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Lydia Joy Beagle

Bringing Down the Oligarchy: Change-Making on Campus

Organizational Communication Capstone Project

University of Portland

Fall 2018

Supervised by Alexa Dare, Ph.D.

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Abstract

Student groups working within a broader institution may experience positive outcomes, negative outcomes, or a mixture of the two. This research looks at the question of: what does the culture of student groups within the institution look like and how do they perform within a possible unsupportive broader institution? The problem at hand is the question under research, 'Is the institution effectively guiding student-led groups attempting to implement change within the institution and on campus, or is the institution hindering the growth, impact, and importance of student-led clubs and boards on campus?' Data was collected through qualitative interviews with student leaders at a private university in the Pacific Northwest. All data collected was thoroughly analyzed through the lens of structuration theory. The data uncovered themes of support/collaboration on behalf of the university, student/self-led initiative and engagement, and non-support. Although these findings look like separate entities, they influence each other. This research is crucial because it can help provide an understanding to the culture of student groups and how they interact with the broader institution that they operate under.

Keywords: institution, students, groups, clubs, culture, identity, change

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Implementing change within a broader institution that an individual finds themselves a part of, can be one of the most intimidating factors one may face. Imagine being a student-led group that is trying to implement change within their own institution that they are students of. The hesitancy on behalf of the student group could be caused by factors of fear, possible intimidation, and rejection. But, on the other hand, these groups have the possibility that they may be met with support, collaboration, and engagement of other students.

The question that leads these student groups to implement change within the broader institution itself is, what would compel these subordinate groups to 'rock the boat' and threaten their working relationship with the dominant group? The answer to the question is simple; the students act on behalf of their own, based on their own shared interests and experiences. They act on a sense of restoring justice to issues which range from diversity and inclusion, mental health, sustainability, and sexual assault.

With these student groups taking their own self-led initiative in attempting to change a factor within the institution, the question must be considered if these students feel a tension between their institutional identity and their student-group/club identity. One would assume that these students would in most circumstances feel a sense of tension, but that can only be identified through the analysis of data.

This research is intended to break open the doors of the inner thoughts of a large institution, through their actions of possibly supporting student groups trying to implement change. But, this study is also meant to contribute to the current literature surrounding the workings of student groups and the factors that play into their strategies of how they function.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Title IX related reports, incidents, and conversations have plagued college campuses around the country; some could even call this an epidemic that has broken out. The Title IX regulation deals and processes reports of sexual assault, harassment, stalking, rape, and discrimination of sex (“Title IX and Sexual Assault”). These persistent problems have started to impact the culture of students within the broader institution, possibly making students feel further marginalized, unsupportive, and irrelevant.

Even though some individuals might think sexual assault is an isolated problem, it is a nation-wide epidemic that has been found on what one could assume, all college campuses. “An average of 21 percent of female undergraduates told researchers they’d been sexually assaulted since starting school in a Bureau of Justice Statistics-funded study of nine unnamed U.S. colleges and universities published earlier this year” (O’ Connor and Kingkade, 2016).

Sexual assault occurrences and handlings on college campuses are contributing to the factor to the feeling that students do not physically feel safe on their campuses. Not only do most survivors of sexual assault deal with long and tedious legal actions when trying to pursue their attacker, but institutions can further complicate this process by acting as another level of resistance and non-support when students are trying to take action against their perpetrator. Some campuses may view attacks as isolated incidences, but "The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has 246 ongoing investigations into how 195 colleges and universities handled sexual assault under Title IX, and 90 similar investigations at 82 K-12 schools and school districts" (O'Connor and Kingkade, 2016).

The lived experience of group members may feel between institutional identity and their club/group identity, is an aspect that can not only affect the institution as a whole but also its students, whether that be a positive or negative impact.

Student groups within a broader institution provide the backbone of that particular institution. Student groups and clubs provide a space where students are able to gather with like-minded individuals to share and create goals that they hope to achieve during their time in the club. But, without a supportive institution, the goals of the student club could potentially be halted.

When student clubs find, themselves being oppressed and silenced through the means of the institution, these groups may have to use other tools as means to accomplish their goals and to go about implementing societal change within that specific institution. These tools mainly focus on student groups using collecting action and digital media to gain support and spread awareness of the club's cause and goals without institutional support.

Student groups must also pay attention to co-cultures and dominate groups in order to confirm the correct use of the specific communication networks in order to penetrate the boundaries of the dominant group, as the marginalized group.

The main goals of this research are to further produce and contribute to current research and literature that promotes tools for student activist clubs and groups working within broader institutions; as well as developing literature within the institution, through data collection and coding. In order to gain a fully rounded understanding of group behavior and identity within an institution, Structuration Theory must be established and understood.

Theoretical Framework

Structuration Theory is a communication theory that is linked with Anthony Giddens, a social theorist. The main focus of Structuration Theory that Giddens analyzed discussed was that “do individuals in interaction construct social meaning and social order or does an evolved or given structure determine and constrain the behavior of its human members?” (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937). This question developed by Giddens would launch the study of Structuration Theory.

Structure, system, and practice are three driving forces behind Structuration Theory. A structure is what individuals and societies are built around. This idea of structure creates the rules and resources that both individuals and societies draw upon (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937). A system is the interaction of patterns that “connecting people, behaviors, messages, relationships, and things, including both human and nonhuman elements” (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937). Lastly, rules are the set of direct and indirect guidelines that dictate actions (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937).

Giddens then continues to explain a major basic concept of Structuration Theory, which is duality. This notion of duality analyzes the structural rules and resources that were produced and reproduced in any social interaction that an individual may find themselves in. Duality analyzes how macro-forces and social constructionism can create their own meaning within these social interactions (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937). This thought of constraints by language, society, and material through Structuration Theory, is pertinent when looking at student groups operating within broader institutions. Larger institutions could use these three tactics of Structuration Theory as an attempt to derail or silence student groups with opposing views.

Duality can also be applied to the question of tension between identities students may feel between their identity within the student group and their identity within the institution. “Duality is thus the first step toward breaking down the opposition between emphasis on institutional macrostructures and on interaction micro-episodes by showing how each of these entails the other (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 938). This tension of identity that student club members, or possibly even staff members, at an institution could potentially apply the theory of duality in their personal identity in order to cope with the struggle of the possible tension between identities.

Structuration Theory also poses the capability of examining the properties of social institutions, such as universities, in order to determine how structures, operate within the organization and interact and interpret each other (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 938). Giddens presented that, “A social system's structural principles are nearly always in contradiction with one another, operating in terms of one another and yet contravening one another” (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 938). This concept within Structuration Theory could be applied to student groups operating within broader institutions in order to attempt to offer an explanation of the possible tension between the student group and institution.

The theory of Modernity is a valuable concept that Giddens developed that is a part of Structuration Theory. Giddens states that "Organized control centers are power containers that dominate less central parts of the system, but they are also loci of institutional reflexivity or places where the system responds to and guides information produced within and by the system itself" (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 937). This concept within the theory of Modernity shows exactly why it is a peril to study exactly how broader institutions may exercise control and power by attempting to control a 'lesser' part of their system, student groups, which in turn could

potentially control information going from bottom to top. This notion is pertinent to understand to determine if the broader institution is striving to control the actions of student groups. This idea is described by Giddens as, "Modern institutions become increasingly able to gather and process information and reflexively steer developments based on that collected information" (McPhee and Poole, 2009, p. 397).

Applied Literature.

Throughout the research of the literature, several themes were discovered that possess the potential to be applied to how student groups operate within broader institutions, by going further in depth in varying communication theories and strategies for co-cultural conflict in order to bring about societal change.

Communication Networks

“Scholarly communication across formal and informal channels has traditionally been a well-defined practice to share knowledge, establish visibility and build a reputation within the academic community” (Plastina and Franca, 2015, p. 9). Over the years, social media communication has become a more prominent form of communication. Although social media has evolved to become an extremely influential communication channel, it has not penetrated the academic community at the same intensity. The academic community, over time, has developed their own channels of communication which are now starting to be disrupted by the ever-growing presence of social media communication (Plastina and Franca, 2015, p. 9).

This change in communication tactics in the social sphere and the academic sphere could have the potential to be a breeding ground for miscommunication between student groups and the broader institution that they operate within. While student groups are utilizing social media as

a source of networking and communication, it could also be used as a platform to expose the actions of the broader institution.

The institution could also experience miscommunication with student groups attempting to create change within said institution simply based on the different uses of communication platforms. Since most institutions have their own unique communication networks apart from social media, miscommunication between the institution and student groups could form in that gap.

Co-Cultures and Dominant Group Theory

M.P Orbe wrote that "Co-cultural theory is a framework designed to provide insight into the communication behaviors of individuals with little societal power" (Orbe, 2009, p. 109). Co-cultural theory inspects not how the individual with the power behaves and communicates, but instead looks at the marginalized groups within society, or even within an institution. What keeps the power out of the hands of the marginalized, is the dominant groups occupy positions of power which in turn, creates communication habits within the dominant groups to suppress the subordinate. By dominant groups controlling the marginalized, like a student group, the effects could be substantial. Identity, confidence, and a sense of belonging could be impacted in a negative way (Orbe, 2009, p. 109).

Communication within co-cultural groups will vary based on the communication orientation that particular group reflects. This could be grounds for miscommunication between groups (Orbe, 2009, p. 109).

Within communication networks of student groups and institutions, the aspect of dominant group communication strategies within co-cultures come onto the scene. Robert J. Razzante, applies co-cultural theory to dominant group theory. "Communication is the means

through which identity is created, shared, altered, and re-created” (Razzante, 2018, p. 389).

Communication is what helps create the identity that students create within the student groups, being a part of a broader institution, and how the institution itself creates their own identity.

Razzante found through his study that four main themes emerged when analyzing dominant group communication within co-cultures. These themes are: “(a) using dominant group membership for reinforcement of privilege, (b) coming to a dominant group awareness, (c) using dominant group membership for support of co-cultural groups, and (d) using dominant group membership for disrupting practices of oppression” (Razzante, 2018, p. 394). These four themes that were founded through Razzante’s study, have the potential to be found when investigating institutions when attempting to exude power and control over student groups.

Muted Group Theory

Muted Group theory is defined as, “the ways that the communication practices of dominant group suppress, mute, or devalue the words, ideas, and discourses of subordinate groups” (Kramarae, 2009, p. 668). This theory analyzes how more dominant groups use specific communication tactics in order to silence others. It begs the question of looking at the language and practices used by these groups in order to dominate the subordinate groups. “The theory suggests that an important way that a social group creates and maintains its dominance is by stifling the speech and ideas of those the dominant group has labeled as outside the privileged circle” (Karamarae, 2009, p. 668). The subordinate groups are often looked over and have little power, which only enforces the power of the dominant group.

Conflict and Social Change

Gurumurthy argues that “Definitions of social progress must, therefore, pay close attention to the contradictions of contemporary information-communication structures”

(Gurumurthy, 2018, p. 193). This contradiction of information due to a difference in communication structures between social groups and broader institutions can lead to dangerous assumptions and conflict. But, in order to bring about change, conflict is typically a catalyst. “Conflict is extremely important in explaining social evolution to a large number of sociologists” which is stated in Mihail’s article, “Conflict and Social Change: Three Sociological Traditions” (Mihail, 2012, p. 68). This era of disarray during an episode of conflict, should not be viewed through a negative lens but instead, conflict should be looked at through a hopeful lens to bring about societal change.

Social Change Communication

The idea that "Social movements bring together groups or constituencies with a common purpose, often with the aim of addressing structural inequalities or affecting change to uphold the rights of individuals and communities" is a common one (Obregón and Tufte, 2017, p. 635, 636). But, these social movements are becoming more complex based on changing communication dynamics, which is mostly based on social media. Social media can also be used by smaller groups who desire to bring about societal change, to put pressure on those in power (Obregón and Tufte, 2017, p. 636).

Strategic communication practices can be used to bring about social change within a variety of different institutions. Not only can strategic communication strategies bring about societal change, but it can also produce a collective understanding that would bring together different groups and possibly bring together marginalized groups and those in power.

Strategic communication strategies are key to the development of social change. Erica L. Ciszek suggests through her study in that activism and public relations are a tool for not only influencing public opinion but also are forms of strategic communication which could lead to

potential social change. These two strategies could be utilized in dealing with conflict within working in a broader institution, while also providing tools for student groups to be successful (Ciszek, 2017, p. 702).

Collective Action

In order to fully carry out societal change, collective action must take place. Without collective action, no change will be made by individuals in positions of power. One tool in order to make sure that collective action takes place is using means to gain sympathy within the eyes of the public. By gaining the backing of the public, the subordinate or marginalized group has more power and a voice when going against a broader institution (Levine and Kam, 2017, p. 200).

The second tool in order to gain collective action is communication credibility is “persuading potential new supporters that they can actually achieve the goals they set out to achieve” (Levine and Kam, 2017, p. 200). This concept is extremely valuable to groups working within and even against broader institutions. Communication credibility builds the groups reputation and helps groups gain backing and support from outsiders, even if it does not have support from the institution. If a group trying to bring about change and does not have communication credibility, it will be hard for said group to gain and maintain support in the future.

A third tool a student group could use in promoting their agenda when working within broader institutions is the use of digital media. Digital media, most importantly, can act as an influence on human behavior (Bimber, 2017, p. 6). When student groups are struggling to accomplish their goals because of an unsupportive institution, the group can take to digital media in order to spread the cause. The thought that digital media can bring about change is an

important one, "the digital media environment should be understood as a change in the context for action rather than as an individual-level variable" (Bimber, 2017, p. 6).

Research Questions

1. What is the lived experience of groups that advocate for cultural change within an institution?
2. Do group members experience tension between their club/group identity and their institutional identity?

Methodology

To conduct this emic research, I gained access to interview participants and gatekeepers through reaching out to influential participants in this study through the use of email, face-to-face contact, and through the use of snowball sampling. The criteria that distinguished interview participants from the student body included group/club involvement and student activism. I used these methods to make connections to gain crucial access for formal structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with student club members who are currently attempting to implement change.

To ensure the confidentiality of the research participants throughout this process, I ensured that pseudonyms were used in order to protect the identities of the interview participants in this research. To go a step further of preserving their confidentiality, I removed any and all identifying factors of the participants and any work they could easily be affiliated with. The participants were then provided with a consent form which offered an extensive summary of the research project, my personal information for further contact if needed, and the reassurance that their identity would be kept confidential. At this time, the participant was welcome to turn down their involvement in the study. The interviews were then recorded on a password-protected

mobile device and were transcribed.

When conducting the interviews, I made sure to arrive early and find a quiet and secluded area that was easily accessible to the interview participants. This quiet and intimate place allowed the participant to feel comfortable throughout the duration of the interview, by providing a comfortable and secure environment. Providing a sense of security during this process was a large concern. By choosing a secluded and comfortable meeting spot, this was ensured. Again, at the end of each interview, I ensured that the participant could retract their interview at any point in time without academic punishment, and asked off the record if I could answer any further questions that they may have had at that moment in time.

In order to preserve the culture of the participants, "we have a responsibility to be aware of the influence of our cultural analysis on shaping the culture" (Driskill and Brenton, 2019, p. 72). In order to preserve the interview participant's view and value of the cultural experience, they have had within the institution and not alter their cultural analysis of the institution, by carefully phrasing the interview questions (Driskill and Brenton, 2019, p. 72).

To collect data, I conducted a total of five formal interviews of various student club members and student activists which totaled one hundred and eighty minutes. Two participants were from the same club, while the last three interview participants were each a part of different club on campus. A total of three interviews were fully transcribed, which totaled to thirty-five pages, while a total of seven pages were produced through the process of audible coding.

The next step was data analysis. The first step was a primary level of coding which is the first stages of analyzing the data. This is to pick out keywords, phrases, descriptions, metaphors or indications of 'something more'. Then came secondary coding, which dived deeper into the

meaning of the primary level codes. This is done by organizing codes into categories where they shared similar meanings and how they fit together. This eventually became the themes of the data. I then entered the secondary level of codes into a formatted codebook which was laid out by color-coordinated sections, based on the themes, and was organized by the assigned color code.

Findings

Gaining a fully rounded understanding about the culture of student groups attempting to implement change within a broader institution, opens up a whole new world in learning about the ways in which student groups can go about in successfully creating the change they are seeking. This research is intriguing because it opens the door to a potentially larger problem that could be hindering the success of these student groups. This research revealed themes such as support/collaboration, non-support, and student/self-led initiative and engagement.

What is special about these themes, is that they all influence each other. While support/collaboration on behalf of the university appears in some cases, it was only gained through student's self-initiative and engagement, who eventually brought it to the university's attention. The same applies to the lack of support on behalf of the institution. Students, off their own initiative and engagement, bring attention to a project or plan, which is resisted by the university.

When conducting this study as the researcher, I had to admit my own personal biases. I am personally involved with two of the interview participants, in that us three are a part of a student group trying to implement change within a broader institution together. During this process, I had to acknowledge my own biases in order to conduct an ethical study emic study that

would collect and reveal honest data that truly reflected the feelings and emotions of the interview participants.

Support/Collaboration

Support and collaboration were two of the most common words mentioned when members of student groups who were a part of trying to implement change, during our conversation about the institution. The thematic code of a supportive and collaborative institution arose in various situations. This proved the fact that in most instances where student groups are attempting to make change within the institution, that a majority of the student groups were supported and was able to collaborate with the institution itself when enacting these changes. Not only was the institution supportive of these student groups in trying to create change, but they even provided a path for its students to do so. Sarah recognizes the role the university played in her student involvement,

And thankfully 'The Institution' gave me a path to do so

Sarah described how she felt that the institution provided a pathway for her to create the changes that she was wanting to create within the institution itself, and felt like it would not have happened without the pathway that the institution gave to Brandy.

I think they're really trying and they're motivating students and I don't know that it's the administration but I've felt nothing but support from faculty

Brandy's confidence when discussing how she has felt support from her personal interactions with the faculty, which has been nothing but a positive experience, was strong. This strong emotion when describing her positive experiences further proves the finding that the institution has been supportive and willing to collaborate in a group's endeavors. Also, the notion

that she felt like the institution has been putting forth the effort in order to create a sense of motivation within the student body not only shows the institution's support through their words but through their actions, which only further proves their supportive behavior.

Not only has the institution shown support and collaboration through their actions of physically supporting these student groups and their attempt to enact change somehow on campus, but the institution has even gone as far as opening up and expanding their curriculum in ways to include the growing interest of sustainability on their campus. Lola discusses her own experience with new class opportunities that the university has provided.

I'm in a climate change economics class this year and an environmental organizing and advocacy class this year with you, both those classes are 391's and it's-it's the first time they've been taught...

When one hears that something is promised to get taken care of it is difficult to trust those changes will actually come to fruition. That is exactly what Derek thought would happen with the institution promised to get rid of their plastic straws. For Derek, actually physically seeing that change of omitting plastic straws, on behalf of the institution, confirmed to him that the institution truly was supportive in the student's endeavors of wanting to create change.

I remember thinking that seems like it should happen but it's not going to, but no we just did it..." [in regards to the metal and paper straws]

Lola also acknowledged that they have noticed that the institution has expanded their support and interest of topic areas and supporting the change that student groups and just the general student body within the institution were pushing for.

I would say diversity and inclusion have received a respectable amount of a-attention

And you know like diver--mental health, then there was diversity, then there's

sustainability...

In this specific data set that was collected through formal interviews of participants who were involved in student groups trying to implement change within a broader institution, voiced that support and collaboration were prominent in several different areas such as diversity and inclusion, mental health, and sustainability.

Non-Support/Resistance

Although one would hope that the broader institution that their student group is working in would ideally have a fully supportive and willing to collaborate on projects of change, that is not always the case. Even though in most cases, the interview participants noted that they have experienced forms of support, there are still some cases that have shown complete non-support from the institution, or moments of resistance.

In talking about new projects, events, and new students entering the institution one interview participant, Sarah, stated that she noticed sometimes these 'older' projects of change that student groups have been attempting to create, have lost their priority in the eyes of the institution over time and with the incoming freshman classes every fall.

But they are also new and I feel like this project has kind of taken a back burner for them...

Sarah noted that she personally observed a lack of interest and support from the institution over the course of time that she is trying to create change, although that might require a longer timeline to execute the project that Sarah and her student group are trying to create. Below, Lola offers her opinion on how the university has shown a lack of support towards their students.

I don't think that they're doing anything. I don't think they're listening. I don't think they're actively not listening, and I don't think they're brushing it under the rug

The institution that these student groups are trying to implement change in, expressed above by Lola, can be difficult to enforce that change when the institution is not willing to listen or going out of their way to help these student groups, as further expressed by Lola.

Yeah, I wouldn't say they're going out of their way to support us and doing that all...

One area that experienced nothing but resistance and non-support was the topic of sexual assault handlings within the institution. 'The Change Club', as expressed by Bill, worked hard within the broader institution to create change within the institution's Title IX committee, but Bill explained that working with the institution's committee was nothing but a negative experience.

I think working with Title IX has been very difficult lately 'The Change Club' is attempting to advocate for the institution to hire a full-time, third-party individual to take control of the Title IX committee. By doing this, 'The Change Club' is advocating for change within the current system of the institution because they feel like survivors are not getting the support from the institution currently.

So right now, what we're working on is getting an advocate for Title IX survivors, or survivors of sexual assault or anybody who's seen as the reporting party for a Title IX case

Bill also states that "The Change Club" has been working extremely hard in their endeavors to bring about the change that the club is trying to do.

We shouldn't have to be working this hard [in regards to students advocating for this issue]

Student/Self-Led Initiative and Engagement

The themes of student/self-led initiative are not something that can stand on its own. These two pair together and show how student leaders make sense of whether the university was

supportive or non-supportive. These themes explain the relationship dynamic with the other themes of support/collaboration and non-support. Even with a supportive or non-supportive institution that these student groups are trying to operate in, most, if not all, of these actions are all led and initiated by either individual students, or student clubs, which was all shown through Derek, Bill, and Brandy.

This sort of felt like the first step that I could take

Yeah, so I loved every moment of it. It was so much fun and I just wanted to keep getting involved

The nature of the student's attitude, demeanor, and interest as they stated fueled their personal actions in deciding to get involved with initiatives.

I honestly think it's a student-driven thing

...for me I saw you know oh 'there's action happening and I can be a part of it'

Student's adaptive attitudes of sustainability, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, mental health, and sexual assault have all been influenced and propelled by the self-led initiative on behalf of the students that fueled their desire to get involved.

Engagement and the student's self-led initiative go hand-in-hand. Without the student's engagement in their interests, which is driven by their own initiative the change that these student groups are trying to implement would not be successful. This student engagement could come in various forms such as students involved in clubs within the institution, creating and/or participating in events, or developing programs and plans to help the institution implement acts of change. Lola states,

I would say I'm the most heavily involved with 'The Green Institution'

Sarah also explains how her self-led initiative created an opportunity for engagement for other

students,

...instead of having students go to the actual bins and like hide their garbage like we make them look at the garbage and like make them look in the clear plastic tubs to see like how much food is wasted, how many paper boxes are wasted...

Brandy explains how positive her experience was, which was all credited to her own self-led initiative.

Yeah, so I loved every moment of it. It was so much fun and I just wanted to keep getting involved

Student engagement within issues that are pressing within the broader institution is led by their self-initiative in order to get involved and engage with these issues.

In the last year, they're really just, they're really trying to engage students

This engagement on behalf of the students has brought support from the institution which in turn, is trying to help push students to get engaged especially along the lines of diversity, mental health, and sustainability. Brandy acknowledges how she has noticed a positive shift in student engagement.

I think, especially in this last year I just loved that they really encouraged so many people to get so much more involved in sustainability initiatives

Brandy noted hopefully, that she noticed a change within the institution and how they were providing support to these student groups and students trying to implement change, through their encouragement to get involved.

Discussion

During the research process, I was able to gain a more rounded understanding and insight into the inner-workings and culture of student groups trying to implement change within a broader institution. These findings, when paired together with the already existing literature was mentioned previously, provide insight and knowledge to this topic and research questions.

The first question that was addressed during this research process was, what is the lived experiences of groups that advocate for cultural change within an institution? The first clue that presented itself through the data that is related to this question in regards to advocating for cultural change; is that these groups working within the institution are not attempting to fully change the entire culture of the institution. But, they are trying to provide the opportunity for other students to join in and get involved with a cause that they feel comfortable in joining, and have that support from the institution and fellow students to do so. By creating this atmosphere within the institution, itself, this paves the path for students to take their own initiative. It has formulated an environment that is most supportive in any student-led, or student group change that is wanted to be implemented. This supportive environment that was formed provided the comfortability and ability for students to come to the institution and feel confident in asking for either collaboration and/or support in their causes.

On the contrary, an unsupportive culture would present itself in showing resistance, hesitation, and just straight denial and lack of approval on behalf of the university. This has been experienced on the ground through some of the student groups trying to create change, which was Bill's personal experience with the university.

The second research question, do group members experience tension between their club/group identity and their institutional identity, was clearly answered through the use of the collected data. It was made extremely clear, that the student's identity in regards to issues or change surrounding sustainability, these students did not feel any tension between their club/group identity and their institutional identity. But, the one interview participant that alluded to some sort of tension between his institutional identity and his club identity, was Bill. His personal experience dealing with issues of sexual assault paired with the resistance and non-

support that himself and 'The Change Group' felt when strenuously trying to work alongside the institution, hinted that the identity that he formed within the institution and within the group, were at battle.

Structuration Theory is based on the idea of structure, system, and practice. The structures that are in place create the rules and resources that an entity, such as the institution, will operate by. When analyzing the data, the structures and resources of the institution can be noticed in the sense of whether or not a cause gains support. The structures that were placed within the institution, caused these student groups to implement change in order to, therefore, change those structures that went against student interest. But, the current structures in place still are not supportive of every student group trying to implement change within the institution. With 'The Change Group' these structures that were put in place hinder the growth and success of this student group when dealing with the issue of sexual assault and Title IX proceedings.

What went against the literature that was previously studied, and acted as an outlier within the data, was Bill's lived experience working with the institution. One notion that proved notable was questioning, what makes Title IX and sexual assault/harassment unique in the sense of it being led and pioneered by the students of the institution, and not by the institution itself? An individual could formulate negative perceptions of the institution's perceptions of this issue that is plaguing campuses across the country.

This notion hints towards a reality that the institution has specific perceptions and shared understandings with the administration and staff members about which initiatives of change they are willing to support and collaborate on with the student groups that are heading the projects. The main factor that makes this issue so different from the others: diversity, mental health, and

sustainability, one could wonder, is the nature of the issue itself. Two key players that are noticed when analyzing the topic of sexual assault handlings within the institution are gender and sex issues. This is the clear distinction between sexual assault and the other areas of change that have occurred within the institution. Could gender and sex issues be the distinction between the institution being supportive or not? The data seems to allude so, through Bill's tough interview.

What stood out to me, as a researcher, was how no other interview participant, when prompted about issues of change within the institution, not one individual, brought up the topic of sexual assault. This made the question, why are students so quiet about this issue during this process? Is this hinting at a bigger problem within the institution that has not been fully revealed? Why is this topic hidden, unless specifically brought up by others, mostly students? This seemed to be portrayed through the data that was collected in the sense that one participant had anything to say in regards to the issue that 'The Change Group' is trying to change within the institution, which has only been met with resistance and non-support.

The significance of the findings for current knowledge of this topic is extremely prominent. I believe that these findings through the data support the notion that the culture student groups and clubs trying to implement change within a broader institution experiences the majority of being supported and collaborative. These findings are significant in the sense that it shows other student-led groups, whether or not if they are affiliated within this specific institution, that most acts of change that these groups are heading up, will be continued in being supported by the institution. It shows that groups should not fear to try to implement change, for their fears will most likely be matched with support and collaboration on behalf of the institution.

When conducting this study certain limitations became evidently clear. The limitations

that potentially hindered the study in becoming even more successful were few. The time frame of exactly how long I had as a researcher to collect evidence was the main constraint throughout this study. With the limited time allotted the sample size of this study was small. If more time was allowed, more data could have been collected allowing this study to become even more thorough and well-rounded by being able to interview more participants. Again, with more time, more study participants could have been gathered to take part in this study which in turn, would produce more data to be analyzed. Not being able to interview one student from each club at the university also served as a limitation to this study. This would have produced a more thorough data collection and offered a wider variety in the data.

This study proved that the institution under analysis provided support and collaboration to student groups trying to implement change surrounding most causes provided that it was based on student and self-led initiatives. Structuration theory emerged in the data through examples of how student groups operated within the university and the process that students needed experience when attempting to implement change within the university.

The understanding that was found through this process of the institution, shows other student groups that when trying to implement change within a broader institution, some resistance and non-support may be met, but evidently, support and collaboration on behalf of the institution was found.

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