep connection to white supremacy. Exploring these barriers and missing analyses with a critical race framing, I argue, will make visible contributions from faculty as well as community groups they are deeply involved with.

Nancy Naples (2002) notes, pedagogically, the women' studies faculty is the academic arm of the women's movement. Within, behind and between theories and literatures, canons of thought or approaches to sexual violence, there are scholars working on campus. They work not only as educators and researchers, but also as organizers and activists. Naples (2002) believes that the role of women's studies faculty is to teach how to be an engaged feminist and a scholar. These are the faculty members that are involved behind the scenes organizing within academia to

support students with regards to sexual violence. Many of them report being the ones students approach when needing to disclose or get advice on how to address sexual violence. Many are also engaged in academic projects to raise awareness and increase the number of scholars and faculty concerned with an analysis of gendered and racialized oppressions on campus.

Nevertheless, women's studies departments are not free from the tensions I am concerned with. Sirma Bilge (2013), underscores that among feminist academics claiming an intersectional analysis, some may remain attached to what she identifies as "disciplinary feminism … a hegemonic intellectual position with regards to knowledge production, a way of doing "science" which is more concerned with fitting into the parameters of what constitutes legitimate scientific knowledge than challenging those parameters" (p. 409). In this, they try to validate their work or the work of feminism with the tools that feminism resists. While not a critique in the same context as Audre Lorde's "the master's tools" speech (1984) which criticizes the New York University Institute for the Humanities conference by saying "the tools of racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruit of that same patriarchy", Bilge, like Lorde, asserts that as long as the academy maintains existing structures and epistemologies, there can be no transformation won from resistance and counter narratives offered within race analysis and intersectionality. Bilge reminds us that the initial impetus for feminist theorizing was to bring precisely such resistance into the academy and deplores its subsequent depoliticization. She names intersectionality separately as "an analytical and political tool elaborated by less powerful social actors facing multiple minoritizations" (2013, p.410) and with this she questions the use of intersectionality by academics and scholars who are otherwise invested in "disciplinary feminism". While many academic feminists continue to challenge these hegemonic practices, Bilge emphasizes that *disciplinary* feminists appropriate intersectionality so that it is depoliticized through a process of

"whitening" to the extent that it is "undone", losing its deep commitment to highlighting race. This tension, though she expresses it particularly within the context of academic feminism, is pertinent within the context of sexual violence policies and programs, and interactions with and by different groups on campus. It is also important when analyzing common sense approaches to sexual violence, because some have superficial framings – like "No means No" Campaigns, described as "obsolete simplicities" by Megan Garber in The Atlantic (August 1, 2018). These campaigns focus on minimal behaviour changes without questioning the underpinnings of such violence, thus they are oversimplified and common sense. The key question becomes whether any woman in a position of authority within a university is using the word intersectionality and whitening it. As Bilge (2013) explains, they do this by exercising authority to speak for others, casting women as a universal category, or using intersectionality for feminism without attending to its complex analysis; thus protecting their own power from contestation. Contradictions arise between epistemologies that may be at odds with intersectionality, or perhaps invisible, because while they are deemed "neutral" in reality they hold space for the liberal framing of violence and its solutions.

The way white liberal framings of sexual violence policies and prevention programs at universities are read as "common sense" or normalized is raised by Sara Carrigan Wooten (2017) who identifies it as a "hidden curriculum" (p. 406) that permeates educational processes, a kind of obligatory whiteness that is a default setting within any undertaking that does not have an explicit critical race or intersectional framework. I would add, with reference to Bilge (2013), that because of whitening intersectionality, omissions persist. In her examination of *Not Alone*, the first report in 2014 from President Barack Obama's White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, Wooten identifies that Black women are grouped within the larger

category of women, in spite of important histories, needs and concerns, and therefore effectively erased. This erasure privileges white understandings of sexual violence and its impacts – the hidden curriculum within what is often presented as a race-neutral position. Within sexual violence explorations, erasing Black women fails to account for the differences that are inherent in the racialized histories of the diverse communities on campus.

Sexual Violence on Campus – North American Considerations

In addition to feminist academics' decades of work in this area, multiple stakeholders have more recently confronted gender-based violence as a critical issue for contemporary society (Crocker et al., 2020). To pursue goals to end sexual violence on campus, feminist community organizations regularly interact with different parts of the university: administration, service provision units, faculty members, scholars, and students, to mention only a few (Pietsch, 2022; Bergeron, Goyer et al., 2019; Gunraj, 2014; Bergeron, Paquette et al., 2019). Safety from gendered violence on campus is vital to maintaining learning spaces that are accessible to women and 2SLGBTQ+ people. Estimates of experience of sexual violence on campus place incidence at around one in five (SSMU, 2017) and as high as 35% (E. Quinlan, 2017), and many reports place this number higher, because many victims and survivors choose not to report to officials and police. Statistics are not the only way to understand the extent of this violence, nor its impact. Recent #MeToo and social media denunciations and disclosures have added to formal accusations, such that the spread and range of hashtags on sexual violence have played their part in measuring its everyday nature.

All the same, #MeToo, survivor-centred and student campus movements remain heavily contested, and now as before, student activism and demands for change are delegitimized, as Carrie Rentschler points out: "In an attempt to de-legitimize student claims, as Sara Ahmed

(2015) argues, faculty and university administration often dismiss students as complainers, as problems, as overly consumerist, and/or as overly-sensitive individuals (e.g., "snow flakes")" (2018, p. 505). Denigrating student survivors and activists who are pointing out flaws in the systems helps to deflect from the harms caused by those systems. This mentality of opposition and contention erodes trust, which is counter-productive when there is serious underreporting (Gunraj, 2014; Rossiter et al., 2020). As noted earlier, the university also delegitimizes academics, and organizations, engendering distrust and undermining the collaboration that each policy, prevention program or research project should be built on. Added to this, historic and ongoing discrimination, directed towards those outside the white patriarchal hegemony, deemed "other", effectively holds back many from participating fully in the academy (Siddiqui, 2010) and generations of activism and advocacy have identified this absence, erasure, and oppression.

As noted in Chapter 2, sexual violence has been utilized as a tool of white patriarchy in the colonizing process, and still functions as a barrier to participation in universities (Khan et al., 2019) to those who are other within the settler colonial state. Xhercis Méndez (2020) reflects on the colonial underpinnings of sexual violence policies in universities in the US, based on her own experiences:

> "I have watched as accusations of sexual assault bring into sharp focus a settler- colonial history that was designed not to recognize black, Latinx, and Indigenous ciswomen as "victims" or survivors and as therefore existing outside of the "protection" of the law. This is a direct legacy of the modern/colonial gender system, wherein those relegated to the dark side were cast as too lascivious to ever be vulnerable to sexual harm and as such were understood to be "unrapeable" and therefore unbelievable" (p. 85).

While Méndez is concerned with the uses and failings of Title IX in the US to bring about remedy to sexual violence, her critique of institutional responses failing to take on racial justice needs central to demands to end rape culture is just as important in the Canadian context. She turns to transformative justice, and its promise to foreground victims' needs to replace the carceral approach, so that rather than eject someone who causes harm, institutions offer support, concluding that if the root causes of violence are attended to, transformation is possible (p. 99). Within the literature on decolonizing approaches to sexual violence this understanding of transformative justice approaches is crucial. Sarah Deer (2009) outlines that any system that aims to provide justice for Indigenous[1] women must acknowledge rape as "part and parcel of colonization" (p. 150) and expresses skepticism for judicial models built in and by what she names as the "Anglo-American model" – or colonial processes. This judicial system is flawed in several ways when compared to Indigenous processes. In addition to its colonial underpinnings, it is adversarial, based in property law, and does not recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous women. She points to remedies in community, relationships and kinship circles, designed by and for Indigenous women, elders and leaders. Analyzing sexual violence within this race critical understanding, demonstrates how oppression holds back Indigenous peoples specifically and privileges the university, as a settler entity.

With respect to McGill University as a colonial project founded by James McGill whose profits in part derived from the enslavement of Indigenous and Black persons, this has to feature in the institution's coming to terms with sexual violence. As Méndez (2016) notes, a partial view of sexual violence will yield only partial results. If remedies for sexual violence remain complicit

[1] Deer uses the term Native, appropriate for her context; I have substituted Indigenous to reflect usage common to my local context

with the dominant racism and patriarchy that oppress Indigenous and Black women, or are silent about them, then the transformational structural change that is tangibly different from "saving" individuals will not be possible.

Certainly, some researchers have chosen to approach research on sexual violence with the strategy that new knowledge will help "solve" the problem, and with a qualitative framework that attempts to garner knowledge and respect the survivor as an expert (Maynes et al., 2011), but without an intersectional framework. The Sexual Health Initiative to Foster Transformation or SHIFT project received official sanction, administrative support, and US$2.2 million in funding to undertake surveys and ethnographic studies of Columbia University's students on the subject of sexual violence. As part of the project, principal researchers Jennifer Hirsch and Claude Mellins researched students who choose not to report sexual violence. In 2018, Shamus Khan, Jennifer Hirsch, Alexander Wamboldt, and Claude Mellins published findings using the social risk framework to show that students who did not report sexual violence were trying to preserve their "college projects and trajectories" (p. 436). By connecting students' decision making to their desire to maintain social ties and /or identity, the researchers shed some light on survivors' thinking and choices in the campus setting specifically. They also stated that the students identified another reason for not reporting was to avoid the burden of the survivor label "as abject, politicized, and necessarily deeply traumatized" (p. 442). Looking at how the victim label affects students is important. It also seems to echo Sara Ahmed's analysis (2017, p. 170) – that in order to report sexual assault, the survivor has to be able to work hard – to handle what they are going to come up against and policies and reporting structures have not to date been shown to be effective in avoiding this. Wide ranging studies are important for the study of sexual violence on campus and paint broad strokes about the how it is experienced, especially when

using mixed methodologies and with a feminist base of understanding. While the SHIFT study takes up some of the needs of survivors, it does not attempt to understand root causes, identified as key by Méndez (2016), nor does it uncover the "hidden curriculum" that Wooten (2017) describes and makes no claim to being intersectional.

Researching Sexual Violence on Canadian and Quebec Campuses

Canadian Universities and community organizations as institutions of knowledge, expect to be able to open new space, to "identify gaps" and ensure they present diverse perspectives, and scholars and faculty in the academy are often working in both spaces. As noted by Choudry (2016) and others (e.g., Shragge, 2013; Naples, 1998), there are formal and informal sites for this knowledge to be formulated and they are not mutually exclusive. There must be opportunities for shared knowledge creation, and more varieties of embodied knowledge. Yet within universities in Quebec as elsewhere, a largely positivist and liberal stance sometimes directs research and conclusions about sexual assault on campus, even with the anti-oppressive stance of project partners, including faculty members (Potts and Brown, 2005), and collaboration causes tensions to be left untouched. In the positivist model, the knowing "owns" the subject, and the ownership is a form of control, or appropriation, from which power can be exerted to establish the corrected behavior (Tuck & Yang, 2014). In the anti-oppressive frame, the knowledge is embedded in people and the power relations between them. When these tensions underlying joint work cannot be brought into the open, discussed and then tackled together, research misses the mark, even as it purports to be intersectional. This is what it means to do intersectional research intersectionally.

Although inquiry and frameworks adopted by feminist community organizations may be largely critical of systemic barriers, the vagaries and demands of state funding have compelled

organizations to adapt their models, and when offering services usually they adopt neoliberal management styles that are at odds with, or at the very least, detract from, their social justice mission (Dufour & Pagé, 2020). Professionalization of service provision and institutionalization have disconnected some organizations from their radical feminist roots. For other feminist community organizations, they choose not to be explicit about their politicized and engaged positionality, and sometimes even when being invited to present their learning as experts with specialized knowledge, their tenuous position has resulted in self-silencing, particularly about their social justice aims (Lalonde, 2017, p. 262). Melanie Beres, Barbara Crow and Lise Gotell (2009) identify that centering survivors' expertise in a struggle for social change is no longer politically viable, and that organizations explain that they avoid making critiques about the systems – whether they be colonial, capitalist, liberal or sexist – because these criticisms of state apparatuses put them at risk or losing funding, support and influence, and Lalonde (2017) concurs. By being dependent on state funding, they become less critical of the state, accepting what Dylan Rodríguez describes as "the velvet purse of state repression" (2017, p. 23). Within a university, organizations may not be dependent on funding, but on maintaining positive relationships, having the "in" they need onto the campus to be able to support survivors and activists. In large research projects, organizations may also commit to being good partners in order to benefit from the advantages of these projects in spite of any misgivings about the approaches or the tensions mentioned earlier. In contrast, other organizations may leave projects and partnerships that do not serve their political and social justice aims. In this context, examining different forms of contestation and their disagreements helps to uncover and consider tensions that have otherwise been silenced.

Aziz Choudry (2015) describes how movements create informal and non-formal knowledge, how they connect to the grassroots and express an analysis of particular oppressions, as well as sometimes providing a historical connection to multiple struggles that is not contained in official readings of the terrain. Within this examination of faculty and scholarly work, feminist community-based work of multiple organizations in Canada are creating grassroots level understanding of the ways in which power is working and are also generating new knowledge that combines the embodied knowledge of survivors with the scholarship of critical race feminists. The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence (METRAC) has carried out safety audits on 22 post-secondary institutions and campuses in Canada. Andrea Gunraj (2017) describes how METRAC's safety audit process engages and gathers information from students, faculty, administrators and community-based partners. Most especially, the audits focus on "women as experts in their own safety" (p. 163), and in this also maintains the focus on survivors as experts. This is one of the key points in the work of many feminist, community-based organizations. Not only do they centre service and social justice actions on those who are most marginalized, but they also use explicitly anti-oppression and intersectional framing. Analysis and knowledge are deeply rooted in the community organizing and grassroots base, and Gunraj notes that this "lived knowledge and expertise in gender-based violence" (p. 163), is lacking on campuses, as frequently she observed during the safety audit processes. Gunraj notes that there are particular systemic / spatial reasons why universities are important when it comes to addressing sexual violence. The mix of space that is semipublic, public and private; the purposes of that space to produce knowledge while it may be invisibilizing certain kinds of knowledge; and risks to the institution's health and reputation are identified as particularities of the campus

space that must be considered. The university is also imbricated with other state actors, including the police, provincial or federal government ministries, the justice system, and funding agencies.

Reports published by organizations funded by the federal government to consider sexual violence on campus, e.g., Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW, 2014), Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association (AWRCSAS, 2014) and METRAC (2014) explore students' needs, universities' policies, survivors' concerns, safety and prevention measures as well as frameworks and models for how to move forward. AWRCSAS led a project founded on active participation and collaboration between students, faculty and staff, including community-led outreach and consultation with the Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, in line with its goals to follow a "feminist and anti-oppression model" (p.7) for prevention. The final outputs include guidelines for the creation of policies and procedures on sexual violence at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, and a prevention training program. OCTEVAW provides a comprehensive road map to tackling sexual violence on campus through multiple mechanisms. Their "Promising Strategies" document specifically names intersectionality as a way to understand violence, but the analysis does not seem to travel through the recommendations to intersectional praxis. As with AWRCSAS and METRAC, at least some of the recommendations focus on university leadership and administration being required to take a stand, to "communicate a public commitment to action" (OCTEVAW, p. 2). Interestingly, METRAC concludes their guide with supporting statements from well-known feminist academics working in research on sexual violence, which is possibly a choice to lend deeper legitimacy or formalization to what might be judged as community-level and informal knowledge. They all three refer to the Ontario Women's Directorate's resource guide, "Developing a Response to Sexual Violence", and this may be a strategic choice to utilize

government policy in one sphere to encourage change in others, but they avoid critiquing the governmentality of the overall processes.

These reports reference ongoing challenges in engaging with universities, because of the nature of their bureaucracies, power imbalances, and universities using different paradigms to the ones used by the feminist community organizations. The reports shed light on existing tensions between feminist organizations and universities, and sometimes between organizations, about what terms (anti-racist, intersectional, anti-oppressive) connote, how they are applied, who uses them to what purpose and whether they always result in a critical race analysis. Most community organizations identify their models and interventions as anti-oppression or intersectional because these terms allow them to discuss the roots of violence as connected to gender / race / class and expand to include any interlocking and intersecting oppression. However, their analysis in these reports largely halts at liberal understandings of sexual violence and do not expose the nature of structures underlying this violence. An intersectional analysis of the federal government, places it as both settler colonial in nature, and neoliberal, and as such funding for these multiple projects came as a reaction to external pressures to be seen to do something. Government funding is not offered to criticize government inaction, and as noted by Lalonde (2017) and Beres, Crow and Gotell (2009), this is not how it is used. In the reports, a liberal framing of education remains centred in spite of their analysis, and they focus on aligning policies and procedures with criminal proceeding, encouraging consultation and collaboration, and establishing clear policies so that survivors / victims can report and get support. These are important actions to address issues but do not explicitly call on governments or universities to address the paradigm of power and how it is enacted (Kamudio et al. 2011, 18). Without applying the intersectional analysis to all parts of the project to tackle sexual violence, the remedies risk re-instigating white liberal

interpretations of rape culture, sexual violence, consent education, prevention and awareness campaigns and thus the remedies reinforce the dominant structures rather than re-imagining them.

Even in the face of reports and hashtags, universities continued to drag their feet over establishing policies and procedures, and only a handful of provincial governments introduced legislation to obligate this. In 2019, the federal government funded Possibility Seeds to develop a more cohesive national framework; beyond research, it included Canada-wide communities of practice in multiple areas and utilized intersectional praxis in engagement, research and reporting. Their report *Courage to Act* (Khan et al., 2019) is self-described as a call to action for solidarity, outlining recommendations on education, intervention, and prevention within universities. It takes a road map approach to offer significant knowledge on how to address sexual violence in any post-secondary institution. In its key recommendations, it highlights many concepts also emphasized by feminist community organizations and activists – collaborating with survivors, activists, researchers and community; gathering disaggregated data and transparency about the results; and using intersectionality as the framework to address and prevent violence (p. 30). The report offers definitions and explanations of intersectionality, but it does not detail what this looks like in action, except to illustrate its use in excerpts from interviews. There is more work to be done in McGill specifically to identify what recommendations from this report are germane to this university, as well as how it responds to the detailed road map provided.

Particular concerns in the Quebec context

McGill, as an English-language institution in Quebec, is connected to both the larger Quebec feminist movements and local community organizations. Diane Lamoureux (2016)

identifies that within Quebec, there is a closer connection between feminist and women's studies departments at universities and grassroots movements that also makes for more robust activism and support for women's issues. Because the projects of the Quiet Revolution tied together an independent Quebec and a largely nationalist form of feminism led by *Québecoises de souche* (white women descended from French-speaking colonizers), Caroline Jacquet notes that these interconnected discourses legitimize each other in the following way: "After the Quiet Revolution, society became secular, the state took on secularism and gender equality became a national value"[2] (Online essay, n.d. p. 7). This history of whiteness and Francophone identity remains largely unquestioned in mainstream feminist action in spite of recent challenges by intersectional feminists.

In her explanation of the "paradoxes" of Quebec women's movements, Lamoureux does not touch on the current complexity of intersectionality when organizing with cis, trans and non-binary people, neither does she allude to the ongoing debate about sex workers, and finally, there is no reference to Islamophobia. Her approach is essentially liberal and avoids contestation, it seems that as an insider to the women's movement, her approach lacks a critical analysis and glosses over some of the larger concerns. She does note that intersectionality gradually came into the movement in theory and praxis from the mid-1990s and confirms that this has led to understandings of the impact of neoliberalism but does not use this analysis herself, instead commenting that: "Using the word in the plural, "feminisms," would more faithfully represent the diversity of the practices and reflections within these movements of resistance and of critical thought." (p. 367). Unfortunately, she does not attempt to connect the erasures concomitant with

[2] My translation of : Après la « révolution tranquille », la société s'est sécularisée, l'État s'est laïcisé et l'égalité des sexes est devenue une valeur nationale.

second wave feminism to the critiques of intersectional theory and praxis, nor does she explain where the *Québecoises de souche* place themselves now vis-à-vis those histories of invizibilization. The neutral tone and liberal positioning of this timeline evoke again what Wooten (2017) identifies as the "hidden curriculum" and as such is important to my consideration of how McGill organizes itself, and the histories of feminism that make up its faculty, students, staff and administrators, not to mention the feminist community organizations that I also examine in this study.

Resistance, contention and support concerning Muslim women's head coverings (hijab or niqab) is a one of the central debates informing contemporary feminisms in Quebec, and important to my exploration of sexual violence through a critical race lens. Federalist and nationalist left and right leaning Francophone Quebeckers have all responded to what amounts to a rallying cry for secularism and religious neutrality in Quebec. A critical race analysis of these calls for secularity directed at Muslim women's head coverings shows connections to Islamophobia and racism derived in Orientalism. Quebec feminists supporting a ban, like the political parties behind it, tend to express the need to both uphold so-called "Quebec values" and save Muslim women from the violent patriarchy of "dangerous" Muslim men (Razack, 2018). As mentioned earlier, Quebec sovereignty is tightly implicated in the feminist struggles in Quebec, and the concepts of liberty and secularism were important levers in the societal rejection of the Catholic Church, though this was not without its tensions on gender roles and female stereotypes (Beauregard et al., 2020; Austin, 2013). Yet like Canadian multiculturalism, Quebec sovereignty also takes up racial innocence. Pierre Vallières used and appropriated Fanon's and Black Power theories in his book *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (1967) to explicate the position of Francophones, particularly those without class privilege. David Austin (2013) asks an important question as he

examines this work: “If French Canadians were *nègres*, what about Quebec’s actual living and breathing Black *nègres*? Vallières neglected these questions. For him …anti-Black racism, exploitation, and oppression did not exist in his home territory.” (p. 69). Racial innocence can slide rapidly into anti- Black racism within the debates on accommodations and multi-culturalism in particular, as Délice Mugabo (2016) identifies in her commentary on both the nationalist and feminist movements. She further highlights that even among radical and liberal movements that opposed heads covering bans, their activism “serves to rehabilitate and preserve whiteness and white racial rule and order” (p. 195). She emphasizes that because Islamophobia has been typically framed as associated with South Asian, Arab and Persian femininity, debates commonly ignore and deny Black Muslim women’s experiences and existence. Literature on anti-Black racism in mainstream Quebec feminist circles is limited, as again, the debate around intersectionality’s applications has often been stifled or actively resisted (Dufour & Pagé, 2020) or more recently, typically centred on Bill 21 and its previous manifestations, as Katrine Beauregard, Brenda O’Neill and Elisabeth Gidengil note:

> “On the one hand, the FFQ has pushed for a more intersectional feminism and has defended the right of women to wear religious symbols such as the hijab in their chosen professions (FFQ n.d.). On the other hand, other feminist organizations have emerged to advocate in favor of secularism and laws banning religious symbols in the public sphere (Benhadjoudja 2017).” (2022, p. 54)

This debate shows fractures in the ostensible unity that the Quebec women’s movement has prided itself on for decades (Lamoureux, 2016), and demonstrates tensions in a largely white movement when the analysis turns to manifestations of systemic racism, Orientalism, and anti-Blackness. Further to this, Mugabo (2016) argues that among multiracial groups that confront

systemic white supremacy, anti-Blackness persists as they often continue to centre white liberal framings. Paying attention to political discourse as well as grassroots organizing when acting to tackle to sexual violence on campus must foreground considerations about how Quebec feminist community organizations can reproduce anti-Blackness.

Marlihan Lopez and Jade Almeida published research in 2021 on "institutional Quebec feminist organizations" (p. 171), interviewing a dozen or so Black women working in Quebec's feminist spaces, spanning Anglophone, Francophone and Allophone communities. They pinpoint a refusal to dismantle racist systems of thought within organization structures and bracket these with anti-Black racist stereotypes that cause harm to workers. Their research suggests that the violence experienced by Black women in gender justice movements is specific because workplaces are judged to be feminist and thus safer for women such that power dynamics are rarely examined. They track the burden and the cost for workers with intersecting identity categories, who are expected to introduce, apply and maintain intersectionality. They identify this violence as both "white tears" – a tactic for mainstream feminists to avoid conflict and accountability, and "becoming the problem" – a result for intersectional feminists, using Sara Ahmed's term to explain that "They create problems by their very presence" (p. 177), and that both tokenism and anti-Black racist stereotypes create the conditions for these harms. This burgeoning exploration by and for Black women in Quebec feminist movements is essential to transform systems, and similar considerations by and for Indigenous women and differently racialized women are also needed.

Activist burnout within social movements has been explored from several perspectives, and it is clear that the discrimination that women and BIPOC advocates face worsens their experiences of violence, exhaustion, overwhelm and cynicism (Gorski & Erakat, 2019).

Recognizing that high levels of frustration and burnout have been reported for activists facing institutional sexism, Paul Gorski and Noura Erakat (2019) identify the additional levels of racism as exacerbating factors, especially within movements. Together, these intersectional analyses outline patterns of behaviour towards Black and racialized women in feminist organizations that are also important for not only community organizers and activists, but also administrators, scholars, student and staff in Quebec universities. Feminist credentials within community groups have been revealed to be tied to histories of political thought that contain Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, and still fail to account for imperialist and colonizing principles of nationalism. In addressing sexual violence through a critical race lens, the innocence of white liberal and even white radical feminist knowledge creation – formal and informal - deserves more attention.

McGill University and campus sexual violence

Within McGill, the iMPACTS project has generated knowledge on the current situation of students' experiences of sexual violence that provides important context. The project has measured incidence, and explored education, policy, activism and media (Vemuri, 2020; Bergeron, Paquette et al., 2019). Shaheen Shariff, the project director, published the results of the McGill campus *Climate Survey 1* to record sexual harassment prevalence in 2018 and found that 41% of student respondents self reported experiences of "unwanted sexual communication or attention", a number that lines up with similar measures in the rest of North America (E. Quinlan, 2017; Gunraj, 2014; Barnes & Chau, 2014). For the purposes of understanding sexual violence with a critical race understanding, it is significant that McGill's *Climate Survey 1* used definitions that provided some level of disaggregated data, in line with many calls for these measurements coming from community feminist organizations and activists. Other information on racialization can be found in McGill's previous *2009 Student Demographic Survey: Final*

Report revealed that 37% of the student body at that time identified as being from a visible minority group as such. Even though McGill's student body is diverse, it is fundamental to understand that within the critical race framing I use, diversity of itself does not change systems. The disproportionate levels of violence experienced by BIPOC women and 2SLGBTQ+ people are tied to settler colonialism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. These data, unusual for an institution to collect, as Suzie Dunn, Jane Bailey and Yamikani Msosa (2020) point out, delineate the diversity of the student body, and the prevalence of sexual violence, which together inform an intersectional understanding of the issue but do not of themselves demonstrate intersectionality in this context.

McGill's Student Union, as part of the Our Turn project, now known as Students for Consent Culture, published reports that place McGill on a scorecard among other universities in how it is tackling sexual violence on campus. In 2017, the authors of this report, Caitlin Salvino, Kelsey Gilchrist and Jade Cooligan Pang gave McGill a C- on its sexual violence policy, and offered checklists and action plans, that in many ways, update the earlier guidelines provided by METRAC, AWRCSAS and OCTEVAW. This report, and later ones published by Students for Consent Culture, use intersectional practices in how the documents are written; they attend to the accessibility of the materials and policies explicitly name specific needs of Indigenous and racialized students. However, they fail to name Black students in the 2017 report, leaving unquestioned that "women of colour and racialized women" automatically include Black women, an assumption that cannot be made in light of Mugabo's Afro-pessimist reading of organizing spaces in Quebec (2016). The most recent research and knowledge creation being undertaken by this group is the Open Secrets Study, released as a Preliminary report in 2021. This survivor-centred report takes aim at accountability failings in institutions by directly challenging the

culture of impunity and silence on sexual violence between students and professors. It names "how institutional cultures that support gender-based violence are co-constituted by systems of oppression, including ongoing colonialism, racism, white supremacy, ableism, classism, heteronormativity, homophobia and transphobia." (p. 7) introducing the important intersectional frame, but this second report does not provide context specific to McGill, nor has it published its final analyses.

Gaps my research will fill

The contributions of feminist studies and scholars, community organizations and activists towards theorizing, problematizing, and measuring sexual violence stretches back decades (Naples, 2002; Johnson & Dawson, 2011; Crocker et al., 2020; Vemuri, 2020), but my examination has largely focused on the last decade. These studies bring forward many recommendations on administrative, research and community sectors within universities (Gunraj, 2017; Lalonde, 2017; Khan et al., 2019). My examination has considered gaps related to the underpinnings of sexual violence in systems of oppression and power as Méndez (2016) and Wooten (2017) consider, and continuing erasure and anti-Black racism, particularly in Quebec and McGill, as related to contributions from Almeida and Lopez (2021) and Mugabo (2016). While an intersectional approach is ostensibly more present in the multi-layered appreciations of how feminists and organizations are engaging with the campus, appropriation, and "whitening" maintains innocence to the harms of the systemic violence (Bilge, 2013).

Considering the contributions of feminist community-based organizations within this system of mixed and unevenly distributed power with complex dynamics related to race /gender / class, I am interested in how intersectional knowledge might be utilized, supported, overlooked, co-opted or claimed by and within McGill, in developing strategies to end sexual violence.

Bringing a critical race feminist perspective to how this comes about at this English-language university in Quebec, I examine the knowledge created, the interventions promoted, and the frameworks in place. I plan to prioritize interviews with people working to bring about change from and with intersectional embodiment. I am interested in addressing the effects of practices that aim to "solve" sexual violence, and governing principles that continue to support rape culture, and protect perpetrators. I am also interested exploring the extent to which resources, knowledge creation, organizing mechanisms and systems are probed to uncover their underpinning white supremacy, using my research to consider the debates, concerns, contradictions, and gaps that have formed around what may be uneasy partnerships. By engaging stakeholders in conversation and qualitative reviews, I aim to understand more fully any schisms within partnerships and enunciate ways that feminist knowledge creation has the promise to transform campus culture, not only contribute to ending campus sexual violence.

Research questions

How does the research community at McGill engage with the knowledge of feminist community organizations and to what effect?

How does the governing culture of McGill allow space for and validate feminist community organizations knowledge interventions on sexual campus, and does this lead to an intersectional understanding of sexual violence?

Within partnerships to address sexual violence in the last decade, how do the practices and ideologies of feminist community organizations reflect intersectional goals and do these influence McGill university? Are they perceived as helping or harming the legitimacy of work to end sexual violence?

Chapter 4 – Methodology and Methods

Choosing the methodology

In this chapter, I will describe how I came to choose interviewing methodology with the background considerations of critical race counter storytelling, narrative inquiry and some influence from institutional ethnography. I will then explain the process I used to gather meaning from the interviews, using constant comparison to analyse and parse the interviews, and how I aligned this with my research questions.

Using methodologies that centre experience in keeping with my critical race and intersectional frameworks, and I am taking care not to appropriate methods emerging from or strictly connected to specific communities or embodied realities. As a woman of colour, I am focused on understandings of sexual violence that are rooted in the experiences of BIPOC and committed to decolonizing approaches. This means that I have chosen to study McGill through the viewpoint and experiences of those perceived as having less power. Focusing on interviewing, with an acknowledgement that this choice is heavily influenced by the methodologies of critical race and narrative inquiry, I have been able to tend to my feminist commitment to recording personal and lived experience as valued and valid information while allowing for complexities and contradictions to be uncovered and examined. This means decentring whiteness, using critical race and intersectionality to pay attention to how power dynamics and differential relationships between and within communities are taken into account (Bailey et al, 2019), and also being reflective about my own biases and privilege throughout the research process.

Counter-storytelling as a critical race methodology is described by Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso (2002) as a way to expose and challenge forms of racial privilege while also empowering those who have been historically marginalized. Since I interviewed several racialized graduate students and feminist community workers, this methodology helps ground understandings of how their stories may be silenced or distorted because of marginalization and racism operating within institutions. It is an important methodology when considering McGill with its multiple actions on sexual violence, because it can: "acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower" (p. 26). My research questions focus on these contradictions and on the potential for intersectionality as a transformative lens through which to intervene and prevent sexual violence, making space for the specific and interrelated ways that race / class / gender / sexuality and other systems used to oppress come together. Solórzano and Yosso explain that: "[s]torytelling and counter-storytelling these experiences can help strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance" (p. 32). I attempt to adhere to the main themes of counter-storytelling by ensuring the intercentricity of racism among other oppressions, and by offering perspectives that challenge majoritarian narratives (also known as monovocals or standard stories, told from the centring of white privilege). This makes up a first strand of how I approached the interviewing research process.

Next, I am influenced by narrative inquiry as a methodology that allows the researcher and the person interviewed to discuss meaning within personal stories and is often used to connect individual experience to larger organizational systems (Butler-Kisber, 2018). It uses the telling of stories as the means to access the connection between action and consciousness. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), using narrative inquiry extensively in educational settings,

highlight the collaboration process between researcher and participants, that takes place over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus.

> "An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social." (p. 20)

I attempt to remain close to Clandinin and Connelly's recommendation to be present within the lives of interviewees and to reflect with them on the process, the analysis and the conclusions I make, helping me to account for power and authority in how their voices are represented. This recommendation is an important reminder in how I interact with those I work with on this project and whose stories I explore. I remain conscious to act as if I were in the midst of telling, reliving and retelling alongside those I interview, and this helps me remain clear about the power inherent in writing about someone in their absence. That this also happens within an intersectional framework makes this doubly important – not to replicate erasures, invisibilization or speaking for others who have been typically pushed to the margins.

In education research, using interviews to understand experiences of systems and promote shared meaning making is an important methodology that has been adopted widely (Seidman, 2006). Brinkmann (2020) describes the conversational experience as a way of learning about and sharing what is central to human experience (p. 426) while also warning that the conversation can become too commonplace and thus easy to slide into roles that are familiar to us, which is an important reminder for a critical approach. To stay focused and connected to the stories that emerge, I turn to Margaret Kovach (2015) and am influenced by her Indigenous worldview, that it is important to understand the place of stories where: "knowledge is transmitted through stories that shape shift in relation to the wisdom of the storyteller at the time

of the telling." (p. 27). I take from this that remaining attentive to context, to the moment in time and to the concrete knowledge embedded in narratives, without falling into either overly romanticizing or generalizing from them, and in particular to be respectful and openminded about where each story leads.

Undertaking several key informant interviews to outline personal and embodied experiences helped delineate the extent to which of feminist organizations and activists are involved with and influence the university. Attention to critical race counter-storytelling, and narrative inquiry's living in the story, allows me to use interviewing for what I would call "truth telling" above all, where interviewees offer testimonials of what they experienced. This is poignant in the context of sexual violence and the #MeToo movement, where survivors' stories are questioned and challenged (Fileborn & Loney-Howes, 2019). The use of the word "story" to describe lived experience has been questioned within feminist organizations, especially with regards to sexual violence, because it seems to de-legitimize real experience, making it different from facts and suggests it is a form of fiction, or fabulation. In essence, it implies that women are making it up. One feminist organization, Women at the Centre, has decided to use the term "declaration" or "declaration of truth". Saying what has happened, speaking embodied truth also places my methodology in wider feminist methodologies (Butler-Kisber, 2018), as a means to both disrupt the status quo and push back against marginalization.

This research does not include interviews with survivors that speak of the trauma of sexual violence; the interviews focus on the experience of labour to end sexual violence– how people organize, create knowledge, support prevention efforts, develop policy and training and make sense of the legalistic systems in place. By placing interviewing within framework that is feminist and critical race, the narratives that I hear through the interviews are explored for what

they reveal about sexual violence responses and remedies at McGill, and how each person makes meaning from these experiences, bringing descriptions of experience from the margins to the centre within feminist knowledge creation (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2018). Finally, this methodology makes space for my activist position on sexual violence– one that is described by the hashtags rising out of the #MeToo movements - #BelieveWomen, and #WeBelieveYou (Vemuri, 2020) - because so often, the narrative accounts of those harmed by institutions or people in authority have rarely been treated as legitimate reality from the get-go. Using "story" as meaning an account of experience and not a fabulation, this methodology encapsulates the process of understanding the stories that are told as being both about the person and what they know concurrently – the two are inseparable – the person is the knowledge and vice versa. As Lynn Butler-Kisber (2018) describes, this process can bring "to the surface unsettling questions about power, authority, voice and representation in research" (p. 63), and this is a tension that will also trouble any analysis or meaning making that I draw from the interviews.

Approaching this research through emancipatory frameworks like critical race and intersectionality, of necessity the people I interview are considered as being from the margins within the settler colonial setting of McGill, as am I, although this positioning is already mitigated and contested by the fact that we are interacting professionally or otherwise with McGill and therefore already stand within a certain class or privileged space that mitigates the extent to which we might be considered marginal. To attempt to outline the power differences, I argue that the concepts of receptivity, (Kovach, 2015, p. 54) and reciprocity (Tilley, 2016, p. 44) from transgressive methodologies (research that resists white supremacy hegemony) concerned with centring voices that are Indigenous (Kovach, 2015), are also appropriate if and when

dealing with the intersections of race, gender and class. My understanding and commitment to these concepts is partially shaped by Indigenous methodologies, as expressed by Margaret Kovach (2015) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) and also embedded in feminist activist epistemologies (Naples, 1998; incite! 2007).

a. Participant Selection

I work and study in feminist circles in Montreal, the main site of my research, and both the location and the subject of this study are deeply connected to my positionality. The stories I gathered are from people known to me and existing contacts. The interviews have the potential to reveal the personal cost and effort in understanding, categorizing, researching, mobilization against and dealing directly with sexual violence. This is emotional labour carried out by activists of all kinds, and within the context of the neoliberal university and organizations, BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ workers and activists experience trauma resisting oppressive power structures. As a researcher, I am also benefiting from this emotional labour. Using Kovach's (2015) methodology on receptivity here, I understand that narratives are offered with trust and within a respectful relationship that represents an authentic commitment to centre their narratives within institutional contexts. My research benefited from long-standing and trusting relationships with the organizations and the people I interviewed. Rather than attempt to insert anonymity into this process by electing to interview people who I do not personally know, this approach yielded rich and nuanced narratives given established relationships built on rapport. In this, I am using an insider position to be able to facilitate important conversations (Tilley, 2016, p. 42). In the smaller scope of this exploration, trust was important to be able to have conversations about tensions and conflict (Brinkmann, 2020). It is important to see trust building as a priority, and a responsibility (Tilley, 2016). First, I was careful not to put people in a position that they could

not refuse to be interviewed, and then to use what I know of them outside the interview process to influence my meaning making. This acknowledgement of power and how it is mitigated is also informed by Himani Bannerji's (1991) critical race and intersectional framing on voice in feminist paradigms and Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2020) discussion on power.

Focusing on those working at the point where student survivors, university administration, research and activism intersect, I interviewed staff in feminist community organizations; and engaged scholars, by which I mean graduate students and faculty members actively engaged in feminist praxis and concerned with sexual violence on campus. There were concerns about confidentiality that I dealt with in the following ways 1) by assigning pseudonyms to each participant when describing them and their experiences, 2) by not using any information that would make them easily identifiable, and 3) by changing information that may reveal their identity (Tilley, 2016, p. 87). I also chose to use non-binary pronouns to refer to everyone I interviewed. Because there are relatively few people actively working to end sexual violence on campus, and the group of feminist organizations involved is limited, the ecosystem is small, and using specific pronouns and descriptions would make some people more identifiable. Therefore, I was careful in the choices I made and in line with the terms of agency and reciprocity, I communicated with the interviewees about these choices and received their consent.

In some cases, interviewees were not concerned with being identified, either because they believe their story itself is important, or because they want to highlight their work and contributions to the subject, however because it is important to maintain confidentiality for the majority of those I interviewed, I chose to give all pseudonyms. In cases where those I interviewed referred to and named specific contributions to knowledge creation, I have done that

through referencing in other sections of this paper. In the cases where, for the purposes of counter-storytelling, it was important to identify interviewees who were Black and racialized, or other intersecting identities, I have done this throughout the analysis section, in the next chapter. For a full breakdown of who was interviewed, see Figure 3 on page 79.

b. Semi-structured interviews

Since this research aims to gather information on lived experience and how they make meaning from this, I used a conversational interview technique, recording the interviews and reflecting on their meaning (Seidman, 2006). The main data method for this research is the semi-structured interview, grounded in participants' experiences. To respect confidentiality, privacy and agency I conducted one-on-one interviews. Since they are not clients, subjects, participants or informants, I chose the term interviewee to describe them. I believe this to be consistent with the constructionist nature of narrative inquiry, that it acknowledges a co-creation relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, as Svend Brinkmann (2020) describes: "the interviewer is often portrayed as a "traveler" together with the interviewee, with both involved in the co-construction of whatever happens in the conversation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015)" (p. 433). This travelling together can happen when we share a path and is more easily maintained in a dialogue rather than in a multi-person conversation.

Recruiting from my existing networks, inviting interviewees to participate through email in order to set up hour-long interviews and recording the interviews all required an interview protocol to provide structure, consistency and clear expectations. The interview protocol also offered information on how the research process lined up with my research aims. In keeping with the methodological paradigms, the questions were open-ended so that the main points and themes brought forward by the interviewees emerge in conversation together. They were

designed to allow each interviewee to enter the narrative at the point at which they were most interested (Butler-Kisber, 2018). Keeping questions consistent helped maintain overall complementarity among the answers while allowing space for a nuanced understanding and uncovering of this complex issue. In keeping with the methodology chosen, I followed the lead of the interviewees, starting with their direct experience and moving into the institutional life that they are connected to. I considered issues of power, privilege and representation among those I interviewed, and asked them to reflect on this too, and exposed the trust within the relationship and our shared experiences. By naming this, I believe I held us both accountable to be aware that I could only use what they shared in the context of this interview and acknowledged the importance of that. To help contain this knowledge overflow and centre each person as knower in their own lives, I also took the approach to not ask each person to express an identity using charts or questionnaires. Instead of using categories and identities that I had created before meeting them, I chose to open each interview with a question asking people to describe themselves. This allowed two points to emerge – firstly, that each person has their own way to describe themself and I used what I could from this without breaking confidentiality to introduce each of them in the following chapter. Secondly, that some people mentioned identities that I may not have asked about, such as invisible disabilities, undisclosed sexual assault, or contested indigeneity. From this, I developed the Figure 3 (p. 79) below that helps explicate whom I was speaking with and how they expressed their own identities.

In order to attempt to address a critical race framing of sexual violence at McGill and offer the counter-story-telling approach that influenced my methodology, it was important to interview people identifying as Black, Indigenous and racialized. I also paid attention to other intersecting oppressions, such as 2SLGBTQ+, class or migration status, although the

interviewees reflected most on gender, race and class within academia and McGill. As I was recruiting from existing networks as well as during a global pandemic that was disproportionately affecting exactly these communities (Khanlou et al., 2021), I tried to fulfil the expectations of the plan but had to be flexible to who was interested and available. Originally planning for up to 12 interviews, I was able to carry out nine and in terms of their involvement with sexual violence prevention on campus, they identified in the following ways. Four were staff in feminist organizations working on partnerships to prevent sexual violence, all with experience working within McGill, as well as with other universities and the Montreal area. Three were graduate students (who had done internships, and who were collaborating with community groups), two enrolled at McGill, one previously enrolled at McGill now studying at another university. Two were faculty members at McGill.

Several people I reached out to were changing their jobs and unavailable. Graduate students and community workers were under pressure of work or were unwilling to comment, saying they had little to offer. In particular, it was not possible to engage a faculty member at McGill who identified as Black, Indigenous or racialized who also had a particular interest in sexual violence at McGill. Even though I reached out specifically to several faculty members, they did not agree to be interviewed. This may be because in McGill, as in many universities, there is still a relatively small number of BIPOC faculty members (M. Smith, 2010), making them more visible and potentially tokenized. Furthermore, because they are few, they are oversubscribed and cannot respond to all the demands on their time and make choices about what they can engage strategically and according to the long-term potential for change (Howard, 2019). Without a personal relationship on which to build, as I had with the other interviews, it was not possible to interview BIPOC faculty member at McGill within the limited time frame

available to me. I also explored the possibility of reaching out and including more graduate students or feminist organizers identifying as BIPOC, but I was concerned that this would shift the balance among those I had interviewed. Neither was I able to interview a faculty member engaged with community-level organizing and scholarship on sexual violence specifically at McGill who also identified as male. This might not be a surprise, as Michael Flood (2019) explains, there are many reasons why men might not engage in sexual violence work, related to denying its severity, defending masculinity or experiencing "mute discomfort" (p. 285). In light of decades of feminist organizing to tackle sexual violence led by women and gender-diverse people, including McGill's projects, it is also not surprising that I did not interview men specifically.

Figure 3 – Demographic information shared by interviewees

Members of faculty	2
Graduate Students	3
Community organizers and activists	4
Black	2
Racialized	2
Immigrant	4
Lesbian, queer	3
Trans, non-binary	2
Living with disabilities	2
Survivors	5

The table reflects how interviewees self-identified; they all mentioned more than one category from the list above, so the total adds up to more than nine. I choose to separate Black and racialized to highlight interviewees who said they were Black specifically; of those who said they were racialized, they also referred to themselves as brown. To reflect differences among the interviewees and reflect on specific and different forms of oppression, I chose to separate sexuality – lesbian / queer, from gender – Trans/non-binary, although in the theoretical frameworks, this is often combined into 2SLGBTQ+. Finally, although more than five of the nine might be survivors of different forms of gender-based violence, I only counted those who mentioned this in the context of the interviews. None identified as Indigenous, male, or international, refugee or non status.

c. Interview guide and communication before and after the interview

To give each interviewee the chance to gather their thoughts and connect to the narratives that relate to the points raised, I sent the interview guide in advance (see Appendix A). Each interview was planned to take place in a private space – they all chose their home or office - with an hour and half of uninterrupted time. The open-ended questions referred to the frameworks they used to understand sexual violence and how this affected their analysis of policies and procedures that existed in McGill, as well as their experience of and involvement in university partnerships. I finished with an invitation for them to share anything that they felt was important that I had not asked about. Since they are the knowers, and their story is the central experience around which we will build a shared and mutual connection (Tilley, 2016, p.111), it was important to give them plenty of latitude to stray from answering these questions. Their chosen setting ensured confidentiality, in that they were private and took place at each interviewee's discretion. The comfort they felt in the setting was a factor in telling stories that might reveal

difficult experiences – things that harmed them and that were troubling, contentious or difficult to live through. In addition, recognizing that there is always the potential to touch on a history of trauma in any conversation on sexual violence, no matter how much the interviewer tries to keep to issues related to theory / practice / praxis, this cannot be ignored in the setting of research on this subject. In this, my style as an interviewer also had to be calibrated to be receptive to the way each person wants to be interviewed (Wengraf 2001 quoted by Brinkmann, 2020).

My stance as a researcher using narrative and critical methodologies affected how I listened, I checked in, I understood and clarified the interactions, before, during and after the interviews. During interviews, my tone, my listening, my interjections were genuine and curious about the process and honest about the relationships I have with each interviewee, being open to discuss and name the complexities that these relationships brought into the research. As it turned out all interviews took place on face-to-face on camera by Zoom because of social distancing health measures in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a necessary adaption that did not affect the final depth of the interview content. I recorded each interview and saved the recordings and the transcripts on a password protected external hard drive. When replaying these interviews, there were issues with sound quality, with interruptions and with lagging Wi-Fi connection. Gaps in voice recordings due to lagging Wi-Fi turned out to be one limitation which I had not considered and thus in each interview, there are one or two moments when momentary lapses in focus happened, but so minor as to not affect final information gathered on the questions.

After each interview, I shared a copy of the transcript by email for confirmation that it represented what we had talked about, and also as an opportunity for each person to reflect on the extent to which they were comfortable with what they had shared. Interviewees responded by email or verbally on a Zoom call, either confirming they were fine with the content or asking for

specific changes. This is what Pamela Maykut and Richard Morehouse identify as "member checks" quoting Lincoln and Guba (1985) and is "the process of asking research participants to tell you whether you have accurately described their experience" (1994, p. 135). The impetus behind this process is to validate that the transcript is "correct", however in line with critical and feminist frameworks, it is also important to tend to the sense of "voice" that emerges in the interviews (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998) and to be conscious that even when checking back with interviewees, responses to the transcript are governed by the context of the interview, the relationship and trust we share, as well as many other factors about their identity and their conceptions. Butler-Kisber (2018) highlights the qualitative approach in terms of voice, power, and ethics in reflecting on this stage of the research process:

> "transcripts are not neutral texts that reconstruct as a carbon copy what has been recorded and/or observed. They are constructions, always partial and selective, and value laden and can represent potential power differentials that merit attention." (p. 29)

As Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (1998) point out, interviewee constantly make choices: "about what to emphasize and what to hold back", and while they are referring to the interview, this is something I am attentive to at the stage of "member checks". If an interviewee holds back in the checking-in moment, that is as important and as revealing, and can be problematized further. When I checked in about the transcripts, most people were fine with how their comments were transcribed; a few asked for points to be removed because there was too much personal information that might break confidentiality, and we agreed on the necessary changes. This was an important reflection on their part, accounting for changes in storytelling that happen according to context and setting that Kovach (2015) mentioned that I remained attentive to

Method – Constant Comparison - Applying the Constant Comparison method

I undertook constant comparison to analyze the interviews, paying attention to relationships, to the significant moments and experiences and to the emergence of educational knowledge on prevention strategies from these lived experiences. I turn to Lynn Butler-Kisber's (2018) descriptions of constant comparison, that it is:

> "a thematic form of qualitative work that uses categorizing, or the comparing and the contrasting of units and categories of field texts, to produce conceptual understanding of experiences and/or phenomena that are ultimately constructed into large themes." (p. 47)

Constant comparison emerged out of grounded theory and is also influenced by Strauss and provides a way to conceptualize how to identify units of meaning providing a complex model of culling excerpts from the original transcripts (Butler-Kisber 2018). After each interview, I listened to it once while trying to pick up the main stories, the context, who the person was and how they explained what they had experienced. At this first listening, I did not take notes, or attempt to organize anything; I was listening openly. To develop transcripts, I listened to each interview at least three times – once to transcribe, once to review and make changes and then a third time with the finished transcript in front of me to check for accuracy. These parts of the process were all done within a few months after the interviews. I also referred to McGill's sexual violence policy, guidelines for relationships between faculty and students, McGill senate minutes and open letters as points of knowledge that were important markers emerging in the interviews affecting my analytical process.

There was then a pause of several months, due to personal reasons, after which I went back to review each transcript. At this moment, I was reading the transcripts while re-listening to

the recordings, to understand tone and pauses, to hear the hesitations, the irony, the incredulity and the humour in their voices. I listened as interviewees focused in on subjects that seemed hard for them to talk about, those that surprised them and moments when I was surprised or reacted with more probing questions in the interview. I also noted moments when there were tangents and a loss of the thread of their arguments, because they were following a story, or their narrative escaped the logical armouring. I went through this process of reading while listening once only.

The final step working with the transcripts was to then read them without referring to the audio, using close reading method, identifying key narrative points, looking for congruencies, surprises and hesitations. In the previous reading and listening, I had already highlighted moments in the text that were compelling, telling, charged, or otherwise interesting and these are where I started as I was looking for themes. Influenced by Joseph Maxwell and Barbara Miller strategies in qualitative data collection (2008), and Susan Tilley's (2016), I considered the contents of each transcript while "coding, collapsing, categorizing and (re)constructing" (Tilley, p 61). – finding similar pieces of data from different interviews and putting them together into units is an important process. These units emerged as I organized the ways interviewees reflected on their work to deal with sexual violence - through multiple avenues - advocacy, policy, activism, research and survivor support; the activity was not the focus, but the tone and feel of the experience. .

Using constant comparison as my main method for moving through the analysis, I undertook groupings of interview excerpts based on similarities, differences and contiguities among the variety and range of narrative / experiential revelations that the interviews contained. I then organized these into three broad areas – contiguities, surprises and hesitations - in an Excel Spreadsheet, forming a mind map that first outlined each interview individually. I then gathered

the main ideas that emerged from each participant, recorded quotations that described those ideas and connected them in a narrative structure describing what was happening. In some cases, even after going through this close reading two or three times to refine and review, I went back to gather more details afterwards on highlighted sections related to the main themes I had already drawn out, which I began to name. Following suggestions from Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 125, Fig 9.4), I used both a Word document and an Excel spreadsheet for the discovery phase, the refinement of categories and the exploration of relationships and patterns across categories and this allowed me to save multiple versions of each file to see how the ideas developed. Taken together, the listening and reading of these interviews for these main ideas make up what Butler-Kisber (1988) refers to as the coarse-grained analysis in constant comparison.

After the first careful reading and categorization of the chunks and excerpts that had been identified in the first stage as occurring frequently, I then went back through the tentatively named sections to confirm that the ideas have been appropriately identified within each category, or refined the naming of the category, or collapsed categories. This is what Butler-Kisber describes as the "fine-grained phase", developing ways to describe the themes. As described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994), writing out rules for including items within themes on another sheet and using this to also develop a propositional statement is the next important step in being able to categorize lived experiences into more developed ideas. When it came to continuing the process, I found that as well as writing explanations of what was transpiring, writing broad statements – like the headlines of a newspaper, or the chapters of a book, some humourous and some ironic, also helped me develop a clearer view of the meaning of each proposition. After several "passes" I concentrated on three or four larger propositional statements (Butler-Kisber, 2018, p.48), collapsing related propositions under larger ones.

Self reflection and the constant process of analysis

Before, during and after each interview, I took notes to remind myself of my process and to re-situate myself each time in the moment of the interview. This helped develop a sense of continuity and connection in a virtual context that seemed very divorced from what I had planned. In a way, I would describe this as "grounding" exercise, taken from the practice of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). Sometimes, this even became a moment of meditation, incorporating spiritual and healing practice into work that is often difficult to handle because of the intense emotional nature of sexual violence. While it cannot be said that any interviewee shared an intimate story related to a personal experience of sexual violence, focusing on this subject, discussing the nature, scope and impact of rape culture, and constant awareness of the harms perpetrated on women can take its toll. This form of vicarious trauma is one I am very familiar with in my work, and mindfulness is a practice from my day-to-day work that I took into my scholarly work. Some of the notes in my journaling were more personal and less academic because of this, reflecting on feelings and sensations as well as about analysis and thinking.

I find it helpful to remind myself here that, as noted by Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (1998) when they described their voice-centred relational method for analysis: "'data analysis' is not a discrete phase of the research process confined to the moments when we analyse interview transcripts" (p. 124), reflecting to me that constructing meanings, assigning frameworks and making comparisons while articulating similarities and contiguity have been happening even before each interview took place. This influenced how I went about listening to the interviews from a feminist research standpoint. Mauthner and Doucet describe the importance of listening for and acknowledging my own implicit biases as a researcher and remaining aware of this, while not entirely discounting it. I did this by journaling right after each

interview, then again later on as I was reading transcripts. When I was tracking the development of my analysis, I compared the journaling with the transcripts themselves as a way to be more conscious of the potential for bias and of my reactions and emotional state. Feminist methodologies and the critical frameworks that I use all encourage reflexivity to account for the interpretation that a researcher makes of the content of interviews and data collected, avoiding the creation of a false sense of objectivity. As I worked through the interviewing, transcribing, analyzing and writing, I continued to make notes that reflected on my own experience, and read back over them as mentioned above, as a way to remain aware of my state of mind at each step.

Chapter 5 - Analyzing the Interviews

In this chapter I discuss the main themes that came from the constant comparison analysis of nine interviews I carried out, exploring both interviewees' interpretations of their experiences and feelings related to them. The interviewees described interactions with people working at different roles at McGill – largely administrative – and their different approaches to influence the university to adopt a feminist and intersectional analysis seen as essential to end sexual violence on campus. These interviews went on in a dynamic and shifting landscape of policy and social change on campus, in Quebec and beyond, and these stories emerge through the conversations.

I argue, based in the research data, that the university continues to describe efforts to change rape culture, announce new initiatives to support survivors and uses the language of intersectionality, but the interviewees do not see the university's policies or actions as intersectional, and they feel disbelief and disillusion about McGill's intentions. Most of the interviewees presented their analyses of sexual violence and rape culture through an intersectional lens and proposed that this was the way to move forward, by ensuring that BIPOC

and 2SLGBTQ+ students' experiences and realities were made visible and therefore accounted for in university policies. They were concerned that current policies in place at McGill reflected what I identify as white liberal feminist framings of sexual violence, in that they reveal underlying heteronormativity, ableism, racism and colonialism.

In the first section of this chapter, I analyze the meaning interviewees made of their experiences tackling sexual violence on campus. These experiences include how they undertook studies, participated in activism, created knowledge and offered expertise to McGill related to sexual violence policies, prevention programs and survivor support. The interviewees described groups collaborating with McGill in different ways, such that to some extent, feminist and intersectional knowledge is being used, however this is troubled by power and influence imbalances relative to the perceived or actual status of faculty, students, and community workers. The people I interviewed developed important support networks that bolster their work professionally and personally, but within the university and organizations, these networks were not always committed to intersectionality. Intersectionality, as noted, has to work hand in hand with recognition of anti-Black racism and interlocking oppressions, but there was little explicit mention of ways that the institutional or administrative sections of the university were working within these frameworks. The research data from these interviews point to ways that white feminisms are mobilized in different ways to undermine and counteract the impact of these frameworks. I analyze the extent to which interviewees activated feminist and intersectional frameworks to resist and transgress the institutional power dynamics they experienced, with relation to sexual violence prevention and intervention.

In the second section of this chapter, I consider how interviewees felt about specific and individual experiences, what they said about the emotional and psychological impact of these

events and interactions, and what the implications are for feminist and intersectional work. These affective experiences provided important insights into forms of tokenization and isolation that can have the effect of belittling and undermining their contributions. In discussing this, many explained immediate and cumulative harm, and while this is gradually being recognized as a form of violence, white liberal feminist structures in place in university and feminist community organizations still mobilize to erase and diminish they contributions.

Making Meaning of Experiences

In this section, I discuss how the interviewees, faculty, graduate students, activists and workers in feminist community organizations, interpreted their experiences in the context of McGill as they engaged in sexual violence prevention efforts with a commitment to feminism and intersectionality. To some extent, I have added further interpretation of how feminism and intersectionality are applied in prevention efforts and policies. This section largely maps out the forms that feminism takes in the McGill context, and how they are received, contested, and supported**.**

a. Values in Partnerships

Speaking about partnerships between community organizations and different projects at McGill, interviewees interpreted their experiences, bringing up issues of hierarchy and performativity among partners, that ended up damaging the relationships and, in some cases, the outcomes of the projects. McGill as an institution does not acknowledge that its policies, practices, research mechanisms, community work and pedagogy are part of the deeply entrenched inequitable structures based in white supremacy. Other critiques held that McGill is doing the minimum so that as an administration, it looks like they are enacting change while not

truly undertaking institutional culture shifts or transformational goals. Change can be seen, and some barriers are coming down in some parts of the university, nevertheless, there are still too many examples of structures and behaviours that harm students, stakeholders, faculty and staff, identified by the interviewees.

i. The commitment is personal

For all the graduate students, faculty and community workers I interviewed, there was a strong personal connection to the issue of sexual violence. Leyla[3], a racialized graduate student[4], is committed to changing rape culture and believes that academia has a positive contribution to making this happen: "why I choose to do this work is actually to change the world. And I think academia does have an important role to play in it". Sadie, a Black worker in a feminist community organization, introduces a history of violence in their opening remarks:

> And that is because I am a survivor of family violence … so I've always wanted to, you know, like most of us try … and go back and prevent the violence that we witnessed in our homes. And also to prevent it happening with other people.

Anna, a white middle-class graduate student, describes their[5] job in a supermarket when younger as being key to understanding misogyny and patriarchy, being paid less and experiencing sexual harassment:

> I became very interested in the subject, as well as having dealt with, you know, a lot of experiences in the workplace in my own personal life, that were very indicative of

[3] All interviewees were assigned pseudonyms
[4] All interviewees are described only using information they were comfortable sharing
[5] I have chosen to use the non-binary They and Their pronouns for all interviewees; this is to respect the confidentiality of interviewees who use non-binary pronouns. Using they and their for only one or two people would make them too identifiable.

> misogyny, and patriarchy … feeling that there was no place for me to go to say, complain about a boss who I felt was being inappropriate.

Quinn, a white graduate student from rural Canada, describes how their activism emerged from helping people: "I got involved in anti-sexual violence work … it started from that kind of community, like we were dealing with very specific situations of … trying to keep people safe, trying to hold people accountable". Sophia, a white faculty member, describes a lifetime commitment to looking into issues of safety and security, but identifies the Polytechnique December 6th event as:

> the single most compelling and dramatic and galvanizing event in my life as a feminist and think about how could this be and … how can we be working in these sort of look, seemingly safe looking Western environments and something so horrific could happen.

Each of them describes their personal connection tying experience directly to preventing sexual violence on campus, and an impetus to help others to deal with what is also an underlying powerlessness, a sense of "how could this happen?" and a drive to make sure it does not happen again. Different histories of violence, and diverse analyses stemming from academic, historical or personal perspectives were ways that they made meaning of their own vulnerability and reflect the many paths that graduate students, faculty and community workers take – these divergences may give rise to tensions. The impression that there is shared understanding of what sexual violence encompasses and how to tackle it, or any other similar issue, often leads collaborators to believe that they share frameworks for understanding, which can be deceiving and stymie working together, unless this is carefully unpacked.

ii. The engagement is partial

As a white faculty member, Amy describes very positive relationships with feminist community organizations and rich and varied potential for knowledge when referring to project collaborations they have been part of:

> It's all about the movement of these ideas … I just learned so much. Like it was an injection of new ideas, for me, a way of thinking about how people are imaginatively revising some of the assumptions that I have just from my own sort of feminist research. … Community organizations can be … just like collaborators, yes. … It's like wow, we are kindred spirits.

Their work as a researcher and their analysis were enriched and improved from working with informal sites of knowledge that happened in ways that Amy saw as equitable, which is important since, all too often, especially if it concerns intersectionality or BIPOC knowledge, this can be coopted and appropriated in and by the academy. Sophia, another faculty member, highlights that partnership, collaboration and community work are part of the feminist praxis that they and other faculty members prioritize, and that for students, this is a way to show an authenticity in the way universities connect to the world off campus:

> I think it's very important, … that kind of … walking the talk of grassroots, I think for students … the idea that they might have some engagement with people from outside the McGill community is really, really important.

The role to demonstrate to students what it is like in the real world is one way of considering Sophia's comments, but I also consider them as a suggestion that students' everyday life at McGill may be limited by campus delineations, another reason why variety and complexity in feminist community organizations' engagements with campus activities are so important. In a

similar vein, Leyla discusses the potential for "reciprocal knowledge construction" which works when there are efforts made to create authentic and beneficial relationships. However, they are concerned that not all community groups are welcome on campus and that power dynamics affect how the workers and organizations are received:

> where you are working, in which neighborhoods, those kinds of things come into play as well, as well as the specific kind of organization. So, if you're a legal organization versus a frontline organization, working with sex workers, you're going to be treated differently … there's a certain kind of respect that goes with particular ways of working … that … replicates … structures of power

I take from these comments that power structures that encompass racist, sexist and classist attitudes also affect what community level knowledge is included on the campus; that power structures in the university work to invisibilize or simply not include some knowledge, leaving gaps in who is involved and tensions when the values do not line up, opening up the possibility for evacuation of some knowledge.

iii. Influence is mitigated by the academy's knowledge creation

Some knowledge from feminist community groups is made legible to the university and may have some influence. Amy mentions a large national feminist organization that has resources to make knowledge available and thus influence the academy:

> They represent movement frameworks around the creation and dissemination of knowledge based in evidentiary practice, too, right, like stuff that people have tried out. They've modeled it. They've assessed it. And they've written it up. And they make that shareable with others.

In this, Amy confirms that within the university, certain forms of knowledge are more acceptable, and I argue this is because they are legible as knowledge – organizations that provide evidence, assessment, and have written things up, have some influence, because they observe conventions on how knowledge is packaged. Success is another way that groups can influence the university and Hilaire, a white community worker, reveals that in an organization that had produced results on sexual violence prevention, they were able to meet with and share these results with many different stakeholders: McGill administrators, other organizations, and students. Hilaire says: "We have the privilege of being an organization that succeeded. Although [name removed for confidentiality] didn't recognize that, but I mean, we succeeded. We had knowledge and experience. And then we had to share that". In their interview, they describe that this sharing is also a form of influencing and activism, as well as a feminist praxis. Making knowledge available and accessible is an important intersectional practice, so that diverse voices are heard; as a worker in a community organization, Hilaire continues to tell their story to influence others about their vision of success. Sophia also expresses their excitement about the ways that community organizations have contributed in many ways to projects that tackle sexual violence but like Amy, prioritizes making these contributions available to support learning in the academy and elsewhere, asking:

> How do we learn from this work? And how do we value what we're learning across a whole lot of different contexts? So I sort of feel like in a way, there's the work itself, but there's also the kind of the structural features

The interviewees describe examples where feminist community organizations were influential in the university setting, but not what knowledge was transferred, from which I derive those different forms of knowledge had different impact, that more transgressional forms of knowledge

were not so easily included. Within partnerships, the interviewees saw change and influence, although, as I will discuss later, at times this was mitigated by experiences where community informal knowledge was coopted, appropriated and controlled by white liberal feminist framing.

iv. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not

Simply inviting organizations in is not the same as incorporating their knowledge, and the interviewees often brought up this dichotomy. Sophia, discussing a sexual violence prevention project that brought in feminist community groups' perspectives, describes that sometimes groups are not able to contribute:

> When we first started the project, we hoped that [name removed for confidentiality] would be much more active. And of course, I think I was one of the people who was responsible for helping to get them on board only to discover that they hardly exist.

From the context of this excerpt, "hardly exists" means that the organization had no resources and were struggling financially. Not all groups can commit resources to university collaborations and that they do not always prioritize these activities, as discussed in an earlier chapter, and borne out here. Sophia did not discuss other ways a project can include the contribution and knowledge from community groups when resources are limited. Nina, an Afro-feminist queer woman, and community organizer and worker, raises the point that community feminist groups may be included in project activities to provide an intersectional analysis that does not always get used or taken up because of resistance to this knowledge. They explain that the community level knowledge they brought forward was not deemed appropriate for the research projects they were part of:

> when it was time to bring an intersectional lens to the issue, they depended a lot on [name removed for confidentiality] … I was the one representing them, to bring that intersectional analysis. But it wasn't easy because I'm not a scholar. So, a lot of times it would be – (mimicking a dismissive tone) *Yeah, but in terms of academia that doesn't work*…

Nina was not able to make headway to increase intersectional practice because there was resistance to how the knowledge they brought could translate into an academic setting. Even when they suggested intersectional scholars, they were not included. Leyla is concerned that good partnerships with community organizations do not commonly happen: "it's not the norm." Instead, they believe that there is performativity in project and research collaborations they have seen at McGill:

> there's certain kind of social capital gains, to having community organizations as partners, which looks great on grant applications, websites … without necessarily it being realized as actual collaboration.

Leyla is worried that this means important knowledge is not being brought into the project because groups are present in this space mostly as window dressing; that this is a model of inviting groups in, but not actually developing a true collaboration, as a way to sell a project to funders, or students, but not to enact change. Leyla further problematizes these partial relationships as being a potential vector for harm for knowledge creation in the academy. Their unease stems from project activities becoming transactional, meaning there is less attention paid "to create conditions for change in some way that's meaningful". These relationships are often in flux, and as we saw from the comments by Sophia and Amy, the organizations are also in constant movement, and in shifting dynamics vis-à-vis the university. While many are valued for

what they bring to the projects and activities related to sexual violence prevention, these partnerships are troubled.

b. Feminisms in action

In the following sections, I argue that within the projects and partnerships I heard about many forms of feminist resistance and recalcitrance, creating both potential for transformation and unresolved tension. Networks for feminist collective action exist within some parts of the university and attempt to extend support, and informally strengthen capacity in a feminist and at times intersectional tactic of resistance and survivance. At the same time, white liberal feminism is mobilized on multiple levels to protect the status quo, centering whiteness to avoid responding to the demands to change power structures underpinned by heteropatriarchy. Workers and graduate students also may adopt a white liberal framing, or at least use the language of liberal white feminisms, to legitimize and make their activism palatable so that it can be viewed with greater sympathy or be more acceptable to a general audience.

i. Feminist organizing is community, collectivity, mentoring & networking

Feminist organizing, as described by several people I interviewed, put into action collectivity, mentoring, community building and networking as means to help others move ahead, and also learn strengths, and transfer knowledge, while avoiding pitfalls. Several interviewees mentioned developing relationships that resulted in capacity strengthening, tying these to feminist values. Sophia mentioned that although they did not care for the term "mentor", it was often applied to them; although they refuted the term, they actively found ways to support younger faculty, helping them learn from mistakes and remaining open to strategizing around how to face institutional roadblocks. They described this as sharing: "how you have impact and how it works. But I think those collaborative pieces that are so central to what I've

been doing for so long, are at the core of this work." They describe how they use their privilege to support others, and have done this for most of their career, in terms of collaboration and amplifying others. Hilaire, describing this as peer support also says it is important to commit to: "being an amplifier, when you're in a position of privilege, or position of power, then it makes a world of difference." "Being an accomplice" is how Hilaire describes the support someone positioned with greater privilege can offer. They see allyship as a commitment to intersectional community practice and an essential part of developing better tactics in the struggle against sexual violence. Quinn also mentioned that they received strong support among faculty in McGill committed to transforming the institution, getting advice on how to with the administration:

> they were profs who were 100% behind us, behind the scenes, helping out, like letting us lead, doing anything … And like insight into how to work with some of these institutionalized white women in admin positions.

Quinn explains that as someone with less influence and fewer resources, the support, even though it might be from behind-the-scenes, was essential in helping them strategize so they could effectively do their work to help prevent sexual violence on campus.

Francis, a queer BIPOC community worker, on the other hand, was disappointed in their attempts to find this support and community on campus and instead felt they had to return to intersectional and feminist forms of care outside of academia: "Going back to grassroots contexts where we talk about collective care instead of caring about our reputation, our grade, getting published". They did not find the support they were looking for on campus that others had. Similarly, Leyla also said that this support does not happen in academia, for example, on the projects they were involved in, and as a result, joint scholarly work suffered: "even in some cases

where we did put in a lot of work, without the right mentorship, it then got discarded". Leyla describes that their work was effectively meaningless. This was an opportunity to provide support so that joint scholarly work would be retained, or to explain what went wrong when it was rejected. Missing this opportunity to learn from and instead experiencing it as being "discarded" represents to me a failure in feminist praxis to provide effective pedagogical mentoring within the academy. This leads to disengagement for Francis and a lack of feminist knowledge transfer for Leyla. I think in cases where feminist collective support worked, for Sophia, Hilaire and Quinn, there was clearly an intentional approach to create feminist and intersectional space which was lacking for Leyla and Francis. As racialized workers and graduate students, they experienced having their work, analysis and capacity dismissed in the academy and I argue that what Leyla described as a lack of mentoring was in fact a form of discursive violence to minimize and actually evacuate their intersectional work.

ii. Making yourself palatable

Previously Amy described how groups make themselves legible to the university in how their knowledge is packaged and presented, Sadie also describes how the content and the delivery of some information on sexual violence has to be tempered so that education is effectively palatable to those receiving it:

> We can't just be like, (mimicking a slightly more aggressive tone) *Oh my gosh, you're part of patriarchy and misogyny and you suck and you're the reason why rape culture exists*. But it's about like a gentle introduction, right? … our goal is to get to compassionate adults who are supporting survivors, then we need to start with a training … in that same direction

Here Sadie describes how to train faculty members to receive disclosures from students on sexual violence and point them in the right direction, to offer help and support. They describe that such training unpacks intersectional understandings of sexual violence "a little bit" and then moves forward. Even though feminist community organizations want universities to use intersectionality so that survivors are better supported, they are in a bind that only allows them to do this in small doses. Francis describes that too often the focus of education on sexual violence is on learning terminology, and explains that this is not the same as learning about violence: "What we want is for people to sit with the discomforting and unsettling truth about gendered and sexual violence. Learning terms will not let us do that". Similarly, Francis questions the value of simplistic training for students:

> In academia … when they ask for trainings, they're like … "let's do a consent workshop, where we tell people no means no and yes means maybe or whatever". You know those reductive terms are… not giving us the richest site for learning about these things.

Preventing sexual violence with consent education is called into question because it fails to take into account deeper power dynamics about who can give consent and who does not have this agency because of forms of oppression. Simplifying analyses is a form of making intersectional feminist work more palatable. To even begin to work in academia, community educators frequently compromise. Sadie and Francis are still promoting a feminist stance on sexual violence, but they are modulating their own intersectional analysis. Workers and organizations take this stance to cast themselves as liberal and therefore unthreatening to get a seat at the table within academia, and this compromise has affective outcomes to themselves, as I discuss later. It results in watering down intersectional analysis, while also propping up white liberal framings, such that staff and university may think this level of knowledge on sexual violence is enough,

rather than just a starting point of a deeper culture change. Anna discussed how powerful women, and in this case, they were referring to Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, have to present themselves a certain way in institutions to be seen and heard:

> you are expected to spend so much time and money … especially I think women in positions of power to be palatable and not misstep. … to try and fit into this thing, to even get a seat at the table.

While Anna is referring to a US Representative and how she is judged in her workplace, this same need to be acceptable and toned down, to present arguments in a way that does not seem hostile to the status quo or too extreme is part and parcel of respectability politics that maintain existing power structures. By compromising—gradually introducing new factors to analysis over time, working for incremental progress so as not to rush a re-learning cultural change, feminist community organizations may be playing the long game, but there are lasting harms to this approach, to the Black and racialized faculty, students and workers who are still subsumed in the piecemeal approach of white liberal feminism.

iii. Middle-class respectability maintains the status quo

The narrative I heard from interviewees is that McGill does not understand sexual violence, and that this lack of understanding is not a gap, or an oversight or a lack of information, but a deliberate position. The updated policy includes the *Code of Conduct: Romantic and Sexual Relationships between Teaching Staff and Students* (p.5-6), that legislates relationships, romantic or otherwise, and is concerned more with academic conflicts of interest than power imbalances. Quinn describes a member of McGill's administration discussing relationships between faculty and students during their time as a student: "Sure, there were

people that would come on to like *other* women, but that was other women in the class, not *her*. *She* was there to study." This excerpt reflects an attitude that in the past, women were simply able to say yes or no to harassment is rooted in their white privilege. Senior women administrators then at McGill are reflecting on this experience based on their own middle-class understanding that some women are virtuous and refuse to be distracted by sex, while others are essentially "asking for it", that other women do not have the discipline or strength to hold men off, also rooted in respectability politics of white heteropatriarchy. There seems to be a refusal among white liberal feminism to consider the critical race and intersectional perspective, that Black and brown bodies are dehumanized, enslaved, occupied and therefore "unrapeable" and without this analysis making its way into the policies and procedures, there can be little trust that they will protect everyone. In our interview, Amy relates an anecdote they had heard about Senate proceedings: "One of the faculty senators had talked about how she had experienced sexual misconduct from faculty at McGill, when she was a student" and was laughed at in Senate. Amy goes on to explain the laughter and the attitude displayed: "This was just understood as (mimicking very dismissive voice) *Oh, it's just the way it is*". For many members of the McGill Senate, relationships between professors, teaching assistants, staff and students are status quo, acceptable, and this does not need to change, as evidenced by the guidelines adopted. For me, this shows not only a callous lack of concern for a past experience but also a commitment to sexist, racist and classist stereotypes. Drawing a line between types of relationships, categorizing and identifying who is inside and who is "other" is very much a function of white supremacy, where those deemed virtuous and respectable have nothing to fear, since those assaulted are asking for it, or outside the respectability of white middle class hegemony.

iv. Mobilizing white feminism

Several interviewees observe that almost everyone within McGill who was working in Senate and on the sexual violence ad hoc committee was white, because of institutional barriers and a lack of Black, Indigenous and other racialized groups in the administration or in the faculty. This administrative whiteness, reflected in McGill's Board and Senate, and much of its faculty, does little to question itself. As Nina noted: "the analysis remained very white woman denouncing sexual violence on campus", meaning that it stuck to sexual binaries that explain violence as being between men and women and to middle-class or common-sense remedies that rely on consent education, increasing disclosures, adding more procedures and multiplying security guards and police presence. In essence, these are technologies of white liberal feminism, and therefore not "mindful that certain communities have certain experiences with the police". In this, Nina is referring to hyper surveillance by police of Black communities, and to distrust for authority that is experienced by many racialized, refugee and immigrant groups. Like Nina, Leyla describes committees and their approach in similar ways:

> committees are always white women, and they're, they're wonderful white women. You know, and they are they doing really good work, and so on. But I think that also goes to the continued portrayal of sexual violence on campus as targeting particular parts of the population. You know, in fact, like the attention to campuses itself is somehow classist and racist already. Right? Because these spaces are already kind of segregated.

Leyla is referring to the white middle-class nature of the university as a whole and McGill in particular, since the university is seen as an elitist institution, where BIPOC students are often uncomfortable and find it hard to break through racist structures, and where they are typically found in certain faculties, projects and spaces. Francis describes McGill as "So many white

women. So many white straight women. I was like – Ok – I should have known that", recalling that the university, despite having large numbers of international students, still centres whiteness. While white women express compassion for many forms of sexual violence, as liberal white women, they still maintain a heteronormative and patriarchal logic in how they see sexual violence, with limited capacity to understand violence against BIPOC or 2SLGBTQ+ people, potentially increasing harms to these communities.

When referring to the measures McGill put in place to tackle sexual violence, interviewees described what I interpret as white and disciplinary feminism, whereby knowledge was policed and controlled, so that younger women, racialized women, queer femmes and in fact anyone counter to the hegemony was discounted, dismissed, diminished to the extent that they questioned their own capacity. Quinn describes one such conversation where they were bringing their intersectional understanding of sexual violence to senior white women in McGill:

> I found that as well, like – (mimicking a patronising tone) *Hun, like, I've been doing gender-based violence work for 20 years, like, I think I know what I'm doing. And like, Who are you? What expertise are you bringing here?* There's that huge, so you're constantly self doubting of like, oh, maybe I am making this a bigger deal than it is.

Liberal feminism here is used to support the admin-friendly work of older white women and leads to others questioning their own intersectional feminism. Nina, a Black worker in a feminist organization, working with faculty from multiple universities, also expressed that their role was undermined because of lack of credentials, describing how they were not able to have influence because of power imbalances:

> I had to, like, always, always, like call out a lot of stuff. And kind of like shame them to bring stuff, and that's basically it because, like, they would always like, say, (mimicking a prissy voice) *Well, you know, (tutting) you're not an academic*, you know. So I wasn't, there was like a power imbalance in the fact that I wasn't from academia.

Nina constantly offers critique and analysis to respect their own intersectional commitment to the work of sexual violence prevention, but this knowledge is not recognized, even within a project where they have been invited in precisely to provide it. Their comments typically met with denial and when they demanded the project hire intersectional academics to contribute, there were excuses and prevarications. Leyla also describes that feminist community workers who are considered uncredentialed are dismissed:

> one aspect of why community organization or community work in general gets also kind of put on a lower tier is … like, (mimicking a lofty tone) *Oh, we are PhDs*. And there is a certain like, classist aspect to that.

Assuming lack of validity based on level of education is classist on many levels. First of all, though the number of women with master's degrees and PhDs is on the rise, the cost of education and / or the debt associated is prohibitive in Canada, tending to keep all but largely middle-class women out. The community organizing sector is majority female and over 50% racialized, unlike the faculty of most universities, including McGill, so knowledge of BIPOC communities is being locked out of academia through this insistence on credentials over lived experience. Students and feminist organizing allies continue to come up against institutional intransigence. Knowledge and analysis provided by graduate students and community worker is undermined. Amy describes: "They've been gaslit. They've been belittled. They've been told that they don't know things they know. That they're childish.". Amy, Nina, Francis, Quinn and Leyla

described academic and administrative feminists both pulling rank and taking patronizing approaches to other more marginalized women. I argue from these examples that within McGill, white liberal feminists replicate patriarchal violence while ostensibly advancing more expansive feminist agendas to end sexual violence. More powerful, usually white, women mobilize their credentials, often at the expense of non-academic, community feminists.

I see the actions of white liberal feminists at McGill also as gatekeeping; they are experiencing potential threats to their institution and put their feminist credentials into play to protect the university and its reputation. They also protect themselves and their authority, not only the institution as the two are interrelated. It is important to note that women in positions of authority within the administration stated that they were feminist and understood sexual violence. When I asked if they displayed feminist solidarity on rape culture and policy demands, Quinn responded:

> I think yes, they 100% had the agency to act differently. They kept telling us they didn't ... because they represented the institution, and they kept telling us how they were feminist, how, like, they had done similar activism when they were in their youth. They cared about the issues, but (mimicking a softer tone, as if the women were speaking) *their hands are tied*, you know, like, it was that narrative, got really, really mobilized.

As well as protecting the institution by not acting, the white women in the administration claimed that pressing for more demands damaged their credibility, because it made their efforts to tackle sexual violence seem ineffectual. Here, disciplinary feminism is activated to maintain the status quo. In another example, Leyla describes different graduate students and faculty holding back on being too critical of the institution, even though this creates roadblocks for others and causes potential harms, because: “it's not rewarding for them. In the future, it's not

going to result in more funding, if you spend your time critiquing the institution, you know, when you are so tied to the institution, for your everything". So in order to protect their future status, and progress professionally, feminists make choices not to critique the institution. Hilaire, speaking about women in universities as much as about feminist community workers in this section, mentioned the danger of choosing comfort over change, to maintain power and to avoid pain, explaining this as another reason why feminists attempt to preserve the established order in their own organizations:

> you can be complacent in the system that you're in and won't challenge it because you're in a position of privilege or in a position of power…if you get within organizations that are institutionalized, then complacency is, you know, it's a huge part of it.

Knowing it is painful to push for change within an institution, knowing that doing so can result in exclusion, marginalization, silencing and ultimately ejection, some stick to making limited changes within existing structures, while avoiding criticism. There is also a white liberal feminist tactic to centre their analysis over others, and to expect solidarity without offering it back, misses the point made in my earlier section on collaboration, collectivity and mentoring– that feminist praxis centres solidarity, so that more powerful women offer support and lend their influence to those perceived as having less. In this example, being tied to an institution, and protecting it by mobilizing feminist credentials leaves aside feminist values of solidarity.

Here I am arguing that both respectability and credentials are at stake. From the perspective of these powerful women, younger, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ community workers and activists are threatening women's progress by failing to show proper support of women in authority in the institution. As such, I submit that women's place in the hegemony is borrowed, and subject to change. Women in the university administration expect support from younger

feminists and women and femmes of colour, assuming that they also seek space in the hegemony at McGill, the institution they protect in order to protect their own power. They have earned this power by upholding the mainstream white liberal position, contingent on disciplinary technologies of governance and by blocking existential threats to this power. In contrast, for intersectional activists, policy change is not the end goal; they are after transformation – an end to rape culture. In the context of settler colonial heteropatriarchy and the institution, having feminists and women control each other is a significant tactic that maintains existing power structures.

One vision for decentring this whiteness comes from Francis, who hopes for a radical transformation where power is named, and accountability is clear: "a culture that makes it fertile for nourishing collaboration and trust so that when fuck-ups do happen people are ready to be accountable and call each other in to do better." They describe conscious and intentional relationships within what they call grassroots communities, as opposed to academia, that are BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+, and acknowledge that harms are possible, through discursive violence, or otherwise. There is a possibility for change, an openness to changing the script if there can be explicit commitments to dismantle heteropatriarchal colonial structures within the institutions that have awarded and afforded this power.

v. Ticking a box on intersectionality

Black and racialized women in academia, in the university administration, and within majority white feminist organizations were mentioned occasionally. Francis muses on their positionality, reminding me that many organizations hire racialized staff while still resisting an intersectional or race critical framing to deflect legitimate criticism:

> … lots of people of colour are violent and horrible, and sometimes that is actually more dangerous because then (mimicking a high-toned voice) *Oh – it's not racist, because the director of this is a mixed-race person of colour* …

Feminist community organization workers who are racialized women may advance liberal feminism and avoid intersectional analysis to their individual benefit at the expense of women of colour in general. Leyla also mentions that racialized people can replicate white liberal feminism, "people of colour, including femme people of colour, will also very successfully embody their proximity to whiteness." This is commonplace enough that they say this happens "over and over and over again", where the repetition has the effect of suggesting that these are not isolated incidents, but a regular occurrence in academia, or perhaps at McGill, although this was not clear from the interview. Francis specifically pointed to racialized people in Montreal who, advocating for community-based sexual violence prevention, did not name and take into account racism and other forms of oppression within the system or failed to account for extractive practices and perhaps most importantly "did not name their power", were potentially dangerous. Their racialized presence *stands in for* an intersectional analysis – diversity without change, while they in fact *stand in the way of* more radical, anti-oppressive frameworks. They do not challenge the structures of power within their own organizations, and in this sense, I argue that racialized women may be complicit in white liberal feminism, and choose to prop up this power, possibly to protect their proximity to whiteness, gaining validity and power within established structures. Anna mentions that there is a tendency to try to accumulate status or legitimacy by using "buzzwords" to indicate a certain commitment to a cause without actually doing the work to support it and take steps that increase women's safety, pointing out that

community organizations continue to fail women in spite of posturing about solidarity, because this is not authentic:

> … quote, unquote, feminist organizations … got on the #metoo train. But like, when you actually look within … under that kind of optics, like people were coming out from those very organizations and critiquing them and saying, I didn't feel safe there.

In this case, the optics Anna is referring to are the optics of organizations claiming to support all survivors while actually causing harms and violence to women within their organizations, getting on the #MeToo train to say #WeBelieveSurvivors or #YesAllWomen while actively suppressing narratives internally. Feminist community organizations can be sites for harm because they do not actually listen to all women or support all survivors, but only those deserving of help - white, middle-class, virtuous and submissive, the perfect victim from rape scripts and rape myths. Women who do not feel safe within these feminist organizations are commonly those who are trying to bring in other ways to understand sexual violence and rape culture, the kind of expansive analyses that the Black women's triangulation of rape encompasses (see Figure 2). From previous chapters, I think it is clear that #MeToo had an enormous effect on shifting taboos around sexual violence, and there are now measurably more examples of survivors speaking out, and institutions taking steps to make they space safer, troubled though these efforts are at McGill.

It is important for me to note, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3, that the internal struggle related to Quebec feminist organizations plays out in academia in discussing sexual violence. The form of white feminism associated with the sovereigntist cause is being confronted with critical intersectional feminism, and as Nina describes, this also affects the research approach and policies adopted:

> There's also the challenge that in Quebec … when we were addressing sexual violence, there was no intersectional framework. And there was an inability to adopt one because we didn't really have scholars around the table that had an expertise in intersectionality.

Beyond McGill, Hilaire states that there are societal gaps in Quebec at large, where admitting there is a problem and capturing the nature of that problem is a huge step, and one that is still not being taken:

> we see it like evidently with … criticism in Quebec, right, we can't accept that we have systemic racism in Quebec, and because we can't admit that, then we can't move on to finding true solutions.

As graduate students, community workers and faculty tried to ensure that community level knowledge and expertise came together within various academic sites, there were serious gaps that could not be reconciled, in spite of the efforts among several people I interviewed. This is important since the same feminist organizations may interact with several universities, and faculty work together on multiple projects across institutions, more so in light of Quebec legislation that sexual violence policies in must be passed in post-secondary education institutions. Using the term intersectionality without the accompanying active critical approach is a considerable hindrance and highlights that while there are many efforts to dismantle rape culture at McGill and throughout Quebec, white liberal feminism and neoliberal governance in institutions are material blocks. These blocks reinforce or replicate invisibilities of scholars and students who identify as racialized as well as those who use critical race and intersectional frameworks who are working in Quebec to prevent sexual violence in campuses. Critical race and intersectional work *is* happening; however, coming from community, it may be dismissed as small scale, less rigorous, ineffectual, or incompatible. Coming from other scholars, it is

questioned and diminished. Even in light of successful work, there are significant barriers to bringing an intersectional analysis into the main campus space when sexual violence is addressed.

McGill named intersectional understandings of violence in its 2019 *Policy Against Sexual Violence,* ostensibly a potential shift towards transformative action. However, from several perspectives among the interviewees, McGill is judged to be disingenuous by inserting an analysis used by feminist community organizations, or organizers in the campus setting, without actively applying it:

> …just because a policy says intersectionality doesn't mean it's intersectional. And I think that's one of like, the most disillusioning parts of all this is like, when people talk the right way, we can, a lot of times come away with the idea that like, oh, we're on the same page, like we all hold those same values. But in reality, like we don't. (Anna)

The administration, in the form of the committee working on the policy or from the perspective of the Senate, was perceived as coopting, watering down, or "washing" as one interviewee, Quinn, said. Leyla reflected that: "the policy becomes the way of not doing the work, you know, and I feel like that happens. A lot. Especially around an issue like this, because there isn't enough of an investment in actually changing the status quo". As noted above in this chapter, partnerships which develop intersectional research, statements, policies and protocols to prevent sexual violence, are all to often words without action. Ultimately, they were presented within an overall structure of performative action "ticking a box".

Concluding this first of two sections, in response to research question 1, I argue that while there is significant and varied engagement between the research community at McGill and

feminist community organizations, that this is tempered by unspoken and unpacked power dynamics and positionality. Thus, community organizations engage believing there are shared values, but find there are institutional as well as academic barriers to their analysis and that engagements may be transactional. The research data point to unproductive tensions and uncomfortable departures. In response to research question 2, I argue that the governing culture of McGill, while allowing for feminist community organizations' knowledge interventions on campus, uses women within McGill's power structures, and liberal white feminism to subordinate other women perceived as having less power and to maintain the status quo. The research data I have presented point to a pattern of pushback, possibly backlash, from within McGill based in heteropatriarchy and white supremacy, and also in what is understood as rape culture.

Affective impacts of sexual violence work on campus

In this section, I turn to the tenor and texture of experience as revealed by the interviewees, away from how they explained what happened and made of their efforts to tackle sexual violence on campus. Here I am concerned with their sensations, how this work affected them, and the emotionality of their commitments. As mentioned, there is a personal involvement in this work, feminist, intersectional, race critical or otherwise affective, these are embodied, lived realities that by their very nature deal with emotionality. Through my commitment to critical frameworks, it is important to reflect how it felt for the people I interviewed to engage with the campus. I often think of this as being a cost or burden when I look in from the outside as the weight carried, but this is not necessarily how the interviewees described it, so I start by considering the texture of their lives through their descriptions, then attempting to consider this in light of the conclusions of the previous section on erasure, cooptation and performativity.

a. We're still doing denial in 2020 (Sophia)

As mentioned, many interviewees have long histories of organizing, academic research and feminist advocacy. Sophia describes a commitment to remain vigilant because there are constantly new manifestations of the forms of violence which are met with silence:

> in terms of my history … everything that I've done … around inequity, harassment, systemic kinds of discrimination, and the denial that keeps taking place over and over again, from everything from the Ghomeshi case to everything that we've seen during COVID-19.

The denial Sophia is invoking here is a sort of head-in-the-sand reaction that followed momentous femicides such as the Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989, or in Nova Scotia in April 2020, where there was initial institutional failure to consider them examples of gender-based violence. There is societal denial of the impacts of gender-based violence, as Hilaire also mentions, discussing the case of Martin Carpentier, (a Quebec man who killed his two daughters in July 2020 during the separation process with their mother):

> they're saying there is no indication that Martin Carpentier who killed his two daughters … is dangerous to the public. So it gives … a very, very contemporary, recent event that shows how we undermine … the victim … to minimize what has happened

In this case, *they* is the police force, another institution that continues to reproduce the governing prinicples it is built to protect, at the expense of the girls killed and the woman harmed. In the police statement stating Carpentier is "not a danger to the public", the children and the ex-partner he has harmed are not included in this institution's definition of "the public" - they are female, young, and only 'alleged' victims until such time as the legal system proves it. I argue that as

intersectional feminists, interviewees feel and sense gender-based violence, beyond analysis and knowledge, and this is part of their every day lived experiences. Amy describes a form of feminist praxis that makes this experiential, embodied knowledge tangibly something that can be relied on:

> feminism is something you embody. It's about how we inhabit ourselves … the forms of awareness that we can develop and have already developed, but often don't recognize, all the kind of instinctual and intuitive information that we live with but are taught to distrust.

Although there is embodied knowledge that as feminists we trust and use to make sense of the situations we find ourselves in, we are taught to question this as women and femmes and we are constantly having to unlearn this. The denial, minimization, and distrust that Sophia, Hilaire and Amy respectively describe lead them to question the validity of lived experiences and the knowledge gained from this, whereby intersectional feminism reinforces these embodied experiences.

b. Creeping feeling of dispossession

Amy noted their frustration dealing with anti-feminist stances within discussions on academic courses, with other faculty members on a committee suggesting that “feminist” in the title of the proposed course be replaced with the word “gender”:

> and that's the *only* course, ever, along the *entire* process of approvals that *ever* got questioned. The only one, … you know, I'd show up to all of the meetings for different approval levels. We're consulting and discussing the approvals. And I always had to answer that question. (Mimicking a subtly contemptuous voice) *Why feminist*?

Amy's emphasis on the uniqueness of this situation is important – they mentioned it four times in this excerpt, and this is another affective factor in their academic work. When I probed, Amy went on to say: "Oh, they think feminism, you know, means something, really caricatured. And they're scared by it." This analysis of how it feels to face growing resistance to and active distaste of feminism within academic circles, is something they do not think others face. The situation of feminism in academia gives them cause for concern.

More than once, it was mentioned that the existence of the Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies (IGSF), a catalyzer for feminist organizing, a focus for feminist scholarship and a conduit to external partnerships, is under scrutiny within McGill. Sophia described being "shocked at the anti-feminist attacks on the organization" and that it has been criticized for being "too focused on community engagement" as if this were a reason to question its academic or institutional credentials. Sophia described a surprising lack of support within the arts faculty, where it is housed: "I just couldn't believe … just how misogynistic and rude … some of the comments that were made by some of the senior administration, it was really appalling." As a feminist institution under threat, it is also important to note that Amy says that getting things done within McGill depends on who is in key leadership roles:

> What kind of support it has, all depends on who is in those positions [of power]. And what they relationships are with other people who are either in leadership positions or close to those people in leadership positions.

Relationships emerged in my interviews many times as being crucial to move ahead and make things happen, and these are alliances built sometimes in shared values but might also be a form of additional affective work that faculty in particular take on, rather than graduate students or community feminist organizations who would not have the influence to keep the IGSF open.

c. Burn out and exhaustion is common, caused by disillusion

Lack of trust, disappointment, disillusionment, frustration and betrayal were felt by interviewees working on and researching sexual violence on campus at McGill. These emotions connect the hard work to the commitment needed to keep going. In feminist activist circles, typically workers who experience constant pressure along with negative emotions are prone to cynicism and disengagement, as well as vicarious trauma and burn out, especially front-line workers intervening and preventing gender-based violence.

Sadie mentions that waiting for universities to follow internal processes and approvals is frustrating as a community worker:

> the length of time that it takes some organizations or some academics to get their work approved … the sort of stalls happening in this work. And you can see that a lot of folks are so focused on the research. … I have had some challenges … bringing people to understand real-life scenarios.

They explain here that they experience an urgent feeling to help those who in need that is not shared by researchers or not considered in the university processes, and they experience tension because of this, aware of harms and waiting for universities to follow due process before undertaking the work. As already mentioned, Anna is disillusioned by the use of the term intersectionality without the accompanying analysis in reality. They, like Sadie, express frustration about the way institutions work to create knowledge, seeing it as creating barriers. As a graduate student, Anna experiences frustration in academia; they have been researching harms and pain but cannot address them directly. They also feel that the knowledge created within McGill is too abstract and obtuse to be appreciated by most people: “So we have all this kind of

really important knowledge that people have worked on for years, right, that feels kind of locked up from the general public, which can be hard".

Leyla also found university mechanisms that kept community organizations collaborations to a minimum were a lost opportunity, that was: "extremely disappointing for those of us who were excited, and who had worked with community orgs before and through which a lot of our knowledge was formed". Although research projects included community level knowledge, they did not allow for significant contributions, which this was disappointing to them as a graduate student. Anna reflected that the way to achieve transformational change is to leave and find other places more suited to the analysis: "it did not seem valuable to try and do this work in a setting that was so not conducive to it." Anna mentioned that they had since left academia: "realizing that academia was not the audience that I wanted to talk to". The university does not feel right for some graduate students and some community workers and engaging put them in a difficult situation emotionally, as they labour for institutional change that would take into account intersectional and critical race interpretations of sexual violence. Anna felt harmed by taking up this resistance and left because of the toll it takes.

Quinn told me that exchanges with the administration: "showed a dissonance between what *we* were saying and … how the institution interpreted it". Constantly confronting intellectual dissonance is both exhausting and disheartening, and this is part of the constant efforts to advocate on behalf of survivors, with a view to creating greater safety. The institutional barriers cause additional harms even for those who are trying to work with the institution to address those barriers.

As mentioned, the harms within the university structure, the negative emotions and constant pressure can easily lead to different forms of burn out. As Quinn mentions, the impact

of organizing to tackle gender-based violence can be devastating and long-term: “I was so sick. I was really sick. And it took me a really long time to recover”. Hilaire recognizes that this is an ongoing form of working in feminist community organizations, such that they call it “burn out culture” and argue that it is important to check in with each other, including the administrators, in recognition that the work is taxing. They say that they learned the importance of:

> Sharing and supporting people in a culture of self care. I would say that that's one of the things that throughout everything I did, even with administrators, right, everything I did, yeah. How do you take care of yourself?

They are playing a mentoring role here, as well as introducing what they see as a form of feminist self-care, which they are careful to state goes “beyond the bubble bath.” Self care is not an individualized action, it is a recognition for Hilaire that there is a personal engagement to: “find my worth, through the lens of self care, not though the lens of production”, from which I see self care as a compassionate call to action to recognize being over doing. It is an important counterbalance to burn out and the negative affective pull that the discursive, collaborative and feminist tensions have on the people I interviewed.

d. Becoming a token: fodder for others

In the interviews, there were a few examples where those who are deemed “other” expressed how deeply they were isolated and tokenized, because of their positions as the only person like them within a larger group, complicated by racism, sexism, classism and by ideas of representation and empowerment. For those who mentioned being tokenized, it was important to take opportunities to speak, but they also felt controlled, or questioned because their role was to be seen, not to critique, even when they held important knowledge. In particular those who were

young, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+ students, organizers, activists and workers described patronizing and tokenizing experiences as they were bringing forward the embodied experiences and intersectional knowledge.

Francis describes that when asked to speak up, to be a voice for intersectionality because they embodied this more than others, there was a pressure to conform: "people … really tokenized me. … And I leaned in sometimes because I knew I had to comply". While there is the chance to voice a reality that otherwise would not be spoken about, there was a form of violence here in, feeling they had no agency. Nina describes a similar experience:

> I was highly tokenized because there was nobody of color and nobody with an intersectional framework. So, they always gave me a podium. They always gave me a space to do a workshop or write a paper because if not, nobody else would cover those issues. But I don't think that there was a real commitment to adopting an intersectional lens.

Nina was dismayed that there was no commitment to adopting intersectionality, but they used these opportunities to advance the analysis they had, even though they were simultaneously frustrated that there was no substantive commitment to intersectionality. Hilaire's comments on tokenizing attitudes were succinct and also revealed their level of frustration: "Don't fucking tokenize. If you don't do it, don't say it". Their words are harsh and also revealed an emotional toll that suggested they were sick of this behaviour because they had seen it play out too many times. In this section, I am concerned with the emotional toll that tokenization has on those who experience it; they are both resistant and compliant and that they must walk an uncomfortable line, keeping people on their side, avoiding criticism, while still using the opportunities they have to speak out. These tensions are predicated on the behaviour of those with more power who

invite others in and offer space in efforts that improve their standing, without enacting change or transformation in their work as a result of embodied knowledge offered.

Being isolated as the only person with an intersectional framework also makes it possible to corral community-based intersectional analyses and marginalize them, sometimes on campus and sometimes within organizations. Being associated with identity over knowledge, is not only tokenizing but also objectifying. Francis describes feeling this way being in majority white spaces: “How can you speak up for me if you don’t care about me? If I am theoretical to you, how can you care about me in a deep and embodied way?” This question is haunting in that it suggests the potential for true relationship and collective commitment to change, where care replaces the transactional or productive nature of interactions about sexual violence. Beyond Francis’s embodied reality, McGill’s work to address sexual violence if made intersectional, would address the material safety of women, BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ people; realities that are theoretical to liberal white feminists. Sadie names these as “folks who don't feel like they have agency to go and do something about it or share anything”, and often faced with institutional intransigence or roadblocks.

On the one hand, McGill administratively is making attempts to demonstrate action, responding to public outcry and legislative requirements by adopting some policy and offering some accommodations to survivors. At the same time, it is blocking transformative action that goes beyond the white liberal feminist frame. Similarly, some parts of the academy are researching and developing projects that tackle sexual violence, also with a largely white feminist framing while isolating intersectional knowledge and praxis. In some cases, both are seen as performative and disingenuous.

Concluding this second section I argue that tensions among faculty, graduate students and community organizations come about because while the university might claim to support the partnerships and the intersectional analysis they bring forward, this is interpreted as actions undertaken to burnish the institutional reputation, and not backed by commitment to change. Constantly facing the dissonance of this with the reality of survivors' experiences is exhausting and there is little recognition of the extent of the harms of this approach on workers and graduate students.

In response to my third research question, I argue that partnerships in the last decade, while moving ahead in some areas, hold inconsistencies and troubling dynamics. In feminist community organizations, practices and ideologies do not always reflect intersectional goals, and are sometimes compromised by liberal white feminist framings. Organizations do influence McGill university but largely in the context of working for incremental change; there are lasting harms to this approach, to the Black and racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ faculty, students and workers who are still waiting for transformative action that will recognize their multiple intersectional and interlocking oppressions. McGill's actions or inactions, as analyzed through the interviewees' embodied experiences sometimes maintain structures of deliberate and disingenuous performativity and could also be seen as "ticking a box", rather than deep engagement. Mobilizing institutional feminists and women to control others is a significant tactic that maintains existing power structures in the context of settler colonial heteropatriarchy within the institution.

Chapter 6 – CONCLUSION

In this research paper, I have argued that feminist workers, engaged faculty, activists and students are actively working to propose intersectional, race critical and anti-oppressive solutions to sexual violence but that within McGill's power and governance structures, this undertaking meets with mixed results. I have pointed to internal and contradictory subordination, within McGill, whereby white liberal women protect their power, to the detriment of other women and feminist aims, because this power aligns with the dominance of heteropatriarchy. Mobilizing white liberal feminism to refute and deny legitimacy of other feminisms, largely intersectional, and certainly emancipatory, allows women representing the institution to dismiss, diminish, and patronize more radical understandings of sexual violence because they do not see or accept the connections to systems of power. In McGill, this power relates to the university's epistemological, disciplinary and governmental power, at the very least, and extends further into extending settler colonial power over BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff. Although there are considerable institutional efforts to tackle sexual violence, the results of these efforts will always be partial because of these knowledge / praxis gaps.

What flows from these findings?

My exploration of how intersectional understandings of sexual violence coming from community and activists is concerned with the ways that knowledge is generated by and for feminist community organizations. As I questioned if what is happening at McGill reflects the work of previous scholars, I found, like others, that feminist community organizations are rarely recognized or validated for their contributions (Lalonde 2017; Smith 2010; Naples 1998). This does not stop ongoing advocacy and activism that may be having incremental effects. However,

the dedication and tenacity of activists and organizers, whether they are placed within the institution or outside it, often accounts for the moments when the work of the university reflects emancipatory analysis. By continuing to make community level knowledge visible on campus, and advocating for its inclusion in efforts to break down the false dichotomy between formal and informal knowledge (Choudry, 2015), faculty, graduate students and workers in partnership are offering emancipatory solutions to sexual violence.

Through the lens of the interviews and the intersectional and critical race analysis, I argue that McGill as an institution is not a neutral space in which people work and study but is a site of heteropatriarchal practices, coded into its existence. I consider systems of oppression and power dynamics as existing in many more places than a single institution, and that within the institution there are many different departments and stakeholders coming together, albeit with different concerns and motivations, when dealing with sexual violence and creating policies (Vemuri, 2020). Using critical race and intersectional frames, working to expand viewpoints contextually, leaning into Naples's explanation of Collins's construct – through the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal dimensions (2009, p. 570-571), I found that the neoliberal logics of the institution, as well as the governing culture created conditions whereby feminist knowledge was questioned and diminished, and was therefore only partially visible (Méndez, 2020). It could be that a partial examination of the realities at McGill explains or even justifies policy initiatives that are only partial solutions and erosion of trust and collaboration leads to under-reporting that means that the scope of the issue will never be fully grasped, and thus efforts will always fall short. There is the possibility for transformational culture change on campus, to tackle rape culture with an intersectional understanding but only if there is full recognition of sexual violence within these framings.

Within intersectional gender justice movements, transformative justice, community-based support, and social movement building are prioritized, and are considered to have significant promise to change culture (Kivel, 2017). Community feminist organizations and scholars prioritize similarly to build on action to address sexual violence on campus, uncovering how it operates and what can be done about it. with the lens I used in this examination, it was possible to consider not only the institutional power that controls knowledge production about sexual violence, but also the power imbalances that create situations where sexual violence is taking place. These power imbalances exist within departments, faculties, and administrative units on campus, and among and within community groups, effectively creating discrimination against some forms of knowledge. Some of my analysis demonstrates that policies, procedures, and practices put into place to support survivors and end sexual violence fail to attend to this power and thus continue to cause harm. Addressing the harms of discursive violence and the whitening of intersectionality (Bilge, 2013), by not only considering actions, but also accounting for this knowledge, is needed.

McGill was given a C- grade on its sexual violence policy in 2017 (Our Turn, 2017) and has since experienced student protests and strikes for failing to establish a climate of safety for all its students, knowing that 40% have experienced some form of violence (Shariff, 2018). It has fulfilled legislated requirements put in place to establish policies and procedures, including a prevention program. It has yet to show that it has established a safer environment for students and reduced levels of sexual violence. The governing culture as well as the white liberal feminist stance on display with consent initiatives and tensions with intersectional organizations and teachings that drive remedies so far have not met the promise of transformative action on sexual violence.

My research uncovered examples of informal networks, built largely outside of official structures and processes, that provided solidarity and support. However, the lack of action by the administration reveals that the power of faculty is also mitigated by institutional processes. Supporting student activists, faculty, and partners to prevent burn out, cynicism and disillusion that leads to many leaving the projects and in fact impoverishing knowledge creation, means involving them deeply, valuing their work and sharing power.

Limitations to this research paper

I am conscious that this study takes up only some aspects of this problem to provide a view into how sexual violence prevention and intervention transpires in McGill, among the larger context of scholars, activists and organizers who are embarking on similar processes to name, tackle and account for the racism, sexism, ableism, and classism baked into education systems and specifically into McGill. This examination touched on part of this complex web of interactions, and from an intersectional perspective, in the interviews, gender was foregrounded with the intersections with race, class and sexuality named most often. Within oppressions, indigeneity was hardly touched on and among other intersecting oppressions, migration / nationality status, disability, were mentioned by interviewees but not explicitly examined in the McGill context. Crip theorists Robert McCruer and Michael Berube (2006) connect compulsory heterosexuality with dominant ideologies of gender, sexuality and race (p. 1) and offer rich and varied opportunities to explore how oppressions connected to the hegemony act out in different lives, often invisibilized among intersectional examinations of power, and this deserves much more attention. The Report on Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and Two Spirit People is a significant contribution to understand the violence and genocide of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people that should be examined in the light of sexual

violence against First Nations, Inuit and Métis people at McGill. Centring on Indigenous-led world views, research practices and community needs, and with the leadership of knowledge keepers and Elders, this work could provide an analysis into the ways that sexual violence on campus is deeply enmeshed with settler colonialism.

Final words

Being able to pause and taking time to reflect between a series of events is an important part of meaning making processes. As I reflect back on the conversations and the interviews at the end of this analysis and research process, with waves of the pandemic still traveling through our communities, I wonder about the effects of COVID and how it changed this work. Because of existing disproportionate access to resources based in race, class and gender, this pandemic devastated Black, racialized and Indigenous communities. Working class women, usually racialized, workers in health, caring services, cashiering, catering and cleaning held the frontlines. At the same time, increased care needs at home burdened all women. There was a great resignation for middle class women who could afford it and roll backs that affected largely professional women's advances in pay and seniority. Spikes in gender-based violence during the pandemic caused the federal government to release $300 million to support shelters, sexual assault centres and gender-based violence organizations. Among the stories sexual violence prevention and intervention at McGill, tangible moments of anger, frustration and exhaustion came out related to the isolation and tightly controlled strain that COVID-19 put on us all. Over the last three years, I find the collective trauma echoed that of sexual violence prevention and intervention, and similarly, knowledge creation, feminist support networks, and shared activism created avenues to move ahead.

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APPENDIX A

Sample Email for Key Informant Interview

Dear X,

I am currently pursuing a Master's in Education and Society at the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE) under the supervision of Professors Shaheen Shariff and Philip SS Howard at McGill University's Faculty of Education. I am working on my thesis "The Role of Feminist Organizations in Ending Sexual Violence on Campus" and would like to invite you to take part in a Key Informant Interview. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to the interview, all subsequent use of the contents will be confidential.

The interview will take place via a secure video-conferencing platform - ideally Zoom, and I will send you a meeting invitation for Zoom once you have confirmed the preferred time. I will send the meeting link directly to you, you will need the password to gain entry, I will create a waiting room and lock the room once started. You may choose to use the video function, or only the voice function, and you can log in using only your first name, or a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. If you cannot access Zoom, I can also set up a Teams meeting.

The questions will focus on your experience working in this field, and in particular your work in projects connecting feminist community organizations and McGill University. I am interested in understanding the interaction between these sectors and how organizations and institutions work together to end sexual violence on campus.

This audio-recorded interview will take approximately 60-75 minutes and will take place at a mutually convenient location.

Please find attached the Informed Consent Form. I am happy to go over this with you to answer any questions you might have. You may also want to go over this with a colleague at work. I invite you to ask any questions you might have about the consent form or about the work. We will not proceed with the interview until and unless I have your full consent in advance.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you are interested and willing to participate in this research, or if you have any questions, please respond to this email at anuradha.dugal@mail.mcgill.ca

Sincerely,

Anuradha Dugal

First of all, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to explore your experience of the Role of Feminist Organizations in Ending Sexual Violence on Campus. Your experience as a front-line worker, activist and organizer to end sexual violence on campus is invaluable, and I welcome your thoughts, experiences, and insights.

Our conversation today will be fluid and evolving, but the following questions are intended to start the discussion. Do not feel obligated to answer all the questions, and should you wish to discuss something that is not included in the Interview Schedule, yet relevant to your experiences, you are welcome to raise such points in the discussion.

Key Informant Interview Questions

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, what you are doing now, and your connection or commitment to ending sexual violence on campus? Please share with me anything you would like me to know about yourself in relation to this research topic.
- What terms do you use to describe sexual violence? For example, do you use the term "rape culture" in your work? Can you explain why or why not?
- Can you tell me about your experience and role in partnerships or projects addressing sexual violence on campus? Was there one event or issue that particularly sticks in your mind about this work?
- From your perspective, what was the influence you had? Can you share some examples of how your input was received and utilized?
- On reflection, what would you say was the effect of partnerships or projects overall? What impact or influence do you see?

Master's Thesis Research

DISE Faculty of Education

McGill University

Information and Consent Form

Research Title	"The Role of Feminist Organizations in Campus-based ending sexual violence"
Student Researcher	Anuradha Dugal
Co-Supervisors	Professors Shaheen Shariff and Philip SS Howard

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this key informant interview because you are involved or have been involved in campus-based efforts to end sexual violence at McGill University, or another post-secondary institution in Canada.

Purpose

In my work at Canadian Women's Foundation, I collaborate with feminist organizations to prevent gender-based violence (i.e,. teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, elder abuse), and observe community organizations offering their labour to end sexual violence on campus.

My research will explore how community organizations and universities interact to tackle sexual violence on campus, what both groups contribute to what end, and interrogate how feminist community-based knowledge exists in university settings. In pursuit of this objective, I am concerned with the following questions –

1) How do the practices and ideologies of feminist community organizations influence the university (and are they perceived as helping or harming the legitimacy of work to end sexual violence)?

2) How does the governing culture of the university influence the effectiveness of feminist community organizations when they try to intervene on campus in projects or in specific cases (what gets done, by whom, who defines "the work to end sexual violence")? In what ways does research interact with feminist knowledge creation and vice versa?

Participation

The interview will take place via secure video-conferencing platform – ideally we will use MS Teams. If you request to use another platform and specifically Zoom, I will send the meeting link directly to you, and you will only be able to gain entry to the meeting with the password. I will create a waiting room and lock the room once started. For any online platform, participants may log in using only first name or a pseudonym to protect confidentiality, and it will not be

mandatory to use the video function. Although all precautions are taken, there is always the possibility of third-party interception when using communications through the internet.

You will be asked to take part in one interview lasting 60- 75 minutes. This interview will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Thereafter, there will be email exchanges to share the transcript to confirm that your responses are accurately recorded. There may be follow-up emails reflecting on some parts of the interview, explaining how the information will be used, to confirm your agreement to be represented anonymously in this way as part of the final thesis document.

Potential Risks

Discussing experiences related to sexual violence in institutional settings can be difficult for people who have dealt with and may be continuing to face institutional barriers to resources and support. Accordingly, you will find attached a list of free, university and community-based health, mental health, legal and social services for people of diverse racial, ethnic, economic, linguistic, and gender/sexual identities.

Given the small sample size involved in this research, the possibility exists for participants to be identified. This will be mitigated by withholding or altering identifying data such as nationality, location of organization etc., in the release of findings.

Possible Benefits

The potential for supporting knowledge creation that may benefit communities that have been only partially considered in the current examination of sexual violence on campus (LGBTQ / Black / Indigenous / People of colour / People with disabilities) is an important gap to fill. This research seeks to fill some of these previously identified gaps and help better support communities in ending sexual violence on campus.

Voluntary Participation and the Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, you may refuse to participate. You may also withdraw from the project at any time, without giving any reason, by informing the researcher.

You will be informed in a timely manner if any information becomes available that may impact your willingness to continue participating in this study. If you withdraw, you may also request that the data already collected about you be removed from the study.

If you choose to withdraw during or right after the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you specify otherwise at the time of withdrawal. Once data has

been de-identified or combined for publication, it may not be possible to withdraw your data in its entirety, although every effort will be made to do this. We may only be able to remove it from analysis and from use in future publications. The dataset will be kept for 7 years as per McGill University policy regarding research data retention after publication.

Sharing Results

As well as being used in the final thesis document, analysis from this interview may be presented at conferences and published in journals. You may be quoted directly, using a pseudonym in these materials.

Confidentiality

Audio-recordings will be transcribed in a de-identified fashion (i.e. your name will not appear in the transcripts). The audio-recordings will then be destroyed. It is possible that direct quotes of what you said will be presented in the thesis document, journal articles and/or conferences. However, precautions will be taken to ensure that it will not be possible to identify you. This includes removing information that may identify where you work.

The participants' identity will remain confidential in the reporting of this research. The data gathered in the interview will be kept in a secure password protected external hard drive. Only the student researcher and the two co-supervisors will have access to the transcripts. Each interviewee and each organization will be identified with pseudonyms and a code, and the code key will be kept in a separate location on the hard drive.

Overview of the Ethical Aspects of this Research

The McGill University Research Ethics Board reviewed this research and is responsible for monitoring it. This research study is approved by the REB of McGill University for compliance with ethical guidelines and policies involving research with human participants.

Contact information

If you have questions or if you have a problem you think may be related to your participation in this research study, or if you would like to withdraw, you may communicate with the researcher : Anuradha.dugal@mail.mcgill.ca If you have questions for the student researcher's co-supervisors, you may contact them by email : Shaheen.shariff@mcgill.ca or philip.howard@mcgill.ca If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Statement of Consent

Please sign below if you have read and understood the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Signature of the participant

I have reviewed the information and consent form. Both the key informant interview process and the information and consent form were explained to me. My questions were answered, and I was given sufficient time to make a decision. After reflection, I consent to participate in this interview in accordance with the conditions stated above.

1) I authorize the researcher to contact me to check the transcript of what I said.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2) I wish to receive a copy of the final thesis by email.

   Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please provide contact information: _____

Name of participant_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Signature of the researcher

I have explained the key informant interview process and the terms of this information and consent form to the interviewee, and I answered all his/her questions.

Name of the researcher_____

Signature_____

Date_____