FROM COMMONALITY TO DIFFERENCE AND BACK AGAIN?: REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO CHALLENGE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Liz Kelly

18 – 22 February 2002, University of Sydney, Australia

FROM COMMONALITY TO DIFFERENCE AND BACK AGAIN?: REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO CHALLENGE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Keynote Speech

Prof Liz Kelly
Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit
University of North London

This paper represents a reflection on how my own horizons have expanded over almost thirty years of working on violence against women, and how complexity, commonality and difference feature in the perspective I now work with. To do this requires locating myself.

I began this work in the early 1970s, in a small town in England. I was a passionate and angry young mother, convinced of the necessity to create women's liberation. Along with many others at that time this was linked to a naive, but nonetheless engaged, sense of internationalism; both the desire to learn more about women everywhere and a sympathy for liberation struggles, particularly in Central and Latin America and South Africa. Whilst the knowledge and frameworks on which these aspirations were based were undoubtedly lacking in depth, complexity – and perhaps especially humility given the history of the country I am a citizen of – the heartfelt desire for an internationalist women's liberation movement is not something I now want to disavow. It was from this source that the search for commonality began, and violence against women undoubtedly became an issue where shared experiences were significant. But, we do our history a disservice if we neglect to remember that at this earliest stage there was awareness of differences between women – class, race and sexuality featured in much of the early writings of the WLM, and in most of the debates and dissension, whether at a theoretical or practical level. It is also the case that variations in the forms of

violence across time and space were noted – for example, an entire chapter of Susan Brownmillers' *Against Our Will* dealt with rape during war, and many of the early key feminist texts referred to dowry deaths, sati, FGM, witch burnings and child marriage (see, for example, Morgan, 1970; Daly, 1979). And where is it recorded that Washington DC Rape Crisis – the first RC line – was by the end of the 1970s a Black women's collective?

Three decades on, depending on how you measure 'success' much or very little has changed. We have not achieved women's liberation, but women's consciousness across the globe has shifted in vast and ever increasing ways. A global coalition of feminist activists lobbied vigorously to ensure that violence against women is now recognised as a violation of human rights. Women's organisations in the north, south east and west have created new forms of provision that enable women and girls to tell of their violation, seek safety and support and demand legal redress. We know more than we ever wanted to imagine about the extent to which women and girls' bodies, minds and spirits are violated. These discoveries, alongside the fact that we appear to have made limited if any difference to the scale of abuse women and girls endure makes me think that today it is vital to reclaim those words – women's liberation.

During the now almost 30 years I have worked on violence against women I have been part of groups providing direct support, and still belong to two small, but effective, campaigning groups. For 20 years I have done research: on domestic violence, child sexual abuse, rape and sexual assault and trafficking in women. The Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit where I work is known for making connections between forms of woman abuse and between abuse of woman and of children. We also endeavour to link research to policy and practice, including through our training and consultancy work. Since 1996 we have been special advisors to the British Council on violence against women. This has afforded us the immense privilege of providing training and consultancy in Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as directing three international seminars in the UK attended by participants from over 60 countries.

It is this combination of local and global that I want to draw on today, to reflect on what I have learnt, unlearnt and re-learnt in the 1990s. The first half of the paper uses three snapshots of significant events and the lessons they

contained for me. The second half addresses both old and new themes I keep returning to.

What difference does difference make

Snapshot 1: Rediscovering authenticity

As a white woman from a western country with a history of colonialism, the issue of racism has been the most difficult and painful to negotiate. I was part of anti-racist politics in the 1970s, and had strong relationships with a few Black women. The fury and vehemence of Black women's voices in the 1980s shocked and disturbed me, personally and politically. Many of my attempts to make sense took place inside my own head, as the public debates and distress engulfed the WLM. Looking back I realise that I became one of the silent observers, refusing or not daring to contribute, publicly for fear of either 'getting it wrong' or becoming one of the white women who took it upon themselves to show how much more racist than they other white women were. Whilst a vital part of this process was to listen, reflect and re-think, through my silence I became inauthentic: I hid my politics, what I really thought. I undoubtedly learnt to think and write in a more open way, to ask more and different questions, but impassioned engagement across difference, space for debate and even disagreement – the lifeblood of both any movement for change and any relationship based on respect – shrank.

The extent to which I had withdrawn became apparent during a visit to India, where part of the purpose was to meet and exchange with activist groups in Calcutta. Initially I was cautious, believing – not wrongly – that this was an opportunity to learn. During one visit, however, one of the women pushed me about my feminist politics, and divisions in the women's movement in the UK. During the next two hours we amazed each other at the similarities and parallels, alongside the more obvious differences of contexts. It was an impassioned engagement, and a moment of realisation that my self-conscious focus on difference had closed down such challenging and enriching possibilities. I also discovered that Indian feminists expect, enjoy and even at times provoke disagreement and debate. Arguing and conflict are not to be avoided, and nor are they sufficient reason to 'fall out' with

anyone. Lessons that individual feminists and women's organisations in the west could greatly benefit from.

Snapshot 2: Framing difference in similarity

The next snapshot comes from a year later when Oxfam commissioned Purna Sen and I to design and deliver a week long workshop in Sarajevo for 80 staff and partners to explore how violence against women could be integrated into their humanitarian and development work. Participants would come from every continent, and we would be working in five languages. Our challenge was to find a framework within which local and regional differences could be recognised, whilst building a shared perspective to take back into the organisation. Our strategy was to offer a set of simple concepts in the hope that they might encompass diverse realities: in other words we sought to locate difference within a form of similarity. The four concepts were forms **of** gender violence, contexts **for** violence, sanctions and sanctuary.

In making a distinction between forms and contexts of violence we encouraged exploration of how similar and different acts occur throughout the life cycle, and that they take place in different locations, social and political milieu and systems of meaning. Contexts vary within and between societies – the same form of violence can take place in public or private, in peacetime or war, in a country of origin or not, be committed by known and unknown men who have a variety of levels of relationship with their victims. Whilst certain forms of gender violence such as rape, sexual harassment and physical assaults by partners and femicide span the globe, others such as FGM and honour killings have a more limited range. The power dynamics of racism and disability are also contexts, used as sources of permission through which men (and women) deny the humanity of those they consider less than themselves.

Whilst no context is free from violence against women, some – the home, residential and custodial institutions, war, conflict and displacement – appear to exacerbate the level of non-safety for women and girls, at the same time as decreasing access to intervention and support. Whilst variations in political, cultural and economic contexts do not change the reality or brutality of abuse, they certainly do affect

its meanings and the options available to women and girls for naming it, seeking support, protection and redress.

The concepts of Sanctions and Sanctuary were intended as overviews of actions focused on victimisation and perpetration.

Sanctions apply to perpetrators, and are actions that communicate the unacceptability of their behaviour and exact some kind of cost for it. Sanctions can be informal such as gossip, disdain, lower standing in the community, explicit criticism and shunning and/or formal through systems of rules and laws. Formal sanctions include various orders from institutions – courts – such as being required to not contact the victim and/or leave the family home, pay a fine or compensation, attend a re-education programme, or a prison sentence. Currently in most societies only a minority of perpetrators are sanctioned for their actions.

Sanctuary refers to responses to victims – it involves creating safety, firstly to be able to tell someone and be believed and not blamed, secondly to guarantee safety from further abuse, and thirdly to provide longer-term support that helps undo some of the damage. Access to justice can be both a way to create safety and provide redress. Sanctuary can be provided by family members, neighbours and friends, elders, community leaders, as well as specialist services and state agencies. Globally sanctuary is most often provided by other women, individually or through women's services.

During the seminar participants gave examples of forms of violence – such as honour killings and acid throwing – which they believed to be culturally specific, only to discover that very similar actions existed not just in other countries but on other continents. These connections were not only important in deepening awareness about the extent and range of woman abuse, but also because they led to questioning whether the forms could be explained in terms of specific cultural contexts. One of the most powerful and thought provoking interventions was by a Bosnian woman, Duska Andric-Ruzicic, who contested the over dramatisation of war rape. She said: “Rape, is rape, is rape. The only difference in war is that your government wants you to talk about it, but when the war is over they expect you to shut up again”.

The explicit recognition, in both sanctions and sanctuary, of informal resources made it possible to give equal value the community based responses which are preferred by some marginalised and indigenous

communities, and often all that is possible in countries with weak or none existent state infrastructures. The limitations of focusing on the Criminal Justice System have been discussed in developed countries; the issues are even more stark in countries where levels of corruption and/or endless bureaucracy make seeking formal legal redress an often fruitless task. That said, however, recent work we have been doing on trafficking in women (see, for example, Kelly & Regan, 2000; Kelly 2002) makes clear that creating sanctuary in the absence of any sanctions is tenuous at best. This is both because women simply are not safe unless their exploiters are stopped from harassing them or their families, and that merely rescuing women without disrupting the trafficking networks means that they will rapidly be replaced by others, not to mention vulnerable to re-trafficking and/or reprisal if they are returned home.

What thinking seriously about informal responses has made us see, however, is that the north has much to learn from the south, and from marginalised communities within, in developing community-based responses. If you look at what 'co-ordinated community responses' mean in many developed countries it is not much more than another name for multi-agency work, but with the inclusion of NGOs. What most people understand as 'community' – family, neighbourhoods, friendship groups and other forms of voluntary association, such as religious organisations – are remarkable in their absence. Yet every piece of research we have done in the UK and Ireland – whether it be on domestic violence, child sexual abuse or rape – reveals that help is most likely to be sought from informal sources, at least initially. These networks remain under-recognised and under-used as resources in relation to sanctuary and sanctions. Here again, if we pay attention, think beyond what we have come to expect, there are connections across contexts and continents, similarity within difference.

Snapshot 3: Being open to connections

The final snapshot comes from a few months ago. In December 2001 my colleague Linda Regan and I spent two weeks in Ethiopia where concerted work on violence against women is only emerging, especially with respect to domestic violence. Work on FGM has a longer history, and over the last couple of years campaigns have grown on the abduction and rape of young girls. One element of our work was to facilitate the development of a Zero

Tolerance-type awareness-raising campaign. For those of you who are not familiar with the Edinburgh-based project, it used graphic design and conventions in advertising photography to deliver hard-hitting messages. Conscious choices were made to cover a range of forms of woman abuse, and to use images that did not depict women and girls as victims.

The issue of how to depict violence and victimisation prompted intense debate in Ethiopia, with almost all the younger women at the workshop appreciating the absence of marks of violence or defeated, abject figures. On the other side some of the older women and men argued for explicit depictions of violence – to make people notice, to show the harm, and in relation to illiteracy. These questions echo debates in the west not just about violence against women, but also the ways in which development agencies and children's charities have used depictions that emphasise poverty, despair and pain to prompt sympathy – and donations. Such images are undoubtedly effective in grabbing attention, raising funds, but usually at the cost of reinforcing stereotypes which construct people as 'other'.

One of the challenges movements against gender violence have consistently met is to insist that much woman and child abuse is mundane, everyday and close to home. It is not just that this message is hard to face in Ethiopia, but that everywhere the reality that most violence is by known men is resisted. In many countries, including the UK, the framework for rape investigations still implicitly assumes the rapist is a stranger (Kelly, 2002); the offensive concept of 'paedophile' – literally meaning 'lover of children' – has enjoyed a global resurgence precisely because it locates the problem somewhere other than in our own homes, neighbourhoods and networks (Kelly, 1998; Kelly & Regan, 2001).

To return to Ethiopia, some of the tasks involved small groups designing a logo for their campaign and developing the messages they wanted to give about a range of forms of violence. The logo chosen by the whole group was culturally specific – a shield and arrangement of spears that represented protection from violence. Many messages were suggested, at least half of which drew explicitly on Ethiopian sayings and culture. Participants each had three votes, for the messages they thought were the strongest and most likely to be effective. The outcomes were not what we expected: the most popular by far were those that have been used, almost to the point of becoming

clichés, in many western countries – 'no means no' 'domestic violence /child sexual abuse is a crime'.

The final part of the workshop involved developing oral methods of communicating messages. One group chose to compose a song, the title of which was 'The story of my burdens'. It had a complex structure, including a chorus in which the woman asks the listener if they are going to notice and support her. When I told several friends at home about this, they were rather disdainful, disliking the 'victim' connotations in the title. In trying to make sense of my different response I only had to remember the reality we observed both in Addis Ababa and the rural areas. Everywhere hundreds of people are walking, and women carry huge burdens – taking goods to and from market, carrying firewood down the mountain into the city. Men and boys, on the other hand, carry themselves and perhaps a switch (stick) if they are taking animals to and from water. If they are transporting goods anywhere men use donkeys and or carts.

On one particular day I reflected on what my eyes were seeing and its connections to feminist theory that emphasises women's agency. All of these burdened women were strong; they were undoubtedly actors in their own lives, doing what was possible to survive. I also recalled art photography that represented African women carrying water and other 'burdens' as having dignity, stature and elegance. The oppression and inequality only come into view when you put the men into the picture, men who are not 'burdened' in this way. I had, therefore, understood the symbolic use of this image in the song as both a reference to this inequality and at the same time a critique of it. These reflections connected with an issue that continually recurs at the moment – that feminist theory has become so mesmerised by the desire to validate women's agency that men's agency, and the extent to which it constructs and constrains what is possible for women, can disappear.

Connections within diversity

So what do these snapshots have in common? They all speak to the complexity of the issues and the contexts in which women are working to challenge gender violence and that there will be a diversity of approaches and strategies adjusted to local contexts. What I have learnt is to explore rather than presume difference – since it may not be what we expect, and there may

be areas of commonality that we miss at our peril. Each attests to the importance of being open to connections. Just to be absolutely clear here, by connections I **do not** mean things which are the same, but that there are links, lessons to be learnt and knowledge to be shared. To work with diversity requires discovery and debate, which in turn enriches our knowledge, concepts and approaches to change.

It is both depressing and illuminating to discover that many forms of victim blame are common across the globe. Whilst the intensity with which this might be felt and expressed in 'honour cultures' **is** a difference, isn't it at the same time connected to the sense of shame, dirtiness and being *worth less* that women in developed countries report? The idea that the family is private, and should be protected from state interference, militates against intervention in domestic violence and incest from Jordan to Switzerland. And is it not a matter of detail that in Malaysia the crime of rape does not exist legally without forensic evidence, and that in Australia and the UK it does in principle, but in practice a conviction (and even a prosecution) is unlikely without such corroboration?

That said I do not intend to deny real differences of context – the fact that who we are and where we live on this planet widens or narrows the options that we have in escaping and/or dealing with victimisation. The risks activists take in challenging violence are also different – currently all I risk is regular unpleasant letters from the UK Men's Movement, whereas women in other places are literally risking their lives and livelihoods. But here too there are lessons – the most effective prosecutors of sexual crime I have met come from Namibia, and I sometimes long for the noisy, raucous protests that we used to create in the UK, and which I still hear about in Africa and Asia.

Part of what I have learnt in the last few years is the difference that respect makes – not just of others, but of ourselves – what we each have done, what we know from our own contexts, and what we have learnt. This certainly **does not** preclude learning anew, or doing differently in the future, but if I haven't learnt some things over 25 years, what have I been doing? Respect for others also includes being honest and acting with integrity, daring to disagree and take risks – there are far worse things in the world than someone correcting your ignorance.

In the next section I pick up on some of the complexities, challenges and questions that we need to continue to struggle with.

Victims, survivors, agency and damage

One theme I keep returning to is the unintended consequences of abandoning the term victim, alongside the irony of the accusation feminists have created a culture of victimhood (see Kelly, Regan & Burton, 1994?, for a more detailed discussion of these issues). In the 1970s we were acutely aware of the negative meanings that attached to the term victim – it was shaming and implied passivity and powerlessness. The alternative 'survivor' was intended to draw attention to the ways women and children resisted abuse at the time and the efforts they made to cope with its many consequences. My PhD research used this framework (Kelly, 1987). But not all women and girls do survive. And in these days where feminist theory ties itself in knots to demonstrate women's agency and avoid the taint of victimisation, violence against women represents something of a conundrum. It demonstrates vividly the extent to which women's agency can still be removed from their control or be so constrained, and overwhelmed by legacies of abuse that women choose to act in ways that endanger, and even end, their own lives.

To elide the documentation of women's victimisation with a suggestion that feminists have created a notion of 'victimhood', or constructed women as inevitable victims is to conflate empirical reality with constructions of identity. I want to argue for a conceptualisation that positions women and children as **neither** inevitable victims (or men as inevitable victimisers) **nor** as strong survivors for whom abuse has minimal consequences. There are women in every mental hospital, prison, drug and alcohol project whose spirit has been defeated, who find living with their past almost unbearable. The legacies of abuse are, for some women, a burden they resent and find hard to carry – and few women's services cater for the complex and demanding needs of those for whom the damage is greatest. Women running shelters for trafficked women in the Balkans and Nepal talk of working with women who are so traumatised that it feels as if they have 'gone', their very personhood has been destroyed. I have personally known at least six women whose

multiple abuse in child and adulthood was a burden they were unable to surmount: death was preferable.

Questions of concepts and definitions have been at the heart of feminist work, perhaps in the next decade we can create new meanings that no longer make victim and agency contradictions in terms, and I also hope that we will dare to return to exploring the damage of victimisation (Kelly, 2000).

The decision to speak or remain silent

The feminist orthodoxy that 'breaking silence' and 'speaking out' is necessarily a good thing has also turned out to be more complex than it at first appeared. In many countries it is no longer the case that violence against women is hidden and 'unspeakable' – yet it continues to be redefined and minimised within institutional responses. Recent research in the UK, Switzerland and Australia (Breckenridge & Laing, 1999; Seith, 2001; Stanko & Crisp, 2001) highlights how much information institutions have which they neither recognise, nor use. In many contexts women and children do tell, but those trusted with this knowledge fail to act on it to either provide safety and sanctuary for victims or any form of sanction on perpetrators.

In other contexts women and children still choose to use silence as a survival strategy, when the consequences of telling are further danger in the absence of support. Honour cultures are an extreme example, where telling about rape or sexual abuse can literally cost women their lives. But in every context it is the potential costs, including increased danger in a context of inadequate protection, of 'speaking out' that continue to act as barriers to reporting of all forms of gender violence, and underpin many women's decisions not to pursue legal cases.

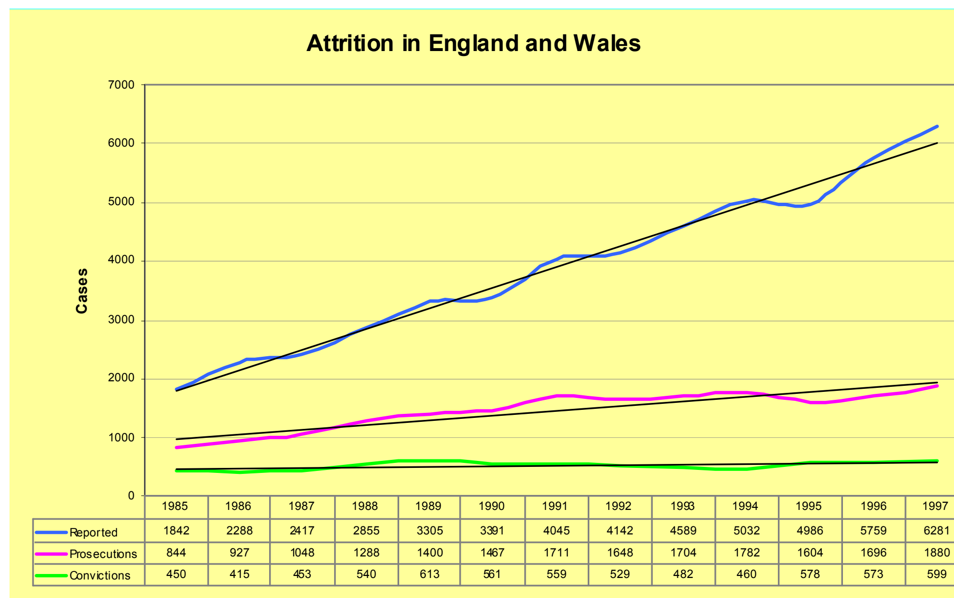
Dangerous questions

We know that violence against women and children occurs in all social groups, social status and economic security do not protect women and children. But as research findings become more sophisticated and global in reach, it is also clear that rates of violence, not just reporting, are not consistent across social groups or between societies. Do we ignore the rates of rape and child sexual assault in South Africa, the levels of domestic homicide in Russia, the differential murder rates for Aboriginal and Filipina women in Australia and African American women in the USA? Or will we

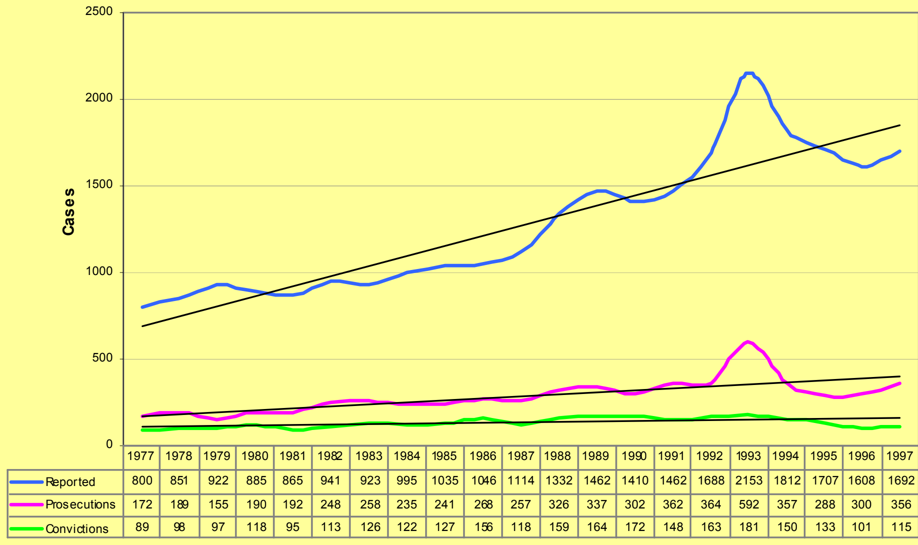
dare to look again, and try to make sense of why this is the case, in order to be better able to prevent it?

For researchers and activists there is also the question of whether we are willing to look for and see change? Some of the research findings we repeat are 15-20 years old. Is it possible that women suffering domestic violence are seeking help at an earlier point – before they have been assaulted 35 times? And if they are, does this mean they are looking for different things? Are the models of provision that we created in the 1970s what women and children want and need in the 21st century? Has legal and institutional reform, not to mention women and children's preferences (see Mullender et al., 2001), created a context in which a familial abuser can be removed from the home and safety created?

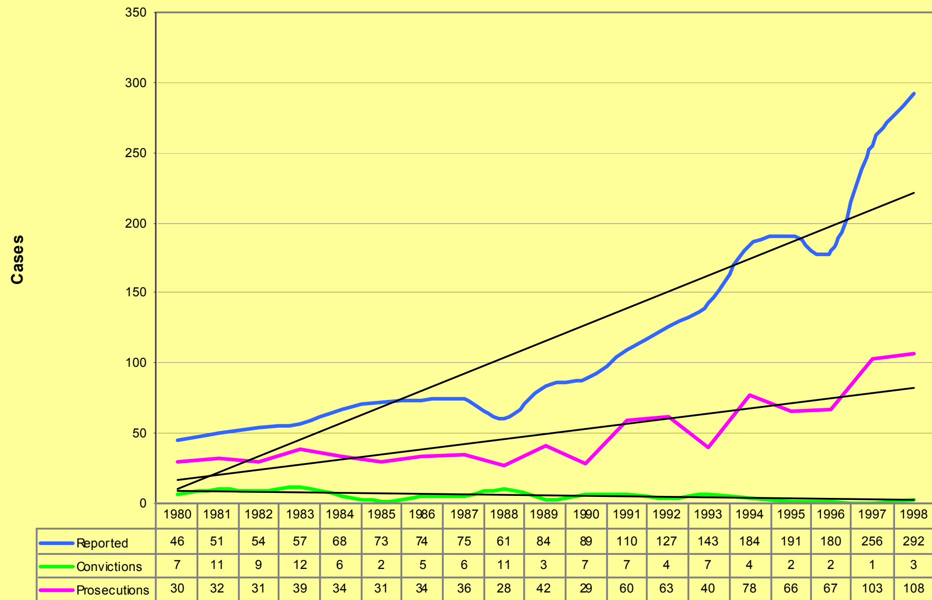
How do we explain the continued increase in the reporting of rape to the police in many western countries, when the criminal justice system is less effective in prosecuting rape than 20 years ago? These graphs (below) illustrate the increased attrition rate for reported rapes in England, Sweden and Ireland, countries with very different legal systems. Over the same time period reporting rates have fallen in Eastern Europe, due the collapse of state infrastructures, but the prosecution rate is falling there too.



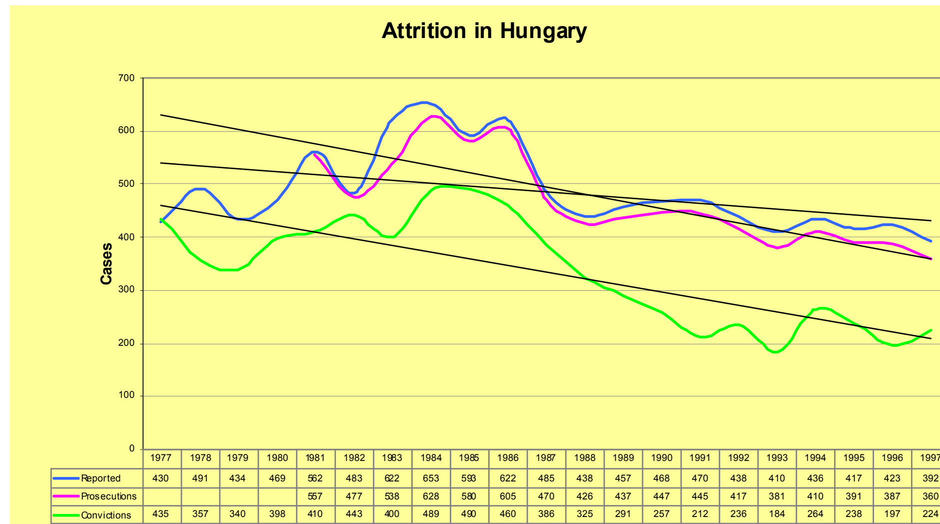
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Reported	1842	2288	2417	2855	3305	3391	4045	4142	4589	5032	4986	5759	6281
Prosecutions	844	927	1048	1288	1400	1467	1711	1648	1704	1782	1604	1696	1880
Convictions	450	415	453	540	613	561	559	529	482	460	578	573	599



	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Reported	800	851	922	885	865	941	923	995	1035	1046	1114	1332	1462	1410	1462	1688	2153	1812	1707	1608	1692
Prosecutions	172	189	155	190	192	248	258	235	241	268	257	326	337	302	362	364	592	357	288	300	356
Convictions	89	98	97	118	95	113	126	122	127	156	118	159	164	172	148	163	181	150	133	101	115



	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Reported	46	51	54	57	68	73	74	75	61	84	89	110	127	143	184	191	180	256	292
Convictions	7	11	9	12	6	2	5	6	11	3	7	7	4	7	4	2	2	1	3
Prosecutions	30	32	31	39	34	31	34	36	28	42	29	60	63	40	78	66	67	103	108



	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Reported	430	491	434	469	562	483	622	653	593	622	485	438	457	468	470	438	410	436	417	423	392
Prosecutions					557	477	538	628	580	605	470	426	437	447	445	417	381	410	391	387	360
Convictions	435	357	340	398	410	443	400	489	490	460	386	325	291	257	212	236	184	264	238	197	224

At a theoretical level – how do we map the relationships between woman abuse and gender equality? The conventional approach has assumed that as women become more equal – economically, socially and politically – then violence against women will decline. Data from Sweden suggests this model may be too simplistic. The country that on a state policy level has done most to establish formal equality between women and men, has the highest level of reported rape per head of population in Europe. Discovering this recently reminded me of a hypothesis Diana Russell proposed many years ago. If violence against women is an expression of men's power, challenges to that power may, in the short term at least, result in increasing rather than decreasing levels of abuse. If there is any truth in this proposition, the implications for social policy and intervention are as many as they are profound.

Globalisation

Globalisation processes are also directly implicated in forms of violence against women, creating new contexts and mechanisms for mistreatment. We need to be more curious and inquisitive about what is happening in the sex industry internationally, and what it means. Why are sex industries across continents increasingly populated by migrant and trafficked women? These shifts are not just from poor to rich countries but within regions such as the Balkans and South East Asia.

Part of the answer has to be the scale of profits involved in trafficking: having someone who is hugely in debt, or who has been literally sold or kidnapped, means that she works for virtually nothing, and the profit

margin goes to the exploiter – whether they are a pimp, a flat or brothel owner, or part of a modern Mafia. Such profits are not possible, however, without demand: demand from men to pay for sex with women who are 'other', who do not speak their language, who have less power and status than women who are nationals, and, therefore with respect to what Julia O'Connell Davidson (1998) calls the 'prostitution contract'. That this is increasingly the case, and that one of the things exploiters and customers alike enjoy about 'foreign' women is the fact that they are more likely to have sex without condoms and not draw lines about which sexual acts they will and will not do, raises a number of fundamental questions for those who have sought to argue that women in prostitution have considerable control over their 'work'. It confirms what Julia O'Connell Davidson (1998) argues – that what men are buying is temporary control over another's body, and more than this: that there is a significant market for having total control.

As the processes of globalisation result in large-scale movements of people – legal and illegal – so too forms of gender violence that have been located in specific regions move too. FGM, honour killings, acid attacks are now issues in western countries. At the same time, additional complex connections between forms of gender violence and the contexts they take place in are emerging. Chris Cunneen and Julie Stubbs (2000) have noted the connections between mail-order bride agencies and the heightened prevalence of domestic murder of Filipina wives in Australia. The Norwegian shelters are also beginning to document men serially sponsoring partners from poor countries. Here a further twist appears, with men using the Internet to specify marriage partners with young female children.

At the same time an incontestable benefit of globalisation is that women's networks now snake around the globe and back again. But are we making the most of these new possibilities? Research and models from the USA continue to dominate our understandings and responses. Other approaches and work of outstanding insight and quality from the majority of the planet continues to be marginalised. Part of our recent shift of emphasis has been to pay more attention to Europe, and to work more closely with researchers and groups in Africa, Asia and Australia.

Taking stock

To return to the rather enigmatic title of this paper – this is not a story of movement back to a previous position, but rather a movement forward through various emphases. At this point, it is clear that title should have been 'From similarity, through difference, to making connections'.

Violence against women is an arena where some of the best aspirations of the women's liberation movement have been made real: thriving global coalitions; continuing and challenging connections between research, activism and public policy; legal reform based on recognition of women's physical integrity and sexual autonomy; innovative services and forms of protest. At the same time it is also the arena where the extent of what remains to be done is most visceral. We are a very long way from our ambition – later adopted by the UN – of ending violence against women.

The most recent example for me of the need to simultaneously think in terms of similarity and difference was a message sent from RAWA – the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan, the organisation that has struggled for over a decade to alert the world to the suppression of Afgani women and which has secretly been educating girls – to the 2001 Emma Humphreys[1] prize event where they were given a special award. They welcomed the support but at the same time urged us to continue our own struggles. For RAWA seeing themselves part of a global movement for women's freedom was sustaining, and so it should be for all of us – making connections across contexts and continents is the lifeblood of any movement for women's liberation. They want the particularities of women's oppression in Afghanistan to be recognised and challenged, not as something 'other', but as part of the continuum of unfreedom within which we all live out lives. They invite other women to connect with them as participants in a collective

---

[1] Emma Humphreys endured a childhood full of male violence, including running away and becoming involved in prostitution to survive at 14. She killed her older boyfriend/pimp when she believed he was about to rape her, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987, at the age of 17. She contacted Justice For Women in 1994, following publicity for the successful appeals against conviction of Kiranjit Aluwalia and Sarah Thornton. After a highly visible campaign Emma too had her conviction overturned, in a historic judgement that changed legal interpretations of provocation. Unfortunately, after three years – during which time she was involved in activism – Emma died from an overdose of the prescribed drugs she had been given from the first night she spent in prison. The Prize is one way that Justice for Women – who supported Emma in her campaign for justice – have chosen to remember her. It is awarded each year to an individual and an organisation.

struggle to make a difference through changing the world – I think we should join them.

References

Breckenridge, J.; & Laing, L. (Eds) (1999). *Challenging silence: Innovative responses to sexual and domestic violence.* St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Cunneen, C.; & Stubbs, J. (2000). 'Male violence, male fantasy and commodification of women through the Internet'. *International Review of Victimology,* 7(1-3): 5-28.

Daly, M. (1979). *Gyn/ecology: The metaethics of radical feminism*. London: The Women's Press.

Kelly, L, (1987). *Surviving sexual violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kelly, L. (1996). >Weasel words: Paedophilia and cycle of abuse= *Trouble and Strife,* 33.

Kelly, L. (2000). *'Joined up responses to complicated lives: Making connections across recently constructed boundaries'* Keynote speech at the Domestic Violence: Enough is Enough Conference, London, October.

Kelly, L. (2001). 'From rhetoric to curiosity: Urgent questions from the UK about response to trafficking in women'. *Asian Women,* 13: 21-36.

Kelly, L.; (2002). *Routes to (in)justice: A research review on the reporting, investigation and prosecution of rape cases*. London: CPSI.

Kelly, L. & Regan, L. (2000). *Stopping traffic: Exploring the extent of, and responses to, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in the UK*. London: Home Office.

Kelly, L.; & Regan, L. (2001). *Rhetorics and realities: Sexual exploitation of children in Europe*. London: CWASU.

Kelly, L.; Burton, S.; & Regan, L. (1996). 'Beyond victim and survivor: Sexual violence, identity, feminist theory and practice'. In Adkins, L. & Merchant, V. (Eds), *Sexualising the social: The social organization of power*. London: Macmillan.

Morgan, R. (1970). *Sisterhood is powerful.* New York: Vintage Books.

Mullender A.; et al. (2001). *Children's needs, coping strategies and understanding of woman abuse*. Final report to the ESRC, Warwick University.

O'Connell Davidson J. (1998). *Prostitution, power and freedom.,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Seith C. (2001) 'Security matters: Domestic violence and public social services'. *Violence Against Women (European Perspectives),* 7(7): 799-820.

Stanko, E.; & Crisp, D. (2001). 'Domestic violence: A health care issue'. In Shepherd J. (Ed), *Violence and the health care professional.* Oxford University Press, pp 75-93.

Stanko, E.; et al. (1998). *Counting the cost: Estimating the impact of domestic violence in the London borough of Hackney*. London: Crime Concern.