1

Framing Sexual Violence Prevention

What Does It Mean to Challenge a Rape Culture?

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Introduction

The startling findings across various country and multi-country studies on sexual violence unequivocally point to what the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013, p.2) describes as a 'pervasive [...] global public health problem of epidemic proportions'. In the first study of aggregated global and regional prevalence estimates for intimate partner and non-intimate partner sexual violence, the WHO (2013) found that overall 35 per cent of women worldwide reported having experienced either physical or sexual violence by a partner, or sexual violence by a friend, family member, acquaintance or stranger. Police data consistently show that while men report experiencing more physical, non-sexual violence than women, women continue to represent the majority of victims of sexual violence, while perpetrators are overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, male. Young women continue to be at highest risk of experiencing sexual violence, and most likely at the hands of a known man, such as a boyfriend, friend or acquaintance, rather than at the hands of a stranger (for prevalence studies, see, for example, ABS, 2006; 2013; Basile et al., 2007; Black et al., 2011; Fulu et al., 2013; Heenan & Murray, 2006; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004; Office for National Statistics (UK), 2013).

The statistics only tell half a story, yet they can be utilised to paint a gloomy picture of the widespread, persistent and systemic problem of sexual violence – and more generally, gender-based violence or violence against women. While scholars and practitioners routinely agree about the scope of the problem, there is much disagreement about how to prevent and ultimately eradicate all forms of sexual violence.[1] The public health model, advocated by governments, organisations and institutions globally, tends to describe sexual violence as an 'epidemic'. Accordingly, sexual violence is treated as a disease that can be eradicated before it occurs, or before it 'spreads' further into the community. This

approach enables the identification of adverse social, economic and psychological 'public health' impacts on victims, while squarely positioning violence against women as prevalent and serious – but preventable. While it is important to be optimistic about eradicating all forms of violence against women (as many public health models are – see discussion below), a disease-centred model runs the risk of individualising both the causes and impacts of violence, and as such it may fail to address the structural and cultural 'scaffolding' of men's violence against women (Gavey, 2005).

Rather than focusing on individual risk factors for either sexual violence perpetration or victimisation, many feminist scholars conversely argue that the focus instead should be on the social structures that underpin the perpetration of sexual violence.[2] Feminist scholars, practitioners and activists pejoratively refer to a 'rape culture' as the social, cultural and structural discourses and practices in which sexual violence is tolerated, accepted, eroticised, minimised and trivialised (Buchwald et al., 1993; 2005; Gavey, 2005). In a rape culture, violence against women is eroticised in literary, cinematic and media representations; victims are routinely disbelieved or blamed for their own victimisation; and perpetrators are rarely held accountable or their behaviours are seen as excusable or understandable (see Burt, 1980; MacKinnon, 1987; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). These manifestly sexist attitudes and beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists do not exist in isolation but rather are part of a broader manifestation of gender inequality, prevalent in the language, laws and institutions that are supposed to criminalise, challenge and prevent sexual violence but instead perpetuate, support, condone or reflect these values (see Smart, 1989; Temkin, 2002). Resistance to changing or challenging this rape culture can also be found in the erroneous but deeply embedded belief that rape is an inevitable and natural fact of life (Marcus, 1992).[3]

Whether drawing on prevalence statistics and public health impacts, or on critiques of gender-based inequalities, what feminist and public health models of sexual violence have in common is the desire to prevent and eradicate sexual violence. Indeed, owing to the dynamic development of these diverse models, over the past decade the field of sexual violence prevention has undergone an enormous shift both pragmatically and theoretically. Emerging out of the women's movement and grass-roots efforts in the 1970s and 1980s to secure support services for victim-survivors of rape, early efforts tended to focus on what *women* can do to avoid rape, such as how to avoid risk in public spaces and how to defend oneself against a potential predator (see Bart & O'Brien, 1984; Levine-MacCombie & Koss, 1986). Following the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, governments too began directing greater policy attention to the prevention of sexual violence. In the United States, for example, the 1994 *Violence Against Women Act* committed federal funding for prevention of sexual

and intimate partner violence, among other policy measures, including victim support services. Since 2000, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has received additional federal funding to develop a programme of research into public health models to prevent sexual violence (Degue et al., 2012; CDC, 2004).[4] In the same period, the WHO published several key research reports on sexual and intimate partner violence and advocated a public health approach to preventing violence against women 'before it occurs' (WHO, 2002; 2007; 2010; 2013). The last five years have seen a burgeoning of state and federal government policy and programmes directed at the *primary prevention* of sexual violence in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

Drawing significantly on the public health approach, as well as interdisciplinary perspectives across education, criminology, gender studies, law, psychology, social work and sociology, 'primary prevention' refers to strategies that seek to prevent sexual violence *before it occurs*. Prevention efforts are commonly directed towards addressing the key underlying causes of sexual violence, including cultural attitudes, values, beliefs and norms about masculinity, sexuality, gender and violence. These efforts include interventions that focus on building the knowledge and/or skills of individuals in order to change their behaviour, such as social marketing campaigns, community theatre and/or public art projects, as well as education programmes in high schools and university campuses. Yet primary prevention also incorporates strategies that are directed towards changing organisational, community, institutional and societal cultures and structures to address underlying causes of violence, such as gender inequality, sexism, discrimination and socio-economic deprivation.

The rapid rise of primary prevention approaches to sexual violence represents a substantial shift from strategies directed at women to strategies directed at changing the socio-cultural and socio-structural causes of sexual violence. The implications of this shift for how we address sexual violence through policy, law, education and our broader community are yet to be fully realised. Indeed, to date, the field of sexual violence prevention remains significantly under-theorised. This book is the first to draw together a unique collection of internationally renowned scholars writing about the issue of primary prevention of sexual violence. The chapters in the collection are informed by analytical frameworks and strategies across key fields, including criminology, education, health promotion, law, psychology, social work, socio-legal studies, sociology and women's studies. The book provides a much-needed theoretical and empirical investigation of primary prevention, which is lacking in the existing sexual violence literature.

This chapter provides a brief background and conceptual framework for exploring the promises and the perils of the emerging field of primary prevention of sexual violence. The chapter will introduce several key themes to

be further developed across the book, including the role that structural violence and inequality play in fostering a 'culture' of sexual violence; the relationship between the macro- and micro-levels for understanding both sexual violence perpetration and prevention; the role of bystanders and community initiatives; the normalisation of sexual violence in certain cross-cultural contexts; and the benefits of multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing and preventing sexual violence to effect substantive cultural change. The first part of the chapter critically examines three conceptual frameworks for the primary prevention of sexual violence, before then addressing some of the key tensions and challenges inherent in current theoretical and practical approaches to primary prevention. The final section provides an overview of each contributing chapter to this collection.

How to prevent sexual violence? Conceptual frameworks and accompanying strategies

The conceptual frameworks with which we seek to understand sexual violence have important implications for what we do in practice. Indeed, different prevention frameworks draw on different understandings of the problem of sexual violence and are open to divergent limitations or critiques. For example, some feminist engagements with sexual violence prevention have been critiqued for focusing too strongly on gender, while marginalising other factors such as ethnicity, sexuality and socio-economic status, or for focusing on what women can do to 'protect themselves' from men's violence. Classic crime prevention frameworks have likewise long been criticised for focusing on protecting the 'targets' of crime (often conceived of in terms of property rather than people) and less commonly focusing on attempts to change the behaviour of offenders themselves. Public health models, meanwhile, tend to be more inclusive in their focus on a broad range of causal factors, but in doing so they risk marginalising strategies that address systemic gender inequalities or the human rights basis for action to prevent violence (Daykin & Naidoo, 1995).

The following sections will briefly outline each of these three key frameworks and their contribution to sexual violence prevention. Ultimately, we suggest that primary prevention of sexual violence means challenging the socio-cultural and socio-structural basis of rape, and it is this broad approach to primary prevention that underpins each of the chapters in this book.

Sexual violence as a socio-cultural and socio-structural problem

Feminist theory and action over the last 40 years have persistently challenged the silence surrounding sexual violence, and the idea that it is a matter exclusively for the private realm. A range of strategies have been deployed to bring sexual violence firmly into public discourse and debate, and ultimately to

eradicate this form of violence. Law and policy reform, crisis support services, community programmes, school curricula, awareness-raising resources (such as posters, pamphlets, stickers, billboards and films), mainstream media interviews and articles, public shaming of alleged and convicted rapists, street marches such as 'Reclaim the Night' and 'Slut Walk', and online campaigns through blogs, petitions and social media have all contributed to an alternative discourse on sexual violence and a challenge to a 'culture' of rape. While feminist approaches to prevention are many and varied (as are feminist thinking and activism), feminist-informed frameworks remain central to sexual violence prevention. At their core, these frameworks share the central tenet that gender inequality and gender relations underpin sexual violence (Evans et al., 2009).

As Carmody (2009, p.3) writes, early feminist approaches to rape prevention problematically tended to 'deny the diversity of women's experience of sexual violence, and left unchallenged an assumption that sexual violence was inevitable. In other words, early approaches universalised women as "victims" and men as "perpetrators".' Susan Brownmiller's highly influential 1975 book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, for example, positioned rape both as an expression of men's political dominance over women and as a biological inevitability:

> Man's structural capacity to rape and women's corresponding structural vulnerability are as basic to the physiology of both our sexes as the primal act of sex itself [...] We cannot work around the fact that in terms of human anatomy the possibility of forcible intercourse incontrovertibly exists. This single factor may have been sufficient to have caused the creation of a male ideology of rape. When men discovered that they could rape, they proceeded to do it.
>
> (Brownmiller, 1975, pp.13–14)

This 'inevitability of rape' was (and still is in many examples) expressed in public campaigns and programmes that focus on what women can do to prevent being attacked: improving knowledge of what constitutes sexual assault; providing legal education around rights and recognising and avoiding risk; and in some instances, proposing strategies for women to resist and/or survive rape (see, for example, Delacoste, 1981; Rozee, 2011).

Influenced by the post-modern turn within gender studies more broadly, by the 1990s, feminist ideas about gender and violence shifted substantially to recognising the socially and culturally variable practices of femininities and masculinities (see Carmody, 2009). This brought greater attention to both the diversity of women's experiences of sexual violence and the intersectionality of marginalisation based on race, class, sexuality and disability. It also enabled a challenge to societal constructions of normative gender roles and the

notion that rape is an inevitable, or natural, manifestation of gender difference. In other words, challenging the fundamental roots of a 'rape culture' has become a key approach within feminist rape prevention.

While the everyday expressions of rape culture in mainstream media, advertising and popular culture (including more recently in online communities and via social media) cannot be ignored, one identified problem for feminist prevention strategies is that the construction of women's vulnerability to victimisation can have the effect of positioning women as 'inherently rapeable'. Feminist scholar Sharon Marcus (1992, p.170), for example, has challenged the view of rape as an inevitable 'fact', structured in the physiological differences between men and women, and instead calls for a challenge to the 'narratives, complexes and institutions' that make rape a dominant 'cultural script'. Norms inscribing passive, non-combative models of femininity against a physically aggressive masculinity set women up to live with both the fear and practice of rape. Controversially, among the strategies of rape prevention that Marcus (1992, p.170) suggests is for women to 'resist self-defeating notions of polite feminine speech as well as develop physical self-defense tactics'.

To be clear, Marcus's approach is not to imply that individual women are responsible for 'rape avoidance', as is common in some risk frameworks of rape prevention, but rather she acknowledges that disrupting our collective, cultural narratives of women's 'natural' passivity and vulnerability to rape is just as important as disrupting those of men's 'natural' sexual aggression (Marcus, 1992; see also Henderson, 2007). When one considers broader contexts of gender inequality, in which a presumed physical and psychological passivity underlies women's under-participation in sport comparable to men (in turn negatively affecting their health and well-being), and women's lower assertiveness in the workplace (which is linked to women's lower rates of promotion and positions of leadership), the deconstruction of normative assumptions about passive femininity should not be dismissed too readily, since discourses are powerful and can have the effect of reinscribing these patterns of dominance and subjugation which perpetuates the oppression rather than fundamentally challenges it (Brown, 1995). However, as Mardorossian (2002, p.755) argues, 'making women's behavior and identity the site of rape prevention only mirrors the dominant culture's proclivity to see rape as women's problem, both in the sense of a problem women should solve and one that they caused'.

In response to the limitations of prevention programmes and initiatives that focus on dismantling women's vulnerability to sexual violence, more recently, feminist approaches have turned towards engaging men and promoting alternative cultures and practices of masculinity as key to the prevention of sexual violence. The important role that masculinity and male peer cultures play in violence against women is further expanded in Schwartz and DeKeseredy's

highly cited theory of 'male peer support' – a feminist-informed application of 'routine activity theory' (RAT) to the specific issue of men's sexual violence against women. Based on research conducted in Canadian college campuses, male peer support focuses on the community and peer norms condoning violence against women that can contribute to both increasing offender motivations for using violence and a perception of the absence of guardianship against violence (DeKeseredy, 1990; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). In their own surveys of campus sexual assault, Schwartz and DeKeseredy have repeatedly found that rates of violence are higher on those campuses where there is male peer norm support for the use of coercion in sexual relationships (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2001). The theory of male peer support then highlights the need for sexual violence prevention to focus on challenging the norms at the meso-level – in peer groups, organisations and communities – such that these cultures may become spaces where peers routinely challenge other men's adherence to attitudes and norms condoning sexual violence, rather than reinforcing them.

This approach to rape prevention, based on engaging men to challenge their own socio-cultural norms and practices as well as those within their immediate peer groups and communities, has grown in influence in recent years. The work of Katz (1994), Katz and colleagues (2011) and Foubert and colleagues (2011), for example, draws in men as 'bystanders' in a culture that ultimately condones male dominance and sexual violence and calls on men to become allies in sexual violence prevention by challenging norms of violence, sexism and male dominance in their everyday lives. As Capraro (1994, p.22) asserts:

> [R]ape prevention work begins with men and with men's questioning of prevailing assumptions about masculinity and their rethinking what it means to be a man [. . .] the perpetration of rape is traceable to a highly problematic masculinity, constituted by sexism, violence and homophobia.

While shifting the focus to engaging men and problematising hegemonic masculinity is fundamental to the deconstruction of cultural beliefs and attitudes around normative femininity, masculinity and sexuality, it is important to view prevention not simply as the responsibility of individual men but more importantly as a shared, community or societal responsibility. Thus to expand on Mardorossian's (2002) conclusion, feminist approaches to rape prevention must be situated not in focussing on 'women' as 'victims' and 'men' as 'perpetrators' but rather in an understanding of the gender relations and wider social systems of patriarchy, capitalism and exploitation. This entails a focus not simply on men as potential perpetrators but also on men *and women* as bystanders and supporters of a rape culture.

Criminology, 'crime prevention' and rape

Criminological models such as 'routine activity theory' (or RAT) 'crime pattern theory' and 'rational choice theory' (or RCT) have substantially influenced crime prevention frameworks more generally. For example, at its core, RAT suggests that for the opportunity of crime to occur there must be (1) a motivated offender, (2) a potential target or victim, and (3) the absence of capable guardianship (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson & Cohen, 1980). Crime pattern theory meanwhile provides an account of the localised opportunities for offending behaviour, which are often concentrated around particular times and locations (such as home burglaries when residents are out at work for the day, or shoplifting during the busiest of business hours or sexual assaults around licensed premises at night). Finally, RCT 'seeks to understand how the offender makes crime choices, driven by a particular motive within a specific setting, which offers the opportunities to satisfy that motive' (Felson & Clarke, 1998, p.7).

While such 'crime opportunity' models explicitly include the offender in their account of crime (indeed, such models often suggest to take the offender's perspective when designing crime prevention strategies), in practice much crime prevention programming has tended to focus foremost on the target/victim and guardianship issues ('environmental' crime prevention) rather than focusing on 'social' crime prevention, that is, the strategies seeking to change the motivations of offenders (see Sutton et al., 2014). This contradiction in the theory and practice of crime prevention is arguably most evident in sexual violence prevention programmes. Though mainstream criminology has largely neglected the prevention of sexual violence, the impact of victim-focused 'opportunity reduction' can nonetheless be seen in much rape prevention programming. For example, in their review of sexual violence prevention approaches, feminist criminologists Moira Carmody and Kerry Carrington (2000) found that many strategies focus almost exclusively on educating women to improve their knowledge of 'risky' situations and to avoid 'risky' behaviours. The persistence of this type of approach is further evident internationally in several meta-analyses which continue to recommend targeting women for education on risk behaviours as a key approach to sexual violence prevention (Söchting et al., 2004; Yeater & O'Donohue, 1999).

Such 'risk management' or 'rape avoidance' approaches to sexual violence prevention are highly problematic for several reasons. First, risk management represents an inaccurate model of sexual violence victimisation, as even women who follow the safety guidelines may still become victims (see Carmody, 2006; Lawson & Olle, 2006; Neame, 2003). Indeed, the list of behaviours women are instructed to avoid are often so encompassing that 'we could remind women that taking their vaginas out [...] with them is "risky" ' (Lawson & Olle, 2006, p.50). Moreover, sexual assaults are rarely committed by strangers in public

spaces preying on 'risky' or 'unprotected' women but rather by known men at residential locations, often the victim's or perpetrator's home (Keel, 2005; Neame, 2003).

Another issue with the victim-focused risk management approach to sexual violence prevention is that it conveniently makes the perpetrators of sexual violence and coercion invisible, at the same time 'denying women a right to be safe' (Lawson & Olle, 2006, p.50). Finally, prevention models that emphasise women's risk management tend to lend themselves to strategies that teach young women 'refusal skills' and how to say 'no' clearly and assertively. While it may remain important to encourage and empower women to assertively refuse unwanted sex, it is arguably counter-productive to position rape as primarily a problem of women's 'miscommunication' (see Kitzinger & Frith, 1999) rather than a problem of perpetrators' indifference to consent. Indeed, such models of sexual violence prevention remain contentious for feminists and victim advocates, largely due to the vast number of strategies that have focused on modifying women's behaviour so as not to 'precipitate' sexual assault (Neame, 2003). In other words, the focus is on the 'target' and 'guardianship' aspects of the crime while ignoring or minimising the responsibility of perpetrators and the cultural and social conditions that produced the offending in the first place.

Public health frameworks for preventing gender-based violence

Public health frameworks for violence prevention are underpinned by an understanding of the individual, relationship, community and societal factors contributing to violence (the ecological model), and the classification of prevention approaches across three categories or levels of intervention – primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention deals with population-wide factors that contribute to violence before it occurs. It can include strategies to address the underlying causes of gender-based violence, such as gender inequality, as well as strategies focused on changing individual behaviour, knowledge and skills. Primary prevention can target a whole population (for example, through media/social marketing campaigns, education through schools, universities and community organisations, or by addressing structural factors such as policies and institutional practices) or be developed to engage particular groups that are at a higher risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence in the future (VicHealth, 2007). Secondary prevention, also known as early intervention, targets individuals or population subgroups who show early signs of engaging in violent behaviour, or becoming a victim of violence, or who may be at particular risk of developing violent behaviours (VicHealth, 2007). Tertiary prevention focuses on intervening after violence has occurred to reduce its effects and prevent reoccurrence, such as therapeutic and criminal justice responses.

While a public health framework provides a useful model for identifying the level and scope of prevention strategies, according to some researchers, 'it says

little about the key theoretical assumptions informing these practices' (Sutton, Cherney & White, 2014, p.24). Nonetheless, one of the significant gains of public health's engagement in the prevention of sexual violence, and indeed violence against women more broadly, is the confidence and optimism now expressed that violence can indeed be stopped (see Carmody et al., 2009). As the VicHealth framework for the primary prevention of violence against women suggests: 'The prevention of violence is not an aspirational goal, rather, it is well within our reach' (VicHealth, 2007, p.5). It is a message that governments and non-government agencies have been increasingly taking up and building into their policy agendas (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2013; Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2013; Office of Women's Policy, 2009). Arguably, some of this success might be attributable to public health's framing of violence against women as the leading cause of women's poor health and mental well-being, and in turn demonstrating the financial burden of violence against women to society more broadly (National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, 2009; VicHealth, 2004). Yet it is precisely this framing whereby the impetus to stop sexual and other forms of violence against women is a financial 'burden of disease', rather than a human rights or social justice motivation, that has led some researchers in the field to question whether a public health framework for preventing violence is the most appropriate (see, for example, Pease, this volume). Moreover, though there is widespread agreement within research, government policy and the community sector that primary prevention of violence against women involves promoting gender equality and challenging the social and cultural norms that lead to discrimination, inequality and ultimately violence against women (for example, WHO, 2010), in practice many examples of primary prevention programming appear to focus foremost on individual and organisational attitudes and cultures, while prevention addressing structural issues of women's political, economic and participation inequalities is arguably less developed.

Challenges and tensions within sexual violence prevention work

The extent to which programmes targeting attitudinal and cultural change can deliver broader, societal-level impacts remains an unresolved issue in primary prevention frameworks. Throughout this book, each chapter grapples with this and other key challenges within sexual violence prevention work and the primary prevention of violence against women more broadly. Foremost among these is the positioning of feminist analyses in sexual violence prevention work. For example, contemporary feminist scholarship on rape has identified a number of interconnected problems associated with concentrating on sexual violence as the universal source of women's oppression, including a failure to

recognise the intersectionality of women's marginalisation and inadvertently reinforcing women's sexed body as the inevitable target of violence (see, for example, Brown, 1995; Marcus, 1992; Smart, 1989). Such issues raise broader questions regarding the extent to which *gender* inequality should be framed as one factor among many in prevention work, or as *the* central, contributing factor underlying sexual violence in our society.

A related tension within primary prevention work concerns what may be gained and lost through focusing specifically on sexual violence versus a focus on gender-based violence more broadly. It is acknowledged in much research that primary prevention strategies and programmes do not necessarily need to refer to violence at all, since their focus may be on broader goals of promoting gender equality and cultures intolerant of violence and discrimination generally (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2013). Much government policy refers to sexual violence prevention under broader terms such as 'violence against women', 'gender-based violence' or 'sexual and intimate partner violence'. However, Carmody (2009, p.2) powerfully contends that there is a need to 'put the spotlight specifically on sexual violence and its prevention. This is because sexual violence is one of the most difficult of crimes to detect, deter, police, or punish.' Moreover, sexual violence comes with a particular history of 'denial, silence and taboo' (Carmody, 2009, p.3), which may make cultures of sexual violence arguably more insidious and resistant to change than other forms of violence.

How to effectively engage men in sexual violence prevention is also contested within the field (see Berkowitz, 2002; Pease, 2008). In a review of sexual violence prevention education, Carmody and colleagues (2009) found that some programme educators described deliberately using gender neutral language and a universal risk framing of sexual violence so as to be inclusive and respectful of *everybody's* experiences and beliefs. According to one educator, '[w]e are moving away from that whole feminist framework and more toward a gender and diversity and a humanity framework' (Evans et al., 2009, p.8). Evans and colleagues (2009, p.9) further note that 'being respectful towards young men is not antithetical to using a feminist practice approach' and that contemporary feminisms have recognised that 'constructing young men as universally likely to commit sexual violence [...] has little hope of engaging men in primary prevention'. Yet arguably, men's genuine engagement in prevention of sexual violence requires them to acknowledge and seek to change their own contributions to gender inequality (including violence), rather than allowing them to remain in the more comfortable turf as non-violent 'allies' (Katz et al., 2011; Pease, 2008). The extent to which primary prevention of sexual violence requires men to develop a critical awareness of their own privilege and status within a context of unequal gendered structures and relations remains an unresolved issue within programme development.

Finally, an ongoing challenge within primary prevention of sexual violence work, and indeed violence prevention work more generally, concerns developing a rigorous evidence base to guide practice. As Evans and colleagues (2009, p.13) highlight, 'prevention program evaluation practices are often poor or limited [. . .] [with] a lack of long term follow-up and the problem of programs not examining their effects on actual behaviour (not just professed attitude)'. Many reasons contribute to the difficulty of incorporating evaluation into sexual violence prevention, including the concern that evaluation may take time and resources away from strategy implementation (Cox et al., 2009) and tertiary responses. Designing and conducting empirical evaluative research, whether randomised control trials (RCTS), (see Tharp et al., 2011) or mixed method, longitudinal and qualitative approaches (see Campbell, 2011; Sullivan, 2011), require specific skill sets that may or may not be widely available in the community sector. There are also important ethical considerations when undertaking evaluation research that may exclude some groups from participation and access to programmes as part of the evaluation design (see Powell & Imbesi, 2008). Additionally, there has been a history of limited funding and support made available to the community sector for evaluative work. Nonetheless, as many researchers and those working in prevention have noted, there is a clear need both for evaluation of programmes focused on sexual violence and for additional resourcing to support the development of an evidence base to guide prevention work.

Structure of the book

Rather than taking a 'grand tour' of various types of prevention activities that could be directed towards sexual violence, the chapters in this book focus on those high-level strategy areas that represent distinct alternatives to the victim-focused and secondary/tertiary levels that have typified much prevention work to date. This focus on sexual violence as a socio-cultural and socio-structural problem requiring a range of primary prevention strategies is characteristic of the newly emerging and highly promising field of sexual violence prevention as it is currently developing in the global West. In this book, the chapters variously consider the rationale and contributions that prevention across policy, law, education and the community can make towards the ultimate goal of ending men's sexual violence against women.

In a critique of policy responses to sexual violence, Bob Pease, in the second chapter of this collection, argues that it is important to locate sexual violence within the wider frame of men's violence against women. More specifically, he notes that policy and practice responses have not drawn upon the critical studies of men and masculinities scholarship. As such, there is a tendency in policy responses to frame the issue of sexual violence as a problem of atypical men,

a problem that is represented in overly individualistic terms. Pease, like the other authors in this collection, underscores the importance of theory to understand men's violence against women. He draws heavily on feminist conceptual frameworks for preventing sexual violence, working to reinvigorate the highly contested concept of patriarchy to both warn against the danger of co-option in neoliberal and managerial agendas and also understand the origins of men's violence as a structural, rather than individualised, phenomenon.

Globally, rates of men's sexual violence against women indicate a widespread, persistent and systemic problem as Pease rightly suggests. We only have a limited understanding of this problem given the hidden figure of unreported sexual violence. As Antonia Quadara argues in her chapter (Chapter 3), our understanding of sexual offences has primarily been through a psychopathology lens, which has tended to favour a focus on recidivism and treatment efficacy, and is inherently flawed as far as primary prevention is concerned. In other words, we cannot begin to prevent sexual violence until we understand who perpetrates the majority of sexual assaults. As such, Quadara focuses on the *undetected perpetrators* of sexual violence (those who have not been detected, for example, by the criminal justice system) as a reminder of the importance of primary prevention strategies that take into account this population. She reveals that the evidence base is lacking on this particular population of perpetrators. She also argues that the distinctions between detected and undetected rapists may not be so pronounced, yet the manner in which they offend is likely to be different. Quadara, however, is careful not to champion an overly individualistic approach to primary prevention, nor to imply that perpetrators are 'all-too-normal'. Rather, her key point is that the behaviours, desires and interactions of undetected (and detected) perpetrators are normalised in and through socio-cultural, legal and institutional responses to sexual violence. In other words, a broader culture of rape provides explicit and implicit support for 'abnormal' beliefs, values and behaviours around gender, sexuality and violence.

As Quadara points out, our understanding of sexual violence perpetrators is largely informed by those that are detected and prosecuted by the criminal justice system, and yet, to date, little attention has been focused on law's role in preventing sexual violence. Wendy Larcombe in her chapter reinforces, and at the same time challenges, the idea that law is simply reactive, rather than proactive. She weaves together diverse legal theories to examine the role of law as a communicator of morals and standards that guide social conduct to explore both the limitations and potentials of law's educative function, but with a focus on why criminal law has struggled to 'establish authoritative norms and thereby prevent rape and sexual violence before it occurs'. Larcombe claims that law 'no longer communicates a coherent and consistent standard for conduct' and 'no longer [addresses] all members of the community'. Overall, Larcombe is

sceptical of law's communicative role in preventing rape on the basis of what the criminal law says, who it speaks to and who it speaks for. Her argument is that if the norm is neither clear nor consistent and if the recipients and audience are not well defined, or do not recognise the authority of the law in guiding behaviour, then this represents a significant communicative challenge, a challenge not unique to law, but also existent in primary prevention strategies and activities across other domains. As such, Larcombe argues that cross-disciplinary and institutional dialogue and collaboration are important to overcome the communicative challenges inherent both within and beyond the criminal law.

Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell in their chapter draw attention to the ways in which new technologies enable, assist, promote and permit the perpetration of sexual violence against women within a broader culture of rape, or indeed as a manifestation of that very culture. Although they insist that a holistic approach to primary prevention must engage in proactive strategies across the micro (individual), meso (organisation) and macro (societal) levels, they highlight the importance of promoting a responsible digital citizenship or a digital sexual ethics that can be pursued equally (but differently) within diverse educational, legal and community responses to this problem. Like the other authors in this collection, Henry and Powell argue that to date the approach within legal, media and other public discourses has been to problematically focus on the victim's 'risky' behaviours, or how the victim can protect herself in cyberspace. For example, advice is commonly offered to women to desist from taking or filming sexually explicit images of themselves, to turn off their computers and to deactivate their Facebook accounts. Henry and Powell suggest that this parallels earlier and problematic rape prevention strategies where the focus is on the victim, rather than the perpetrator, or the broader social context which condones and supports heteronormative and hegemonic beliefs and attitudes about gender, sexuality and violence.

Educational settings are commonly viewed as the most appropriate context for primary prevention activity within both geospatial and sociospatial/technosocial spaces, for challenging gender inequality and by extension, gendered violence. In the next chapter, Claire Maxwell emphasises the importance of theoretically inspired sexual violence prevention strategies in schools. She asks, 'How can we tackle the root cause of sexual violence – gender inequality – within a context of limited awareness of the ingrained nature of gender inequality and too little time available for targeted work?' She suggests that a useful starting point is the incorporation of a strong theoretical framework to challenge deeply held cultural myths and values about gender as the basis for sexual violence. Maxwell uses Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus to construct an overarching framework from which prevention work can be

guided in schools. Rather than focusing on one theorist, however, Maxwell also incorporates Butler's notion of 'performative resignification' (introducing new ways of 'performing' one's gender), Rancière's presumption of equality (between students and between teachers and students) and Fraser's focus on recognition and redistribution. She maintains that theoretically inspired programmes can work effectively to disrupt heteronormative discourses about gender and sexuality. She further argues that prevention programmes need to extend beyond the classroom and target whole-of-school organisational change, and that such programmes need to be more tightly focused to avoid overly ambitious goals that make evaluation difficult and in turn potentially reduce future funding opportunities.

Challenging heteronormative and binary discourses about gender and sexuality is also the focus of Gillian Fletcher's chapter. Drawing on specific primary prevention programmes in Victoria (Australia), Fletcher argues that much primary prevention work in the gendered violence field is inherently problematic since it fails to address the 'far deeper-seated ills' of gender inequality as the underlying cause of violence against women. Fletcher argues that 'primary prevention is predicated on the biomedical concept of a discrete, identifiable, static, "removable causes" ' and that gender processes 'are none of these things'. She claims that there is a 'black box' at the heart of primary prevention work because little is known about what is actually needed for reducing the incidence of violence in all its forms.

In order to unpack this black box, Fletcher argues that a radical rethinking of gender is necessary to move beyond problematic sex binaries, and to ensure that culture change does actually happen. She proposes that best practice examples in the field of international development can inspire future primary prevention efforts in the violence against women field. These are participant-centered, inductive and iterative programmes that are 'discursive, locally owned [and] genuinely participatory'. Above all, Fletcher argues, primary prevention must be underpinned by the goals of 'gender democratisation'. She concludes, however, that this cannot be taught. Instead, primary prevention programmes must provide a productive and open space to enable participants to explore the good, the bad and the ugly of gender. This is what ultimately can lead to culture change.

The content of sexuality education in schools, universities and the broader community, even if guided by theoretical frameworks that seek to challenge heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity and gender inequality, will only succeed if those who are delivering the content are adequately trained. In the next chapter on educational approaches to primary prevention, Moira Carmody claims that very little attention to date has been focused on evaluating the 'intricacies of preparing diverse personnel to deliver violence prevention education'. She claims there is a marked absence of clearly articulated

prevention models for educator training, resulting in the variable, piecemeal and unpredictable delivery of education. Like Maxwell, Carmody draws attention to the growing pressures of evidence-based practice and the difficulties and challenges in evaluating rape prevention programmes. She also underscores the importance of theoretically inspired prevention education. In the absence of educator training that is theoretically guided, clearly articulated and adequately evaluated, there is little hope that prevention programmes can achieve their key aims.

The final section of the book looks more broadly at community-style approaches to tackling sexual violence. Alison Cares, Mary Moynihan and Victoria Banyard's chapter raises an important question about whether attitudinal change can lead to changes in behaviour, focusing on the ways in which changing attitudes of bystanders may be useful in the repertoire of primary prevention strategies. As demonstrated in the current bystander research, there are strong links between bystander attitudes and bystander behaviour/actions. As such, changing the attitudes of bystanders is crucial, they argue, for preventing sexual violence and for encouraging active intervention and discouraging inaction and, by extension, support for sexual violence.

In the final chapter, Anastasia Powell extends the scope of bystander approaches to focus on individuals' attitudes, intentions and actions to challenge sexism and discrimination against women in the general community. Drawing on recent research undertaken in Victoria (Australia) by VicHealth, she advocates a feminist ecological framework for supporting bystander models of primary prevention of sexual violence. While acknowledging the ever-present risk that analyses of gendered power relations and socio-cultural structures are lost in translation in prevention work, Powell suggests that bystander approaches have the potential to re-focus prevention frameworks towards organisational, institutional and societal levels of social change.

Conclusion

Sexual violence against women occurs at alarming and unacceptable rates across the globe, reflecting both the prevalence of this social problem and also its persistence over time. Yet sexual violence is not an inevitable feature of human societies – there is much we have learned about its underlying causes, and ultimately, how to prevent its occurrence. Until recently, much government policy and community sector work have focused on the urgent need to respond to men's sexual violence against women by supporting victim-survivors and improving justice responses to perpetrators. However, if we are to achieve our shared goal of ending sexual violence, we must engage in critical debates and further development of our conceptual approaches to guide primary prevention work. By drawing together theoretical frameworks and

interdisciplinary approaches from across public health, education, criminology, gender studies, law, psychology, social work and sociology, it is our hope and intention that this book will mark the beginning of substantive critical and conceptual development of primary prevention of sexual violence as a field of research and practice.

Notes

1. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) defines sexual violence as 'any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work'. Like the term 'sexual violence', definitions for 'rape' and 'sexual assault' are widely divergent across criminal jurisdictions and within public and scholarly discourses. In some instances, rape is defined as a penetrative offence; for instance, the FBI now defines rape as 'The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim' (similar to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) definition). This is in contrast to the much broader definition of rape at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), where rape was defined as 'a physical invasion of a sexual nature committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive'. Some definitions thus treat sexual assault, sexual violence and rape interchangeably, whereas definitions that focus on the penetrative element of the offence tend to treat sexual violence as the broad, umbrella term that includes sexual assault as a non-penetrative sexual offence and rape as a penetrative sexual offence. To complicate matters further, in some instances, sexual assault is used interchangeably with rape as a penetrative sexual offence. In light of these definitional dilemmas and divergences, it is interesting to note Liz Kelly's (1987, p.54) contention that rather than discrete categories of violence and non-violence, women's experiences of violence exist along a continuum from 'choice to pressure to coercion to force'. Thus women's experiences of sexual violence are not disconnected from other coercive and discriminatory experiences, including sexual harassment, poverty and other gender inequalities. In line with this conceptualisation, throughout the book the terms 'sexual violence', 'sexual assault' and 'rape' are used interchangeably.
2. It is important to note that although public health approaches tend to use the language of 'risk', they do also recognise the importance of addressing the underlying structural inequalities of men's violence against women. For example, at the most recent 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2013, the underlying structural and social causes of violence against women, such as poverty, discrimination and other inequalities, were explicitly recognised:

> The Commission stresses that the realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including women's economic empowerment and full and equal access to resources, and their full integration into the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making, as well as their full and equal participation in public and political life, is essential for addressing the structural and underlying causes of violence against women and girls.
>
> (United Nations, 2013, p.3)

3. The United States 2012 Steubenville (Ohio) rape case is a good example of the dynamics of a rape culture. In this case, an intoxicated and unconscious 16-year-old girl was repeatedly sexually assaulted by high school footballers at various parties across different locations. The assaults were recorded on mobile phones by other students, distributed via text messages, and posted onto YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. The incident, as well as the media and public reaction to it, generated much discussion surrounding the trivialisation of rape, the exoneration of perpetrators and the prevalence of a 'blaming the victim' mentality (see Henry & Powell, this volume).
4. In January 2014, President Obama announced a new White House initiative to address sexual violence in US college campuses. At the time of writing, the policy recommendations, to be made by the White House Task Force on Protecting Students from Sexual Assault, had not yet been announced (see: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/sexual_assault_report_1-21-14.pdf).

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PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Overcoming a Rape Culture

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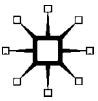

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Contents

List of Tables vii

Acknowledgements viii

Notes on Contributors ix

1 Framing Sexual Violence Prevention: What Does It Mean to Challenge a Rape Culture? 1
Anastasia Powell and Nicola Henry

2 Theorising Men's Violence Prevention Policies: Limitations and Possibilities of Interventions in a Patriarchal State 22
Bob Pease

3 The Everydayness of Rape: How Understanding Sexual Assault Perpetration Can Inform Prevention Efforts 41
Antonia Quadara

4 Limits of the Criminal Law for Preventing Sexual Violence 64
Wendy Larcombe

5 The Dark Side of the Virtual World: Towards a Digital Sexual Ethics 84
Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell

6 The Prevention of Sexual Violence in Schools: Developing Some Theoretical Starting Points 105
Claire Maxwell

7 Just *How* Do We Create Change?: Sites of Contradiction and the 'Black Box' of Change in Primary Prevention 127
Gillian Fletcher

8 Sexual Violence Prevention Educator Training: Opportunities and Challenges 150
Moira Carmody

9 Taking Stock of Bystander Programmes: Changing Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Sexual Violence 170
Alison C. Cares, Mary M. Moynihan and Victoria L. Banyard

10 Shifting Upstream: Bystander Action Against Sexism and Discrimination Against Women 189
Anastasia Powell

Index 208