Implementing the Rights Revolution? Effects of Sexual Misconduct Training on University Campuses

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Abstract

In response to federal mandates, public and private organizations have introduced sexual assault and harassment prevention training. As the #metoo movement grows, pressure to expand and perfect such trainings increases. Does training work? This paper examines the effects of mandatory, in-person training on sexual misconduct for students at a diverse university in the Southwest of the US. Drawing on three studies with quasi-experimental designs and interviews with students and staff, we explore the effects of the training on attitudes towards rape myths, women and gender roles, and expressed willingness to report of episodes of violence. We find that students who undergo the training gain a more encompassing perspective on what constitutes sexual misconduct and are less likely to endorse common rape myths, especially men. However, the training also makes students more likely to express some traditional gender stereotypes and less likely—particularly women—to say they will report incidents of sexual assault. In addition, some men—namely white men—express more hostile sexist attitudes. Concluding with reflections on the reasons for these heterogeneous and unanticipated effects, this paper has implications for the design of institutional responses to sexual misconduct and other efforts to implement the "rights revolution."

1 Introduction

States historically did little to combat gender and sexual violence. On the contrary: most states endorsed violence through civil laws that considered sex to be an obligation of marriage, criminal laws stipulating that rapists who married their victims would be exempt from punishment, and family codes authorizing parents to marry off their girl children. Starting around the 1960s and 1970s, feminist movements and their allies pushed states change their approaches by adopting legislation and public policies to prevent and punish intimate partner violence and other forms of sexual and gender violence, as well as sexual harassment (Htun and Weldon, 2012; Weldon, 2002). Yet violence remains pervasive in multiple sites, including the home, the street, the workplace, schools and universities. And it is usually un- and underreported (García-Moreno et al., 2005; Hindin, Kishor and Ansara, 2008). How can states induce the alignment of social norms and entrenched behavior with new legal rights, including the right to be free from violence?

Arguably, the United States has gone farther than most other countries to put laws on certain forms of sexual and gender violence into practice. The expansion of the civil rights state since the 1960s has enhanced the government's power to compel public and private organizations to take action against sexual misconduct, a broad spectrum of behavior ranging from physical assault to verbal harassment. Since employers and schools are potentially liable for misconduct committed by their employees, they have adopted proactive measures to promote inclusive climates and encourage reporting (Dobbin, 2009; Dobbin, Kalev and Roberson, 2013; Epp, 2010; Melnick, 2018).

One of the most widespread and least controversial mechanisms to reduce sexual misconduct is training. Long a key component of the arsenal of human resources professionals in private corporations, training has diffused across schools and universities as well. In the 2000s, the federal government began to require that universities provide training for students,

staff, and faculty with the goal of preventing sexual assault and harassment on campus. As the #metoo movement grows, pressure to expand and perfect such trainings has increased across all organizations.

Does sexual misconduct training achieve its objectives? Much of the evidence is ambiguous. Some studies conducted in university contexts show that training reduces support for cultural beliefs conducive to violence known as "rape myths" and produces positive effects on bystander awareness and intentions to engage in bystander interventions (Banyard, Moynihan and Crossman, 2009; Storer, Casey and Herrenkohl, 2016; Vladutiu, Martin and Macy, 2011). However, other studies of misconduct training have found that it may activate traditional gender stereotypes, incite backlash against women, and trigger resistance (Bingham and Scherer, 2001; Malamuth, Huppin and Linz, 2018; Tinkler, 2012, 2013). Studies of different types of training, such as training to promote diversity or sensitivity in the workplace, has also found that it may be counterproductive to the goal of promoting more women and minorities in leadership (Dobbin, Schrage and Kalev, 2015).

In this paper, we analyze the effects of universal, in-person sexual misconduct training at the University of New Mexico (UNM), a program introduced as part of a three-year agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice to put UNM into compliance with Title IX. We explore the impact of the training, designed and administered by the student advocacy center called Lobo Respect, on self-reported attitudes toward sexual harassment and assault, including rape myths, views of women and gender roles, and willingness to report experiences of misconduct. We draw on three studies with quasi-experimental designs conducted in 2017 and 2018. In addition, we conducted some 30 interviews with students, several interviews with university staff and administrators, and a few interviews with other public officials, and we observed and participated in over a dozen training sessions.[1]

We find that students who undergo Lobo Respect's training, called "The Grey Area," gain

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[1]The study was approved by the UNM Office of the Institutional Review Board.

a more encompassing perspective on what constitutes sexual misconduct and are less likely to endorse common rape myths, especially men. However, the training also made students more likely to express some traditional gender stereotypes, while some men—namely white men—express more hostile sexist attitudes. Finally, students, especially women, grow less likely to say they would report incidents of sexual assault to the university.

Our study shows that universal training produces different effects on students from different social groups. It likely produces even more varied impacts across individuals. These heterogeneous effects complicate, and have the potential to undermine, the training's impact on campus climates. Drawing on qualitative interviews with students and staff, we interpret these findings as the result of defensive reactions to gender status beliefs and norms of interactions, as well as a reaction to the legalism and mandatory nature of the training, among certain groups. Our results conform to the findings of other studies showing that training on sexual harassment and assault can produce mixed results, and to a broader literature on the possible "boomerang" effects of public health interventions. We conclude by speculating that the enforcement and compliance patterns set by the U.S. civil rights state, though successful in many ways, run the risk of crowding out diverse, organizationally-specific and home-grown solutions to gender and sexual violence.

2 Background

To comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, organizations across the United States adopted policies and programs to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity. In response to feminist arguments that sexual harassment constituted a form of employment discrimination, dominant legal understandings of equal opportunity came to include protection from sexual harassment. Federal regulations and jurisprudence related to Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act similarly evolved from an initial focus on gender equality in

admissions and athletics to require that institutions of higher education take action to prevent and punish sexual misconduct, as well as to protect victims, in order to insure equal opportunities (Dobbin, Kalev and Roberson, 2013; Epp, 2010; MacKinnon, 1979; Rose, 2018; Saguy, 2003; Zippel, 2006).

In the 2000s, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the Department of Education became more proactive on sexual harassment and assault. It issued multiple, detailed guidelines that went beyond existing federal jurisprudence and launched investigations into dozens of colleges. This transformation in state-sanctioned approaches to sexual harassment, including both the form of rulemaking and the content of the regulations, have been controversial. Critics allege that the OCR's requirements for college investigative procedures deny accused their rights of due process and that the proposed sexual harassment rules are so broad they stifle free speech (see analysis in Melnick, 2018).

OCR's 2011 "Dear Colleague" letter recommends that schools adopt preventive education programs, including training of faculty, staff, students, coaches, and other groups, and that the training contain information about what behavior constitutes sexual harassment and assault, university policies, and the consequences of violation, as well as information "aimed at encouraging students to report incidents of sexual violence to the appropriate school and law enforcement authorities" (Ali, 2011, pp. 14-15). In 2013, Congress passed the Campus SaVE Act, which went further by requiring that colleges deliver sexual and gender violence primary prevention and awareness programs to incoming students and staff. Subsequent regulations promulgated by the Department of Education stipulated that the programs include information not just about definitions, policies, and punishments, but also the meaning of sexual consent in the applicable jurisdiction and "safe and positive options for bystander intervention" (DOE, 2014).

Does training help to prevent, or even reduce, sexual assault and harassment on campus? There is evidence that participation in training changes attitudes toward gender and

sexual violence. One comprehensive meta-analysis of sexual assault prevention programs in colleges found that workshops delivered in multiple sessions, and especially to single-gender audiences, helped to change attitudes about sexual violence and behavioral intentions, but also found many trade-offs between program formats and goals achieved (Vladutiu, Martin and Macy, 2011). Another review found evidence of change in attitudes, but that these tended to decline over time (Newlands and O'Donohue, 2016). Other studies have found that participation in sexual misconduct workshops increases students' stated likelihood and confidence to engage in bystander interventions (Banyard, Moynihan and Crossman, 2009; Coker et al., 2011).

On the other hand, there is far less evidence that sexual misconduct training, particularly when delivered in single doses and to a mixed audience, achieves its intended effects of reducing assault and harassment on campus. Participation in mixed-gender programs has generally not been associated with behavioral change (Gidycz et al., 2006). By contrast, there is evidence that gender-specific interventions delivered in multiple doses, such as programs to educate women to avoid risks and to change men's perceptions about community norms and consent, are associated with changes in self-reported victimization and perpetration (see, e.g. Gidycz, Orchowski and Berkowitz, 2011; Gidycz et al., 2001).

The fact that mixed-gender, single dose training, as well as single-dose online training, is the most prevalent form of training universities have adopted in the 2010s, raises concern that many training programs may end up being merely "symbolic structures" introduced hastily to signal compliance with federal mandates on civil rights. Other "symbolic structures" identified by Edelman (2016) include sexual harassment training in private companies, grievance procedures, and anti-discrimination policies. Courts have tended to accept the mere existence of programs and policies as evidence that organizations have taken "reasonable care" to prevent harassment and hostile work environments. Even though they may amount to little more than lip service, the programs thus reduce liability and serve as a shield from punitive

damages (Bisom-Rapp, 2018; Gertner, 2018). But superficial initiatives often lack efficacy, and divert attention from enduring harassment, discrimination, and bias (Edelman, 2016). Kaiser et al. (2013) find that the mere existence of diversity-promotion programs can offer an *illusion of fairness* which makes dominant groups less able to recognize discrimination and undermines the legitimacy of claims of bias.

Other studies have found that programs intended to prevent and reduce discrimination and other mistreatment of disadvantaged groups may be ineffective and even counterproductive. Many equal opportunity programs, including job tests, performance evaluations, and diversity training, are perceived as externally imposed measures that limit individual discretion to be biased and aim to correct people's beliefs. Self-determination theory shows that people resist external controls and imposition. Managers and employees may rebel against initiatives that micromanage them, which may end up activating, rather than reducing, social biases (Dobbin and Kalev, 2016; Dobbin, Schrage and Kalev, 2015). In particular, when the locus of motivation for diversity training programs is perceived to be imposed from the outside, such as from a legal mandate, it is less effective than when the locus of motivation is internal to the organizational culture and people participate in training on a voluntary basis (Kalev and Dobbin, N.d.).

In addition, some public policy interventions, media campaigns, and advertising intending to change behavior may provoke a "boomerang effect." The boomerang effect occurs when a message, strategically constructed with a specific intent, produces a result that is the opposite of that intent (Byrne and Hart, 2009). For example, researchers have found that public education campaigns on climate change that emphasize scientific facts can exacerbate the polarization of public opinion on the issue instead of forging greater consensus (Kahan et al., 2012). Others have found that campaigns against smoking, alcohol, and drug use may increase people's dispositions to do those things (Campo and Cameron, 2006; Hornik et al., 2008; Wolburg, 2006). Similarly, political psychologists have found that providing

information to correct people's misperceptions can sometimes make the misperceptions worse (Flynn, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017). Crucially, individual characteristics such as ideology, social identity, gender, and especially partisanship may moderate or aggravate boomerang effects.

Some studies on college campuses have found that men at a high risk for sexually aggressive behavior exhibit a greater proclivity towards sexual assault after receiving training that is supposed to prevent it (Cárdaba et al., 2016; Malamuth, Huppin and Linz, 2018; Wilson et al., 1992). Malamuth, Huppin and Linz (2018) speculate that psychological reactance, defined as the motivation to re-establish personal choices, control, and freedom in response to a perceived threat, underlies this boomerang effect. Some high-risk men perceive the anti-violence messages embedded in misconduct training as a threat to their deeply entrenched assumptions that they can have sex with women at their will. They can reassert control by engaging in the proscribed behavior or defending the proscribed idea (Byrne and Hart, 2009, p. 16). In addition, certain conservative men may perceive the critical or "patronizing" nature of a sexual misconduct program as a deprivation to their freedom to think, feel, and act as they would like (Malamuth, Huppin and Linz, 2018). Since the training conforms to their progressive attitudes, men who identify as liberals are at lower risk for a boomerang reaction.

Tinkler's work on sexual harassment training identifies another reason why we might see mixed effects. By definition, training on sexual assault and harassment make gender and sexuality salient. For example, trainers confront "rape myths" or long-standing cultural beliefs that legitimize male sexual entitlement and women's submission and shame. In addition, many prevention programs on college campuses attempt to produce change in sexual practices by educating students in "affirmative consent" policies, which require both parties to seek and receive affirmative, conscious, and verbal consent at each stage of a sexual interaction.

Even when the content is inclusive or egalitarian, simply by making gender and sexuality

salient, the training may activate people's background beliefs and assumptions about gender (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). The hegemonic gender status beliefs that are widely shared in our culture, as well as assumptions about sexuality, hold men to be assertive and women to be deferential (Lorber, 1994). Tinkler's work shows that some men and women perceive sexual harassment policies as threats to gendered interaction norms and status positions in which they are invested, and react negatively to training to defend these norms and positions (Tinkler, 2008, 2012, 2013).

These perspectives suggest several reasons why mandatory, in-person sexual misconduct training may produce mixed, counterproductive, and heterogeneous effects across groups and individuals. First, trainings are introduced hastily to comply with the law, without adequate time to pilot and adjust the intervention, and may therefore suffer from design flaws and a lack of resources. Second, some people may perceive the training as an external imposition and rebel against it as a threat to their autonomy and self-determination. Third, the training may trigger reactance in some people, including men who are a high risk of committing sexual aggression, and others who consider the content to be patronizing or paternalistic. Finally, the training makes ideas about gender and norms of sexuality salient, and so may unintentionally activate traditional gender stereotypes or status beliefs. Different people have different perspectives, experiences, and views, which shapes how they receive the training and how it affects them. Whereas the training may produce intended effects in some people, it may lead to little change in different people, and potentially trigger "boomerang" effects in others.

3   Title IX Reforms at the University of New Mexico

In October of 2016, the University of New Mexico (UNM) entered into a three-year agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) to bring the university into compliance with Title

IX of the Educational Amendments Act. The agreement resulted from a DoJ investigation into allegations of Title IX violations at UNM, which culminated in a "findings" letter of April 2016. According to the findings, UNM was "out of compliance in several respects." It did not have adequate policies on misconduct, procedures to report and investigate, leadership commitment, and also sustained a hostile institutional climate. In the 30-page agreement, UNM committed to five principal pillars of action, including revision of policies, revision of reporting and investigative procedures, annual climate surveys, annual sexual misconduct training of employees, and in-person sexual misconduct training of 27,000 students within the first year of the agreement. The in-person training for students, called the Grey Area training, was developed and implemented by staff in the university's student advocacy and response center, called Lobo Respect.

UNM's agreement with the DoJ was unusual. Previously, the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education had served as the main enforcer of Title IX. As of 2018, only the University of Montana and UNM have been the subjects of a DoJ investigation and agreement. In UNM's case, the reasons for the investigation are idiosyncratic, involving personal connections and demonstration effects from the Montana experience as well as from the DoJ investigation into abuses committed by the Albuquerque Police Department.[2]

This paper focuses on the in-person training, called The Grey Area, not the online training for employees. The Grey Area involves an approximately one hour lecture, followed by a small group discussion which lasts about 30 minutes. The topics covered in the lecture include definitions and examples of sexual misconduct, university policies, reporting procedures, data on the prevalence of assault and harassment, Title IX and federal law, bystander interventions, the concept of affirmative consent, and an illustrative video. In 2017, small group discussions engaged participants in a conversation about the features of "good

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[2]Interviews with former U.S. Attorney Damon Martínez, May 2017 and February 2018, and family members of sexual assault victims, March 2018.

hookups," "bad hookups," "alcohol," and "rape," with the goal of emphasizing that consent is part of the former two experiences, but not part of the the latter two.

According to the terms of the agreement with the DoJ, the Grey Area in-person training was required for all enrolled students. Incoming students, whether first-year or transfer students, participated in the training as part of their new student orientation programs. Continuing students were sent multiple notices and reminders informing them that they needed to sign up for the training, under penalty of a registration hold. Students were instructed to go to the Dean of Students website, where they selected and registered for a training session on a particular date.[3] Between March and December of 2017, Lobo Respect trained approximately 22,400 enrolled students.

4 Data Overview

The DoJ agreement provided an opportunity to study student reactions to mandatory sexual misconduct training. In this paper we report from three studies on the effects of the Grey Area training on undergraduate students' understandings of sexual misconduct, adherence to rape myths, beliefs about gender, willingness to report assault, and beliefs about the consequences of reporting. We completed two studies during the summer and fall of 2017, and a third study in the summer of 2018, including a randomized field experiment and two quasi-experimental studies.

Since our goal was to measure effects of the Grey Area training, we were interested in comparing how students respond to our survey before and after the training. One option would have been to compare the responses of the *same students* before and after going through the training (often referred to as a 'pre-experimental' research design or 'pre- and

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[3]To avoid triggering reactions in students who may have experienced violence in the past, the website included "escape" buttons. Students were able to opt out of the training, and advocates were on hand during the sessions in order to consult with students in the event of adverse reactions.

post-test' design). However, this approach would be vulnerable to learning or test effects: that changes in responses result from the testing itself due to questions raising awareness and triggering learning after the pre-test (see, e.g., Marsden and Torgerson, 2012). Another option was to compare responses from students who had undergone the training to another *very similar* group of students who had not yet undergone the training. This was the strategy we employed, by assigning some groups of students to complete the survey immediately before the training began (our control groups) and other groups to complete the survey immediately after the training (our treatment groups). Though Lobo Respect employs three trainers, the treatment groups in all of our studies sat through training with the same person.

4.1 Quasi-experimental studies in July 2017 and July 2018

The summer studies were conducted during two successive sessions of New Student Orientation (NSO), which ran for most of the summer. Students self-selected into which NSO session they signed up for, and sessions closed as they filled up. Our assumption was that there might be substantial self-selection bias between the students who ended up signing up for a session held early or later in the summer (e.g., if more eager students signed up as soon as they could), but that this bias was likely to be small if we selected successive sessions, identical in all respects other than being one week apart.

For these summer studies, our "control group" responded to our survey instrument right before they sat through the Grey Area Training, and the "treatment group" responded to it immediately after. In 2017, the treatment group consisted of the students who took the training exactly one week later than the control group. In each of the sessions included in the July 2017 study, there were approximately 300 students, and since the surveys were conducted in the training room itself almost all of the students present responded to the survey.

In 2018, we modified the design after Lobo Respect—the university advocacy center

responsible for the trainings—changed the organization of NSO. They decided to run the trainings in the middle of the day, and to divide students into two groups, one of which took the training before lunch and one after lunch. They did not divide the students randomly at the individual level, but by small orientation group. Since students' mood may be affected by doing a survey before or after having lunch, we decided to include two before-lunch and two after-lunch groups in our study: our "control group" consisted of students who took the training after lunch on July 17 and before lunch on July 24, and our "treatment group" of students who took the training before lunch on July 17 and after lunch on the 24.

We call this a quasi-experimental design since, though the students were not randomly assigned to the control and treatment conditions, their participation in successive new student orientation sessions, and their division into two groups in 2018, can be considered *as if* random, meaning that the groups are likely to be very similar in all respects before the training.

This intuition is confirmed when we look at the demographic composition of the survey respondents (see Tables 2 and 4 in the Appendix). In terms of age, the respondents could choose below 18, 18–24 or older than 24 in the 2017 survey. In this study, none of the respondents said they were older than 24, and the vast majority reported being 18-24. Both control and treatment groups had slightly more female than male respondents, and few respondents who chose other categories (transgender or gender non-conforming).

The largest reported ethnic group was Hispanic/Latino, in line with the University of New Mexico's status as a Hispanic-serving institution. In July 2017, the share was somewhat higher in the treatment group, but the difference was not statistically significant. The share of students self-reporting as white was, on the other hand, lower in the treatment group, and there was a somewhat higher number of students self-reporting as Native American or American Indian, or who checked several of the ethnicity categories. In July 2018, the racial-ethnic composition was roughly the same across control and treatment groups. Close

to 46% of the students in both studies said they were first-generation college students, and this was virtually the same across the treatment and control groups.

4.2   Randomized study in November 2017

For the fall 2017 study, we were able to employ a fully randomized design for a training session for continuing students. Here, we took the list of students registered for a large training session and randomly assigned them to control and treatment conditions in advance. The training took place in two ballrooms of the Student Union Building. Each student had to register with their student ID at a registration desk, and was then told to enter either room A or B, where sessions were held by instructors simultaneously. Project staff were present to ensure that the students entered the room they had been assigned to. Students in room B took the survey before the training session (our control group), and students in room A took the survey after the training session (our treatment group). Both sessions started and ended at approximately the same time.

Randomizing the students into a treatment and control should ensure good balance on both observable and unobservable characteristics. This means that the control group students should be comparable to the treatment group students *before* the training. In this study, the students were older—26 years of age on average—which is not surprising given that these are continuing students, and as a public university UNM has many non-traditional students. There is an imbalance between the treatment and control groups on the age variable, with the average age being over 3.3 years higher in the control group. However, this difference is driven by a few older respondents—one was 78 and some were in their 50s. When we compare only the respondents that were younger than 25, the two groups are balanced, with an average age of about 22. Since all the respondents in the summer studies are younger than 25—the oldest one in the July 2018 study is 21—and our goal is to look at the effects of the training on college students, we look only at respondents younger than 25

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years of age in our analysis.

In this study, we also had somewhat fewer white students and more Native Americans in the treatment groups, but these differences are not statistically significant. Here, there were about 42% of students across both groups who reported being first-generation college students (see Table 3 in the Appendix).

Seeing imbalances in a randomized study is not uncommon, particularly with a smaller sample size. What we see here is the trade-off between choosing a fully randomized set-up and one with a higher sample size. The literature is not in agreement about whether correcting for imbalances in experimental work, through matching or by introducing control variables in a regression framework, is actually advantageous. It may help to improve balance on observables and to reduce precision in estimates, but it may also worsen balance on unobservables and consequently bias the results. In the next section we report differences in responses across the control and treatment conditions without any further control variables. However, we have also checked the robustness of all the patterns by running models with demographic controls—these results are available upon request.

4.3   Outcome Measures

Our survey instruments included questions relating to understandings of sexual harassment and assault, indicators of adherence to rape myths, a gender beliefs scale developed in Tinkler (2013), questions about willingness to report sexual assault, and beliefs about the consequences of reporting. The survey was short, as we had limited time to administer it. New student orientation operates on a tight schedule, and the regular Grey Area trainings during the academic year are scheduled in two-hour blocks. Respondents did not enter any identifying information. Though anonymity likely encouraged greater honesty, and facilitated approval of the study by the university's Institutional Review Board, it precluded us from contacting students for a follow-up study.

First, the survey instrument presented respondents with a series of statements asking whether they would consider certain behaviors to be sexual misconduct. Across the three waves of surveys we included two statements that are clear examples of sexual misconduct "A student in one of your classes shows you nude pictures of another student on their cell phone" and "A man has sex with a woman who is extremely drunk and unable to speak clearly." We also included a more ambiguous statement: "Another student tells you that you look really good in your new jeans," as the Grey Area training instructs students to obtain consent before making comments of a suggestive or sexual nature. Finally, we included a neutral statement: "Two students have sex after both expressed their consent" to gauge whether training increases the chances to misidentify behavior.

To measure rape myth acceptance, we utilized the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) developed by Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999). The survey instrument included McMahon and Farmer (2011)'s updated version, which presents four subscales—She asked for it; he didn't mean to; it wasn't really rape; and she lied—each of which includes five to six statements to which respondents can agree or disagree. For our study, we used one complete subscale and summary indicators of the remaining three subscales based on work by Theresa Cruz in New Mexico high schools. In the summer 2017 study, we used the "it wasn't really rape" subscale and in the fall 2017 and summer 2018 studies, the "he didn't mean to" subscale.

Third, we adopted the semantic differential scales used in Tinkler's research on the effect of sexual harassment policies (Tinkler, 2013; Tinkler, Gremillion and Arthurs, 2015). These items are seven-point scales for various pairs of words measuring participants' personal opinions about men and women on three dimensions: (1) competence: competent/incompetent, knowledgeable/unknowledgeable, capable/incapable; (2) power: respected/not respected, powerful/powerless, high status/low status, leader/follower; (3) considerateness: considerate/inconsiderate, pleasant/unpleasant, likable/unlikable, cooperative/uncooperative. We

asked students to mark where they personally thought men, and then women, fell on each of the polar adjective scales.

After observing interesting patterns in these gender belief questions in the 2017 studies, we probed the hypothesis that the training activates sexist beliefs among participants by including five items from Glick and Fiske's Hostile Sexism sub-scale (Glick and Fiske, 1996) as well as an additional item for a total of six,[4] and then the Benevolent Sexism—Protective Paternalism—subscale, which includes four items.

Finally, we measured students respondent's willingness to report sexual misconduct to campus authorities by adapting questions from previous campus climate surveys, such as "How likely would you be to report sexual assault to campus authorities?" and "How likely is it that campus authorities would believe you?" On a four-point scale, the answers ranged from very likely (1) to not at all likely (4). The survey also asked demographic questions on gender identity, racial identity, age, and whether students were first generation college students, as reported above. We describe slight differences between the three study instruments in Appendix A.

5   Findings

Looking first at notions of sexual misconduct, Figure 1 shows responses to the four statements included across all the surveys. For each statement, we asked the students whether they agree or disagree that this behavior is sexual misconduct. The Figure shows the share of the respondents that agree. For each statement, the top bar shows the percentage of the students that agree before the training (the control group, in orange) and the bottom bar shows the percentage that agree after the training (the treatment group, in green). Inside the bars we report the percentage of students that agree. The stronger colors indicate that the difference

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[4]The additional item reads "Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences."

in means of those two bars is statistically significant at the 5% level in a two-sample t-test.

Figure 1: Responses to questions about forms of misconduct in the three studies
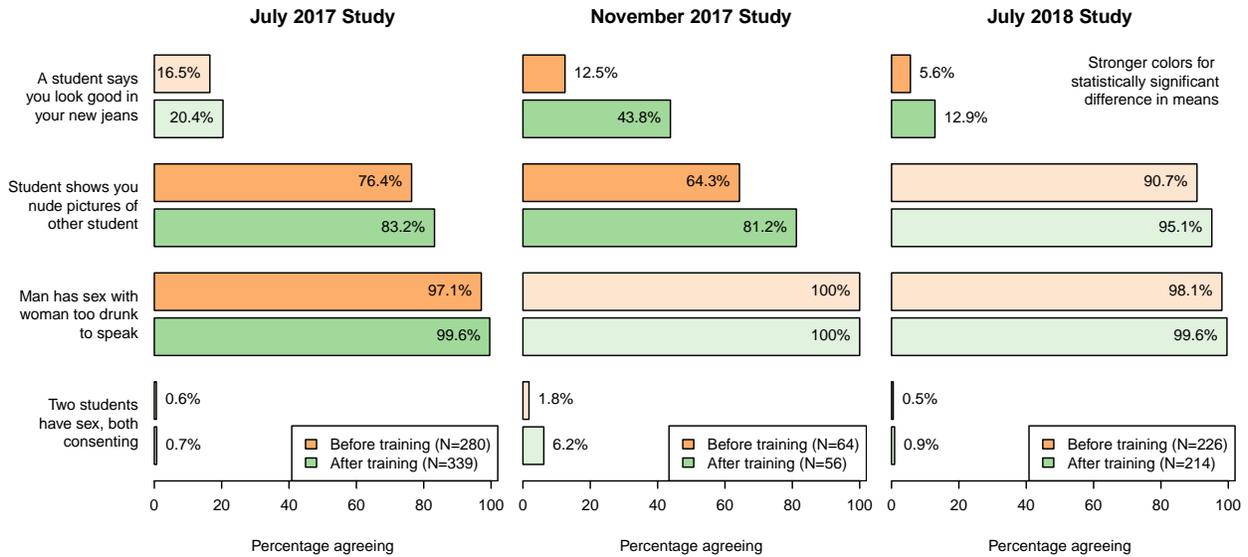

For the two clear examples of proscribed behavior—"A student in one of your classes shows you nude pictures of another student on their cell phone" and "A man has sex with a woman who is extremely drunk and unable to speak clearly"—we see that the majority of students consider both of these to be sexual misconduct before and after the training, but the share of students agreeing is higher in the post-training groups. Few students consider "Two students have sex after both expressed their consent" to be sexual misconduct. Some, but far from all, respondents say they consider getting a compliment to constitute sexual misconduct. The Grey Area trainers emphasize the need to get consent before making a sexually suggestive statement, and we see that in the November 2017 and the July 2018 studies, the share of students responding affirmatively increases considerably as a result of the training.

5.1 Rape myths

In Figure 2 we show responses to some of the questions about rape myths from the three studies. We show the questions that were the same across all waves of the surveys. For each question, the top bar shows the responses in the group we surveyed before the training (control) and the bottom bar shows the responses in the group we surveyed after the training (treatment). We recorded responses on a six-level Likert scale running from "Totally agree" to "Totally disagree," where agreeing means adhering to the rape myth. We report p-values from bivariate regressions of responses regressed on being in the treatment or control group for each pair of bars in the bottom bar.

Figure 2: Responses to questions about rape myths in the three studies
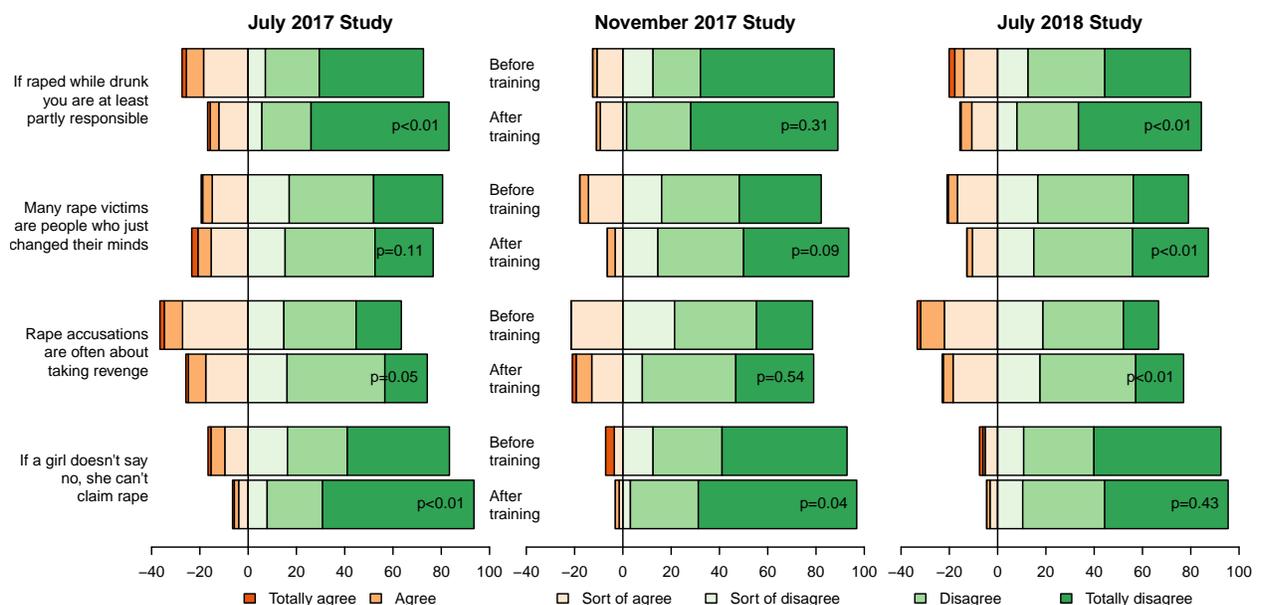
Ideally, the training will be associated with a shift in the responses toward the right side of the panel, which we see for several of the questions. Across all three studies, a higher share of the respondents "totally disagree" with the statement "If someone is raped while they are drunk or on drugs, they are at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control" after the training. In the November 2017 and July 2018 studies, we see significant

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shifts in the responses to the statement that many rape victims are people who changed their minds. In the summer 2017 study and July 2018 studies, we see a significant shift in the responses to the statement "Rape accusations or charges are often used as a way of getting revenge." Finally, in both the 2017 studies we see significant shifts in the statement "If a girl doesn't say no, she can't claim rape."
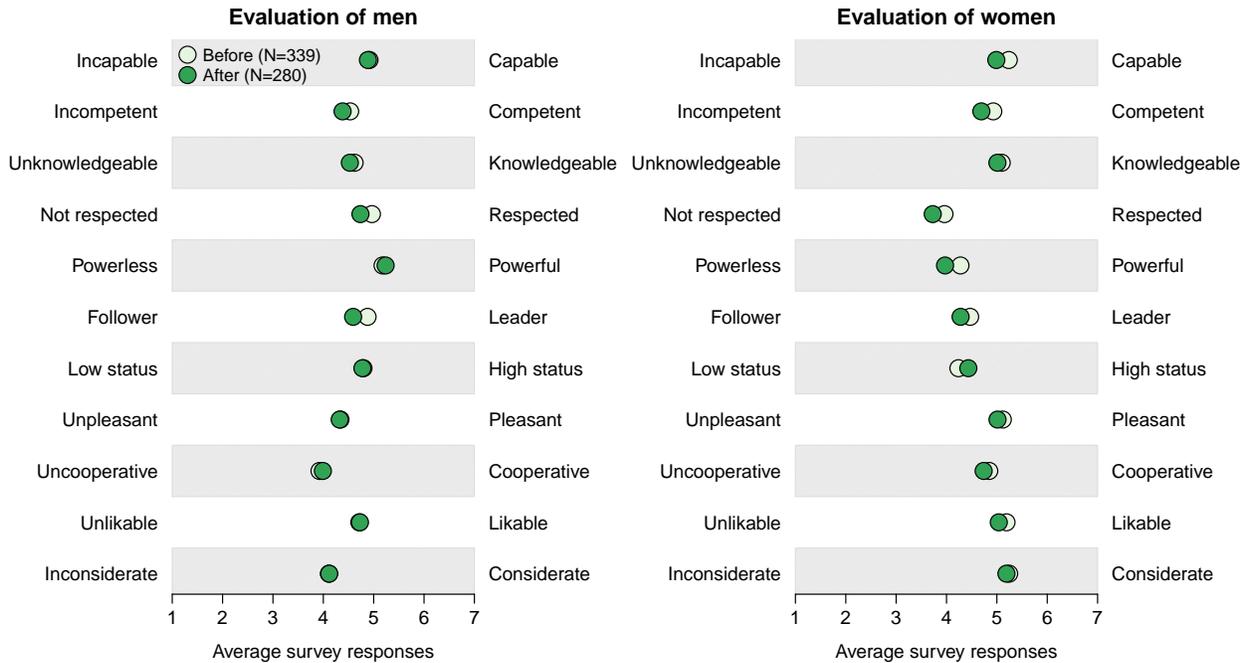
To assess whether men and women respond differently to the training, we split the sample (see Figure 7 and 8 in the Appendix). Though the difference in responses is not dramatic, men are somewhat more likely than women to believe in rape myths before the training, and the treatment effect of the training is somewhat greater for men than for women.

5.2   Gender stereotypes and sexism

We turn now to our questions about gender stereotypes and beliefs about gender roles. Here, we asked students to place men and women in a space between a more and less desirable trait. Figure 3 compares how students evaluate men (left plot) and women (right plot) in the before-training and after-training groups in the July 2017 study. In the survey, the traits were ordered differently (sometimes with the positive attribute on the left side of the scale and other times on the right) to pre-empt respondents from becoming too aware of the patterns in their responses. Here we order the pairs so that the less desirable trait is consistently on the left and the more desirable one is on the right. The figure identifies the average responses for the group interviewed before the training (control) by light-colored circles and identifies average responses after the training (treatment) by dark-colored circles.

What we see in Figure 3 is that both before and after the training, the students see men as more respected and more powerful than women, while they evaluate women as more pleasant. We also see some changes in the responses before and after the training: after the training the respondents are more likely to say that men are "Not respected" and they are more likely to label men a "Follower." These changes are stronger among women respondents (not

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Figure 3: Responses to questions about gender stereotypes in the July 2017 study

Evaluation of men

| Before (N=339) | | Capable |
| After (N=280) | | |

Incapable · Capable
Incompetent · Competent
Unknowledgeable · Knowledgeable
Not respected · Respected
Powerless · Powerful
Follower · Leader
Low status · High status
Unpleasant · Pleasant
Uncooperative · Cooperative
Unlikable · Likable
Inconsiderate · Considerate

Average survey responses

Evaluation of women

Incapable · Capable
Incompetent · Competent
Unknowledgeable · Knowledgeable
Not respected · Respected
Powerless · Powerful
Follower · Leader
Low status · High status
Unpleasant · Pleasant
Uncooperative · Cooperative
Unlikable · Likable
Inconsiderate · Considerate

Average survey responses

shown). When it comes to women, we see that respondents are more likely to deem women "Incapable," "Incompetent," "Not respected," and "Powerless" after the training. Here, the change in "Not respected" and "Incapable" is stronger among male respondents, while the change in "Incompetent" and "Powerless" is stronger among the female respondents. These changes in gender beliefs, which the Grey Area did not intend to produce, suggests that simply talking about sexual assault activates traditional gender stereotypes in some people.[5]

Collapsing the responses to the "competence", "power" and "considerateness" scales developed by Tinkler (2013); Tinkler, Gremillion and Arthurs (2015), we find none of the changes in the beliefs scales about men to be statistically significant. For the beliefs about women, there is a statistically significant reduction of about 0.19 points in the competence scale (p-value=0.03) after the training in the July 2017 study. In the November 2017 and July 2018 studies, the patterns are the same as students evaluate women to be less competent

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[5]In Figure 9 in the Appendix we show the differences in responses before and after the training for all three studies, and 95% confidence intervals from bivariate regressions models that allow us to see whether the changes are statistically significant.

after training, but the differences are not statistically significant at conventional levels (p=.14 and p=.12, respectively).

Figure 4: Responses to sexist statements before and after the training

Effect of training men respondents

Effect of training women respondents
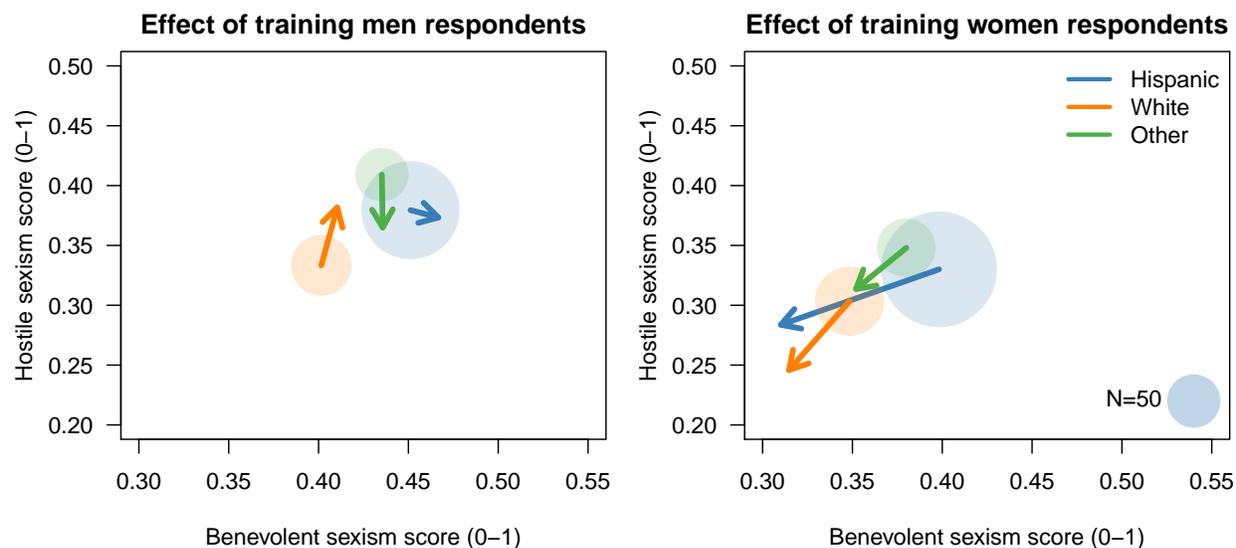
To further explore how the training may affect gender stereotypes and sexism, we decided to include questions from the Hostile and Benevolent Sexism scales from Glick and Fiske's ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI) (Glick and Fiske, 1996) in the study in July 2018. The ASI is intended to capture the dualistic nature of contemporary sexism, wherein antipathy toward competition from women for power and resources (hostile sexism) often coexists with protective attitudes toward women family members and other intimates (benevolent sexism). Both types of attitudes legitimize and contribute to gender inequality (Glick and Fiske, 2001, 2011). Students responded to the different statements in the scales on a five-level Likert scale, where a 1 indicates complete agreement with the sexist statement and a 5 indicates complete disagreement. Following Glick and Fiske, we took the average score of responses to the four statements in the benevolent sexism scale and the five statements in the hostile sexism scale. We then rescaled so that a 0 indicates disagreement with all the sexist statements (less sexist) and 1 indicates agreement with all the statements (more

sexist).

In Figure 4 we show the change to responses on the two sexism scales. The x-axis shows responses on the benevolent sexism scale and the y-axis shows the responses on the hostile sexism scale. We sub-divided the responses by gender and by racial identity groups. The circle at the root of each arrow indicates the sample size for the sub-group.

As we can see in the figure, men agree more with the sexist statements than women overall, particularly the statements about benevolent sexism. Both the beginning and the end of the arrows reach farther to the right. Overall, the training does not significantly shift sexist attitudes among men respondents. However, we see differences by racial identity group. White men, for example, move higher on the hostile sexism score after the training. They were initially less sexist than Hispanic men, but rise to the same level of hostile sexism after the training, but not the same level of benevolent sexism.

Among women respondents, there is an overall significant treatment effect. Women are significantly less likely to agree with both types of sexist statements after the training. The strongest significant pattern here is that Hispanic women score lower on benevolent sexism after the training. They start out as more benevolent sexists than white women, but change significantly after the training to have a similar score as white women. Put differently, the gap in sexist attitudes shrinks among members of different racial identity groups for both men and women. But since women get less sexist and men get more so, the gap between men and women overall grows as a result of the training.

5.3 Reporting

In Figure 5 we turn to the questions about reporting included in the two studies conducted in 2017. Here we want to see a shift to the right in the top three questions—"Would you report," "Would you encourage a friend to report," and "Would campus authorities believe you"—and a shift to the left on the bottom two questions about retaliations and getting

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blamed for reporting. For the most part, we see these desired results. In July and November 2017, almost all the students say they would encourage a friend to report, and after the training a higher share say it is likely that campus authorities will believe them if they report. Across both of these studies, a larger share of students also deem it unlikely that they will be blamed for the assault if they report.

Figure 5: Responses to questions about reporting in the 2017 studies
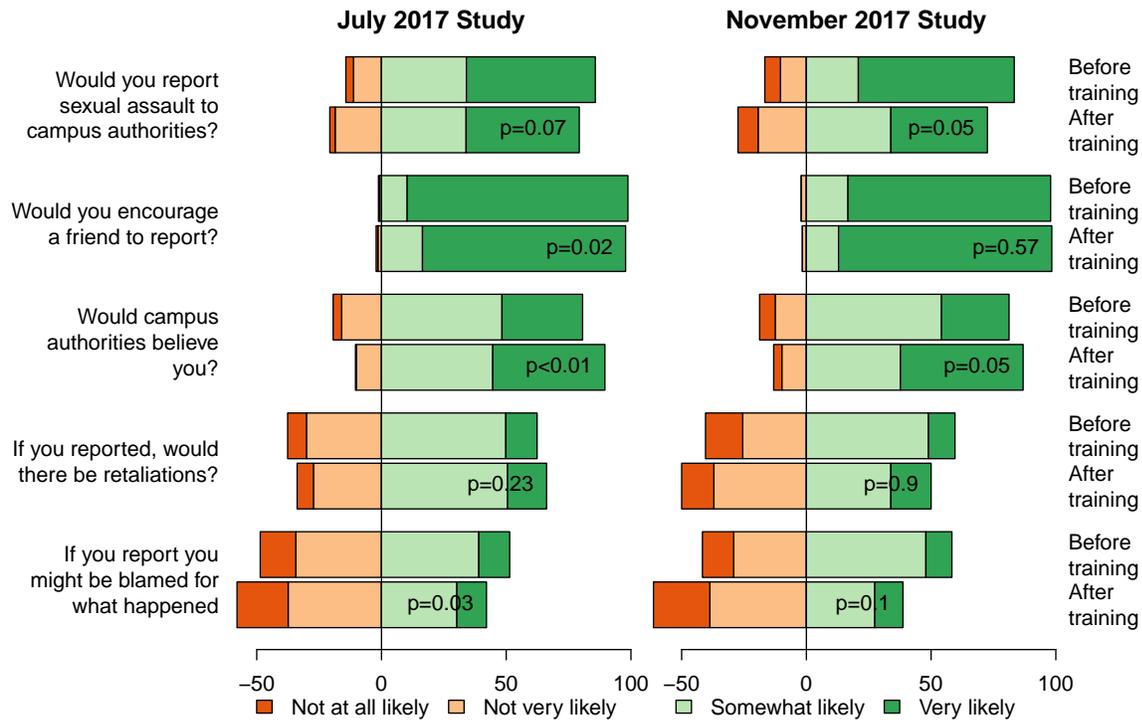
Our most surprising finding is that students say they are less likely to report assault to campus authorities after the training. Across all three studies, we see a shift to the left rather than to the right on the intention to report question. If we treat the response categories as continuous and run bivariate regression models on this change, we see that it is highly statistically significant. This result is also robust to recoding the response to a dichotomous variable—"Not likely" or "Likely"—and when we include control variables.

The change in reporting intent is driven primarily by a change among women respondents,

Figure 6: Responses to the question about the intention to report, for women and men across the three studies
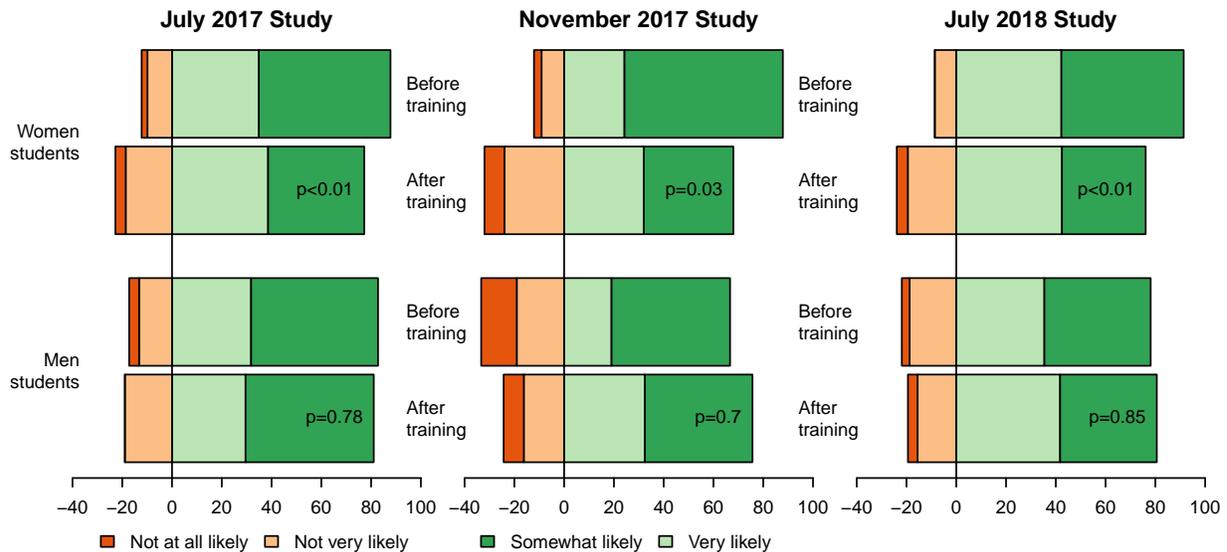
as Figure 6 shows. In the July 2017 study, the training is associated with a 10 percentage point drop in the share of women who say they were "Somewhat likely" or "Very likely" to report assault to campus authorities. In the November 2017 study, the training is associated with a slight increase in the share of men who say they are likely to report (statistically insignifcant), but an even larger drop among the women (15 percentage points). A similar pattern repeats in the July 2018 study.

6   Qualitative Interviews

In addition to our quasi-experiments on student attitudes, we conducted in person, semi-structured interviews with 33 students to gain a more holistic assessment of student responses to the training.[6] We recruited interviewees in various settings, included through classes,

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[6]We are still conducting interviews to ensure that we have a sample that represents UNM's population. We are oversampling LGBTQ* populations to ensure that the diverse voices and perspectives of this population are included. Although we have interviewed students with diverse demographic characteristics, we have not yet reached saturation in perspectives.

friends, people we saw walking around campus or studying in the library, and in the gym. Most interviews were formally structured, while some were more informal, though consented, conversations. Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown of the students.

We asked students about their perceptions of the training and its efficacy, sexual harassment and assault on campus, the role and response of the university, and whether they had noticed changes to the campus climate. In some cases, we also explored student reactions to our survey results, particularly the findings about men and women having different views about gender, feminism, and reporting assault to the university.

Table 1: Demographics of Interviewees

Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic	13
White	10
Native American	0
African American	2
Asian	7
More than one	1
Gender	
Female	14
Male	18
Other	1
LGBTQ*	
Yes	6
No	27
N=33	

Note: Interviews were conducted by the authors of this paper between February and August 2018.

We used thematic analysis to characterize variation in student attitudes about, and perceptions of, the training. Following the steps laid out by Nowell et al. (2017), we discussed codes and themes in meetings of the research team. Then we searched for these themes in the transcriptions of our interviews, reviewed, revised, and defined them. In light of the relatively small number of interviews, we did this analysis manually, and we opted not to count the number of students that addressed particular themes. We identify themes that were brought up by one or two students. We use language such as "most" to indicate that

the theme was mentioned by more than half of the students we interviewed.

6.1 Attitudes about training

Students had mixed attitudes about the training. They found it helpful, unnecessary, or bad and ideologically-charged.

Many of the students we interviewed found the training helpful. One student explained that he took the session with his girlfriend and afterwards they had a great discussion about consent in their relationship that was helpful to both. Other students described the training as informative and good. Some men said they learned that which actions could make women uncomfortable or be seen as harassment, and said that they have become more conscientious in their behavior.

Most students, however, found the training redundant. They explained that they didn't need training to tell them that sexual violence is an important topic. As one student put it, "there was no mind-blowing moment where I was like 'wow, I had no idea about that'."[7] Others said the training taught common-sense facts, such as the idea that rape is bad, and did not reveal any new ifnormation. And some suggested that the training was unnecessary, because it merely reiterated rules that they already knew. These accounts are consistent with what one student wrote in a written evaluation collected by the Lobo Respect staff, "A lot of the presentation made me feel like I was being talked to like a child."[8]

A smaller group of students expressed hostility to the training. A couple of interviewees complained that the training was pushing a politically left agenda, with one student stating that the training gave off a "very sort of in that new age, social justice P.C. sort of vibe,"[9]. Another student explained that "there was some degree of political charged-ness to it," and held that rather than seeking to actually help victims of sexual violence, the training sought

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[7]Interview, May 16, 2018.
[8]Reported in the *Albuquerque Journal*, January 22, 2018.
[9]Interview, May 24, 2018

to promote leftist ideals.

6.2   Gender Beliefs

The staff that presents the *Grey Area* training endeavors to be inclusive and egalitarian, gender neutral when presenting the issue of sexual assault and harassment, and avoids language that uses the male-perpetrator and female-victim stereotype. Yet our survey and interviews show that this message gets filtered through students' prior beliefs.

Some students spoke about gender polarization as an effect of the training. One student found the training to be "isolating", saying "it made everyone feel, like the genders, feel polarized. So, when I walked in there, I was having a comfortable conversation with my neighbor who was a man and by the end of it was like we were trying to distance our seats as much as we could from each other." Another student described the atmosphere during the training as "tense." The first student went further, explaining that the training overall "didn't necessarily make people feel safer like they knew what they shouldn't do. It kind of just made them feel more different from the opposite gender...now there are more ways that they have to look to not treat them or make them uncomfortable." [10]

When we asked students directly what they thought of the finding that training activates gender stereotypes, some stated that, even when the training is gender neutral in language, people still assume that the victims are women and the perpetrators men, due to their real life experiences or reported statistics. Other students explicitly recalled the training as gendered, claiming that it used female-male victim-perpetrator examples. Yet in the many training sessions we attended, we never saw trainers using gendered language or examples.

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[10]Interview, March 9, 2018.

6.3   Decreased Reporting

When we asked students what they thought about the decrease in the intention to report an incident of sexual misconduct, we received different answers. Some of the men said that people were grumpy and resentful about being forced to take the training. Several women students explained that the training made reporting seem like a lot of work. Some were concerned that, since perpetrators often escape punishment, reporting would not lead to anything, and the training failed to convince them otherwise.

One student attributed the decline in willingness to report to the training's message about affirmative consent and the broad range of behavior considered misconduct. Students may have learned that they themselves had engaged in sexual misconduct, which made them less likely to say they would report.

6.4   Does Training change Campus Climate?

We asked students whether and how they thought the training had changed campus climate. For the most part, we could ask this question only of older students who had taken the training while already enrolled at UNM. Among this smaller group, several students affirmed that awareness of sexual assault had increased considerably. Besides the Grey Area, students told us about other campaigns to promote sexual violence awareness, such as Solo Cups set up in front of the main library to signify numbers of victims of sexual abuse.[11] However, students hesitated to attribute this shift to the training. As one student noted: "So I think from when I first started taking classes here, which is my senior year of high school, I've noticed that there's been a shift not necessarily because of great initiatives taken by UNM administration, but because of the shift overall countrywide during the #MeToo movement."[12]

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[11]Interview, May 21, 2018.
[12]Interview, June 18, 2018.

7 Conclusions

The spread of sexual harassment and assault training on college campuses has been driven by the need to comply with federal mandates, not evidence of the efficacy of the intervention. Though it changes views toward rape and assault, there is little evidence that universal, mixed-gender, and single-dose training achieves its goal of reducing harassment and assault, or even encouraging more people to report misconduct to the university. Our study, along with several others, suggests that federally-mandated sexual misconduct training has mixed and heterogeneous effects, a finding echoed in studies in private corporations (Magley et al., 2013).

Some of our results suggest that training produces a "boomerang" effect on select sub-groups. The first "boomerang" effect consists of women's decreased willingness to report an episode of sexual assault. This finding is consistent across all three of our studies. Why do we see this result?

It could be the case that the control condition artificially increases the likelihood to report assault. To the extent that participants know they are entering a sexual misconduct training, they are already primed toward a socially desirable answer, which is that they would report assault under any circumstance. It is also possible that sitting through the training makes reporting less desirable. The training is legally required to inform students of the potential consequences of misconduct, which include expulsion and incarceration. We know that many women victims do not want their abusers punished; rather, they just want the behavior to stop. Knowing of harsh punishments, they may be less willing to report.

In addition, the training promotes a more encompassing understanding of the types of social encounters that the university considers to be punishable misconduct. The training emphasizes the importance of consent, and states that people under the influence of drugs or alcohol are unable to give consent. Since sexual encounters involving drugs or alcohol are

common on college campuses, the training takes what people may have formerly perceived to be normal and acceptable behavior and moves it to the realm of assault. As one of our interviewees noted, students may have realized that they themselves had committed or experienced what the training calls "assault" and therefore become less willing to report.

The second "boomerang" effect consists of a growing gap between men and women on attitudes toward some gender issues, including women's role in society captured by the Benevolent and Hostile Sexism scales, as well as the gender beliefs scale. This suggests that women are more likely than men to receive a feminist message of gender empowerment, and that the gender gap in views toward appropriate gender roles grows. Since our results for gender stereotypes are not consistent across the three studies, we need more research in this area to infer stronger conclusions.

Finally, our qualitative interviews point to a third "boomerang" in the hostility some men report feeling toward the training. Though we have no indication that these men grow more inclined to commit assault, our results suggest that they become less receptive to messages about campus climate communicated by the university, which would confirm their view of a leftist, politically correct agenda. It is easy to preach to the converted, but far more difficult to change the minds of people who disagree merely by compelling them to sit through a lecture.

What are the policy implications of our research? In the first place, universities and other organizations may want disaggregate the goals of the training and developing separate programs for each objective. Some types of training may be better suited to provision of information about policies and services, while different approaches may be required to induce changes in sexual behavior, understandings of consent, and views about gender, particularly among men.

Second, organizations may want to develop targeted training. There is consensus among experts that gender-specific training is more effective at changing behavior (see discussion in

Gidycz et al., 2006). In addition, training could targeted at lower- and higher-risk groups, or people that share other characteristics such as ideology or partisanship. The problem is that the university violates privacy by using its enrollment data to target, and the notion of segregated or gender-specific training offends many trainers and advocates, for whom breaking down traditional ideas about gender, including the binary, is part of the cultural change needed to reduce assault.

The findings of our study raise the question of why universities and other organizations continue to allocate money and time to training programs when studies show that other strategies, such as immediate confrontation, speedy investigation, swift discipline, leadership commitment, and even hiring more women help to reduce harassment. (Dobbin and Kalev, 2017; Erdreich, Slavet and Amador, 1995; Feldblum and Lipnic, 2016; Lee, 2018a,b). These other interventions implicate the interests and behavior of senior administrators and faculty members. Mandatory, universal, single-dose training, by contrast, is cheaper and places the burden of sexual assault prevention on the least powerful—students. Training may persist as a dominant strategy because more effective interventions are costly.

A second reason could be that decision making on training is driven by activism and politics more than analysis of costs and benefits. As Mansbridge (2015) observed in her analysis of why the U.S. failed to enact the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, many activists prefer "being right over winning." Federal officials, university administrators, and sexual violence advocates want to be right: they want people to engage in healthy sexual relationships and to believe in gender equality. They endorse training that communicates these values. But as this "right" message gets filtered through individual perspectives and biases, it produces differential effects on individuals, including a partial boomerang. Our study at UNM points to the need for more research to explore whether the desire to educate about the right values blinds advocates to practical strategies that increase the chances of winning the fight against sexual misconduct.

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A Surveys

There are slight differences in the surveys we administered in each of the three studies. The addition of questions from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to the July 2018 instrument meant that we had to cut some questions to keep the instrument at a manageable length. Based on results from the 2017 studies, we decided to cut the four items from the gender beliefs scale intended to tap into assessments of considerateness. We also cut questions about whether respondents would encourage a friend to report assault and about their expectations of university officials' behavior if they reported assault.

The demographic questions for the three studies were the same, with the following exception. The age question for the summer studies in 2017 and 2018 included two options, which were under 18, and 18-24, since the New Student Orientation was exclusively for traditional students. The fall 2017 study allowed respondents to fill in their own age.

The question about the respondent's gender had four categories: Woman, Man, Transgender, and Non-Conforming. The race and ethnicity identification question had five categories, which were Hispanic/Latino, White, Native American/American Indian, Black/African American, and Asian/Asian American. Some respondents chose to check more than one category, which we coded as More than 1 (race). Finally, the survey asked respondents whether one or both of their parents had attended a four-year university, to determine whether the students were first generation college students or not.

B   Balance statistics

Table 2: Demographic composition of the control and treatment groups in the summer 2017 study

	Control group (N=339)	Treatment group (N=280)	Difference in means	P-value
Percent below 18	11.4	12.6	1.2	0.66
Percent women	52.8	52.3	-0.4	0.92
First-generation college	45.8	45.5	-0.4	0.93
Self-reported ethnicity				
Hispanic	39.6	44.8	5.1	0.20
White	33.4	23.8	-9.6	0.01
Native American	6.2	9.4	3.2	0.14
African American	6.5	5.1	-1.4	0.45
Asian	5.0	5.4	0.5	0.80
Mixed race	9.3	11.6	2.3	0.36

Note: The p-values are from two-sample t-tests.

Table 3: Demographic composition of the control and treatment groups in the fall 2017 study

	Control group (N=86)	Treatment group (N=80)	Difference in means	P-value
Age (all)	27.2	24.0	-3.3	0.02
Age (below 25)	21.6	21.8	0.2	0.36
Percent women	51.9	42.7	-9.2	0.25
First-generation college	41.7	42.3	0.6	0.93
Self-reported ethnicity				
Hispanic	35.8	35.1	-0.7	0.92
White	42.0	37.7	-4.3	0.58
Native American	6.2	10.4	4.2	0.34
African American	3.7	2.6	-1.1	0.69
Asian	8.6	3.9	-4.7	0.22
Mixed race	3.7	10.4	6.7	0.10

Note: The p-values are from two-sample t-tests.

Table 4: Demographic composition of the control and treatment groups in the summer 2018 study

	Control group (N=214)	Treatment group (N=226)	Difference in means	P-value
Average age	17.9	17.9	0.0	0.34
Percent women	54.7	52.3	-2.4	0.62
First-generation college	46.0	45.1	-0.9	0.85
Self-reported ethnicity				
Hispanic	45.8	48.4	2.6	0.59
White	29.9	26.7	-3.2	0.47
Native American	6.5	7.4	0.8	0.74
African American	6.1	5.5	-0.5	0.81
Asian	4.2	3.2	-1.0	0.59
Mixed race	7.5	8.8	1.3	0.63

Note: The p-values are from two-sample t-tests.

C   Additional findings

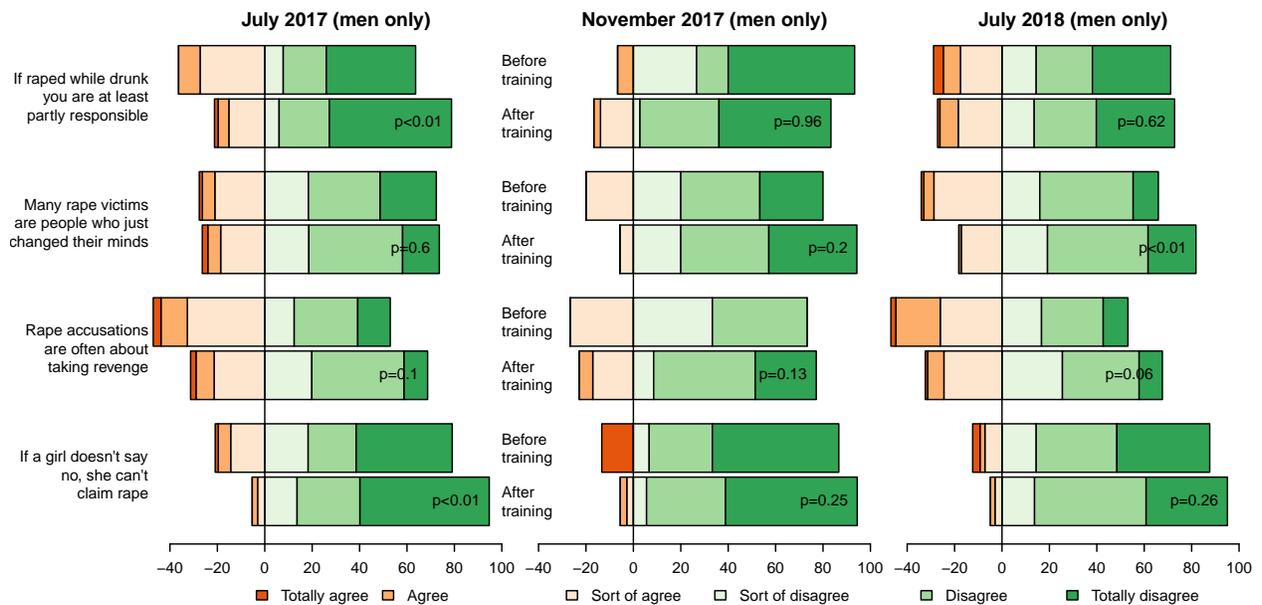Figure 7: Men's responses to questions about rape myths in the three studies

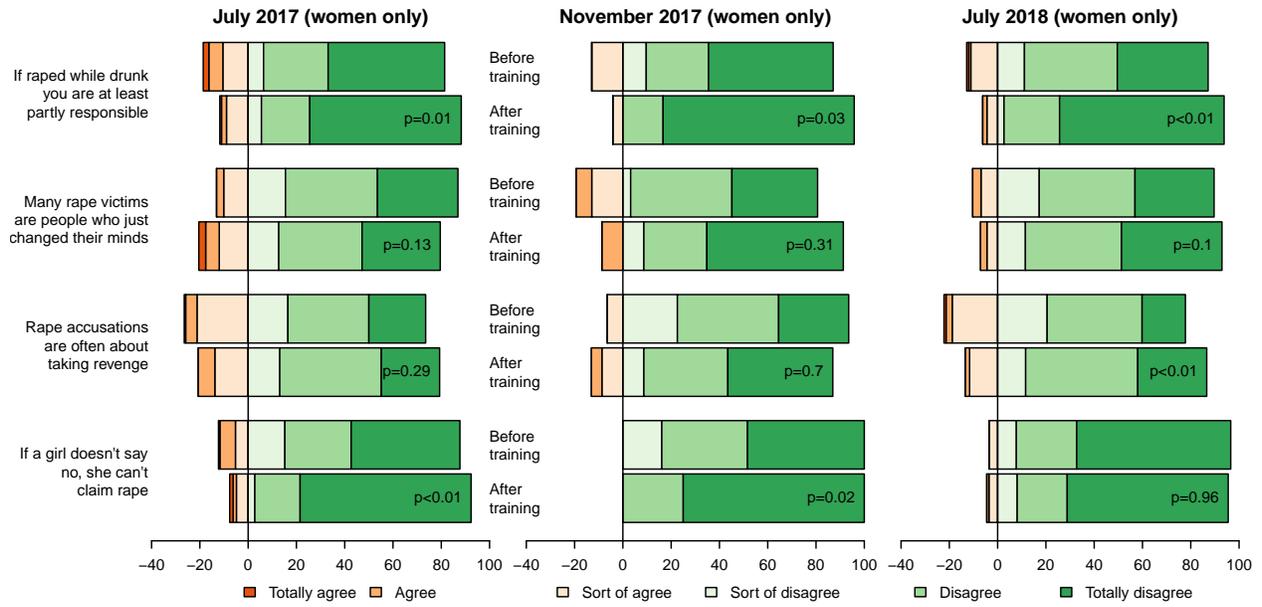Figure 8: Women's responses to questions about rape myths in the three studies

Figure 9: Changes in stereotypes from after the training