

STUDENT RESEARCH WEEK

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"This is What Anti-Feminism Looks Like:" Men's Rights Edmonton and Counter Sexual Assault Campaigns

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Abstract

Men's Rights Edmonton (MRE) gained a large deal of visibility during the summer months of 2013 as a result of their infamous "Don't Be That Girl" campaign. MRE's campaign was designed as a counter attack on an earlier advertising operation with the slogan "Don't Be That Guy", a joint effort between the Edmonton Police Service and Sexual Assault Voices of Edmonton designed to reduce sexual assault. Although the original campaign sought to challenge various myths regarding sexual assaults, combat victim-blaming, empower bystanders, and support survivors of sexual assault crimes, MRE aimed to do the exact opposite. As a controversial group meriting sociological study, this case study examined the available web content of MRE through the use of multiple methodologies to explore the means through which the online men's rights activists forum propagate men's rights in their counter initiatives involving sexual assault awareness campaigns. A qualitative content analysis of 6 images and 7 videos revealed that MRE had counter-protested 4 campaigns including "Make Your Move," "Edmonton SlutWalk," "Walk a Mile in her Shoes," and "Don't Be That Guy." Discourse analyses revealed that the messages propagated by Men's Rights Edmonton reinforced myths surrounding sexual assaults and victim-blamed women who report sexual assault. Findings of the study indicated that the group presents very limited representations of men's rights with an emphasis on being anti-feminist. In addition, the results point out that by attempting to eliminate or convolute a basis of understanding of sexual assault it further stigmatizes victims of sexual assault, playing a noteworthy role in reinforcing rape culture.