

Appendix 3: Independently authored think pieces

Note: This is Appendix 3 of the following document:

Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia: Framework Foundations 2*.

It comprises eight independently authored 'think pieces' that were commissioned by Our Watch. The views expressed in these papers are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the position of the framework partnership.

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CONCEPTUALISING CHILDREN IN A PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN FRAMEWORK

Think piece paper for the development of the national framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children

Prepared for Our Watch

Monica Campo

Summary

This paper examines how children should be conceptualised within a national framework for preventing violence against women. It raises issues and areas for consideration in the development of the framework and the implications for policy and practice. It is predominately focused on male violence against women and children that occurs typically in the context of family or intimate relationships. It is acknowledged that there are other patterns of violence within relationships that need consideration in a violence prevention framework, for example violence in non-heterosexual relationships, which is beyond the scope of this paper. It is also acknowledged that family violence takes on many forms including sibling violence and violence perpetrated by women against their partners, however, it is the overwhelming majority of domestic and family violence that is perpetrated by men against women and children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014) that forms the focus of this paper.

The inclusion of children in a national framework to prevent violence against women:

- reflects that many women who experience male violence are mothers, carers or guardians of children
- acknowledges that exposure to violence is a form of harm for children
- acknowledges that child abuse and violence against women are interconnected
- acknowledges that men's violence against women and children can occur across the life course.

This discussion provides an overview of the ways in which children are involved in and affected by domestic and family violence, and how the co-occurrence of domestic and family violence with child abuse might be understood within a broader understanding of violence, perpetuated against women and children by men, across the lifespan. While preventing child abuse is not within the scope of a national framework to prevent violence against women, it is imperative that such a framework considers these overlapping realms, examining how they might intersect. Of particular importance to the prevention framework is the link between childhood experiences of abuse including experiencing domestic and family violence, and future perpetration of violence.

Recent research suggests that violence-supportive attitudes and adherence to traditional gender roles are at the crux of understanding the link between childhood exposure and future perpetration. Some researchers and scholars studying violence against women now suggest that the perpetration of violence against women and children should be understood as existing along a continuum of male violence that spans the life course. Harmful forms of hyper-masculinity that link manhood with power, control, aggression and competition are factors linked to violence against women, and violence and abuse against children. For this reason, challenging traditional gender roles and harmful forms of masculinity are important for prevention policies and practice across the child protection

and domestic violence sectors, but this should occur alongside supporting families and enhancing access to services, education and social support.

It is crucial that the complexity of women and children's lives is considered in a national framework and that the framework speaks to the diversity of experiences, acknowledging the intersecting cultural, social and historical factors that are relevant to specific groups at higher risk of experiencing violence. However, it is equally important that the framework focus on challenging the gendered norms and violence-supportive attitudes that continue to sustain and perpetuate violence against women.

Introduction

This paper explores issues for consideration in including children in a framework to prevent violence against women and their children. Violence against women can include a host of specific forms of violence experienced by women and girls including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, domestic and family violence, as well as practices that are harmful to women and girls such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage (United Nations, 1993; World Health Organization, 2010). In this paper however, violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women and children within the context of a family or domestic relationship is of most relevance.

There are several obvious overlaps between violence against women and violence against children, though prevention efforts have largely been developed in isolation (Lessard & Alvarez-Lizotte, 2015). The most obvious overlap is that children are frequently exposed to violence against their mothers, grandmothers and other carers or relatives (Indermaur, 2001; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014, particularly at times of parental separation (De Maio et al., 2013). Such exposure to domestic and family violence is recognised as a form of harm to children in some state and territory child protection frameworks, the Australian Government's *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020* (Council of Australian Governments, 2009a), and the federal *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth).

Research suggests that in families where domestic and family violence is present, it often occurs alongside child abuse including child sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect (Goddard & Bedi, 2010; Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner, 2007). Another significant overlap, and of particular implication for a prevention framework, is that exposure to domestic and family violence is a key risk factor for future perpetration of violence against women, though the social and familial context of an individual's exposure is important for understanding this correlation (Fulu et al., 2013; Heise & Fulu, 2014).

While preventing child abuse is not within the scope of a national prevention of violence against women framework, it is imperative that such a framework considers these overlapping realms, examining how they might intersect. Conceptually this is a somewhat fraught exercise, given that addressing children's exposure to domestic and family violence, and other forms of child abuse would seemingly fall under the umbrella of tertiary response rather than primary prevention. However, as Heise and Fulu (2014, p. 24) argue, "any serious effort to prevent the abuse of women must take on the challenge of preventing violence in early life", including children's exposure to violence between parents.

Over the last decade, prevention frameworks in both the child protection and violence against women sectors have adopted a public health approach to prevention (Council of Australian Governments, 2009a; VicHealth, 2007; World Health Organization, 2010). A socio-ecological framework for preventing violence against women acknowledges that violence is determined by multiple and complex interrelated factors at varying levels of influence including the individual, community and society (Heise, 1998; World Health Organization, 2010). Within the socio-ecological

model, it is thought that the prevention of violence against women needs to address the ways in which gender inequality and socio-cultural factors intersect with life-course factors, such as experiencing child abuse and exposure to domestic and family violence in childhood (Heise & Fulu, 2014; Ellsberg et al., 2014). Child protection frameworks focus on addressing risk factors in early life and supporting families through education and access to health care and social services (Council of Australian Governments, 2009a).

There is scope for prevention frameworks in both policy sectors to complement each other to work toward an end to violence against women and children through both supporting families and addressing the gender norms and violent-supportive attitudes at the crux of violence against women. This work however, would need to be relevant to the diversity and complexity of women and children's lives, acknowledging the intersecting cultural, social and historical factors that are relevant to specific groups in the Australian population.

This paper first summarises what is known about the relationship between childhood exposure to domestic and family violence, and the co-occurrence of domestic and family violence with child abuse, and then considers how this overlap might be conceptualised within a broader understanding of men's violence and masculinity. The ways in which media, advertising and pornography impact on children is also considered before turning to examine existing frameworks that prevent violence against women, and those that aim to protect children from harm. Finally, the paper outlines the implications for policy and practice, and for the development of a national framework to prevent violence against women and their children.

Children's exposure to domestic and family violence

Prevalence

Australian evidence indicates that where domestic and family violence occurs, children are more than likely to be exposed (Indermaur, 2001; Kaspiw et al., 2009; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014 De Maio et al., 2013). The Australian Bureau of Statistics' (2014) *Personal Safety Survey* found:

- 36% of women over the age of 18 years have experienced physical or sexual violence by a known perpetrator since the age of 15 (3,106,500 women).
- The most likely known perpetrator was a former partner with 15% of women having experienced violence from a *former* partner since the age of 15 years (1,158,700 women).
- Of those women who had experienced violence by a *current* partner, 54% had children in their care at the time of the violence and 31% of children had seen or heard the violence.
- Of the women who had experienced violence by a *former* partner, 61% had children in their care at the time of the violence and 48% of children had seen or heard the violence.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies' *Survey of Recently Separated Parents* (De Maio et al., 2013) found that a majority of parents experienced either emotional or physical abuse before, during and after separation. Of the parents who reported emotional or physical violence prior to and during separation, 53% of fathers and 64% of mothers reported that their children had either seen or heard the violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are at greater risk of being exposed to domestic and family violence, reflecting the higher levels of violence against women in those communities (Cripps et al., 2009; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). For example, Indigenous women and girls are 31 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence than non-Aboriginal women and girls (SCRGSP, 2011). Other population groups are also thought to be at greater risk, for example culturally and

linguistically diverse communities, women with disabilities, and children living with parents with mental health and/or substance abuse issues (Bromfield et al., 2010; Dawson, 2008; Frohmader et al., 2015).

Effects of domestic and family violence on children

The nature of children's exposure to domestic and family violence varies, ranging from witnessing (including seeing and overhearing violence and witnessing its impact) to being directly involved (Mullender, et al., 2002; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008 Stanley, Miller & Foster, 2012; Thiara & Humphreys, 2015). Children are also at risk of homicide in the context of domestic and family violence, especially after parental separation (Kirkwood, 2012; Hazel, et al., 2013).

Research over the last 20 years has unequivocally determined that children exposed to violence in the home suffer an array of poor psychosocial, developmental and health outcomes (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003; Rivara, et al., 2007; Bedi & Goddard, 2007; Heugten & Wilson, 2008; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008; Jaffe, Wolfe & Campbell, 2012; Margolin & Vickerman, 2011). A recent review of the literature (Campo, 2015) establishes that these outcomes might include:

- depression
- low self-esteem
- anxiety
- trauma symptoms
- aggression
- chronic illness
- lower social competence
- maladaptive attachment to caregivers.

Exposure to domestic and family violence has also been associated with poorer academic outcomes, higher rates of peer conflict and impaired cognitive functioning (Kitzmann et al., 2003). It is also the leading cause of homelessness for children in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014; Spinney, 2013).

Significantly, domestic and family violence can also undermine and interfere with the mother-child attachment relationship, both directly and indirectly (Thiara & Humphreys, 2015) which may result in long-lasting developmental effects into adulthood (Gewirtz & Edelson, 2007; Lannert et al., 2014; Margolin & Vickerman, 2011). Children who experience domestic and family violence are also more likely to be abused themselves (Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner, 2007; Herrenkohl, et al., 2008; Bromfield et al, 2010). The long term cumulative effects of children's exposure to multiple forms of abuse is thought to lead to poor psychosocial outcomes and may affect the ability to form attachments and partake in healthy, respectful relationships in adulthood (Price-Roberston, et al., 2013).

However, there are considerable divergences in outcomes and effects in different populations of children (Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008). The socio-economic and familial context in which domestic and family violence occurs and the co-occurrence with child maltreatment or abuse are important for understanding these outcomes (Fergusson et al., 2006; Bevan & Higgins, 2002; Price-Robertson, Higgins & Vassallo, 2013). Moreover, the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and disability with domestic and family violence further adds to the complexity of children's experiences. For example,

within Indigenous communities, domestic and family violence needs to be understood in the context of a history of colonisation, dispossession of land, forced child removal, racism and discrimination, and the resulting intergenerational trauma that has arisen from this history (Cripps & Davis, 2012). Likewise, the effect of domestic and family violence on culturally and linguistically diverse and asylum seeker children is compounded by cultural and language barriers, discrimination and racism, isolation from peers, and a potential history of trauma arising from witnessing conflict in their homeland or from the journey to Australia (Dawson, 2008).

Women and girls with disabilities are more likely than the general population to experience all forms of violence (Frohman, Dowse & Didi, 2015). Their experience of domestic and family violence includes distinctive forms of abuse related to their “situation of social disadvantage, cultural devaluation and increased dependency on others” (Frohman, Dowse & Didi, 2015, p. 12). Children with disabilities are more likely to experience violence, child abuse and maltreatment (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000) though there is, to date, no statistical data establishing the extent of the connection between children with disabilities’ experience of abuse, and that of their mothers or other family members.

Childhood exposure and risk of future perpetration

Of particular relevance to the prevention framework is the correlation between childhood experiences of abuse, including exposure to domestic and family violence, and future perpetration of violence against women. Longitudinal, meta-analytic and population-based studies have consistently linked childhood exposure with perpetration of violence against women across different countries and populations (Barker et al., 2011; Fergusson et al., 2006; Fulu et al., 2013; Hagemann-White et al., 2010).

There is some debate in the literature, however, on the question of whether exposure to domestic and family violence *alone* is a factor in future perpetration of violence against women (Campo et al., 2014). Not all children who experience abuse or family violence go on to become perpetrators and, likewise, not all perpetrators have a history of family violence or abuse (see, for example, Bevan & Higgins, 2002; Casey et al., 2009). Participants in studies where a correlation is established tend to experience childhoods characterised by many risk factors and adversities such as socio-economic disadvantage, parental mental ill-health and parental substance abuse, and they are also likely to have experienced more than one type of abuse (Fergusson et al., 2006; Temple et al., 2013; Fulu et al., 2013).

New evidence now emerging from large multi-country population-based studies suggests that adherence to traditional gender roles, inequitable attitudes towards women, and a high tolerance for violence against women, are important for understanding the correlation between child exposure to abuse and future perpetration (Barker et al., 2011; Fulu et al., 2013; Hagemann-White et al., 2010). For example, the United Nations Multi-country Study of Men and Violence (Fulu et al., 2013) analysed population-wide questionnaires from several countries across the Asia Pacific region to understand the determinants of violence against women. The study (Fulu et al., 2013, p. 4) found that:

at least one form of childhood abuse was associated with intimate partner violence perpetration... with emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse, and witnessing abuse of one’s own mother as the most common.

However, Fulu et al. (2013) emphasised that gender inequality and the enactment of and support for forms of masculinity associated with power, control, domination, aggression and sexual entitlement were important correlating factors in men’s perpetration of violence against women. Fulu et al. (2013) argue, on the basis of their findings, that the individual contexts of men’s violence against women, such as exposure to abuse in childhood, should be contextualised within the broader

historical and societal contexts in which “gender inequality, patriarchy and men’s power over women create an environment in which violence against women is widespread and accepted” (p. 6). Other studies have found that underlying commonalities among perpetrators of violence against women are attitudes supportive of violence, and adherence to traditional ideas about men’s and women’s roles in society (Stith et al., 2004; Barker et al., 2011; Hagemann-White et al., 2010).

Social learning theory is another way researchers have explained the link between childhood exposure and future perpetration. According to social learning theory, violent behaviour is learned in childhood through behavioural modelling and observations of parents and peer relationships (Bell & Naugle, 2008; Cochran et al., 2011; Flood & Pease, 2009; Ellis et al., 2006; Shorey et al., 2008). Children who grow up with domestic and family violence may internalise “family norms which may serve to neutralise the stigma of intimate partner violence, to accept it as normal, and perhaps even approve it under certain circumstances” (Cochran et al., 2011, p. 794). Gender role-modelling is an important aspect of this theory, as it is thought that children model behaviour on the parent they identify with; boys may learn that violence is an acceptable and appropriate method for dealing with conflict, and girls may internalise victimisation (Jaffe et al., 2012). There is some evidence to suggest that the effects of exposure to violence in childhood have greater impacts on boys who are more likely to condone and perpetrate violence in adulthood (Flood & Pease, 2009). However it is important to note that not all boys exposed to domestic and family violence go on to perpetrate violence against women. In the social learning model, it is thought that prevention efforts should focus on developing skills and knowledge that enable children to learn non-violent methods of dealing with conflict (Ellis et al., 2006).

Child abuse and violence against women: a continuum of male violence

Co-occurrence of domestic and family violence with child abuse is common, particularly in disadvantaged families with complex needs such as substance abuse and mental ill-health (Finkelhor et al., 2007; Herrenkohl et al., 2008). While it is evident that women also perpetrate child abuse, and though it is acknowledged that the dynamics of child abuse, particularly in highly disadvantaged families are complex and nuanced (Bromfield et al., 2010), statistics nonetheless indicate that men perpetrate the majority of child sexual abuse and child physical abuse (Child Family Community Australia, 2014).

Jewkes, Flood and Lang (2014) propose that the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) is useful in explaining the continuum of male violence against women and children. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant “legitimate and acclaimed version of manhood” accepted by men, women and children as normal in many societies, which expects that men are aggressive, competitive and claim dominance over women and children (Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2014, p. 3; Flood, 2011). Jewkes et al. (2014, p. 3) argue that “perpetration of violence against women and girls by men spans the life course” and that men and boys, not just women, are also the victims of men’s violence.). While multiple versions of masculinity exist within a society, research shows that a “hyper-masculine” ideal is common in both men who perpetrate violence against women as well as among men who have been exposed to childhood abuse and violence (Stith et al., 2004; Flood & Pease, 2009; Fulu et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2014). For example, the United Nations study described above (Fulu et al., 2013) found a strong correlation between child abuse and neglect, gender inequality and harmful forms of masculinity.

There is an increased research focus on the continuum of violence against women and child abuse (Williams, 2003; Finkelhor et al., 2007; Barker & Nascimento, 2010; Bissell, 2015) and a growing consensus that different experiences of abuse should not be viewed in isolation (c.f. Higgins, 2004; Finkelhor, et al., 2007). However, prevention efforts have largely occurred in isolation. This is discussed further, below when considering implications for policy and practice.

The impact of popular culture, media and pornography on children

We know that gender inequality and attitudes to gender, women and sexuality are central to understanding the perpetration of violence against women as well as community responses to violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2011; Heise & Fulu, 2014; VicHealth, 2007; Wall, 2014). As discussed above, a consistent finding across a broad range of research has identified strong associations between traditional attitudes towards gender and acceptance of violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2011; Fulu et al., 2013; World Health Organization, 2010). Recent community attitudes studies show that younger people (16-24 years) are more likely than other age groups to hold violence-supportive attitudes, particularly views that excuse violence against women in certain circumstances (VicHealth, 2014).

Examining the link between children's exposure to pornography, sexist media and advertising and violence against women is an emerging field of research. Reviews of research evidence suggest that children's exposure to pornography and sexual images is becoming more frequent and that routine exposure may contribute to children and young people's adherence to sexist attitudes toward women, sex and violence (Flood, 2009; Papadopoulos, 2010). Media and advertising that perpetuate gender norms and sexism may also affect children's development, experiences and understandings of gender roles (American Psychological Association, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2010). A comprehensive review of the literature undertaken for the British Home Office in 2010 by Papadopoulos (2010, p. 11) found that:

Repeated exposure to gender-stereotypical ideas and images contributes to sexist attitudes and beliefs; sexual harassment; violence against women; and stereotyped perceptions of, and behaviour toward, men and women.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to comprehensively examine or review the evidence on the impact of media and pornography on children. However, given that attitudes to gender begin in childhood, and in light of recent community attitudes surveys (VicHealth, 2014), it is important that a national framework to prevent violence against women and children considers the effects of media, advertising and pornography in reinforcing traditional gender norms and sexist attitudes among children and young people.

Implications for policy and practice

A public health approach

Despite the clear nexus between violence against women and violence against children, as described above, the two issues are rarely considered together within policy or research (Barker & Nascimento, 2010; Lessard & Alvarez-Lizotte, 2015). This is largely because responses to violence against women, and to child abuse, have developed independently from each other in distinct fields of research and practice (Lessard & Alvarez-Lizotte, 2015) and have evolved from significantly different histories, ideologies and practices (Hester, 2011) making collaboration challenging. However, existing child protection frameworks and violence against women frameworks both promote a public health approach to prevention and there is potential for approaches to impact positively on each sphere of practice.

The Australian Government's child protection framework, *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* (Council of Australian Governments, 2009a) was in part a response to obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 19) (United Nations, 1989). In 2011, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child released an expanded comment regarding Article 19, which re-emphasised the obligation of signatory states to ensure the right for all children to live free of violence, including, among other forms of violence, the right to be free of violence in the home. The committee stated

that countries act to prohibit, prevent and respond to violence against children through “legislative, judicial, societal and educational measures” (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011, p. 6). As a signatory, Australia has an increased obligation to uphold the convention to prevent violence against children, including exposure to domestic and family violence.

The framework is based on a public health approach to child protection, emphasising the need to move from seeing “protecting children” as a primary response to abuse and neglect, and move towards the promotion of safety and wellbeing through primary prevention and early intervention initiatives. Within this structure, the provision of universal services, such as health and education to all families, are seen as key prevention strategies (Child Family Community Australia, 2015; Nair, 2012). The child protection framework also emphasises the importance of collaborating with other sectors including the prevention of violence against women sector.

In Australia and internationally, a public health, socio-ecological model for approaching the prevention of violence against women has been widely adopted (Council of Australian Governments, 2009b; VicHealth, 2007; World Health Organization, 2010). Like the child protection framework above, the socio-ecological model takes a public health approach, focusing on preventing violence at the population level by addressing key determinants of violence against women: gender inequality, violence-supportive attitudes, and gender norms (Walden & Wall, 2014). Within a socio-ecological model, it is recognised that there is no single factor that causes violence against women, rather it is determined by a dynamic and complex interaction of individual, community and societal-level influences (World Health Organization, 2010; Walden & Wall, 2014). A socio-ecological approach to primary prevention of violence against women prioritises a shifting of societal attitudes and norms on gender in order to create a “climate of non-tolerance” (World Health Organization, 2010, p. 35) through universal and targeted primary prevention strategies in multiple contexts and populations (World Health Organization, 2010; Heise & Fulu, 2014).

There is growing recognition that preventing violence against women and preventing child abuse requires a joining of resources, research and information across sectors to address the determinants of both forms of violence and abuse (Lessard & Alvarez-Lizotte, 2015; Bissell, 2015; Herrenkohl et al., 2015). As such, Bissell (2015) argues that universal prevention strategies in child protection need to support families *in addition* to bringing about a cultural shift in attitudes towards violence (see also Barker & Nascimento, 2010; Herrenkohl et al., 2015; Lessard & Alvarez-Lizotte, 2015). Enhancing child and family wellbeing by supporting parents and caregivers through education, increasing parent access to mental health and substance abuse services, and supporting services for children may therefore be able to work alongside strategies that address the determinants of violence against women, in particular gender inequality and violence-supporting attitudes (Bissell, 2015). Moreover, since exposure to violence in childhood, hyper-masculinity and adherence to gender stereotypes are identified as persistent factors in perpetrating violence against women *and* violence against children, it is imperative that sectors work together to address these issues at the universal level as well as targeting specific risk groups through culturally sensitive and inclusive approaches.

Primary prevention strategies targeting children and families

Several promising strategies and program areas for prevention work targeting children and families have been identified in emerging research. However, there is no strong evidence for the effectiveness of any one particular area of practice (Stanley et al., 2015). Promising strategies targeting children include:

- school-based respectful relationship programs (Fulu, Kerr-Wilson and Lang, 2014; Whitaker et al., 2013; Stanley et al., 2015)
- community-based respectful relationships programs targeting new parents (Flynn, 2011; Fulu, Wilson & Lang, 2014)

- programs targeting boys and young men in school, community and sporting settings (Carmody et al., 2014; Flood, 2015)
- home-visiting parenting support programs for at-risk families (Bair-Meritt et al., 2010; Taft et al., 2011).

It is important however that primary prevention strategies are universal as well as targeted to populations at higher risk of experiencing violence, and that strategies and programs take into account the specificity of needs in such populations (Tayton et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2015). Programs for Indigenous communities, for example, need to be trauma-informed and involve a high degree of community consultation and ownership (Cripps & Davis, 2012; Tayton et al., 2014). Programs targeting culturally and linguistically diverse groups also require community consultation and sensitivity/ awareness of cultural issues. Stanley and colleague's (2015) recent review of prevention programs for children and young people in the U.K. highlights the need for programs that cater for children who identify as LGBTIQ.

Responding effectively to children experiencing multiple forms of violence should also be viewed as an important element of preventing future perpetration of violence against women, with evidence suggesting that therapeutic programs that work with child and mother are essential in this area (Humphreys, 2014; Campo, 2015). Within the child protection and family support sectors there is now a good deal of knowledge and evidence as a solid base for responding to children of disadvantaged families with multiple and complex problems (see, for example, Australian Childhood Foundation, 2013; Bromfield et al., 2010; Price-Robertson et al., 2013). There are many therapeutic programs and services across Australia that work with children exposed to violence, although they are poorly funded and involve long waiting lists (Campo et al., 2014).

Implications for the development of the national framework

The inclusion of children in a new national framework to prevent violence against women reflects that many women who experience male violence are mothers, carers or guardians of children and that exposure to violence is a form of harm for children. This inclusion also demonstrates an acknowledgment of the interconnecting nature of men's violence against women and children across the lifespan (Jewkes et al., 2014). It is important that the complexity of children's exposure to violence and abuse in childhood is recognised within the framework as a key determinant but also that the framework remains focused on reducing gender inequality, challenging the gendered norms and violence-supportive attitudes that continue to sustain and perpetuate violence against women. This includes challenging widespread exposure to harmful stereotypes and sexism present in media and the proliferation and impact of pornography, and working therapeutically with children who are already experiencing domestic and family violence.

A new national framework to prevent violence against women and their children would complement the existing national child protection framework and has potential to benefit children, even without a specific focus on children. This is because preventing violence against women, by addressing gender inequality and challenging attitudes that perpetuate an acceptance of violence, can also impact positively on child abuse and neglect by preventing male violence across the lifespan. However, it is critical that the framework takes into account that multiple approaches are necessary in order to address the specific needs of various community groups at a greater risk of experiencing male violence, for example Indigenous communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, asylum seeker communities, women and children with disabilities, and disadvantaged families with multiple and complex needs.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the ways in which children should be considered in a new national framework to prevent violence against women. It has examined the impacts of experiencing domestic and family violence in childhood, the co-occurrence of domestic and family violence with child abuse, and the intergenerational transmission of violence. This paper also considered how pornography, sexist advertising and media may impact on children.

A socio-ecological conceptualisation of violence against women acknowledges that there is no single factor to explain violence against women. Rather, violence is determined by a complex interplay of multiple and interrelated factors at different levels of influence. Children's exposure to violence in childhood is consistently identified in research as a factor in perpetration and victimisation, though there is some complexity in understanding just how this exposure elevates an individual's risk. Adherence to traditional gender norms – especially hyper-masculine ideals – is also consistently linked to both violence against women and violence against children, including child sexual and physical abuse.

Despite these clear overlaps between violence against women and violence against children, frameworks, policies and practices have rarely been considered in unison. However, work in preventing violence against women has the potential to impact positively on reducing child abuse and neglect, and vice versa. There is therefore scope for prevention frameworks in both policy sectors to complement each other in addressing the determinants of male violence against women and children as well as enhancing support to families in need.

Challenging gender norms, sexism and violence-supportive attitudes, and working to improve gender equality should remain the primary focus of a national prevention framework. However, the framework should also acknowledge and recognise the interconnecting nature of men's violence against women and children and advocate approaches that are culturally appropriate and targeted to the needs of specific communities.

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And a subsequent discussion paper by the author:

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UNDERSTANDING THE PAST TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE: FINDING THE APPROPRIATE PROCESSES TO WORK WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES ON VIOLENCE PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Dorinda Cox

Director, Inspire Change Consulting Group, Western Australia

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Key Points

- Family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities remains a significant social issue with far reaching implications across the service system, with impacts including lack of legal response, access to health, social and emotional wellbeing services, lack of short term and long term affordable housing and culturally unsafe child protection responses.
- Despite these significant consequences, there has not been a prevention approach to family violence across policy areas, with the appropriate shared systems or responses.
- Australia is one of the world's most progressive countries working to achieve gender equality. Yet violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children persists and will need further long-term investment in violence primary prevention strategies to alleviate overburdened service provision and to break the cycle of transgenerational trauma.
- The paper examines the inclusion of culturally appropriate processes to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on violence primary prevention strategies.

Introduction

Aboriginal family violence in Australia

Family violence is a serious issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Violence in the Indigenous population is a 'multi-dimensional problem that manifests itself in a range of health and related social outcomes' (Anderson, 2002, p. 409).

The terms 'domestic violence' and 'intimate partner violence' are commonly used in Western literature to refer to a range of abuses, including physical, sexual, emotional, social and financial abuse, primarily between intimate partners. These terms expressly include an understanding of this violence as reflecting gendered power relations in relationships, recognising that men make up the majority of perpetrators and women make up the majority of victims (World Health Organization, 2002).

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, however, prefer to use the term 'family violence' that describes a broader range of relationships within families and communities in which violence can occur. Internationally the term 'family violence' has been adopted by the indigenous peoples of other post-colonial countries, including Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand (Blagg, 2000).

Use of the term 'family violence' also highlights the disruption of the relationship between spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life that has taken place since colonisation; dimensions which are critical elements for understanding violence in these communities (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, 2006; Robertson, 2000). This understanding perceives that roles and responsibilities within families and communities traditionally associated with the support and nurture of all members, as well as the regulation of

behaviour, have been undermined by the development of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that do not consistently value each person (see Kaberry, 2004).

As stated in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004) about one in four Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or over reported being a victim of physical or threatened violence in the twelve months before the survey (24%). The rate was higher among those who:

- were aged 15–24 years
- had been removed from their natural families (38% compared with 23% among those not removed)
- had a disability (29% compared with 22% among those without a disability)
- had experienced a high number of stressors (50% of those with 11 or more stressors compared to 8% among those with none)
- lived in low income households (27% compared with 19% among those in high income households)
- were unemployed (38% compared with 21% among the employed).

The age-standardised rate for being a victim of physical or threatened violence among the Indigenous population was over twice the rate of the non-Indigenous population. Although the rates were similar among those living in major cities (25%) and in remote areas (23%), people in remote areas were much more likely to report family violence was a neighbourhood problem (41% compared with 14% in non-remote areas).

In terms of understanding the impact of family violence, a greater emphasis is placed on the family as a whole, rather than just women and children. This refers to abuses occurring within an extended family network that may include grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and other kinship relationships outside of the nuclear family (Memmott et al., 2001; Mow, 1992).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commentators draw on feminist analyses, acknowledging the gendered power relations that manifest in gendered patterns of family violence. However, they emphasised the need to contextualise such violence, that is, to recognise the impact of dispossession, breakdown of kinship systems, child removal policies and disadvantage that act as risk factors for trauma, violence and the use of drugs and alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, 2006).

This paper uses the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', rather than 'Indigenous' people and communities, as the former is a more accurate and respectful way of referring to the traditional peoples of this country. However, when reporting the results of research or studies where researchers have referred to 'Indigenous people', this term is used.

True picture through data

The true extent of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is difficult to determine due to under-reporting by victims, lack of appropriate screening by service providers, incomplete identification of Indigenous people in many datasets and problems of quality and comparability of existing data. The existing datasets differed in their ability to distinguish between family violence, partner violence and other violence, and between different types of violence such as physical violence, sexual violence, and threatened violence (Al-Yaman, van Doeland & Wallis, 2006).

The feasibility should be explored of developing a minimum set of national standardised data items that allows reporting on the victims and perpetrators of violence and the different types of violence, along with contextual information. Improving the quality of Indigenous identification across all

relevant datasets continues to be of paramount importance in providing more complete information on the extent of violence among Indigenous Australians (Al-Yaman, van Doeland & Wallis, 2006).

Aboriginal Australia's legacy

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, family violence has been recognised as a serious issue for more than a decade. A number of studies and inquiries have provided insights into the extent of abuse. For example, the work of Blagg (2000), Robertson (2000), Memmott et al. (2001), the Gordon Inquiry (Gordon, Hallahan & Henry, 2002), the New South Wales Aboriginal Child Sexual Abuse Taskforce (2006), and the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse (Wild & Anderson, 2007) clearly establishes an alarming picture of the prevalence of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Strategies for preventing and responding to family violence must be able to address the causes of violence including being able to resist the identified triggers and causes of violence including triggers of specific episodes.

These factors include:

- precipitating or impulsive causes such as jealousy, infidelity and concerns about relationship commitment, arguments about childrearing, payment of debts, payback
- situational factors such as alcohol intoxication and substance misuse, money problems, unemployment, and communication breakdown between partners, disruptions to family functioning such as pregnancy/childbirth and sorry business, persons who encourage a person engaging in violence towards others to act, and conflicting differences between the antagonists
- underlying causes such as loss of self-esteem, loss of masculinity/identity, loss of self-respect, loss of respect, and loss of responsibility (Day & Doyle, 2010; McCalman et al., 2006, p. 43).

Internalised oppression

Lateral violence is created by experiences of powerlessness and it plays out in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities through behaviours such as gossiping, jealousy, bullying, shaming, social exclusion, family feuding, organisational conflict and physical violence. Lateral violence is often the result of disadvantage, discrimination and oppression, and it arises from working within a society that is not designed for the Indigenous way of doing things (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, 2014). This violence can take place alongside other forms of violence and as a consequence can make the context of individual, familial and community experiences with violence all the more complex (Dudgeon et al., 2014).

The solutions to lateral violence must come from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as they exercise their right to self-determination. Responses to family violence need to ensure culture is viewed as a form of resilience that recognises difference and diversity to support healthy relationships within our communities. Prevention and responses should focus on individual and community healing, and recognise that grief, loss, disempowerment and trauma is at the heart of family violence (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, 2014).

Breaking the transmission of transgenerational trauma

The violence experienced today in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has been significantly influenced by policies and practices of colonisation, in particular the removal of children, and the effects of the violence continue to be felt intergenerationally exacerbating experiences of present violence (Adams, 2001).

These effects damage the children who were forcibly removed, their parents and siblings and their communities. Subsequent generations continue to suffer the effects of parents and grandparents having been forcibly removed, institutionalised, denied contact with their Aboriginality and in some cases traumatised and abused (Wilson, 1997).

Against this background we also know that no one factor can be singled out as the cause of the violence and abuse occurring in our communities; it can often be attributed to many interrelated factors (Cripps, 2004).

The transmission of abusive behaviour from one generation to the next is best understood in the context of Milroy's (2005, p. xxi) comprehensive account of intergenerational trauma: ... via a variety of mechanisms including the impact on the attachment relationship with caregivers; the impact on parenting and family functioning; the association with parental physical and mental illness; disconnection and alienation from extended family, culture and society.

These effects are exacerbated by exposure to continuing high levels of stress and trauma including multiple bereavements and other loss, the process of vicarious traumatising where children witness the ongoing effect of the original trauma that a parent or other family member has experienced. Even where children are protected from the traumatic stories of their ancestors, the effects of past traumas still impact on children in the form of ill health, family dysfunction, community violence, psychological morbidity and early mortality.

This is particularly the case for young people who may have been exposed to intergenerational violence and abuse as children, as the effects of such ongoing trauma on the developing brain can impair executive functioning and increase impulsive behaviour (Perry, 2004).

A key strategy in the prevention of family violence is targeting young people to promote respectful relationships, develop a strong identity including a strong cultural identity, deal with conflict, provide recreational opportunities, promote problem-solving skills and foster hope and future-mindedness (McCalman et al., 2006).

Attitudes towards violence against women

A recent analysis (VicHealth, 2015) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sample of the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) found many similarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people's attitudes, together with some differences.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents are more likely to recognise that violence against women is common and slightly more likely to understand that it includes emotional, social and financial forms, not just physical violence and forced sex. Compared to non-Indigenous respondents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women are more likely to justify and excuse violence against women. However, when gender and socio-economic disadvantage are taken into account, only disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women than disadvantaged non-Indigenous men.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to support gender equality and less likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. These gender differences are larger than in the non-Indigenous sample. The strongest influences on attitudes towards violence against women among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are understandings of violence and attitudes towards gender equality. However, a person's socioeconomic status (measured by level of education and occupation) has a greater influence on attitudes than it does among other respondents.

Primary prevention opportunities

Prevention is the new paradigm

While it is essential that other areas of prevention work continue there is also increasing awareness of the need for new efforts to prevent violence against women from occurring in the first place. Primary prevention of violence is an emerging area of practice worldwide, and there is a growing consensus that it is possible to prevent violence against women before it occurs (World Health Organization, 2002).

There is also mounting agreement that this problem is too prevalent and its consequences for individuals and communities too great to limit efforts to responding after violence has occurred (World Health Organization, 2002). Rather, there is a need to develop a spectrum of prevention responses. This involves building on existing work with affected individuals and families to include strategies to support primary prevention (World Health Organization, 2002).

Prevention is better than cure is as relevant in working to solve the issues for violence against women as in any other social or health-related ailment. Violence prevention programs need to be holistic and build on evidence targeting those at risk (primary prevention) or those who have been victims or offenders in order to reduce re-victimisation or re-offending (secondary prevention).

A story is told of a woman who, while washing her clothes by the riverside, saw someone being swept downstream struggling to keep their head above water. The woman jumped in, grabbed the person, and helped them to shore. The survivor thanked her and left. The woman dried herself and continued washing clothes.

Soon she heard another cry for help and saw someone else being swept downstream. She immediately jumped into the river again and saved that person as well. This scenario continued all afternoon. As soon as the woman returned to her washing, she would hear another cry for help and would wade in to rescue another wet and drowning person. Finally, the woman said to herself: "I can't go on like this. I'd better go upstream and find out what is happening." (Adapted from Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004, p. 1).

Prevention strategies as a way of responding to family violence imply taking a proactive stance to stop people from falling into the stream and possibly drowning, while at a reactive level making sure that if they do fall in the stream, they are rescued and there is support to ensure that they do not fall back in. This paper is about moving upstream to the source of the problem, rather than waiting to rescue drowning bodies downstream.

Investing in primary prevention

This paper argues that the development of the national framework for primary prevention must incorporate the constructs of violence that represent the experience of violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, not mainstream concepts of domestic violence, underpinned by western models of female oppression (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2006).

This is also supported by evidence that mainstream approaches to domestic violence rarely address the determinants of violence at multiple levels. Rather, such mechanisms tend to focus on the person who is experiencing violence or the person engaging in violence towards others without delving into the familial or cultural context in which the violence has occurred (Cripps, 2007, p. 11).

The current approach to addressing family violence in most states and territories is being led from policing, legal/judicial and women's policy perspectives, which is not surprising given the increased emphasis placed on recognising family violence as a crime against women and children. However,

responding to family violence requires more than simply changing the law (Blagg, 2000) or improving police responses.

Preventing and responding to the problem requires the establishment of collaborative partnerships at all levels of government and service provision so an appropriate joined-up or seamless approach can be provided to those affected by violence to prevent re-victimisation. As a result of the underlying trauma affecting Indigenous communities, it is essential that healing be at the core for all programs for children, families and communities' This should include the increasing recognition of 'healing and its place in assisting Aboriginal (and Torres Strait Islander) communities and organisations to reclaim and strengthen their role in service their community and addressing their many needs' (Western, 2012).

Healing is defined as recovery from the psychological and physical impacts of trauma. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this trauma is predominately the result of colonisation and past government policies. Healing is not an outcome or cure but a process; a process that is unique to each individual. It enables individuals, families and communities to gain control over the direction of their lives and reach their full potential. Healing continues throughout a person's lifetime and across generations. It can take many forms and is underpinned by a strong cultural and spiritual base (National Healing Foundation, 2015).

Making primary prevention a priority

The primary prevention approach needs to be prioritised by everyone – governments, communities and institutions, but if we fail to look at the causal or risk factors involved and strategies to prevent them the transmission of intergenerational trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will continue.

There are high personal costs for those affected by violence and significant social and economic costs to society as a whole. The cost of violence against women and their children to the Australian economy was estimated to be \$13.6 billion in 2008-09 and, if there is no reduction in current rates, it will cost the economy an estimated \$15.6 billion by 2021-22 (Cost of Violence against Women and their children, 2009).

Without intervention, the cost of violence perpetrated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is estimated at \$2.2 billion in 2021-22 across the seven cost categories (Pg.5, Cost of Violence against Women and their children, 2009). These are;

- pain, suffering and premature mortality costs associated with the victims/survivors experience of violence.
- health costs include public and private health system costs associated with treating the effects of violence against women.
- production-related costs, including the cost of being absent from work, and employer administrative costs (for example, employee replacement).
- consumption-related costs, including replacing damaged property, defaulting on bad debts, and the costs of moving.
- second generation costs are the costs of children witnessing and living with violence, including child protection services and increased juvenile and adult crime.
- administrative and other costs, including police, incarceration, court system costs, counselling, and violence prevention programs
- transfer costs, which are the inefficiencies associated with the payment of government benefits.

This is based on the estimate that up to 40% of Indigenous women will have experienced domestic violence over the past 12 months, and the unit cost of a domestic violence incident of \$20,766 (Cost of Violence against Women and their children, 2009).

While the service system does respond to impacts of family violence after the fact, there has been little to no investment or coordinated/strategic national approach to prevention, even though the cost effectiveness of prevention and early intervention services is well established (Valentine and Katz, 2007).

Using multiple strategies

The NCAS findings discussed above, along with other research, indicate that reducing violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will require a multi-pronged approach including support for equal and respectful gender relations, promoting non-violent norms and practices, addressing the impacts of past exposure to violence and supporting the equal social and economic participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women (VicHealth 2015)

Creating culturally secure national policies for primary prevention

Policy opportunities for primary prevention

At the federal level, considerable policy work has been undertaken to improve the national response to family violence, creating an opportunity to integrate responses across sectors. In 2009, the community-based National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children released *Time for action*, its proposed national plan to prevent and reduce violence against women. The council had no capacity to compel the government to implement the plan and had no finances to resource their recommendations. The existing National Action Plan to reduce Violence against Women and their children has an Indigenous specific outcome area. The opportunity to shape primary prevention specific strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was missed.

One strategy that has drawn together the Commonwealth and state governments is the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage, which was signed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2008.

Of particular interest is the underlying Council of Australian Governments process that specifically requires intergovernmental and multi-sectoral collaboration and commitment. The collaborative nature of the Council of Australian Governments, together with efforts to provide effective coordination of strategies in its agendas, is a key strength of this approach.

The partnership not only brings together the Commonwealth, state and territory governments at the highest level of collaboration and coordination but it also provides the opportunity for such collaboration and coordination to continue at state and agency-level through to frontline service provision.

Another strength of the Closing the Gap approach that could be used effectively to deal with family violence is that it already operates within the context of core understandings about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, such as those reflected in the principles outlined in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Consultancy Paper (Swan and Raphael, 1995). These principles include:

- the need for cultural understandings
- a trauma informed model for working effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- acknowledgement of the impact of history and of racism and stigma

- recognition of the centrality of kinship
- awareness of the heterogeneity of communities and needs.

What this means is that considerable work has already taken place to build this understanding at the Council of Australian Governments level. Consequently, the Council of Australian Governments strategies are culturally informed.

A comprehensive and coordinated national strategy for family violence under the improving community safety initiative would provide the national leadership required to create change in the service system to achieve better outcomes for reducing and preventing violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This strategy could be informed by the learnings from the First and Second Action Plans for the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, specifically on building the foundation for prevention and capturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's diverse experiences of violence.

A National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific violence prevention strategy could also provide a framework to inform state based family violence plans and strategies, initiatives and policy documents for better consistency across the nation and provides better evaluation mechanisms to track Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific outcomes.

Key elements of a prevention framework

The following elements should be included.

Make Aboriginal violence primary prevention core business

- Adopt a core business approach across the service system to primary prevention of family violence including guidelines and procedures that inform initiatives and program design, development and implementation. Guidelines should include a clear and specific description of primary prevention and how it relates to different portfolio areas and strategies and initiatives to adopt primary prevention.

Adopt a holistic primary prevention model

- Invest in primary prevention models that move beyond the early intervention and tertiary prevention models to incorporate healing strategies.
- Adopt a better understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview and ways of working that value and respect cultural values, traditions, processes and systems that have been impacted by colonisation.

Reduce fragmentation in policy and service delivery

- Adopt a comprehensive systems approach to primary prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence across service systems as a minimum requirement, which includes assessing the 'fit' between relevant agencies strategic objectives to achieve a more seamless approach.
- Commit to working collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence experts to ensure consistency in policy and practice across portfolios to evaluate primary prevention strategies and approaches.
- Facilitate forums with federal and state governments, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and mainstream service providers to create collaboration on violence prevention through existing political mechanisms.

Support healing initiatives

- Provide resources and support to implement healing initiatives, led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with primary prevention focus and complementary existing tertiary responses and services to prevent re-victimisation.

Increase cultural competency

- Develop best practice principles for cultural competency for frontline service delivery and culturally appropriate and relevant family violence screening tools and resources.

Improve training and workforce development

- Improve training information to the services sector workforce on primary prevention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence.
- Work with relevant advisory boards and tertiary institutions to embed training in undergraduate courses as a minimum.

Promote community leadership and collaboration

- Promote and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leadership in violence prevention programs that discourage the normalisation of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to develop and lead appropriate prevention campaigns and services in response to family violence. This includes supporting community led meaningful processes that value and respect women and men equally in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Promote research

- Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research and development program to:
 - investigate how violence across the lifespan affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in particular women and children
 - develop models detailing processes (direct and indirect) by which violence is related to other sectors such as mental health, substance misuse, housing, child protection and justice areas
 - investigate the effects of trauma on primary and secondary victims understand community attitudes towards family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Building an Aboriginal specific violence prevention strategy

The determinants of violence are multiple, complex and interrelated. A successful strategy must include the participation of a broad group of individuals and a range of activities that link with, build upon, and add value to each other.

To understand the necessary range of activities, violence prevention practitioners have used the 'Spectrum of Prevention', a tool that enables people and organisations to develop a comprehensive plan while building on existing efforts (Cohen & Swift, 1999).

The spectrum in Figure 1 encourages people to move beyond the educational or individual skill-building approach to address broader environmental and system-level issues. When the six levels of the spectrum are used together, they produce a more effective strategy than would be possible by implementing a single initiative or program in isolation. The spectrum can be used to develop initiatives that build on the shared strengths of groups concerned with preventing violence.

Figure 1: Spectrum of prevention



Source: Cohen and Swift (1999).

Data and evaluation

Data and evaluation inform all levels of the Spectrum. Any proposed activity should be based on data showing;

- 1) the issue is important
- 2) the target population is appropriate, and
- 3) the intervention is promising.

To develop a successful approach, it is essential to first review the data and determine an appropriate set of objectives. During implementation, ongoing evaluation of the overall approach and the individual activities at each level of the Spectrum will provide the information necessary for making ongoing adjustments to the activities that are best suited to meet overall objectives.

Genuine and meaningful consultation with Aboriginal communities

Much of the literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and domestic violence argues for the active involvement of communities in planning, developing, delivering and evaluating responses. At a basic level, inclusion builds ownership of problems as well as solutions, grows understanding and support for programs and enables fine-tuning to program delivery.

Violence prevention programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must include strengthening of factors to protect and support individuals, families and communities, as well as the reduction of factors that threaten their wellbeing. A growing body of research demonstrates the interrelationship between risk and resilience (Pollard et al., 1999), the ability of resilience to mitigate the effects of some risks (Bradley, 1994) and the importance of focusing on both sets of factors.

Table 1: Risks and resilience factors

Risk Factors	Resilience Factors
Poverty and economic disparity	Economic capital
Discrimination and oppression	Meaningful opportunities for participation
Negative family dynamics	Positive attachment and relationships
Firearms	Good physical and mental health
Media violence	Social capital
Alcohol and other drugs	Built environment
Incarceration and re-entry	High quality services and institutions
Experiencing and/or witnessing violence	Emotional and cognitive competence
Community deterioration	Artistic and creative opportunities
Illiteracy and academic failure	Ethnic, racial and intergroup relations
Truancy	Media and marketing
Mental illness	
Traditional gender socialisation	

Source: (Smith et al., 1995).

Ultimately, the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over the safety and wellbeing of their children can take many forms and must be negotiated within those communities (Wilson, 1997). The solutions to problems surrounding Aboriginal child welfare will come from within the communities themselves and that can only be achieved by truly empowering those communities and recognising that they have the ultimate responsibility for their own children (Harris-Short, 2012).

Along with their knowledge and experience, community members should be provided with evidence from other sources, including literature reviews and program descriptions, to make informed choices about programs and practices that may be effective in their community. This also will help to address the challenge of balancing 'traditional history and process with Westernised content and accountability' (Brown & Languedoc, 2004, p. 482).

Mobilising organisations and support structures

Formulating an integrated strategy to prevent violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities into an action plan that strategically coordinates, supports and strengthens multiple efforts needs to have an understanding of these complex issues, policies and systems that affect individuals, families and communities.

This will require the identification of local suitable existing community-based organisational structures or agencies that could be extended and supplemented in some way to incorporate violence prevention programs.

Alternatively, establishing new structures identified in through the consultation processes of how other key players and stakeholders may be mobilised and assigned a role in the process (see National Crime Prevention 1999:4, for further details on this model).

Flexible place based approaches to the funding of services are required (Gilbert, 2012) to combat the follow on effects of family violence, such as homelessness and increased poverty, that are likely to be magnified in regions with less infrastructure, greater cultural or political disruption, or more oppressive governmental structures (Fischbach & Herbert, 1997).

Research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services indicates that longer timeframes are required in engagement, identifying needs and developing responses (Lohoar, 2012),

and a long-term investment strategy is needed to establish and maintain services (Department of Finance, 2010; Australian National Audit Office, 2012).

Layering this with sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community based primary prevention initiatives will work towards '... the establishment and continuity of activities, structures, processes, ways of working and services that can persist and endure. It is about the ongoing application of knowledge, skills and understandings to family and community issues and the maintenance of positive patterns of behaviour' and '.... the ability acquired and held by communities over time to initiate, and control development thus enabling communities to participate more effectively in their own destiny ...' (Lyons, Smuts and Stephens, 2001 in Scougall, 2008).

A more holistic approach

The problem of Indigenous violence is both longitudinal and interconnected with many spheres of life. The holistic approach to tackling the violence problem involves providing land, housing, health services, education, employment, substance abuse services etc as well as violence programs.

It is critical that services offer different types of services along the prevention continuum. For any impact to be made on family violence in communities, complex, multifaceted and long-term focused solutions must be used to provide a holistic response, with 'interventions which include spiritual, cultural, and other dimensions of indigenous ways of life' (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2006; Shea, 2010).

An international Indigenous anti-violence strategy that is the basis for programs currently operating in Indigenous communities in Canada and New Zealand is based on the ideology of 'Heal the spirit and you will heal the problems' (Canadian Native Workers, in Hazlehurst 1997).

It is significant that this approach is making changes towards reducing violence in Indigenous communities in Canada and New Zealand. However this approach has apparently not yet been strongly adopted in Australia (some suggest that it has been avoided), whereas in Canada and New Zealand these principles form part of the 'bi-cultural landscape' and occupy a respectable place at the negotiation table in race relationships and administrative reform (Hazlehurst 1997).

Conclusion

This paper has argued that primary prevention is critical in the approach to reduce and respond to family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but there is a significant role for a more cohesive strategic systemic approach.

It has further been argued that the Council of Australian Governments National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes provides a suitable leadership opportunity to progress the development of a specific national strategic document focused on the primary prevention of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A key strength of this initiative is the commitment of the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments at the highest level to work together to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. One of the key targets to improve community safety allows the service system to recognise the importance of primary prevention.

The national primary prevention framework should provide some key elements that can inform a separate document or framework specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prevention strategies.

Two key elements must be embraced by the systemic change required for better commitment to primary prevention approach to family violence. Firstly, that the system starts to recognise, adequately fund and appropriately evaluate primary prevention initiatives and strategies. Secondly,

the service system must become more culturally competent by acknowledging and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and taking action to decolonise the systems that were created and maintained to oppress both the culture and peoples.

There is considerable work to be done for national leadership on primary prevention of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Work includes working collaboratively to heal the nation for the past injustices that contributed to the systemic issues of the human services sector and providing more culturally safe effective responses and approaches to prevent the re-victimisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in particular women and children.

A solid commitment by governments to longitudinal research led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations working with violence prevention is required to inform practice and better understand how and what effective primary prevention approaches look like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia.

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PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES: INTEGRATING A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

**Think Piece Document for the Development of the National Framework to Prevent Violence
Against Women**

By Carolyn Frohmader (Women With Disabilities Australia)

Associate Professor Leanne Dowse (University of New South Wales)

Dr Aminath Didi (University of New South Wales)

January 2015

Revised and updated by Carolyn Frohmader September 2015



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

PO BOX 407 | LENAH VALLEY | TAS 7008
| AUSTRALIA

T: +61 438 535 123

E: carolyn@wwda.org.au



The University of New South Wales (UNSW)

SYDNEY | NSW 2052 | AUSTRALIA

T +61 (2) 9385 2608

E: l.dowse@unsw.edu.au

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'Preventing Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities: Integrating A Human Rights Perspective'

By Carolyn Frohmader (Women With Disabilities Australia), Associate Professor Leanne Dowse (University of New South Wales) and Dr Aminath Didi (University of New South Wales)

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About Women With Disabilities Australia

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the peak non-government organisation (NGO) for women with all types of disabilities in Australia. WWDA is run by women with disabilities, for women with disabilities, and represents more than 2 million disabled women in Australia. WWDA's work is grounded in a rights based framework which links gender and disability issues to a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Promoting the reproductive rights of women and girls with disabilities, along with promoting their rights to freedom from violence and exploitation, and to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are key policy priorities of WWDA.

WWDA's human rights based approach recognises that the international human rights normative framework, including the international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, and the general comments and recommendations adopted by the bodies monitoring their implementation, provide the framework to delineate the respective obligations and responsibilities of governments and other duty-bearers in relation to the human rights of women and girls with disabilities. It is this framework that WWDA utilises to promote and indeed demand, accountability from Governments and other duty bearers in relation to recognising and addressing the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms experienced by women and girls with disabilities.

Contact



Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

PO Box 407, LENA VALLEY 7008 TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Ph: +61 438 535 123

Email: carolyn@wwda.org.au

Email: wwda@wwda.org.au

Web: www.wwda.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WWDA.Australia

Twitter: https://twitter.com/WWDA_AU

Contact: Carolyn Frohmader, Executive Director

Winner, National Human Rights Award 2001

Winner, National Violence Prevention Award 1999

Winner, Tasmanian Women's Safety Award 2008

Certificate of Merit, Australian Crime & Violence Prevention Awards 2008

Nominee, French Republic's Human Rights Prize 2003

Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000

Summary

Violence perpetrated against women with disabilities continues to fall through legislative, policy and service response gaps as a result of the failure to understand the intersectional nature of the violence that they experience, and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (and its aggravating effects) which make them more likely to experience, and be at risk of, all forms of violence.

The strength of international approaches to gendered violence prevention is that, in adopting a comprehensive human rights perspective, intersectional experiences of gendered violence are a central concern in recognising that multiple identity positions (such as age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and ability) increase the likelihood, nature and impact of violence.

This is not the case in Australia, where legislation, policy and service responses tend to view women with disabilities as an additional group whose needs are exceptional or additional to the central violence prevention framework.

Current legislation, policy and service responses to address and prevent violence against women in Australia assume a particular way of conceptualising violence against women, which falls short in encompassing the key experiences of many women with disabilities. Legislative and policy frameworks to address and prevent violence against women fail to adequately address intersectional discrimination, including intersectional experiences of gendered violence. Compounding this in the Australian context is the (largely mistaken) belief that frameworks of disability policy and service provision have given attention to gendered violence. However, the reality is that legislative and policy frameworks to advance the rights of people with disabilities remain un-gendered and fail to adequately address intersectional discrimination, including violence perpetrated against women with disabilities.

Current anti-discrimination laws in Australia do not adequately recognise and address intersectional discrimination, including its compounding effects (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015). Instead, most anti-discrimination laws and provisions tend to categorise identity and require each protected characteristic to be dealt with in isolation. Such an approach “fails to recognise the heightened disadvantage experienced by the victim, and the corresponding heightened damage caused, and cannot adequately provide redress nor restore their individual dignity” (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015).

This type of legislative and policy siloing, and lack of understanding of the intersectional nature of violence against women with disabilities, contributes to women with disabilities who experience, and who are at risk of experiencing violence, “falling through the gaps” (Dowse et al., 2013).

This paper examines these issues in the context of preventing violence against women and their children. It examines conceptual understandings of violence against women, and argues that we need to broaden the current way of thinking about how we frame what violence against women encompasses. It highlights the critical need to understand and respect the complexity and specificity of gendered disability violence – that is, violence directed against a woman because she is a woman, which is shaped by the disability context, and which affects women with disabilities disproportionately as individuals and as a group. It demonstrates that violence prevention in Australia remains characterised by inadequate conceptualisation and recognition of, and response to, the needs and rights of women and girls with disabilities who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence (Dowse et al., 2013).

Conceptualising violence against women as a form of discrimination, this paper recognises the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that combine to significantly heighten the risk and likelihood of women and girls with disabilities experiencing violence. In so doing, it stresses that attention to the nature and scope of gendered disability violence is integral to violence prevention (Manjoo, 2011; Council of Europe, 2013).

This paper argues that a comprehensive human rights perspective and approach is imperative to the prevention of violence against women. A human rights approach to conceptualising violence against women underscores the interdependence and indivisibility of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It situates violence against women on a continuum that spans interpersonal and structural violence; acknowledges the structural aspects and factors of discrimination, including structural and institutional inequalities; and analyses social and economic hierarchies between women and men and among women. In so doing, it investigates the places where violence against women coincides with multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (Manjoo, 2011).

An intersectional analysis is critical in a human rights approach to the prevention of violence against women. Intersectionality recognises that human beings are not only male, female, intersex or transgender; they also have ethnic, indigenous, cultural and/or religious backgrounds; they may have an impairment or not and have other layers of identity, social positions and experiences, such as age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, health status, place of residence, immigration status, economic status or social situation (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015, Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012).

Critically, a human rights approach to addressing and preventing violence against women recognises that responses to violence against women cannot be considered in isolation from the context of individuals, households, settings, communities or States. The human rights approach recognises that discrimination including gender-based violence affects women in different ways depending on how they are positioned within social, economic and cultural hierarchies. These positionings can prohibit or further compromise certain women's ability to enjoy universal human rights (Manjoo, 2011). In this context, a human rights approach not only embeds addressing inter-gender discrimination and inequality into the violence prevention effort, but recognises the need for holistic measures that address inter-gender *and* intra-gender inequality and intersectional discrimination. Furthermore, a human rights approach does not exclude particular forms of violence experienced by women, although it does recognise forms of violence that affect women disproportionately as individuals and as a group, such as those identified with gendered disability violence (Council of Europe, 2013).

This paper therefore argues that grounding violence prevention in a comprehensive human rights framework, offers a resolution to address the marginalisation of gendered disability violence, and reduce the perpetuation of the systemic violence and abuse experienced by women with disabilities in a wide range of settings.

1. Introduction and context

Violence against women is considered as one of the most widespread violations of human rights worldwide (United Nations General Assembly, 2012) and is now firmly at the forefront of the international development agenda as an urgent human rights issue requiring national government and international action (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). In Australia, violence against women is being described in our communities as “a national human rights disaster” (Phillips, 2014), an “epidemic” (Domestic Violence NSW, 2014), a “national emergency” (Jacques, 2014), and “a national disgrace” (Turnbull, 2015).

As shocking as the current statistics are – showing that one in three women in Australia has experienced physical violence and almost one in five has experienced sexual violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012) – the picture is substantially worse for some groups of women, particularly women and girls with disabilities, Indigenous women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and communities (Department of Social Services, 2014; Dowse et al., 2013; Our Watch, 2014, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety, 2014).

It is now well established that violence against women and girls with disabilities in Australia is far more extensive than violence among the general population (Dowse et al., 2013; Healey, 2014). Violence perpetrated against women and girls with disabilities is significantly more diverse in nature and more severe than for women in general (Dowse et al., 2013; Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council, 2014; Woodlock et al., 2014). Compared to their peers, women with disabilities experience significantly higher levels of all forms of violence more intensely and frequently and are subjected to such violence by a greater number of perpetrators (Bettinger-López, Lapidus & Ward, 2014; Plummer & Findley, 2012, Women With Disabilities Australia, 2007a). Women with disabilities’ experiences of violence last over a longer period of time, more severe injuries result from the violence (Dowse et al., 2013; Brain Injury Australia, 2015), and they have considerably fewer pathways to safety (Dowse et al., 2013; Frawley et al., 2015; Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2014; Woodlock et al., 2014).

Current gendered violence prevention policies and discourse in Australia are predominantly focused on addressing and preventing domestic and family violence – typically understood as intimate partner and/or spousal violence that occurs within the family setting between former or current spouses or partners (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). Recent events, such as the Victorian Government Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence, the profile and media coverage of family violence campaigner and Australian of the Year Rosie Batty, the establishment of the Prime Minister’s National Advisory Panel on Domestic and Family Violence, and the Council of Australian Governments’ announcement of \$30 million on a national awareness campaign to stop domestic violence, have been successful in placing domestic and family violence firmly on the national agenda and into the consciousness of the public. While this is welcomed and arguably long overdue, it presents both risks and challenges, in that the focus on narrow conceptual understandings of domestic and family violence as spousal and/or intimate partner violence risks seeing other forms of violence against women, such as those identified with gendered disability violence, become further obscured, resulting in their marginalisation in policies and service responses designed to address and prevent violence against women.

In Australia today, there remains a significant lack of awareness and understanding of the extent, nature, incidence and impact of gendered disability violence at the individual, community, service provider and criminal justice system levels, along with the violence prevention public policy environment (Dowse et al., 2013; Women With Disabilities Australia, et al., 2013; Healey, 2014; Department of Social Services, 2014; Woodlock et al., 2014). To date, conceptual understandings of

the causes of violence against women, including women with disabilities, have “failed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how various forms of discrimination, beyond a male/female gender binary, contextualise, exacerbate, and correlate to high levels of violence in given societies” (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015).

The current work to develop a national framework to prevent violence against women is a critical element in addressing violence against women in Australia. It provides a valuable opportunity to remedy the past discriminations by developing and implementing a framework from a human rights model and approach to ensure equality of outcomes for *all* women.

For women with disabilities to truly benefit from the national framework to prevent violence against women, it must be framed and operationalised in a human rights model, consistent with Australia’s international human rights obligations and based on key human rights principles outlined by National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (2015), United Nations Population Fund (2005) and Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (2014). These obligations and principles include:

- **Universality and inalienability**
Human rights are universal and inalienable, the entitlement of all women everywhere. An individual cannot voluntarily give them up. Nor can others take them away.
- **Indivisibility**
Human rights are indivisible. Whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social, they are all inherent to the dignity of every woman. Consequently, all human rights have equal status.
- **Interdependence**
The realisation of one right often depends, wholly or in part, on the realisation of others. The right to live free from violence is therefore dependent on realisation of other human rights.
- **Equality and non-discrimination**
All women are equal as human beings, and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each woman, are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind. Governments must take specific, deliberate and targeted measures (including gendered measures) to ensure rights are enjoyed equally, in practice and in law.
- **Participation and inclusion**
All women have the right to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and wellbeing. This includes the establishment of specific mechanisms and institutional arrangements, at various levels of decision-making, to overcome the obstacles that some women face in terms of effective participation.
- **Accountability**
Governments assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that Governments must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires Governments to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that Governments must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights. Governments also have negative obligations to abstain from rights violations.
- **Transparency**
Transparency means that Governments must be open about all information and decision-making processes related to rights. Women must be able to know and understand how

major decisions affecting rights are made and how public institutions which are needed to protect rights, are managed and run.

- **Enforceability and Remedies**

All women should be able to enforce their rights at the national and international levels and should be provided with adequate redress for violations of their human rights.

2. Understanding gendered disability violence

In order to prevent violence against women with disabilities, and reduce such violence, it is critical to understand and respect its complexity and specificity. One of the reasons that violence against women with disabilities too often goes unidentified and unaddressed is the limited understanding of the nature of gendered disability violence, which is not encompassed in either historic or contemporary definitions and understandings of gendered violence. In addition, legislation, policy and service responses in Australia that aim to address and prevent violence against women, including women with disabilities, have shown limited capacity to fully operationalise a comprehensive human rights framework (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2010; United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 2009). The interrelationship between these two issues has wide ranging consequences for the legislative, policy and service landscape, which continues to be fragmented, partial and limited in its capacity to fully address *all* forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls, including those with disabilities. Most significantly this results in ongoing high levels of vulnerability to harm for many women, constituting a failure to protect their human rights to live free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.

This section of the paper provides a brief overview of violence against women with disabilities, including the key factors that contribute to this violence.

2.1 Who are women and girls with disabilities?

Women with disabilities make up almost 20% of the population of Australian women, about two million women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Women with disabilities come from a diverse range of backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs including from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Some women are in heterosexual relationships; some in lesbian relationships; some identify as bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex, and some are single. Many are mothers, some are in paid work, and many have no paid work. They experience a range of impairments that impact on their lives in different ways. These may include medical and/or health conditions, and/or sensory, physical, cognitive and psychosocial impairments, singly or in combination (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015, Ortoleva & Lewis, 2012; Dowse et al., 2013).

The ways in which disability is understood have implications for responses to women with disabilities at risk of, or experiencing, violence. In recent decades focus has moved beyond simply considering an individual's body, intellect or behaviour to examine the experience of disability in the context of a more complex set of social, political, material and cultural relationships (Meekosha & Dowse, 2007) and to recognise the human rights of people with disabilities. Australia's international human rights obligations, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, require that conceptualising and defining disability must reflect a rights based understanding of disability and focus on the prohibition of discrimination and the promotion of equality, rather than on the categorisation of various disabilities based on impairments (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010). A paradigm shift from the traditional medical and charity based welfare model of disability to today's rights based model, identifies people with disabilities as subjects of human rights law on an equal basis. It recognises that disability is an issue of diversity, the same as race or gender, and

places the responsibility on society and governments for ensuring that political, legal, social, and physical environments guarantee the exercise of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights by all persons with disabilities.

Despite Australia's international human rights obligations, and the strong global movement towards recognising people with disability as subjects of human rights law on an equal basis, in Australia, women with disabilities are still subject to the effects of ableism – the practices and dominant attitudes in society that denigrate, devalue, oppress and limit the potential and rights of people with disabilities (Campbell, 2011). The influence of ableism is poorly recognised in Australia, but is a term used to capture the way that the construction of social systems with able-bodied people as the norm results in the systemic, structural, intersecting and individual forms of discrimination against and exclusion of people with disabilities. People with disability, by virtue of the exceptional status of falling away from this norm, are often treated as less than fully human (Campbell, 2011).

2.2 What is gendered disability violence?

Across Australia, there is no uniform definition or consensus as to what constitutes violence against women. It is generally conceptualised in the context of domestic, spousal, intimate partner or family violence. The *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) (Council of Australian Governments, 2011) conceptualises domestic violence as acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship, with the central element of domestic violence being an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. The National Plan refers to family violence as violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as domestic violence, and as with domestic violence, only some aspects of family violence are criminal offences.

This definition frequently excludes the violence that women with disabilities experience in the many settings they live in, occupy and experience. The legal definition of domestic violence in Australia varies across jurisdictions. Some definitions are more inclusive than others. However, despite the many and varied definitions within the various laws and policy frameworks of what constitutes domestic violence, family violence, and domestic relationships, most do not contain definitions which do justice to, nor encompass, the range of settings in which women with disabilities live, occupy or experience, such as institutions or service settings. Nor do they contain definitions which capture the range of relationships and various dimensions and experiences of violence as experienced by women with disabilities, which may include the relationships they have with support workers, co-residents with disabilities and so on (Frohman, 2011; Frohman & Swift, 2012).

Violence against women and girls with disabilities includes physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence and abuse as well as institutional violence, chemical restraint, forced or coerced sterilisation, forced contraception, forced or coerced psychiatric interventions, forced abortion, medical exploitation, withholding of or forced medication, violations of privacy, forced isolation, seclusion and restraint, deprivation of liberty, denial of provision of essential care, humiliation, and harassment (Women With Disabilities Australia, 2004, 2010a; Chenoweth, 1997; Dowse et al., 2013; Méndez, 2013; Healey, 2014; Frawley et al., 2015; Committee Against Torture, 2014). Women and girls with disabilities also face unnecessary institutionalisation, denial of control over their bodies, lack of financial control, denial of social contact, employment and community participation, and denial of the right to decision-making (International Network of Women with Disabilities, 2011; Women With Disabilities Australia, 2010a; Méndez, 2013; Woodlock et al., 2014).

Although women with disabilities experience many of the same forms of violence that all women experience, including domestic and family violence and sexual assault, when gender and disability intersect, violence has unique causes, takes on unique forms and results in unique consequences (Manjoo, 2012; Dowse et al., 2013; Frohman, 2014; Healey, 2014; Woodlock et al., 2014). Women

with disabilities also experience forms of violence that are particular to their situation of social disadvantage, cultural devaluation and increased dependency on others (Swift, 2013; Healey, 2014; Woodlock et al., 2014).

For example, women with disabilities are more likely to be subjected to forced interventions which infringe their reproductive rights (such as forced sterilisation) than women without disabilities and men with disabilities. Women with disabilities in institutional settings are more likely to be subject to guardianship proceedings for the formal removal of their legal capacity. This facilitates and may even authorise forced interventions and other forms of violence. Aboriginal women with disabilities are more likely to be subject to indefinite detention than non-Aboriginal women with disabilities and women without disabilities. These human rights violations are perpetrated on account of the interaction and intersection of various layers of identity, social position, and experiences. The resulting myriad of violations of rights in these examples include the right to non-discrimination, freedom from torture and ill-treatment, protection of personal integrity, right to legal capacity, protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, right to family, right to health, right to live independently and be included in the community, and access to justice (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015; Committee Against Torture, 2014; Frohmader & Sands, 2015).

Intersectional discrimination has unique and specific impacts on women with disabilities and in many cases, may lead to different or to another degree of discrimination or to new forms of discrimination not yet acknowledged by law, policy or in research (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015; Manjoo, 2011). Women with disabilities experience intersectional discrimination that often has aggravating or compounding effects, yet in Australia, this is not well recognised or adequately addressed in legislation and policy frameworks including those to prevent violence and to advance the human rights of people with disabilities (Frohmader & Sands, 2015; Manjoo, 2011; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013).

Violence against women with disabilities thrives in social isolation and seclusion, either by isolating or secluding the victim/survivors or hiding the violence from society (Abdul Aziz & Moussa, 2014). Understanding the settings and places in which women with disabilities reside, occupy and/or receive services, is a fundamental element in conceptualising and preventing gendered disability violence. For example, as well as those women with disabilities in Australia who live in traditional domestic settings including private and family dwellings, large numbers of women with disabilities still reside in and receive support in a range of institutional and/or service settings, such as group homes, supported residential facilities, licenced and un-licenced boarding houses, psychiatric and mental health community care facilities, residential aged care facilities, hostels, hospitals, prisons, foster care, respite facilities, cluster housing, congregate care, special schools and out-of-home care services. Women and girls with disabilities who experience these types of settings are at particular and significant risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (Attard & Price-Kelly, 2010; Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2014, Frohmader & Sands, 2015; Commission for Children and Young People, 2015). Yet violence perpetrated against women with disabilities in these settings remains outside the current legislative and policy frameworks and responses to preventing and addressing violence against women in Australia.

Regardless of setting or context, violence against women with disabilities in Australia continues to be conceptualised and downplayed as abuse or neglect or service incidents, or administrative infringements or a workplace issue to be addressed (French et al., 2010; Frohmader & Sands, 2015) – rather than viewed as violence or crimes. This is particularly the case in institutional and/or service settings where violence perpetrated against women with disabilities is rarely recognised or understood as violence and, more often than not, is deliberately minimised, trivialised, ignored, dismissed, excused, covered up or normalised (McKenzie et al., 2014; Victorian Ombudsman, 2015; Donnelly, 2015; DPP v Kumar, 2013; Horin, 2011; McKenzie & Baker, 2012). For women with

disabilities, this means, in effect, that their experiences of violence are not properly recognised across the legal and service systems, they are given less legal protection and access to justice than their counterparts who do not have disabilities, and the likelihood of them benefiting from integrated and coordinated responses, including prevention, is compromised (Frohman & Cadwallader, 2014; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013).

Before we can prevent and or address violence against women with disabilities, we must be clear about what it is. Violence against women with disabilities:

- can often constitute torture or ill-treatment – particularly when it occurs in institutional or residential settings, including for example, through practices such as forced or coerced sterilisation, forced contraception, forced or coerced psychiatric interventions and other forced treatments, indefinite detention, sexual violence, and restraint.
- is a gross violation of multiple human rights;
- is a form of disability discrimination, a form of gender-based discrimination and often occurs within, and as a result of, intersectional forms of discrimination;
- is gendered disability violence, which is violence directed against a woman because she is a woman and which is shaped by the disability context. This violence affects women with disabilities disproportionately as individuals and as a group;
- includes all acts of violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women with disabilities, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;
- includes all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit/setting or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim; and/or irrespective of the nature of the relationship between victim and perpetrator;
- is inclusive of those acts of violence which are more unique to women with disabilities – and that often occur in the context of, or as a result of, the settings which they live in, occupy and/or experience, and/or the relationships they experience within these settings, including violations of privacy, denial of control over bodily integrity, forced isolation and denial of social contact, denial of the right to decision-making, and denial of provision of essential care.

2.3 Prevalence and incidence

Compared to their peers, women with disabilities experience substantially higher levels of all forms of violence and are subjected to such violence by a greater number of perpetrators (Women With Disabilities Australia, 2007a, Healey, 2014; Bettinger-López, Lapidus & Ward, 2014; Frawley et al., 2015; Mitchell, 2011; Woodlock et al., 2014). Women with disabilities are 40% more likely to be the victims of domestic violence than women without disabilities (Brownridge, 2006), and more than 70% of women with disabilities have been victims of violent sexual encounters at some time in their lives (Stimpson & Best, 2005).

Women with disabilities in residential, institutional and service settings frequently experience sustained and multiple episodes of violence, particularly sexual violence (Attard & Price-Kelly, 2010). One in five women with disabilities (20%) report a history of unwanted sex compared to 8.2% of women without disabilities (People With Disability Australia, 2013; Dowse et al., 2013), and the rates

of sexual victimisation of women with disabilities range from four to 10 times higher than for other women (Dowse et al., 2013). More than a quarter of rape cases reported by females in Australia are perpetrated against women with disabilities (Heenan & Murray, 2006). Almost all Australian women with an intellectual disability (90%) have been subjected to sexual abuse, with more than two-thirds (68%) having been sexually abused before they turn 18 years of age (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2010).

Evidence indicates that every week in Australia, three women are hospitalised with a brain injury as a direct result of family violence (Brain Injury Australia, 2015). Most women with mental health impairment (85%) report feeling unsafe during hospitalisation, 67% report experiencing sexual or other forms of harassment during hospitalisation and almost half (45%) report experiencing sexual assault during an in-patient admission (Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council, 2014). Women with disabilities represent more than 50% of the female prison population in Australia. More than half of all women incarcerated in Australian prisons have a diagnosed psychosocial disability and a history of sexual victimisation (Human Rights Law Centre, 2014).

A national survey was undertaken in 2013 as part of the Council of Australian Governments' National Women with Disabilities and Domestic Violence Reform Project entitled Stop the Violence by Women With Disabilities Australia, the University of New South Wales and People with Disability Australia. The survey found that violence is present in the lives of approximately 22% of women with disabilities who had accessed service support in the disability, family violence and sexual assault sectors, housing/homelessness sector, the youth services sector, child welfare, employment and training, health, aged care and the justice sector in the preceding 12 months (Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013). The national survey was targeted at service providers, representative organisations and policy makers across all jurisdictions regarding the work that they do, their knowledge and experiences of the policies and legislative frameworks that guide their work, and the challenges they face in responding to the needs of women with disabilities experiencing or at risk of violence. A total of 367 agencies responded to the survey; 279 of these were service providers, 34 were policy development agencies and 54 were representative organisations. The high rate of participation in the survey suggests that violence against women with disabilities is recognised in the field as a significant issue warranting attention. The prevalence of violence against women with disabilities is acknowledged to be substantially higher than the 22% suggested by the national Stop the Violence Project survey findings, given that many women with disabilities do not, cannot and/or are prevented from using and/or accessing services (Dowse et al., 2013).

It is widely recognised that any available data relating to incidence and prevalence of violence against women with disabilities does not give the true picture of the level of risk and prevalence of violence and abuse, due to many factors, including the barriers experienced by women with disabilities in reporting violence (SafePlace Institute, 2000; Woodlock et al., 2014). Importantly, the vast array of settings and places which women with disabilities live in, occupy and/or experience also impedes capturing the true prevalence and incidence of violence perpetrated against them.

There is currently no comprehensive strategy or mechanism in place at the national level that captures the prevalence, extent, nature, causes and impact of violence against women with disabilities in the range of settings in which they reside or receive support services. These major gaps in the evidence base stem from the multiple and conflicting understandings of disability and violence in policy. The Personal Safety Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012), the key national data collection instrument aimed at capturing prevalence and type of violence, excludes women who reside in settings other than private dwellings and those who have communication impairments which would require the presence of a third party to participate in the survey. These methodological restrictions mean that the Personal Safety Survey misses a very significant proportion of those

women with disabilities who are known to be at the highest risk of experiencing violence (Dowse et al., 2013; Frawley et al., 2015; Healey 2014).

2.4 Factors contributing to gendered disability violence

International and national research (VicHealth, 2007, 2011; Action Aid UK, 2014; United Nations Women, 2014) has established that the most significant determinants of violence against women are:

- the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, and institutional, cultural and individual support for (or weak sanctions against) gender inequality
- an adherence to rigidly defined gender roles expressed institutionally, culturally, organisationally and individually.

These factors are frequently exacerbated and altered for women with disabilities due to the structural inequality and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination they face. Women and girls with disabilities have fewer opportunities, lower status and less power and influence than men and boys with disabilities (Women With Disabilities Australia, 2010b). Gender-based assumptions and expectations place women with disabilities at a disadvantage in substantive enjoyment of rights such as freedom to act and to be recognised as autonomous, fully capable adults, to participate fully in economic, social and political development, and to make decisions concerning their circumstances and conditions (Frohman & Cadwallader, 2014; Frohman, 2014).

Women with disabilities are at high risk of gendered disability violence based on social stereotypes and biases that attempt to dehumanise or infantilise them, exclude or isolate them, target them for sexual and other forms of violence, and put them at greater risk of institutionalised violence (Dowse et al., 2013; Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013; Healey, 2014). A combination of factors at the societal and individual level, such as exclusion from participation in community life due to prejudices, stigma and discrimination, lack of access to quality education, employment and livelihood, as well as access to healthcare and other support services and resources, result in marginalisation, disempowerment, dehumanisation and the systemic denial of the rights of women with disabilities (Manjoo, 2012; Dowse et al., 2013; Frawley et al., 2015).

Research has found that there remains a significant lack of awareness and understanding of the extent, nature, incidence and impact of gendered disability violence at the individual, community, service provider and criminal justice system levels (Dowse et al., 2013; Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013; Frawley et al., 2015; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013). Women with disabilities are regularly deprived of the information, education and skills to recognise and address violence (Woodlock et al., 2014). Those who live in, occupy and/or experience institutional, residential and service settings are often taught and “rewarded” for unquestioning compliance. In such settings, criminal behaviours are often normalised (French et al., 2010). Many women with disabilities do not recognise the violence perpetrated against them as a crime, are unaware of how to seek help and support, or are actively prevented from seeking help and support. There is a dearth of accessible information and education resources about violence against women with disabilities – for the women themselves, the service sector and the broader community (Frohman & Cadwallader, 2014; Frawley et al., 2015; Healey, 2014; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015; Manjoo, 2012; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2010; Woodlock et al., 2014).

Women with disabilities have identified many factors that contribute to the pervasive and extensive violence perpetrated against them (Healey, 2014; Frawley et al., 2015; Woodlock et al., 2014; Women With Disabilities Australia, 2007a; Dowse et al., 2013; Frohman & Sands, 2015). These are discussed in detail in Frohman and Cadwallader (2014) and Women with Disabilities Victoria

(2014). It is outside the scope of this paper to examine all these factors in detail, however, some of the key factors include:

- poverty and lack of economic independence
- place of residence or service setting
- exclusion from the labour market
- dependence on others
- credibility and fear of disclosure
- lack of access to the criminal justice system
- lack of appropriate housing
- lack of awareness and knowledge
- lack of access to crisis accommodation and support
- service system issues, including difficulty of navigating support systems
- lack of participation, access to decision-making, and representation.

2.5 The impact

Like most women who experience violence, the impact and effects for women with disabilities are profound, long-term and wide-ranging – with the impact of different types of violence and of multiple episodes found to be cumulative (Women With Disabilities Australia, 2007a; Manjoo, 2011; Manjoo, 2012; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015). Of significance is the fact that the consequences of violence against women with disabilities are pervasive, due to the length of time that they endure such violence, the severity of the violence, multiple perpetrators of the violence, and the inability of many women with disabilities to ever disclose the violence or seek help to stop it. Even when they do disclose violence, women with disabilities have far less chance of being believed when reporting sexual assault, domestic violence, and other forms of violence than other women (Frohmader, 2011; French et al., 2010; Woodlock et al., 2014; Frohmader & Sands, 2015).

Research has also found that discriminatory attitudes and negative police culture, including the tendency to blame the victim, refusal to investigate allegations of violence, treating crimes of violence as service incidents, failing to make reasonable adjustments, assuming that a prosecution will not succeed because the court may think the person lacks credibility, along with negative or paternalistic stereotypes of people with disabilities, contribute to the pervasive and extensive violence perpetrated against women with disabilities (Woodlock et al., 2014; Frohmader & Cadwallader, 2014; Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2014; Commission for Children and Young People, 2015; Frohmader & Sands, 2015).

Crimes of violence committed against women with disabilities often go unreported, and when they are, they are either dismissed, ignored, covered up by service staff and/or management, inadequately investigated, remain unsolved or result in minimal sentences (Frohmader, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2014; Victorian Ombudsman, 2015; Donnelly, 2015; DPP v Kumar, 2013; Horin, 2011; McKenzie & Baker, 2012; Frohmader & Cadwallader, 2014; French et al., 2010).

3. Implications for policy and practice: the legislative, policy and service response vacuum

Violence perpetrated against women with disabilities continues to fall through legislative, policy and service response gaps as a result of the failure to understand the intersectional nature of the violence that they experience, the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (and its aggravating effects) which make them more likely to experience, and be at risk of, violence. Current anti-discrimination laws in Australia do not adequately recognise and address intersectional discrimination, including its aggravating and compounding effects (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015). Instead, most anti-discrimination laws and provisions tend to

categorise identity and require each protected characteristic to be dealt with in isolation. Such an approach “fails to recognise the heightened disadvantage experienced by the victim, and the corresponding heightened damage caused, and cannot adequately provide redress nor restore their individual dignity” (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015).

In Australia, there is no national, coordinated legislation to prevent and address violence against women, including domestic and family violence (Australian Government, 2012). No existing Commonwealth, state or territory domestic and family violence legislation is framed in a human rights framework setting it in the context of Australia’s obligations to the core international human rights treaties to which it is a party. Domestic and family violence legislation and policy frameworks differ across states and territories providing different levels of protection and definitions of what constitutes family violence, domestic violence and what constitutes a domestic relationship.

The lack of agreed definitions and conceptual understandings of what constitutes violence against women, family violence, domestic violence, domestic relationship and so on, has serious implications for women with disabilities. Research has found that the lack of a clear definition and legal recognition of the violence against women with disabilities in legislation and policy frameworks results in low priority being given to the issue in service environments, where the service sector is largely governed by a range of specific legislative and policy frameworks designed to ensure effective service delivery that addresses one area alone such as disability or gendered violence (Dowse et al., 2013, Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013).

The Australian Law Reform Commission in its 2012 *National Inquiry into Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws* (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2012) recommended that in relation to people with disability, the term family violence should be inclusive of the types of family violence experienced by people with disabilities, including domestic, sexual or physical assault; stealing and financial exploitation including misappropriation of social security payments and other benefits and concessions; neglect and deprivation of things such as shelter, nutrition and essential medical treatment; and other specific types of violence and abuse such as withholding equipment, food and medication; and forced sterilisation and abortion (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2012). Conceptualising family violence in this way is critical for women with disabilities, as it not only helps to ensure legal protection but, importantly, helps to promote a culture where *no* form of violence against women, including women with disabilities is tolerated.

The problem of narrow and non-inclusive conceptual understandings of what constitutes violence against women, and/or gender-based violence and/or a human rights approach to addressing violence against women, is evident in current national policy frameworks to address violence against women, and to advance the rights of people with disabilities.

For example, the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (Council of Australian Governments, 2011) has significant limitations: it has little emphasis on girls with disabilities, it focuses on traditional notions of domestic and family violence such as intimate partner violence and sexual assault, and fails to include or address the many other forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls with disabilities such as violence in institutions and service settings, sexual and reproductive rights violations, restrictive practices, seclusion and restraint, and deprivation of liberty. These forms of violence currently fall outside the scope of the National Plan. While the second three year action plan of the National Plan does prioritise women with disabilities by providing the opportunity to “prioritise and implement key outcomes from the Stop the Violence Project” (Department of Social Services, 2014), the project was itself limited in scope as its contracted focus was on building the evidence base to reform service provision for women with disabilities who are experiencing or at risk of violence. The project was unable to “address the myriad issues and complexities inherent in the multiple forms of violence perpetrated against women with disabilities” (Dowse et al., 2013; Women With Disabilities Australia et al., 2013).

The *National Disability Strategy* sets out the national policy framework for guiding Australian governments to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The strategy is supported by three implementation plans developed over its ten-year life span. The strategy is not gendered, and contains limited measures to address violence against people with disabilities, identifying only that there is a need to “develop strategies to reduce violence, abuse and neglect of people with disabilities”. The first implementation plan, *Laying the Groundwork: 2011–2014*, contained only one specific action to achieve this, which is to “ensure that the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children* have priority action to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children with disability” (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 2013).

Neither the National Plan or the National Disability Strategy are embedded in a comprehensive human rights framework. For example, the National Plan is only linked to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and so is primarily focused on meeting human rights obligations in relation to gender discrimination. The National Disability Strategy is only linked to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and so is primarily focused on meeting human rights obligations in relation to disability discrimination. A human rights approach to the prevention of violence against women, including women with disabilities, requires such policy frameworks to be developed *and* operationalised in a comprehensive human rights framework (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2009). This means recognising that prevention of violence against women is an obligation in relation to gender rights, civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; disability rights; child rights; as well as rights to be free from torture (and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment); and racial discrimination.

This type of policy siloing, and lack of understanding of the intersectional nature of violence against women and girls with disabilities, contributes to women with disabilities who experience and are at risk of experiencing violence falling through violence prevention legislation, policy, program and service delivery gaps (Dowse et al., 2013). The multiple forms and complex nature of violence perpetrated against women and girls with disabilities currently sit in a legislative, policy and service response vacuum.

Although Australia has clear obligations under international human rights law to address and prevent violence against women, violence against women with disabilities, in all its forms, remains widespread and largely unaddressed in Australia.

Several of the international human rights treaty monitoring bodies have repeatedly expressed their deep concern about the high levels of violence experienced by women and girls with disabilities in Australia. They have found that the inter-connection between violence against women and discrimination on the basis of gender and disability remains unaddressed (Manjoo, 2012). They have raised serious concerns about the low rates of reporting, prosecutions and convictions, the lack of data, the lack of inclusive legislation, policies, services and support, and lack of targeted measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls with disabilities. The monitoring bodies have called on Australian governments to take urgent measures to address violence and abuse experienced by women and girls with disabilities, particularly those living in institutional, residential and/or service settings. They have urged Australian governments to ensure access for women with disabilities to an effective, integrated response system, and include a more comprehensive consideration of women with disabilities in policies on the prevention of gender-based violence. Importantly, the treaty monitoring bodies have recognised the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls with disabilities, along with the multiple and severe forms of violence perpetrated against them, and have called on Australian governments to take immediate steps to end such violence and discrimination (Committee on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities, 2013; Committee Against Torture, 2014; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2010b; Frohmader, 2014; Frohmader & Cadwallader, 2014).

International approaches to gendered violence prevention adopt a comprehensive human rights perspective, where intersectional experiences of gendered violence are a central concern in recognition that multiple identity positions increase the likelihood, nature and impact of violence. This is not the case in the Australian context, where legislation, policy and service responses tend to view women with disabilities as an additional group whose needs are exceptional or additional to the central violence prevention agenda. Compounding this in the Australian context is the [largely mistaken] belief that frameworks of disability policy and provision have given attention to gendered violence.

Recent events in Victoria depicted in ABC *Four Corners* episode *In Our Care* (McKenzie et al., 2014) and which resulted in a Victorian Ombudsman's inquiry into how abuse in the disability sector is reported and investigated, a State Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services, and a Senate Inquiry into Violence and Abuse against People with Disabilities in Institutional and Residential Settings provide a stark reminder that disability policy frameworks are currently inadequate in encompassing either gender or violence issues, let alone the intersection of the two. In practice, this means that efforts and approaches to prevent violence against women in Australia are not comprehensive, are piecemeal and inconsistent in definitions and scope, continue to focus predominately on protection from traditional forms of domestic and family violence and therefore fail to provide a coordinated and integrated approach to combating all forms of violence perpetrated against women and girls (Frohmader & Cadwallader, 2014).

A comprehensive human rights framework offers a resolution to reduce marginalisation of gendered disability violence and to reduce the systemic violence and abuse experienced by women with disabilities in a wide range of settings.

4. Implications for the development of the national framework to prevent violence against women

International human rights law condemns violence against women in all its forms, whether it occurs in the home, schools, institutions, the workplace, the community or in other public and private institutions, and regardless of who perpetrates it (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). Australia is a party to a number of international and regional human rights instruments which clearly articulate the human rights context and imperative to preventing and addressing violence against women, including the structural causes of such violence, and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination which make particular groups of women more at risk of, and more likely to experience, violence.

4.1 A comprehensive human rights framework and approach

To ensure the national framework to prevent violence against women is set in a comprehensive human rights framework that will prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities, the framework should be developed to:

- reference, embed and be clearly linked to relevant international human rights standards, including the international human rights treaties to which Australia is a party (Manjoo, 2011)
- underscore the universality, inalienability, interdependence and indivisibility of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (Manjoo, 2011)

- embed the core human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion; accountability; transparency; enforceability and remedies (United Nations Women et al., 2012)
- be universally responsive to the intersections of gender and disability, and also integrate specific, targeted measures to reach women and girls with disabilities in all settings (Council of Europe, 2013)
- encompass holistic measures that address inter-gender and intra-gender inequality and intersectional discrimination (Manjoo, 2011; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015)
- address the targeted, compounded and structural discrimination that combines to increase the risk and likelihood of women and girls with disabilities experiencing violence in all its forms (United Nations General Assembly, 2011)
- have universal applicability for all women, while clearly recognising and targeting specific vulnerable groups and addressing the most severe forms of gender-based violence such as forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence, and domestic violence (Council of Europe, 2013)
- articulate the critical and central role of civil society organisations, women's organisations and groups and other relevant actors in the prevention of violence against women (United Nations Women et al., 2012)
- ensure that women with disabilities are at the centre of efforts to hold governments accountable for implementing international standards guaranteeing the right to be free from violence and non-discrimination (United Nations General Assembly, 2011)
- articulate the elements and measures of integration, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation (Council of Europe, 2013; United Nations General Assembly, 2011).
- embed and prioritise the standard of due diligence as a critical tool in accountability of States to prevent all forms of violence against all women (Abul Aziz & Moussa, 2014).

4.2 Prevention measures and strategies

The human rights approach to preventing violence against women recognises that discrimination including gender-based violence affects women in different ways depending on how they are positioned within social, economic and cultural hierarchies. These positionings can prohibit or further compromise certain women's ability to enjoy universal human rights (Manjoo, 2011). In this context, a human rights approach not only embeds addressing inter-gender discrimination and inequality into the violence prevention effort, but recognises the need for holistic measures that address inter-gender *and* intra-gender inequality and intersectional discrimination.

The empowerment of women is vital in any framework to prevent violence against women, and this is even more potent for women with disabilities, who have made it clear that empowerment for them comes from speaking and/or acting in their own interests; the presence of a collectivity and a basis in self-determination; and a discourse of human rights (Frohman, 2011; Millen, 2015). Empowerment in the context of women with disabilities means empowerment in *all* aspects of life, including political and economic empowerment. This reflects the greater aim of achieving gender equality by increasing women's agency and reducing their vulnerability to violence (Council of Europe, 2013). It also reflects the interdependence of human rights, by recognising that the right to live free from violence is dependent on realisation of other human rights.

Participation of women with disabilities as citizens is at the basis of the recognition of their dignity. Access to decision-making, political participation and representation are essential markers of gender equality and fundamental to a human rights approach to preventing violence. Women with disabilities in Australia are often excluded from and denied opportunities to participate in decision-making about issues that affect their lives and those of their families, community and nation (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2010). Fulfilling the right to information is a key prerequisite for the active, free, informed, relevant and meaningful participation of women with disabilities.

Australia has clear obligations under the international human rights treaties it has ratified to ensure the meaningful participation of women with disabilities at all stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions and policies affecting them (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2010; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015).

For many women with disabilities, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack of awareness about their rights, experiences of violence, abuse, harassment, exploitation, sexual violence, and other forms of discrimination all act as barriers to them participating in their communities, or having decision-making power in their day-to-day lives. Women with disabilities have made it clear that one of the best ways for them to develop knowledge, confidence, self-esteem and skills is to work together with other women with disabilities on common issues, including the prevention of violence (Millen, 2015; Women With Disabilities Australia, 2007b). This promotes the development of personal identities, where women with disabilities are able to recognise the need for personal autonomy, and importantly, develop a sense of personal worth. At the broader level, it enables the formation of a collective identity, where women with disabilities are able to speak out about their experiences and take action to collectively improve their lives.

In this context, organisations, groups and networks of women with disabilities run *by* and *for* women with disabilities play an essential role in efforts to promote the rights of women with disabilities to freedom from *all* forms of violence. The crucial role of women's civil society organisations in preventing violence against women is a further critical element of a human rights approach (Abdul Aziz & Moussa, 2014).

To ensure the national framework to prevent violence against women embeds and integrates a human rights approach to all measures to prevent gendered disability violence, the framework should:

1. Adopt a due diligence framework to operationalise violence against women as a human rights violation and a form of discrimination, derived from the examples provided by Abdul Aziz & Moussa (2014), the Council of Europe (2013) and Manjoo (2013).
2. Integrate and standardise definitions and conceptual understandings of gender-based violence which are inclusive of the experiences of all women and girls with disabilities, irrespective of their place of residence, or the setting in which they live, occupy, experience and/or receive service support. This requires review and reform of violence prevention legislation including domestic and family violence laws. It also requires integration of national disability framework related policies including the *National Disability Strategy* and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework as outlined in the *Second Action Plan of the National Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children: Moving Ahead 2013-2016*, and subsequent action plans (Department of Social Services, 2014).
3. Ensure all approaches recognise that gender-based violence is not only violence directed against a woman because she is a woman, but is also violence that affects some women

disproportionately (Council of Europe, 2013), particularly women with disabilities who are disproportionately affected by specific forms of violence.

4. Recognise that women with disabilities are more likely to experience, and be at risk of, violence due to the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to which they are subject.
5. Ensure that prevention measures have at their centre both inter-gender and intra-gender inequality and discrimination (Manjoo, 2011).
6. Ensure that prevention measures connect the causes and consequences of violence against women with the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
7. Recognise that multifaceted prevention strategies and measures (United Nations Women et al., 2012) are required to address the multiplicity of forms of violence against women and recognise that violence frequently occurs at the intersection of different types of discrimination.
8. Ensure prevention activities include positive obligations – beyond awareness-raising, education, training and sensitisation of the media – to include government policy and legislative reforms across all sectors and jurisdictions to promote gender equality and address intersectional discrimination.
9. Give priority to addressing and preventing the most severe and egregious forms of gender-based violence such as forced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, sexual violence and domestic violence (Council of Europe, 2013).
10. Include women with disabilities at the centre of the planning and development of prevention measures and activities that best address their particular needs and rights in relation to violence in their specific contexts and settings.
11. Include the establishment of mechanisms and institutional arrangements, at various levels of decision-making, to overcome the obstacles that women with disabilities face in terms of effective participation.
12. Ensure that mechanisms include women with disabilities in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of all prevention efforts including at the governance level of the national framework itself and in localised and specific activities.
13. Avoid re-victimisation by ensuring that prevention measures place the human rights of all victims at the centre of strategies to prevent violence against women (Council of Europe, 2013).

4.3 Governance and coordination

Effective prevention frameworks to address violence against women clearly articulate that essential, strategic, coherent and co-ordinated multi-stakeholder and interagency interventions are required to effectively prevent and address violence against women (Council of Europe, 2013; Manjoo, 2013; Abdul Aziz & Moussa, 2014). They also have institutional mechanisms to monitor and assess implementation of such frameworks, which includes monitoring and assessing the implementation and effectiveness of relevant laws, policies and other programs to address violence against women.

International research has found that most countries vest the responsibility for governance and coordination of violence prevention frameworks and plans with one national mechanism, most typically ministries and/or government departments for women (Abdul Aziz & Moussa, 2014;

Manjoo, 2013). However, research has found that there is a risk in this approach, in that other agencies and sectors may not prioritise implementation of violence prevention measures and strategies, or may not allocate sufficient resources to the violence prevention task (Abdul Aziz & Moussa, 2014; Manjoo, 2013).

The national framework to prevent violence against women should be a holistic, comprehensive, integrated framework; detailed enough to be rendered, effective and implementable; inclusive and reflective of all forms of violence against women in the context of individuals, households, settings, communities and States; based on international human rights law; and framed from the perspective of Australia's international human rights obligations to prevent all forms of violence against women. Implementing such a framework should include:

- setting up an independent governance and monitoring body made up of independent and qualified experts in the fields of human rights, gender equality, intersectional discrimination, violence against women, criminal law, and include as a priority, representatives from relevant non-government and civil society organisations
- ensuring there is a mechanism within national, state and territory parliaments to monitor the framework, including its implementation and evaluation, to help ensure that the issue of violence against women remains on the political agenda and that legislative and policy reforms are recognised as a critical element of the violence prevention agenda.

5. Conclusion

Compared to their peers, women with disabilities experience significantly higher levels of all forms of violence more intensely and frequently and are subjected to such violence by a greater number of perpetrators. Yet, as this paper has sought to demonstrate, the approach to gendered violence prevention in Australia has to date, largely excluded and subsequently failed women with disabilities who experience, or are at risk of, violence.

Violence perpetrated against women with disabilities continues therefore, to fall through legislative, policy and service response gaps as a result of the failure to understand the intersectional nature of the violence that they experience, and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination which make them more likely to experience, and be at risk of, all forms of violence.

This paper has examined conceptual understandings of violence against women and, in so doing, demonstrated that definitions and conceptual understandings of gender-based violence must be inclusive of the experiences of all women, including women with disabilities, irrespective of their place of residence, or setting in which they live, occupy, experience and/or receive service support. The critical need to understand and respect the complexity and specificity of gendered disability violence – that is, violence directed against a woman because she is a woman, which is shaped by the disability context, and which affects women with disabilities disproportionately as individuals and as a group – has also been highlighted, including the urgent need to ensure that the nature and scope of gendered disability violence is integral to violence prevention.

This paper has argued that a comprehensive human rights framework and approach, consistent with Australia's international human rights obligations and underscored by key human rights principles, is imperative to the prevention of all forms of violence against all women. It has articulated the critical importance of conceptualising violence against women from a human rights approach – an approach which situates violence against women on a continuum that spans interpersonal and structural violence; acknowledges the structural aspects and factors of discrimination, including structural and institutional inequalities; and analyses social and economic hierarchies between women and men and among women.

The need for holistic measures that address inter-gender *and* intra-gender inequality and intersectional discrimination has been discussed in this paper as fundamental to the prevention of violence against women, and key to the national framework to prevent violence against women which ensures equality of outcomes for all women.

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CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: LEARNINGS FROM SOCIAL MOVEMENT RESEARCH

A Think Piece

Andrew Joyce, Emily Foenander, & Jo Barraket

Centre for Social Impact Swinburne, Swinburne University of Technology

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Centre for Social Impact Swinburne

H23, PO Box 218 Hawthorn
Victoria 3122 Australia

T: +61 3 9214 5554

E: csiswin@swin.edu.au



Summary

The aim of this paper is to consider how insights from social movement research and practice may inform effective approaches to the primary prevention of violence against women. To achieve this aim, this paper examines existing studies of social movement processes as well as a selection of four case studies of social movements that exemplify some of the main themes covered. Campaigns for the prevention of violence against women can be strengthened by social movement approaches such as feminist activism. For example, a recent review of data spanning four decades from over 70 countries on social movements and violence against women reported that the strength of feminist movements was positively associated with policy development (Htun & Weldon, 2012). This review identifies a range of potentially generalisable strategies for successful socio-political change enacted through social movements, including: developing a narrative approach to message framing; ongoing relationship building and networking; mobilising and sustaining community and social support and advocacy; utilising political opportunities to mobilise and galvanise campaign support; being flexibly responsive to opportunities in an often fluid campaigning environment; and responding to setbacks and negotiating compromises. Concluding sections explore implications for policy and practice and implications for the development of a national framework.

Introduction

Efforts that support the prevention of violence against women are becoming a key policy and practice focus in Australia. Existing research clearly indicates the need to understand prevention efforts and approaches through the lens of historical, cultural and political contexts and to ensure that future approaches are developed with the needs of these specific contexts and communities in mind. It is established practice that addressing the complexity of this topic requires a multifaceted approach including but not limited to social marketing campaigns, community and organisational based initiatives, and policy reform (VicHealth, 2007). This paper outlines possible strategies and approaches to prevention of violence against women from a social movement perspective. Social movements are characterised by engagement in political or cultural conflicts involving individuals, groups and/or organisations that share some sense of collective identity (Diani, 1992). Such collective action challenges the dominant construction of expert knowledge and the institutional conventions derived from such knowledge (Cornish et al., 2014; Joachim, 2007), and uses diverse communication forms, or acts of cultural persuasion, in order to express objectives and promote collective action (Burgmann, 2003; McCammon et al., 2007).

By conceptualising prevention of violence against women as a field of action consistent with social movements, the drivers of sustainable change can be more deeply understood. Some of the most important policy changes associated with progressive change for population groups have been the result of long standing social movements. In developing holistic approaches for sustainable prevention of violence against women, insights from the strategies practised in other effective, long-term, sustainable social movement and public health campaigns is potentially valuable. This review presents and critiques several public health and social movement campaigns in order to offer evidence-based recommendations for the development of future approaches to prevention of violence against women that can include social movement elements as part of a broad suite of initiatives. A very brief history of social movements is presented followed by an overview of current social movement theories and approaches. The paper then describes example strategies of two key elements of social movements: message framing and relationship/network mobilisation. Where possible, a diverse range of examples is provided to illustrate that there is a divergence of

opinion on particular strategies and processes to use in social movements and not an agreed consensus in any one area. The paper also presents four case studies of how these strategies have been synthesised in existing strategic campaigns and influenced successful outcomes in various campaigns. The final section of the paper provides implications for practice and policy.

Historical insights: Understanding the evolution of social movements

Social movements in their present forms were informed by traditional or “old” social movements of the nineteenth century, which were concerned primarily with material needs of particular groups (Habermas, 1981). Following this initial form of action, “new social movements” emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and were primarily focused on identity, democratic issues and cultural issues rather than the material needs characteristic of earlier movements (Habermas, 1981). As Zimbra, Chen and Abassi (2010) note, new social movement researchers typically focus on non-class issues in social movements including gender, age and environment.

First-wave feminism has been defined as the time period in the nineteenth and early twentieth century where legal rights such as voting and property rights were being scrutinised and appealed. Second-wave feminism is one of the core exemplars of the new social movements where the movement broadened its scope and addressed the experience of women more generally, inclusive of family, sexuality, and work spheres. This influenced institutional changes in Western societies to reduce gender-related health inequities, support women’s reproductive health and prevent violence against women (Munch, 2006).

The women’s health movement, which has its roots in the broader feminist movement, played an instrumental role in redressing gender-bias and its exacerbations of health inequities for women in Western countries throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Munch, 2006). As evidence of the utility of feminism in collective action, Htun and Weldon (2012) recently reviewed data from over 70 countries on social movements and violence against women, reporting that the strength of feminist movements was related to policy development in this area. Htun and Weldon’s study involved analysis of movement cases spanning four decades and found evidence that feminist-led social movement strategies positively shaped both domestic and international policy. Examples of such strategies include: the establishment of women’s groups independent of political parties and established organisations; information dissemination and consciousness raising at a public level; sharing of strategies across countries and regions; and networking with those in power and influence.

Current social movement theories and approaches

Social movement theories can inform campaign strategies by offering insight into demonstrated methods of mobilising support, sustaining movement longevity and evaluating campaign outcomes. A diverse range of social movement perspectives exist, presenting differing conceptualisations of the preconditions, processes and sustainability of collective action. Among the key new social movement theorists is Melucci (Zimbra, Chen & Abassi, 2010). Melucci (1994) argues that collective identity underpins social movement action and that this identity operates along three axes. First, relationships between movement actors, participants in the process, inform their sense of common purpose. Second, emotional investment binds actors to the purposes and actions of the movement. Third, cognition – through shared language and framing of the problems being addressed, movement goals and the way the movement works – is significant to both insiders and outsiders making sense of social movement action. The cognitive axis in particular illuminates the importance of discourse in framing the problems social movements seek to

address and the messages that movement actors convey about the purpose of their action. As described in this paper, how messages are constructed and framed is a critical component of the social movement process.

There have been recent attempts at identifying some of the key stages of social movement action. In a workshop on social movements, Polletta pointed to three key factors in social movement mobilisation: political opportunities; the structures from which to mobilise; and messaging frames (Institute of Medicine (IOM), 2014). Political opportunities relate to factors such as electoral instability, the potential of new legislation, or changes in political rhetoric. These opportunities can be promoters or facilitators of change. The next key element, mobilising structures, focuses on the building of coalitions and mechanisms for ongoing collaboration. According to Polletta, coalitions between “elites” in positions of influence, together with grassroots participation from other individuals or communities, can produce effective social movements. Finally, effective messaging refers to the narratives that can determine the coverage and range of people involved in a movement. There are other typologies that are similar to Polletta’s model. Another influential figure in social movements, Ganz describes five essential elements including: relationship building, developing a narrative, strategising, action, and structures (IOM, 2014).

The Colorado Trust has developed a five phase framework for building public will as part of the social movement approach (IOM, 2014). Phase one involves research into the causes of the problem and also involves establishing which organisations, groups and/or individuals can contribute to informing approaches to address the issue. The second phase focuses on “using information to raise the sense of urgency around the issue” (IOM, 2014). This requires constantly testing and refining messages to see how they resonate with different sections of the community, as it cannot be assumed that what works in one area or group will work well in another area. The third phase involves collecting and disseminating information to engage key groups such as politicians and organisations. In the fourth phase, the intention is to celebrate success and develop aspirations to inspire and engage broader participation. The final phase involves evaluation, reflection and the implementation of structures that can reliably facilitate ongoing progress in preventing and/or responding to the issue.

While stages of social movements provide some sense of how to understand their process, it is important to emphasise that these stages do not necessarily occur sequentially and there is not a universally accepted model. However, there are key strategies that researchers seem to agree are important. The next two sections of the paper provide examples of two key elements that are prominent in the literature: effective message framing and relationship/network mobilisation. This is followed by the four case studies to illustrate how these strategies have been synthesised in existing strategic campaigns. This is then followed by practice and policy recommendations on how to cultivate and then capitalise on political opportunities.

The importance of effective message framing

Effective messaging refers to the narratives that can determine the coverage and range of people involved in a movement. For instance, movements campaigning against the death penalty could employ message frames on the sanctity of life and/or a message that this form of punishment is not an effective deterrent for perpetrators (IOM, 2014). Each of these messages has very different philosophical origins, but can appeal to different groups and potentially broaden the supporter base (IOM, 2014). An example of framing issues is the movement for equal representation of women and men in politics that occurred in France in the 1990s. The term parity was considered sufficiently ambiguous to facilitate engagement

from diverse groups that would normally disagree on political issues (Krook, 2007). Furthermore, the movement argued that parity was an extension of the ideals of the French Revolution, which also helped to galvanise broad support (Krook, 2007).

The reframing of language and approaches facilitates broader participation in social movements (IOM, 2014). As an example from the United States, the framing of gay marriage in terms of personal freedoms broadened the appeal of a campaign to a wider audience (IOM, 2014). There are also historical examples of how groups with very different political values were able to form alliances for change (IOM, 2014). For example, the movement to abolish slavery in the nineteenth century was supported by people in the northern United States who harboured strong racial hostility but were more concerned about the expansion of slavery in the South undermining the economic position of the North (IOM, 2014). Support for the civil rights movement in the 1960s among politicians was fostered in part by concern for how the United States would be viewed on the world stage, which was critical in forming alliances during the Cold War period (IOM, 2014). The protests against the Vietnam War in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s were aided by conservative voices concerned about the war's drain on the budget. Ultimately, these examples demonstrate the importance of sustaining coalitions of broad support and diverse interest groups in order to effect change through collective action.

Marshall (2002) examined the role of teacher unions in enabling policy reform in the United States and the various strategies employed to effect this change. Underpinned by shared values and strong networking, the strategies included developing relationships with those in positions of power and framing of human interest stories to exemplify structural inequities. Recent research in the field of obesity prevention has demonstrated that narrative-based messages focused on a human story are effective at conveying complex information and can positively influence support for policy action (Lee, Shapiro & Niederdeppe, 2014; Niederdeppe, Shapiro, Kim, Bartolo & Porticella, 2014). Narrative-based strategies can interweave both individual and social explanations for issues to reduce the chance of a negative reaction by those typically less understanding of social determinants and who may dismiss less holistic explanations (Niederdeppe et al., 2014). The challenge of how particular message frames may alienate certain groups is covered later.

Key learning: Message framing is a critical component of successful movement mobilisation. Framing effective messages involves:

- considering the target audience
- ensuring a message appeals to the broadest range of people possible, and/or crafting a range of different messages for different groups
- constantly testing how the messages are resonating with different groups and adjusting where necessary.

Relationship and network mobilisation

Social movement networks can be understood as individuals and/or social movement organisations that may collaborate and interact with a shared aim of effecting social change. As Ganz discusses, social movements have had a pivotal role in political change within the United States, due to the structure of the political system which is designed in such a way that inhibits change and innovation (IOM, 2014). Due to the embedded barriers to legislative change in the United States political system, social movements have been critical in creating shifts in values which have subsequently facilitated policy and legislative change. While the United States and Australia have different political structures some of the challenges in achieving change in Australia are similar to the United States. Given the enormous

challenges associated with achieving change, Ganz argues that within social movements, it is important that there is sustainable organisational structure, citing the example of the United States' National Rifle Association, whose organisational structure has been vital to their success in successfully defeating anti-gun ownership movements (IOM, 2014). This section reveals that there are a range of factors that influence network structure and that the internet has also provided new means of generating movements.

Taylor (2001) examined the process of education reform in education unions in South Australia and Queensland and, through interviews with key activists, described the process of this change. This movement advocated for professional development of teachers and non-sexist teaching resources. The activists also had to battle male dominated unions, particularly in Queensland, whereas gender reform had occurred earlier in the history of the education unions in South Australia. Again, networks both in Australia and overseas, and relationships with key bureaucrats who were termed femocrats enabled progress in gender equity reform. Highlighting again the importance of institutional context, the changes were slower in Queensland and many changes did not take full effect until the conservative government lost power in 1989 (Taylor, 2001).

Social movements are relational by nature; thus, networking is critical for successful social movements. Research has found that increasing levels of engagement in professional women's organisations and ties between these organisations and union organisations was related to increased gender equality in pay across 51 countries (Akchurin & Lee, 2013). However increasing levels of engagement in popular social movements, such as those related to advancing human rights or protecting the environment, without access to professional or union networks was not related to increased gender equality in pay (Akchurin & Lee, 2013). In a similar finding, Irvine (2013) concluded that increased networking between women's organisations, political parties and unions was partially associated with greater numbers of women being elected in 2000 in Croatia compared to Serbia.

Irvine (2013) contrasted an insider/inclusion strategy operating in Croatia in the lead up to the 2000 elections compared to an outsider/oppositional strategy operating in Serbia. The Croatian insider/inclusion strategy was able to successfully facilitate the formation of alliances, which is integral in increasing the representation of women in parliament. These alliances were formed as a result of a ten year process of mobilisation, first beginning as women's organisations focused on relief causes during the war and then politically focused organisations from 1995 which garnered external funding support. In contrast, Irvine (2013) explains how the conditions under the Milosevic regime in Serbia during the 1990s made it more difficult for women's organisations to mobilise capacity, posing barriers to achieving the success that was evident in Croatia. Subsequently Serbian women's organisations did not engage in political networking and instead were more focused on street protests and other similar tactics. In the 2000 election in Croatia there was a 15% increase in the number of women elected to parliament and a number of significant legislative reforms were introduced soon after. By 2000, in Serbia the gender imbalance in parliament was eight women and 170 men elected. It was not until later in the decade that Serbia was able to achieve women's representation levels and legislative reform similar to Croatia. This highlights how social movement progress depends on the strength of connections between different sectors of society.

While networking and building alliances with a broad range of groups is considered important for success it can also pose risks. The sex trafficking campaign illustrates some of the challenges inherent in forming coalitions of diverse groups. Bernstein (2010) examined

the social and political conditions that facilitated a coalition of religious right groups with liberal feminist groups in the pursuit of sex trafficking campaigns. While many point to this alliance as an example of how a broad humanitarian framing of the issue was able to connect divergent groups, Bernstein (2010) instead argued that these groups have coalesced around an agenda focused on criminal sanctions at the expense of a broader focus of the structural inequities behind sex trafficking. While a law enforcement angle aligns well with current neoliberal governments and significant legislative change has occurred, there is no evidence that this approach has benefited survivors and has the potential to legitimise this criminal sanction approach into other domains of social policy. This example highlights the tensions in social movements and how broadening the base of support can also potentially expose a number of other challenges.

The alignment of the violence prevention movement and neoliberal governments has been addressed at a broader level by Bumiller (2013). According to Bumiller the alliance of the state with the feminist movement has seen the type of approach Bernstein (2010) comments upon across the whole field of endeavour. Bumiller (2013) writes that the focus on criminal justice approaches and more narrowly defined scope of social programs has directed attention and effort away from the underlying determinants of women's oppression. Fraser (2012) also writes from a socialist feminist perspective on the need for the feminist movement to re-engage in the political and economic sphere to address the broad issues related to social inequity. The ability of rights-based identity movements to address systemic inequities is a contested area with Fraser (2012) outlining the failings of such an approach. Herman (1993) writes on the merits and limitations of rights-based movements which highlights while there are some common general features of social movements which are captured in this paper, there is considerable debate within any movement of particular tactics to employ with tactics often influenced by philosophical value positions.

Returning to particular social movement processes, online action has developed as a new form of engagement in social movements. Vromen (2014) has explored the emergence of online campaigning organisations such as GetUp!, Change.org and Avaaz, which are challenging traditional conceptions of social movements. In contrast to traditional movement structures, which tend to have a centralised infrastructure, these online campaigning organisations exhibit both hierarchical and horizontal bureaucratic and networked structures. Online movement organisations are unconventional as they are professional forms of activism, yet have very little centralised infrastructure or resources. Due to the instantaneous nature of internet publicity and mobilisation, online collective campaigns offer a more rapid and nimble mobilisation approach (Bimber, Flanagin & Stohl, 2005; Chadwick, 2007) and align with Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) conceptualisation of organisationally enabled networks including *connective* action. It has been suggested that the flexibility of connective networks is more suited to present societies, where collective action through structured formal movement organisations is being replaced by connective action through more fluid social networks (Castells, 2000).

While social media enables quicker and more affordable communication it has also been criticised from a social movement perspective for the digital divide, government surveillance and "slacktivism", which makes participants feel good about themselves but has little political impact (Molaei, 2015). But Molaei (2015) found two examples from Indonesia where social media did play an important role in achieving positive outcomes. Both events related to perceived injustice and they received widespread social media coverage that was then picked up by the mass media. In both situations there was a constellation of factors

related to public and political interest in the broader themes those stories reflected and social media was the channel through which those stories emerged. In this instance the capacity of social media, both to provide content for mass media and more broadly to set the agenda for mass media, was commented upon (Molaei, 2015). Vromen (2014) has also analysed factors that influence why certain topics are addressed within internet-based social movements such as social causes that relate to the values of those in leadership roles and also the membership base (see Vromen, 2014). At this stage, there is no clear evidence of which topics are best addressed with a connective type network approach and which are best addressed through a collective type network approach.

Key learning: Social movement networks are comprised of a range of collaborating social movement organisations and actors. Galvanising both sustainable internal social movement organisation structure as well as strong network linkages is important to ensure the sustainability of social change campaigns and the longevity of movements. Often these more formal networks have been established after connections were formed at an individual level. The empowerment aspect of grassroots movements lies in real, ordinary people making connections with each other – realising that their experiences are not isolated, and collectively sharing tacit or grounded knowledge that experts do not otherwise see (first with each other and then feeding up to institutions). Evidence of networking at an individual and organisational level has been associated with achieving target campaign outcomes. Furthermore, this section highlights the interconnection of the different aspects of social movements and the challenges in trying to compartmentalise social movements. The structure of social movements is influenced by historical, political and cultural factors as well as shaping these factors. Likewise, message framing influences network collaboration and conversely, the composition of the movement influences who engages in the collaboration. A range of variables including campaign aims, political and social forces at play within the target context and the characteristics of the target message demographic should be considered in order to develop the most effectively framed messages and sustainable campaign approach for a specific social movement.

Evidence on achieving social change: Successful social movement case studies

The following four case studies have been selected to illustrate how change campaigns can be conceptualised as social movements. Examining these cases as social movements can offer valuable insights into campaign features associated with successful change outcomes including the processes and strategies in successful change campaigns. The campaigns illustrate the key learnings that have been summarised throughout the report and how these aspects intersect to produce positive change. The campaigns are examples where social, political and cultural change has been achieved.

Case 1: The process of developing a violence prevention focus in Taiwan

Taiwan is as an exemplary leader of violence prevention legislation and change in East Asia (Chao, 2005) although the extent to which this has reduced prevalence is not known. This case study outlines the process by which prevention initiatives arose from the initial focus on response. The Taiwanese violence prevention movement began when the Nationalist Party lifted martial law in 1987 and 12 women's groups were able to register as non-government organisations (Chao, 2005). Later that year, the Taipei City Government Bureau of Social Affairs established a centre to provide support to women and children experiencing violence and abuse (Chao, 2005). Women's groups continued to publicise the issue of violence against women, including domestic violence, through organising meetings with government representatives and publicising issues among the social worker population via newsletters and seminars (Chao, 2005). Women's voices were now being expressed through the mobilisation of these social movement organisations and non-government organisations and this facilitated the development of feminist social networks. While women's groups providing support services remained vital in responding to cases of violence against women and children, it soon became clear that without a sustainable and comprehensive policy response to domestic violence, direct care services would face unsurmountable service provision difficulties. Through the concerted efforts of advocate groups, the government's social service sector acknowledged the need for an overarching domestic violence response system (Chao, 2005).

Growing media coverage of crimes involving violence against women also catalysed a strong, collective social receptivity to policy change. Models of violence prevention implemented by other nations were also beginning to be examined. Taiwanese people reacted strongly to several specific cases of gender-based violence including the story of Deng Ruweng, a woman who killed her husband after he perpetrated horrific and long term sexual, physical and psychological violence on her, their children and other family members. Media coverage also included the brutal rape and murder of a prominent women's rights advocate and the rape and torture of a Taiwanese celebrity's daughter (Chao, 2005). The public's reaction to these horrific cases was expressed through protest about the urgent need for government legislation to prevent violence against women and children. In May 1997, 50,000 Taiwanese united in a public demonstration in Taipei to protest against a lack of government response to violence against women (Chao, 2005). Public perception about violence against women had now changed irreversibly and non-government organisations began to collaborate with policy makers to draft specific legislative goals to develop sustainable preventative measures (Chao, 2005).

An issue that had previously been compartmentalised as exclusively private had now been forced into the public sphere and Taiwanese people had begun to challenge the socio-cultural etiquette on what had previously been considered a taboo and private topic, by engaging in public discourse and protest. By 1998, the Taiwanese movement for the prevention of violence against women had achieved legislative progress against gender-based violence, in the form of the *Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Act* and Taiwan had become the first East Asian country to pass legislation on domestic violence (Chao, 2005). One year after the implementation of the Act the Taipei City Government opened the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Centre and school-based violence prevention programs began to emerge in Taipei (Lee, 2002; Chao, 2005). Government expenditure on violence prevention in Taiwan remains dependent on overall economic stability and during times of economic uncertainty, government funds are reallocated to employment programs (Chao, 2005).

The consolidation and evolution of violence prevention measures in Taiwan included: the abolishment of martial law and subsequent democratisation; the consequent emergence of women's groups and feminist social movement organisation networks thereafter; women's access to education; freedom of Taiwanese press to report on violence against women and internet access; and a sustained, public support for movement aims (Chao, 2005). This case study indicates a range of generalisable strategies for sustainable social change including: capitalising on freedoms afforded by political and social change; the establishment of organisations dedicated to the issues; creating a space for women's voices to be heard; drawing on exemplary international strategic change models and the consolidation of social movement organisations and their networks; media coverage and galvanising public engagement and support by using multiple channels to publicise an issue.

Case 2: The influence of social movement organisations on policy responses to HIV/AIDS in the United Kingdom

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a disease that leads to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and weakens the immune system, increasing susceptibility to a range of infections and cancers among infected individuals (Better Health Channel, n.d.). In response to the global HIV and AIDS epidemic, many specific health support services and social movement organisations have developed. Within the context of HIV/AIDS advocacy, social movement organisations perform many functions, including: the provision of support services and information, mobilisation of community resources and facilitation of effective lobbying for target policy and institutional changes (Petchley et al., 1998). Petchley et al. (1998) applied a strategic change model to study the relationships between health authorities and social movement organisations in two low prevalence areas (District A and District B) of the United Kingdom between 1986 and 1995. This study explored the ways that relationships between social movement organisations and health authorities influence the development of support services. Interviews and surveys were conducted with HIV/AIDS positive service users, GPs and other staff in direct care settings.

There was a marked difference between the development of both voluntary and statutory HIV/AIDS services in the two health authority districts examined, which reflected differences in the quality of health authority and social movement organisation relationships across the two districts. In District A, there had been limited existing community mobilisation and the strategic response to HIV/AIDS in District A was unstable. The relationship between the social movement organisation and health authority was conflicted, participants reported that frictions between the organisations were obstructing the provision of services and participants ultimately perceived that the social movement organisation had 'imploded' by the end of the study period (Petchley et al., 1998). In contrast, in District B, a strong community allegiance existed due to previous social movement mobilisation. District B had previously united to form political and social advocacy services in social movements, such as the gay rights movement. This history of social mobilisation provided District B with a basis of existing community solidarity and mobilisation experience, which assisted with the development and consolidation of a successful HIV/AIDS social movement organisation. This history of past social movement mobilisation is also likely to have assisted the development of collaborative and strategic relationships between the social movement organisation and the health authority. Positive relations between the health authority and social movement organisation in District B is also likely to have been informed by staff movement between the organisations. This cross-sectoral transfer of personnel is likely to have promoted communication and cooperation. This indicates the importance of social movement organisations to the development and sustainable delivery of HIV/AIDS services (Petchley et

al., 1998). In District A, where relations between the health authority and social movement organisation were compromised, individuals experienced a direct effect on service provision.

Petchley et al.'s (1998) study of HIV/AIDS movement mobilisation and cross-sectoral collaboration indicates that pre-existing community solidarity, mobilisation and campaigning experience are all likely to enhance social movement organisation strength, and therefore success and sustainability. The quality of relevant cross-sectoral relationships, including collaborative engagement between staff from respective organisations, is likely to directly influence campaign sustainability and success. In addition to demographic, social and epidemiological factors, local variability and historical context can directly influence the trajectory of a social movement. Ensuring strong collaborative engagement between social movement organisations and other organisations is likely to be of central importance to sustainable social movement mobilisation.

Case 3: The campaign for gay and lesbian law reform in Tasmania

The case of gay law reform in Tasmania provides several indications of the key elements of successful social movements, including message framing, the ability to structure and organise, and mobilising influential support. The arduous and controversial campaign for gay law reform in Tasmania occurred between 1988 and 1997 (Baird, 2003). Tasmania was the last of the Australian states to decriminalise homosexuality, officially passing legislation in 1997. This change was the product of a sustained social movement including significant campaigning nine years preceding the outcome. This campaign was led by the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group (TGLRG), who demonstrated stoic advocacy efforts during the lengthy social movement campaign process. In response to the TGLRG's sustained dedication, organised homophobic opposition emerged including several anti-gay groups (Baird, 2003). Throughout the campaign, the TGLRG was challenged by ideological prejudice, verbal aggression and physical discrimination including persecution. For instance, several TGLRG members were arrested for association with an advocacy stall at the weekly Salamanca market in Hobart. In further reflection of discriminatory attitudes, both anti-gay campaigners and members of the Tasmanian government including premier Robin Gray, blatantly remarked that homosexuals were not welcome in Tasmania (Croome, 2014).

Baird (2003) interviewed Rodney Croome, a key movement activist, about the movement as part of a broader reflection on sexual citizenship within the context of this gay law reform. The TGLRG framed their campaign via a lens of human rights and gay rights, while their opponents focused on their opposition to homosexual sexual practices. This positioned Croome as somewhat nonsexual within the public sphere in that his public identity did not include his sexual identity (Baird, 2003). Rather the campaign focused specifically on the rights perspective. Consequently, although some great progress was made subsequent to law reform, the social stigma associated with public expression of homosexual affection did not shift. This again highlights the challenge of message framing and negotiated compromises that are made in the pursuit of some goals that may hinder progress towards other goals.

The TGLRG's rights-based approach, together with other key strategies including appeals to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the Commonwealth Government and the High Court, was highly successful in applying sustained pressure for legislative change (Baird, 2003; Croome, 1997). Ultimately, the social movement for gay law reform in Tasmania resulted in the establishment of the most progressive anti-discrimination and relationship laws in Australia at that time. This reform subsequently contributed to the electoral defeat of opponents to the reform (Croome, 1997, 2014).

Case 4: The social movement for IVF access for gay and lesbian parents in Victoria

The efforts of social movement organisations to dismantle barriers to assisted reproductive technology (ART) for lesbian singles and couples in Victoria present an exemplary case of social movement mobilisation including message framing and strategic campaigning to effect judicial change. The Victorian movement for ART eligibility equity occurred in association with seven years of ongoing policy, legal and social debate on eligibility criteria. As Dempsey (2008) discusses, the social movement in support of ART equity for lesbians was encouraged by the landmark federal court case *McBain versus Victoria* (2000). This case gave gynaecologist Dr John McBain legal permission to provide in-vitro fertilisation to a single heterosexual client. This ruling provided a precedent against which a case for ART access and equity for women of other sexualities could be developed. Initial evidence of a growing social movement for ART eligibility and equity was evident in the formation of the Fertility Access Rights Lobby (FAR) in 1999 (Dempsey, 2008).

The social movement mobilisation for change on ART access and equity was facilitated and sustained by prominent debates in the public sphere. Debates on the notion of psychological infertility and subsequently the positioning of denied access as a catalyst for unsafe alternative insemination methods garnered consolidated coverage throughout the campaign. Social movement mobilisation by the FAR ultimately influenced a range of equity gains, however compromises were also made (Dempsey, 2008). In the interests of supporting increased IVF access for partnered and single lesbian women, the FAR initially supported Dr McBain's proposal of psychological infertility as an eligibility criteria for ART. Although the FAR's intention in supporting this concept was clearly motivated by the prospect of securing ART equity, this assumption risked homogenising lesbians' sexual activity and related reproductive opportunities. An argument based on psychological infertility risked constructing stringent criteria for the definition of lesbian relations. Furthermore, suggestion that a non-heterosexual choice is a psychological obstacle gives credence to the archaic argument that all lesbian practices might be dysfunctional or inferior to heterosexual alternatives, countering the significant achievement of the removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (Dempsey, 2008).

Arguments for ART access and equity based on the need to protect desperate women from taking risks to become inseminated, had the potential to undermine existing sexual and gender equity progress. For example, portrayal of lesbian and gay individuals as "desperately risk taking" could have reinforced social stigmas and positioned individuals as irresponsible (Dempsey, 2008). Ultimately, due to public and member response, the FAR withdrew its support for the notion of psychological infertility. Lesbian activism for ART access and equity initially emerged from a "constructive medicalisation" perspective, though arguments based on infertility treatment and risk subsequently emerged. Key outcomes of this social movement campaign include the extension of eligibility for ART to all lesbians and single homosexual women and the decriminalisation of self-insemination (Dempsey, 2008). Generalisable strategies that can be extrapolated from this case include the importance of message framing to campaign outcomes such as the importance of framing advocacy rationales equitably.

Implications for policy and practice: Political opportunities, key events and flexibility

Many of the theories related to public policy processes highlight the importance of certain political and social opportunities that make change possible, often phrased as windows of opportunity. The first case study included in this report describes how the process of violence prevention reform in Taiwan was enabled by some of the broader economic, political and social events occurring in the country at the dawn of the twenty first century (Lee, 2011). Some of this political progress was hastened by public outrage following the rape and murder of prominent feminist politician Peng Wau-Ru in 1996 (Lee, 2011). This event generated large protests and subsequent pressure for change (Lee, 2011). As the Taiwan case study highlights, feminist-based organisations were very well placed to capitalise on this opportunity due to a long history of collaboration and campaigning on these issues. While the timing of these key events cannot be predicted, having the social network infrastructure in place, and having well developed policy and program ideas can be prepared by policy makers and practitioners. Having well established structures and capacity within government to advance gender equity issues has been documented as a key component in achieving success as mentioned previously in the section on networks and structure (Taylor, 2001).

The conditions for change can also be influenced by what are termed policy entrepreneurs (Anderson, 2014). Anderson describes how an advocate in the United States was able to generate public focus on the importance of child sexual abuse by publicly telling of her own experience, and how this created a policy window, using Kingdon's (1985) model, when the three streams of problems, policies and politics aligned to enable policy reform. The advocate was able to capitalise on the policy work that existed and the multiple strategies that had been used to generate awareness of the extent of the problem and the result was the introduction of legislation that mandated implementation of sexual abuse prevention programs in all public kindergarten and primary schools in Illinois (Anderson, 2014). Rodney Croome could also be described as a policy entrepreneur and through his leadership social movement organisations were able to generate external pressure which was central to the success of the campaign to decriminalise homosexuality in Tasmania. Tasmania was the last of the Australian states to decriminalise homosexuality and the campaign to effect this change continued for nine years preceding its eventual success. A range of campaign events including applications to the Commonwealth Government, the High Court and the United Nations Human Rights Committee created external pressure and influenced campaign success in the form of legislative change and decriminalisation in 1997. Again this highlights the importance of multiple strategies that, when coordinated well, have the potential to achieve significant change.

Adopting a flexible campaign approach is a very important social movement strategy, and is distinct from traditional program approaches, as it involves a fluidity and flexibility in direction and approach (IOM, 2014). Within such flexible frameworks, emergent campaign challenges are inevitable. For example, both Marshall (2002) from the United States and Taylor (2001) in Australia noted that the rise of conservative governments in the 1990s diminished some of the gains made in gender equity reform in the education sector which were seen across many sectors of the community. A participant in Taylor's (2001) study commented on the need to reflexively evolve tactics and networks in response to changing political and social circumstances. The challenge for policy makers and practitioners is to constantly revise and update frameworks and plans as situations change.

Key learning: Political opportunities and key events can be pivotal in determining the strength of movement mobilisation and the trajectory of campaigns.

Typical factors that create a window of opportunity for change include:

- wider economic, political and social events within nations that can either promote or inhibit change, such as freedom of speech, media reporting restrictions, educational and other political reforms
- upswing in public debate, interest and pressure
- pressure from international contexts and movements.

Studies of successful social movements suggest that setbacks and compromises are to be expected in the process of mobilising support and advocating for social change. The ability to anticipate, prepare and disseminate strong, strategic responses to potential opposition enhances the likelihood of campaign effectiveness.

Implications for development of a national framework to prevent violence against women

In considering the implications for a national framework, there are three social movement strategies for sustained socio-political change that are potentially generalisable across Australia: the development of a narrative approach to message framing (recognising the need to contextualise messages for local conditions on occasions), the consolidation of networking and relationship building, and the mobilisation of community and social support and advocacy. Recognising and capitalising on political opportunities to mobilise and galvanise campaign support, being flexibly responsive in a fluid campaigning environment, and diplomatically and effectively responding to setbacks and negotiating compromises are also likely to have positive implications for campaign effectiveness. Existing literature also indicates that there is a need to recognise the respective benefits of both traditional social movement frameworks (with a centralised infrastructure) and newer, innovative strategies that exist within networks and can be both hierarchical and horizontal. The inclusion of insights from both the old and new campaigning structure approaches is likely to promote the development of holistic, sustainable and comprehensive campaigns. As well as including insights from more traditional movement approaches, the nature of modern internet publicity and online movement mobilisation (Bimber, Flanagin & Stohl, 2005; Chadwick, 2007) aligns with Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) conceptualisation of *connective* action. It is suggested that in developed societies, collective action through structured formal movement organisations is being replaced in certain situations by connective action through more fluid social networks (Castells, 2000).

The diffuse nature of social movements and their unpredictability has important implications for the operationalisation of the national framework for the prevention of violence against women. Diffuse strategies across the spectrum of prevention, such as advocacy, social marketing, community development and education, have the potential to contribute to social movement success. However, progress is more likely if there are also strong coordination mechanisms and a commitment to partnerships and collaboration to ensure these diffuse strategies are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Strong coordinating and monitoring processes could highlight where strategies have a synergistic effect, where, in combination, the strategies are creating greater progress than could be achieved by implementation of single strategies. These coordination mechanisms

also need to monitor for any adverse consequences that strategies in one domain might have on strategies in other domains. One of the challenges of traditional monitoring and evaluation approaches are that they only measure the issue of direct focus of the intervention and do not consider or measure systemic effects and unintended consequences ([Dixon-Woods et al., 2011](#)). For instance, social marketing messages aimed at a particular demographic might have success with that demographic but inadvertently upset another demographic that may be an important ally within a social movement approach. Competitive funding processes within the industry might also hamper relationship building that is necessary for social movement success. There is no current evidence that this is occurring, and these examples are merely used to emphasise the need for all strategies to be carefully monitored and coordinated to ensure they are mutually supporting.

Another implication for the operationalisation of the national framework for the prevention of violence relates to the complexity of prevention of violence against women work and social movements. In working with complex problems there are limitations in relying on evidence-based practice alone in formulating strategies. A *complex* situation has multiple factors that interrelate in such a way that precise delineation of the causes and solutions is not possible (Snowden & Boone, 2007). In these situations there is not a defined way to execute strategies and leadership, so local adaptation and strong reflective processes are required, including monitoring and impact assessments of new initiatives to enable ongoing learning and refinement of approaches. Violence against women is a complex problem and, as described in this paper, developing social movement strategies to prevent it requires significant flexibility and innovation. In producing operational plans that might arise out of the national framework that accommodate adaptability, Hawe ([2015](#)) provides an overview of different types of logic models that can accommodate complexity rather than the traditional sequential logic model approach that would be ill suited to this topic. Two examples are use of different visuals such as circles rather than left to right orientation and mapping multiple pathways for change ([Hawe, 2015](#)).

Conclusion

This review has identified a range of valuable strategies associated with successful and sustainable social movement mobilisation. The four case studies from Taiwan, the United Kingdom, Victoria and Tasmania illustrated each of these elements and how they combined in these situations to create the opportunity for change. It is emphasised that the great diversity and enormity of women's equity problems in society mean that different sorts of social movements encompassing different paradigms, such as feminism and social justice, are needed (Montoya, 2014). In campaign approaches to prevent violence against women, strategies need to be specific to localised contexts (Montoya, 2014). Thus, any reflection and learning from these movements needs to be interpreted through the prism of the current political and social context in Australia. Considering these pertinent contextual factors will help determine which actions are most likely to be effective in preventing violence against women.

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Bringing the Margins to the Centre

How do different forms of discrimination intersect with gender to contribute to violence against women and their children and what are the implications of this for developing inclusive prevention strategies?

Adele Murdolo and Regina Quiazon

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Summary

This paper explores the ways in which racism and other forms of discrimination intersect with gender to contribute to violence against immigrant and refugee women and their children. Class, race and gender discrimination and other forms of structural disadvantage together circumscribe immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence and increase their vulnerability to gendered violence. This paper argues for primary prevention policy and practice that brings immigrant and refugee women's experiences to the centre – not as an add-on – but as the starting point for redefining universal approaches to violence prevention.

Introduction

Gender inequality, sex discrimination and sexism have been increasingly understood as the key drivers of violence against women. Such understandings tend to be theorised with the category of gender at the centre of analysis. The focus is largely on the impact of gender inequality and sexism on relationships between men and women, and the contribution of unequal relationships, sexist community attitudes, hegemonic masculinity and misogyny to men's perpetration of violence.

Less accepted and understood is the way in which other forms of discrimination, structural inequality, and oppression such as racism or class-based disadvantage intersect with sexism and gender inequality to contribute to violence against women and their children. As a result, there is a limited understanding of immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence. This limited understanding not only excludes a large realm of experience which is circumscribed as much by racism and class disadvantage as it is by sexism, but takes only the specific experiences of Anglo-Australian, middle-class women to represent the experiences of all women.

This dual tendency to simultaneously marginalise immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence and universalise mainstream experiences of violence means that there is a limited theoretical and experiential knowledge base from which to develop effective primary prevention strategies that take full account of the experiences of the broad

diversity of Australian women. The concept of intersectionality, first articulated by the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to explain the marginalisation of black women, describes how different forms of discrimination intersect and overlap. Following Crenshaw's work, this paper explores the intersectionality of immigrant and refugee women's experiences, with a specific focus on those forms of discrimination and structural inequality that have the largest impact on immigrant and refugee women in Australia, namely class and race discrimination and structural racism. This is not to say that other structural inequities do not impact on immigrants and refugees. Rather, it is equally important to recognise the intersections between race, class and other factors, such as sexuality, disability and age.

For immigrant and refugee women, class, gender and race discrimination and disadvantage come together to circumscribe experiences of violence, not only increasing women's vulnerability to gendered violence, but framing experience in gendered, classed and racialised ways. In other words, violence is experienced differently, different forms of violence are experienced and the violence has different harms and consequences. All women experience violence in this same intersectional way, but they may not be disadvantaged by their class or racialised position. This paper argues for a recognition of difference and diversity across women's experience of violence in primary prevention policy and practice, not as an add-on, but as a departure point from which inclusive prevention strategies can be developed.

Difference and diversity

This paper explores the ways that we can acknowledge and incorporate difference across women's experience in policy and practice in a way that does not reproduce existing marginality. While the desire to acknowledge differences across women's experiences of violence is often expressed in the initial stages of policy planning and development, it is less often translated into effective practice. Incorporating the concept of difference needs to be more than a statement of intention. It requires careful consideration of, firstly, how the concept is and should be understood and, secondly, how it can then be applied to include rather than tokenise and marginalise women's differences.

Case Study

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009-2021 (National Plan), and particularly the first action plan (Council of Australian Governments, 2011), is a good example of policy that states a commitment to diversity. However, that commitment has not been adequately transferred into on-the-ground strategies and programs. The National Plan states: "policy solutions to address domestic violence and sexual assault must take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of women and their children" (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). Strategies are intended to be "relevant to all Australians irrespective of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, culture, disability, religious belief, faith, linguistic background or location". However, despite this statement of diversity and inclusiveness, immigrant and refugee communities, and other specific groups, have been marginalised in funding allocation and project implementation.

The Respectful Relationships program was one of the main primary prevention programs implemented under the first action plan of the National Plan. A total investment of \$9 million was made, with 26 projects funded across Australia. Only one of the 26 projects (3% of total funding allocated) was specifically targeted to immigrant and refugee communities. Five projects were targeted to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and one to people with intellectual disabilities. The remaining 19 projects were 'universal', and intended to be relevant to all communities. However, there is no requirement under funding guidelines to demonstrate cultural relevance, diversity or attention to structural barriers

such as race, culture or language. Nor is there any requirement for evaluations to provide information about whether and how projects may have reached participants from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds (see for example Flood and Kendrick, 2012).

The issue of how to develop broader, more inclusive, feminist theories has been widely dubbed “the problem of difference”, with the dilemma couched as the question: How do we balance a recognition of the differences between women with an articulation of our commonalities, to ensure there is a coherence to our activism? This is an important theoretical and practical question for prevention policy and practice. Within the field of the prevention of violence against women, there has been a tendency to adopt a universal approach that focuses on what women have in common, while at the same time developing tailored approaches that are appropriate for specific groups (VicHealth, 2007).

However, as Elizabeth V. Spelman (1988) has shown, while the intention behind universal policies might be to include marginalised women, particular theoretical approaches to the concept of difference may in effect exclude those very women (Spelman, 1988). The problem, Spelman argues, is that universal approaches are not, in effect, universal. Rather, universal approaches reflect the experiences of women from the dominant culture. The process of focusing on women’s commonalities “acknowledges differences only enough to bury them” (Spelman, 1988, p. xx). In this regard, Spelman (1988, p. 3) states:

... the focus on women “as women” has addressed only one group of women – namely, white middle-class women of Western industrialised countries. So the solution has not been to talk about what women have in common as women; it has been to conflate the condition of one group of women with the condition of all and to treat the differences of white middle-class women from all other women as if they were not differences.

There are two ways that difference has been generally understood and used in violence prevention policy and practice; both of which fail to take account of the concrete and diverse lived experiences of women. In the first understanding, difference has been taken to mean a difference from a mainstream experience, and as such it is simply added on to a gendered experience of violence, rather than understood as an intersectional one. In this frame, the mainstream experience is universalised, and comes to stand in for all women’s experience, so that difference is something that only happens to specific groups of marginalised women. In addition, because gender sits at the centre of analysis, with race and class posited as additional factors, important concepts like culture are understood as only belonging to immigrant and refugee women. Such an interpretation of culture, as an add-on factor that comes into play only when we start to focus on immigrant communities, reinforces binary oppositions between modernity and tradition (Volpp, 2011), where immigrant women and men are firmly positioned on the tradition side of the binary.

A second way that difference has been understood is as benign and horizontal diversity, an approach that tends to exclude a range of important experiences from its frame by glossing over structural disadvantage, class divisions and racism. As Sara Ahmed (2012) has shown, at times the very focus on diversity, and the intention to include diverse subjects in programs, can have the effect of cutting off diversity from other strategies that challenge inequities more directly and, in fact, may even replace programs that address inequality. In some cases, the acknowledgement of diversity can act as a public relations exercise, telling a “happy story” about inclusion and acceptance, and thus have the effect of masking the existence and acknowledgement of structural racism (Ahmed, 2012).

In the Australian context, in-common and universal approaches deal only with the type of violence that is thought of as gendered, rather than violence that is based on an intersection between gender, race and class. Clearly, gender is always at play in considerations of gender-based violence. However, using gender – and only gender – as a category through which to understand women's experience, leads us to a narrow definition of women's experience. Those experiences that are not shared, such as racism and gendered, racist violence, are marginalised and not readily understood as women's experience. This means that our understanding of women's experiences is synonymous with that of women who are defined by gender only, rather than by their intersection with other factors. Any experiences that fall outside of a gendered frame are therefore not included as representative of a 'universal' women's experience.

In other words, the experiences of women as a group and their oppression as women have been universalised from a centralised point, so that only the experiences of middle-class, Anglo-Australian women, become representative of the experiences of all women. This form of mainstreaming is further enabled by the invisibility of race and class privilege in our frameworks, which fails to recognise that Anglo-Australian, middle-class women also have a race and class (McIntosh, 1989). Such invisibilities flow on to our universal frameworks and strategies. Conversely, any woman other than an Anglo-Australian middle-class woman is thought of as having a specific experience of violence that cannot be generalised across to other women.

As Joshua Price has argued (2012), the conception of domestic violence as representative of violence against women provides an instructive example of the universalisation of women's experience. Violence against women that occurs in the nuclear family home, regardless of a woman's race, faith, migration status or class, is always included in policy definitions of violence against women. This is what Australian women have in common, and it is therefore at the very core of our understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence. In some cases, the term violence against women is used only to refer to family-based (or domestic) violence, without any further explanation or qualification. As Price has put it, domestic violence is often taken as representative of all violence against women, and as such often excludes other forms of violence to which marginalised women are subjected (Price, 2012).

Less securely placed in our definition of violence against women are other forms of violence – those that occur in public places, workplaces, on public transport, or in group accommodation. Racist and xenophobic violence directed towards Muslim women in public places, for example, is not always or automatically included in our definitions of violence against women, despite the fact that it is clearly a gendered act, as Muslim *women* are the target. Similarly, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace directed at immigrant women workers, even when, as is the case for nannies, housekeepers and domestic cooks, the workplace is the middle-class home, are also rarely included in violence against women policy and strategy (Bhattacharjee, 1997). Further, the assumption is often made in our definitions of violence that immigrant and refugee women are able to safely seek assistance from the state in the face of violence against them. Less understood is that the state itself, through policy, legislation and migration practices, is often implicated in racist and sexist violence (Price, 2012).

Difference is an important theoretical starting point for a fully integrated approach to diversity in policy and planning at all key stages of development and implementation. In order to avoid universalising from the experience of one group of privileged women, we need to start with the concept of difference *across* experience, rather than difference *from* a mainstreamed experience. The methodology of starting from the concept of difference

across women's experiences lends itself to the development of a more complex, intersectional understanding of gender, which generates a more diverse definition of what it means to be a woman. Importantly, a focus on difference, also needs to extend beyond the theoretical, to be incorporated throughout policy, strategies and actions, and it needs to include an analysis of the ways that structural disadvantage creates the conditions for women's experiences of gender-based violence.

Defining culture

An equally important concept that requires definition in primary prevention policy is 'culture'. In the field of violence prevention, the term culture is understood and used in at least two different ways. The first meaning of culture is a set of social norms, produced through a gendered normalisation process and promoted by the mass media, mainstream education, workplace and educational institutions that circumscribe behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. In this first meaning, culture is seen to belong to the mainstream, and is closely related to the creation and maintenance of hegemonic ideals (or patterns of practice) of masculinity and femininity, relationships between women and men, and gender equity. An example of the adoption within violence prevention programs of the first meaning of culture is the development of direct participation programs targeted at young people in secondary schools, which are aimed at changing attitudes, norms and beliefs about gender equality (VicHealth, 2007).

The second definition of culture is that which is generally understood to belong exclusively to "ethnic" or culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and refers to the norms and practices that operate within immigrant communities, and that can be thought of as specific to a particular group, for example, Italians, Greeks or Indians in Australia. These norms and practices are assumed to be different from the mainstream and dominant culture. An example of the adoption within violence prevention programs of the second definition of culture is a communication campaign conducted in south western and central Sydney which targeted the Arabic, Chinese, Tongan and Vietnamese communities in Sydney (Poljski, 2010).

Framing culture in these two ways has a direct impact on violence prevention approaches that combine the universal with a tailored approach: culturally-specific norms (the second definition) are addressed through tailored approaches, while cultural norms (the first, societal-level definition) are addressed through universal approaches. Strategies aimed at preventing violence against immigrant and refugee women tend to adopt the second definition of culture, an adoption that further marginalises the violence experienced by immigrant and refugee women. While the first definition of culture is mainstream, the second is marginal.

We suggest in this paper that consideration needs to be given to our understanding of culture in the development of primary prevention policy and frameworks. Beyond the need to be specific in our definitions of culture, we also need to take account of the contexts, histories, and representational forms through which cultures are understood and operate. For immigrant communities, both physically, and somewhat historically removed from their cultural homes, understandings of culture can become "mummified" (Bhattacharjee, 1992). This process often impacts most on women, insofar as women's roles, treatment and practices are so often taken to be the measure of a culture (Bhattacharjee, 1992). This is so, whether one is adhering to culture by upholding traditional gender roles, or estimating a culture's claim to being 'progressive' by their treatment of women: women are at the frontline of debates about culture, tradition and modernity. In this regard, "mummified" understandings of culture tend to lead to the framing of gendered violence as a battle between tradition and modernity, enacted on the terrain of gender subordination. The West

(or host society) is presumed to be progressive, democratic, civilised and feminist, and in contrast, immigrants are depicted as backward, barbaric, primitive and misogynist (Volpp, 2011).

In this same vein, as Leti Volpp (2011) has pointed out in the United States context, violence perpetrated by immigrant men is understood very differently from that perpetrated by white, non-immigrant American men. Explanations of violence perpetrated by immigrant or refugee men rely on a one-dimensional and limited understanding of the concept of culture. Specifically, violence is seen to stem from immigrant culture, rather than from individual pathology or from the gender subordination that is generally understood to lead to endemic violence against women (Volpp, 2011; see also Price, 2012). As Volpp (2011, p. 106) states:

Rather than position the immigrant as the disorderly and strange bearer of archaic traditions, we must recognise the role of racism, state policies, and material concerns in shaping immigrants' experiences of culture.

Volpp argues that all cultures are patriarchal, not more or less, but differently. We therefore need to pay attention to the particularity of women's relationships to specific patriarchies, as well as to geopolitical and economic relationships. Volpp (2011, pp. 101-2) states:

Cultural practices are multiple and experienced differently by individuals within any particular community. Culture is not made up of unchanging rituals that cement the subordinate location of women in a fixed and timeless system of social practices. Rather we must remember that myriad forms of power – the geopolitical, the structural, the economic – shape cultural practices.

In sum, rather than gauging the extent to which the same form of patriarchy may be measured across cultures, resulting in a limited answer to the unhelpful question of which culture is more patriarchal, we need to recognise instead how patriarchy operates differently across cultures, noting in particular the ways in which culture is mediated through structural factors, as well as the ways in which culture changes over time and context. In this regard, a more productive question might be: "How are women's cultural experiences of violence mediated through structural forms of oppression?" (Volpp, 2001).

Intersections of disadvantage

It is a common statement of fact that gender-based violence is experienced by women and girls across the world, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, migration status, race or class. This is an important starting point for understanding gender-based violence in ways that enable a comprehensive understanding of the causes, experiences and impacts of violence against women. It is equally important to acknowledge that different women experience violence differently, different forms of violence are experienced and the violence has different harms and consequences. There is no common experience of women. As Chandra Mohanty (2003) has shown, such an assertion leads us to re-focus our gaze, from a universalising one that reproduces marginality, to one which starts with local and marginalised experiences and gathers them together to work toward "specifying and illuminating the universal" (Mohanty, 2003).

Globally, intersectional and critical race theorists have shown that race and class disadvantage intersects with gender to contribute to violence against women. Intersectional approaches have been adopted to re-think violence against women, providing new insights into diverse definitions, contexts and experiences of violence. Intersectionality scholars have shown that gender inequality is not the primary factor determining violence against women. Rather, violence against women takes place in the intersections of systems of power and

oppression (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Gender itself should be seen as a site of complex and contested interactions, which cannot be understood outside of other forms of inequality. Patriarchy is one system of inequality that needs to be considered both alongside and in relation to other hierarchical forms of inequality such as racism and classism.

There is a range of structural factors that must be considered to fully understand immigrant and refugee women's experiences of gendered violence. These factors include the historical context of migration, race and class discrimination, as well as the circumstances brought about by migration and precarious visa status, limited employment options, educational opportunities, and language and cultural differences. In addition, stereotyped representations of immigrant and refugee women, and their communities and cultures, interplay with structural factors to impact on experience. All of these factors impact on the way that men enact violence, that immigrant and refugee women experience that violence, and on how the broader community, including police, courts, government, and social services, responds to violence occurring in immigrant and refugee communities.

In the historical and socio-political context, immigrants have been and continue to be accepted into Australia when there is a need to populate the country, with the primary aim of contributing to the economy. The visa points system, for both temporary and permanent visas, ensures that immigrants are young, productive, flexible and adaptable. Women in particular are seen to be responsible for production, as key workers in the service and manufacturing industries, as well as for the reproduction of consumers and future Australian workers (Haque, 2008). Citizenship and belonging, particularly for non-white, unskilled immigrants, are always conditional and precarious (Henry-Waring, 2008). In these ways, immigrant and refugee women "live outside the full realm of citizenship" (Price, 2012, p. 47) because they often lack the resources and the entitlements to fully participate in Australian society. Social and legal structures often make newly-arrived women more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in both the workplace and the home, particularly if their visa status is dependent on their spouse or employer (Poljski, 2010).

Immigrant and refugee women's negotiation of the social and familial also plays a part in their vulnerability to violence. While women can feel socially isolated if their family is based overseas, immigrant women are also more likely to feel the need to negotiate extended family and/or community involvement and investment in their personal relationships (Poljski, 2010). In this regard, immigrant and refugee women are more likely to return to a violent situation due to a combination of societal, familial and financial factors (Poljski, 2010). Moreover, services that assist women escaping domestic violence are more likely to be inaccessible or inappropriate for immigrant and refugee women (Murdolo, 2014) and may not acknowledge the complexities of forms of violence such as forced or early marriage (Siddiqui, 2013).

Representational forms are also an important factor in circumscribing immigrant and refugee women's experiences of gendered violence. Stereotyped representations in mainstream media of immigrant women and ethnic culture and community contribute to the ways in which the broader community thinks about and values immigrant women. For example, the racialised reporting of sexual assault of women from South East Asian backgrounds often relies on stereotypes of the compliant or hypersexualised Asian woman (Woang, 2008).

Finally, a structural approach should also lead us to think differently about culture, community and the way that the Australian population is constituted and described. Populations, whether defined as culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander or Anglo-Australian, do not live in discrete and unrelated communities set apart from one another. The immigrant and refugee population is not a cohesive or stand-alone entity within which a particular kind of sexism is enacted. Rather, the reality of most people's lives in Australia is that they interrelate with people from a range of backgrounds. People develop cross-cultural relationships, partnerships, and friendships within the everyday experiences and contexts of workplaces, educational institutions, sporting activities, and neighbourhoods. We must also take into account the culturally diverse families resulting from intermarriage, cross-cultural and transnational relationships, children born from such relationships, overseas adoption, and blended families. For instance, within the authors' small extended families, typical of many Australian families, there are Italian, Filipino, Greek, Chinese, Anglo-Australian, American and New Zealand members, as well as a third migrant generation with hybridised Greek-Italian, Chinese-Italian, Filipino-American, Filipino-Australian and Anglo-Australian-Italian identities.

Discussion of implications of findings for policy and practice

A nuanced and complex understanding of concepts such as difference, diversity, gender, and culture should frame our understanding of how women experience violence, but also what defines gender-based violence. Attention must be paid to the way that women's cultural experiences of violence are mediated through structural factors, understood in their specific historical, political and social context. Representational forms too, contribute to, and illustrate, the lesser value placed on immigrant and refugee women in our society.

Accordingly, such understandings frame decisions about how policies are developed, how resources are distributed, which populations are best to specifically target, and what it means when universal programs target the whole community. In the Australian context, current policies, strategies and programs that prevent violence against women are mostly assumed to be both diverse and universal, as they ostensibly take into account the diversity among women and thus reach and impact on all women. As seen with the National Plan (Council of Australian Governments, 2011), this is not necessarily the case. The diversity and inclusiveness of such programs may not be interpreted in the actual allocation of resources and implementation of programs.

The problem for immigrant and refugee women is bigger than culture in its narrow definition, and the solution therefore, must be bigger than changing cultural attitudes within immigrant and refugee communities. While immigrant and refugee communities must remain targets for primary prevention activity, we must also include, alongside primary prevention programs that target the general community from a range of cultural backgrounds, a consideration of the structural disadvantage that affects immigrant and refugee women. Racism, culture in all its complexity, stereotyped representations of immigrant communities as being backward, and class discrimination must all become the business of mainstream, universal, primary violence prevention. Resources must also be allocated to ensure that marginalised communities, and the diversity of concerns across the community, are included in mainstream prevention programs.

Bringing the margins to the centre: redefining gender equity

To return to our starting questions, an intersectional approach to violence against women first requires a different starting point, one which starts with diversity instead of commonality. Such an understanding may be developed by bringing the voices and experiences of marginalised women to the centre of analysis, rather than positioning them at the margins to be defined by their difference from the universalised centre. A starting point of diversity also needs to acknowledge that there is much we do not know about women's experiences of violence, and that researchers and policy makers are taking part in

a process of better understanding women's experiences in all their diversity. This process of learning starts with an understanding of local experience, by first asking how marginalised women experience violence, and then building a universal experience from this process of piecing together (Price, 2012; Mohanty, 2003). The picture that is built from this methodology is not a picture of centres and margins, but of many different experiences that make up the whole (Mohanty, 2003). This approach also builds a different definition of gender, women and gender inequality – one which is based on a more diverse and inclusive understanding of the specificities of women's experiences, and accordingly, requires rethinking our definition of gender-based violence by including forms of violence that have previously not been included.

Second, a policy or framework that adopts a diversity approach should have a stronger focus on the structural factors that impact on immigrant and refugee women, rather than just the cultural factors. The dynamics of racism and class-based discrimination contribute to a devaluing of immigrant and refugee women in our broader community, and a culture of violence against immigrant women in particular. The problem for immigrant and refugee women is not only immigrant and refugee men and their sexist attitudes toward women and girls, but also the racist and classist attitudes that are tolerated and perpetuated in our culture more broadly. Immigrant and refugee women are defined as being not only of less value than men, but also of less value than women from Anglo-Australian communities.

Rethinking community leadership

Immigrant and refugee women's leadership in primary prevention efforts is an important mechanism through which marginalised voices can be heard within the privileged universalised centre. Although it is important that we engage immigrant and refugee men and boys in primary prevention, it should be guided by the leadership of immigrant and refugee women. In this regard, the concepts of leadership and community leader need critical reflection.

Working with community leaders to help mobilise communities has become a common strategy in achieving social change, yet the gendered nature of this strategy is often overlooked. When community workers and researchers approach a community with a view to engagement, they may face a situation where the people who are the most accessible leaders are those who display a louder, more visible and acknowledged form of leadership, more likely to be men. Members of the community who exercise a quieter, less recognised form of influence, more likely to be women, remain unseen.

Given the relative low social status afforded to immigrant and refugee women in the community, it would be prudent to note the ways in which knowledge about communities has been built on male experience to suit men's interests. This type of reflection is crucial when engaging with immigrant and refugee community leaders, particularly when leaders from immigrant and refugee communities are less likely to be regarded as leaders (and by inference, therefore less valued) in the mainstream, Australian community.

As Amanda Sinclair (2014) has argued, our understanding of the concept of leadership is not a gender-free zone, prefigured as it is by relations of power and knowledge. Joy Damousi and Mary Tomsic have similarly argued that the dominant conception of leadership is of a masculine, heroic type of leadership, which silences and devalues other modes of leadership, often enacted by women. They ask, "what acts of leadership do we see, which go publicly unidentified as leadership?" (Damousi & Tomsic, 2014).

Stereotypes of immigrant and refugee communities as more patriarchal contribute to our assumptions that men are the leaders. In addition, it is important to remember that positions of power in most representative organisations are male dominated, and immigrant and refugee community organisations are no exception. Indeed, while immigrant and refugee women have been strong activists against violence against women in Australia, their work has remained largely acknowledged and undocumented (Murdolo, 2014), and they are often unlikely to be seen as the leaders in their communities.

Class differences within immigrant communities further complicate this gendered picture. As Bhattacharjee (1992) has shown in the case of Indian immigrant communities in the United States, middle-class immigrants have often been asked to represent their community, and to translate issues, cultural values and practices to those outside the community. Bhattacharjee (1992) notes that part of this process has involved the reinforcement of the middle-class group's universalised position, through the identification of gender subordination as a phenomenon that only exists among the 'others' in the community. This process, which Bhatterjee (1992) refers to as 'ex-nomination', means that the particular form of gender subordination that exists within the middle-class group remains invisible, while the form that is identified comes to stand in as a particularly Indian form of gender inequality (Bhattacharjee, 1992). A phenomenon which is not only class-bound, but also described from a particular middle-class perspective, is understood as forming a truth about gendered relationships in Indian immigrant communities.

Volpp (2011) has argued that an important strategy in developing interventions in preventing violence against women is to acknowledge and learn from the work that has gone before. In the specific case of immigrant and refugee communities and violence prevention, Volpp (2011) notes that immigrant women themselves have been working strategically in this space for many years, and it is immigrant women that should be sought for ideas about how to resolve dilemmas about working more appropriately.

Given the different ways in which culture is understood, immigrant women's leadership in primary prevention can avoid the reduction of immigrant women to their culture, and to ensure that they are understood in a more complex way through intersection with other identities. As Volpp (2011) reminds us, we should respect and acknowledge immigrant and refugee women as leaders and political agents in their own right and not assume that eliminating or changing cultural practices is inextricably linked to their capacity to achieve change.

As the previous sections have outlined, women's subordination is shaped by factors beyond community-specific cultural practices. Immigrant feminist activism should therefore focus on the various structural positions immigrant women hold in Australia as a way of firstly, breaking the false links made between gender subordination and traditional culture and secondly, in order to make visible the practices that might be marked as both modern and gender subordinating, and the activism of feminists within communities marked as traditional (Volpp, 2011).

The involvement of community leaders in primary prevention to achieve change is still highly gendered. From this perspective, we need to seek out and encourage the leadership of immigrant and refugee women. As Rehman, Kelly and Siddiqui (2013, p. 9) point out, immigrant women want 'equal rather than "special" treatment', which can be achieved through the provision of spaces and options provided by secular community-based women's organisations.

Incorporating intersectionality

Incorporating an intersectional approach across policy and frameworks can guard against a statement of diversity remaining a statement of intent without further implications. It is important to ensure that the programs, strategies and related actions that are adopted are appropriate and meaningful for the target groups, especially those that have been marginalised and previously overlooked. Specific policy initiatives must be developed in recognition of the specific and diverse inequalities experienced by immigrant and refugee women. Policy development thus requires a focus on women's particular social, political, legal, and economic status as not only women, but also as *immigrants* with varying state entitlements. Such a process also requires an examination of policy areas such as immigration and health, which remain sites of difference in violence against women primary prevention because they are not generally regarded as gendered. Immigrant women's visa status should be a mandatory consideration in policy development particularly in relation to access to healthcare and legal support.

A truly inclusive universal approach to prevent violence against immigrant and refugee women means interventions would be tailored and specific to the target communities. In practice, interventions would have a dual focus on changing attitudes and the broader factors that shape attitudes and behaviours. Salter, Carmody and Presterudstuen (2015) have highlighted that there is need to combine both normative and structural interventions as a way of circumventing the prevention paradox. Tailored interventions, such as direct participation programs, embedded within a redefined universal approach that recognises structural inequalities can provide a practical resolution to the paradox, where violence against women can increase if only standard interventions are in place.

Preventative actions in research, evaluation and monitoring also involve asking questions about what success and impact might look like. The measurement and analyses of progress would therefore require asking intersectional questions: if, for example, there are now more women in parliament, in community leadership roles, and/or acting as spokespeople for violence prevention, which women are they? And to what extent have their participation and contribution impacted on the status quo?

Implications of findings for the development of the framework

Building diversity into the development of all levels of the national framework, rather than only at certain points, such as in the articulation of specific population groups, or culturally-specific norms, can bring the voices and experiences of marginalised women to the centre of analysis. This means, for example, ensuring that workplace and educational settings that are targeted for action are relevant to immigrant and refugee communities, including, for example, blue-collar workplaces, English-language schools, soccer clinics and multilingual media. It also means ensuring that adequate consideration is given to equitable resource allocation for particularly marginalised groups that have previously been excluded from primary prevention programs.

Building the idea of difference *across* populations, rather than the idea of difference *from* a mainstream experience, requires that we re-think universal approaches, supplemented by tailored approaches. Instead, we should adopt an approach that addresses intersectional factors in all programs and strategies, combined with the flexibility of adapting programs to suit the specific characteristics of communities. This might mean, for example, that all programs would include strategies to combat the stereotypes of immigrant communities as backward and traditional, and of immigrant men as more violent. However, the way that programs approach this question would vary depending on the demographic make-up, age-group, educational level, and other specific factors in the targeted community or workplace.

Including a broader definition of violence into the national framework should take account of the different ways that immigrant and refugee women experience domestic violence, and the different forms of violence that they experience. While it is important to reinforce the feminist critique of privatised gendered violence, and the important strategy of bringing violence out of the private realm into the public sphere, this needs to be balanced with the understanding that the public/private distinction has different meanings for different women.

Similarly, clarity around definitions of the term culture – how the word is used, and what its different meanings are in different contexts – should be articulated in the national framework. For example, any reference to culture in the context of immigrant and refugee communities should be used in a complex way that recognises the impact of negative stereotypes of immigrant communities, and the ways that structural factors interact with cultural factors to circumscribe immigrant and refugee women's experiences of violence.

The national framework also needs to take adequate account of the structural factors that impact on women's experiences of gendered violence. These would include, for example, considerations of the ways that policy and legislation that is not generally thought of as relating to gendered violence, such as immigration and multiculturalism, may act as a barrier to gender equity, citizenship and the equal representation of immigrant and refugee women in public life. In addition, a structural approach would mean that programs take into account class and race (and other) disadvantage in their design, so that programs are appropriate and relevant, as well as accessible.

The principle of enhancing the leadership of women from immigrant and refugee communities should be built into the national framework as a central action. In addition, feminists from immigrant and refugee communities who have expertise in the area of gendered violence should be thought of as a powerful resource and their expertise harnessed in the engagement and understanding of gendered dynamics in their communities. The concept of using community leaders to engage immigrant and refugee communities should be critically examined, taking into account the power differentials within communities based on gender, class, age, education, generation, position and language.

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Critical gender theory, gender inequality and men's violence against women:

An Our Watch think piece paper

Bob Pease

Summary

The aim of this paper is understand the relationship between gender inequality and violence against women by interrogating the key concepts of 'gender', 'gender inequality' and 'violence against women'. While gender is understood in most policy documents addressing violence against women as men's and women's socialised identities, it is suggested that this represents an individualised conception of gender. Gender is more usefully understood as relational between men and women, as enacted by men and women, as institutionalised in social structures and as intersected with other social divisions of inequality. Gender equality and gender inequality tend to be measured by political and socio-economic indicators which do not address broader structures of inequality between men and women or the ideologies and practices of men which reproduce inequality.

The concept of coercive control is useful in understanding the dynamics of men's oppressive relations with women in the context of changes in structural levels of inequality. This concept helps to understand the paradoxical relationship between gender inequality and violence against women, where in the short term moves towards greater gender equality may lead to increases in violence against women as men engage in backlash responses. Furthermore, patriarchal power exercised by men and violence against women can persist in the context of gender equality, as evidenced by the experiences of the Nordic countries.

It is argued that a nuanced conceptualisation of patriarchy that accounts for a variety of patriarchal structures, intersections with other forms of inequality, patriarchal ideologies, men's peer group relations, men's sexist practices and men's psyches is required to understand the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women. These six factors provide the basis for an integrated feminist conceptual framework to guide violence prevention policy and practice.

Introduction and context

How does critical gender theory (feminist theory and critical studies of men and masculinities) inform understanding of the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women? What are the implications of this understanding for violence prevention policy and practice and the development of a national conceptual framework for the prevention of violence against women?

Within feminist and feminist-informed theories, violence against women is understood as being gendered and interconnected to gender inequalities in the wider society. Radical and socialist feminist theories explicitly name violence against women as violence perpetrated by men in the context of patriarchy (Walby, 1990; Hunnicutt, 2009; Dragiewicz, 2011). In the context of a backlash against feminism and resistance to the naming of patriarchy as the main source of men's violence against women, feminist language has been tempered and liberal feminist ideas have gained dominance. Equal opportunity policies and affirmative action within the state and gender mainstream approaches to addressing gender inequality have replaced radical and socialist feminism which were more grounded in social movement organising and community-based activism which made explicit demands on the state to implement more radical agendas for change.

Whereas previously feminism was seen as the major theoretical framework for understanding violence against women, it has recently been seen as a single-factor explanation and has been criticised for being unable to explain why the majority of men are not violent towards women (Dutton, 1994; Heise, 1998; Dutton and Nicholls, 2005; VicHealth, 2007).

In response, an ecological model has assumed primacy as the conceptual framework for understanding violence against women. In this model, violence against women is seen as being caused by the interaction of biological, economic, cultural, social and political factors rather than any single factor (Heise, 1998; World Health Organization, 2002; VicHealth, 2007). Within feminist-informed versions of this model, belief in rigid gender roles, male dominance, men's sense of entitlement and social norms promoting violence against women are seen as key determinants of violence against women, along with a wider range of non-gendered factors that operate at multiple levels of the social ecology (VicHealth, 2007).

The promotion of gender equality has been espoused as an important part of the prevention of violence against women for many years (World Health Organization, 2009; VicHealth, 2007; Wall, 2014). The premise has been that as gender inequality, measured by inequalities in employment, salaries and political participation, decreases, violence against women will also decrease. Wall (2014) argues that understanding the link between gender inequality and men's violence against women requires a multidimensional analysis. While gender equality is regarded as a key objective of violence against women prevention, Wall (2014) says that it is unclear which aspects of gender equality are most important and also how gender inequality relates to class and race inequality. Furthermore, it is unclear in the ecological model how gender inequality and rigid gender roles intersect with the multiplicity of other factors in perpetuating violence against women.

Non-feminist and anti-feminist writers claim that there is empirical support for a multitude of individual-level factors causing violence against women, including experience of violence in childhood, alcohol and drug use and personality disorders (Yodanis, 2004). From a feminist perspective, these individual-level factors must be understood in the context of a patriarchal society, rather than being seen as complementary determinants that are unconnected to structural gender inequalities.

There appears to be a high level of confusion about what it means to claim that violence is gendered and caused by gendered inequality (Dragiewicz, 2011). Also, many non-feminist commentators seem unconvinced by feminist claims about gender inequality as a major causal factor of violence.

This paper explores these issues from a critical gender theory perspective, drawing upon feminist theory, critical masculinity studies and intersectionality studies. There are a multiplicity of feminisms, a wide diversity of theoretical perspectives on men and masculinities and different theoretical ways of understanding social divisions and difference in men's and women's lives. This paper is influenced by critical theoretical understandings of these issues. Schwalbe (2014), in a recent book, summarises the difference between critical theory and other forms of theory by emphasising the relational, structural and discursive dimensions of lived experience and the importance of social transformation to address exploitation and oppression. What this means for violence prevention policies is explored by investigating the concepts of gender, gender equality and violence against women. It also involves addressing the following questions:

- What are the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women?

- How do changes in the prevalence rates of physical violence against women relate to changes in other forms of injustice against women?
- How do we understand the backlash hypothesis, where it is argued that in the short term, greater gender equality may contribute to higher levels of violence against women?
- How do the concepts of patriarchy, gender order, gender regimes and coercive control inform understanding of the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women?
- What can we learn about the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women from the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland?
- What are the links between gender inequality and other forms of hierarchy and what do they mean for men's violence against women in marginalised communities?
- How do gender inequality and men's violence against women relate to relations among and inequalities between men?
- What are the implications of this critical gender theory for violence prevention policy and practice?
- What are implications of critical gender theory for the development of a conceptual framework for the prevention of violence against women?

The concept of gender

To understand the links between gender inequality and violence against women, we need to understand what gender is. The concept of gender was originally adopted by feminists to distinguish between the biological features of sex and the culturally constructed characteristics of masculinity and femininity (Dragiewicz, 2008).

Thus, gender is often defined in policy documents as men's and women's socialised identities in contrast to the biological differences of sex that distinguish males from females. For example, Wall (2014: 3) defines gender as "the configuration of men's and women's identities and relationships rather than the biological differences of sex that are male and female". VicHealth (2007: 8) defines gender as "the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female at a particular point in time". The World Health Organization (cited in Irwin, 2010: 33) defines gender as "those characteristics of women and men which are socially constructed, whereas sex designates those characteristics that are biologically determined".

Dragiewicz (2008) notes that the terms gender and sex are often used interchangeably and that the terms are often conflated. Moi (1999) argues that in distinguishing between sex and gender, biologically essentialist understandings about women were replaced with gender essentialist understandings. Furthermore, in dismissing biological determinism, understandings of the body were also neglected.

Many of the references to gender in writing about violence against women are actually referring to sex differences, as in the case of "who hits who most often" in domestic violence situations. Fathers' rights advocates use this notion of gender as part of their claim that violence in the home is not a gender issue (Dragiewicz, 2008).

Htun (2005) notes that most people think that gender simply refers to women (and in some cases men). In other words, it is understood as an identity or an attribute of individuals rather than a set of practices involved in the reproduction of institutions and an attribute of social structures. Connell (2010) notes that gender is often understood simply as the categories men and women occupy in terms of sex roles or gender roles. Connell and others have developed critiques of sex role theory (Connell, 1995; Messner, 1997; Pease, 2007). A

major criticism of sex role theory is that it underemphasises the economic and political power that men exercise over women and cannot explain male domination or gender inequality (Pease, 2007).

Anderson (2005), drawing upon Risman (1998), usefully identifies three different approaches to gender: individualist, interactionist and structural. From an individualist perspective, masculinity and femininity are learned characteristics that men and women internalise into their identities. Anderson (2005) argues that restricting the definition of gender to social attributes of persons has allowed critiques of feminist analyses of violence as a gender issue to gain greater traction. If gender is only an attribute of individuals, there is a less persuasive case that violence against women is primarily a gender issue. For example, the gender symmetry arguments propagated by anti-feminist researchers rest upon an individualist conception of gender.

Interactionist approaches regard gender as a consequence of social interaction and enactment, where gender is an accomplishment. In this view, violence is one of the ways in which men construct their masculinity. This explains, in part, why men might resort to physical violence when their masculinity is challenged. Such a challenge could arise from unemployment or low paid work in comparison with higher paid work by female partners. Men who have access to greater economic resources may not have to resort to physical violence to control their partners. This understanding of gender as enacted by men can also explain men's violence against other men as well as violence against women (Anderson, 2005).

Thus, one of the key insights of critical gender theory is that gender is something that is enacted or done rather than a state of being (Fenstermaker and West, 2002). This enactment of gender must be located in the context of larger structures and social arrangements. The focus of concern is how this doing of gender reproduces these wider structures (Pease, 2010; Schwalbe, 2014). This notion captures the idea of gender as a process rather than as a category where gender reproduces unequal gender outcomes in policies and structures.

Structuralist approaches focus on the structural dimensions of gender, where gender is understood as a form of social structure within which men and women are embedded. Htun and Weldon (2010a: 5-6) define gender as "a constellation of institutions. It is constituted by rules, norms and practices. Gender is a feature of social structures and institutions more than human identity. It positions men and women in unequal relation of power, often intersecting (or combatting) with other institutions to uphold patterns of status hierarchy and economic inequality". In this view, men and women are located in structurally unequal gender relations that shape and constitute the experience of violence beyond who hits who how often.

Young (2000) argues that gender is comprised of a threefold gender structure which includes the status hierarchy between men and women, the sexual division of labour, and normative heterosexuality. To achieve gender equality in Young's view, we have to transform these structures which constrain women. Johnson et al. (cited in Gelb et al., 2012) identify four levels of gender, including gender identity, gender roles, gender relations and institutionalised gender, the latter denoting the power inequality between men and women in the social institutions of society.

Anderson (2005) maintained ten years ago that the vast majority of studies on gender and violence at that time relied upon an individualistic approach to gender, which may still be

the case. In a recent review of the use of the concept of gender in health promotion literature, Gelb et al. (2012) found that the relational complexity of gender and its intersections with other social divisions was rarely addressed. We have to move beyond individualistic approaches to gender to understand the complexity of the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women.

In this wider definition of gender, it may be more appropriate to use the term "gender order" rather than gender. Given that gender does not just include presentation of self, but also entails laws, cultural beliefs and collective practices (Schwalbe, 2014), this term captures the wider institutional dimensions of gender. Flood (2007: 235), drawing upon Connell (1987), defines a gender order as "the patterning of gender at the level of an entire society. This is differentiated from gender regimes which refer to 'the patterning of gender in given institutions' such as schools, workplaces or the state. Kelly (2005) notes that the language of gender orders or gender regimes has replaced the language of patriarchy in response to criticisms of the concept. However, the concept of patriarchy is an example of an unequal gender order where men dominate women and other men and, as argued later, this concept still has currency in understanding men's violence against women.

An expanded definition of gender as suggested here will avoid the depoliticising of gender current in many policies on violence against women. It will also redirect the focus of violence prevention policies and programs towards structural issues both in direct interventions and also how interventions at the other levels of the unequal gender order can contribute to transformation at the structural level.

The concept of gender equality

The concept of gender equality is a complex concept and furthermore the links between gender inequality and violence add another level of complexity. While it is generally agreed among feminists that gender inequality is a major source of women's oppression, there is considerable disagreement about the causes of gender inequality (Nooraddini, 2012).

Wall (2014: 3) defines gender equality as "equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and access to resources". Wall notes that gender equity is often used interchangeably with gender equality but she defines the former concept primarily as a pathway towards gender equality. The World Health Organization (2009: 3) defines gender equality as "Equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society at large".

Treating men and women equally in laws and policies developed by men may not address the subordinate position of women or the privileged position of men. McLellan (2012) argues that anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policies ignore structural inequality between men and women. Where men and women are treated as the same, the wider inequalities built into the system are ignored. For example, domestic violence is seen to take place between equals within a family.

Thus, the language of gender equality is often couched in terms of treating men and women equally within a patriarchal framework of meaning (Dragiewicz, 2011). Gelb and Palley (1996) differentiate between "role equity" and "role change" policies in their analysis of gender equality policies in the United States. They found that gender equity policies that granted women equal access to privileges available to men were easier to accomplish than those policies which aimed to transform the attributed roles of women.

Ferber (2007) says that backlash strategies have shifted from discriminatory laws to the appropriation of the language of equality. She argues that the promotion of formal equality

often ignores structural inequalities between men and women. Dragiewicz (2008) also observes that fathers' rights groups use the language of formal equality to argue that policies should be gender neutral.

Dragiewicz (2011) identifies the ways in which anti-feminist men's rights groups use the language of "equal rights" to advance a patriarchal men's agenda. Many men's rights advocates proclaim their support for what they call "equality feminism" which they set up against radical and other feminisms which are seen as women focused and anti-male (McLellan, 2012). If men's rights advocates proclaim their support for equality, the concept may have been corrupted. In McLellan's view, the concepts of gender and equality can be used in support of patriarchal interests.

Hence, it is recognised that the measurement of inequality is contentious and complex (Walby and Armstrong, 2010). There are conflicts in the definitions and operationalisation of inequality as a concept. Wall (2014) makes the point that we need to be clearer about which dimensions of gender inequality are most important in relation to violence against women. Hunnicutt (2009) suggests that the variability of results in measuring the relationship between gender inequality and violence against women may be due in part to the different ways of measuring gender equality.

Gender equality tends to be measured primarily by socio-economic indicators. For example, gender inequality is operationalised by Whaley (2001) on the basis of income levels between men and women, levels of labour force participation, gender ratios of executives and managers, and levels of educational attainment. Titterton (2006) draws upon the Gender Equality Index developed by Baron and Strauss (1987), where three dimensions of gender inequality are measured: socio-economic, political and legislative forms of inequality. Gubin (2004) also uses three major dimensions of inequality: inequalities in educational attainment, inequalities in workforce participation and unemployment, and inequalities in political participation, including representation in parliaments.

Bradley and Khor (1993) conceptualise women's inequality as comprising three dimensions: political, economic and social. In their view, all three dimensions are critical in analysing women's status. Furthermore, in this view, all three dimensions have both private and public domains. Htun and Weldon (2010b) argue that gender equality requires the transformation of the sexual division of labour where housework and child care are delegated to primarily to women and where men are expected to assume public responsibilities.

The implications of this interrogation of the concept of gender equality for the promotion of gender equality require that the structural dimensions of unequal gender relations in both the public and private domains need to be clearly explicated when formulating interventions. Otherwise, the equal treatment of men and women, so often referred to in policy documents, will not address the systemic inequalities in the structure of gender relations.

The concept of violence

Violence has a diversity of manifestations and meanings. Hearn (2012) proposes that this diversity is best recognised by pluralising violence to violences, as it is not just one thing. Violence can be defined narrowly in relation to physical and sexual violence as codified in legal definitions or it can be defined more widely in relation to non-physical forms of power, control and abuse (DeKeseredy, 2011).

Part of the problem of the narrow definition is that it is constructed as occurring as violent incidents (Hearn, 2012). Stark (2009) argues that defining violence as a specific incident of

physical assault has stalled the progress of the women's movement in ending violence against women. However, it has been noted by some commentators that including too many abusive and exploitative behaviours as forms of violence may lead to unintended outcomes (Stark, 2007; DeKeseredy, 2011).

Johnson (1995) differentiates between two types of violence: intimate terrorism involving men's use of coercive control and situational couple violence where supposedly the violence is mutual and there is no motive of coercive control. Johnson (1995) developed his typology in response to the conflicting research by feminists and family violence theorists. He has expanded his typology in recent years to include violent resistance by women against men in the context of men's ongoing violence and abuse (Johnson, 2008). This development of the typology has been useful for feminist practitioners in understanding women's use of violence in relationships (Mottram and Salter, 2015).

The premise underlying Johnson's distinction between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence is that discrete acts of violence can either be a part of coercive control or they can be differentiated from that and that it is possible to distinguish scientifically between these two types of violence. Furthermore, it assumes that external experts are better suited to make this distinction than the women victim/survivors themselves (Wangmann, 2011).

While Johnson (1995) says that he wants to defend feminist analyses, his typology reinforces the prevailing view that men's violence against women is primarily a relationship issue, as most violence against women is presented by many of those who use this typology as situational couple violence (Wangmann, 2011). Steegh (2005), for example, argues that most violence against women in the home is situational couple violence. Similarly, Dutton and Nicholls (2005) use Johnson's (1995) distinction between patriarchal terrorism where coercive control is present and what he then called "common couple violence", where supposedly there was no motive of control to challenge the feminist analysis of men's violence against women as being characterised by coercive control. They argue that only one in 200 men arrested for violence against their partner would be identified as a patriarchal terrorist. However, men do not need to be conscious of using violence instrumentally to control women for coercive control to take place. Also, the typology ignores structural gender inequality within which all violence by men against women occurs.

While Johnson cannot be held responsible for how other scholars and practitioners use his typology, the lack of analysis of structural inequality in gender relations lends support to lawyers defending violent men and family law judges making custody decisions (Steegh, 2005; Rathus, 2012). Rathus (2012), for example, illustrates the way in which court decisions drawing upon the typology have tended to locate almost all instances of family violence within the one category of situational couple violence. They fail to acknowledge the contested nature of the typology and the methodological concerns that have been raised about it.

Furthermore, Johnson does not examine the impact of coercive control where physical violence is not present. As Anderson (2008) notes, women experience numerous negative health outcomes from coercive control in the absence of physical violence and they are not likely to identify themselves as victims of violence. She argues that the acceptance of this typology has been premature.

Stark (2009) argues that it is important to distinguish violence from coercive control and that the latter is a particular form of injustice against women that is not captured by the

language of violence. Coercive control is often enacted by abusive men without resorting to physical assault. In Stark's view (2007), as societies move towards greater levels of equality, men resort to forms of coercion and control (which may or may not include physical assault) to regulate and dominate their female partners in the home. In contexts of greater levels of gender inequality at the political level, he argues that there may be less need for men to exert strategies of coercive control in the private realm because male power is consolidated by religious, cultural and political forms of inequality in the public realm. Thus coercive control is both shaped by women's equality at the public level but sustained by gender inequalities at the private level. Stark (2007) identifies this as a paradox. The gains made by women to live independently are also the basis of men's incentive to engage in coercive control.

Hunnicutt (2009) notes that it is the least powerful men who often feel the need to resort to violence to reassert their masculinity. More powerful men do not need violence as a strategy to control women or to confirm their masculinity, as their privileged position is reinforced in other ways. When gender inequalities are structurally entrenched, violence against women is not necessary to sustain gender inequality.

Price (2012) argues that the power and control wheel, which has been used extensively to describe diverse forms of violence against women, has contributed to the limited definition of violence against women as being only an interpersonal dynamic in the home. This power and control by the male partner is disconnected from the wider institutional and cultural supports for men's violence against women and consequently disconnects the private from the public. Price (2012) maintains that defining violence against women primarily as domestic violence hides the structural and institutional forms of violence related to law, the state and culture that women in marginalised communities experience. He notes that the state and state workers are sometimes perpetrators of violence against women.

Heise et al. (1994) differentiate between individual and societal forms of violence against women. While individual violence emphasises partner abuse and sexual assault, societal violence includes gender-biased laws, gender inequalities at the political level, structural dimensions of discrimination and patriarchal belief systems and human rights violations. In Donohoe's (2002) view, societal violence reproduces individual forms of violence. Furthermore, holding individual men fully responsible for their violence can feed into neoliberal notions of individual responsibility that is disconnected from wider social forces that construct men's violence (Hearn, 2012).

When violence against women is separated from gender inequality and patriarchy, it allows men's rights advocates and anti-feminist commentators to argue that gender does not matter and that there is no logical basis for privileging violence against women over other forms of violence (Stark, 2009). This means that in violence prevention policies and practices, violence against women must be framed as only one of the ways in which men and the institutions of patriarchy oppress women. Policies and practices also need to address coercive control, whether physical violence is present or not, and the wider structural and institutional forms of violence enacted in law, the state and culture.

Gender inequality and violence against women

There are numerous studies that provide empirical support for the feminist thesis that women will experience lower levels of violence in the context of being more equal to men in employment, education and income (Titterton, 2006; Whaley and Messner, 2002; Gubin, 2004; Yodanis, 2004). This is known as the ameliorative feminist thesis. Whaley and Messner

(2002) also note that greater gender equality reduces the motivation of men to enact all violence, not just violence directed towards women.

In contrast to the ameliorative feminist thesis, a number of feminist writers also posit a backlash thesis in moves towards gender equality (Whaley, 2001; Whaley et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2006) where men endeavour to keep women subordinated through violence. There is also empirical support for the backlash thesis (Martin et al., 2006). Moves towards greater gender equality do appear to generate a backlash of violence by men in particular circumstances.

Yodanis (2014) notes differences between women's overall status in society and violence against women and the levels of gender equality at the micro level of intimate relationships. In the latter, there is more evidence of men feeling threatened by their female partner's success and sometimes using physical violence against them to maintain their dependence. Furthermore, sexual violence against women can be a way in which men express their hostility towards women who step outside of traditional female roles (Whaley, 2001). In these instances, violence against women results from men's threatened egos.

Many men are likely to perceive a move towards greater gender equality as a threat to their interests and their sense of masculinity which is founded on gender inequality. As a result, they may enact violence against women as a way of sustaining or doing a dominant form of masculinity. Men may resist the loss of their privileges through the expression of hyper masculinity and the use of violence.

The empirical research thus demonstrates both positive and negative consequences for women's safety of greater gender equality. The key issue this raises is how we understand this contradiction. Under what circumstances will greater gender equality *lessen* men's violence against women and under what circumstances will it lead to *increases* in men's violence against women (Gubin, 2004)?

The backlash is seen by some as being a temporary unintended consequence of greater equality for women. Greater levels of gender inequality may lead to increased violence against women as men who are threatened by women's empowerment may use violence to reassert their dominance and control over women (Whaley, 2001). Whaley (2001) argues that backlash violence may occur initially when gender equality measures are achieved but this will reverse as time passes.

Whaley (2001) argues that there is a paradoxical relationship between gender inequality and violence against women. While discussing rape and sexual violence in particular, she notes that higher levels of violence against women have resulted initially from the gains made by women's demands for legal equality. Thus, in the short term at least, greater gender equality is said to lead to higher levels of sexual violence. In positing this link of course, it should not be interpreted as lessening the demands for gender equality. Rather, it suggests that interventions need to be targeted at men who feel their masculinity is under threat by women's empowerment.

Men's decreased earnings and/or unemployment create hostility for those men who hold traditional gendered attitudes about male dominance (McCloskey, 1996). For men in lower socio-economic classes, their frustration and oppression within the class hierarchy may lead to violence against women (Walby, 1990). If men lose power over women as a result of loss of power in the public realm, they may resort to physical violence to reassert their dominance.

The backlash hypothesis operates at the micro level of individual families, as well as the wider societal level of increased status of women. If individual men earn less than their female partners, it is hypothesised that they will be more likely to use violence in their relationships than when men have equal or greater income compared with their partners (Resko, 2014).

Whaley (2001) proposes a refined feminist theory of the links between gender inequality and violence against women that posits a short term backlash effect and a longer term ameliorative effect. The refined feminist theory developed by Whaley (2001) and Whaley et al. (2013) demonstrates that these two apparently contradictory consequences can be framed as complementary and form part of an integrated feminist theory of the links between gender inequality and violence against women.

It should be noted that men can use violence against women in the context of high gender inequality with little concern about punitive consequences (Whaley et al., 2013). High levels of gender inequality pose little threat to men. As a result, men do not need to use physical violence as a form of control over women. Legislative discrimination against women, patriarchal gender ideologies, institutionalised male privilege and structural barriers to women's full participation in society provide adequate forms of social control. This is why we need to locate men's violence against women as only one of the myriad of ways in which men oppress women.

The Nordic ideal and men's violence against women

What can we learn about the links between gender inequality and men's violence against women from the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, where gender equality policies are seen as international role models (Scott, 2014; Lindvert, 2002; Holter, 2011; Pringle et al., 2010; Eriksson and Pringle, 2005)?

Holter (2011) points out that while almost 90% of men and women in Norway agree that there should be equality between men and women in the division of domestic labour, workforce participation and income and decision-making in the home, less than 30% share equal responsibility in practice. Similarly, Eriksson and Pringle (2011) note that Sweden is not as uniformly positive for women as we are lead to believe. In the relatively gender equal society of Finland, Hearn and Niemi (2011) identify that patriarchal practices by men to further their gendered interests prevail in spite of the ideology of gender equality.

Pringle et al. (2010) identify that, notwithstanding the level of legislative gender equality in Nordic countries, men's violence against women remains an endemic problem. Eriksson and Pringle (2005) note that in spite of strong ideologies and legislative achievements of gender equality and high levels of women's involvement in the public sphere, men's violence against women and children remains a major problem that is equal to or greater than other Western countries. In a study carried out among European Union countries, the Nordic countries reported higher levels of violence against women than other member countries (TNS Opinion and Social, 2010). Nguyen (2014) suggests that one possible reason for these results is that women may feel freer to report such violence because there is less stigma. She also says that increased workforce participation of women may result in higher levels of sexual harassment.

Lindvert (2002) says that because the focus of gender equality policies in the Nordic countries was on discrimination in public life, violence against women was neglected as a focus of attention. She observes that the focus of gender equality policies in Sweden, for example, was on the politics of distribution, as distinct from the politics of recognition.

Eriksson (2015) also says that the focus of gender equality policies in Nordic countries focused mainly on women as citizens and workers, with attention given to political participation, labour force involvement, equal pay and shared unpaid work in the home. Less attention was given to women's bodily integrity and violence against women was not explicitly addressed until recently.

Kelly (2005), in commenting on the Nordic experience, says that violence against women has relative independence from other dimensions of gender inequality and therefore must be addressed separately as part of the project of promoting gender equality. Kelly (2005: 11) makes the point that violence against women "is both a cause and an outcome of women's inequality". The former notion that violence against women is a causal factor and/or a practice in the inequality of women is not as readily acknowledged in the violence prevention literature. In this view, gender equality cannot be achieved while men's violence against women still remains. This raises the question about the level of achievement of gender equality in Nordic countries where violence against women is still prevalent in spite of more traditional equality measures being in place.

Eriksson and Pringle (2005) point out that patriarchal power persists in the context of progressive gender equality policies. Eriksson (2015) suggests that part of the problem is that these countries are both gender equal and patriarchal simultaneously. The Nordic experience indicates the importance of locating men's violence against women and gender inequality in the wider context of patriarchy. It also means that it is important to recognise in violence prevention policies and practice that socio-economic indicators of equality in the public sphere are a necessary but insufficient precondition for the elimination of violence against women.

The concept of patriarchy

In Walby's (1990) view, we cannot understand violence against women outside of an understanding of patriarchy. Pease (2014a) noted Walby identified six sites of patriarchy for analysing different forms of gender inequality: household (where women's household labour is exploited by husbands and male partners); paid work (where women are excluded from high status jobs, receive less pay and are often employed in segregated sections of the labour force); the state (where there is a systematic bias in favour of men's interests); male violence (which is legitimated by the state); sexuality (where compulsory heterosexuality and sexual double standards reign); and cultural institutions (which represent women in negative ways in the media, religion and education). Walby (1990) argues that men's violence against women will persist as long as society is framed by gender inequality in each of these structures. She makes the point that we should focus on the *structures* of patriarchy rather than on the often used concept of sites.

DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2013) differentiate between social patriarchy involving men's domination at the societal level and familial patriarchy which refers to men's control of women in domestic settings. These two levels of patriarchy are interconnected and the interpersonal dynamics of men and women need to be considered in the macro level gender order. Much interrogation of gender power at the family level focuses on the interpersonal dynamics of men in relation to women outside of the patriarchal power structures in the wider society within which men and women are embedded (Yllo, 1984).

Those who are antagonistic to feminism argue that the concept of patriarchy does not explain men's violence against women. Dutton (1994) dismisses patriarchy as a single factor explanation for men's violence against women. He argues that only ecological theory with recognition of multiple systems levels of culture (macro system), sub-culture (exo system)

family (micro system) and the individual (ontology) can explain the multiple causes of violence against women. He further argues that if patriarchy is a cause of men's violence, then individual men cannot be held responsible for being violent. Heise (1998) also argues that feminism proposes a single factor explanation and is unable to explain why only a minority of men are violent towards women.

Tracy (2007) also uses the statistic of only a minority of men using physical violence against women as a form of evidence against the feminist analysis that violence against women is a result of patriarchy. In this view, the feminist analysis of patriarchy only applies to non-Western cultures that Tracy accepts may be patriarchal. In Tracy's view, because women in the Western world have more power than before, there must be other explanations for men's violence that have nothing to do with patriarchy.

The concept of patriarchy has thus been criticised because it is said that it cannot explain why only a minority of men use violence against women and that it fails to explain violence against men by both women and men (Hunnicut, 2009). Because the concept of patriarchy has been derailed by criticism from within and outside of feminism, men's domination and women's subordination have had to be presented in disguised language (Hunnicut, 2009). Thus, rather than talking about patriarchy, there is discussion about gender inequity, sexism, gender roles, dominant social norms, and traditional masculinity. However, this disguised language does not enable us to understand the links between various levels of patriarchy and men's violence against women.

Hunnicut (2009) advances a nuanced conceptualisation of patriarchy that accounts for a variety of patriarchal structures; understands how men are also situated in hierarchies with other men; acknowledges that patriarchal ideologies may continue even when greater gender equality has been achieved; and recognises other forms of hierarchy. She identifies patriarchy as operating at multiple levels including the macro level of structures of government, law and the market, the micro level of family and intimate relations and the intra-psychic level of being embedded within individual men. These multiple levels are in symbiotic relation to each other. Dragiewicz (2011) similarly identifies the cultural level where patriarchal ideologies define dominant gender norms, the community level reflected in discriminatory laws, the interpersonal level of family and the division of labour in the home and friendship relations between men where there is often peer support for men's violence against women.

Thus, it is important to recognise that patriarchy is not a single factor (Dragiewicz, 2011), as claimed by critics of the concept. Patriarchy operates at multiple levels that intersect with each other. The remainder of this paper investigates the various levels of patriarchy beyond the structural dimensions discussed earlier, as this provides important sites for intervention for preventing men's violence against women.

Patriarchal ideology and men's domination

Yodanis (2004) differentiates between the structural dimensions of inequality involving women's access to institutional positions of power and authority and ideological beliefs about the status of women. Hunnicutt (2009) also discusses the differences between the structural conditions of patriarchy and patriarchal ideologies, which she argues can often continue after gender equality has been achieved. Drawing upon the work of socialist feminists, she argues that the matrix of domination is such that structural changes toward gender equality may not necessarily lead to a lessening of patriarchal ideologies among men. Structural inequality is thus only one feature of patriarchy and attention must be directed at patriarchal ideologies as well. This means that social change movements must address both

structural and ideological dimensions of patriarchy simultaneously. While changing structural relations will modify patriarchal beliefs about gender and gender inequality, the core structure of beliefs may remain intact even in the context of increasing gender equality at the structural level (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

Numerous empirical studies indicate a link between sexist attitudes by men and the likelihood of engaging in violence against women (see Flood and Pease, 2009). What is less acknowledged in the community attitudes literature is the relationship between sexist attitudes and patriarchal ideology which sustains men's domination of women. Violence against women is justified not by free-floating attitudes of individuals clustered together as "community attitudes" but by patriarchal ideologies adhered to by men to support their dominant and privileged position.

Social norms and gender role attitudes are euphemisms for patriarchal ideology. Thus, it may be more useful to refer to traditional gender role attitudes as "hegemonic beliefs" (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Such beliefs are not only held by individuals but are also institutionalised in the structures and ideologies of public institutions. That is, they are embedded in organisations, laws and practices and thus reproduce gender inequality and men's dominance.

In most community attitudes research, people are categorised into two groups: patriarchal individuals who support men's domination of women, and egalitarians or feminist supportive individuals (Herzog and Oreg 2008). However, such classifications fail to capture negative attitudes towards women that are expressed in more socially acceptable forms. Herzog and Oreg (2008) argue that openly hostile and negative attitudes towards women have become stigmatised. However, rather than being replaced with egalitarian attitudes, sexism remains in the form of benevolent attitudes which still view women as inferior to men. Such attitudes, Herzog argues, support patriarchy in the same way that hostile attitudes towards women do.

Glick and Fiske (2001) also argue that traditional gender role attitudes are both hostile and benevolent in relation to women. While hostile sexism involves an antipathy toward women, benevolent sexism involves chivalry and protection of women who adopt traditional female roles. Benevolent sexism is also a form of prejudice and as such legitimates gender inequality and men's privilege. Barreto and Ellemers (2005) suggest that benevolent forms of sexism must be addressed in the project of promoting gender equality. However, they also note that such sexist prejudice is likely to be more difficult to change.

Benevolent attitudes by men about women may involve protective elements that may inhibit violence towards women. Allen et al. (2009) found that men who held benevolent sexist attitudes were less likely to perpetrate violence against women than men with less benevolent attitudes. Furthermore, women who conform to men's sexist expectations of them were less likely to experience violence than those women who challenge traditional gender roles which evoke hostile responses by men. Women who accept a subordinate status placate men.

There is a risk that such research can be seen as encouraging women's greater acceptance of traditional gender roles to avoid men's violence. Within the wider patriarchal ideology, women who challenge men's sexism can be blamed by sexist men for their partner's violence. However, what this research illustrates is the importance of targeting patriarchal ideologies about women that are internalised by men. This means that while challenging men's attitudes that support violence is insufficient on its own as a form of primary

prevention, attitudes are nevertheless an important part of violence prevention if they are able to move beyond the individual level of attitude formation to the wider institutional and public level of dominant ideologies.

Patriarchal peer support and men's domination

Christian (1994) argues that patriarchy has a generational dimension, where older men oppress younger men and boys. Other writers have also argued that inequality between men should be part of the definition of patriarchy. This implies that men's domination of men is a central element of men's oppression of women. Cabrera (2010) argues that to understand why men enact violence against women, we must understand how men are situated in relations of inequality between men.

Dominant forms of masculinity that are linked with men's violence against women are generated through men's relations with other men (Hearn and Whitehead, 2006). This means that patriarchy also subordinates men to other men. This is evident through studies of homosocial bonding (Flood, 2008), fratriarchy (Remy, 1990), mateship in Australia (Pease, 2001) and male peer support (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2014).

Flood (2008) argues that men's relationships with women are shaped by their peer relations with other men. The social bonds between men, known as homosociality, construct particular forms of masculinity that impact on women's lives through coercive sexuality and violence. Men's abusive practices with women are both a way of affirming a particular form of masculinity and a means of bonding with other men. Flood (2008) gives examples of watching table-top dancing, strip shows and pornographic movies and group visits to brothels as practices that reproduce the bonds between men.

Hearn and Whitehead (2006) apply these insights to men's violence against women. They argue that violence against women is a vehicle by which men locate themselves in relation to other men. Violence against women is thus a way in which men reproduce a particular form of masculine self. Whitehead (2005) argues that men demonstrate their manhood in relation to other men more than in relation to women. He notes that this also explains men's violence towards other men as well as violence towards women.

Towns and Terry (2012) undertook focus groups with men in New Zealand to explore the extent to which men would challenge their mate if they knew he was being violent to his female partner. All of the men spoke about the difficulty they experienced in challenging their male friends within the context of their mateship. As one man commented, it would "wreck the system of male bonding" (Towns and Terry, 2012: 13). The discomfort the men talked about in potentially challenging their mate was seen as a sufficient reason to discourage them from interfering in what they regarded as a private matter. Thus, the requirements and expectations of mateship discouraged the men from challenging their male friends and the consequences of this inaction was collusion with the violence their male friends were perpetrating.

The implications for violence prevention policy and practice are that male peer group cultures need to be targeted to demonstrate to men how their complicity in some forms of homosocial bonding reproduces a culture that allows men's violence against women to flourish.

The patriarchal male psyche

Hearn and Whitehead (2006) argue that to address men's violence against women, we need a theoretical framework that enables us to understand how men subjectively experience patriarchy. Hooks (2010) also argues that patriarchy is embedded in men's psyches. It involves intra-psychic processes that give meaning to men. Thus, this "psychological patriarchy" must be challenged alongside the material and discursive levels of patriarchy in the wider world.

Numerous studies demonstrate that men use violence to bolster their masculinity when other sources of confirmation are not available to them. This means that men need to construct their sense of self outside of frameworks of dominant masculinity so that violence is not equated with masculinity or manhood (Yllo, 1984). The key question is whether masculinity can be reconstructed to allow for a democratic and egalitarian subjectivity or whether such a subjectivity needs to break with notions of masculinity or manhood altogether (Pease, 2014).

Pease (2015) argued all men who are raised within a patriarchal society will be exposed to pressures about what it means to be a man and how men are expected to behave. Invariably, these pressures will be internalised and will shape men's attitudes and practices in relation to women. While some men may come to resist such pressures and seek to establish respectful and equal relationships with women, this will involve them "going against the grain". For many men, however, they may not be conscious of the extent to which the expectations of patriarchy have been internalised within their psyches. It is thus necessary for men to understand patriarchy and its influence on their lives if they are to find a way of challenging it.

This means that educative programs and workshops need to be developed that target men in workplaces, community groups and sporting organisations that raise men's awareness about the consequences of patriarchy for the lives of men, women and children.

Patriarchy and intersectional gender structures

Hunnicut (2009) notes that patriarchy is linked with other systems of inequality and must be theorised in relation to other forms of hierarchy such as race, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and geo-political location. Even in Walby's (1990) account 25 years ago, the importance of understanding the different forms of gender inequality across different ethnic and class groups was emphasised. Hence, any theory of patriarchy must recognise the specific forms of patriarchy defined by different cultures (Cabrera, 2010). This also entails understanding how racist, heterosexist and classist ideologies and practices perpetuate men's violence against women.

Thus, gender is always interconnected with other social divisions of inequality. Hearn (2012) talks about intersectional gender structures as a way of noting the links between gender and other social divisions. Acker (2009) uses the notion of inequality regimes to describe the intersectional gender barriers that produce patterns of inequality. For her, inequality regimes capture the intersections of gender, class and race that inhibit women's advancement towards gender equality. The concept of inequality regimes analyses the ways in which class, race and ethnicity intersect with gender to create inequalities at the level of institutions and organisations. If we focus only on gender imbalance in upper level positions or gender-based pay inequalities, we will not address the class-based inequalities and other social divisions which impact on many women.

Htun and Weldon (2010a) argue that addressing women's disadvantage and discrimination requires not only policies addressing women's position relative to men but also the differences and inequalities among women. Vieratis and Williams (2002) note that most gender equality research assumes that women are a homogeneous group and consequently it ignores the intersection of gender and race. Their empirical research in the United States demonstrates different consequences for white women of greater gender equality when compared to the experiences of black women.

Titterington (2006) argues that legislative equality may be less significant for women with limited financial resources. Class and other forms of marginalisation are important to consider because low-income or no-income women have less opportunity to leave a violent relationship (Hunnicut, 2009). It is clear that the impact of violence on women will vary depending upon their class, race, religion, age, ability/disability and other forms of social difference. Women are located in multiple systems of inequality.

The implications for violence prevention policy and practice are that the intersections between gender and other social divisions need to be clearly explicated so that gender is understood as being filtered through men's and women's other social characteristics.

Implications for policy and practice

The implication of critical gender theory for policy initiatives is to be mindful about the limits of what can be achieved by state-based policies and practices. For example, numerous commentators have discussed the limits of criminal justice responses in reducing men's violence and ensuring women's safety (Bumiller, 2008; Walklate, 2008; Howe, 2008; DeKeseredy, 2011; Harne and Radford, 2008; Larcombe, 2014). Barzilai (2004) says that the concept of patriarchy enables us to understand the limits of law reform in addressing violence against women because such reforms exist within the patriarchal state.

Public awareness campaigns have been seen to face similar limitations in transforming patriarchal social norms (Carmody, 2014; Larcombe, 2014; Harne and Radford, 2008). Campaigns appear to have more impact on increased reporting rates to police and greater demand for women's services than changing the attitudes of men (Harne and Radford, 2008).

Public health campaigns that define violence against women as a significant public health issue argue that violence can be prevented before it occurs (VicHealth, 2007). The premise of the public health approach is that primary prevention approaches in other health-related fields such as HIV transmission and smoking (Casey and Lindhorst, 2009) can be applied to violence prevention. As Jewkes (2002) notes, the causes of violence against women are more complex than the biological causes of a disease that can be objectively measured. Fletcher (2014) observes that the concept of primary prevention has its origins in a biomedical discourse. She notes the attempts to socialise it by removing explicit references to disease. However, the premise is that violence, like a disease, can be objectively assessed and prevented.

Many public health approaches have moved beyond the biomedical model and public health promotions to reduce smoking and HIV transmission, for example, embrace a social determinants of health approach that acknowledges gender and class inequality. However, it is argued here that men's violence against women is not comparable to these other public health problems and that primary prevention models to address these public health issues are not transferrable to tackling the underlying structural causes of men's violence against women.

Notwithstanding the limitations of state-based violence prevention initiatives, it is nevertheless important that the state formulate responses to violence that empower women and increase women's choices. While some of these initiatives are often referred to as tertiary responses (responding to violence after it occurs) rather than primary prevention responses (stopping violence before it occurs), such a distinction fails to acknowledge the importance of women's services in empowering women to become active agents in prevention work, as has been evident with the women's refuge movement.

In terms of specific policy initiatives from this analysis and the literature reviewed, state-based policies need to address changes in specific sites of patriarchy. This is what creating gender equality means in practical terms. Once we identify the structural changes required, it immediately raises the question of how we accomplish these significant social transformations. It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop detailed strategic interventions in each of these sites. Furthermore, the explicit naming of them is likely to create political resistance and there is not currently the political will to address these issues. Nevertheless, identifying the structural transformations in patriarchy required to end men's violence against women enables us to be mindful of the limitations of short term policies that fail to address the underlying structural causes of the problem.

In the longer term stopping men's violence against women must involve the following:

- Framing violence against women as a human rights violation and emphasising the abuse of women as a hate crime.

There is currently no enforcement mechanism for addressing human rights violations in Australia and hate crime legislation has been subject to sustained criticism. However, the translation of women's rights into the human rights discourse has provided an important framework for organising against violence against women at the international level. It is argued here that the human rights discourse can generate renewed activism at the social movement level and keep pressure on the state to address the fundamental causes of men's violence against women.

Challenging the sexual division of labour in the home that positions women as having the major responsibility for housework and child care.

Equalising family work has always been an important goal of the feminist project. Shared responsibility for child care and housework and a changed relationship to paid work and family life based on equal partnership has long been recognised as the alternative to unequal power and coercive control.

Promoting gender equality within the state apparatus and bureaucracy.

Ensuring greater representation of women in key decision-making bodies of the government and bureaucracy of the state is necessary to address the institutionalised male domination that currently pervades all levels of the Australian state.

Promoting gender equality in the workplace.

The paid workplace is a major source of gender inequality due to inequality in wages, occupational sex segregation and over-representation of women in casual and part-time work. To bring about workplace equality, we need to strengthen affirmative action and equal opportunity policies with minimum quotas for women (or maximum quotas for men)

to ensure that more women are appointed to senior management levels. Fathers will also need to be encouraged to shift away from the masculinist basis of paid full-time work.

Promoting the reconstruction of heterosexual relations on the basis of reciprocity rather than hierarchy.

We need to develop a vision of non-patriarchal sexuality that is consensual, equitable and free of violence and abuse. Models of partnership sexuality where men's sexual arousal is not based on the exercise of power and does not involve the emotional and sexual servicing by women need to be fostered.

Challenging the mainstream media that objectifies and sexualises women in movies, television, news media, video games and advertising.

This involves challenging the fantasy model of sex in pornography and sexual violence propaganda and raising men's awareness of the destructive effects of objectifying images of women on both women and men.

Challenging the cultural representation of women in the media, education and the church.

Challenging male-centric views of women will require a cultural transformation of patriarchal attitudes and values. Such cultural shifts need to be grounded in multi-faith and multicultural contexts and avoid the imposition of white Anglo values. However, at the same time, we need to be mindful of the ways in which culture and religion are used to justify patriarchal privilege and the violation of women's human rights.

The transformations articulated above are unlikely to be embraced by governments and communities in the short term and they will only be achieved when there is a large-scale shift in the patriarchal culture that is internalised in men's and women's subjectivities and identities. Meanwhile, there is a need for short term policies to address women's safety. This involves the following:

- increasing women's wages and welfare payments to single mothers to ensure that women have the financial capacity to leave violent and abusive men
- providing affordable child care to women and men to enable women to maintain employment
- increasing funding for specialist women's services that support women who have been abused and that assist them to leave their violent partners
- engaging men to challenge other men's sexism and violence (Stark, 2007; DeKeseredy, 2011; Dragiewicz, 2011; Bumiller, 2008; Harne and Radford, 2008).

Whatever policy initiatives are developed, they must be located within an analysis of patriarchy. Calling on the state to address gender inequality, male privilege and the structural bases of men's power is likely to meet with resistance. Also, challenging the basis of men's privilege is likely to fuel backlash responses by men's rights activists (Stark, 2007; Dragiewicz, 2011).

Such resistance should not lead to a compromising of the demands for cultural and structural change and it should not lead to trying to lessen the levels of defensiveness of men who have internalised a sense of entitlement in relation to women. Pease (2010) suggested that we need to develop pedagogical strategies of undoing privilege at structural, discursive, interactional and intra-psychic levels.

Historically, it was the women's movement in collaboration with survivors of men's violence that both lobbied the state to address the issue of men's violence against women and monitored state policies to ensure that they addressed women's interests (Stark, 2007). There needs to be a revitalisation of the women's movement.

In addition to the important work that is being done within the government and bureaucracies of the state, where feminism has become professionalised, there is a need to encourage, support and fund the development of women's community-based activism in civil society. Such activism is under threat as neoliberal governments impose restrictions on policy advocacy work arising out of funded direct service programs. Although, as the INCITE (2009) collective reminds us in its apt-titled anthology, "the revolution will not be funded". Thus social justice organisations will need to explore funding alternatives outside of the state.

Pease (2014a) noted that when Htun and Weldon (2012a) undertook a global comparative analysis of policies addressing violence against women across ten countries, they found that autonomous women's movements were more important than women in government in advancing the interests of women. Thus, if policy change towards gender equality and violence against women is to be effective, it must be located within the context of strong, autonomous women's movements that are applying ongoing pressure on the state. This analysis provides support for the view that autonomous women's movements are the main drivers of policy change because they generate ideas that are outside the discourses of a neoliberal state.

It is necessary to match this encouragement of women's activism with acknowledging the importance of men as allies to women against men's violence. It is important to encourage men to break their silence and get involved in profeminist campaigns against men's violence (DeKeseredy, 2011). While critical of the corporatisation of the White Ribbon Campaign (Pease, 2008), it is important to encourage men's social movement activism on this issue in alliance with the feminist movement.

Implications for development of the framework

Carlson (1984) argues that no one theoretical framework can analyse the multiple causal factors at different levels that impact on violence against women. She rejects the notion that some theories are right and others are wrong. Heise (1998), who shares a similar view, combines theoretical models. Wall (2014) argues that an ecological model enables the theoretical consideration of the diversity of influences on violence against women. Quadara and Wall (2012) also argue that the ecological model enables the conceptualisation of the interactive nature of the multiple causal factors in violence against women.

However, when Quadara and Wall (2012) list factors at the individual level (including alcohol and drug use, anti-social tendencies, childhood history of sexual abuse and witnessing family violence), the interpersonal level (including workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods) and the societal level (including government policies and laws and societal norms and cultural belief systems), they do not ground these in the context of overall theoretical understanding. Without an overarching theoretical framework, it is difficult to make coherent connections between the various levels. Carlson (1984) acknowledges that one major limitation of the ecological model is that it is unable to identify the appropriate weighting of the various causal factors.

Pease (2014a) argued the premises underpinning feminist analyses at the societal level in the ecological model are at odds with the premises underpinning psychological approaches

to personality factors at the individual level. A feminist analysis has relevance at all levels in terms of explaining patriarchal structural forces, patriarchal ideologies, men's peer support for patriarchy, men's sexist practices with women and men's internalised dominance. However, non-feminist psychological and systems approaches suggest alternative interventions to address violence against women. This means that because the ecological model does not construct a theoretically integrated conceptual framework, some discourses are likely to be promoted at the expense of others. This is often most evident when structural issues that are difficult to address are marginalised in intervention programs where more attention is focused on behavioural and attitudinal change interventions.

While adherents of the ecological model talk about the complexity of the causes of violence against women, they do not actually identify what they consider the main causes to be. Instead, they tend to talk about determinants of violence rather than causes and while gender inequality is presented as a major determinant, when it comes to prevention approaches, they tend to focus on the individual level of intervention. For example, Quadara and Wall (2012) state that primary prevention is primarily concerned with changing behaviour.

The premise of the ecological model is that the relationship between individuals and their societal context can be understood by reference to the principles informing biological ecology. Brofenbrenner's (1977) ecology of human development which informs the ecological approach purports to be a scientific study of the relationship between a human organism and environment in which it survives. In Brofenbrenner's view (1977: 518), "environmental structures and the processes taking place within and between them must be viewed as interdependent and must be analysed in systems terms". Stanger (2011: 168) defines an ecosystem of being "composed of the scientific observation of interactions, organisms and environments".

Stanger (2011) notes that ecosystem is used as a metaphor in various public discourses to describe interrelationships between humans and their cultural and political context. However, this is problematic because the ecosystem concepts of equilibrium, diversity and resilience fail to capture the dynamics between men and women under patriarchy. Stanger (2011) argues that political and economic discourses are not comparable to ecosystems in terms of their complexity.

It is clearly important to acknowledge multiple levels of causation for men's violence against women. However, an ecological model is neither the only nor the best model for incorporating these multiple levels of analysis. While some writers refer to what they call a feminist ecological model (Powell, 2014), a limitation of the ecological approach is that men's dominance is regarded as only a contributing variable to violence against women rather than as the central organising framework. It is a difference between regarding gender as one variable in a model versus developing a critical gender-centred theoretical framework that elucidates how violence against women occurs in a gendered social context with other social divisions such as class, race, sexuality, age, nationality and religion (Hunnicutt, 2009).

Feminist analyses recognise the importance of interrogating the intersections between gender and other social divisions. McPhail et al. (2007) develop an integrative feminist model that places gender in the centre of the analysis. That is, other theories are located within the feminist analysis rather than alongside it. In this way, other perspectives are used to complement and enrich the feminist framework rather than undermine it as some multifactorial analyses do.

Feminist analysis is not necessarily incommensurable with an ecological model and it may be possible to do feminist work within an ecological framework. It is rather that there is nothing specifically feminist about the model and it has lent itself equally to anti-feminist commentators and researchers (see, for example, Dutton, 1994; Dutton and Nicholls, 2005; Sliwka and Macdonald, 2005).

Any conceptual framework that aims to address men's violence against women should:

- move beyond the limitations of the ecological model identified in this paper and emphasise the centrality of gender as relational, enacted, institutionalised and intersected with other social divisions
- be theoretically integrated and internally coherent at multiple levels of intervention
- specify the main causes of men's violence against women and emphasise the primacy of structural factors
- clearly articulate six primary levels of intervention: men's structural power over women, the intersections of gender power and other forms of inequality, patriarchal ideology, men's peer support for violence against women, the exercise of coercive control in family life, and the patriarchal psyche of individual men.

This paper has endeavoured to make the case for a clearer conceptual understanding of gender, gender inequality and violence against women as the basis for an integrated framework for violence prevention and to give some substance to six levels of analysis, all of which need to be developed further.

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Intersectionality and the prevention of violence against women and their children: Informing a future framework to ensure inclusivity and relevance to all Australians

Susan Rees

Summary

Intersectionality is a construct which, at its core, focuses on multiple forms of injustice, power imbalance and social marginalisation as a way of understanding oppression. This paper applies the construct of intersectionality to examine factors and processes that may inform initiatives to prevent men's violence against women and their children in Australia. In the Australian context, factors that contribute to inequalities include gender, being of mainly non-English speaking background, ability, socio-economic status, and place. The intersectional approach underscores the simultaneous interaction between these multiple forces, rather than focusing on single inequalities on their own within each of these broad domains of oppression. A key issue that is emphasized by this conceptual framework is that, while gender inequality is at the core of the problem, the experience of men's violence against women may be mitigated or intensified by the aforementioned contextual and individual factors of place, ability, socio-economic status and age. Within this framework, a key issue is the heightened risk of violence against women from mainly non-English speaking backgrounds in marginalised communities, with women from refugee backgrounds being at particular risk due to the interaction of multiple forms of structural disadvantage specific to that group. The implications of this approach for policy and practice are explored, including an emphasis on power and privilege as core to both the source of and remedy for the problem; implicit is the recognition of the need for a diversity of women's voices to be heard when seeking solutions to preventing men's violence against women.

Introduction

This paper aims to review, document and analyse core theory and relevant empirical work relating to the concept of intersectionality and its potential for informing an Australian national framework to prevent violence against women and their children. The paper identifies the meta-categories of relevance to the analysis, in particular, gender, populations from mainly non-English speaking backgrounds, socio-economic status, and geographical place of residency.

The importance of identifying and responding to social and cultural diversity has been acknowledged in past formulations of models and frameworks aimed at preventing violence against women. The intersectional perspective brings to attention, however, the concern that key components of diversity have too often been considered as independent, single or selective categories for analysis. For example, there is a tendency to confine the focus to gender, socio-economic status or mainly non-English speaking backgrounds in isolation. Intersectionality offers a framework to consider simultaneous interactions amongst different categories, giving emphasis to the systems and processes of oppression and domination that shape key domains such as racism, sexism and discrimination based on poverty, ability or place of residence.

This paper provides:

- an overview of the intersectional perspective
- an overview of a focused intersectional approach that is relevant to advancing the task of preventing violence against women and their children
- an overview of five meta-categories identified as most significant to understanding and preventing violence against women in Australian, and a demonstration of their application within the intersectional model
- a summary of the advantages and limits of an intersectional approach in advancing strategies for the prevention of violence against women and their children.

The paper refers to women only, with the assumption that preventing violence against women will protect their children from the associated risk of harm. Children exposed to violence perpetrated against their mothers may be at risk of emotional and physical harm, disability, homelessness, lifetime adversity and intergenerational violence ([Kitzmann et al., 2003](#); [Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009](#); [Stith et al., 2000](#); [Wolfe et al., 2003](#)).

What is meant by intersectionality?

Intersectionality was defined by Crenshaw ([1991](#)) who drew on concepts that were brought to the fore by the Black Feminist movement in the United States of America in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The underlying notion was that to understand oppression fully, it is vital to analyse simultaneous interactions amongst a multiplicity of forces that shape social identity, including gender, race, ethnicity and class. The construct of intersectionality was later extended to include the domains of sexuality, geography (or place), age, ability, immigration status and religion ([Hankivsky, Cormier, & De Merich, 2009](#)).

There has been a diversity of theoretical, analytical and empirical applications of intersectionality across a range of disciplines, including feminism, women's studies, economics, political science, geography, criminology and public health. In spite of this diverse application, there is a remarkable level of consistency in the adherence to the core perspective, that is, a focus on examining issues of injustice, power inequalities and social marginalisation at the individual and institutional level. An intersectional analysis is based on identifying social stratifications (referred to interchangeably as categories and identities), such as socio-economic status, mainly non-English speaking background and gender, that contribute to systems of oppression and that therefore require attention and solutions in policy and practice ([Hankivsky et al., 2009](#)). In its application, intersectional analysis invariably draws attention to these categories as they structure interactions and opportunities, as well as to core constructs of consciousness, ideology and forms of resistance ([Brah & Phoenix, 2013](#)).

Women's unequal power status and male domination, although universal, may be experienced differently by those who face varying combinations of oppression and inequality (Collins, 1998). According to this perspective, men's violence against women is not a monolithic and consistently manifest phenomenon; rather its expression, meaning and nature are shaped by factors including but not limited to gender, culture, class and race (Bograd, 1999). General theory is vital to informing inquiry and translation into practice, but models that are undefined risk overlooking the diverse experiences and realities of women living in distinctive historical, social and cultural settings. In particular, there is a real risk that policies derived from general precepts in which dominant voices prevail will lack contextual resonance or relevance amongst the diversity of populations that make up a pluralist society. In terms of informing theory, a unitary approach applying race theory or feminist theory may resonate with many women, but it may also generate resentment and alienation

amongst Indigenous or “non-Western” women (Daly, 2008). Indigenous women, for example, have argued that the feminist framework has encouraged mainstream leaders to confer middle-class, white feminist identities on non-mainstream women activists (Moreton-Robinson, 2000). Even when theory takes diversity into account, if the accompanying theorising does not extend beyond the superficial, it will do little to counter the prevailing white logic that pervades the discourse in addressing violence against women (Moreton-Robinson, 2000).

Immigrant women activists and services in Australia stand out in their consistency in articulating the importance of culture and migrant identity as powerful forces in understanding violence against women ([Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance, 2012](#)). The intersectional approach offers a framework to demonstrate and articulate the simultaneous effects of a multiplicity of forces leading to violence in diverse contexts. For example, men intending to use violence in a relationship often seek to isolate women ([Jewkes, 2002](#)), a situation that makes the refugee experience particularly insecure. Refugee women experience additional and unique forms of isolation arising from challenges such as mastering the mainstream language, lack of adequate social supports, and fears related to their own and their families’ security of residency.

An intersectional analysis stresses the importance of identifying both the similarities and differences in the patterns of men’s violence against women according to the diversity of cultural and social settings ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)). Some areas of commonality that transcend particular cultures or social conditions include community mores that portray an acceptance of violence against women and the generally unequal social status of women. Even these commonalities, however, are expressed and manifest differently according to culture, levels and type of stressors associated with migration, and extent of cultural dissonance within families in relation to the dominant society of the new country. Recognition of culture-specific explanations of what constitutes violence, and under what conditions it may also be culturally legitimised are of vital importance in formulating prevention strategies that are congruent with each population ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#); [Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005](#)).

Nevertheless, a balance needs to be struck between seeking explanations for violence against women primarily in factors associated with cultural diversity or socio-economic status ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)). If “difference” is adopted as the over-riding yardstick, there is a risk of inadvertently promoting quasi-racist or classist ideologies that attribute violence against women to the particularities of “others” and “other” communities ([Crenshaw, 1991](#); [B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)). In that sense, it is vital not to overlook the reality that attitudes supporting, condoning and/or excusing violence against women cross cultural and social boundaries ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#); [Vichealth, 2014](#)).

The intersectional framework ensures that against a backdrop of universal factors that motivate violence against women, consideration needs to be given to the multiplicity of identities that contribute to its structural roots and need to be considered in the design and implementation of effective preventive strategies. Domains of oppression and patriarchy need to be considered as they intersect with gender and other identities. Identifying multiple forms and expressions of masculinity that contribute to the causal chain is also vital to understanding factors that lead men to perpetrate violence ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)).

The theory: More than a sum of its parts

Hancock (2007b, p. 64) noted that “Intersectionality stands ontologically between reductionist research that blindly seeks only the generalisable and particularised research so specialised that it cannot contribute to theory”.

There is a risk in generating multiple categories of oppression (or identities) by fracturing larger categories into an exponentially increasing number of smaller units of study. Such intersectional process ultimately can be paralysing because of its complexity ([Hancock, 2007b](#)). Maintaining the emphasis on what are considered to be the fundamental categories such as gender, mainly non-English speaking background and socio-economic status sharpens the focus on the core forces resulting in violence.

An important premise of an intersectional approach is that “different dimensions of social life cannot be separated into discrete or pure strands” ([Brah & Phoenix, 2013](#), p. 76). The economic, political, cultural, subjective and experiential lives of individuals intersect to create a whole that is more than the sum of its parts ([Hankivsky et al., 2009](#)). Research methodologies that focus on unitary or even multivariate analysis are not able to capture this dynamic and holistic aspect of the intersectional model because conventional approaches treat variables as fixed, not taking into account the dynamic nature of the interaction that leads to iterative changes in the variables themselves, which is consistent with an iterative feedback or cybernetic model (Von Bertalanffy, 1969). In rural Australia, categories such as race, gender and socio-economic status may have different meanings and impacts, particularly as they interact with each other in a context that is ever-changing. For example, the occurrence of drought may impact on the socio-economic status of the family, increase women’s social isolation as others leave the area, and impact on the male sense of masculinity as the breadwinner, a combination of factors that together increase risk of violence against partners. Factors such as cultural isolation and customary differences would manifest differently again for women who have arrived as migrants to live in conservative rural areas that are traditionally Anglo-Australian ([Carrington, McIntosh, Hogg, & Scott, 2013](#); [Enarson, 1999](#)). It is important therefore to recognise that individual and social group identities are constructed, developed and negotiated within their particular social locations and require examination as unique intersections in establishing the overall pattern of oppression in each setting. The implication is that intersectional analysis is grounded in an “experience-based epistemology” which assumes that humans are shaped by interlocking forms of oppression that are located in time and place ([Simien, 2007](#)). At the same time, the tension that invariably arises is that preventive strategies at a national level need to be general enough to apply across contexts and communities, a challenge that requires creativity to ensure the flexibility required to engage populations with unique sets of identities. As such, the intersectional framework may be particularly useful in offering a framework for anticipating and analysing the extent to which general preventive strategies are likely to achieve sufficient flexibility and breadth to address populations in which there are differences in the dynamic relationship between categories of, for example, gender, socio-economic status and race.

Debate has centred on the terminology used in the intersectional approach, particularly the terms “identity”, “social categories” and “forms of oppression” ([Yuval-Davis, 2006](#)). In this paper, the terms are often conflated or applied interchangeably depending on the context. In this paper social categories are viewed as being connected to inequalities and these play a role in shaping identities. Structural factors include hegemonic (ideas, cultures and practices) as well as social institutions. Perhaps of more importance, however, is that these terms of identities, inequalities and categories refer to constructs that are not static or

reified but are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in different forms according to the particularities of the histories and situations of individuals and populations ([Hankivsky et al., 2009](#)).

Power and privilege

An analysis of the sources of power rather than axes or intersections of oppression is most revealing of the locus of entitlement and privilege ([Dhamoon, 2010](#); [B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)). Focusing on power and privilege facilitates an exploration of the intersections of the dominant forms of oppression, their dynamic nature and institutional foundations ([Ferree, 2009](#); [Hancock, 2007b](#); [McCall, 2005](#)). In addition, this focus avoids a superficial and static use of the term intersectionality, a tendency that has drawn criticism ([Carastathis, 2014](#)). Rather than identifying points of intersection, this approach sees the dimensions of inequality, or sources of power and privilege, themselves as dynamic and in ever-changing, mutually constituted relationships with each other ([Ferree, 2009](#); [Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2012](#)).

Exploring the intersections in the context of preventing violence against women and their children

There is clearly a range of relevant intersecting factors in the lives of women at a population level in Australia. Some of these factors serve to undermine the safety and rights of women and some serve to provide them with agency or empowerment. This paper focuses on the meta-social inequalities of marginalisation in the Australian context to include gender, mainly non-English speaking background, place, ability and socio-economic status. A meta-social inequality or a meta-inequality in this paper refers to a large composite category that encompasses a range of interlinked although somewhat heterogeneous dimensions. Each meta-category embodies shared factors among its constituent elements that allow for a level of generalisable analysis and criticism of inequality in the context of violence against women. Although this paper emphasises the commonalities within meta-categories, some reference is also made to areas of diversity amongst constituent elements.

Including women's voices and targeting structural factors in preventing violence against women and their children

Clearly, intersectionality when applied to violence against women recognises the critical importance of addressing hegemonic, structural factors such as sexism and gender inequality, racism and economic privilege, as well as incorporating the often dissonant voice of women from diverse, and often ignored, social locations and cultural backgrounds. At times however women may not want to challenge the structural factors identified by scholars and policy makers (Mann & Grimes, 2001). For example, a refugee woman who has lived through war and conflict-related disruption may be particularly reluctant to risk further family disturbance by involving the police in the case of violence from her partner.

Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argue that both institutional and individual approaches are necessary to liberate women from the risks of male violence against women. It is, however, too simple to assume that the participation of women will lead directly to fundamental change in itself, as this would deny different political positions taken by women, and at times conflicting hegemonic dynamics within feminism ([Verloo, 2005](#)). For prevention of violence against women to be effective, however, a diversity of women's voices needs to be heard. To be effective, the prevention of violence against women should include a dual strategy of challenging the political structures and values that perpetuate it, but also a policy of empowerment to ensure a space for "non-hegemonic actors" to define and redefine the prevention agenda ([Fraser, 1997](#); [Verloo, 2005](#)). The embodiment of multiple inequalities,

and women's capacities to identify and reshape oppressive dynamics, also needs to be recognised, and promoted ([Krieger, 2005](#)).

A discussion of each meta-inequality in this paper incorporates an exploration of the contextual factors as a process to demonstrate how each is defined as a risk in its own right, as well as how it coalesces in a matrix of mutually shaping, interlocking sites for oppression and risk of violence against women. Each section is therefore necessarily imbued with meta-theoretical reflections on intersectionality and how each meta-inequality can relate to and shapes each other.

Gender, mainly non-English speaking background, ability, socio-economic status and place

Hancock (2007a) constructively identifies and explores the political significance of each category while demonstrating its intersection with others in shaping *risk* of violence against women. Similarly, the intersectional approach applied in this paper changes the relationship between the categories of investigation from one that is determined *a priori* to one of empirical investigation, that is, a structural analysis of power and inequality in a particular context; and posits an interactive, mutually constitutive relationship among these categories in which race (or mainly non-English speaking background) and gender (or other categories) play a role in the shaping of institutional and individual factors, and the relationships between them.

Age

Age is a critically important category in an intersectional analysis of violence against women. The mean average first exposure for women to gender-based violence is 12 years of age, and adolescent girls are at high risk of first abuse from their partners ([Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004](#); [Rees et al., 2011](#); [Rees et al., 2014](#)). Intergenerational effects are evident, including transmission of risk of victimisation among women or perpetration of abuse among men following exposure to violence at a population level. This may direct attention towards prevention aimed at the family and in particular protecting children from violence ([Stith et al., 2000](#)).

It is also noteworthy that women in senior age categories in national surveys report lower lifetime rates of violence from partners. This may in part reflect a tendency toward denial, or a different understanding of abuse in that age category, factors that should be considered in designing prevention strategies.

Gender

Bob Pease (2015) has reviewed gender in detail, but gender is the overarching and essential factor shaping each irreducibly interconnected intersectional location. Gender is a structural factor which intersects with racism, culture and economic privilege in shaping the risk of violence against women. Gendered norms position women as being at greater risk of violence perpetrated by men who assume and benefit from socially legitimised power and the right to exploit it. The acceptability of men's violence against women plays an important part in shaping the social environment in which the victims of violence are embedded, which, depending on progress in changing societal mores, contributes either to the perpetuation or reduction of levels of violence against women and children in our societies over time ([Gracia & Herrero, 2006](#); [Powell, 2014](#)). For all these reasons, there are cogent arguments in favour of challenging the foundations of patriarchy and men's assumed right to social and cultural privilege, regardless of how that constellation manifests and is shaped by other forms of oppression, given that it represents the core factor that needs to be addressed in reducing rates of violence against women ([Flood & Pease, 2009](#); [B. Pease, 2010](#)). An intersectional analysis brings to the discourse the knowledge that while privilege

and subordination are at the core of the problem, gender as a risk factor is shaped by socio-economic status, age, ability, place and migration status.

While men's violence is universally damaging and in many countries prohibited, women in situations of socio-economic privilege have access to more resources to avoid the problem and/or to seek remedies through knowledge, support and services. Education and employment confer further protection on women ([Vyas & Watts, 2009](#); [Yodanis, 2004](#)), although even these advantages are modified by contextual factors.

At an individual and household level, economic development and poverty reduction may have protective impacts on intimate partner violence. Nevertheless context specific factors influence whether financial autonomy is protective or associated with increased risk. A meta-analysis of studies from low and medium income countries indicated that household assets and women's higher education were generally protective against partner violence, however evidence of protection from violence associated with women's involvement in income generation was not clear ([Vyas & Watts, 2009](#)). In Australia evidence suggests that immigrant and refugee women may be victimised by male partners when they take up new educational or employment opportunities in the country of settlement (Rees and Pease, 2011; Rees et al., 2011; Hickman et al., 2004).

Pease (2010) argues that privilege, as the opposite side of oppression, has received insufficient attention in both critical theories and in the practices of social change. As a result, dominant groups have been allowed to reinforce their dominance. Pease (2010) points out that while the vast majority of people may be oppressed on one level many are also privileged on another.

Mainly non-English speaking background

Australia is a culturally diverse country. In 2011, the Australian Census of Population and Housing revealed that over a quarter (26%) of Australia's population was born overseas and a further one fifth (20%) had at least one overseas-born parent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). National studies examining prevalence of violence against women have not adequately addressed the challenge of providing accurate estimates of violence against women from communities that are mainly non-English speaking. Prevalence estimates in national data in Australia show similar or lower levels of violence against women from mainly non-English speaking backgrounds, but under-reporting and sampling may have introduced biases into the findings ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013](#); [Mouzos & Makkai, 2004](#); [Rees et al., 2011](#)).

There is emerging evidence that the migrant and refugee experience may be associated with distinctive risk factors for violence against women ([Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance, 2012](#); [Erez, Adelman, & Gregory, 2008](#); [Ghafournia, 2011](#); [B. Pease & Rees, 2011](#); [Rees & Pease, 2007](#)). Stresses that have been identified include ([Catani, 2010](#); [Jewkes, 2002](#); [Poljski, 2011](#); [Rees & Pease, 2007](#)):

- difficulty with English-language acquisition, which in turn interferes with communication, and adds to isolation and fear
- poor integration and lack of access to culturally appropriate support and legal services
- isolation from extended family, support groups and culture of origin
- insecurity related to residency status, creating an opportunity for male control and abuse

- acculturation stress, particularly a disjuncture between traditional and cultural expectations of gendered roles that are in conflict with gendered norms in the country of settlement
- male unemployment that challenges traditional masculine identity
- exposure to war trauma and the role of traumatic stress reactions that increase resort to violence.

Recent studies show that in Australia, attitudes that may support or condone violence against women may prevail in some mainly non-English speaking background communities ([Vicehealth, 2014](#)). Nevertheless the expression of attitudes supporting gender inequality does not in itself translate into the enactment of patriarchal practices or violence ([B. Pease & Rees, 2008](#)). It is also vital to understand that attitudes condoning violence against women vary within and across communities including Australian-born populations, changing over time and context. Settlement environments designed to attenuate the likelihood for men's violence against mainly non-English speaking background women may include ensuring families and communities can maintain economic stability and pervasive social support following migration ([Rees & Silove, 2011](#)). Reducing fear and isolation associated with insecure migration status, access to supportive interpreters, and information about rights on migration status and domestic violence provisions in immigration law are centrally important to violence prevention.

Ability

Physical, intellectual and mental health impairments all pose risk for women of experiencing violence by male partners. Abuse of male power is at its most potent when women are rendered vulnerable as a result of the social structures that generate or emphasise disability. Disability in this context is construed as resulting from disabling social, environmental and attitudinal barriers, and violence against women with a disability is considered yet another structural factor that requires eradication ([Howe, 2000](#)). Viewed from that perspective, social change and violence against women with a disability, as against women from diverse cultural backgrounds, is about the eradication of structural forms of oppression that deny women's full ability to challenge it. This contrasts strongly with the dominant "medical" construction of disability, which emphasises overcoming or conquering disability through medical treatment or promoting individual strength ([Howe, 2000](#)). The social construction of disability is critical to understanding the nature and extent of violence against people with disabilities and in particular women with disabilities. Men with a propensity for violence are known to target women who are less able to protect themselves from abuse. Coker emphasised that abusive men do not act alone and are often directly or indirectly aided by family, peers, and larger cultural forces that take advantage of women's vulnerabilities, including deficits in physical ability, material resources and social power ([D. Coker, 1999](#); [Koss, 2000](#)). Empirical evidence supports this supposition, including from a representative sample of adults in the United States, which shows that women with physical or mental health impairments were significantly associated with higher risk of intimate partner violence than women who did not report similar impairments ([Casteel, Martin, Smith, Gurka, & Kupper, 2008](#); [Hahn, McCormick, Silverman, Robinson, & Koenen, 2014](#)).

A literature review (Howe, 2000) reports a general lack of empirical data in Australia on violence against women with disabilities. There is some Australian evidence, however, that supports international data in showing that women with intellectual disabilities are more likely to be abused than other women ([Howe, 2000](#); [Woodlock et al., 2014](#)). Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) reports that between 20 and 30% of women who experienced sexual assault had some physical or intellectual disability ([Australian Bureau of Statistics,](#)

[2004](#); [Department of Families, 2011](#)). The experiences of sexual assault among women from refugee or migrant backgrounds who also live with disability have not been adequately examined or documented.

The impact of mental disorder as a disability may have been overlooked as another form of disadvantage that places women at risk of violence. A representative population study in Australia found that gender-based violence was associated with mood, anxiety (including post-traumatic stress disorder) and substance use disorders – with higher rates of disorder in those women experiencing the greatest exposure to violence ([Rees et al., 2011](#); [Rees et al., 2014](#)). The Australian Assessment of Quality of Life Instrument was used to assess quality of life and the 12-item version World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule (WHODAS 2.0) and the Short-Form Disability Module were used to assess a multidimensional construct of disability based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health ([Rees et al., 2011](#)). The study found that women who had experienced gender-based violence reported a higher level of severity and comorbidity of mental disorder and associated general disability and impaired quality of life ([Rees et al., 2011](#)). The findings, however, also showed that one third of women experienced a mental disorder prior to their first experience of gender-based violence. These findings suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between physical, intellectual and mental health impairments and violence against women; each factor is both a cause and an outcome of the other, creating the potential for a vicious cycle of abuse and disability. Prevention strategies, therefore, need to consider structural factors that increase risk of violence and that generate and perpetuate social disability of all types and how these two sets of factors intersect.

Socio-economic status

Poverty and associated stressors have been shown to contribute to men's violence against women and their children. This association is observed across a diversity of countries. Specifically, rates of violence against women are higher in low and medium income countries than in the high income countries that include the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom ([World Health Organization, 2013](#)). When the prevalence data are grouped by the 21 regions used in the 2010 Global Burden of Disease study, the highest rates of violence against women were found in central sub-Saharan Africa, where two thirds of ever-partnered women have experienced intimate partner violence. The only regions that fell below the global average were the high income regions of Western Europe (19.3%), North America (21.3%), Central Asia (22.9%) and Southern Latin America (23.7%). The remaining countries had a prevalence of 26% or higher ([World Health Organization, 2013](#)).

It is important to note that even in below-average prevalence regions, between one quarter and one fifth of ever-partnered women have experienced partner violence ([World Health Organization, 2013](#)). No country has a truly "low" rate of violence against women. In addition, when within country data are examined in high income countries, the lower-socio economic groups have a higher prevalence of men's violence against women ([Benson, Fox, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2003](#); [Finney & Britain, 2006](#)). It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that although violence occurs in all socio-economic groups, it is more frequent and severe in lower income groups, including in Australia ([Rees et al., 2011](#)).

Socio-economic status is not, however, the singular over-riding factor as shown by inconsistent prevalence rates in countries of similar national income ([Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013](#); [Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006](#)). It seems evident that socio-economic status interacts with other factors such as patriarchal attitudes and racism in generating differences in rates of violence against women across societies.

Violence against women also leads to socio-economic duress. Violence from male partners is the main cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia ([Nunan, 2009](#)).

Violence against women impacts women's physical and psychological health ([A. L. Coker et al., 2002](#); [Rees et al., 2011](#); [Trevillion, Oram, Feder, & Howard, 2012](#)), which in turn affects women's employability and therefore their financial stability. Social support from family and friends converges with access to socio-economic resources in conferring protection against both risk of violence and in curtailing the abuse once it has occurred. Women with these assets have the resources, support and options to prevent themselves becoming homeless, sliding into extreme poverty or feeling emotionally and economically reliant on the abuser ([Renzetti, 2009](#)).

Nevertheless family and friends may not be able to offer much in the way of tangible assistance to a survivor, particularly if their own financial circumstances are precarious. Traditional family values and beliefs related to female roles can also increase pressure on women to remain in violent relationships. In addition, because it may be customary to solve problems within the family, a woman from a refugee or migrant background may not consider approaching the formal system to manage abuse ([Bui & Morash, 1999](#)). These examples underscore the importance of recognising the role of the wider social context in which violence occurs in designing prevention strategies.

Stress may play a role in mediating the relationship between poverty and intimate partner violence ([Jewkes, Fulu, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013](#); [Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002](#)). Unemployment amongst men whose identity is strongly tied to being the dominant income earner impacts the male sense of power and control, increasing risk of violence. Paradoxically, as indicated, migrant women who enjoy new employment opportunities in the country of settlement may be at greater risk of violence because of resentment by partners who are unemployed and whose masculine identity is threatened by the reversal of traditional breadwinner roles ([Van Hightower, Gorton, & DeMoss, 2000](#)).

The association between male partner violence and situations in which males have lower status, or fewer resources than their female partner, may be understood in the context of what constitutes prevailing notions of successful manhood and weakened male identity ([Sandberg, 2013](#)). Culture and ethnicity as well as general societal mores play a role in determining the strength of these perceptions. Norms of male dominance have also been used to explain why domestic violence rates are higher, or are reported more often, in communities and neighbourhoods characterised by economic disadvantage compared with more economically stable or affluent communities and neighbourhoods. The social and structural contexts in which people live help shape their values and norms, including gender norms. This observation has led some researchers to hypothesise that unemployed and underemployed men who live in neighbourhoods of concentrated economic disadvantage may experience high levels of stress because they cannot achieve the type of masculine success most valued in our patriarchal culture, for example, as represented by financial success and independence ([Sandberg, 2013](#)). The unfortunate consequence may be that such men express and measure their masculine success by asserting their dominance in the home by enacting violence against women (Benson et al., 2004; Raghavan, Mennerich, Sexton & James, 200). In support of that contention, there is evidence that violent men as well as those disenfranchised by economic failure may associate with one another in male peer support networks that collectively devalue women and regard them as legitimate victims who deserve physical and sexual abuse (DeKeseredy, Alvi, Schwartz & Tomaszewski, 2003). Therefore, while financial independence in general offers women greater protection against violence, the intersection of a range of other factors determines the extent of the

protection conferred and whether, in some contexts, a paradoxical effect of increased violence eventuates.

Place

Data on violence against women in rural areas is limited, and where it is reported it is largely from the United States, Canada and Australia. There is some contradictory evidence on the prevalence of violence against women in rural locations ([Sandberg, 2013](#)), but the majority of studies, including those from Australia, indicate a higher prevalence of abuse than among women living in urban settings ([Sandberg, 2013](#); [WESNET, 2000](#)). In 2000, the Women's Services Network undertook a literature review and examination of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program data to report on violence against women in rural Australia ([WESNET, 2000](#)). The overall conclusion was that available data on the whole indicates a higher prevalence of domestic violence in rural and remote communities than in metropolitan settings ([Parliament of Australia, 2006](#); [WESNET, 2000](#)).

In considering rural-urban differences, it needs to be acknowledged that there is great variation in the geographical and related factors that impact on violence risk to women across a vast and diverse Australian landscape. Key issues that are common to these settings, however, are geographic isolation, socio-economic inequality and lack of anonymity.

The most common definition of rurality is of sparsely populated regions with low population density ([Sandberg, 2013](#)). Over two-thirds (69%) of Australians live in major cities, one in five (20%) live in inner regional areas, one in ten (9%) in outer regional areas and around one in forty (2.3%) live in remote or very remote areas (1.5% remote and 0.8% very remote). (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2010).

Geographic isolation in these contexts comprises emotional, social and physical elements. Some male perpetrators of violence against women deliberately seek out places of residence to match these characteristics in order to achieve greater control over their partners. Conversely, the closer proximity to family and friends offered by rural life may afford some protection for women, the double-edged sword that was identified by Lanier and Maume (2009). However, women who live in fear of abuse, or are being abused, are less likely to confide in their social networks in rural areas ([DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2009](#); [Sandberg, 2013](#)). Isolation may increase the women's sense of emotional seclusion, feelings of hopelessness and/or symptoms of depression, factors that together increase women's vulnerability to violence ([Trevillion et al., 2012](#)).

Australian Bureau of Statistics data (2010) has revealed differences in socio-economic status among urban, rural and remote areas. People living in the most disadvantaged locations were over-represented in smaller towns and remote areas. The capacity of women to achieve financial independence, often a protective factor against men's violence, is also limited by high rates of unemployment and fewer vocational opportunities in these localities, a problem that is particularly true for Indigenous women ([Australian Human Rights Commission, 2008](#); [Sandberg, 2013](#)).

Services and welfare infrastructure are relatively poorly resourced in rural areas, particularly the most remote locations ([Eastman & Bunch, 2007](#)). The problem applies to a range of services, including education and welfare, police, legal and court infrastructure, and the availability and accessibility of women's shelters ([Coorey, 1990](#); [New South Wales Government, 2013](#); [WESNET, 2000](#)). Specialist skills and knowledge in these services also tend to be lacking, including those that convey or champion a violence prevention message.

Sandberg (2013) identified a special form of social control that pervades smaller communities in sparsely populated areas and increases risk of violence against women. Seeking help often means confiding in someone that the woman knows personally, for example, in the workplace or professionally. Due to the small size of the community, professionals are very likely to be familiar with the violent partner, posing major challenges for confidentiality, partiality and hence the safety for women following disclosure. The most extreme situation, but one that is not unusual, is when perpetrators are friends or close associates of law enforcement or legal officials ([WESNET, 2000](#)). Clearly systems and organisations communicating explicit messages that oppose men's violence against women and their children undermine the potential for violent men to feel supported or legitimised within these unchallenged contexts.

An intersectional insight into minority status in rural areas: migrants and Indigenous populations

In 2011, 82% of the overseas-born population lived in capital cities compared with 66% of all people in Australia ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011](#)). Nevertheless, migrant status still needs to be recognised as a risk for violence against women in places outside metropolitan cities. The intersection of geographic factors, ethnicity and increased risk of racism may create conditions of extreme isolation for some migrant women living in rural locations ([Baum, 1999](#)). Insecurity of residency in Australia, both at the personal and family level, may add to the fear women experience about divulging domestic violence to authorities ([Poljski, 2011](#)). Knowledge of legal rights, social services and supports is also limited by lack of access to interpreter services or the skills to learn the English language.

Almost half (49.5%) of the Indigenous population in Australia lived in Outer Regional, Remote and Very Remote areas combined, compared with 13% of the total Australian population ([Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011](#)). Indigenous women are at increased risk of violence perpetrated by male partners ([Australian Human Rights Commission, 2008](#)).

Although this key area of Indigenous women is covered by Cox (2015), the intersectional model is of particular relevance to this population, specifically in the interplay of the effects of marginalisation, racism, isolation, rurality, low socio-economic status and lack of anonymity on the Indigenous Australian population.

An intersectional insight into remote mining towns

Families living in remote mining towns in Australia constitute a specific sociological group living under unique geographical and sociocultural circumstances ([Sharma & Rees, 2007](#)). Isolation from friends and relatives and limited social resources and opportunities for family members of mine workers are some of the distinct disadvantages of these towns. The mining industry is known, however, to offer workers relatively high remuneration. Research by Sharma and Rees (2007) indicated that mining work practices and the high proportion of men in mining jobs help promote a patriarchal culture within the community and the family marginalising women to a secondary status and increasing their risk of violence and poor mental health.

Policy and practice within an intersectional framework

Policy and practice to prevent violence against women and their children located within an intersectional framework will have several features:

- It includes an informing theory for violence prevention with an intersectional foundation. Unequal gender power relations and associated social norms are central to addressing violence against women and girls; however policy must include the adoption

of a holistic and dynamic framework that admits the multiple contributing categories of relevance both to understanding and to preventing violence against women and their children.

- It avoids stereotypes and static constructs by encouraging recognition of the tension that exists between the commonalities and particularities in evaluating key categories such as gender, mainly non-English speaking background and socio-economic status both between and within different communities.
- It emphasises the importance of addressing key categories such as racism, gender, socio-economic stratification and place simultaneously, recognising that these forces interact in a multiplicity of ways in shaping the prevalence, nature, and perceptions of violence against women, as well as individual and collective resistances, motivations, capacity and actions to address the problem.
- It recognises that a systematic and inclusive method for the identification of specific subpopulations for targeted interventions is needed to underpin the development of an effective prevention framework.
- It reflects the importance of maintaining a critical focus on inequalities in power and privilege as core to both the source of and remedy for the problem. It examines racism, classism and sexism as core socially constructed features that perpetuate violence against women and their children.
- It understands that the voices and perspectives of women from within and across populations may not always reflect the same ideological critique of the dominant inequalities. On this basis it may be indicative of an intersectional approach that policy and practice reflects divergent ideological positions.
- It ensures that prevention is informed by rigorous empirical studies undertaken with identified at risk groups and tailored to address the particular factors affecting violence against women and girls in multiple given contexts.
- It acknowledges that limitations in research methods may compel investigators to impose a *reductionist approach* by studying each component such as racism, gender, and class in *relative isolation*; but insisting that the products of research always need to be re-integrated into a comprehensive and dynamic framework in order to understand fully how each category interacts with others in shaping risk of violence.
- It recognises that while *unitary* or even *multiple* (or multivariate) variable models applied in conventional research tend to render categories as *static*, the intersectional framework emphasises the *dynamic nature* of both the categories and the whole that it produces. For example, racism in the 1960s is different in its form, content and impact from racism in 2015. Similarly, racism, class and gender and their interactions, may have a different meaning in rural and inner city metropolitan Australia. Ethnicity and migration status may play very different roles in pathways to violence for first and second generation migrant women. Cultural change is slow and uneven within families and across generations. This emphasises that issues of time, place and perceptions need to be taken into account in designing effective prevention programs that are meaningful and therefore have an impact on diverse communities. It also means that research and prevention practice need to proceed in a tight feedback loop to ensure that both reflect a relevant and dynamic mix of factors that are truly contemporary in characterising the problem of violence against women.
- It acknowledges that no single methodology of research can match the epistemological criteria, or foundation of knowledge and beliefs, of the intersectional model. As such, the model remains a theoretical (or idealised) framework that is both normative and teleological or goal oriented: it specifies what knowledge is needed to design an effective preventive strategy that is applicable to all members of a diverse population. In

that sense, it provides a measure that constantly reminds us of the gap between what we know and what we need to know, providing the motivation to expand methodologies to generate the knowledge that will allow prevention strategies to become increasingly firmly based on sound evidence ([Bauer, 2014](#)).

Implications for development of a framework

There are several implications for the development of a national framework to prevent violence against women and their children.

- Coordinated prevention activities within an ecological model that operates in and across multiple levels, across sectors and over various timeframes are more likely to address the diverse factors necessary to prevent violence against women and their children.
- An intersectional prevention framework will reflect and embrace social, cultural and economic diversity, difference and inclusion.
- An intersectional prevention framework may reflect different and at times contradictory language and embodied meanings.
- A systematic and inclusive method to identify specific subpopulations for development, implementation and monitoring of the prevention framework will be required. Populations may change over time and an empirical approach will enhance the likelihood of accurate identification.

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Futures Methodologies and Implications for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

A Think Piece

Fae Robinson

Principal Consultant and Futurist

PDF Management Services Pty Ltd

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PDF Management Services Pty Ltd
ABN 38 086 882 626
PO Box 143 Highpoint Maribyrnong VIC
3032
P 1300 727 002 **F** 03 6278 3418
E pdf@pdfmanagement.com.au
www.pdfmanagement.com.au

Abstract

This paper shows how futures methods can throw new light on women's experience of violence and the practice that could end it. It demonstrates how expanding into new kinds of knowledge can inform novel conclusions about, and new action for, achieving the social transformation inherent in ending gender-based violence.

The core theme of the paper is that *how* we think influences *what* we do – that our knowing efforts are complicit in our conclusions. Thinking models, tools and methods from futures studies are introduced to stimulate and deepen understanding and widen the range of opportunities for action.

By using tools to reinterpret the past, contest the present and create alternative futures, futures studies challenge established ways of knowing and stimulate thinkers and knowers to ask questions that result in the possibility of a different present. The paper employs a critical approach (problematising issues not criticising them) to the *status quo*, providing a range of theoretical, developmental and practical frameworks that illuminate the futures perspective.

Thinking about change

Recent research and strategy documents including VicHealth (2007), Office of Women's Policy (2009) and Council of Australian Governments (2011) have described and explained the root causes of violence against women as unequal power relationships between women and men; adherence to rigid gender roles and stereotypes; and broad cultures of violence. These are further described as being subject to norms, beliefs and attitudes that pervade female/male relationships. These identified causes require change at a social, cultural, institutional and individual level.

However, not all change is the same. Heifetz (1994) explores ideas about technical and adaptive problems, which informs the nature of the response needed to achieve the desired change. Some problems "are *technical* in the sense that we know already how to respond to them" (Heifetz 1994, p. 71). While technical problems are not necessarily easy or unimportant, there is usually knowledge and understanding of what to do and how to do it and reasonable expectations that governments will fix the problems.

Heifetz (1994) notes many problems, such as poverty at home and abroad, racial prejudice and drug abuse, are adaptive – that is, they do not yet have adequate responses. Heifetz 1994 (p. 72) explains:

No clear expertise can be found, no single sage has general credibility, no established procedure will suffice. Stresses build up and produce a sense of urgency among certain groups within society and sometimes throughout society. In these situations, our inclination to look to authority may generate inappropriate dependencies.

Stopping violence against women is arguably an adaptive problem which has attracted a largely technical solution in Australia, where governments are taking action by committing to a public health approach (Walden & Wall 2014) described as "organised measures... to prevent disease, promote health, and prolong life among the population as a whole" (World Health Organization 2015). The challenging and entrenched nature of the root causes of violence against women suggests that further expertise or different thinking is needed to open up options for different solutions to achieve a future without gender-based violence.

Thinking about knowledge

Futures tools and methodologies have the capacity to support researchers, policy makers and social innovators to challenge conventional ways of thinking and knowing and engage in a fundamental and systemic reconceptualisation (Slaughter 1999). Critical futures, in particular, offer the opportunity to better understand how a category of thought has become the principal mode of discourse and, in so doing, open up spaces where new thought is possible and new ways of navigating the future are presented.

Critical futures models and tools help to problematise current ways we understand and analyse the world, and because action is embedded in what we know, expand the options available for solving adaptive problems. Using critical futures methods involves framing questions about dominant ways of thinking and knowing to peel back the foundational ideas that give them currency. In preventing violence against women, it would involve “turning the analytic gaze” (Inayatullah 2004, p. 26) on ourselves and asking critical questions about the public health and primary prevention model that leads contemporary thinking in preventing violence against women and their children.

Habermas’ theory of cognitive interests

One way of turning our gaze on how we think about ending violence against women is to apply Jurgen Habermas’ theory of cognitive interests (Habermas 1972). Habermas divides the way we come to know into three categories: the technical interest, the practical interest and the emancipatory interest. Each of the interests is linked to a specific mode of inquiry that influences the way we view and review knowledge: the technical interest is based in empirical analytical thought; the practical interest in historical interpretive thought; and the emancipatory interest in critically oriented thought (McCarthy 1984).

The *Framework to guide primary prevention of violence against women* developed by VicHealth (2007) has been influential in the development of public health and primary prevention policy and informing action in Australia. Applying Habermas’ theory suggests that the majority of proposed preventative actions generated from this approach are based on technical knowledge acquired through evidence derived from empirical and analytic research. The type of research and the evidence produced define a set of rules for instrumental action by others, providing a level of control that preserves the integrity of the policy model of public health. This poses a risk that public health practitioners become complicit in generating only technical knowledge and creating a world narrowed by observation of it, attention to it, and interaction with it (McGilchrist 2009).

Some of the preventative actions which have flowed from VicHealth’s 2007 framework could also be described as practical, that is they are derived from an interpretive mode of inquiry. This mode is not so much about setting rules, but about communication and understanding, which are grounded in language and culture. It is a more inclusive, interactive mode of knowledge acquisition and attempts to clarify understanding between people based on dialogue and negotiation.

Habermas does not denigrate the technical mode of inquiry, but raises concerns when it is considered “the *only* type of truly legitimate knowledge, and hence the standard by which all knowledge is measured” (Slaughter 1999, p. 216). Habermas’ layered approach encourages inquirers to consider all modes of inquiry in their acquisition of knowledge and to appraise their values and interests in the process. Fundamental to Habermas’ theory is that the pursuit of knowledge cannot be separated from the values and interests of the inquirer (Fisher 2002) and it is impossible to conceive of the world as a universe of facts independent of the knower.

At this stage of development, the emancipatory interest appears to be missing from the prevention approach, despite gender equality and the implication of emancipating women being a key underlying driver of gender-based violence prevention. The emancipatory interest relates to power and the challenge for those involved in ending violence against women and their children is dependency on, and constraints imposed by, the support provided by those in power, particularly governments. Governments are representative of the very institutions and structures that need to change to achieve gender equality and to end gender-based violence. This creates a tension and limits the freedom of those seeking social transformation, true gender equality and resource and power sharing. The entrenched gender bias of social, cultural and political institutions also risks leaving women out of a meaningful discourse about the need for change. This critical layer of inquiry provides the opportunity to critique the dominant model and its relationship to power in a way that opens up alternatives for action.

Habermas' theory invites policy makers, activists, thinkers and educators to consider a broader range of choices in the pursuit of social change using a critical mode of inquiry together with the empirical and analytical and interpretive modes. It encourages a critical appraisal of the cultural and power relationships that support unequal gender relationships, bias and stereotypes, and contributes to new opportunities for research, policy and action.

A summary of Habermas' theory as it might relate to strategies identified by VicHealth (2007) for the primary prevention of violence against women is in Table 1.

Table 2: Summary of Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests applied to violence against women (adapted from Slaughter 1999, p. 217)

Interest	Life dimension	Form of knowledge	Knowledge criteria	Type of problem	Examples of prevention of violence against women and their children
Technical	'Work' (Instrumental action)	Empirical/ analytical	Economy, efficiency, effectiveness	Technical/ instrumental	<p>Direct participation programs</p> <p>Organisational and workforce development</p> <p>Community strengthening</p> <p>Legislative and policy reform</p> <p>Research and evaluation</p>

Interest	Life dimension	Form of knowledge	Knowledge criteria	Type of problem	Examples of prevention of violence against women and their children
Practical	Interaction	Interpretive	Achievement of communication and understanding	Interpretive understanding and practical choices	Communication and social marketing Advocacy
Emancipatory	Power	Critical	Achievement of emancipation and liberation	Normative; critique of domination, repression, mystification, institutions and distorted communication	

Causal layered analysis

If *how* we think is complicit in our conclusions and influences *what* we do, there is an opportunity to go beyond the predominantly technical and practical interests described by Habermas, and a technical approach to adaptive change based on a public health framework, by widening and deepening our thinking. The methodology, causal layered analysis, is a tool that supports such a process.

Causal layered analysis comprises four layers of thinking, unfolding from the level of litany through systemic causes, worldview and metaphor or myth. The litany is the list of quantitative trends, events, issues and problems usually articulated in the media and often used for political purposes. They are often believed and can create a climate of fear.

The systemic level involves interpretation of usually quantitative data and trends across social, technological, economic, cultural, political and historical factors that are analysed by policy institutes and can appear as newspaper editorials. They do not generally involve questioning the paradigm within which the issue is framed.

The third level goes deeper and is concerned with the discourse or worldview that supports and legitimates the second level interpretation. It reveals deeper social, linguistic and cultural structures that are not dependent on who is involved. Basic assumptions are challenged here and the problem reframed. Importantly the third level exposes how different discourses constitute the issue.

The fourth level explores the deep stories, collective archetypes, the unconscious and emotive dimensions of the problem and elucidates a myth or metaphor and visual images through deeper questioning.

A causal layered analysis of various dimensions of ending violence against women and their children produces insights into current paradigms of thought and explores alternatives. The potential analyses presented here in Figures 2, 3 and 4 are demonstrations of the tool.

However, causal layered analysis is even richer when used with a wide range of divergent stakeholders.

The first causal layered analysis (Table 2) explores a worldview and metaphor for the current prevention paradigm. In 2007, VicHealth took the litany of harm and defined systemic issues underlying violence against women. VicHealth developed a framework and policy paper, changing the then existing paradigm. The paper (VicHealth 2007) recommended a response at the population level using primary prevention methods. The discourse developed around health and safety for women as a right and the deeper story is human rights for women.

Table 3: Causal layered analysis applied to violence against women – version 1 (indicative only)

CLA Level	CLA Description	Example
Litany	Quantitative trends, problems, media reporting, fear	The statistics demonstrate that women are harmed physically, psychologically, emotionally etc and we need to stop it Violence against women and their children has a high economic cost to the community
Systemic causes	Social, technological, economic, political and historical factors	Unequal power and access to resources; bias and stereotypes; attitudes, beliefs and norms towards women and violence; violence to assert power; a culture of violence Policy defines violence against women as a health issue requiring a primary prevention response Governments take action based on the policy recommendation
Discourse/worldview	Structure of the discourse/worldview that supports and legitimates	Women deserve to be healthy and safe and primary prevention interventions based on a public health model will stop gender-based violence before it starts Men can be stopped
Myth/metaphor	Deep stories, collective archetypes, unconscious dimensions	Human rights for women

The second causal layered analysis (Table 3) explores a different response to ending violence against women and their children, based on a different worldview and metaphor. It seeks to illustrate the difference a worldview and myth/metaphor makes across the layers of the methodology. In this example, the litany identifies the human stories, the enforcement and judicial responses, and the risk factors that contribute to violence against women and their children. The systemic issues around gender inequality, rigid gender roles and stereotypes and cultural attitudes towards violence generate a policy response that considers discrimination against women and the institutional legitimisation of violence as key settings for change. The policy writers in this example reveal a worldview of feminism, community

and care that seeks to transform social, cultural and institutional discrimination and legitimisation of violence. The metaphor is equality for women.

Table 4: Causal layered analysis applied to violence against women – version 2 (indicative only)

CLA Level	CLA Description	Example
Litany	Quantitative trends, problems, media reporting, fear	Media coverage of deaths and injury; increasing police activity and arrests; reporting of culturally and socially inappropriate treatment of women; alcohol and drug abuse etc as contributors
Systemic causes	Social, technological, economic, political and historical factors	<p>Women lack power in the public and private spheres</p> <p>Women have unequal access to power and resources</p> <p>Women are subject to gender bias and stereotyping</p> <p>Men hold power and structure the response</p> <p>Violence is legitimised in the public sphere through language and through commitments to resolving conflict (troops going to war)</p> <p>Policy is developed to address endemic discrimination against women</p> <p>Policy considers violence across the historical, political, social, cultural and technological spheres</p>
Discourse/ worldview	Structure of the discourse/worldview that supports and legitimates	<p>Men are privileged and define structures and institutions and should be challenged</p> <p>Women's equality with men is essential to ending violence including against women and their children</p> <p>Violence will end when women hold equal power and resources</p> <p>Men must change</p>
Myth/ metaphor	Deep stories, collective archetypes, unconscious dimensions	Equality for women

The third causal layered analysis (Table 4) undertakes a layered analysis of the current research paradigm based on the public health model. This example illustrates how the litany is influenced by the discourse and the metaphor. In this case the litany is built around the need for data and the search for evidence that is the predominant basis for action in the public health approach. In the same way that Marshal McLuhan (1994) suggested “the medium is the message”, in this example the “paradigm is the system”. The discourse is around the collection of data and the conduct of empirical research that is free of both

individual values and subjectivity, something which Habermas suggests is impossible. The metaphor is rationality and objectivity rule.

Table 5: Causal layered analysis applied to violence against women – version 3 (indicative only)

CLA Level	CLA Description	Example
Litany	Quantitative trends, problems, media reporting, fear	We need data to define the problem; we don't have much evidence of what works in primary prevention; we need more evaluation; we need an evidence base to see what works
Systemic causes	Social, technological, economic, political and historical factors	Primary prevention is the key weapon in fighting violence against women and their children (as in we 'fight disease'); primary prevention programs support the fight; we are committed to a public health and primary prevention model
Discourse/worldview	Structure of the discourse/worldview that supports and legitimates	Empirical value-free research is essential; subjectivity must be overcome
Myth/metaphor	Deep stories, collective archetypes, unconscious dimensions	Rationality and objectivity rule

The value of the example in Table 4 is in recognising limits as well as value. Evidence is valuable in understanding the past – in asking whether something worked or not and why, and whether there were any unintended consequences. Generally, empirical evidence is derived only from the aspects of complex phenomenon that can be measured, registered and controlled. When it is limited in this way, it begs the question, what has been left out of our reflections of the past? The evidence itself becomes “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Polak 1955, p. 190) and only provides part of the rich picture that other ways of knowing can cast light on.

Causal layered analysis provides a structure to ask new and different questions, for example to explore whether public health and primary prevention has become a category of thinking; to consider whether it has become privileged over other ways of thinking and knowing; and to understand whether it has become a collective identity for those involved in a social movement. It creates the space and distance from our categorisations to create new knowledge.

To understand the future, we need to include many ways of knowing – the research and discovery process needs to be open to different ways of knowing. Bringing about social transformation requires a different set of inputs and considerations and even a different perspective on evidence. There are no facts about, and no concrete evidence from, the future; it remains elusive unless we conceptualise where we want to be, build a rich picture and use it to energise us and put things together in new ways to direct new action.

The three causal layered analysis examples illustrate how modes of inquiry and the deeper considerations of worldview and metaphor provide the scope for different policy options that lead to different actions. No one layer is privileged over another, but policy makers, thinkers and researchers are encouraged to move up and down the layers to define multiple actionable steps across different time horizons. Causal layered analysis deepens our understanding of how we know the world and reveals our individual and collective identity. Importantly, it brings into conscious awareness what we know and helps to capture some of the unknowns.

Integral model

A comprehensive way to understand where our knowledge lies and where our action is directed is to apply Wilber's (2001, p. xii) integral model:

'An integral vision'... attempts to include matter, body, mind, soul and spirit as they appear in self, culture, and nature. A vision that attempts to be comprehensive, balanced, inclusive. A vision that therefore embraces science, art, and morals; that equally includes disciplines from physics to spirituality, biology to aesthetics, sociology to contemplative prayer; that shows up in integral politics, integral medicine, integral business, integral spirituality... [and potentially integral change that ends violence].

There are four quadrants in the integral model that reflect a mix of internal and external perspectives across individual and collective experience. The model is presented in Table 5. On the left of the model is the internal perspective of the individual and the collective; on the right, the external perspective of each. This is expressed in the shorthand of I, It, We, Its. More fully described, the model includes developmental levels which are tailored to the area of practice.

An integral approach using all quadrants and all levels has been applied to a wide range of areas such as leadership development, education, business and organisational strategy. UNICEF, for example, recognised it had invested in decades of Right Hand (collective internal and external) initiatives dating back to the 1950s. It named the 2000s as the "era of the integral approach" and consultants working with UNICEF concluded "all ideas during these five decades (from the 1950s to the 1990s) were monological to a degree that excluded an understanding of the needs for interior/subjective development in individuals and societies in order to make the process of change and especially transformation sustainable" (iSchaik Development Associates quoted in Wilber 2001, p. 102).

The aim of applying this integral model is to provide a more comprehensive framework for ending violence in general and violence against women and their children in particular. It provides a lens through which to view current thinking and action and a framework for integral transformative practice.

Table 6: Integral model (Wilber 2001)

Individual/Internal	Individual/External
Inner world of individual identity, meaning and purpose <i>Beliefs and attitudes</i> "I"	World of individual capability and behaviour <i>Rigid gender roles and stereotypes</i> "It"
"WE" Social/cultural world and how we construct our shared social reality <i>Norms</i> <i>Culture of violence</i> Collective/Internal	"ITS" External physical world of political, business, science, technology and the natural environment <i>Gender and power</i> <i>Inequality</i> Collective/External

The example maps the root causes of violence against women and their children into the model (the italic text in Table 5). It demonstrates that policy and action are needed in all quadrants to achieve transformative change to end violence against women and their children. The model also provides a powerful framework for thinking about measurement. If change is needed in all quadrants to achieve social transformation, it will be important to see relative progress and where resources might need to be directed or redirected.

The integral model provides a way to understand the complexity of social change, and to map it to inform thinking, knowledge development, policy and practice and to measure change. It can be applied at a national, state or local level and can provide a ready reckoner of which players are doing what in each quadrant, reducing duplication and revealing gaps.

Implications

Policy and practice

There are four possible implications for policy and practice in the prevention of violence against women from using futures tools and methodologies. Firstly, multiple policy options can be identified and considered beyond public health and primary prevention; secondly, a wider range of research methods can be implemented, providing new knowledge leading to new policy and practice; thirdly, change and progress are driven by participative action learning; and fourthly, futures tools and methodologies not only elucidate what is currently being seen, but uncover what is not being seen.

Multiple policy options

A central objective of this discussion is to invite a broader discussion about the policy landscape. The current landscape is dominated by public health and primary prevention thinking, knowing and action and has a largely technical orientation. It is rarely, if ever, extra-rational and is motivated largely by goals and operationalisation. McGilchrist (2009) challenges us to consider whether it is important which models and metaphors we bring to

bear on our own reality and, if it is, why one particular model has come to dominate and become pervasive.

Considering Habermas' emancipatory knowledge interest, applying causal layered analysis at its deeper levels or mapping action across all quadrants and all levels of the integral framework provide the possibility for new understanding, knowledge generation and policy development. Multiple policy positions become evident when our assumptions are critiqued through these and other futures tools from which different pathways to ending violence against women and their children can be constructed. They acknowledge the different ways individuals construct the world; and communication practice can be realigned based on the recognition that different people are operating from different worldviews, motivation, values and beliefs, and ways of thinking.

Multidimensional research

If a reconceptualisation of the policy landscape is to be explored and realised, differing research traditions and discovery processes will be needed to open up different pathways to knowledge and different ways of knowing. Research will need to address at least three dimensions of thinking – empirical, interpretive and critical, and may consider a fourth emerging perspective of action research. Each dimension, Inayatullah (2004, p. 11) suggests, “makes different assumptions about the real, about truth, about the role of the subject, about the nature of the universe, and about the nature of the future”.

The present focus of research on gathering new data and evaluating programs provides empirical understanding of violence against women and what is currently working and not working. Expanding research activity to include the interpretive and critical will add significantly to the empirical and rational perspective, by including different variables and the opportunity for new knowledge to emerge. For example, literature reviews will be broadened to include futurescans and other environmental scanning methods that anticipate the future as well as report the learnings of the past; scenarios will widen understanding of what is possible; and engagement in action research will tap deeper wisdom.

Importantly, critical research is needed to address the external world of Wilber's external/collective quadrant, to disturb the present power relations that impact gender equality and prevent progress towards the equal sharing of power and resources.

Participatory action learning

Inayatullah (2002) describes four types of futures studies: predictive, interpretive, critical and anticipatory action learning. Each type of activity has a place in policy development and the first two are already used at least to some extent through the top two levels of causal layered analysis – the litany and systemic causes – and Habermas' technical and practical interests.

If these theories and tools are to contribute to a new, expanded and emancipatory policy landscape and be an agent of transformation, they must be participatory, bringing insights from different cultures, disciplines and civilisations that help to reveal the problems and forge solutions. Different disciplines provide different perspectives that inform the way we think about violence in general and violence against women in particular. They help to illuminate other ways of knowing. The participation of a wide range of stakeholders that opens up the conversation provides information-rich and multidimensional perspectives. In anticipatory action learning, communication between all participants is crucial. It is much

less about the presentation of information and more about genuine dialogue that allows new ideas and actions to emerge.

Asking questions

The way we frame a problem changes the policy solution and the actors responsible, and the questions we pose inform where we go to look and the answers we find. Different questions will generate different answers and potentially new kinds of knowledge that inform the possibility of different solutions that can be applied to preventing violence and different pathways to change and transformation.

Futures tools like causal layered analysis and the integral framework provide a way of asking a wider range of questions at a deeper level of analysis. Examples of questions that might be asked at the causal layered analysis level of myth/metaphor (adapted from Brice in Inayatullah 2004) include:

- What would a realistic metaphorical shift be to address the desired future?
- What key aspects of the existing metaphor would need to be sustained?
- What key aspects of the existing metaphor would need to change?
- What 'characters' will you play in the metaphor of the future?
- What actions would need to be taken to enable the change?

Similarly, questions that open up each of the integral quadrants to interpretive and critical understanding and the views of a very wide range of stakeholders will inform new policy and action.

Conceptual model and framework

A conceptual model synthesises our understanding of an issue. Using futures methods and tools to understand violence against women and transform cultural, social, political and institutional norms suggests a reconceptualisation of our current understanding of preventing violence against women and their children is possible and worthwhile. Different approaches to research, knowledge acquisition and understanding that go beyond systemic causes and incorporate worldviews, myths and metaphors may reveal more or different policy and practice options and throw further light on the underlying root causes.

Such a reconceptualisation that includes and transcends prevention delivered through the public health and primary prevention model will require a different architecture for the national framework – one that supports adaptive change and invites the opportunity for interpretive and critical thinking and deep consideration of and discussion about worldviews, myths and metaphors. A more open framework that accommodates different ideological and methodological options and invites the possibility of multiple policy positions avoids the pitfall of a singular policy defining the pathway and opportunities for action.

A new framework might consider the interaction of action learning, multiple layers of participation and policy options, and multidimensional research. It might encourage asking questions and open the way to finding new answers by inviting in previously unthought-of ideas, partners, disciplines, stakeholders and communities. Moving to this new approach invites a shift in both attention and intention from a paradigm of prevention to primary prevention and what else?. New structures might emerge to support new conversations. For instance, a series of local learning hubs with divergent stakeholders designed around the unifying issue of preventing and ending violence against women could critically appraise modes of thinking and worldviews and turn attention to other possibilities using models and methodologies described in this paper or others that support such a process. This activity

could lead to prototyping new action with rapid, dynamic and flexible assessment of effectiveness.

Part of establishing the hubs might include inspiring leaders and champions active in preventing violence against women and their children to lead the hubs using futures thinking and tools. Convening a national conversation through a conference, seminar or workshop, perhaps titled *Leading from the Emerging Future of Preventing Violence against Women*, will help to identify those ready, willing and able to facilitate the learning hubs and support new and different thinking. Grants programs might also consider funding different types of collaborative action research to provide a pathway to previously unthought-of ideas.

Conclusion

The adoption of futures methods will open up the possibilities for longer term sustainable policy change to end violence against women by not only addressing shorter term technical aspects but more widely and deeply addressing the adaptive root causes of gender inequality, rigid roles and stereotypes and cultures of violence. Preventive health and primary prevention does give us a body of knowledge on how to respond to issues that are neither easy nor unimportant; the solutions help to save lives and require great organisational effort. But the problems are treated as technical because the necessary knowledge is thought to have been acquired and put in the form of a legitimised set of strategies that guide what to do and who should do it (Heifeitz 1994).

Futures methods encourage a move from this problem-centred technical way of thinking to critical and other considerations that question the nature of knowledge. They help to recognise that current ways of thinking, types of knowledge, and institutional structures have shaped and constructed our approach to, and language towards, violence and women. Prevention could perhaps be considered a “train of thought that gets us only some of the way” (McGilchrist 2009, p. 3).

Polak (1955) suggests the imagined tomorrow is today’s ideas but history has taught us that new ideas must gestate before they become the common property of the people. By combining tools offered by futures studies, whether they are the selection presented here or other equally useful and insightful futures tools, with knowledge of a rich empirical past and the theoretical present, an even greater momentum towards a future without violence against women can be achieved.

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