

‘The Powerful Ones’
Exploring Young Men’s Understandings
of Sexual Violence and Rape Culture in
Aotearoa New Zealand

By

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Abstract

The centralising of women within institutional responses to sexual violence (Ministry of Justice, 2019) and sexual violence scholarship (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004a, 2011; Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle, & Perese, 2010; Gavey, 1991; Jordan, 2004, 2008) consequently means that despite men being both the primary perpetrators of sexual violence, and whose privileged identities create and maintain rape culture, men often remain invisible within sexual violence discourse. To gain insight into how young men understand sexual violence, rape culture, and their own identity within these structures, this research involved (n=11) qualitative semi-structured interviews with cisgender men aged between 18-30 who identified as heterosexual. These interviews highlighted the complexities of participant's comprehension of sexual violence, particularly regarding the typology and motivations of offenders, the relationship between gender, alcohol, power and consent, and the various perceived causes of sexual violence. Participants also signalled the importance of comprehensive consent and sex education as a method of sexual violence prevention. This research is essential to responsibilise sexual violence prevention as the obligation of men, effectively inform prevention, intervention and response measures, and work towards ultimately eradicating sexual violence and the wider rape culture in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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“You might not be a bad man - but unless you're doing something to challenge and change the world we live in for the better, you're not a good one either.

All you are is an ordinary person, doing nothing and holding out your hand for a cookie that you do not deserve”.

(Ford, 2014)

Chapter One – Introduction

Sexual violence is often considered ‘a women’s issue’. The inundation of media, statistics, research, and anecdotes all tend to reinforce that ‘a *woman* is raped’, working together to effectively eradicate men from the sexual violence narrative (Beaudrow, 2014; Katz, 2013). The accurate response, according to Beaudrow (2014), would be saying ‘a *man* raped a woman’, and that therefore sexual violence is not ‘a women’s issue’, but an issue of men (Katz, 2013). While a substantial body of literature documents the experiences of women who have experienced sexual violence, there remains limited discussion on the role of men within sexual violence discourse. Even more scarce is how men, not as victim-survivors or convicted perpetrators but as a gender, understand and perceive sexual violence, especially considering they are key in sustaining male supremacy, rape supportive attitudes, and the wider rape culture encompassing sexual violence. This project, therefore, conducted exploratory semi-structured interviews investigating men’s perceptions of sexual violence, and situated participants own accounts within a feminist context of rape culture.

In the past decade, New Zealand has had a myriad of high-profile sexual violence cases highlighting the insidious and pervasive nature of rape culture in Aotearoa. From instances of sexual harassment, to gang rape, the public discourse on these cases have consistently trivialised or even blatantly erased the actions of men, by interrogating and blaming the female victim-survivors for the harm they experienced, and ignoring the role of men. For example, in 2013 the notorious Roast Busters case involved a group of young men intoxicating, gang raping and filming multiple underage girls before boasting online, and did not result in a single charge laid, leaving the men wholly unaccountable for their actions (Steward & Dennett, 2014). A couple of years later, then Prime Minister John Key pulled the hair of a female waitress, after which the NZ Government was quick to defend his actions as “light-hearted, ... a bit of a joke” (Bracewell-Worrall, 2017, n.p.), contributing to the ongoing minimisation and normalisation of behaviours that sustain rape culture behaviours that sustain rape culture (Wilmerding, Knuth-Bouracee, & Edleson, 2018). In 2016 there was the Chiefs scandal, whereby multiple members of the rugby team sexually assaulted a young woman, resulting in a national outcry of hostility towards the accuser and nationwide defence of the accused (Edens & Geenty, 2016; Mather, 2016). A year later, during his rape trial, Scott Kuggeleijn’s lawyer asked the victim/survivor “were you saying ‘no’, but not meaning ‘no’?”, and later stated that “consent given reluctantly or regretted later is still consent” (Dennis, 2019, n.p.), blatantly contradicting well-known rape prevention rhetoric that ‘no’ means ‘no’ and that consent must be free, reversible, informed and enthusiastic (Mariam, 2017; Rape Prevention Education, 2016). In 2019 a story broke regarding University of Otago’s

residential hall Knox College, uncovering more than six years' worth of sexual violence allegations that were dismissed or ignored by leadership, argued to be a result of the structural misogyny, victim blaming, and objectification of women present within the institution (O'Mannin, 2019). Finally, most recently, the Grace Millane trial was visceral reminder of rape culture's presence in contemporary Aotearoa, as the deceased was relentlessly blamed for her rape and murder for previously (consensually) engaging in rough sex (Beaumont, 2019). These cases highlight the extent to which rape culture remains prolific within Aotearoa, obscuring men's harmful attitudes and actions, and centering the behaviours of victim-survivors. However, this phenomenon is not isolated to specific cases, but also the wider discourse around sexual violence prevention.

One of the founding creeds of rape culture, is a victim-blaming narrative that displaces the responsibility for rape prevention on the shoulders of women (Gavey, 2005). Incidentally, most New Zealand-based research has been centred primarily on the experiences of women and girls as victim-survivors (for example see, Fanslow & Robinson, 2004a, 2011; Fanslow et al., 2010; Gavey, 1991; Jordan, 2004, 2008), as are most institutional and programmatic responses to sexual violence in New Zealand (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Whilst research that foregrounds the voices of victim-survivors is critical and necessary, they should not shoulder the responsibility of preventing men's violence towards women. Centralising women has meant that programmes designed to tackle gender-based violence have historically positioned men as the problem and often not part of the solution (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016). Contemporary sexual violence research and prevention initiatives have begun to reconceptualise men into their target audience, however work is still needed to fundamentally shift the burden of responsibility, for as Eves (2012) points out, "focusing on women alone is insufficient to overturn the power structures that entrench gender inequality and sustain violence against women" (p. 1217). Therefore effective understandings of rape culture, responses to victim-survivors, and prevention approaches must also be informed by empirical research on men's understandings of sexual violence. As men are overrepresented as perpetrators of sexual violence, and certain constructions of masculinity are integral to sustaining rape culture, an increased body of research is needed to investigate how men understand sexual violence. While sexual violence may not be part of many men's routine behaviour, men's complicity in upholding the sexually harmful attitudes embedded in patriarchal structures, is widespread (Pease, 2008).

This introductory chapter further contextualises this research and outlines the key research objectives. It begins by defining key terms relating to this research. Following, to locate the current study within the context of existing literature and further clarify the rationale for undertaking this research, this chapter then introduces the literature exploring the nexus of sexual

violence, men, and masculinities. Finally this chapter will outline the key research aims and provide an overview of the thesis structure.

A Note On Language & Definitions

Defining Sexual Violence

To comprehensively understand how men perceive sexual violence, it is essential to explore the existence of competing definitions and their debates. Research participants for this project drew on a variety of definitions to facilitate their own understandings, and the underlying rationale of their definitional understanding may, in turn, have shaped their set of attitudes and behaviours. Sexual violence has always been a historically contested concept, however, terminology is important (Bourke, 2007). How these terms are defined affects how people label, explain, evaluate, and assimilate their own experiences and convey numerous assumptions about power, coercion, sexuality, and gender (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). Therefore understanding the variety of definitions, alongside the key concepts raised in their formulation, is essential to contextualise the definitions drawn on in this thesis and to situate participants' understandings discussed in subsequent chapters.

Legal definitions are often relied on as some form of 'objective' truth, and are some of the most commonly accepted in the wider community (Muehlenhard, Powch, Phelps, & Giusti, 1992)¹. The Crimes Act 1961 uses the term 'sexual violation' as a replacement for 'sexual violence' to describe either the rape of another person, or the unlawful sexual connection with another person. Rape, as defined in the legislation, is the penetration of a persons genitalia by the penis without consent, and unlawful sexual connection as a sexual interaction – or 'sexual connection' - without consent. The New Zealand Police (n.d), has chosen to operate with a deliberately broad definition that simply states sexual assault as being any unwanted or forced sex act or behaviour that has happened without a person's consent. Despite these relatively inclusive definitions, the mis-conception still remains within society that rape must be vaginal penetration by a penis (Ellison & Munro, 2009).

In response to the often restrictive legal definitions of sexual violence, feminist scholars introduced deliberately broadened definitions which allow for Kelly's (1987) 'continuum of sexual violence', in which all behaviours that are threatening, degrading, or humiliating within the context of intimate contact are considered sexual violence. Similar definitions are often employed by feminist-influenced sexual violence support services. For example Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation (2019) simply states that "sexual abuse is any sexual activity imposed on you that you don't want". Feminist researchers often strive to advocate for a definition

¹ Despite the fact that laws are written by legislatures composed predominantly of white men from upper socioeconomic groups who frame these problems from their own perspectives, resulting in a universalism of the (white) male default (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999).

of rape that has a threefold approach; to challenge the traditional stereotypes and myths about rape often portrayed in mainstream definitions, to situate rape within the social and political context which sustains women's oppression, and to provide a framework that validates the experiences of anyone who identifies as a victim/survivor of sexual harm (Bourke, 2007). This reconsideration catalysed an entire feminist analysis that situated rape as not an isolated event, moral transgression, or individual exchange gone wrong, but an act of terrorism within a context of systemic female subjugation which emphasises power, control and domination (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Griffin, 1977; MacKinnon, 1989). These new definitions allowed for a holistic understanding of rape as culturally and socially situated, an essential acknowledgment for recognising the structural context that supports rape behaviours and enables rape culture (Gavey, 2018).

Thus, the definition of sexual violence is contested and varies from narrow legal definitions to broader academic definitions. This research draws on a contemporary and radical definition proposed by Bourke (2007) who claims that an act of rape requires two components; first, a person has to identify a particular act as sexual², and second, that person must also claim the act as non-consensual, unwanted, or coerced³. Fundamentally, drawing on Bourke's (2007) writing, this thesis takes the position that so long as someone says an act is 'rape' or sexual violence, that claim is accepted.

Victims and Perpetrators

It is important to note that the above definition adopted in this thesis is deliberately gender-neutral, and therefore encompasses victim-survivors or perpetrators of any gender. However this research refers specifically to male-on-female rape committed by cis-gender heterosexual men, whom are vastly over-represented as sexual violence perpetrators (Greenfield, 1997; Planty, Langton, Krebs, Berzofsky, & Smiley-McDonald, 2016). It is also important to clarify the terminology used in this thesis when discussing individuals experiences of sexual violence, as there is substantive debate about the usage of the terms 'victim' or 'survivor' when discussing those who have experienced sexual harm. This debate stems from awareness that the term 'victim' can be a reinforcement of passivity, whilst 'survivor' equates with "active resistance and a sense of agency" (Jordan, 2001, p. 9). However, labelling people as either victims or survivors disregards the possibility that the journey from victim to survivor can be arduous, with both terms potentially relevant to different aspects of peoples' experiences at various times in their lives (Jordan, 2013). To acknowledge that people can be both victims and survivors, I use the term 'victim-survivor' in this thesis when referring to an individuals' experiences of sexual violence.

² However the individual wishes to define 'sexual'.

³ In however the individual may wish to define those terms.

Masculinities, Sexual Violence & the Role Of Men Within a Rape Culture – An Introduction

Central to the themes of this thesis, are men and their masculine identities, sexual violence and the wider rape culture in which it is perpetrated, however these concepts do not exist in isolation, but rather remain inherently interconnected. In Aotearoa New Zealand, approximately 1 in 5 women will experience sexual violence during their lifetime, and for Māori women and girls this statistic is almost double (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004b; Mayhew & Reilly, 2009). A globally pervasive and traumatic phenomenon, rape is seen by Jewkes (2000) as a tangible demonstration of men's power over women which serves to maintain their supremacy within a patriarchal, white-supremacist, heteronormative society. A society that Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth (1993) consider to perpetuate models of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality which in turn foster aggression, violence, and fear. Gavey (2005) considers this society a rape culture, where rape is not an aberrant act committed by deviant individuals, or 'bad apples', but rather connected to, and enabled by, a myriad of everyday social and cultural practices. As one of these practices, Connell (2002) views gender as a condition actively under construction, acquired and enacted through the pattern of social arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern.

The 'kiwi bloke' is a national symbol of masculinity in New Zealand, which enforces a culturally robust prescription for (Pākehā⁴) men to be hard-working, beer-swilling, physically strong, unemotional, aggressive, practical, rugged, rugby-playing, strictly heterosexual, sexually predatory male whose lexicon includes terms such as 'harden up', 'get hard', or 'be a man' (Law, Campbell, & Schick, 1999; Phillips, 1987; Phillips, 1996; Terry & Braun, 2009). In the last 30 years, the 'kiwi bloke' prescription of masculinity, has been the target of scrutiny due to concerns that the masculine virtues of emotional stoicism, physicality, aggression, and compulsory heterosexuality may promote violence as socially normative male behaviour (Phillips, 1996). Additionally, 'hyper' or 'toxic' masculinity is described not as the masculine gender role itself, but the exaggerated masculine actions exhibited in trying to attain the gender ideal (Ranger, 2015) and has been linked with men who hold more 'traditional' gender-role expectations, have a higher likelihood of violence, and are the most likely to perpetrate acts of sexual assault (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Berkowitz (1994) explains that "it is the experience of masculinity itself - how men think of themselves as men - that creates the psychological and cultural environment that leads men to rape... this environment is perpetuated through men's relationships with and expectations of each other" (p. 1).

⁴ A Māori term for a White New Zealander.

However masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body of individual's personality traits, but configurations of practices accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social context (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This is highly relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand, insofar as research on masculinities has often been stereotypical, restrictive, or universalised, erasing the voices of marginalised identities and obscuring the unique interconnectedness of race and gender relations and their relationship with sexually harmful situations (Ranger, 2015; Robertson & Oulton, 2008). Clarifying the differences in masculine constructions between Pākehā, Māori or other men of colour is essential as it facilitates a more indepth critical analysis of the ways in which different New Zealand men construct their masculine identities in relation to each other and becomes particularly salient when unpacking the nexus of race and sexual violence. Therefore considering the experience and reproduction of masculinity within a colonised context, for both Māori and Pākehā, is essential for a nuanced understanding of diverse masculinities and their relationship with sexual violence, and consequently the ability to inform effective sexual violence prevention.

In the limited research on men's perceptions of sexual violence, Kelly-Hanku et al. (2016) found that it is men who generally construct the climate in which sexual violence occurs and dictates whether victim-survivors are accepted back into society. However, also important is that research by Rodriguez et al. (2019) and Adams, Towns, and Gavey (1995) notes that men's discussion of their own sexual violence diverts or trivialises their personal responsibility, actively working to justify, camouflage and maintain positions of dominance over women. This discrepancy, between the impact of their attitudes and perceptions, and their desire to displace responsibility, signals just how essential it is to involve men, wherever possible, in prevention and intervention approaches. Therefore, reconceptualising the role of men within sexual violence discourse is essential to effectively challenge rape culture, and the systems sustaining sexual violence.

Research Aims

This research aims to unpack how young, cisgender, heterosexual New Zealand men understand sexual violence,. In doing so, this thesis aims to help inform how effective prevention and intervention measures should best engage men and boys. The following questions underpinned the research:

1. How do men define sexual violence?
2. What does 'rape culture' mean to men?
3. Who do men think are likely to be the perpetrators and victim-survivors of sexual violence?
4. Why do men think sexual violence happens?

5. How do men think it best to prevent and respond to sexual violence?

This research draws on the developing body of literature interrogating the role of men in sexual violence prevention, recognising that constructions of masculinity and gender norms are key in contributing to rape culture and the perpetration of sexual violence. However, the majority of sexual violence scholarship is centered on the experiences of women and girls as victim-survivors, and as such does not accurately reflect the way men understand this issue. Victim-centric research is essential, however when not paired with research involving, and centring men, remains one-sided. Challenging this position, this research provides a qualitative, feminist approach to highlighting the voices of men in order to examine an issue that is primarily perpetrated by men, towards women.

Thesis Overview

Having clarified the rationale for undertaking this research, Chapter Two reviews the extensive literature examining the complex nexus of masculinity, men, sexual violence, and prevention. Chapter Three outlines the epistemological and theoretical foundations, and research methods used, before discussing the ethical issues, limitations and personal challenges faced during the research process. The findings of data collection commence with Chapter Four, which maps the broader understandings of how men perceive and define sexual violence, rape culture, and consent, as well as considering what they consider to be the cause of sexually violent behaviour. Chapter Five examines what participants consider the major consequences of sexual violence for the perpetrators, and examines how they best think to prevent and respond to sexual violence. Finally, Chapter Six provides a critical discussion of the findings, highlighting some key themes that emerged from the findings and contextualises these themes within the context of contemporary New Zealand society.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

To position this project on men's understandings of sexual violence in a broader context, it is necessary to provide an overview of the most relevant existing literature. This requires examining a diverse body of literature exploring the intersection between masculinities, sexual violence and sexual violence prevention. This chapter begins by outlining the wider literature on men and sexual violence, before specifically exploring the masculinities literature. Then, this chapter continues by examining the interplay between masculinities and sexual violence, unpacking how the literature frames the interconnected nature of the two. Next, follows an examination of rape culture and its relationship with masculinity, particularly the ways in which rape culture is sustained by the objectification and sexualisation of women, and belief in rape myths. Following, this chapter reviews the qualitative literature investigating different demographic's perceptions of violence, noting the scarcity of research exploring men's perceptions of rape in particular. Finally, this chapter examines the changing role of men in sexual violence prevention reflected in the literature. By mapping the existing literature in this area, this chapter situates this research in the terrain of sexual violence and masculinities literature.

Men & Sexual Violence

Literature examining the nexus of men and sexual violence is diverse, and exists across a wide variety of temporal, cultural, and social contexts. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the entire literature base, this chapter instead aims to highlight the three main areas of literature exploring men and sexual violence, and the ways in which there remains a lacuna regarding men's perceptions of sexual violence against women particularly. In general, men's involvement in sexual violence discourse can be separated into three categories: men as offenders; men as victims; and men in prevention. The first category most commonly explores prevalence (e.g., Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher, & Hoffman, 2006; Mayhew & Reilly, 2009), theorises the cause of rape (e.g., Bryden & Grier, 2011; Ellis, 1989; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2010; McKibbin, Shackelford, Goetz, & Starratt, 2008; Thornhill & Palmer, 2000), or maps the typology of offenders (e.g., Berkowitz, 1992; Groth & Birnbaum, 2013; Jewkes et al., 2006). This literature is multi-disciplinary, however remains heavily influenced by psychology, and draws on a plethora of perspectives to map male perpetrated sexual violence, the prevalence of harmful behaviours, different psychological, evolutionary, or social causes of sexual violence, and examines certain risk factors for offending. While it is impossible to sum up the incredible expanse of literature on men who rape, this literature generally identifies the perpetrator by their offense, not expanding their scope to analyse attitudes regarding sexual violence or harmful

attitudes in a wider non-offending audience. The second category explores the typology of male rape (e.g., Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Graham, 2006; Mitchell, Hirschman, & Nagayama, 1999), issues of sexuality relating to male rape (e.g., Davies & McCartney, 2003; Davies, Rogers, & Bates, 2008; Rumney, 2009), and complexities with male victims accessing support and the criminal justice system (e.g., Javaid, 2014, 2016; Kassing & Prieto, 2003). Here, there is a relatively considerable – and growing – literature base on the experiences of male victims, and the unique social, legal, and psychological barriers they face in society. While much of this literature explores social perceptions regarding male rape victims (Javaid, 2016; Rumney, 2009), this often focuses on myths involving sexuality, rather than the wider issues of sexual violence and rape culture which remain firmly gendered. Finally, the third category – which will be detailed more later in this chapter – explores the wider concept of involving men in prevention (e.g., Berkowitz, 2002; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Flood, 2006; Flood, 2011; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015), or men as potential bystanders (e.g., Bannon, Brosi, & Foubert, 2013; Foubert & Perry, 2007; Katz, 2018). As will be discussed, this literature has begun to reconceptualise the role of men in sexual violence prevention, and asserts the necessity of implementing gender specific programmes within male peer groups. However, whilst this literature centres men's responsibility, their involvement often perpetuates 'white knight' stereotypes of men protecting their female friends and whānau, and leaves constructions of masculinity and wider social inequalities unaddressed (Pease, 2008). Additionally, whilst much of this research promotes programs designed to target men's underlying attitudes, it continues to lack a critical exploration of how men view sexual violence to begin with. Therefore, this thesis enhances the current literature based by providing rich understandings into how young men perceive sexual violence, the people involved, and the wider culture in which it is perpetrated, as without these insights both academic scholarship and research supporting prevention programmes remains inchoate.

Masculinity

To situate men's understandings of sexual violence it is essential to introduce the concept of masculinity and its theorisation within existing literature. To understand how men perceive sexual violence, it is necessary to conduct a simultaneous exploration into how men create their masculine identities as either in opposition to, or alignment with, sexually harmful attitudes and behaviours. Gender identity and gender expression are some of the ultimate tenets of how individuals interact with their social, cultural and environmental context, and therefore exploring the literature on masculinity to contextualise how young men construct 'being a man' is essential to their understanding of sexual violence, particularly due to the highly gendered nature of sexual harm (Cahill, 2001).

Modern sociological and feminist understandings of gender, see it not as an attribute of individuals, but as the name given to cultural practices that construct women and men as different, which is thought to advantage men and subordinate women (Connell, 2002; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus, masculinity is commonly defined as the pattern or configuration of social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order, and socially distinguished from practices linked to the position of women (Connell, 2000). Normative cross-cultural behaviours of masculinity are often considered to be aggression, control, toughness, sexual aggression, emotional stoicism, hetero-sexism, hyper-sexualisation, physical competency, and avoidance of femininity (Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

Research on men and masculinities has a diverse history and has developed significantly since early theorising. Whilst a complete overview of the masculinities field and its developments is beyond the scope of the thesis, this chapter aims to provide a synopsis of how the study of masculinity has developed in relation to sexual violence. In the early 20th century, Freud influenced psychoanalytic research which showed adult personality as being constructed via conflict-ridden process of development, in which the gender dynamics of families are central (Lewes, 1985). Later, anthropological researchers developed the concept of a ‘social role’, a social-psychological version of role theory which, when applied to gender, produced the idea of ‘sex roles’ (Connell, 2000). This work treated masculinity and femininity as sex-specific and sex-appropriate patterns of social expectations and behaviour which were transmitted to youth through a process of socialisation (Connell, 2000). The idea of a ‘male sex role’ led to increased recognition regarding male gender expectations and norms, and the concomitant difficulties faced in conforming to the norms (Hacker, 1957).

In the 1970s, alongside the proliferation of second wave feminism, the ‘sex role’ idea was radicalised by feminism, leading to a discussion among both feminist women and pro-feminist men, regarding how men’s sex role does not just oppress women, but also men – resulting in the manifestation of harmful behaviours, such as sexual aggression (Pleck & Sawyer, 1974). Social constructionism developed in the 1980s, an understanding of gender that had intellectual underpinnings within feminist analysis. This growth was catalysed in 1987 within the social sciences by a concern about a ‘masculine crisis’ in Western society (Law et al., 1999). During this year, research produced by Brod (1987), Kaufman (1987), and Kimmel (1987) in the United States; Connell (1987) in Australia; and Phillips (1987) in New Zealand, all shared a common conclusion, that masculinity was not an essentialist biological or psychological state, but rather ‘socially constructed’ in different societal and historical spaces. Within this renewed understanding, gender was considered a structure of social relations (particularly power relations) and paid direct attention to the interplay of gender with race, sexuality, class and nationality. This in turn laid the foundation for a more nuanced understanding of the cause of sexual violence as

rooted in the attainment of the hegemonic ideal, and the importance of considering male peer relations, rather than solely considering the individual male domination of women (Connell, 2000).

In the last two decades of the 20th century, there has been a plethora of ethnographic and life-history studies into the social construction of masculinity, particularly within specific times and locations⁵. According to Connell (2000), contemporary masculinities research has resulted in seven key conclusions which are relevant for understanding the way men interact with their own gender, and other men – considered to be a vital factor in exhibiting sexually aggressive behaviour as a form of social dominance and control over all genders. First, that there is no one pattern of masculinity that is found everywhere, different cultures and different periods in history construct gender differently. Second, that these different masculinities do not sit side-by-side, but rather there are definite social relations creating a hierarchy, where some masculinities are dominant, whilst others are subordinated or marginalised. Third, that patterns of conduct our society defines as masculine may exist beyond the individual – masculinities are defined collectively in culture and sustained in institutions. Fourth, that men's bodies do not determine the patterns of masculinity, rather men's bodies are addressed, defined and disciplined, and given outlets and pleasures, by the gender order of society. Fifth, that masculinities come into existence as people act – they are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting. Sixth, that masculinities are full of contradictory desires and conduct. Finally, that whilst masculinities are created in specific historical circumstances, as those circumstances change, the gender practices can be contested and reconstructed (Connell, 2000).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Of particular relevance to the relationship between masculinities and sexual violence is the concept of hegemonic masculinity – a term originally attributed to Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) but most consistently associated with the work of Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is generally used to represent a *version of masculinity* that is considered legitimate, 'natural', or unquestionable in a particular set of gender relations (Campbell & Bell, 2000), established through a vigorous process of negotiation, defended and legitimated over time (Campbell, 2000). By operating through constant negation of all those marked 'others' in the community, the hegemonic ideal is constructed performatively in such a way that it becomes part of the unquestioned fabric of social interaction, while the performers gaze is constantly turned outwards in continual negation of any threat from without (Campbell,

⁵ Examples of this include: a private school in inter-war England (Heward, 2017), a clergyman's family in 19th century England (Tosh, 1991), two body-building gyms in California (Klein, 1993), a gold mine in South Africa under apartheid (Moodie, 1994), an urban police force in the United States (McElhinny, 1994), drinking groups in Australian bars (Tomsen, 1997), and the US corporate office on the verge of a fatal decision (Messerschmidt, 1997).

2000). Hegemonic masculinity is also used to refer to the *pattern of practice* (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue (Campbell & Bell, 2000). A key feature of hegemonic masculinity is that a hegemonic power relation actually implicates a range of relationally empowered masculinities, and suggests distinguishing, at the very least, between the *hegemonic* (the ideal), *complicit* (masculinities constructed as not achieving the hegemonic ideal but still benefiting from it), *subordinate* (masculinities constructed as lower on the social hierarchy than the hegemonic ideal), and *marginalized* masculinities (those whose identities interplay with other marginalised social categories) (Campbell & Bell, 2000; Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

As research on men and masculinity became solidified as an academic field in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the concept of hegemonic masculinity became heavily adopted within diverse academic fields (Barrett, 1996; Martino, 1996; Messerschmidt, 2005; Newburn & Stanko, 2013; Skelton, 1993), and grafted on to general discussions of men's gender politics and relation to feminism (Segal, 1990). There are multiple examples of research applying specific hegemonic masculinity models to violence against women, for example Groes-Green (2009) found that hegemonic masculinity helped explain young men's involvement in sexually harmful behaviour in Mozambique, by considering unemployment as hindering their ability to exert power and authority through economic powers or social status within the male peer group, and instead exert their authority through violent and/or sexual performance with female partners. Additionally, Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) and Stoudt (2006) linked institutionalised hegemonic ideals of masculinity, and explicit violence exhibited as a result, highlighting that masculine behaviours are not singularly proselytised and regulated within male peer groups, but embedded in institutional and social structures.

However, the hegemonic model has not been without its criticisms. Hearn (2012) stipulates that while the hegemonic masculinity model has generally had powerful impacts on studies on men and masculinities, its application to, and impact, on the problem of men's violence to women has been subdued. The author's reasoning is that violence is generally portrayed in the hegemonic masculinity scheme as a means, albeit strategic, to pre-existing 'ends', rather than constitutive of gender relations (Hearn, 2012). Edwards (2006) claims that whilst Connell's work on hegemonic masculinity is relevant to men's violence to women, the violence has not been effectively foregrounded. Edwards (2006) comments that more recently Connell's work has tended to move away from more interpersonal questions of violence against women or men towards more macrostructural concerns. Moreover, as Murphy (2009) discusses, some parts of Connell's work emphasize violence as an ideal masculine practice upheld in sport, war and brutal competition between men (Connell, 1987, 1997), while other parts stress hegemony in

institutional practices, family values, corporate profit, individual freedom and international competitiveness (Connell, 1995).

Growing research efforts in this area have continued to develop and expand on Connell's original concept, primarily through four key ways. First, by documenting the consequences and costs of hegemony (Messerschmidt, 1997), and the damage that can result from its enactment (Messner, 1992). Second, by uncovering both the visible and invisible mechanisms of hegemony (Sabo & Jansen, 1992). Third, through showing greater diversity and multiplicity in masculinities (Higate, 2003), and finally, by tracing changes and adjustments in hegemonic masculinities (Dasgupta, 2000). From the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, the concept of hegemonic masculinity thus passed from a conceptual model with a fairly narrow empirical base to a widely used framework for research and debate about men and masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Elucidating men's perceptions of sexual violence, simultaneously results in discourse about perceived 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits or behaviour, highlighting how men discern their own identity in relation to both other men and other women. As a term, hegemonic masculinity is used to embody the current most honoured way of being a man, which requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and ideologically legitimates the global subordination of women to men. Therefore investigating perceptions of sexual violence is essential. As whilst not all men sexually offend, all men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is centrally and directly connected with the institutionalization of men's dominance over women (Carrigan et al., 1985).

Masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand

In Aotearoa, Berg and Kearns (1996) propose that practices of colonisation led to a representation of a hegemonic Pākehā masculine subject, and all those who are marked as 'Other' tend to be marginalised. According to Ranger (2015), attempts to define or articulate gender and masculinities within New Zealand have often resulted in stereotypical discussions, and have focused on select examples at the expense of others. For example, beer-drinking (Campbell, Law, & Honeyfield, 1999), rural mindedness and 'Number 8 wire', entrepreneurialism (Law et al., 1999; Phillips, 1987), Māori 'savages' (Hokowhitu, 2004), hard-working and unemotional stoicism (Phillips, 1987), Pākehā national pride (Hood, 1997), and intrepid travellers and explorers (Bell, 2002). Constructions of masculinity within Aotearoa are also heavily reliant on the physicality of rural activities, and therefore Pākehā South Islanders often code the (predominantly rural) South as more masculine and White, whereas the (more urbanised) North is seen as more feminine and Māori (Berg & Kearns, 1996). New Zealand literature on masculinities also focuses heavily on the construction of masculinity or male identities within spectator and participant sports (For example see, Bruce, Falcous, & Thorpe, 2007; Courtney,

2019; Hood, 1997; Phillips, 1987). Additionally, much of the research on masculinities, even in colonised countries such as Aotearoa, presents masculinity as universal through erasing the voices of marginalised identities and obscuring the unique interconnectedness of race and gender relations and their relationship with sexually harmful situations (Robertson & Oulton, 2008). Colonised 'communities' are imaginary for numerous reasons, including the fact that they are represented as universal when they are actually highly specific to members of the hegemonic class. Therefore, not only is the universal default masculine, but the masculine default is white.

As a result of this 'universalism', considering the experience of (re)producing masculinity within a colonised context - for Māori, Pākehā, and other ethnicities - is essential to further a more nuanced understanding of diverse masculinities and their relationship with sexual violence, a much needed consideration for informing effective and culturally appropriate responses to sexual violence. However, within the current literature there is a glaring absence of work examining the interconnected nature of masculinities and sexual violence in New Zealand, highlighting the distinct need for such research.

Masculinity & Sexual Violence

Constructs of gender, according to Dobash and Dobash (1998) result in a system that supports violence against women through employing violence as a resource for demonstrating and asserting masculinity over women. Sexual violence is often considered to be not be an act of deviance, but rather an act that conforms to an ideal standard of masculinity (Kimmel, 1995, p. 189). Central to hegemonic constructions of masculinity are physical competency, heterosexuality, dominance, and sexual promiscuity, therefore, enacting sexual violence may be considered a gender accomplishment, whereby men are acting in line with the normative masculine criteria legitimated by hegemony (Messerschmidt, 2000).

The link between masculinity and sexual violence is nebulous - being masculine does not lead to sexual violence, but research shows that men with more patriarchal attitudes have a greater use and acceptance of gender-based violence, including sexual violence (Abrahams et al., 2006). A study by Sanday (1981) shows that men in patriarchal societies which promote a mandatory adherence to traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity were more likely to appropriate women's sexuality for their own use. According to Burt (1980) and Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny (2002), in rape prone societies such as the United States, traditional gender roles encourage male sexual violence. Masculine ideologies and the endorsement of 'macho personalities' were particularly implicated as problematic in regard to sexual assault (Murnen et al., 2002). Reis (1986) hypothesized two important characteristics that connected masculinity to sexual assault, first, through the endorsement of a 'macho personality' (e.g., high risk-taking, accepting physical aggression, casual attitudes about sex) characteristics and, second, the belief that women were inferior to men. There is also a strong link between traditional masculine

behaviours such as sexual aggression/coercion (Bumby, 1996), belief in traditional gender roles (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985), hostility towards women (Check, Malamuth, Elias, & Barton, 1985) and dominance (Malamuth, Check, & Briere, 1986) with belief in rape myths⁶. Literature on rape and masculinity, is also heavily focused around the use of rape during war-time (For example see, Alison, 2007; Baaz & Stern, 2009; Grey & Shepherd, 2013; Merger, 2010; Zubriggen, 2010), and how soldiers see themselves as committing rape as resulting from masculine heterosexuality, where men have sexual ‘needs’ that must be satisfied and where a man, if deprived, has the ‘right’ to take women by force (Baaz & Stern, 2009). Whilst rape myth endorsement does not indicate that a man will commit an act of rape, in conjunction with other aggressive attitudes and behaviours, these beliefs cause an increased propensity⁷ to commit sexual aggression (DeGue & DiLillo, 2004).

Understanding the intersections of masculinity and sexual violence is essential for this research project, not only as its focus, but also as it aligns with the feminist conceptualisation of sexual violence as being a natural extension of the gendered configurations of masculinity and femininity, which depict men as powerful, superior, and dominant, and women as passive, nurturing, and subordinate (Brod & Kaufman, 1994). However, masculinity is not only implicated directly in men's perpetration of sexual violence, but also in the widespread inaction or complicity in the face of sexual violence (Flood, 2019). Therefore, masculinity contributes to both specific harmful behaviours, and also the wider rape culture in which the behaviours remain condoned, and often actively celebrated.

Understanding Rape Culture

Arguably, most men do not exhibit sexually harmful behaviours, however all men benefit from the existence of a culture in which those behaviours remain unchallenged and male superiority is facilitated unchecked (Carrigan et al., 1985). Therefore, sexual violence exists not only as a result of sexual aggression, but within a rape culture which underpins the both the theorisation, and enactment, of sexually harmful behaviours. As such, exploring perceptions of sexual violence are inchoate without also interrogating young mens’ understandings of rape culture, and their own position within it. It is unclear who first coined the term ‘rape culture’, and debates still continue⁸. Heberle (1996) traces the origin back to Susan Griffin’s (1977) book chapter, “*Rape: The All-American Crime*”, whereas Carr (2013) tracked it to “*Rape: The First*

⁶ Defined by Burt (1980, p. 217) as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists”.

⁷ This increased inclination is measured through factors such reducing a man’s perceived level of responsibility when committing sexual aggression or facilitating a desire to commit future acts of sexual aggression if guaranteed not to be caught (DeGue & DiLillo, 2005).

⁸ For a more indepth overview of these debates and the origins of the term see Phillips (2016).

Sourcebook for Women” published in 1974 by Connell and Wilson⁹. After the publication of Connell and Wilson’s (1974) book, Cambridge Documentary Films released a film “Rape Culture” co-produced by Margaret Lazarus (1975) who recalls that the film was the first time the term was used. Alternatively, some argue that the term ‘rape culture’ was first articulated in Susan Brownmiller’s (1975) *Against our Will* as ‘rape-supportive culture’, and later elaborated on in the anthology *Transforming a Rape Culture* (Buchwald et al., 1993).

Rather than an individualising focus on the perpetrator explicitly, the term ‘rape culture’ describes the cultural practices that reproduce, normalise and justify the perpetration of sexual violence (Phillips, 2016; Rentschler, 2014). One of the most accepted definitions, is Buchwald et al.’s. (1993) claim that rape culture refers to the beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. More recently, Gavey (2018) unpacked rape culture further by proposing that it was made up of two key interlocking elements. One, a gendered dominance-submission binary that provides a normal pattern for (hetero)sex that makes a man’s rape of a woman possible and, at the same time, plausibly deniable (it was ‘just sex’ not ‘rape’) (Gavey, 2018). The second element being the constellation of victim-blaming and trivialising depictions of rape – such as the rape jokes, the ‘slut shaming’, the myths that situate certain categories of men above suspicion and certain categories of women below the threshold for sympathy and understanding (Gavey, 2018).

A common visual depiction of rape culture, used in rape prevention education and therefore potentially known to participants, is the *Rape Culture Pyramid* (11th Principle Consent, n.d.)(see Figure 1), which acknowledges that rape, as a form of explicit violence, is sustained by behaviours that remove autonomy (such as groping, threatening, or safe word violation¹⁰), these of which are supported by the existence of degrading behaviours (such as stalking, cat-calling or unsolicited sexual images). At the bottom of the pyramid, supporting each of the tiers above it, and consequently the whole of rape culture, are normalisation behaviours (such as rape jokes and ‘boys will be boys’ rhetoric). Therefore, this image indicates that rape culture is not just the individuals are perpetrating assault, but also peers failing to intervene and prevent harm, community norms which are perpetuating cultures of violence, and systems that have neglected to hold people accountable (Wilmerding et al., 2018).

⁹ Which was largely developed from material presented at the Speak Out on Rape and the New York Radical Feminist Rape Conference held in 1971.

¹⁰ Individuals who engage in BDSM often employ a ‘safe word’: a term that when employed indicates consent is being withdrawn.

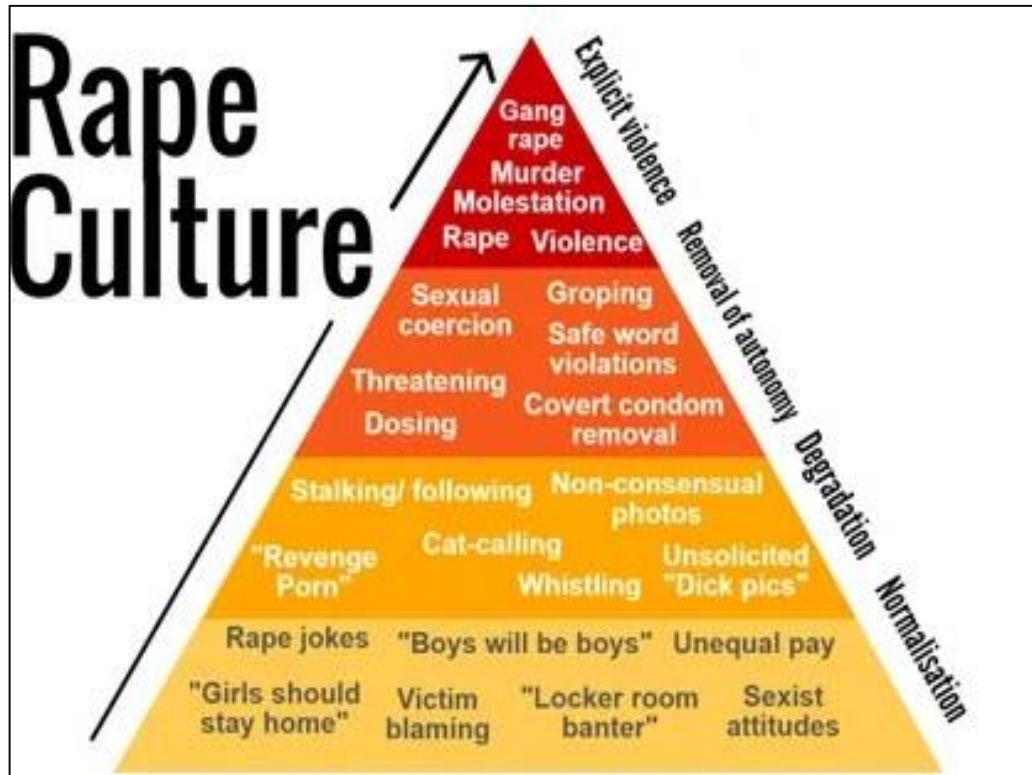


Figure 1: Pyramid of Violence

As rape culture is a concept primarily developed by radical feminists in the 1970's and kept alive through ongoing feminist scholarship in the decades since, there has been little research into how men respond to rape culture, other than examining their contribution to it. Exceptions to this are the extremely limited, but growing, body of sexual violence prevention literature that specifically address men's role in disrupting rape culture and ultimately preventing sexual harm from occurring (Palm, 2018; Walsh, 2015). Although the concept has been referred to by feminist scholars for decades, more recently – since around 2013 – rape culture discussions have been grafted onto popular discourse, particularly in the arena of digital feminist activism and the role of online media as both a platform to promote and resist rape culture (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, & Cosby, 2018; Zaleski, Gundersen, Baes, Estupinian, & Vergara, 2016). Rape culture has not been subject to extensive academic critique, as it is often employed within the context of feminist epistemologies which seek to foreground the lived experience of women without needing external validation. Exceptions to this, are critiques by Gittos (2015) who argues that the phenomenon of rape culture derives from “the hysterical climate that has arisen around rape” (p. 3) fed by ‘panicked news stories’, is demonstrably false or based on questionable evidence¹¹, and has nothing to do with rape but is designed to facilitate the

¹¹ Gittos claims that rape culture proponents rely heavily on personal accounts of those involved in rape cases, and therefore intends not to “recite endless details about people's experiences” (p. 12) but to present the facts. Interestingly, the input of lawyers Gittos knows, or of his friend, or his editor (all unnamed and

“fervent intervention by the state in our private and intimate lives” (p. 9). Similarly, McElroy (2016) argues that rape culture is a fiction created by ‘politically-correct’ feminists to engender a climate of fear and deconstruct the institutions, culture and values of Western society through legally disadvantaging one class of people (white males) in order to benefit others. However, such critiques have been extensively challenged, partially on the basis that these views affirm rather than deny the toxicity and ubiquity of rape culture (Stiebert, 2018).

Objectification and Sexualisation

This research explores young men’s perceptions of sexual violence, naturally this is imbued with their perception of women. The concept of how men view women (and their bodies) - and the resultant potential for objectification and sexualisation - is central to rape culture, and contributes to the rape perpetration. According to Hildebrand and Najdowski (2014), rape culture is sustained by the sexual objectification of women. Objectification refers to the conceptualisation of people as ‘things’, existing or being presented for the sole purpose of pleasure or consumption for the viewer (Beaumont, 2017). Research has shown that objectified women are less likely to be associated with human concepts (Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011), and are also attributed less mind (i.e., perception, emotion, thought, and intention) and moral status (i.e., deserving of moral or fair treatment) (Loughnan et al., 2010). Heteronormative patriarchal power dynamics situate women as existing for the sexual pleasure of men, resulting in a climate where women experience objectification at much higher rates than men (Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011).

Sexualisation is considered a subset of objectification which frames an individual in such a way that just their sexual functions are used to represent them as a whole, and is seen as another tool of oppression by playing a significant role in the replication and indoctrination of gender norms for all genders (Calogero et al., 2011). This is key to rape culture and men’s understanding of it, as sexual violence is sustained within a culture of rigid gender norms, and the pressure men feel to perform expected masculine behaviours on stereotypical feminine bodies. There is a significant amount of evidence linking sexualisation attitudes, adversarial sexual beliefs, acceptance of rape myths and sexist beliefs with aggressive sexual behaviour¹². Primarily as a result of manipulated emotional concern and empathy for rape victims, due to distorting the perception of a victim/survivor’s morality (Burgess & Burpo, 2012; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013). This indicates just how interconnected the sexual objectification of women is with other mechanisms of rape culture, and how some men’s perceptions of women increase the likelihood of sexual harm. Research by Lanis and Covell (1995) shows that men’s sexualisation of women has alarming effects on propensity for sexual aggression, likelihood to intervene in

all hearsay), receive mention in support of Gittos’ claims, in the absence of any independent research or any statistics.

¹² See Dean and Malamuth (1997), Malamuth and Briere (1986), Malamuth and Donnerstein (1982), Murnen, Wright and Kaluzny (2002).

harmful situations, and the treatment and potential re-victimisation of victims, consequently making interrogating sexualising and objectifying attitudes essential to developing understanding into the causes and consequences of sexual violence. However, rape culture is not solely sustained by the objectifying and sexualising tenets of the male gaze, but also the beliefs and attitudes men hold regarding women, men, sex, and rape.

Rape Myths

Given that this research is focused on men's perceptions of sexual violence, it is critical to consider the existing literature on rape myths, as participants innately reflect (mis)beliefs that men have regarding rape, rape victims, rape perpetrators and the wider rape culture (Burt, 1980). Burt and Albin (1981) maintain that rape culture is constructed of a variety of components of our belief system that support and condone rape, which are then legitimised by social and cultural norms and media sources. Burt (1980, p. 217) coined the original term 'rape myths' and defined them as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists", which deny or downplay the significance of sexual violence and blame women for their own victimization. Building on Burt's (1980) original research, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) developed their own working definition that maintained rape myths were attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women. Later, developed from critiques of past definitions, Bohner, Eyssel, Pina, Siebler, and Viki (2009, p. 19) describes rape myths as "descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (i.e. about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims and their interaction) that serve to downplay or justify sexual violence that men commit against women".

In a review of the rape myth literature Bohner et al. (2009) – identified four general types of rape myths. The first category are beliefs that blame the victim/survivor for their rape (e.g. '*women often provoke rape*'), the second was those that express a disbelief in claims of rape (e.g. '*most rape allegations are false*'). The third category of beliefs exonerate the perpetrator (e.g. '*rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control*') and, the fourth alludes the belief that only certain types of women are raped (e.g., '*only bad girls get raped*'). More recently, Hill (2014) reviewed rape myth surveys from the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, and narrowed these categories down further, concluding that there are three broad overlapping categories of rape myths; the 'real rape' misconception, victim-blaming attitudes, and misconceptions about false complaints.

There have been a variety of instruments created to measure rape myth acceptance (RMA) within society, showing just how vital it is to be able to measure the extent to which certain male perceptions of rape, rape victims and rapists are contributing to, or resisting against, the damaging

construction of rape culture. Among the most widely used classic¹³ scales are the *Rape Myth Acceptance Scale* (RMAS) (Burt, 1980) and the *Attitudes Towards Rape Scale* (ATR) (Field, 1978), however other researchers have since developed RMA scales modified off different versions of Burt's (1980) original scale (e.g., Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007). In researching the prevalence of rape myths, these scales have often been applied to particular demographics, most commonly, college students¹⁴. Results generally find that college men are significantly more accepting of rape myths than college women (McMahon, 2010; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). Across a majority of RMA studies, men are consistently more accepting of rape myths than women¹⁵, particularly those pledging a fraternity/sorority, athletes, those without previous rape education, and those who did not know someone sexually assaulted (McMahon, 2010). Suarez and Gadalla (2010, p. 2010) consider that the strong association consistently found between gender and RMA "support the feminist hypothesis that gender inequality perpetuates rape myths; that is, a male-dominant society would probably justify rape and blame the victims". What the authors refer to here, is that patriarchy, and the resultant rape culture, are key determinants in creating attitudes that condone rape behaviours and blame women for their victimisation.

It is a common social belief that RMA must cause sexual offending, however research indicates that this process is considerably more intricate than initially assumed, highlighting the complexities between how men understand sexual violence, and the people involved, and actual behaviour. Studies examining the relationship between RMA and sexual aggression or coercion, have shown that whilst rape myth endorsement does not causatively indicate that a man will commit an act of rape, men who adhere to rape myths are more likely to report higher levels of sexual aggression or coercion (Koss et al., 1985); predict a higher likelihood of themselves raping a woman (Check et al., 1985; Hamilton & Yee, 1990); hold victims responsible for being raped (Check et al., 1985; Krahé, 1988); believe that '*women's secret desire to be raped*' is important in causing rape (Check et al., 1985); perceive a rape victim/survivor's experience in a pornographic depiction as positive (Check et al., 1985); and be aggressive toward women under laboratory conditions (Malamuth et al., 1986). Therefore, whilst research has remained unclear as to a causative link between rape myth belief and sexual offending, RMA does contribute to the structure of rape culture that supports and condones sexual aggression and coercion. As a result, considering how young men understand sexual violence, and exploring the presence (or absence)

¹³ The distinction between classic and contemporary versions of rape myths predominantly rests on the degree of subtlety of the item wordings, with classic measures being marked by rather blatant item formulations, whereas the modern measure is characterised by its subtler item content (Bohner et al., 2009).

¹⁴ In particular, student athletes (McMahon, 2007; McMahon, 2010), fraternities (Bannon et al., 2013), the effectiveness of prevention programs (Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016; McMahon, 2010), and the relationship with alcohol consumption (Hayes et al., 2016).

¹⁵ (For example see, Hayes et al., 2016; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; McMahon, 2010; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010)

and type of rape myth acceptance within their narratives, helps deepen the collective knowledge about how rape culture in New Zealand is supported and sustained.

Perceptions of Sexual Violence

Exploring research focused on perceptions of sexual violence is essential, as how men understand and view sexual violence has direct implications for their response to rape, rape victims/survivors, and rape perpetrators. As men are the dominant social group – and primary perpetrators of rape – within society, their perception of sexual violence directly impacts its enactment, or potentially, eradication. Qualitative literature exploring the way that people perceive, and understand, sexual violence is scarce – and in New Zealand even more so. Kelly et al. (2012) conducted a series of focus group discussions in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo in order to understand the variations of gendered understandings of sexual violence, and found that men's reactions to rape were often pivotal in determining whether the victims would be accepted back into their extended families and communities, an act which the women indicated was vital for their recovery (Kelly et al., 2012). This research showcases just how central men's attitudes towards sexual violence are in both preventing and responding to rape. Lira, Koss, and Russo (1999) also used a series of focus groups to understand Mexican American women's definitions of rape and sexual abuse, this allowed the authors to understand the nuances in the way individuals understand rape themselves alongside the great diversity and variations of understandings within a seemingly homogenous group. In New Zealand, Adams et al. (1995) analyse the rhetoric that men use to discuss their violence towards women, and shed light on the rhetorical devices used by men to actively justify, camouflage and maintain positions of dominance within their relationships with women, and exert a sense of 'naturalness' to their position of power. Similarly, research conducted by Anderson and Umberson (2001) used qualitative interviews to examine the construction of gender within men's accounts of domestic violence, and found that they used diverse strategies to present themselves as non-violent, capable and rational men, displacing the responsibility for violence on the female victims. Rodriguez, Burge, Becho, Katerndahl, Wood and Ferrer (2019) also considered the role of language, comparing men's and women's narratives about men's partner aggression, and found that whilst women were more likely to relate a story in direct terms (i.e., '... he started hitting me every day'), men were more likely to describe their own aggression in indirect terms, with euphemisms or in the third person. Men's indirect language diverted attention away from their personal responsibility for aggression, pointing to an external entity – violence. Whilst Rodriguez et al.'s (2019), Adams et al. (1995) and Anderson and Umberson's (2001) research was not specifically relating to sexual violence, it is highly relevant to understanding the way men understand and communicate male-on-female violence. The language adopted by men in these instances reinforces the framing of violence as a women's problem, disguising the role of men as active agents and shows the stark difference in how men and women communicate the same events, stemming from an underlying discrepancy in how they

understand the enactment of gendered violence (Rodriguez et al., 2019). Kelly-Hanku et al. (2016) conducted a highly relevant study into young men's narratives of sexual violence in rural Papua New Guinea, by exploring what constitutes sexual violence, where these forms of violence most often occur, what meanings are attached to such acts, and male perceptions of which women and girls are most at risk. The findings indicated that men largely decide the conditions under which sexual violence occurs, and argue that efforts to reduce sexual violence against women and girls require an increased focus on male-centric intervention to critically engage with the forms of patriarchal authority that give license to sexual violence. Finally, Pihama et al. (2016) theorise that the way that Māori define sexual violence does not accurately account for Māori understandings and experiences of sexual harm, due to the Westernisation of current social and legal definitions. The authors argue that current Pākehā definitions fail to provide understandings of the cultural, spiritual and collective nature and impact of sexual violence towards Māori, and therefore are failing Māori communities and individuals (Pihama et al., 2016). This research highlights the need to engage with Māori understandings of sexual harm in order to form a comprehensive, inclusive, and fully accessible prevention effort.

The literature highlights the limited research examining individuals' perceptions of violence, some of which is in relation to men's violence, and even less specifically in relation to sexual violence. Research specifically examining men's perceptions of sexual violence is limited, and particularly within a New Zealand context - non-existent. However, the international research which touches on male constructions of sexual harm showcases just how vital men's understandings are to shaping the treatment of victims and the wider society in which sexual violence is able to be perpetrated. It is essential that male perceptions of sexual violence are examined in order to understand more about the patriarchal cultural paradigm in which rape is perpetrated within, and concomitantly shaping effective responses which responsabilise men within sexual violence prevention.

Men in Sexual Violence Prevention

As men are the primary perpetrators of sexual violence, initiating prevention programmes without an in-depth understanding of how men understand sexual violence, has the potential to be highly ineffective. While there has been a lack of research focused on men's perceptions, the last 30 years has seen an evolving body of literature examining the role of men in prevention of violence against women, noting the diversity of approaches including men across different temporal and spatial locations. Jewkes, Flood and Lang (2015), categorise men's involvement in prevention through four different shifts, but note that "these shifts are not linear and contemporary interventions can show signs of all four" (p. 1581). The first, is the category of *invisible or violent men*, characterised by the relative invisibility of men's gender and roles in prevention, and is related to binary views of violent men and victimised women. The second shift, *men with roles*

to play, addresses concepts of male responsibility and ‘men as partners’ rhetoric which constructs men as both part of the problem and part of the solution. The third is categorised as *men in gender relations*, here, there is a greater focus on relationship-level and community-level changes and work with mixed-gender groups to influence dynamic processes of gender relations and norms. Finally, the last shift, *prevention as political*, expands a focus on the diverse experiences of violence and oppression across the life-course and different settings, and calls for system wide changes across the social ecology.

The involvement of men within sexual violence prevention has proliferated over the past 30 years, as prior to this men were rarely mentioned, except possibly as (potential) perpetrators. According to Katz (1995) prior to the mid-90s few violence prevention programs of any kind foreground discussions of masculinity. This is shown by a 1990 survey of 26 North American universities which revealed that, of the 21 institutions with sexual violence prevention programs, only two included programs aimed at changing male behaviour (Parrot, 1990). The concept of men as partners emerged in the later 1990’s, with men described as allies of women in the work to end men’s violence, or the promotion of gender equity (Jewkes et al., 2015). At this time, there was a shift away from program content based on discourses that assume men are inherently violent, evident in a focus towards the promotion of healthy, respectful and ethical behaviours (Carmody, 2003; 2009; Pease, 2008).

Alan Berkowitz (1994) from the United States was among the first to develop a protocol and program focusing on men’s responsibility for preventing sexual violence, and maintains that sexual violence prevention should help men explore how they are taught to be men, the conflicts and discomfort associated with trying to live up to the male role, and how they may intentionally or unintentionally enable the sexually coercive sexual behaviour of other men. His work builds on the growth in masculinities research during the same time period, recognising the importance of men’s constructions of their own identities as playing a vital role in perpetuating sexual aggression. Following was the work of Jackson Katz (1995) who aimed at reconstructing the masculinities of college athletes as a violence prevention tool. Similar approaches have expanded across multiple continents, with pedagogies consisting largely of educational workshops aimed at increasing men’s capacity to develop skills and engage in behaviours that are likely to reduce the incidence of sexual violence (Berkowitz, 2002). These interventions may challenge male socialisation practices, teach men to have empathy for victims, give men greater understanding of consent, and decrease beliefs in rape myths (Fabiano et al., 2003).

While the number of universities incorporating programs aimed at men has increased in recent years, they continue to represent a small minority (Choate, 2003; Fabiano et al., 2003), and many are coeducational (see Anderson & Whiston, 2005 for a review) despite the fact that goals for men’s and women’s sexual violence related programming are not necessarily the same

(Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011). This dearth of specifically male-directed programs continues to exist, despite the fact that research has demonstrated such interventions to be successful at changing attitudes of male participants regarding acceptance of rape myths and interpersonal violence as well as increasing empathy toward victim-survivors (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Foubert & Perry, 2007; Paul & Gray, 2011; Stein, 2007).

Whilst the involvement of men within sexual violence prevention programmes has slowly changed from conceptualising them as solely (potential) perpetrators, to actively targeting male demographics with specific conversations around constructions of masculinity and male responsibility, there is still a tendency to foreground the role of women. The involvement of men is most commonly seen as a subset, an afterthought, or a niche stream of the program, rather than a much needed priority. This research aims to foreground men as the primary demographic responsible for preventing sexual violence, through highlighting how vital men's perceptions of sexual violence are for understanding its enactment and the perpetuation of rape culture. Only through a comprehensive understanding of how men are conceiving sexual violence, are prevention programmes able to effectively eradicate the systems and behaviours that support, condone, and normalise rape.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined that whilst there is increasing recognition within the literature that men have an essential role to play in sexual violence prevention, with the challenging of gender norms and common conceptions of masculinities seen to be central to prevention pedagogies, there remains a lack of understanding as to how men understand sexual violence, rape culture, and their role in this arena. Current research exploring perceptions of men regarding sexual violence relies on quantitative measures of rape myth acceptance, or scales measuring attitudes towards women, showcasing a lack of in-depth qualitative approaches which allow men to provide their own rich accounts of their knowledge. This thesis is situated within this lacuna, adding the voices of men to the existing literature, showcasing how they construct sexual violence and rape culture, and concomitantly highlighting their views on the causes and consequences of sexual harm. This is vital information as it allows prevention and intervention measures to more effectively target specific factors that are seen as contributing to sexual harm, and educate men on how their understandings may align, or conflict, with the lived experience of women.

Chapter Three – Methodological Framework

Introduction

This research sought in-depth insights into men's understandings of sexual violence in Aotearoa. To achieve this a qualitative research design grounded in feminist epistemology was used. This chapter outlines the epistemological and theoretical underpinnings for this project, including a critical discussion of my standpoint as a researcher. It then considers the unique ethical considerations that had to be navigated and provides an discussion of the methods used to conduct this research, before outlining the limitations of this study. This chapter concludes by detailing the personal challenges and developments experienced throughout the research process.

Epistemological & Theoretical Approach

This research is based on a feminist epistemological approach. Feminist epistemologies were developed to recognise that women's experiences as individuals and social beings, women's contributions to work, culture, knowledge, and the history and political interests of women have been systematically ignored or misrepresented by mainstream discourses (Narayan, 2004). Due to this exclusion and misrepresentation of women's voices, feminist scholars have argued that mainstream theories about knowledge are one-dimensional and deeply flawed (Harding, 2004; Narayan, 2004; Scheman, 2011). The development of feminist epistemologies was a response to critiques of more traditional methods of research, for example, the positivist approach, which is seen as reinforcing inequality through being conducted primarily by dominant groups in society and thus solely representing the views of the privileged (Cancian, 1992). Additionally, the positivist emphasis on abstract theory and complex quantitative data, produces knowledges that are highly inaccessible, that devalue personal experiences and everyday knowledge produced by marginalised communities, and defines non-experts as incapable of understanding and controlling their own lives (Cancian, 1992). These traditional and more mainstream epistemologies have situated the dominant voices as a universal and objective truth, where those who differ from dominant norms are not just seen as inferior, but deviant (Scheman, 2011). At the core of feminist epistemologies, according to Narayan (2004) is the knowledge that our location in the world as women makes it possible for us to perceive and understand different aspects of the world in ways that challenge the male bias of existing perspectives. For Hester, Donovan, and Fahmy (2010) it is also to situate knowledge within a framework that is sensitive to the pervasiveness, importance and complexities of gender and power. Therefore, integrating the contributions of women into current discourses must not be done by simply adding them into pre-existing frameworks designed neither by, nor for, women, but should shift the perspective entirely, changing the fundamental nature of how researchers understand knowledge and science (Narayan, 2004).

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory is a particular manifestation of feminist epistemology which recognises “knowledge from the standpoint of women’s experience” (McLennan, 1995, p. 392), and rejects the implicit and hidden white male standpoints of mainstream science and knowledge (Ezzy, 2002). Hartsock (1983) maintained that the framework is constructed on the basis that there are some positions and perspectives in society from which, no matter how well intentioned, a person may never see the real relationships that humans have with each other and the natural world. Additionally, although this theory was built to promote and value the voices and perspectives of women, Collins (1997) also maintains that central to this framework is the linking of social categories to politics. In this instance, race, gender, social class, ethnicity, ability, age, and sexuality are not simply descriptive categories of identity applied to individuals, but rather the result of intentional social structures fostering inequalities between groups. Standpoint epistemology takes these shared understandings of political and social standpoints and produces both an account of experiences and an approach to politics from the position of marginalised groups (Ezzy, 2002). Locating this research within an understanding of women’s experiences from a feminist standpoint is beneficial as it provides access to the experience of women that would otherwise be invisible, and it facilitates political resistance to the patriarchal oppression of women (Ezzy, 2002). Grounding this research in feminist standpoint theory, accepts the validity of women’s individual understandings about sexual violence, gender and power through their lived experiences, rather than needing those experiences validated by the research of male-dominated academic fields.

Feminism is not one perspective, neither is feminist criminology (Flavin, 2001), feminist epistemologies (Comack, 1999) or even feminist methodologies (Allen, 2011), but rather a diverse set of perspectives and approaches that, according to Rafter and Heidensohn (1995) are about centering the interests of women, are overtly political, and strive to present a new vision of equality and justice. Feminist research, like feminist epistemology, was generally developed to respond to criticisms that women have historically been neglected by research attention, and so political change and activism is needed to bring women’s subjugated experiences and knowledge into light (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). For Maynard (1994), feminist scholarship must begin with the experience of women, for it is only from that position that it is possible to see the extent to which women’s worlds are constructed in a way that differs from those of men. This is also the central tenet to feminist standpoint theory, with the recognition that all knowledge is knowledge from where a person stands, and that for a woman, this position is often seen as oppositional to men (Harding, 2004; Lorber, 1996). Whilst there are continuing debates over what constitutes feminist research (Keene, 2015), one core concept of feminist scholarship is considered to be providing a perspective that encourages research to be *for* women, not *on* women, and with women as the key drivers and agents of change (Allen, 2011; Letherby, 2003). It is this kaupapa

that shapes both the theoretical and methodological approach of this research. Where women, as key creators of the epistemological and theoretical approaches, are helping shape a research project *on* men, that will be beneficial *for* women.

It may seem contradictory to employ a feminist perspective developed to highlight the previously silenced voices of women, in a research project that is designed exclusively to understand the opinions of men. Whilst Doucet and Mauthner (2006) stipulate that, where possible, feminist research should be conducted with women, it is not exclusively so. Feminist theory is about validating women's perspective and knowledge (Sprague, 2005), and conducting research through an epistemological lens that acknowledges systemic oppression and structural gender inequality (Hester et al., 2010). However, this can be done without the research being conducted *with* women. While feminism reflects my worldview as a researcher, for the purpose of this research project it is primarily employed as a lens through which to view and understand society, the social and political climate in which rape is committed, and the structures in which rape culture is created and maintained. Additionally, it is the success of feminist theory that has developed understandings of how gender shapes men's experiences of the world, that provides the theoretical foundation of this research. This thesis draws on a feminist approach which is employed as a way of prioritising the experiences of women, and the need to eradicate the structures and behaviours that facilitate sexual harm, whilst simultaneously recognising that it is not the responsibility of women to prevent their own sexual violence, but rather an obligation of men. As men are the primary perpetrators of sexual violence, any attempts to understand the dynamics of sexual harm that do not include the voices of men are therefore inchoate and inadequate. The effectiveness of this feminist approach is seen in similar research conducted by Kelly-Hanku et al. (2016) who employed a feminist perspective to understand young men's narratives of sexual violence against women in rural Papua New Guinea. Their research has a similar focus of male responsibility, the construction of masculinity, and the gendered power dynamics which situate certain people as more at risk of perpetration and victimisation, and one overarching conclusion was that efforts to reduce sexual violence require an increased focus on male-centric interventions which challenge patriarchy and gender norms (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016). Similarly, there is a significant body of feminist research looking at both the role of men in violence prevention (for example see, Fabiano et al., 2003; Flood, 2003, 2011; Katz, 2018) and the various harms that rigid gender roles and hypermasculinity have on the health and wellbeing of men (for example see, Beaudrow, 2014; Kilmartin, 2000; Levant & Richmond, 2016; Ranger, 2015).

Due to the importance of reflexivity in feminist research, this thesis adopts a reflexive approach (Dowling, 2006). As is seen in traditional positivist approaches, and their continuing legacy, research is often considered to be most successful if completed from an objective

standpoint, whereby the researcher devoids themselves of their humanness thereby erasing factors that may impact their views, such as gender, race or sexuality (Cancian, 1992). A lack of emotion is often considered a idealised masculine trait, whereby emotionality and rationality are positioned in contradistinction to each other, with men being positioned as rational and women being positioned as emotional, reinforcing the gender binary (Ferber & Nelson, 1993). Therefore, it has been the work of feminist scholars to challenge this emotionality-rationality dichotomy often present in traditional mainstream scholarship and argue that holding an emotional investment in a research project does not necessarily mean that the results are any less valid (Punch, 2005). Reflexivity involves examining how one's social characteristics and worldviews impact the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2014) and is compatible with feminist epistemological assumptions that one's identity is inseparable from their person, and that feminist research must acknowledge the impacts of a person's identity on their social and cultural interactions (Harding, 2004).

Given my identity as a woman, and my engagement within feminism and feminist activism (particularly in sexual violence prevention), it would be impossible to position myself as entirely objective. However, feminist research interprets bias not as a negative influence that invalidates research findings, but as a resource for researchers to clarify how they conceptualise and identify the knowledge that they generate (Dowling, 2006). Some feminist advocates of feminist standpoint theory even go so far as to say that a critical awareness of your own standpoint, and consequently one's biases, goes beyond just facilitating a more indepth understanding, but actually increases the researchers ability to embrace objectivity and further strengthen the research process (Harding, 1992).

My Standpoint

My complex positioning in this research is influenced by multiple layers of personal, professional and academic experience. Prior to my Honours tertiary study, I had only a minor interest in the field of sexual violence other than a peripheral understanding that it was an incredibly harmful problem in need of a solution. My first engagement with the field of sexual violence scholarship began during undergraduate study, and as my exposure to sexual violence literature and activism increased, I found that research and prevention approaches tended to centre the experiences of victim-survivors in such a way that men (and perpetrators) were seen as more of an afterthought. To me, this implied that women were responsible for researching, responding to, and preventing sexual violence, despite the knowledge that the (cis) male demographic commits over 95% of sexual offences (Ministry of Justice, 2018a) and are key in creating and maintaining a male-dominated society in which rape culture exists (Brownmiller, 1975; Buchwald et al., 1993). I took this belief with me into my Honours research, where I strove to understand the relationship between sexual violence, toxic masculinity and rape-supportive attitudes. As I

learnt more, I began developing my research interest further, and begun to engage more with the way that men are framed and involved in sexual violence research and prevention efforts.

My standpoint as a woman is compounded by my ethnic and sexuality minority identities, meaning that feminist epistemologies, for me, represent the experience of multiple forms of oppression, and the erasure and misrepresentation of my perspective on multiple fronts. My unique position in society, and the social hierarchy of a heteronormative, colonial, patriarchal community has led me to be extremely interested in the way that perceptions of sexual violence are shaped through multiple layers of oppression. For this reason, it was important for me to facilitate a space in which participants were able to express the way their cultural or ethnic background impacted their views and shaped their experiences. I could not intentionally recruit by ethnicity, however I was fortunate to have recruited a relatively diverse sample regardless. Where possible, this research also includes the voices of Indigenous scholars, who, like women, have often experienced silencing within academic contexts. Therefore, whilst the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity and sexual violence are unable to be explored extensively, these factors are still present throughout this research, informing both the perspectives of participants and the standpoint of the researcher.

Part of reflexive research, is understanding how our perspectives are never fixed, but fluid and everchanging, constantly impacted and shaped by our social and environmental worlds (Tarnas, 2010). Staying open to being challenged, and changed, is essential to a reflexive approach (England, 1994). By outlining my own standpoint and the origins of my research interest, I am able to articulate an awareness about how my standpoint may have shaped the research process and the lens through which my interpretations were formed.

Ethical Considerations

As this project is focused on a highly sensitive area, includes the views of men who may have either perpetrated, witnessed, experienced, or in some way been impacted by sexual harm, and was conducted by a young female researcher, there were a plethora of ethical issues considered in order to minimise risk for both the researcher and participants. Ethical approval was sought from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee and granted on 6th June 2019 (Appendix A). A detailed explanation of how ethical issues would be mitigated was required to obtain ethics approval, with safety (of both researcher and participant) being a key consideration.

Protecting the Participants

As a researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure the physical, emotional, psychological, cultural, and spiritual safety of my participants during the research process. Due to the nature of exploratory research, and semi-structured interviews, there was a lack of certainty regarding what the interviews would uncover. Therefore, protecting both myself and participants during the

research process was essential. In advertising a study on sexual violence, there was a strong probability that victim-survivors, friends or whānau of victim-survivors, or anyone with exposure to, or strong opinions on, sexual violence would be interested in participating. This could also include people who were becoming aware of their own harmful behaviour, or men who felt like they had been subject to false allegations of sexual harm by women. For all of these men, there was the potential that they would recall distressing experiences, therefore it was essential that I was able to create a space in which participants felt safe and comfortable to share personal, and often painful details about their lives. Participants were made aware at the start of the interview, that they should prioritise their own safety and well-being, could pause or stop the interview or recorder at any time, could choose not to answer a question, or skip a line of conversation without prejudice or repercussions. Koha was given at the start of the interview in order to prevent participants from feeling pressured to finish the interview process. At the same time, participants were given a list of sexual violence support resources that they were able to take away with them and read/access in their own time. They were reminded of these resources, and of self-care practices, at the end of the interview. As is necessary in sensitive research, I adopted a 'feminist ethic of care' which centres on support and respect for participants, and employed this by being attentive to participants limits on what they were comfortable discussing and simultaneously being empathetic to any sensitive information they disclosed (Bergen, 1993).

Protecting the Researcher

Additionally, as a young women undertaking research, I had to prioritise my own safety as these interviews had the potential to compromise my own physical safety (if a participant became aggressive), and psychological safety (as researching sexual violence can take a negative psychological toll (Campbell, 2002; Coles, Astbury, Dartnall, & Limjerwala, 2014)). For physical protection, I interviewed in semi-public areas and always had a support person know my location. However, researching sensitive topics, such as sexual violence, can have significant various emotional impacts on the researcher (Campbell, 2002; Coles et al., 2014). To mitigate and manage these it was essential to consider how this research may affect my own well-being, be self-aware of my own boundaries and limitations, and have a plan to mitigate any risks. As Coles et al. (2014) report sexual violence researchers may experience vicarious trauma from their data, this was compounded with the fact that in discussing their understandings of sexual violence, many of these men had the potential to present opinions on women and/or victim/survivor's of sexual violence which were possibly harmful and/or offensive. In order to effectively keep myself safe during this process I had regular check ins with my supervisors, debriefs with my friends and whānau, I did my best to not work at home - keeping all my work within my office - and taking regular breaks during transcription or data analysis.

Research Methods

Qualitative Research

As this research intended to explore the nuances of understandings and perceptions of individuals, a qualitative approach involving in-depth semi-structured interviews was chosen as it is seen to be broadly inductivist (whereby theory is generated from research), constructionist (social properties are seen as the outcomes of the interactions between individuals), and interpretivist (the stress is on understanding the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by participants) and is often argued to be directly in line with feminist research (Bryman, 2010). According to Bryman (2010) the notion that there is an affinity between feminism and qualitative research is based in the view that qualitative research provides greater opportunity for a feminist sensitivity to come to the fore. Applying a qualitative approach to a feminist-focused research project on men, results in a thesis that simultaneously prioritises the lived experience of women - and ultimately aims at benefiting their lives - whilst also being designed to highlight the experiences of men.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Ezzy, 2002). In other words, grounded theory involves producing a plausible theory that is grounded in the data, rather than the scientific testing of hypotheses against research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) or being deductively applied to it (McLeod, 2001). The process of employing a grounded theory approach involves systematic collection and analysis of data; developing codes to assist with identifying themes and categories; and developing a flexible theory which can be adapted as data collection continues (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method encourages researchers to constantly interact with their data whilst remaining open to emerging analyses and changes (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010). Drawing on grounded theory is congruent within certain epistemological criteria, such as the feminist standpoint epistemologies understanding that people are a source of knowledge, rather than objects of study (Ackerly & True, 2010). According to Ackerly and True (2010) grounded theory is useful for studying questions that have been concealed by dominant discourses, conceptualisations, and notions of what questions are important. Therefore, by design, grounded theory is a research design that enacts a feminist research ethic (Ackerly & True, 2010). The views of Ackerly and True (2010) regarding the strengths of grounded theory, position it as particularly congruent with this thesis, as discourse critiquing the role of men in sexual violence narratives, particularly developed from a feminist perspective validating constructions such as rape culture and patriarchy, have historically been silenced or invalidated.

Grounded theory is not one methodology however, and this thesis is embedded within a constructivist grounded theoretical approach. Traditional objectivist variations of grounded

theory assume a value-free observer uncovering a single reality through objective inquiry (see Glaser, 1992), whereas constructivist grounded theory assumes that multiple realities exist and recognises researchers as part of the research process (Charmaz, 2008). This allows for a more reflexive approach to research that facilitates a dialogue about how researchers' perceptions may impact their research (Charmaz, 2008). Constructivist grounded theory also, importantly, pays close attention to language use and the way that participants construct and give meaning to their lives, as well as acknowledging ambiguity and inconsistency (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, as participants' understandings of sexual violence are imbued with inherent self-contradictions and inchoate insights, grounded theory is able to strengthen their views through developing meaning from the complexities and inconsistencies rather than conceptualising them as a fault. An epistemological affinity exists between feminist inquiry and constructivist grounded theory, evidenced by multiple points of 'theoretical congruence' (Plummer & Young, 2010). Specifically, that feminist research and constructivist grounded theory both acknowledge the importance of reflexivity in research, value women's lived experiences as a source of knowledge, recognise that knowledge is generated through social processes, and can be used to promote social change (Plummer & Young, 2010).

Research Design

Whilst qualitative research can be employed in a variety of methods, this research uses interviews primarily because they enable the participant to respond freely to the researcher's questions (Lanier & Briggs, 2014). This is beneficial because it emphasises how the interviewee frames and understands issues – that is, what the participant views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour (Bryman, 2010) – which is particularly useful in exploring the insights of men regarding sexual violence, rape culture and other related concepts. Studies have also shown that men feel intense pressure to conform to a set of hypermasculine ideals they perceive to be of utmost importance to their peers, a distorted perception as entire peer groups reported feeling the same perceived pressure and yet did not conform to those beliefs themselves (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003). Using interviews allows the participant to be removed from this perceived pressure, and exempt from the social sanctions imposed when deviating from traditional masculinity and male 'culture' (Beaudrow, 2014), instead facilitating their own self-expression within a safe and non-judgmental environment and thus resulting in more rich expressions and insights from participants.

Semi-structured interviews are considered appropriate for exploratory studies as they give the researchers flexibility to respond to different ideas as they arise, and spontaneously tailor the interview to shape the particular views and interests of the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This is particularly important when discussing sensitive material, such as sexual violence, as it allows for participants to respond to what they feel comfortable with, and choose how much they

are willing to share with the researcher, and on what topic. Semi-structured interviews are often praised within feminist research as allowing women's voices to be highlighted in a way that has often not been achieved within other forms of research methods (Bryman, 2010). Utilising this framework to explore the nuances of men's understandings of sexual violence means that rather than enforcing a rigid interview structure, men are able to discuss and develop conversations and ideas that they may not previously have felt able to within the structures of societal conditioning and masculine expectations.

Harding and Norberg (2005) consider the power imbalances that are often prevalent during research, between the researcher and the 'researched'. The construction of this research project contradicts traditional power dynamics in society where men traditionally are in positions of more power and control than women (often manifesting in gendered displays of violence and sexuality – such as rape (Brownmiller, 1975)). Inverting this dynamic, with a female researcher and a male participant, discussing sexual violence, poses an interesting challenge. Research by Williams and Heikes (1993) suggests that volunteer research participants will likely try to avoid offending or threatening the interviewer with unflattering or socially undesirable opinions and will tend to frame responses in ways designed to minimise this possibility. This is particularly pertinent in interviews with female researchers and male participants, where the authors found that male participants used the interviewer's gender as a cue to gauge the interviewer's orientations and opinions, then consequently developed their responses within that gendered context. Participants became so adept at framing their views, that even if they were hostile and sexist – did not directly challenge or threaten the interviewer (Williams & Heikes, 1993). Additionally, the pre-existing gender dynamics meant that whilst it was important to make the participant feel as comfortable as possible through not adopting an interrogative approach, it was also essential to not position myself as overly passive within the interview and potentially embed the idea of female subjugation or passivity. For some, qualitative interviews help mitigate power imbalances through the sharing of personal information on behalf of the researcher (Brown, Western, & Pascal, 2013). However, in this case, due to the nature of this subject material, and with the gender dynamics in mind, this was not a possibility. Instead, in order to mitigate power disparities and present myself as non-threatening, I spent some time at the start and end of every interview chatting with the participant about their general wellbeing, discussed safety during the interview, follow up self-care techniques, and made sure that the participant was aware of their control and ability to guide the interview process.

Recruitment

Recruiting participants for this project involved a combination of social media advertising and recruitment posters. As the target demographic was cis-gender, heterosexual men aged 18-30, a common age bracket for university students, recruitment posters (Appendix B) were placed

in men's bathrooms around Victoria University of Wellington's Kelburn Campus. Due to the nature of this research being about sensitive issues, recruitment posters in bathrooms are especially suitable as they enable potential participants to note down the researchers contact details in private and therefore remain anonymous to their peers (Liamputtong, 2007).

To maximise response rates, and reach a more diverse sample, the same recruitment poster was also advertised on social media platforms. Social media is an effective platform for advertising as the reach, accessibility, and anonymity of the internet can increase the number and diversity of potential participants (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006). Due to the broad eligibility criteria, there was a variety of social media platforms that could have been suitable, however in the interests of management, I chose to only use Twitter and Facebook – creating specific pages to advertise through so as to not use my personal platforms. I initially was concerned that men would not feel comfortable coming forward to discuss the topic of sexual violence due to its sensitive nature and complex dynamics, however this did not seem to be the case and through continuous recruitment I was able to complete 11 interviews within two months.

Interviews

In line with the feminist framework that this research is situated within, these interviews were conducted from a feminist perspective that strives to build an environment in which participants feel safe and comfortable sharing personal information (Liamputtong, 2007). Whilst feminist research often promotes emotional connections with participants, this was not appropriate within the gender dynamics and subject material of this research, instead, rapport was established through maintaining a professional dynamic which emphasised confidentiality, and a prioritising of the participants wellbeing. For an exploratory study, Fontana and Frey (2005) claim that establishing rapport is crucial as it opens the doors to more informed research. I had anticipated that maintaining a non-judgemental approach may be difficult if the participant presented views on sexual violence, victim-survivors or perpetrators that I deemed harmful or problematic. In order to mitigate the potential for overly emotional responses, I intentionally entered each interview with a view of gathering information, and with a professional mindset that was focused on allowing the safety and comfort of the participant, rather than approach the interview with a personal investment. This meant that I focused on listening without prejudice, managing my own emotions throughout the interview, being empathetic to sensitive information, and ensuring that participants feelings were validated (Armstrong, 2011). I am currently employed by RespectEd Aotearoa (formerly the Sexual Abuse Prevention Network) as Youth Educator, have tutored the undergraduate Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking courses, and volunteer in various sexual violence prevention related positions, I have received training and experience in facilitating discussions on sensitive material. As such I felt equipped to face potentially problematic attitudes with a non-judgemental attitude that invited explanation, rather

than an emotional response that may have condemned or invalidated the participants' perspectives.

When potential participants expressed interest in the project, each participant was emailed an information sheet (Appendix C) that they were able to review and then ask questions about before agreeing to the interview. Before each interview commenced, participants were asked whether they had read the information sheet (and given the opportunity to go over it again) and were also given a consent form (Appendix D). Both documents outlined the purpose and possible uses of the research, and allowed participants to request a copy of their interview transcript and the final thesis upon completion. After informed consent was obtained, participants were asked to complete a brief socio-demographic questionnaire (Appendix E). All interviews lasted roughly one hour and were digitally recorded with the participant's consent. Prior to each interview, participants were given a \$20 supermarket voucher as *koha* to acknowledge the value of their contributions and the time they committed to the research, as well as a list of available sexual violence support services (both for victim-survivors, perpetrators, and friends and *whānau*), in order to minimise any risk of harm associated with their participation (Appendix F).

All interviews took place either at the back of a local café or in a semi-private meeting room at Victoria University of Wellington and drew on a single interview guide (Appendix G) containing open-ended questions relating to the overall research objectives. Questions started off with broad queries regarding the participants background, interest in the research, and wider knowledge around sexual violence and rape culture. Following, the participants were three vignettes of sexually harmful situations (see Appendix G), that each provide a different type of relationship (friends, long term relationship, strangers), as well as influential factors such as alcohol consumption, sexual history, emotional manipulation, and physical violence, in order to generate conversation around participants views of blame, responsibility, and 'what counts' as sexual violence. Next, questions were directed around types of individuals involved in sexual violence, the role of alcohol, before looking at causes, and consequences. Finally, in order to close the interview on a more positive note, participants were asked about how they best thought to prevent sexual violence.

The 11 interviews ranged between 25 minutes and 1 ½ hours, with the average time being 47 minutes. The interview guide ensured that the main areas relating to the key research questions were addressed and did not direct or limit the conversation (McCabe & Holmes, 2009). Therefore, Bryman (2010) argues that in comparison to structured interviews in which the data is likely to reflect only a partial version of the respondent's perceptions in response to a comprehensive set of interview questions, semi-structured interviews tend to yield data that is more representative of the respondents all around views.

Participants

To participate in this research, participants had to identify as a cis-gendered male, identify as heterosexual, be between the ages of 18 and 30 (both ages inclusive)¹⁶, and reside in Aotearoa New Zealand. A total of 11 men participated in this research. Participants also disclosed their ethnicity and religious background, as both of these factors have significant impacts on how individuals view issues of gender and identity (Nadal et al., 2015). In summary, four participants were aged between 18-20, two between 21-23, three between 24-26 and two between 27-30. Six participants identified solely as NZ Euro/Pākehā, one as NZ Euro/Pākehā and British, one as NZ Euro/Pākehā and Thai, one as NZ Euro/Pākehā and Iranian, one as NZ Euro/Pākehā and Māori, and one as Samoan. Regarding religious beliefs, seven participants were non-religious, two preferred not to say, one was Buddhist, and one held Indigenous Samoan beliefs.

To ensure confidentiality of participants, they were assigned pseudonyms, this allowed participants to maintain a sense of agency within the research instead of being referred to numerically. Participants were able to choose their own pseudonym, however many elected to have the name chosen for them. Some identifying details, such as place of employment or area of study have been withheld to ensure confidentiality. Similarly, age was broken down into sections rather than specifics for comfortability of participants. These participants will now be introduced, written in the order that the interviews were conducted.

Steve

Steve is mid 20's, has spent many years working within the Māori community and has experienced the effects of sexual violence within his whānau. Steve identifies as both Māori and NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Eden

Eden is early 20's and is currently enrolled in a postgraduate degree. He has a passion for mental health and has formed a lot of understanding about sexual violence through his work in the mental health sector. Eden identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and Iranian and is non-religious.

Oliver

Oliver is late 20's and works as a social scientist. His views on sexual violence were shaped heavily by his academic education and interactions with friends. Oliver identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Liam

¹⁶ This age demographic was chosen as it represents those at most risk to sexually offend (Ministry of Justice, 2018b).

Liam is early 20's and is a second-year student. He was very interested in the role of the political environment in impacting sexual violence. Liam identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and Thai and is Buddhist.

Samuel

Samuel is late 20's and works with the NZ Government. His views were heavily shaped by his identity as a male of colour, growing up in Samoa. Samuel identifies as Samoan and holds Indigenous Samoan beliefs.

James

James is mid 20's and is enrolled in postgraduate study. He was well travelled and considered much of his views and interests to be shaped by his experiences in different cultural contexts alongside his experience working with youth. James identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and preferred not to disclose his religious beliefs.

Jamie

Jamie is aged between 18-20 and enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student. His views were shaped primarily by his peer group and other media influences. Jamie identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Jason

Jason is aged between 18-20 and is enrolled as an undergraduate student. His views were influenced by education in psychology and earlier education on health and wellbeing in school. Jason identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Lucas

Lucas is mid 20's and has completed a degree in Psychology. His views were heavily shaped by both his academic education, high-level sexuality education, and personal experience with sexual harm. Lucas identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and British and preferred not to disclose his religious beliefs.

Matthew

Matthew is aged between 18-20 and is enrolled in undergraduate study. He was particularly interested in the political facet of sexual violence, and his views were shaped significantly by experiences in his peer group. Matthew identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Riley

Riley is aged between 18-20 and is enrolled in undergraduate study. He had very little exposure to sexual violence and his understandings were primarily shaped by media and literature. Riley identifies as NZ Euro/Pākehā and is non-religious.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim from audio recordings using the online software 'oTranscribe'. The manual transcription of all 11 interviews was time consuming, however it allowed me to become more familiar with my data and consider emerging themes throughout the process. At the interview participants were given the choice to receive copies of their transcription and/or the final thesis, five participants indicated they wanted a transcription copy (and were provided one), and all indicated they wanted a final copy of the thesis on completion of the research.

The qualitative method employed for the analysis of the interview data was thematic analysis driven by constructivist grounded theory. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting particular patterns in qualitative data which allows for theoretical flexibility. The theoretical independence of thematic analysis allows for more detailed accounts of data than can be learned without the theoretical knowledge needed for other methods of data analysis. Predominantly, however, thematic analysis was chosen for this research as it allows for interpretation of themes, such as gender, rape culture and patriarchy that are socially produced and influenced by socio-cultural contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As previously discussed, this research used constructivist grounded theory to generate analysis that was grounded within the data provided by participants, rather than through testing certain hypotheses against research or being deductively applied to it. Therefore, I coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software, by coding interviews line by line into a broad set of preliminary codes - such as; 'consent', 'alcohol', 'rape culture', 'masculinity' - before breaking down each of those categories into more nuanced sectors - such as; 'entitlement', 'responsibility', 'objectification', 'dominance' - and then using all the codes to identify and assess emerging themes and the patterns between them. Findings were then explored further by extracting passages from participants which articulated the chosen core theme clearly, and then framing the chosen passages around relevant literature to formulate a discussion. These findings were then used to explore and map participants understandings of sexual violence, locate their perceptions within the existing feminist sexual violence literature, and contextualise them within a New Zealand setting.

Limitations

This research is based on a small qualitative sample (n = 11), which limits the generalisability of the findings. However, the qualitative design of this study never intended to

present a generalisable data set, rather it sought to identify the subjective and personalised perceptions of sexual violence, and recognise these views as essential in shaping wider social understandings of sexual violence. Another limitation of this research was the location of recruitment, and the way that shaped bias within the participant sample. As this research was advertised on a university campus, almost all the participants were current or ex students. University students tend to be more socially liberal and progressive than non-studying demographics (Hastie, 2007), meaning that this sample presented more socially critical views than perhaps would be representative of men of similar ages not engaged in tertiary study. Finally, whilst it is important for research in Aotearoa to represent the full range of ethnic communities' present within society, particularly tangata whenua, there was only one Māori participant, and three participants who identified as (at least partly) non-Pākehā. This distorted sample results in a limited, predominantly Pākehā understanding of sexual violence within the New Zealand context, however I have done my best to highlight the voices from participants of colour as much as possible, where relevant. With this in mind, I have not used ethnicity tags throughout Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, but rather refer to ethnicity where directly relevant to the research findings. Also recognising that whilst culture is relevant for all participants, those who identified as non-white directly referred to their cultural understanding in a way that was essential to highlight. Future research would be strengthened by including a more ethnically diverse sample of participants, reflective of the wider bi-cultural society of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Personal Challenges

Undertaking this research, particularly the data collection, was a challenging process, with many personal obstacles and barriers to overcome. Due to my experience working in the field of sexual violence, both dealing with disclosures and being confronted with problematic attitudes about rape, I expected that I would complete the research process without any significant emotional or psychological consequences. One big challenge, was accepting the impact that researching sexual violence in such an intimate capacity was having on my emotional and psychological well-being. Being immersed in the sexual violence literature, interviewing, transcribing and conducting analysis, all contributed to increased anxiety, exhaustion, a hyper-awareness/hyper-vigilancy of harmful behaviours (particularly in social and intimate situations) and occasional nightmares. Vicarious trauma frames the interaction between trauma and the individual as an interplay between the individual's personality, personal history, social and cultural contexts and the traumatic experience (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). As such, for researchers of sexual violence, the vicarious trauma experienced can impact the researcher's view of themselves, others, and the world in general (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). This is seen through my experience of increased hyper-awareness of harmful behaviours which had a significant impact on my interactions with the world and understanding of my position within it. The negative emotional and psychological implications, and emotionally draining material, meant that

the data transcription and analysis took longer than the same processes would have taken had the research been non-sensitive. Having to frequently take breaks, both physically and intellectually, heavily impinged on the efficiency of the research process. This process has been called by some, 'research saturation' where repeated exposure to traumatic events can be distressing (Coles et al., 2014). However, many of the participants presented positive views on how rape culture could be prevented, and recounted inspiring stories of how they are initiating change, or dedicated to self-education, and this was positive enough to counteract the negative messages. Additionally, the constant awareness of sexual violence and its negative implications in society, was a really powerful motivator to 'do something about it' by completing my research.

A major challenge that I faced during the research process, was the varying responses of whānau, friends, strangers, and fellow academics when I shared the nature of my research, all of which presented their own challenges. First, responses to my research were often disclosures of sexual harm. Having experienced this often, I believe that positioning yourself as personally or professionally invested in understanding sexual violence, results in victim-survivors feeling as if you are a 'safe' and trusted person to disclose their experiences to. The second response, was that many people (usually men) immediately became hostile and defensive, asking me 'why I hated men?', as if my (obviously feminist) research into how men viewed sexual violence equated me to being an active misandrist. This usually led to me having to defend my research to individuals who were hostile or defensive towards me and resulted in a significant emotional toll. The third type of response was the most difficult to deal with, and most surprisingly, often came from women, who thought that my desire to centre men in sexual violence discourse erased the voices of women as victim-survivors. Their view was that my research was 'anti-feminist', because as this project actively privileges the dominant male voice, then it was consequently perpetuating the subordination and silencing of women. Finally, there were the positive responses from people who believed that my research was important, valuable, and needed, and were interested in further discussion and hearing about my findings. As they were the majority, these responses fuelled my dedication to this work and helped me see that despite negative or hostile reactions, there would always be people who believed in my research.

Conclusion

Men's understandings of sexual violence in Aotearoa is an unexplored area of research, therefore it was imperative that this research adopted a flexible and exploratory approach that was able to adapt to changes in data collection and the emergence of new themes. Further, this research needed to be grounded in a methodological approach that both prioritised the lived experiences of women as valid sources of information, and that gave deep meanings to the understandings and discourses of men which could be situated within a global context of gender inequality. Qualitative interviews provided an ideal approach, as they allowed for a unique, in-depth critique

of the attitudes men presented in this area, for whilst it is accepted that attitudinal change is not sufficient enough to bring about gender equity, understanding men's attitudes provides critical insights into the structural inequalities that exist within New Zealand. The prioritising of men's voices within this feminist-based may appear controversial, however as Berkowitz (2002, p. 163) states, "even though only a minority of men may commit sexual assault, all men can have an influence on the culture and environment that allows other men to be perpetrators". Therefore, understanding the narratives and constructions of sexual violence conceptualised by New Zealand men are essential to furthering the kaupapa of preventing sexual violence in Aotearoa.

Chapter Four – Mapping the Problem of Sexual Violence and Rape Culture

I think I have been around enough violence to kind of be in a place where I need to be reflexive about it, to kind of understand how those things have impacted my life and how I view the world, and what that means for how I choose to impact the world after me

(Samuel, Samoan)

Introduction

This chapter explores four key themes relating to how participants understand ‘the problem’ of sexual violence. To provide a broad overview, this chapter begins by exploring participants’ perceptions of their own levels of understanding (and the factors that have shaped these), and how they defined sexual violence. Following, this chapter maps the ways in which participants understand consent, noting the influence of alcohol, the interplay of alcohol, power and responsibility, and the use of alcohol as a mechanism to excuse men and blame women. This chapter moves forward by charting how participants consider normalisation mechanisms, constructions of masculinity, and objectification practices as creating and sustaining rape culture in Aotearoa. Finally, this chapter will concentrate on the myriad of views participants held regarding the causes of sexual violence.

Broader Understandings & Positionality

When reflecting on their own comprehension of sexual violence, participants interpreted the idea of ‘understanding’ in a variety of ways, and in their discussions highlighted certain factors which contributed to their knowledge. While understanding is difficult to quantify, participants tended to self-categorise themselves into three different streams based on how much they deemed themselves to know about sexual violence; ‘very little’, ‘some’ or ‘a fair amount’.

Out of 11 participants, one disclosed that they had been a victim/survivor of sexual violence, five disclosed whānau or friends had experienced sexual harm, and one mentioned that he knew someone who had perpetrated sexual violence. In describing his experience, Lucas discloses that,

I think it was second year, when I was personally assaulted and it wasn't like to the same extent that a lot of other people have, but it was enough for me to

be like, to start to understand how horrible it was. Like that invasion of your own personal space and how much it can actually get to you.

These ratios are similar to statistics which stipulate that approximately 1 in 10 New Zealand men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime (Morris, Reilly, Berry, & Ransom, 2003), noting that there may have been participants who had experienced harm and chose not to disclose, or did not identify their experience as sexual violence.

Five out of 11 participants considered themselves to have ‘very little’ understanding of sexual violence, primarily as a result of not having experienced victimisation themselves. For example, Matthew claimed his understanding amounted to *“Probably not a lot [...] like I know a lot of people who have dealt with it, but obviously I wouldn't say I know a lot just because I have never experienced it”*, and James (NZ Euro/Pākehā) considers that he only has *“second-hand knowledge [...] I guess in my own family didn't have much experience of it”*.

Four out of 11 participants claimed to have ‘some’, ‘a little’ or an ‘average amount’ of understanding around sexual violence, with their perspectives developed through interactions either with victim-survivors, or others knowledgeable in sexual violence. For example, Samuel said that *“I know a little bit, but I think compared to what I could be or should be knowing, maybe not as much”*, and goes on to explain that his knowledge has developed from *“consum[ing] educational media about it, ...work[ing] professionally with people who run interventions for this, ... work[ing] in the community”*. Similarly, Eden’s experience working in the mental health profession helped facilitate his knowledge, explaining *“just through my work, having been exposed to these issues and having done workshops with things like Wellington Rape Crisis, and being on the frontline with some victims with helpline work”*. Academic education was another significant factor, for example Oliver’s sociological study expanded on his knowledge through *“learning about rape myths and rape scripts and thinking about the enormous amount of pressure that men place on women in that context”*, and Lucas attributed his knowledge to both high school sexuality education and tertiary psychology study, explaining *“I had quite decent sexual education in high school. [...] so, I was kind of raised behind the ideas of consent and things like that”*.

Finally, only two out of 11 participants claimed to have a ‘decent’ or ‘good’ understanding of sexual violence, and attributed their knowledge to very different causes. Jason, for example, stated that he had *“a decent understanding”*, which was developed from *“just being taught about it growing up by my family”* and what seemed to be a fairly comprehensive health education, *“at school, they'd touch on it [sexual violence] during health and wellbeing, [and had] Women's Refuge come in and talk to us about sexual violence”*. Steve also considered

himself well-versed in understanding sexual violence due to personal experience within his whānau. He explained that,

[sexual violence is] a very common thing in my family, very multi-generational, so I think I have a pretty good understanding of the short term and long term impacts on perpetrators and victims [...] people that are close to me, very close to me.

In addition to these contributing factors, importantly, a couple of participants discussed the role that social conditioning and culture can have on the ability to understand sexual violence. For Samuel, moving towards a critical understanding of sexual violence is constantly constrained by what he calls an “*ingrained sense of patriarchy*”, stemming from his cultural and religious socialisation of growing up in Samoa. He explains that,

I always feel like I have to do this huge push to move this batch of water or like to move this set of ideas that I have grown up with, to kind of free my mind to think critically about this. [...] it's like a real task that I actually have to switch on and be like 'okay, acknowledge all of your initial feelings that are probably biased, sweep that away and [...] see if you can have a better understanding of what is going on'.

As sexual violence is predominantly experienced by women (Planty et al., 2016), and consequently has historically been conceptualised as a ‘women’s issue’ (Katz, 2013), it is the privilege of most men to remain unaware and ignorant of these issues. As a result, it is unsurprising that a majority of the participants felt that their understanding was lacking or inadequate, evidenced by Samuel who explained “*the long winded answer is – I know a little bit, but I think compared to what it could be, or should be knowing, maybe not as much*”. Jamie summarises this feeling by stating “*I think that sexual violence is one of the most important things to be aware of, and I think it's crazy that for many people, me especially, just don't think about it*”. These men recognised the importance of the issue, and felt like the amount of understanding they had regarding sexual violence did not mirror what they thought the severity of sexual violence deserved.

As was discussed in Chapter One, there are a plethora of debates within sexual violence research and activism as to how to define sexual violence, rape and sexual assault (see Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). These debates were also evident in and between participants own definitions of sexual violence. Six out of 11 participants constructed sexual violence as an umbrella term for various forms of sexual harm. Here, they suggest that sexual violence is any form of non-consensual sexual acts, echoing many branches of feminist thought which simply mandate an action must be sexual, and non-consensual, in order for it to be considered sexual

violence (Bourke, 2007). For example, Jason's classification is that "*sexual violence can be any act of sexuality that is violent towards another person*", and Jamie claims that sexual violence is "*anything that leaves people feeling violated or that they are not being respected in their relationship*". Riley considers sexual violence to be "*something that a woman doesn't consent to that involves touching*", or Liam summarises that "*it encompasses a lot, forms of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, that sort of stuff*".

However, for three participants there was a distinct division between sexual assault and rape, with participants comprehending rape as non-consensual, penetrative, 'actual' sex, in comparison to sexual assault which was seen as other forms of physical and verbal contact. Lucas acknowledges this separation by explaining that, for him, sexual assault is "*an unwelcome non-consented initiation of physical touching that is in a sexual manner or in a manner that is inappropriate for the given social context*". Whereas for Lucas, the New Zealand legal definition of rape¹⁷ – which he recounted as the penetration of the vagina with the penis – was unsatisfactory and "*any kind of penetration should be considered under the blanket of rape*". This point is similarly elucidated by Jason who sees rape as being "*forced intercourse of some form*" and Matthew who says "*sexual assault, to me, is [...] things like groping, unwanted advances, stuff like that. Whereas rape is **actual**, **unconsensual sex***" [emphasis added]. The 'real rape' stereotype maintains that a rape scenario is only seen as valid if it involved a young, female, white, physically resistant victim, attacked at night by a stranger who is motivated by sexual gratification (and as such involves penetration) (Estrich, 1987). This focus on penetration being essential to rape may contribute to this 'real rape' stereotype, which in turn trivialises and sometimes explicitly erases the experiences of those who did not experience penetration during their sexually violent situation.

Participants also mirrored Liz Kelly's (1987) concept of sexual violence existing on a continuum, to some extent, by contextualising physically violent and penetrative rape as higher on a spectrum than 'lower level' behaviours such as sexual harassment. Lucas explains that,

sexual violence happens on a huge spectrum and it can start with just kind of benign stuff at one end that people could kind of just brush off and move past, and then all the way through to like obviously things like rape at the other end.

Similarly, James describes that "*obviously you have things like rape, and assault [...] but I think actually there is also at a lower level, so to speak, harassment*". Eden also touches on ideas of 'lower-level' harm where there may be "*moments in relationships where a kiss happens or sex happens, but it's not done with consent given, and a person might feel weird after that but*

¹⁷ See Chapter 1, Page 12

not know why". Steve however, conveyed frustration at the common perception that 'lower level' behaviours *"somehow [have] no relation between, like someone grabbing someone without consent, like touching them without consent or like, full blown rape"*. Here, Steve notes a common lack of understanding surrounding the structural nature of rape culture and the spectrum which sexually harmful behaviours exist upon, whilst also touching on the previously discussed concept of 'real rape'. Oliver also comments on this scale, explaining that in his view *"having a knife to your throat versus a guilt trip, is a little bit different, but I don't think it changes the act itself, which is still a sexually violent act"*.

Mapping Consent

Participants' understandings of sexual violence, were heavily laden with discussions of consent, which were in turn infused with complex narratives around alcohol, power and responsibility. Broader conversations around what constitutes consent, however, still elucidated some complex perceptions. According to Lucas, *"consent is the acceptance and permission given to cross sexual boundaries"*, however Oliver recognises the consent process as 'ongoing', where giving and receiving permission is not a once off, explaining, *"it's not just this person said yes at the beginning so everything I did post that point was okay, it's something that's constantly navigated and discussed throughout the act"*.

Oliver demonstrates a critical awareness of gendered consent dynamics, noting that *"consent for a man is just saying yes, and once that consent is given then everything else is non-negotiable, this is happening regardless. Whereas it is up to women to navigate yes and no at certain points"*. Oliver's view that sexual scenarios are often portrayed as situations where male sexual scripts dictate, *"I am here to have sex, you need to tell me to say no"*, rather than a mutual consent conversation that recognises the unique dynamics and boundaries of each individual involved. Whilst highly unrealistic, this scenario is commonly portrayed in popular culture media, such as films or television, where men are portrayed as the active pursuers of sex and the women's role is to initially refuse and then 'give in' after persistent pursuit (Groszhans, 2018). Lucas also raised the concern that some women play 'hard to get', confusing men trying to garner sexual consent, explaining that,

I don't like any of that bullshit of ... [saying] no to encourage guys to try harder because the girls' trying to play hard [to get] - I think that's just not helping the situation at all ... when some girls do that. And it's definitely not teaching men how consent works when they do that either.

The 'hard to get' trope impacts both men and women navigating the consent process (Groszhans, 2018). Media portrayals interact with gendered expectations of female sexual chastity, to pressure women into seeming uninterested in sex, whereas simultaneous portrayals of men as sexually

dominant and persistent result in a perceived requirement to participate in the convoluted ‘no, no, no, no, yes’ process they see normatively enacted (Groszhans, 2018).

Participants generally agreed that while non-verbal indicators of consent can be valid and potentially contextually appropriate, verbal consent is the clearest and idealised form of consent. For example, Steve explained that consent should be *“just talking to somebody, ‘hey do you want to do this? No? Okay’, [...] verbal, face to face”*. The primary belief was that non-verbal forms of consent can easily be mis-interpreted and result in what James refers to as a *“grey zone around consent”*, where a man might feel as if he has gained consent when in reality he has misread certain signals, particularly if he was intoxicated. His view is that,

when you're really drunk you're already [...] not thinking particularly straight I don't think, and so thinking about that becomes harder but ... that doesn't mean that you shouldn't think about it.... yeah, I think that's a grey zone, but that's why I say if it's grey better to opt on the side of no.

Similarly, Riley refers to a *“morally grey area”* where *“it's not clear whether it's, like who is to blame or who is responsible or whether anyone's done anything deserving of punishment”*. This concern around misreading signals was evident in the perceptions of James, Riley, Liam and Lucas, who maintained that there was a significant portion of sexual violence incidents that happen as a result of well-intentioned (and potentially intoxicated) male who misinterpreted non-verbal signals as a sign of consent, who *“might have been operating underneath the opinion that they had consent but they weren't”* (Lucas). Liam explains that, *“because of the increased amount of drinking, reduced consciousness of your actions and speech, your ability to interpret consent would also probably be inhibited. And therefore, it can be possible to perhaps misinterpret consent”*. Whilst this concept of ‘mis-interpreting’ consent will be discussed more later on in this chapter, participants were clear that alcohol has an impact on both the ability to engage in consent communication, and a such distorts their perceptions of men’s responsibility.

Introducing Alcohol – The Consent-Intoxication Debate

Participants discussions of sexual violence were inevitably laden with complex narratives regarding the interactions between consent and intoxication. For many of these young participants, alcohol played a central factor in sexual violence – either through its direct consumption, or through its impact on social responses. Here, participants unpacked a myriad of views regarding how alcohol influences power and responsibility, and its ability to be employed as a victim-blaming discourse where it is used to excuse men’s behaviour and blame women’s behaviour.

First, participants articulated contradictory views on whether, and how, alcohol impacted an individual's ability to give and receive consent. Section 128a of the New Zealand Crimes Act 1961 stipulates that *"A person does not consent to sexual activity if the activity occurs while he or she is so affected by alcohol or some other drug that he or she cannot consent or refuse to consent to the activity"*. This is most commonly interpreted as an individual conclusively being unable to consent after having consumed alcohol. This interpretation creates an easy to understand binary, where the capacity to consent is simply dependent on the presence (or absence) of alcohol. In this model (see Figure 2) an individual is either drunk or sober, and the capacity to consent

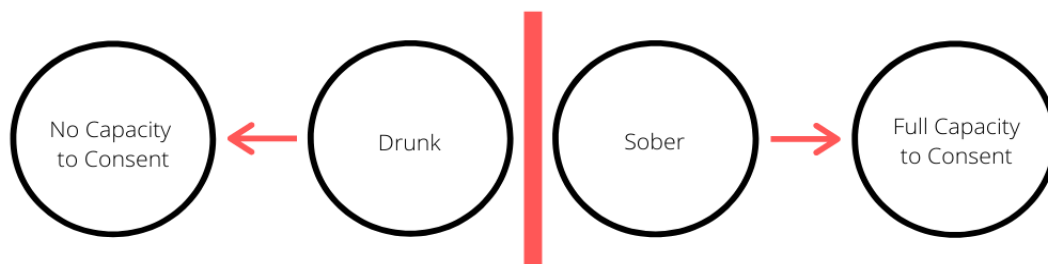


Figure 2: The Consent-Intoxication Binary

becomes mutually exclusive, either an individual has the ability to consent, or they do not. The construction of this intoxication-consent binary, is articulated by participants, for example, Matthew claims that *"there is only sober consent"*, Jamie considers that *"you can't give consent if you are under the influence"*, and Jason maintains that *"if the person is drunk then they can't give consent because their thinking is impaired"*. For these participants, there is no 'grey area' in which consent is able to be given, received or negotiated despite the consumption of alcohol. However, Jason's reasoning *"because their thinking is impaired"* shows a more nuanced understanding that the reduction in ability to consent is aligned with impairment of the senses due to intoxication. Additionally, the legislation relies on the phrasing *"... while he or she is so affected by alcohol or some other drug that he or she cannot consent or refuse to consent to the activity"* [emphasis added]. Emphasising the effect that drugs or alcohol has on consent capacity in this way, indicates that the dynamics of consent and intoxication are considerably more complex than potentially believed, and is also more reflective of a spectrum, rather than mutually exclusive binary.

Six out of 11 participants broke away from this binary thinking and conceptualised the consumption of alcohol on a scale. In this case, rather than individuals solely being either drunk or sober, they existed on a spectrum of fully sober to fully inebriated. Similarly, the capacity to consent was placed on an analogous scale. Therefore, rather than simply being able to consent, or not, the capacity to give (and receive) consent was placed along a scale rated on an individual's level of inebriation (see Figure 3). Here, participants felt that the more impaired an individual was

due to alcohol consumption, the less they were able to engage in consent negotiation. However simply consuming alcohol was generally not considered enough to veto the ability to give or receive consent. For example, Steve explains that, *“it’s not consent if you’re pissed or if you’re impaired. So as soon as you start being impaired then it’s not consent”*. Liam focuses on the concept of ‘reduced’ capacity to consent, explaining *“I think the more alcohol you drink the less conscious you are of your decisions and speech, and therefore your ability to consent is also reduced”*.

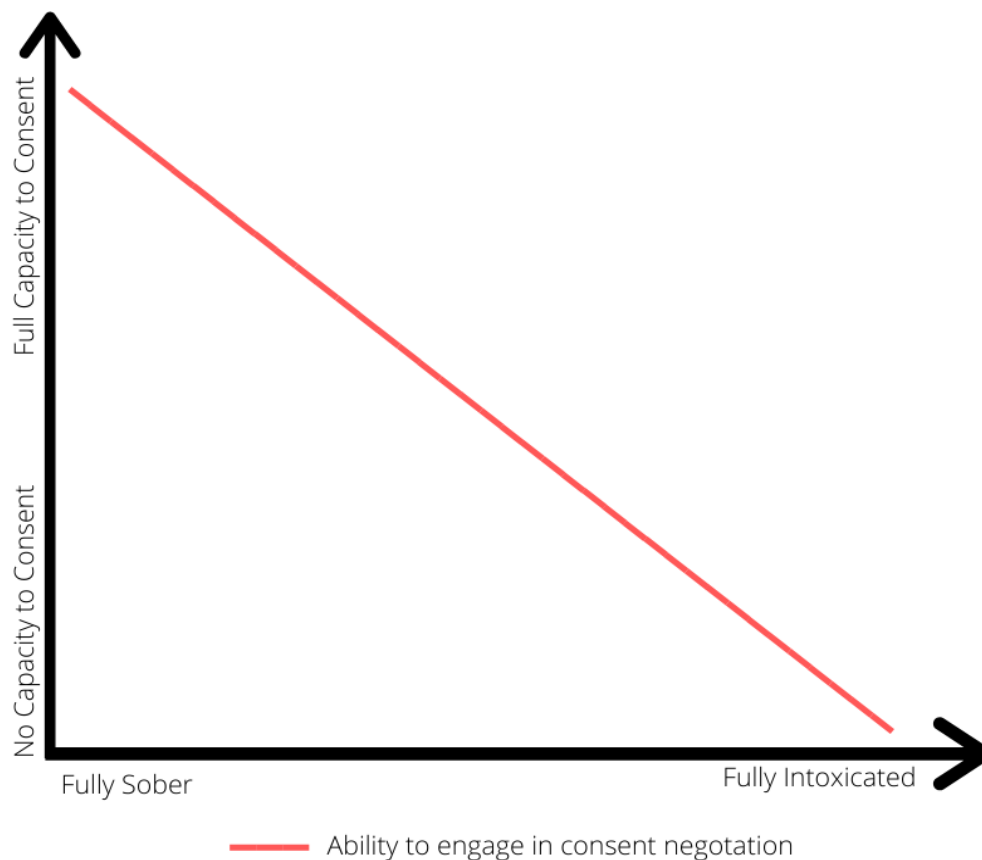


Figure 3: The Consent-Intoxication Spectrum

This reliance on levels of impairment to determine consent capacity presents numerous difficulties. Steve noted that being able to read a person and be comfortable with them is key in determining their capacity levels. However, the ‘party’ culture so inherent within alcohol consumption, and the nature of alcohol-induced lowered inhibitions mean that often individuals are engaging in sexual activity with people previously unknown to them (Carroll & Carroll, 1995). Therefore, without knowledge of the person’s mannerisms and typical behaviour, being able to read non-verbal signs of consent and levels of inebriation is considerably compromised.

Overall, relying on the consent-intoxication spectrum allows for extensive ambiguity and resultantly, the ability for men to engage in, and justify, their sexually harmful behaviour. Jason claims that intoxication makes *“it harder to think through something in your head before it happens”*, Liam also claims that *“you have limited reduced consciousness, less rational thinking”* and emphasises that *“your ability to interpret consent would also probably be inhibited”*. Therefore, participants saw alcohol as compromising both the ability to receive consent due to the impact on interpretation of non-verbal cues or body language, and also the ability to give consent due to incapacitation, reduced consciousness, and the presence of a state which Matthew explains *“[where] they don’t really know what’s going on”*.

Power and Responsibility

For participants in this study, the understanding of consent was central to how they made sense of sexual violence, and themes of alcohol, power and responsibility came through strongly in relation to this. Many of the participants mirrored binary or legislative thinking around intoxication meaning an inability to consent, however they also simultaneously recognised that people do have consensual sex whilst under the influence of alcohol or other drugs – complicating their views of consent and responsibility, particularly in cases of mutual intoxication. This contradictory understanding underpins intricate ideas of the division of responsibility and balance of power in sexual scenarios involving alcohol.

For some participants, whilst alcohol impacted a person’s behaviour, it was thought to have little to no influence on the responsibility of those engaging in sexual activity. For example, Jamie’s view was that *“they might be more likely to do things that they shouldn’t [under the influence], but it doesn’t change what their responsibilities actually are”*, and Lucas claims *“if you’re the one putting it [alcohol] in your body then you are responsible for how you act when you’re under the substance”*. Likewise, Samuel believes that alcohol does not fundamentally change behaviour, but rather acts as a *“social lubricant for whatever is already on top at the time”* and Steve maintains that alcohol acts more as a catalyst, stipulating *“if a dude’s going to rape a girl, he is going to rape a girl, regardless of whether they’re drunk or not”*. This view stipulates that although alcohol may have some influence on harmful behaviour, it is not the sole cause, and does not impact the responsibility shouldered by the individual who initiated the sexual scenario¹⁸.

However, for some participants, the intoxication of the male was seen as lowering his inhibitions and raising his rates of impulsivity to a point where the responsibility of negotiating consent was removed from him, and placed on the sober woman who seemingly had more power.

¹⁸ Notably, due to the nature of this research being focused on male to female sexual violence, the scenario’s discussed by participants were all initiated by the male figure. This is indicative of a wider observation of women’s being position as both the gate-keepers and recipients of sexual activity.

For example, Jason claims that, “*his thinking is impaired [...] he can’t rationalise it properly, he is just on impulse and emotion alone*” or similarly, Riley thinks that “*you are more controlled by just instinct when you’re really drunk*”. This rhetoric of ‘impulse, instinct, and emotion’, is also reinforced by Lucas who believes that “*alcohol decreases your inhibitions, so it actively decreases your ability to control yourself, like your [sexual] impulses*”. As a result of the alcohol-induced impairment, Riley believes that intoxicated men should be “*held less responsible for their actions*”, as,

your decision making completely goes out the window when you’re drunk, you’re not actually in full control of your actions. So, I think sometimes when people get blamed for it they weren’t actually in a position to be controlling themselves at that point.

Riley’s view reflects regarding decreased responsibility as a result of intoxication reflects research by Klippenstine, Schuller, and Wall (2007) who found that perpetrators of sexual violence are held less accountable (i.e. less responsible) than their sober counterparts (in comparison to intoxicated victims who are vilified and held more accountable). The congruence of this perspective, with the evidence highlighting its tangible effects, showcases just how important men’s perspectives are, as cumulatively men’s views on sexual violence situations and perpetrators result in concrete outcomes which can negatively affect victim-survivors.

Following, some participants thought the alleviation of male responsibility relocates accountability to the sober woman. For example, Jason says “*with her being sober, she can think it through and she can give consent or not and just say no outright and she can rationalise all the consequences in her head*”. James similarly maintains that “*when she is sober, maybe because she has got [...] more agency and more kind of perception of what’s happening*”. Universally, participants did not consider the potential for violence and aggression in this scenario, rather these participants considered that due to his levels of intoxication, and resultant impairment, the alcohol caused an unequal power imbalance, in her favour¹⁹. Therefore, in sexual situations involving an intoxicated male and a sober woman, these participants see the responsibility attributed on her to consent as she, in that situation, holds more power. Fundamentally, this perspective assumes that when sober, men and women hold equal amounts of power than are then only manipulated or influenced by other power factors such as intoxication.

This conceptualisation of alcohol as the influential power factor is also evident when participants discussed cases of mutual intoxication, where two participants concluded that neither party could be held responsible in cases of sexual harm because if both were intoxicated then

¹⁹ The lack of acknowledgement regarding violence and aggressive behaviours, may reflect participants wider perception that a significant amount of sexually violent cases are committed ‘by mistake’ rather than intentionally, a point further discussed later in this chapter.

neither had the capacity to consent (reflecting earlier discussions of the consent-intoxication binary). Jason gives the scenario that,

potentially if say both parties were drunk so neither of them could give consent and then after the fact one of them said that the other raped them. I would say that that one is much more of a grey area because both are at fault but you also can't really blame either of them for the act taking place.

Lucas also added that there might be situations where both parties were drunk and “*just going with it, and in the morning one or both of them regretted it and can retrospectively change their mind about whether or not they had wanted to do it*”. Lucas and Jason’s view is that in cases of equal intoxication (or sobriety), both the man and woman involved had equal amounts of power and control, and therefore blame cannot be singularly apportioned to any harmful situation. In situations of sexual violence, this comprehension contributes to excusing men’s harmful behaviour by blaming the woman, and potentially reflects the rape myth that women lie about rape because they regretted sex (McMahon, 2010).

Excusing Men and Blaming Women

There was a strong agreement amongst half of the participants that alcohol was used as a mechanism to simultaneously excuse men’s harmful behaviour and blame the victim/survivor. Here, participants saw harmful behaviour as being the result of the alcohol, rather than the individual. This relates back to the increased erasure of accountability or responsibility for an intoxicated perpetrator, where alcohol is used to excuse or justify harmful behaviour on the basis that ‘he didn’t mean it’ (Javaid, 2015). For example, Matthew explains that “*it’s used as an excuse, like ‘oh I was so drunk that I didn’t realise you didn’t want it’, so like in clubs, groping and shit like that, like ‘oh I was so out of it I didn’t realise’*” and Jamie maintains that “*people will be a whole lot quicker to write it off as ‘oh they were drunk, it was clearly in poor judgement’*”. Oliver discusses this rhetoric also, explaining that “*we seem to have so many bills and excuses for men’s bad behaviour that we already have a list*”, he goes to elaborate by detailing that when an intoxicated male harms someone else “*we would go on and on about ‘boys being boys’ or ‘he didn’t mean it’, ‘you don’t want to ruin his life over it’, or ‘a silly mistake’ [...] ‘if he was drunk he didn’t realise what he was doing’*”. Essentially, rationalising the situation on the basis that since no harm was deliberately intended, no blame could be apportioned onto the man.

Two participants also conceptualised the ‘excuse’ as a ‘justification’. For Samuel “*alcohol’s role in this I always think of like a social lubricant for whatever is already on top at*

the time. [...] I think alcohol is just a justification for why you could act that way", similarly Jamie thinking that *"if people think they are not in the right headspace that they will justify the actions that they do"*. This belief is in direct contradiction to Section 9.3 of the Sentencing Act 2002 stipulates that,

the court must not take into account by way of mitigation the fact that the offender was, at the time of committing the offence, affected by the voluntary consumption or use of alcohol or any drug or other substance (other than a drug or other substance used for bona fide medical purposes).

This legislation details that intoxication is not a valid defence for any harm committed, and therefore undermines the perception of these participants that alcohol consumption is a key factor in determining the accountability in sexual violence incidents.

Oliver notes that using alcohol as an 'excuse' is also conducted through trivialising the responsibility of the offender, drawing on common rhetoric such as *"boys will be boys" or 'he didn't mean it', 'you don't want to ruin his life over it' or 'a silly mistake'".* What Oliver notes here are the victim-blaming narratives that use male intoxication as a way of framing victim-survivors as dramatizing or over-exaggerating the incident as a form of vindication. Similarly, some participants noted that alcohol intake was also used to blame the victim/survivor for her own victimisation. Matthew explains that *"I think it's used both as an excuse, saying to victims 'oh you were so drunk, why did you get that drunk', like 'that's what happens when you drink'".* This mirrors research showing that intoxicated victims are typically held more responsible for their victimisation than their sober counterparts (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Norris & Cubbins, 1992; Richardson & Campbell, 1982), in particular intoxicated women are afforded more blame than intoxicated men (Grubb & Turner, 2012). However, Oliver also noted that the presence of alcohol can be used to blame the victim/survivor even if they were not the one drinking, for example with statements like *"she should have known better, 'she was sober, she should be navigating, 'she should have said no more'".* As previously discussed, this reflects the idea of alcohol as an influential factor dictating the power of women within a sexual scenario, and mirrors research by Klippenstine et al. (2007) that sober women are often considered to be fault worthy, by both men and women, for placing themselves in dangerous situations.

Participants' views around sexual violence, consent and alcohol are highly complex, highlighting a need for further critical discussion and research. There was an uncertainty within participant views regarding which scenarios drunk individuals maintained capacity to consent, and which were both legally and morally grey. While there were distinct conclusions about the

importance of understanding, and engaging in consent communication, the views of these participants highlighted just how limited current understandings are, shaping a rape culture in which the issue of sexual violence remains largely misunderstood or trivialised, and allows sexual violence to proliferate.

Constructions of Rape Culture

Participants presented a diverse understanding of rape culture, drawing on a myriad of perspectives to construct their perceptions. There was a near ubiquitous agreement of the pervasiveness of rape culture, summarised by Eden who claimed that *“I think it encompasses the entire Aotearoa culture”*, however there were differing views on the configuration of rape culture. Riley saw it as a system where *“maybe where men aren’t taught how to behave as much as they should, or there aren’t enough resources for the people that have been through this, or even the legal system isn’t perfect with dealing with it”*. Whereas Samuel explained it as,

rape culture, to me, is a descriptor or it’s a name for like a system or a culture that perpetuates and upholds attitudes that support rape. So it can be as little as joking about it, or as like, attitudes towards the actual incident [of rape], the event of the rape, that are normally pretty far on either far of the spectrum.

What Samuel refers to, is a multi-faceted construction of rape culture comparable to the previously discussed Rape Culture Pyramid (see Figure 1, Page 26), with a hierarchy of behaviours sustaining each other. Whilst participants hold varying perspectives, they maintained similar themes of normalisation, masculinity, and objectification, as key mechanisms causing, or maintaining rape culture. Here, participants conceptualised rape culture as a climate socialising men into sexually aggressive and competitive behaviours, and sexually objectifying women to the extent that sexual violence is normalised.

The Trifecta of Normalisation, Masculinity, and Objectification

Whilst rape culture is formulated differently across the literature, researchers ubiquitously agree that it involves a normalisation process where rape is facilitated by everyday norms, actions and values that establish a normative environment of sexual aggression and coercion (Buchwald et al., 1993; Gavey, 2018; Phillips, 2016; Rentschler, 2014). Gavey (2018) explains that rape culture serves to trivialise and minimise the prevalence, characteristics and consequences of sexual harm, ultimately manifesting a culture where rape is regarded as unimportant.

Seven out of the 11 participants referred to ‘normalisation’ when describing rape culture, albeit in a diverse variety of ways, reflecting the precedent set within the literature. For example, Liam described rape culture as *“a culture that ... I suppose views rape as like something that’s not morally incorrect”* and results in the acceptance that rape is *“just something that happens”*.

Matthew likewise observed that *“people don’t even know that it’s a thing because they have grown up with it their whole lives, and it’s just so normal to them that a lot of people don’t realise that it’s there”* and explains that rape culture remains arduous to challenge because *“it’s so forced on us [...] you just don’t realise because it’s just everyday things”*. Additionally, three participants noted the processes of trivialisation and obscurement within rape culture, by using the analogy of rape being ‘swept under the rug’, evidenced by Jamie who explains that *“we live in a society where rape is normalised, [...] swept under the rug and not talked about”*. Three participants characterised normalisation as the intentional mainstreaming of specific harmful behaviours which sustain sexual violence, mirroring Rentschler’s (2014) construction of rape culture as normalising and encouraging (male) sexual aggression, in order to classify violence as sexy and sexuality as violent. For instance, Eden noted that rape culture is *“a culture which normalises predatory behaviour, primarily against women”*, Lucas commented that it is where *“a lot of this [harmful] behaviour doesn’t get criticised or doesn’t get stopped”* and Riley claims that it is *“a culture [...] of people who find it socially acceptable to be sexually violent”*.

These participants describe a culture which normalises both harmful behaviour and attitudes, and sexual violence, showcasing a diverse and critical understanding of rape culture. In these discussions, participants also showcased a recognition that a rape culture condones (and sometimes actively supports), certain masculine behaviours that can lead to sexual violence, normalising masculine ideals to the point where they become mainstream, and as a result, unseen.

In analysing the foundation of rape culture, Eden immediately stated that, *“masculinity is causing rape culture”*. Whilst slightly less direct, four other participants had similar perspective, viewing a society where *“men are on top, men are the powerful ones and women are the submissive ones. [...] And I think that toxic masculinity [...] plays into it, obviously. It’s all part of rape culture”* (Matthew). Here, participants reflect on the concept that rape culture could not be sustained without the gendered power dynamics of enforced masculinity and femininity, which in turn reify inequity and the social, political, and economic submission of women. Likewise, masculinity could not foster to such extreme standards without existing within a culture that celebrates extreme manifestations of domination, violence and entitlement, all of which are considered extreme characteristics of toxic or hyper masculinity.

These participants highlighted three aspects of masculinity considered central to rape culture. The first was entitlement. Lucas explains that *“I think some guys feel a sense of entitlement towards women in a kind of, if I buy them things and am nice to them, then I deserve their affection in return”*, and Oliver adds *“maybe it comes from an expectation [...] that sex is something a man should just have [...]. That they should be able to take whatever they want”*. Here, Lucas and Oliver discuss entitlement as being paramount to masculinity, a mindset dictating

that men are inherently deserving of women's bodies, and sexual satisfaction, solely because they are men. James also echoes ideas of entitlement congruent within 'lad culture', explaining "*when you're in a group [...] if you've gone out to town and you're talking about who you want to get with [...] it's almost like 'oh I **can** get with that person' type thing*" [emphasis added] and later, "*I think maybe rape culture is part of that underlying mindset of some people, that they have claim to things*". James' use of the word 'can' indicate his perception that masculine behaviours create an expectation that sexual activity is considered a given, rather than an option, highlighting the belief of men that they are entitled to sex, with whom, and when, they want.

The second aspect of masculinity, emphasised by Lucas, was the "*unfortunate trope that has persisted ... in male groups in competing for females as if they're some sort of commodity to win*". He elaborates on the nature of sexual competitiveness by explaining that,

I think it exists in individual men but I think you see it come out a lot more when you have a group of men and they can engage in things like 'locker room talk' where they'll be chatting about women in very kind of like sexually aggressive ways, they might be egging each other on to ... pursue females or they might have competitions to see how many girls they can pull.

Lucas proceeds with a discussion regarding how sexual competitiveness among can start as early as Year 9, "*when you compete with other guys to see how many girls you can dance with*", highlighting the structural nature of rape culture, where seemingly benign behaviours (dancing) reify particular harmful attitudes contributing to sexual aggression. Lucas comments on this process by explaining that,

unfortunately ... [sexual competition] being a part of how men validate themselves leads to a lot of men who are ... less successful becoming bitter and resentful about that. And then they blame women for it rather than the culture or themselves. And then I think [...] that can be how it progresses to the aggression, from just the desire, and it's like desire, rejection, desire, rejection, and then blaming it on them [women] for some reason.

Finally, five participants noted that fundamental to rape culture was a toxic male peer culture in which 'banter' is allowed to flourish. For these participants, it was not a single harmful individual who upheld rape culture, but rather collective groups of men where certain constructions of masculinity are allowed, or encouraged, to foster. Jamie describes this culture as,

a bunch of men who are only there in searching for recognition from their peers, they'll say things that they maybe wouldn't say in a different environment, if it goes down well then they'll continue to do that and then

they'll think that it's okay [...] environments where people are trying to ... out-man each other.

This concept of 'out-manning' reflects Connell's (1995) idea of hegemonic masculinity discussed in Chapter 2, where masculinity is not a single fixed behaviour, but constructed within a hierarchy. By attempting to 'out-man' one another, men are drawing on different masculine ideals to accomplish hegemony. However, as Connell (1997) notes, hegemony interconnects with factors such as class, race, and sexuality, resulting in men unable to achieve hegemony, resorting to more extreme (and yet attainable) behavioural manifestations of masculinity attempting to 'one-up' their male peers. This may be via sexual competition, physical aggression, or even collective sexual violence. Eden and Matthew also recognise the emotional stoicism encouraged within masculine peer groups, jokes are made that *"trivialises the victim and their experiences"* (Matthew) and *"actual genuine issues like mental health or sexual violence don't get discussed, and if they do get discussed it's like a jokey context"* (Eden). This recognition highlights participants understanding that rape culture is intertwined with a culture of masculinity which promotes sexual competition, entitlement, and callous attitudes about sexual violence which serve to harm and dehumanise women who have experienced, or may experience, sexual harm.

For these same two participants, sexual violence was perpetrated within a rape culture that enabled sexual competition through promoting the sexual objectification of women. Eden described this as a climate which views *"women as trophies or objects to be won, rather than another human being"*. For Matthew, rape culture *"promotes the objectification of women and ... women are seen as objects rather than people"* and comments on the normalisation of objectification by explaining that *"it's just everyday things, like it's just 'oh there is another woman wearing virtually nothing on a billboard', or 'oh there's like a woman being objectified on the back of a bus', or something like that"*. Eden critiques the passive acceptance of objectification within media portrayals, by noticing the focus on *"the man getting the woman, and it's not really about what the woman wants or what the woman thinks"*. This disregard for women's agency, feeds directly into the removal of female autonomy, whereby women are seen as unable to think or act for themselves and require men to guide their behaviour. Through casting women as objects rather autonomous agents, the objectification noted by Matthew and Eden fuels harmful beliefs that support rape culture.

Certain tenets of masculinity such as entitlement and sexual competitiveness, the objectification of women, and the normalisation of sexual violence, all form a complex interconnection of mechanisms which are seen by most participants as producing and sustaining rape culture. This understanding replicates Burt's (1980) claim that rape culture dictates that men are inherently, and justifiably, sexually dominant - in contradistinction to women's innate sexual submissiveness, and research by Hildebrand and Najdowski (2014) and Loughnan et al. (2010)

that demonstrates how objectification facilitates a dehumanising attitude which enables and condones the perpetration of sexual violence. Together, these components obscure harmful behaviours and trivialises victim/survivor's experiences, generating a rape culture where sexual violence is enabled to flourish. In conclusion, Matthew sums up, explaining that *"Trump is probably most likely a rapist, I would say, but he is still the President. So that's rape culture, that you can become one of the most powerful people in the world whilst still being a rapist. That's, to me, probably what rape culture is."* Matthew's visceral insight into rape culture embodies several of the theme's participants viewed as formulating rape culture – entitlement, normalisation, toxic male peer groups, to name a few – however when challenged to consider what underpins the existence of rape culture to begin with, many participants were unable to answer. Considering the causes of both rape culture, and sexual violence, is essential to further unpack how participants understand the nature of sexual violence.

Perceived Causes of Sexual Violence

Participants had decidedly varied interpretations on what causes sexual violence, with answers ranging from structural inequalities to biological essentialism. However, they agreed that *"there is no universal cause for it"* (James), with Samuel considering that *"I think it's a hodge podge of a lot of really complicated things"* and Jamie describing that *"there are a whole lot of reasons [...] hundreds of factors that go into it"*. However, despite these participants' belief in a multi-faceted approach, exploring what young men consider to be the cause of sexual violence is vital in preventing sexual violence through targeting the necessary behaviours or risk factors. There was a strong consensus among participants that of people who committed sexual harm, not all of them did so intentionally, dividing the drive to commit sexual violence into two categories. Participants also discussed how colonisation impacted the ability to process emotions, the elements of power and control, and evolutionary biological factors. Finally, in discussing those at risk of perpetrating or experiencing sexual harm, participants constructed a social hierarchy that both caused, and sustained sexual violence and wider inequalities.

Different Types of Men

There was a very strong belief across most participants that there are two types of sexual violence perpetrators, those who harm 'by accident', and those who harm intentionally. These were segregated based on the belief that those who actively and intentionally committed sexual violence were driven by different factors than those who 'unintentionally' harmed somebody – potentially through misreading consent signals. The 'intentional perpetrators' were described by Oliver as *"just fucking awful, fucking awful human beings"*, who think *"that they should be able to take whatever they want"*. Eden similarly explains that *"[they] are like just a horrific human being who doesn't care about causing harm"*. Jason believes that 'intentional perpetrators' must

be impaired, explaining that their actions “*could be due to repressed emotional trauma or just a desire for control, but typically if it occurs the person would be impaired in some way*”, for example, “*that either their conscience is impaired in some way or there’s something else there that is urging them to perform the act*”.

The second category, those who participants viewed as harming ‘unintentionally’ were described by Eden harming “*because they don’t understand consent, they don’t understand the concept of it, they don’t understand that ... taking that without permission is a horrible thing to do*”, James similarly thinks that there may be “*confusion around boundaries and consent. [...] sometimes, in some ways, it’s accidental*”, he elaborates by explaining “*sometimes guys think they’ve received consent when they haven’t?, and so then they do it, and then they get called up on it later, and it’s like ‘oh shit I didn’t realise’ kind of thing*”. Similar views are presented by Jamie and Jason, the former, who determines that “*I think that a lot of people, a lot of perpetrators wouldn’t necessarily realise that what they are doing is sexual violence*”, and that “*it hasn’t been made clear to them what’s okay and what’s not*”, and the latter who thinks that for some men “*they don’t understand consent or rape*”, and that “*mixed signals are a more common case of that happening*”. Participants view was that in cases like this, the cause of sexual violence could be narrowed down to a lack of consent education or awareness which led to a misreading of signals, and that the perpetrator was not inherently ‘bad’, but rather someone who had made a well-intentioned mistake.

Interestingly, both Liam and Jason described these men as a 70/30 ratio, with the former musing that “*I think it would be 70% [...] know it’s wrong and do it, and 30% they don’t know it’s wrong and they do it*”. Whereas Jason presents similar statistics, but in reverse, “*probably I would say 60/40 or 30/70 with the lower one being the ones who chose to do it knowing that’s wrong*”. This shows that whilst this distinction may be commonly agreed upon, there are still complexities in how the separation manifests and the implications of the segregation on potential causes of sexual violence.

Power and Control

The most frequently agreed upon contributing factor to sexual violence, by five participants, was the role of power and control. Feminist discourse rejects early biological, psychological and evolutionary explanations of rape, and conceptualises rape as an explicit enaction of men’s power and domination intended to enforce the submission, subjugation and control of women (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Griffin, 1977; Groth, 1980). Echoing this, participants felt that sexual violence was the result of an explicit assertion of power. For example, Matthew explains that “*it’s about power, it’s about exerting your power over another woman*” and later he links it back to rape culture saying, “*part of rape culture is toxic masculinity and*

the need to be in power, like that hunger for power". Lucas also notes that *"I think there are a lot of situations where people use it as a form of domination and power"*, similarly Samuel thinks that *"there's power involved, there's intimacy, there's proximity, there's like so many things"*. Additionally, there was the perception that sexual violence could potentially be a mechanism through which to re-establish a perceived lack of power or control. Jason questioned, *"maybe there is a sense of like uselessness? Like, 'I am not useful for anything and I am angry and here is a really unhealthy way to lash out'"*. Samuel provides a similar perspective, stating *"I reckon it can just be feeling like you don't belong, feeling any sort of powerlessness ... I think they all add up to a place where things like this happen"*. Samuel and Jason's perspective echoes research by Groes-Green (2009) who found that young men who lack feelings of financial power or social status may express their power and domination over women, via sexual violence, as a method of re-exerting control and asserting authority. This highlights the nature of toxic masculinity which restricts the ability of men to process and express their emotions in a healthy capacity, and rather facilitates violence as an emotional outlet (Umberson, Anderson, Williams, & Chen, 2004).

Colonisation and Emotional (Un)Intelligence

Samuel, as someone who was Samoan, held Indigenous Samoan beliefs, and whose accounts were infused with understandings of colonisation and cultural displacement, also recognised emotional repression as a cause of sexual violence. He provided a unique perspective on the cause of sexual violence, maintaining that *"it feels like sexual violence is like an outcome of unresolved things beforehand. [...] there's this emotional reflexivity that people aren't able to flesh out that kind of, if unresolved, come out and manifest in this"*. When pressed to elaborate, Samuel explained,

I reckon it can be as specific as 'they didn't text me back when I said 'do you want to go on a date'', all the way to 'my mum told me off for not cleaning up my room and now I hate female authority figures'. I reckon it can be so wide, so wide, but because there is a lack of this ability to unpack any of those things.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, normative cross-cultural behaviours of masculinity are often considered to be control, toughness, emotional stoicism, and avoidance of feminine behaviours such as emotionality (Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Emotional stoicism is considered by Schrock and Padavic (2007) to be a key hegemonic masculine ideal, and the authors, along with Umberson et al. (2004) and Tager, Good and Brammer (2010) found that men's demonstration of masculinity through the repression of emotions is linked with violent behaviour – particularly towards intimate partners.

Samuel's considers that certain men "lack [the] ability to unpack" and maintains this results from how "colonisation removed a whole bunch of traditional Indigenous healing methods for a particular group". He views sexual violence as the 'modifier' for emotional tensions created by the nexus of a lack of Indigenous healing methods, and the socio-economic pressures imposed on Māori by colonisation. He explains,

New Zealand [...] kind of doesn't acknowledge its Indigenous roots [...] Māori haven't been given what they should have been given, or I guess the freedom to be like that. [...] I think all these things around them don't give them the ability to I think resolve or reflect, any of these things, and that manifests in violence. And then sexual violence I think is the modifier I think. Because you could say things like where they live, their income, their employment status, their residence status, all of those things would be applying different types of pressure to them.

Samuel's view stems from his personal experience managing emotional conflict without his traditional Indigenous Samoan healing methods, and echoes Kruger et al.'s (2004) argument that the high prevalence of sexual violence within Māori communities "can be located in the act, and impact of colonisation" (p. 8), interconnected with the suppression of Māori knowledge and tikanga, active marginalisation, the removal of traditional healing and conflict resolution methods, and active disempowerment (Kruger et al., 2004). In a similar vein, Steve, who is Māori, identifies the cause of sexual violence as the devaluing, and entitlement, to certain people in their bodies, which he claims stems from colonisation and "the inherent idea that Pākehā people are more developed than the noble savages that live down in the pacific". For him, sexual violence stems from a lack of respect regarding the sovereignty that people, specifically women, have over their bodies. He explains "it's very obvious that [...] Pākehā people don't respect Māori people. Or our sovereignty over ourselves. And they also don't respect women and their sovereignty over their own bodies, so I mean, the intersection of those two things". The perspective of both Steve and Samuel, that sexual violence is rooted in the practice, and outcomes, of colonisation, and the relations between Pākehā and Māori, begins to elucidate the complicated relationship between sexual violence and certain privileged or marginalised identities.

Social Hierarchy

As is seen in the discussions of Steve and Samuel, when analysing their views on the causes of sexual violence, many participants discussed how certain demographics or individuals were more likely to be involved in sexual violence (as either perpetrators or victim-survivors). This kōrero uncovered a discussion about certain identities being more at risk, and the complex social hierarchy that imposes this risk of harm. Whilst not all participants specifically addressed

‘a hierarchy’, a majority touched on related ideas of certain identities being privileged, as there was a near ubiquitous agreement that men (usually White) reigned superior and therefore were most likely to perpetrate sexual violence²⁰. Summarising this perspective, Jamie claims that,

obviously sexual violence happens to anyone but I think that there is the whole like patriarchal society that we live in that kind of perpetrates it, and puts men above women and then they think that they can do what they want.

Like Jamie, other participants constructed society, particularly bi-cultural Aotearoa New Zealand, as a hierarchy of privilege and power which manifests at the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity and sexuality. Steve summarises his perception of a hierarchic society as being rooted in the (de)valuing of certain people, and specifically the privileging of White men. He notes that the link between this hierarchy and sexual violence is,

this value system, or classification of people, a hierarchal classification of different people in our society, the people who are at the top, because they are at the top they have this sense of entitlement to everything else, including people and their bodies.

Oliver explains that he sees it as an environment where certain people are seen as ‘less than’, causing a dehumanisation effect that enables sexual violence. He explains,

when somebody is based on ‘less than’ [...] I would assume, that that would put them as more vulnerable to something that is sexually violent because [...] ... a sexually violent act... is demeaning. It’s strips away somebody’s humanity, and it doesn’t recognise that somebody is a human being.

²⁰ Notably, but perhaps not surprisingly, the participants who presented the most in-depth insights into the existence of this hierarchy were predominantly those who identified with ethnic minority groups.

There was also a nuanced understanding between participants of the intersections of race, gender, and for some participants, sexuality, which affect privilege amongst this hierarchy. Integrating the descriptions of participants regarding how they see the world, and the social strata in which certain people exist in, resulted in a perceived hierarchy which reflects Figure 4²¹²². Matthew, along with almost all of the participants, recognised that “*the world is run by white men*”, and Steve commented that “*it’s white men who are spokespeople [...] and, it could even come from a cultural system, aristocracy, hundreds of years of cultural systems where men are the ones in power*”. In other words, they recognised that white men are the most powerful in society and thus occupy a privileged position in the social order. As such anyone who is not a white male is at increased risk of sexual harm due to their lower place in this values system.



Figure 4: A Hierarchy of Gender, Race and Sexuality

Therefore, there was a general agreement between Steve, Eden, Oliver, Lucas and Samuel that women, particularly those who were Māori, Queer²³ or Takatāpui were at higher risk of experiencing sexual victimisation. Both Eden and Lucas also noted the way that the Queer community can experience hate-motivated violence, often through sexual harm²⁴. Lucas explains

²¹ Recognising that this diagram does not include other marginalised identities such as class, religion or ability which are arguably equally important to intersectional oppression. These were not included as they were not commonly discussed by participants. Further research in this area would increase our collective understanding of how multiple oppression points can intersect to form an even more complex social hierarchy.

²² Note this has been created by integrating the perspectives of 11 men, and is not reflective of all people’s lived experiences.

²³ The usage of the term ‘Queer’ in this thesis reflects its adoption as an umbrella term to refer to the LGBTQIA+ community or anyone who identifies as gender or sexuality diverse. Whilst this term is not accepted by everyone it is designed to represent, it has become commonly used in both academic and educational settings.

²⁴ The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects (NCAVP) estimates that nearly one in ten LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence has experienced sexual assault from their partners (Walters, Chen, &

this as where “*you just have the homophobia and the transphobia and some of that can manifest itself in sexual violence*”, and Eden agrees saying that “*there is a lot of awful hate that people hold towards these communities and that can be expressed through sexual violence*”. Matthew noted that people who have a disability were more likely to experience sexual violence as they were “*seen as weak or they can't fight back or are easy to take advantage of*” and Liam thought that those who may be vulnerable are people that are “*physically smaller, or physically incapacitated in some respects. Also people that are mentally incapacitated to some extent*”. Elman (2005) found that up to 85% of women with disabilities have experienced sexual harm, and research consistently shows that people with disabilities experience harm at significantly higher rates than those who are able-bodied (Martin et al., 2006; O'Neill, 2017; Roguski, 2013). Therefore due to the importance of the issue, it was disappointing that only two participants noted it. Additionally, their comments reflected an understanding of vulnerabilities resulting from perceptions of physical weakness rather than a structural disadvantage that leaves disabled people more vulnerable to abuse resulting from a lack of social, cultural and economic protections.

Biological, Genetic and Evolutionary Factors

Finally, multiple participants considered that the cause of sexual violence was not just constructed from “*a cultural component or an education component, there is a biological part to it*” (Jason). Whilst most participants did not posit evolutionary or biological explanations for rape as singular, some emphasised the importance of these approaches. For example, Riley’s view was that,

I think humans are just animals and there is quite a clear selective pressure on people doing it. The people who have the most babies, their genetics propagate through the gene pool the best, and you see it happening in other animals as well. It's quite common in the animal kingdom. [...] I think it is, at least for some people somewhat genetically.... there are some who are genetically predisposed to it.

Similarly both Jason and Liam believe in a chemical or hormonal element, Liam thinks that sexual violence has “*something to do with chemical and lower inhibitions and that sort of stuff in relation to biology and stuff like that [...] in men*”, and Jason reflected,

it could be a hormonal or chemical reason, men are typically more brash and impulsive I would say than women are. And also they are [...] more sexually

Breiding, 2013). Studies suggest that around half of transgender people and bisexual women will experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetimes (James et al., 2016; Walters et al., 2013).

needy in a way. Like they get aroused quicker and at times seems like it is more compelling to them.

These participants did not appear to consider these psychological, biological and evolutionary factors to be causative, rather another contributing factor alongside other social and cultural influences. Jason, for example explains that *“I think it’s both a social and a biological pressure because men physically are more dominant than women. But it is also a societal thing, in that we are told to be strong or dominant or leaders”* and Riley considers that *“it’s not just sexual violence, but humans have been traditionally a violent species, [...] I think it’s just at this point in human culture we all hold ourselves to a higher standard in multiple different regards”*. Additionally, Lucas maintains that,

by evolutionary I mean it’s evolved as part of our culture, [...] because it’s sexual, it has a biological component and if it’s aggressive it has a biological component to it but I think it’s just been compounded upon by years and years of culture.

However, Steve vehemently opposed this perspective, claiming that *“no, doesn’t matter if you’re a fucking Neanderthal, it doesn’t matter. Evolution, biology, it makes no fucking difference”*. Eden felt similarly, arguing that *“people can overestimate biology and underestimate culture”*.

Conclusion

Participants presented rich and diverse understandings of sexual violence, consent, and rape culture, shaped heavily by the fact that since (most) did not see themselves as victim-survivors of sexual violence, they were therefore limited in their ability to fully understand the issue. Additionally, participants highlighted a nuanced understanding of the continuum of sexual violence, describing the structural nature of sexual harm and the links between perceived ‘low-level’ behaviours and explicit violence. There were incredibly intricate understandings regarding the interactions between consent and alcohol, with two contradicting views regarding the ability to consent while under the influence. Notably, participants also focused heavily on alcohol as the influential factor on power dynamics, ignoring the existence of gender inequality and the resultant power imbalance during sexual activity. Participants presented a nuanced understanding of rape culture, recognising the interconnected nature of how rape culture is constructed of attitudes and behaviours which normalise sexual violence, sexually objectify women, and proselytise certain masculine behaviours such as sexual competitiveness and dominance. Finally, whilst there was no universal agreement as to the cause of sexual violence, participants highlighted the

pervasiveness and importance of a social hierarchy of gender, race, and sexuality which impacted risk of perpetration and victimisation, emphasised the role of power and control in causing sexual aggression and coercion, positioned colonisation as key in understanding why sexual violence occurs, and noted potential evolutionary and biological factors. These insights enable a critical discussion of how young New Zealand men are perceiving sexual violence, highlighting the areas of importance for prevention and intervention efforts.

Chapter Five – Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence

Terrifying. And changeable. It's terrifying, but it's changeable, and I think that's really important. [...] and I think that's what we need to do [...] it's horrifying, but also we have the responsibility to change it.

(Eden, NZ Euro/Pākehā, Iranian)

Introduction

This chapter explores participants' perceptions of the responses that sexual violence perpetrators do, or should, face, and unpacks the ways in which they consider sexual violence could be prevented. First, this chapter begins by detailing the common perception that perpetrators do not face negative repercussions, before further unpacking the potential for more specific legal, emotional and social consequences. It also highlights the tensions between how participants think society should respond to perpetrators - discussing the importance of moving from punitive attitudes to a restorative approach - in comparison to what they see as currently realistic. Finally, this chapter will conclude by mapping the approaches that participants deemed most appropriate for preventing sexual violence, looking at the role of consent education, the place of individual risk management and bystander intervention, and the importance of, and methods for, moving towards a full culture shift.

Responding to Perpetrators: What Is & What Should Be

Interestingly, participants' perceptions of how society does, and/or should, respond to men who have committed sexual harm were layered with significant emotional and personal tensions. There was disagreement and diversity amongst participants regarding what consequences perpetrators face, with Pākehā participants often reflecting a faith in the criminal justice system and wider social structures not usually shared by the non-white participants or experiences of women as victim-survivors (Jordan, 2001). The views of participants about perceived consequences fell predominantly into four categories: either the absence of any repercussions at all, or the potential for legal, emotional, social consequences. In exploring what responses should be, participants unpacked personal tensions around the concept of punishment via imprisonment, proposed ideas of healing, and considered the important role of restorative justice. Discussions regarding the proposed responses to sexual violence perpetrators were

infused with narratives of justice, accountability, culture, and emotion, resulting in highly personal story-telling and anecdotes.

What Is: An Absence of Consequences

Participants generally acknowledged that for a significant number of sexual violence cases, the perpetrator would not face any consequences. For example, Matthew states that, “*in most cases nothing [...] the vast vast majority of cases, that we know about, [...] there is no repercussions, legally and socially for the perpetrators*” he follows with “*I would say a majority of the time it has no real impact for the perpetrator besides gratification*”. Similarly, Eden thinks that “*sometimes [there are] none. In some contexts*”, and Oliver claims that consequences are just “*a slap on the wrist sometimes, not enough*”. In his view, James explains that,

sometimes people are just like ‘hahahaha’ or like ‘look at all the girls I have had sex with’ and I guess that’s just a case where it hasn’t been dealt with or they haven’t recognised that their actions have negatively impacted someone.

Jason considers the lack of both emotional and legal consequences, explaining “*the perpetrator isn’t likely to have the emotional consequences that the victim has*”, and that,

the realistic situation is that you can’t prove it legally because a lot of the time it’s just one on one, so it’s the victims’ word against the perpetrators. So you can’t legally prove them guilty on the fact that they could potentially be innocent.

This mirrors the lived experienced of women, and the research which details how out of 100 sexual violence cases reported to the New Zealand police – of which already is a significant minority²⁵ – 31 make it to court, 11 result in a conviction, and only 6 result in a prison sentence (Ministry of Justice, 2019).

In Chapter Four, participants noted that key to rape culture, was the normalisation of sexual violence and the toxic masculine behaviours that underpin sexually harmful attitudes. Here, their understanding that sexual violence perpetrators largely avoid accountability reiterates the belief that sexual violence is so normalised within society, that harmful behaviours remained obscured, trivialised and condoned. This recognition by participants is vital, as it both reflects the experiences that victim-survivors have been trying to communicate for decades, and also as it helps shape the culture in which this happens. The way that men view sexual violence, and the lack of consequences for offenders, has considerable tangible effects – therefore by acknowledging this phenomenon, these men are able to contribute to its change by enforcing

²⁵Estimates indicate only approximately 9% of sexual violence incidents are reported to the police (Mayhew & Reilly, 2009). See Jordan (2004) for a more critical explanation of why so few sexual violence victim-survivors report to the police.

certain measures of accountability within male peer groups and within the wider society for those who have harmed.

What Is: Legal, Emotional and Social Consequences to Sexual Violence Perpetration

Whilst initial responses revolved around a lack of consequences, when prompted further participants began to contradict earlier sentiments by proposing the existence of legal, social and emotional repercussions, therefore highlighting tensions between their interpretation of potential responses in comparison to the lived experiences of victim-survivors.

Four out of 11 participants were clear that in instances of sexual violence, the perpetrator would be incarcerated. Despite research showing that less than 6% of reported sexual violence cases result in an imprisonment (Ministry of Justice, 2019), these participants were clear that the *“obvious consequences would be jail”* (Riley). James also claims that *“it depends on how it [sexual violence] is dealt with, if it is actually dealt with then obviously there is physical things like prison”*, and Oliver explains that he doesn’t know *“what the average prison sentence is for a rape, but that seems to be the only way that we frame punishment”*. These participants confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS), and the inevitability of incarceration for sexual offending, reflects a trust not often shared by victim-survivors whom have consistently been ignored, disregarded, disbelieved, and often actively harmed (Jordan, 2001, 2004; Maier, 2008). The CJS is designed by, and for Pākehā (cisgender, heterosexual) men, privileging, and consequently trusting, their voices and experiences (Jackson, 1987; Jordan, 2004). However, their privileged identity means that often men lack the lived experience of systemic inequality - and the knowledge that CJS is inherently biased – resulting in a confidence that others will experience the system in the same way they would. Belief in a fair and equal CJS erases the unique experiences of victim-survivors, and allows the universalism of men’s experiences to continue, thus contributing the ongoing harm experienced by victim-survivors.

As was discussed in Chapter 4, participants maintained that there are two types of men who sexually offend – those who harm intentionally, and those who harm unintentionally. This was particularly relevant for participants’ understandings as to whether perpetrators would experience emotional consequences, such as guilt, as a result of their actions. Five out of 11 participants thought that most perpetrators would experience guilt, but there was a distinct element of uncertainty. For example, Eden thinks that *“some perpetrators ... might realise what they have done and carry that with them, for their lives, this guilt, this horror at what they’ve done”*, likewise, Lucas explains his view that *“for others who perhaps wouldn’t have done that when they were sober and they were just drunk and missed the consent lines and fucked up, then they would feel pretty horrible about it afterwards”*, he goes on to explain that *“people who do that and fuck up but aren’t inherently aggressive predatory people, that can make them feel awful as well”*. This hope, that most sexual violence perpetrators feel guilt, potentially represents a need

to separate the ‘evil’ offenders from those that have ‘just made a mistake’ – again dividing by intent, as participants are clear that the former would not experience guilt. It is indicative of participants social awareness of sexual violence, and their levels of empathy, that they maintain (perhaps hopefully) that sexual offenders will feel guilt.

Five out of 11 participants were sure that someone who had committed sexual harm would face social hate and ostracisation. For example, Matthew thinks that *“in some cases it may result in people hating them”*, Riley claims that *“families might disown you”*, and James considers that *“in theory people are like ostracised or shamed”*. Lucas believes that *“if it becomes public [...] perpetrators lose their reputation and can lose careers and stuff as well”* and Samuel perceives that when a *“perpetrator commits rape ... the rape is how they get defined moving forward”*. Jason also believes in the condemnation by the public, citing his concern about false allegations, where he believes that *“people socially [...] out casting the person even if they are not guilty because people, as a social unit, ostracise the perpetrator, so even if they are not legally found guilty legally, people still impair their life”*. Jason was also concerned about cases in which people ostracise a drunk man for raping a woman, he explains *“I feel like ... if he does rape her, the people will ostracise him for that despite being drunk and impaired”* (as in his view the inebriation minimises his responsibility) elaborating that,

most people are a lot more careful with judging the person as good or bad in that situation but there are people who would just jump on whoever the perpetrator is being the bad guy, despite the alcohol being involved.

This faith in public response contradicts the plethora of prolific sexual violence cases involving high profile men such as Donald Trump²⁶, Brett Kavanaugh²⁷, Louis CK²⁸, and Cristiano Ronaldo²⁹, all of whom have had public allegations of sexual harm, and yet remain successful and generally well-respected. Historically, victims have consistently been silenced, disbelieved, outcast and demeaned for speaking up about sexual harm, and yet perpetrators have remained protected, in positions of power, retaining their status and reputation (Jordan, 2011)³⁰.

²⁶ Has been accused by 17 women of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct, and has been recorded referring to women as ‘grab[bing] them by the pussy’ without their consent. Trump is currently the President of the United States of America.

²⁷ Has been accused of sexual assault by three different women. Kavanaugh was consequently nominated and endorsed as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court.

²⁸ Has been accused by five women of sexual misconduct, one year later he has returned to the stand-up comedy circuit and has been publically endorsed by many household comedy names.

²⁹ The footballer has been accused of rape by three women, he continues to be one of the most famous athletes in the world, continues to play internationally, and is considered a national hero of Portugal.

³⁰ However, as was mentioned earlier, this process is dependent on other elements of race and class, the previously listed men are mostly white and wealthy, and their victim(s) were of mixed races and social-economic backgrounds, showing the ways in which race and class intersect with gender privilege to protect certain demographics and condemn others.

For women, the personal belief of these participants that abusers will face social condemnation may be positive, as it potentially contributes to a culture where this is realistic. However, the lack of awareness regarding the social protection of (most) sexual violence perpetrators also can contribute to the ongoing erasure of victim/survivor's experiences. The belief that social controls are in place to regulate harmful sexual behaviour may then imply to men that they do not need to proactively shun or condemn perpetrators – as society will do that for them. This in turn then results in a complete lack of social consequences, as male peer groups abstain from condemning perpetrators as they favour a perceived set of social controls which do not exist. Similarly, research shows that whilst individual men may hold more progressive views than traditional masculinity dictates, they often perceive that other men in the peer groups still maintain more harmful attitudes (Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003). In order for these perceptions to permeate the lives of women, all members of a male peer group must communicate their belief to the others, a significant obstacle for men who may face considerable physical, social, and economic consequences for violating male social norms.

What Should Be: Moving from Punishment to a Restorative Approach

In his discussion regarding what consequences a sexual violence perpetrator should face, Jamie notes that *“you would hope typically, that they would be caught and incarcerated”*. As Oliver noted earlier also, imprisonment is often the only way contemporary society frames punishment for criminal behaviour. However, despite these views about punitive consequences, participants also articulated a tension regarding sexual offenders being ‘deserving’ of punishment, and what may be the most effective long-term solution for sexual violence. For example, James mused that,

it's kind of a hard balance between punishing people enough so that they know that what they have done is not okay, but also trying to get people to actually learn from it and build on it and actually, hopefully, stop others in the future from doing the same thing.

Eden also struggled with this balance, explaining, *“I am still not sure what my own emotions are on that yet [...]. It's really tricky, it's really really really hard, because viscerally I just want to be like ‘No. This is awful what you've done. That's it’”* but goes on to explain that *“we need to ensure perpetrators don't do these kind of actions again, and when they're met with like unyielding hate, which I struggle not to feel myself, it can entrench people in these violent behaviours”*. Similarly, Riley first states that *“there definitely should be punishment, people.... you know purely as a deterrent. Yeah to stop it from happening so people can feel safe in society”*, later on however, he also states that *“even in horrible situations I think people deserve a chance to redeem themselves. They deserve a chance to make up for what they have done, if they actually regret it”*.

While the simple fact that participants recognised sexual violence as a crime deserving of punishment, highlights the severity with which they understand the issue, these tensions also show an important level of empathy and progressiveness. For young men to be emphasising the importance of accountability, but also rehabilitation and healing, showcases an alternative response to sexual offending than either highly punitive measures, or an absence of consequences at all – both of which are harmful. However, participants viewpoints are highly reliant on the perspective that a majority of sexual violence offenses are perpetrated ‘accidentally’, by men who essentially don’t know any better or make a ‘well-intentioned’ mistake. Participants accounts are infused with the idea that responses need to help perpetrators understand the harm they have inflicted, implying the belief that most sexual violence offenders are unaware of their actions. Following on from this idea, Samuel (who is Samoan) and Steve (who is Māori/Pākehā) – and who have both experienced violence in their family - both identified the need for a system that focuses on healing, rather than punishment. Steve explains this as,

So it's not like we should kinda just be like 'you're a horrible person', like yeah they have done something fucked up and they need to understand why it was fucked up and what damage was done, then hopefully they will be able to kind of be healed again.

On a similar vein, Samuel explains that,

I think there is a level of trauma associated with the perpetrator. [...] I don't think it's the same level as the victim, but I think that level of trauma for the perpetrator combined with the almost smaller emotional capacity to be able to deal with this [...] is harmful. But I don't want to compare, that doesn't feel right, but is harmful. Because the system is also set up in a way where the perpetrator kind of just gets left [...] [and] perpetrators don't get a chance to heal? [...] I guess we don't look at how [...] we can heal the trauma of that experience of committing rape. Because I think it's a trauma experience, but also before that, like we don't get to resolve what came before that would have led to committing this.

Here, Samuel articulates the complexities in people who commit harm, and the often considerably traumatic life situations that have led men to engage in sexual offending. Research shows that sexual offenders have often themselves experienced sexual harm or other traumatic events, coupled with the knowledge a significant amount of sexual offences are committed by the same offender³¹ (Looman, Abracen, & Nicholaichuk, 2000; Prentky, Lee, Knight, & Cerce, 1997),

³¹ Research by Hanson, Morton, and Harris (2003) found that the five-year recidivism rate was 14%, the 10-year recidivism rate was 20%, the 15-year rate was 24% and the 20-year rate was 27%. Although the

the participants views here echo the importance of rehabilitation and addressing underlying trauma. However, Eden presents a particularly interesting tension that is often experienced by feminist academics and activists working in the field of sexual violence prevention, and explains,

Yeah, because I logically wonder if things like rehabilitation, that might be necessary, and might have a really positive impact, and ultimately reduce toxic masculinity and reduce rape culture but it's so hard to have that conversation within myself or outwardly because I feel like, I am not emphasizing the victims enough that once this conversation goes in this direction, I have to interrogate myself and wonder how, you know, emotionally, my heart is with the people who have suffered from sexual violence but if I want to help resolve sexual violence there should be room for rehabilitation [...]. Because the hope is that that support will reduce the chance of things like that happening ever again.

This tension, the balance between prioritising the needs of victims/survivors whilst also working with male offenders is often contentious. However, as is argued by sexual violence prevention scholars, whilst there are dangers of involving men within sexual violence prevention, it is vital they remained involved³². Berkowitz (2002) and Flood (2011) state that in order to mitigate potential harms, efforts with men must be guided by a feminist agenda and done in partnership with, and even be accountable to, women and women's groups.

Whilst most of the participants who discussed imprisonment, simply referred to their desire that sexual offenders should face a significant jail sentence, one participant was fairly clear in his view that prison is ineffective and actively harmful. Steve, who being Māori is statistically more likely to experience the effects of incarceration within his whānau or wider community (Jackson, 1987), is of the view,

currently we jail people for doing something or nothing or sometimes anything in between, so I don't know if putting someone in jail is actually going to rehabilitate them to the point where they are going to not do something or feel safe when they come back into the world. So, I don't think we should put people in jail. [...] They need to know what they have done wrong and how they've hurt people and understand that, through reconciliation, speaking with whānau, but I don't think that chucking someone in jail is really going to help

cumulative recidivism rates increase with time, the chances that an offender will eventually reoffend decreases the longer he remains offense-free in the community. The proportion of new recidivists was 14% in the first five years at liberty compared to only 3% during years 15 to 20.

³² For example, the dilution of the feminist agenda, the lessening of resources for victim-survivors, and the marginalisation of women's voices and leadership (Flood, 2011).

them. Because they have done something fucked up they still need to be helped to not do that shit again.

Reflecting common discourse on Māori hyper-incarceration³³, and more specifically Māori worldviews on justice³⁴, Steve emphasised that for him, a prison sentence does not allow the victim/survivor to “*get enough mana back to face up to that person [perpetrator] and say this is the way you’ve done harm to me, you’ve changed my life*”. This belief mirrors research by Jackson (1987, 1990), Tauri (2019), Pratt (1992) and Ward (1995) and reports produced by Department of Corrections (2001) and Te Puni Kokiri (2007) which all indicate how fundamentally culturally inappropriate and harmful Western criminal justice frameworks are for Māori³⁵. Instead, Steve reflects the opinion that rather than prison, a process of restorative justice is significantly more healing for both the victim/survivor and offender, and the overall goal of reducing and preventing harm.

The emphasis on restorative approaches is also seen in the views presented by Samuel, who similarly advocates that the current punitive system does not allow for an effective healing process, and instead articulates the desire for,

[a] wraparound service in terms of like.... I get the feeling that perpetrators get left on their own even by their family, by services, but I think some healing needs to happen in a holistic sense where there is more than just the perpetrator, more than just the individual.

Steve’s view of an effective response process is,

a consultation process, and it should be done on the victim and their whānau’s terms, and there should be whānau engagement, both the victim and the perpetrators whānau should be engaged and there needs to be a complete

³³ Despite accounting for approximately 14.9% of the general New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2018), Māori makeup around 55% of the prison population (Department of Corrections, 2016).

³⁴ Rooted in a collective, rather than an individuated criminal responsibility, a sense of indirect as well as direct liability, a focus on reintegration and the restoration of social bonds rather than deterrence or retribution and driven by the victim/survivor rather than the state (for more see Jackson, 1987, 1990; Tauri, 2019).

³⁵ Primary, amongst many, criticisms are (1) the protocol under which the court system operates is alienating for many Māori; (2) the quality of legal advice to Māori is usually substandard and many Māori find it difficult to access quality legal services; (3) the behaviour of lawyers, court staff, and the judiciary is often culturally inappropriate; (4) Māori offenders often receive inappropriate sentences that do not meet their cultural and rehabilitative needs, imprisonment being the prime example; (5) Government’s over-use of the imprisonment as opposed to non-custodial strategies for dealing with offending and re-offending; (6) a lack of acknowledgement of Māori philosophies and approaches to dealing with Māori offending (for a good summary see Tauri, 2019).

understanding of the harm that was caused and it needs to be talked through and understood. So you're not kinda of separated from the thing. [...] I think reconciliation is a process of engagement with whānau, with the wider community, with discussion over time, and it's up to the victim to determine when and how that works with their whānau.

However, this approach is not without barriers, as Steve notes,

It's a bit of a naïve thing to sometimes say that we can have the wider whānau on both sides, they actually wanna sit in the room with you and they actually want to support you, and that's actually one of the harder things to be able to establish.

There is a common perception in society, that rehabilitation measures are a 'soft on crime' response, whereby offenders are 'getting off easy' (Bernard, Haas, Siler, & Weatherby, 2017). This is demonstrated by Jason who claims that "*obviously if they were tried and found guilty then their sentence would have to be pretty sizable for the crime that they committed. Or **at the very least** put into some sort of rehabilitation*" [emphasis added]. His emphasis here shows that Jason considers rehabilitation a more minor consequence than other forms of sentencing, such as imprisonment. Contrary to this, as seen above, multiple participants stressed the importance of offenders understanding the hurt they had caused. It is generally the central tenet of rehabilitative and restorative measures, that the person who has committed harm understands the impact of their actions, with approaches to accountability placing emphasis on accepting responsibility, making things right, fixing what is broken, and earning redemption (Koss, Bachar, & Hopkins, 2006). Notably, prison can be considered an inherently an ultra-masculine model of punishment that emphasises aggressive interactions and male sex-role stereotypes such as emotional stoicism and physical dominance (Morash & Rucker, 1990). On the contrary, as rehabilitation relies on stereotypically feminine traits such as compassion, emotional self-analysis, and expression (Connell, 1987; Koss et al., 2006), rehabilitation can be considered a feminine ideology which acts in contradiction to the masculine construction of prisons. Participants view that the current prison system is an ineffective, and actively harmful, response to sexual violence, and that rehabilitation is a more effective, healthier measure, potentially highlights a movement towards a healthy masculinity which values emotional intelligence, empathy, and compassion.

Interestingly, of the four participants who were clear advocates of a restorative approach, three identified with ethnic minority communities, reflecting discourse on how deeply culturally unsuitable Western criminal justice frameworks are for Māori and other Indigenous or ethnic minority groups (see Jackson, 1987, 1990; Pratt, 1992; Tauri, 2019; Te Puni Kokiri, 2007; Ward,

1995). This Indigenous world view is clear in the perspective presented by Samuel earlier, where he said *“healing needs to happen in a holistic sense where there is more than just the perpetrator, more than just the individual”*, this focus on moving beyond individual responsibility is indicative of an Indigenous mindset prioritising community and the knowledge that all individuals of a community have an unavoidable collective responsibility for both the wrongdoing and bearing the pain of an offence³⁶ (Jackson, 1990).

Emotional turmoil was present within many of the participants narratives around punishment, justice, and accountability. Articulating the desire that perpetrators recognise their behaviour as wrong and harmful, and yet are supported in a way that prevents further harmful behaviour. There was confusion about how to approach this process in a way that still centered the voice of the victim/survivor, and emphasised the harm of their actions, whilst also being focused on healing and prevention. These conversations were highlighted mostly by participants of colour, who recognised the harms of the current prison system, and its ineffectiveness in preventing further harmful behaviour - showcasing the discrepancy in knowledge around the criminal justice system between participants of different ethnic backgrounds. Ultimately, there was an agreement that the current system fails to work effectively in either preventing or responding to sexual violence, and that there must be a change to the way perpetrators are interacted with after the fact.

Preventing Sexual Violence

Whilst a majority of participants considered comprehensive consent education as the most important and potentially effective form of preventing sexual violence, multiple solutions were proposed. These were layered with previous understandings regarding the two different types of sexual offenders – those who harm intentionally, and those who do not realise their harmful actions. For these participants, there was an understanding that if someone’s harmful behaviour was due to a lack of knowledge, that is something that could be changed, however if someone was intentionally harming another person, they were beyond the scope for intervention or prevention. For example, Liam claims that *“I think it would mostly be around addressing the people that don't know it's wrong. I don't really know if there is anything you can do about the guys that know it's wrong and still do it”*. Similarly, Jamie – referring to those who harm ‘accidentally’ – explains *“it hasn't been made clear to them what's okay and what's not. I think [...] when you're in Year 9 and getting sex-ed it's not enough. [...] There needs to be a better understanding of consent among everyone”*. Although consent education was the most prominent

³⁶ This is particularly important within Māori communities, as sexual violence is not just condemned due to its physical harm, but also as it violates the inherent tapu of a woman. It thus in turn upset the spiritual, emotional and physical balance within the victim/survivor herself, and within the relationships she had with her community and her tīpuna.

proposed solution, participants also discussed the role of individual risk management and bystander intervention, and the importance of instigating a broader culture change through increasing kōrero around sexual violence and reconceptualising a healthy masculinity.

Consent and Sexuality Education

The most universal response to the most effective method of sexual violence prevention, from eight out of 11 participants, was education. Across these participants, there was an agreement that comprehensive consent and sex education was singularly one of the most effective forms of preventing sexual violence. For example, Steve described that,

when I was a kid and a teenager I don't remember being told that consent was a thing. And I think that especially if our families are not around, we don't have people around to support us, I think that should be taught in schools. [...] So we understand what to do if we break that, we understand the damage or the things that we have done wrong.

Similarly, Oliver thinks that “*more considered effort needs to be put into understanding consent, and understanding consent through schools*”, in considering prevention Lucas claims that “*education would be the first thing that comes to mind [...], I think there needs to be a national ... government prescribed curriculum for sexual education in high schools*”. Eden observes that “*education is often a very under-utilised, powerful tool to change the way society views things and change the way we approach issues like masculinity and sexual violence*”, and Jason thinks that “*education is a massive part of it*”. Oliver recounted his experience as a teacher in the classroom of a Mates and Dates³⁷ facilitation session, remembering that there was,

this 14 year old girl and they were having a discussion and one of the first questions was 'am I allowed to say no?'. And I honestly, I felt like my fucking heart was breaking, [...] And if you think that [...] from such an early age that's your understanding of relationships ... and understanding of consent, I mean how do you even know better? How do you even know that you shouldn't be put into a situation like that? So I mean, more programmes like that.

When considering the construction of potential consent education, Lucas considers that it should teach about “*like, no means no, and like consent being the rule of law and things like, if you have any doubts whatsoever that the other person might not be 100% keen, then make it explicit rather than implicit*”. James’ view is that this type of education should be,

³⁷ A New Zealand-based ACC funded program aimed at teaching high school students on healthy relationships, consent, gender and sexuality, how to support victim-survivors and bystander intervention.

a mixture of education around what is and is not your right basically, and also actually like a mindset around how we treat each other, and how we talk to each other, and when everyone is around. But also when it's just in that group setting, like that lad setting or that lad culture kind of setting.

The view of these, and other, participants, is that through comprehensive education, sexual violence can be prevented through better understandings of consent, sexual boundaries, the nature of sexual violence and its impacts. This understanding mirrors the increasing body of research regarding education as a tool of sexual violence prevention, particularly involving men and boys, and constructions of masculinity and gender norms (Berkowitz, 1994, 2002; Flood, 2006; Flood, 2011; Katz, 2006; Katz, 2018). The implementation of this proposed sex and consent education also had similarities across participants, almost all of whom thought it should be present within high schools. However, Steve also thinks primary school students should also be included, as “*you don't have to sexualise something to make it about sex, you don't have to automatically feel like you're exposing kids to explicit material to talk about consent*”. This is a vital insight into education, as it reflects the early gender socialisation³⁸ experienced by children which has fundamental impacts on their behaviour and relationships (both emotional and physical) with others³⁹. Likewise, it mirrors the views of many feminist activists who claim that consent education should start when children are very young, through discussions about bodily autonomy, the interactions between children of different genders and the enforcement of cis-heteronormative paradigms on very young children (Gansen, 2017; Theriault, 2015). On the other end, Lucas thinks that whilst education in high schools is imperative, it should also continue into the university context. In his view, there should be “*a reminder in university with examples of contexts that they might get themselves into because things operate differently from high school*”, he explains that “*having that again when you're 17, 18, going into adulthood and a larger sexual landscape, it would be good to have that two-stage education process*”. Examples that Lucas gives of university specific context would be to,

teach men that just because you're paying for her stuff doesn't entitle you to anything from her in return except maybe her buying you some drinks [...]. Encourage women to try and avoid the situations where they are taking advantage of men's willingness to buy them drinks and being like 'you can do

³⁸ Essential to note as gender (and the associated norms and expectations) are inextricably linked with sexually harmful behaviours.

³⁹ Infants have been shown to form categories of ‘male and female’ during their first year of life (Leinbach & Fagot, 1993) and Haugh, Hoffman, and Cowan (1980) found that children as young as three years old significantly stereotyped an infant labelled boy or girl on trait attributions.

this a little bit, but be aware that you could be putting yourself in a risky situation'.

Interestingly, one participant touched on a concept central to the kaupapa of this research, that the responsibility of men and boys for preventing sexual violence should be centered. James explained that,

I think often like women are seen as the ones who are like 'this happens to us, we shouldn't do this kind of thing', but actually it takes the other, like men stepping up to actually call people out when they can. So a mixture of education around [...] what is not your right basically.

James' view, here, touches on complex ideas of traditional sexual violence prevention initiatives being grounded within victim-blaming narratives that dictate women managing their own safety and risk, rather than empowering men into culture change (Cahill, 2001). For young men, recognising the structural nature of rape to the extent which prevention mechanisms need to be formulated from a systemic foundational background – requires a critical self-analysis of one's own positionality as a contributing member to rape culture – a violation of social norms many men have not achieved. Therefore, promoting education as an effective method of rape prevention is an accessible way for men to engage in prevention without actively challenging the structures in which their success and privilege is (relatively) ensured. However, importantly, participants' perspective, that sexual violence can be prevented in this way, again is imbued with an understanding that most people who sexually offend do so as a result of a lack of knowledge or understanding. Here, men are well-intentioned, but due to an absence of comprehensive consent education, they potentially misread consent signs or made a mistake. As a majority of participants proposed consent education as the most effective method of prevention, there remains a lack of awareness as to perpetrators who harm intentionally, and methods of prevention in these cases.

Individual Risk Management and Bystander Intervention

Taking a different approach, Riley thinks that sexual violence prevention education should focus more on individual risk management strategies such as,

how to drink responsibly [...], to look out for the people around you, make sure that everyone's safe and that none of your friends disappear on you, or have strategies for being safe like a buddy system or always having a friend know where you are or a GPS on your phone or something, [...] to not let

your drink out of your sight, ... don't go out alone. If you're going to a party you should have a couple of people that you know there.

In his view, *“the schools and parents should be ... more okay with the fact that the kids are going to be doing all this stupid shit anyway. They should just make sure that they're safe in those situations”*. Here, Riley's thoughts mirror harm reduction rhetoric, often grounded in the consumption of alcohol or drugs, where the emphasis is on reducing the harm potentially experienced by the consumer rather than aiming for abstinence messaging, which they recognise is unrealistic and consequently, harmful (Marlatt, 1996). Additionally, Riley's view on *“look[ing] out for the people around you, mak[ing] sure that everyone's safe and that none of your friends disappear on you”* is reflective of the recent growth of bystander intervention programs which aim to empower individuals, particularly young men, into being aware of potentially harmful situations and acting in positive proactive ways (Katz, 2018). Similarly, Lucas discusses how he tries to be aware of potentially harmful situations, explaining,

because I am quite a large male I have the ability to step in to situations or to discourage certain situations from getting out of hand [...] There have been situations where, you know like, if I am with my like friends who are females and we are out and there are creeps around then I will make it pretty clear, or just like to assist in whatever way I feel appropriate.

Samuel also describes the importance of people intervening, describing that, *“the most privileged or the most abled people in the room, [...] whoever is ... the most safest in most environments, have this responsibility to create and maintain a safe environment”*, similarly Eden dictates the important of interpersonal relationships, explaining his belief that,

There's a person to person level too. The ability to be an actual bystander. Like, call out someone when something, like a joke is made about sexual violence, you know calling out your mates or your family, being able to say 'that's not okay', and I think that's really important for the cultural shift. Is to not let things slide.

Here, participants highlight the importance of empowering action through bystander intervention programmes, increasingly shown to be successful in reducing violence and effecting

culture change⁴⁰. The bystander approach is built on primary ecological approaches to prevention that move beyond changing individuals to changing the peer and community interactions, norms, and behaviours which construct rape culture, and aim to reduce the actual incidence of the problem (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Certain styles of bystander intervention models have been criticised for perpetuating the ‘white knight’ complex, where, similar to Luca’s perspective, men are needed to protect women in certain situations (Banyard, 2011; Pease, 2008). Eden’s perspective explicitly targets male peer groups, and relations between men, climates in which sexually harmful attitudes are extremely dominant (Beaudrow, 2014). Masculinity is often constructed within these peer groups, where different ideas are supported, and challenged, until individuals mould a masculinity that aligns with the hegemonic identity (Campbell, 2000). Therefore, by disrupting that process and challenging attitudes that are traditionally considered part of hegemonic masculinity, highlights a unique self-awareness of one’s own position in sustaining a harmful rape culture. As men are the dominant social group, they have largely been exempted from having to engage in critical analysis regarding their own position in society, and the structures in which they may be contributing to. It is the nature of privilege remain ignorant of the structures which maintain privilege, and therefore for Eden to note the importance of men’s role in challenging each other, reflects a realisation of the critical analysis necessary to deconstruct the power held by men.

Towards a Culture Shift

Finally, whilst education was predominantly conceptualised as the most effective form of prevention, there was a belief that it could not act in isolation. Participants generally agreed that that in order to completely eradicate sexual harm, there needed to be a complete culture shift by increasing the conversations around sexual violence and reconceptualising a healthy masculinity. For example, Eden’s view is that,

all these things have to be happening in tandem, like with the media, like with education, if that’s all happening then people will feel more empowered to say things to their friends, because it’ll be [...] a dispersment of culture.

Similarly, Jamie thinks that “*there is no silver bullet [...] [a] whole society change away from patriarchy would be pretty cool*” and Matthew thinks that by “*dismantling the patriarchy [...] dismantling rape culture [...] it [rape] wouldn’t be such a cultural thing, it would be like a one-*

⁴⁰ Emerging evidence suggests that bystander approaches to violence prevention may increase bystander intentions (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Moynihan, Banyard, Arnold, Eckstein, & Stapleton, 2010); promote positive bystander behaviours (Coker et al., 2011); and reduce violence among college students (Coker et al., 2016; Gidycz et al., 2011), adolescent male athletes (Miller et al., 2013), and high-school students (Coker, Bush, Brancato, Clear, & Recktenwald, 2019).

off". Matthew's broader perception is that the key to preventing sexual violence is "*taking power away from people [...], taking away this idea that males are impervious*". To recognise that the prevention of sexual violence requires a whole culture shift, indicates a developed understanding that the cause of sexual harm is, at least in part, embedded within the structure of society. By extension, the recognition of patriarchy as causing sexual violence - or even just existing - is still a highly controversial position outside of feminist academia and activism. Therefore, asserting the desire for a culture shift away from patriarchy positions these participants as significantly progressive and aligned with feminist ideals. For these participants to be presenting such views may indicate wider societal shift, in which young men are becoming more aware of the culture in which sexual violence is enabled to happen, and issues such as gender inequality and objectification which allow rape culture to prevail.

For many participants, a key feature of preventing sexual violence was increasing conversations, highlighting rape as a pressing issue, raising awareness of the harms and furthering collective social understanding. For example, James simply stated that he thinks "*we have to have more conversations about it*", whereas Jamie went further by explaining that whilst "*I think that there is no silver bullet [...] I think that talking about it works more to bring it into the limelight and put some guidelines for other people*". Similarly, Jason saw sexual violence as being a topic that,

people are wary about talking about it because they are worried of saying something that could be interpreted the wrong way or mistaking something for what it isn't. So it's a topic that people are wary of talking about. Which makes teaching other people about it difficult because people tend to only barely touch on it rather than talking in-depth.

Additionally, when discussing his view of this research project, Oliver indicated that "*it's something we should talk about more, [...] for people to understand this a lot more*". These men's view was that because people are wary of discussing sexual violence, the conversations do not happen enough and consequently, sexual violence is able to prevail as because it remains a 'hidden issue'⁴¹. Oliver also notes that the emphasis on conversation should extend to the way in which media discusses and frames sexual violence. Oliver's view is that,

there needs to be a concerted change on how these stories are framed [in the media]. So when it comes to, when we talk about sexual violence in the media

⁴¹ An example of this in New Zealand, was the recent Gender Equality Survey conducted in 2017 which indicated that 29% think false rape accusations are common (Gender Equal NZ, 2017).

we are avoiding the common tropes or the victim-blaming angles and we focus on the perpetrator, and we are not trying to... I guess our responses to sexual violence shouldn't be 'women shouldn't be out at this part of town at night', it should be focused on how do we stop perpetrators from committing acts like this.

Eden also agrees that the “media is a big place where change can occur”, as,

every time we see a romantic scene of a kiss or sex, there's this romantic idea of like 'they just know' and then they kiss and then they you know, and it's just like this unspoken, unconscious thing of beauty and romance that we see so much in like romantic depictions, of sexual relationships depictions, and if we redid all of those and had moments of 'is it okay if I do this?', 'how are you feeling about this?', I think that would make a huge impact because we are surrounded by media every day and kids grow up with media.

Eden and Oliver's view about the nature and harms of media reflects work by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1994) and more recently Morgan and Shanahan (2009) who argue that repeated exposure to media influences perceptions of social reality – what they call ‘mainstreaming’. A problematic phenomenon as media types such as tv shows, news coverage and newspapers perpetuate traditional and stereotypical views of sexual violence which employ victim-blaming narratives, dubious consent, and are laden with harmful rape myths (Atmore, 1994; Barton, 2017; Caringella-MacDonald, 1998; Cuklanz, 1996, 2000; Gavey & Gow, 2001; Los & Chamard, 1997). However ‘main-streaming’ has also typically meant ‘male-streaming’, where the dominant male voice becomes so normalised within society, that is considered both normative and universal directing the narrative in a way that benefits them and maintains their male privilege (Barton, 2017).

For James, Eden and Oliver, vital to this culture change was creating a shift in masculinity that allows men to identify and express their emotions in a healthy and productive manner. James explained that in his view sexual violence is,

partly also [...] about having powerlessness. I think there is also within that, that people can't express their emotions or don't feel like they have the ability or feel like they can express their emotions. So maybe it's like a shift in what masculinity is, partly, around actually being a bit more open about your feelings and stuff.

This idea is also supported by Samuel, who solely conceptualised the solution to preventing sexual violence as “*raising the emotional literacy of men*”. This mirrors notions that one of the foundations of masculinity is the avoidance of both emotional vulnerability and any emotional display of fear, hurt, sadness, or any experience that signals ‘weakness’ or lack of control (Farrell, 1975; Kilmartin, 2000; Schrock & Padavic, 2007; Tatum, 2007). Previous theoretical research conducted by this author at Honours level hypothesised that ineffective affective communication and the prohibition of emotional vulnerability can result in a skewed perception of the world (and women), causing the perception that men are constantly victims of other’s inherent deception and may manifest pre-emptive aggression as a means to prevent their (inevitable) victimisation. This research showed how men’s internal narrative often contradicts realistic experiences, particularly those of women. Therefore highlighting how critical self-analysis is discordant to normative constructions of masculinity, where over-emotionality or over-thinking are considered feminine traits, and as such many of these underlying beliefs remain unchallenged. However, these discussions of emotional literacy highlight that participants recognise sexual violence as potentially preventable through encouraging a version of masculinity which promotes emotional self-analysis, enabling men to live in a world with effective emotional communication and the ability to critique their own role and responsibility within a wider rape culture.

Best practice sexual violence prevention is a constantly debated topic, however participants’ perception that consent education is the most effective approach mirrors the beliefs of Flood (2006) who promotes the value of educational programs – particularly for men and boys – and Beres (2014) who recognises that whilst incredibly complex, targeting understanding of consent in sexual violence prevention is vital. Individual risk management has historically been considered the primary approach to preventing sexual violence, as it allows individuals – and especially women – to feel in control of their own potential for victimisation (Bart & O’Brien, 1984; Levine-MacCombie & Koss, 1986), however this approach has been heavily criticised as perpetuating victim-blaming narratives which place the responsibility for prevention on women as potential victims (e.g., Cahill, 2001; Stanko, 1995). Finally, the view of participants, that sexual violence prevention requires a culture shift from rape culture and patriarchy, by increasing conversations around sexual violence and empowering men into healthy emotional expression, reflects Flood’s (2006) claims that prevention programmes must challenge traditional masculinity through increasing men’s emotional and moral compassion to reduce violence. Whilst, generally, participants’ views on prevention mirrored feminist literature, many of the proposed mechanisms relied on the conceptualised of most sexual offenders harming due to a lack of knowledge or awareness. In this sense, prevention models were hypothesised as most effective when targeted at this demographic, essentially engaging in ‘dominant group deflection’ where the responsibility

for prevention is removed from the entire male group, to a few who are at risk of harming (Flood, 2019). This perspective contradicts the tenets of their philosophy, in which ‘accidental’ offenders could potentially be anyone. However, despite the underpinning viewpoint together, most of these prevention approaches indicate a highly informed and socially critical perspective that mirrors the approach of many feminist-founded prevention initiatives.

Conclusion

Participants presented mixed, emotive, educated and highly contradictory understandings of the consequences of sexual violence and types of response and prevention. Their understanding was shaped heavily by their positions as peers or whānau of sexual violence perpetrators and/or victim-survivors, and the intersecting identities of gender and ethnicity. Whilst a significant portion of participants believed that perpetrators would face seriously social sanctions as a result of their harmful behaviour, a majority were upset with their perception that most sexual violence perpetrators remain free from legal, social, emotional or cultural consequences. Therefore, highlighting the extent to which sexual violence and harmful masculine behaviours are normalised within a rape culture. Key to the discussion on proposed responses to sexual violence, was the recognition that current Western criminal justice framework prioritising punishment, particularly the prison system, remain futile and actively harmful – and that restorative Indigenous methods of reconciliation and healing have the potential to be significantly more effective in responding sexual violence and preventing further harm from occurring. Additionally, across participants there were a variety of perspectives regarding effective sexual violence prevention approaches, highlighting the diversity of views. At one end of the spectrum was the explicitly feminist and socially progressive understandings regarding male responsibility for sexual violence, comprehensive consent and sex education, and reconceptualising masculinity as congruent with healthy emotional expression. To the more neutral approaches of bystander intervention, increasing conversations around sexual violence, and alternative media portrayals of sexual activity, to the more traditionally individualistic risk management approaches to women’s safety. Not only did participants present this spectrum of views between them, they also reflected a variety of positions within their own accounts, highlighting the importance of sexual violence prevention efforts targeting the different belief systems which underlie the entire spectrum of prevention approaches.

Chapter Six - Discussion

I felt like I was about to cry through the entire thing ... in a good way though. Because I feel like it's something we should talk about more and that's why I see your research as being so important. For people to understand this a lot more.

(Oliver, NZ Euro/Pākehā)

Introduction

Previous research exploring men's perceptions of sexual violence indicated that men largely contribute to the conditions under which sexual violence occurs (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2016), showcasing the paramount importance of understanding men's perceptions of sexual violence and the wider environment they are situated within. However, despite Kelly-Hanku et al.'s (2016) conclusion, there is a void of New Zealand-specific sexual violence research involving men, outside of quantifying their harmful behaviour towards women. This original, exploratory study emerges in a post #MeToo and #TimesUp climate where the movements have catalysed a global conversation highlighting and interrogating the insidious nature of sexual violence and rape culture. This study contributes to this important dialogue, by employing a feminist lens to critically analyse how young New Zealand men understand sexual violence, and rape culture, and in doing so aimed to strengthen existing insights on the complexities of men's understandings, and their tangible impact on the lives of women. While these findings are not generalisable, this research highlighted a myriad of issues regarding the absences, contradictions, and complexities of men's understanding of sexual violence. Moreover, participants' viewpoints raised significant questions for prevention initiatives, as they emphasized how existing pedagogies may contradict young men's ideas of the cause, nature and reasoning for sexual violence perpetration. To discuss the significance of this research in the context of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand society, and with the ultimate goal of preventing sexual violence, this final chapter discusses the key issues identified in the research findings, addresses the implications of these findings, and contextualises these conclusions within a New Zealand context.

The Scope of The Problem

As has been established, there is a deficit of New Zealand research on men's perceptions of sexual violence. This absence of information exists despite participants awareness that rape culture is highly prevalent in Aotearoa, and is privileging white men to the point where they can

harm against women without negative repercussions. This is concerning as a scarcity of research hinders the ability of both researchers and activists in understanding the true nature of rape culture and sexual violence, and the harmful constructions of masculinity that continue to proliferate. In turn, this lack of awareness then hampers the creation and delivery of best practice prevention and response mechanisms for sexual violence, as well as ongoing efforts to involve men in the disruption and challenging of rape culture.

Participants almost ubiquitously felt they had an insufficient understanding of sexual violence, despite many having attended higher education or completed consent education programmes. Two participants considered they had a ‘higher-than-average’ understanding, however both were founded from distinctly different backgrounds and resulted in different perceptions. As a young Māori man, Steve had lived experience witnessing the effects of both perpetration and victimisation of whānau sexual violence, and his viewpoints were highly critical, empathetic, and were embedded within Indigenous understandings of mana, respect, and self-sovereignty. By contrast, Jason perceived himself as having a decent understanding as a result of socialised family values and a comprehensive health education, however consequently held certain views that did not always mirror the lived experience of women or feminist scholarship in this area. The different views of Steve and Jason highlight the internal contradictions that participants held, and the tensions between their perceived understandings and the viewpoints that they communicated. As quantitative research often shows young men, particularly those in tertiary education, have high rape myth acceptance, perpetrated sexually harmful behaviours, and generally present more toxic masculine ideas than other demographics (Beaudrow, 2014; Jewkes et al., 2006; McMahon, 2007; McMahon, 2010; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992), it was surprising that overall these participants presented progressive, empathetic, victim/survivor-centric, occasionally overtly feminist perspectives. Whilst some participants presented certain attitudes that could align with rape myths, particularly those relating to victim-blaming or biological causes, the contradictions within their accounts meant that they also presented opposing views without potentially realising it. For example, one participant explained the biological cause of rape as being embedded within a man’s high rates of testosterone, and yet later clearly asserted there was never a situation in which a victim/survivor could be responsible for her own victimisation. For these participants, whilst there was a notable lack of critical awareness about the cause or construct of their position, their understandings were generally imbued with equality, respect, and empathy.

Additionally, there was a clear delineation between the understandings of Pākehā participants, and those who identified as men of colour. For the four participants who identified with ethnicities other than New Zealand European/Pākehā, three of them presented accounts that were innately infused with their cultural identities. Indigenous and cultural perspectives were

clear in discussions of bodily autonomy, the idea of understandings as being influenced by cultural and religious socialisation, and perspectives on the criminal justice system. In particular, these participants presented highly detailed positions on the existence of a social hierarchy, and the nature in which White men are privileged, and brown or Māori women exist in a constant state of risk. For the Pākehā participants, whilst many still noted this hierarchy, their explanations of it were considerably more superficial, and often presented with a de-personalising third person perspective. In contrary, the men of colour tended to explicitly situate themselves within the social hierarchy, and explain the other identities as either ‘above’ or ‘below’ them. Whilst Pākehā still may (and often do) have distinct cultural identities, their position of privilege allows these to remain hidden in the mainstream, in contrast to non-white cultures which are clearly delineated as the ‘other’. Therefore, as sexual violence is inherently a racialised issue, just as it is a gendered one, it is essential to understand the ways in which non-white cultures are centred within negative statistics, and White cultures remain largely invisible, universalised as the ‘normal ones’. As such, social understandings of sexual violence must actively critique the influence that *all* cultures have in their communities’ experiences of sexual violence and rape culture, not just the brown ones.

Dividing Offenders by Intent – What This Means

One of the strongest themes underpinning participants understandings of sexual violence, or more specifically the men who commit sexual harm, was the idea of intent. Participants repeatedly referred there being two types of men who sexually offend, those who do so with the intent to harm, and those who do not realise the harm they are committing. This division is vital for several reasons, first as it contributes to rape culture through the mitigation of responsibility and blame, second as it trivialises and erases the experience of women often also resulting in victim-blaming, third as it contributes to harmful conceptions of masculinity and sustains toxic masculine peer groups, and fourth as it impinges on effective prevention approaches.

Participants considered that those who harmed intentionally had elements of evil, were inherently ‘bad people’ and/or had some form of psychological impairment. On the other hand, participants who harmed ‘accidentally’, were seen to be well-intentioned men who had made a mistake. In this instance, this separation may serve to allow men who fall in the ‘accidental’ category to distance themselves from the ‘intentional’ men’s behaviour, simultaneously justifying or excusing their own harmful behaviour. This results in a displacement of responsibility. Rich, Utey, Janke, and Moldoveanu (2010) found that men often portray sexual offenders as ‘the other’, diminishing their own accountability for sexual violence in a rape culture. This separation does just that. By situating one category as ‘evil’ men who intentionally rape women, men are removing their responsibility for contributing to a rape culture which encourages sexually harmful behaviour.

The perception that men also may commit sexual violence by ‘accident’, also typifies this group as lacking the necessary self-control, education, or other regulatory factors. This individualisation of responsibility means that individuals can retain the perception that as long as they are regulated (by education, sobriety etc), they will not rape. The ‘othering’ achieved by this separation continues the narratives of individual responsibility, and erases the structural factors which socialise young men into sexually harmful attitudes and behaviours, thereby allowing rape culture to continue. This means that harmful constructions of masculinity, such as the lack of empathy for rape victims or lack of self-awareness, are able to continue unchecked. This perception facilitates the proliferation of toxic masculine attitudes within peer groups unchallenged, as the non-harmful men in these groups, conceive the harmful as distinctly different from themselves. Therefore, as this conceptualisation of offending erases the role of masculinity in contributing to sexual violence, there remains no social pressure to change.

Alternatively, this two-category perception may facilitate a level of empathy between the male demographic with the ‘accidental’ offenders. As the perception remains that it only takes a ‘small mistake’ to become somebody who has sexually harmed, men could potentially see themselves as closer in identity and with similar amounts of humanity. This empathy then may lead to the social protection of the offender at the expense of the victim/survivor, again privileging the male voice, reinforcing male dominance within society and allowing rape culture to continue.

Not only does this segregation have significant impacts for men and their involvement within rape culture, but it can also result in extremely negative outcomes for women. Focusing on men’s sexual offending as being a ‘well-intentioned mistake’, trivialises the harm that is experienced by a victim/survivor, erases their voice and experience, and potentially contributes to internalised stigma that complicates the potential desire to report their experience. Additionally, this conceptualisation of offending potentially blames women for their victimisation by maintaining that it was their actions that resulted in ‘mixed signals’, and if they had just been clearer in their refusal to sex, the rape wouldn’t have happened. The trivialisation of harm, lack of reporting (and concomitant social awareness), and victim-blaming are all central to sustaining rape culture, and therefore the impacts that this segregation on women highlight just how tangible the effects that men’s perceptions can have on the lives of women.

This separation also has significant implications for prevention approaches. As noted in Chapter Five, participants perceived someone who harms intentionally as being beyond the scope for prevention or intervention, essentially ‘beyond help’. On the other hand, they saw someone who harmed ‘accidentally’ perhaps due to lack of knowledge regarding consent, as able to be influenced with education and therefore prevent further harm from occurring. The philosophical dissonance of men’s understandings versus a programmes pedagogical approach, may therefore

result in the perception that initiatives targeting ‘intentional’ offenders are futile, contributing to a culture where certain men remain untouched by prevention measures. Additionally, programmes targeted at the ‘accidental’ offender run the risk of being highly individualised, ignoring the structural factors which contribute to rape culture and sexual violence, and disregarding the role of masculinity – ultimately allowing sexual violence to continue. There is also the risk that these programmes will engage in victim-blaming pedagogies by attempting to empower women into sending clearer signals towards men in order to avoid men’s misinterpretation, responsibilising women into preventing their own victimisation.

Overall, whilst participants often clearly articulated anti-victim-blaming attitudes, recounted the issues of normalisation and trivialisation embedded within rape culture, the underlying mindset that rape is predominantly ‘accidental’, perpetrated by a well-intentioned individual male, contributes to the ongoing trivialisation of sexual violence that has significant impacts on the perpetuation of rape culture. This concept diminishes the importance of sexual violence, it minimises the significance of the effects on the victim/survivor, and most importantly it erases the structural nature of rape which permeates society and socialises men into sexually aggressive behaviours.

Gender, Alcohol, Power & Consent

For participants, the issue of consent was central to how they understood sexual violence. For these young men, sexual violence was almost singlehandedly considered any sexual act that was imposed without consent, and while the discussions around consent were not highly technical, participants were adamant that consent was essential. However, discussions became significantly more complex when participants considered the influence of alcohol. As was discussed in Chapter 4, participants mostly conceptualised alcohol as the influential power dynamic during consent negotiation, meaning that the presence of an intoxicated party created inequalities between parties. In instances that both individuals were sober – or equally intoxicated – they were seen as holding equal amounts of power to consent. Fundamentally, this perspective assumes that when sober (or equally intoxicated), men and women hold equal amounts of power. A position which ignores the ongoing issue of gender inequality and uneven gendered power dynamics, essentially disregarding the foundations of rape culture. This understanding of alcohol being the most influential factor on power inequalities during consent negotiation contradicts the fact that gendered power dynamics impact consent processes significantly more than alcohol, and for some cases, alcohol consumption can just exacerbate what is already an unequal relationship (Nkosi, Rich, & Morojele, 2014).

As these participants conceptualised consent negotiation as a process in which both parties are equal, there is significant potential for victim-blaming attitudes that responsibilise

women for taking (at least partial) ownership of sexual violence situations that involve the violation of previously established consent. For example, in situations where a woman agrees to a certain type of sex, and then the man initiates a change, and yet the woman does not explicitly refuse the changing nature of the sexual interaction. Research shows there are multiple reasons why women may not speak up in such situations, and key to them is the feeling of fear of negative repercussions (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999; Muehlenhard & Cook, 1988; Warzak & Page, 1990). Gender power dynamics are consistently prevalent, and ignoring their pervasive nature allows victim-blaming attitudes to prevail, contributing to the harm experienced by victim-survivors and the ongoing perpetuation of rape culture.

Sexual relationship power (SRP) is a concept most commonly employed in research looking at HIV/AIDS or sexually transmitted infection risk in young women⁴². Developed under Connell's theory of gender and power, SRP is used to describe power inequities that play out within intimate relationships through men's controlling behaviours, resultant from multi-factorial community, society, and structural level norms and determinants (Closson et al., 2019). However, outside of HIV/AIDS resulting from intimate partner violence, SRP has not been applied to sexual violence – despite its potential. While participants mostly recognised the concept of gender inequality, and the existence of a social hierarchy privileging men, there was a lack of recognition as to the impact of power imbalances on an interpersonal level. Consent negotiation was seen as an arena conducted mutually between two individuals, potentially impacted upon by intoxication. SRP therefore provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics, as it dictates that sexual interactions and consent negotiation is fundamentally underpinned by a gendered power imbalance that is significantly more pervasive and influential than the impact of alcohol.

This has important implications for consent education. If young men are unaware of how structural inequalities manifest within interpersonal relationships, and consent education relies on the intoxication-consent binary discussed in Chapter 4, then there remains a harmful lack of knowledge as to what fully mutual, informed, free consent looks like. Consent education must not only teach the nuances of engaging in sexual activity whilst intoxicated, but must also include education around the nature of patriarchy, gender inequity, and how structural marginalisation can impact on interpersonal relationships. By integrating the concept of SRP influencing individual's capacity to engage in mutual consent negotiation, particularly in situations influenced by other factors such as alcohol, consent and sex education is able to develop its relatability, effectiveness, and engagement for young people.

⁴² (For example see, Buelna, Ulloa, & Ulibarri, 2009; Pulerwitz, Gortmaker, & DeJong, 2000; Teitelman, Ratcliff, Morales-Aleman, & Sullivan, 2008)

Perceived Causes of Sexual Violence & Their Implications

In Chapter 4 most participants agreed that there was no singular cause of sexual violence, however, a majority of the men articulated clear ideas as to contributing factors. Understanding why rape and sexual violence occurs, and its varying natures, is of the utmost importance in helping inform the way we respond to men in society, and the approaches taken by prevention and intervention measures (Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006). Identifying the factors that men see as causing or contributing to rape perpetration gives valuable insight into aetiological factors which underpin harmful behaviour, and helps design programmes to target individual and structural influences on rape behaviour and attitudes.

For participants who emphasised the role of power and control, they considered sexual violence to be a result of men actively enforcing their domination over women in an attempt to maintain supremacy, often through ‘lashing out’ when they feel women are threatening their superiority. This view mirrors the early feminist theories of rape proposed by Brownmiller (1975), Burt (1980), Groth (1980), and Melanie and Fodaski (1974) which dictate rape being, primarily, the use of sexuality by men to establish dominance and control over women, and is itself not about sex, but power and control. Similarly, the participants who focused on the existence of a social hierarchy causing sexual violence perpetrated by the dominant groups upon the subordinate groups, reflected similar ideas of sexual violence resulting from the need to dominate others and maintain superiority. If men believe in this model as causing sexual violence, then social responses must explicitly target hyper-masculine feelings of dominance, and the masculine power structures that reinforce their entitlement of superiority. Flood (2006) discusses that effective prevention strategies must challenge the patriarchal power relations which sustain and are sustained by violence, and promote alternative constructions of masculinity, gender, and selfhood which foster non-violence and gender justice. Considering how powerful men’s attitudes and behaviours are shaped by their peers, mechanisms must harness male on male influence as a positive influence in male peer groups (Fabiano et al., 2003). Therefore, targeting masculine ideas of domination and control is essential, particularly within male peer groups, alongside challenging the wider social and cultural structures which reinforce male superiority.

Others discussed the cycle of violence, where participants considered that experiencing childhood victimisation, or witnessing parental domestic violence, contributed to sexual offending later in life. Research generally stipulates that whilst most perpetrators were abused, most abused men do not perpetrate sexual violence (Lisak, Hopper, & Song, 1996). Later research by Carr and VanDeusen (2002) found that witnessing interparental violence predicted the perpetration of physical dating violence in college men but not sexual aggression, however, attitudes supporting intimate partner violence were predictive of sexual aggression. Altogether, research suggests that the transmission of violence across generations is both role- and gender-

specific and highlight the importance of examining unique dimensions of partner violence to assess influences on children (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2014; Heyman & Slep, 2002). A majority of research examining the ‘cycle of violence’, explores intimate partner violence and adult physical violence, rather than solely sexually aggressive or coercive behaviours. Combined with the contradictory nature of findings across the years, it is impossible to claim experiences of victimisation, or witnessing inter-parental violence as a causative factor. However, the presence of this belief within participants highlights that there must be more awareness regarding the nebulous links between victimisation and victimising, as is necessary to challenge assumptions, and potentially reassure those who have experienced or witnessed victimisation that they are not inherently harmful.

Whilst two participants discussed the important role of colonisation as causing sexual violence, one particularly noted the how colonisations removal of traditional healing methods, has hindered the ability of young men to process and manage emotions. Even as this was only stated by one participant, New Zealand’s status as a colonised country means that such perspectives must be foregrounded and taken seriously. Traditional methods of healing in Māori communities were developed based on the interconnected relationships between spiritual, physical, social and psychological processes (Wirihana & Smith, 2019). This view was first outlined in the Whare Tapa Whā model developed by Durie (1985) who described Māori views of health as a “four-sided concept, representing the four basic tenets of life. There is a spiritual component, a psychic component, a bodily component and a family component” (p. 483). In te ao Māori, emotions are expressed physically, rather than verbally, through rituals such as performing arts such as song, chant, lament, formal speech and dance. However, literature suggests that with colonisation came the introductions of ‘disorder’ and ‘dis-ease’ to traditional Māori structures (Dobbs & Eruera, 2014; Grennell & Cram, 2008; Kruger et al., 2004; Mikaere, 1995; Pihama, Jenkins, & Middleton, 2003). Additionally Dobbs and Eruera (2014) consider that the loss of cultural identity, fragmented and isolated family systems, weakened traditional mechanisms for support, loss of land, language and self-determination may increase the likelihood of violence. These processes exemplify how therapeutic interventions for Māori need to encourage the use of Māori interpretations and constructive expressions of emotions in order to combat rates of violence and other unhealthy emotional outbursts. Centering traditional Māori methods of healings such as waiata, mōteatea, haka, whakanoa and whakawhānaungatanga are therefore necessary to reduce and prevent sexual violence within Māori communities (Wirihana & Smith, 2019). Decolonising the way society approaches emotional expression and drawing on Indigenous understandings of healing, presents a diverse range of opportunities and new possibilities for sexual violence prevention within Indigenous and non-white communities. Additionally, actively decolonising sexual violence prevention programmes may have the added

benefit of contributing to the decolonisation of institutions, therefore challenging the social, cultural, economic and legal inequities currently present in Aotearoa.

Several participants touched on impact of evolutionary, biological and genetic factors on men's increased aggression and higher sexual drives. From this perspective, rape was considered an evolutionary reproductive strategy, of which some men were 'genetically predisposed'. Whilst evolutionary and biological explanations of rape have historically dominated this field, they have since been heavily criticised, particularly by feminist academics⁴³. These perspectives critique this approach for both implying that sexual violence is inevitable and therefore unpreventable, and also through highlighting that if rape is primarily an evolutionary-driven reproductive strategy, then it is highly inefficient⁴⁴ (Brownes & O'Gorman, 1991; Ferris & Sandercock, 1998; Travis, 2003). It also ignores the sexual violence of children, male-on-male, or female-on-female rape (Bourke, 2007). Criticisms by Cowan (2009) also maintain that evolutionary theory minimises the multi-faceted analyses of rape that suggest varied reasons for why men rape and ignores that individual differences related to personality operate within a cultural and social context. The perceptions of some men who participated in this study were clearly informed by such biological explanations, which has important implications for understandings of responsibility and prevention. Men with this belief may not be receptive to prevention measures which focus on social and cultural factors. Therefore, there must be an increase in social awareness as to the critiques of evolutionary/biological theories of sexual violence, and men's aggression more widely. Prevention programs need to target biological essentialist attitudes, ensuring that people understand that sexual violence perpetration is a decision and not an inevitability, and highlight the social and cultural explanations as 'fact' and not as oppositional to the supposedly 'objective' nature of the hard sciences.

Implications of This Research

This research, although small in sample size, has provided rich qualitative insights into how 11 young New Zealand cisgender, heterosexual men are understanding sexual violence and rape culture. As previously discussed, the men interviewed for this research reported a lack of knowledge regarding sexual violence, a cursory knowledge of rape culture, and confusion around the influence of alcohol on consent capacity. However, despite the preconceptions of their own knowledge and lack of technical language, their understandings were generally highly critical, empathetic and aligned with feminist conceptualisations of sexual violence, consent, and the wider social hierarchy which influences rape culture.

⁴³ For a detailed criticism of the evolutionary theory of rape see Travis (2003).

⁴⁴ As rapists frequently do not have erections, do not penetrate the vagina, or ejaculate (Brownes & O'Gorman, 1991; Ferris & Sandercock, 1998; Travis, 2003).

It is important to note that participants' discussions about their understandings were notably abstract, with little shared about their own position and emotional response to rape and rape culture, despite these questions being asked. Generally, only a few participants discussed their own feelings towards certain issues, and these were only brief and still presented an element of disconnect. Participants generally did not critically analyse their own position and potential complicity in rape culture, or recount their own experiences with sex or consent negotiation. This could potentially reflect the extent that men internalise the mechanisms of gender socialisation that assert emotional stoicism, prohibit self-reflection or overthinking, and situate sexual violence as a controversial issue not to be spoken about. Despite being in an environment where these conversations and reflections were accurately encouraged, the lack of personal self-reflection highlights the degree to which men face barriers to emotional communication and speaking up about 'feminine' issues. This limitation means that the overall discussion was heavily restricted to abstract conversations, rooted in conceptual discussions rather than laden with personal accounts and understandings. However, there are wider implications of the tendency of men to depersonalise the issue of sexual violence. Research by Adams et al. (1995), Anderson and Umberson (2001), and Rodriguez et al. (2019) highlight that violent or harmful men tend to use third person to speak about violence as a mechanism to reinforce the framing of violence as a women's problem, disguising the role of men as active agents and shows the stark difference in how men and women communicate the same events, stemming from an underlying discrepancy in how they understand the enactment of gendered violence. Whilst these studies have been conducted with violent men, research is clear that masculinity is strongly linked to violent attitudes and behaviours, and therefore whilst participants in this research did not disclose their own harmful behaviour, they still exist within a culture that socialises them into similar attitudes. Even in instances of resistance against toxic masculinity, the expectations of gendered attitudes and behaviours remain, proliferating through the community. Reflecting this knowledge, prevention initiatives then, must have to overcome these internalised barriers in order to facilitate men's genuine engagement where they can acknowledge and seek to change their own implicit support for the perpetuation of gender inequality (and sexual violence and rape culture), rather than allowing them to remain on the more comfortable turf of non-violent 'allies' (Flood, 2019).

Although there is little known about understandings of sexual violence in Aotearoa New Zealand outside of the impacts of sexual violence for women, this research highlights how important men's perceptions are on shaping the lives of women by creating and contributing to the social structures that facilitate, and respond to, sexual violence. Parallel to informing prevention approaches, this research also contributes to the body of knowledge investigating causes and pathways to sexual violence, allowing a richer understanding regarding the discrepancy between perceived and true realities. Additionally, a majority of rape culture

literature has been developed from the women's understandings and experiences existing with a culture that actively harms them, this research provides a unique perspective regarding how men construct and understand rape culture, and their own role within it. Again, allowing approaches to challenging rape culture to be developed with a more comprehensive and multi-faceted knowledge-base. Men's involvement in prevention has been diverse across different times and locations, however the evidence highlights just how important male peer groups are in shaping men's attitudes (Flood, 2006), and the efficacy of empowering men to be social justice allies of women (Fabiano et al., 2003). This research reiterates the importance of involving men and their communities within a spectrum of sexual violence prevention approaches, centring them as primarily responsible for challenging patriarchy, rape culture, and the attitudes and behaviours which facilitate sexually violent behaviours.

Looking to The Future

As discussed throughout this thesis, the international wider literature on sexual violence, men and masculinities is significant, however the literature base in Aotearoa New Zealand is sparse. This thesis contributes to the small body of New Zealand literature that specifically addresses the role of men in understanding, preventing, and responding to sexual violence by providing the first qualitative exploration into the knowledge and perception that young men have regarding sexual violence and rape culture. The vulnerable and personal accounts shared by the men interviewed for this research provide a solid foundation for further exploration and critical analysis regarding the role of men in this sphere. Further, the knowledge that many of the men interviewed had female friends/whānau impacted by sexual violence, and as a result felt impacted themselves, signals the pressing need to specifically engage cisgender, heterosexual men within prevention and response narratives. By reconceptualising sexual violence prevention as the responsibility of men, women and other individuals impacted by sexual violence are able to be given the necessary space, support, and safety to care for themselves without being blamed or critiqued for their (in)actions.

This thesis emerges as a time when sexual violence is becoming an issue of increasing national conversation. With New Zealand experiencing the effects of #MeToo, #TimesUp, the institutional misogyny of Knox College (O'Mannin, 2019), the blatant victim-blaming in the Grace Millane trial (Beaumont, 2019) and other instances of rape culture and sexual violence, social awareness has begun to change. It is hoped that the publication of this thesis contributes to a discussion amongst men about their role in upholding and therefore challenging rape culture, and the existence of sexual violence, and gains the momentum needed to encourage a national conversation about preventing sexual violence before it occurs, and not just responding to it after the fact. For centuries, women have been asking men to stop raping them, and so far, their pleas have generally fallen on deaf ears. The historically entrenched silencing of women means that to

truly prevent rape, men need to change each other. To call out each other's harmful behaviours, to challenge toxic versions of masculinity, to listen to and respect women, and to support healthy expressions of emotion. To end rape, men must take responsibility for their complicity in creating a culture where women get raped, to challenge their privilege and take ownership of their actions. Then, and only then, will we see change.

Appendices

Appendix

A

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Ethics

Approval



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

Phone 04-463 6028
Email judith.loveridge@vuw.ac.nz

TO	Jahla Tran-Lawrence
FROM	Associate Professor Judith Loveridge, Convenor, Human Ethics Committee
DATE	6 June 2019
PAGES	1
SUBJECT	Ethics Approval Number: 27570 Title: 'The Male Gaze': An exploratory study of young mens' understandings of rape in Aotearoa New Zealand

Thank you for your application for ethical approval, which has now been considered by the Human Ethics Committee.

Your application has been approved from the above date and this approval is valid for three years. If your data collection is not completed by this date you should apply to the Human Ethics Committee for an extension to this approval.

Best wishes with the research.

Kind regards,



Judith Loveridge
Convenor, Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR STUDY ON MENS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



@malegazeproject

@malegazeproject

KEEN TO TALK ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

If you:

- Identify as a cis-gender male
- Are aged between 18 and 30
- Live in New Zealand
- Identify as heterosexual

**...I WOULD LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU!**

I am a Masters student in Criminology at VUW and am interested in the ways that men understand and perceive sexual violence against women. If you have any questions or queries about the study please get in touch with me or my supervisors:

Researcher: Jahla Lawrence
Cell (text preferred): 0212344301
jahla.lawrence@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisors:
Dr Lynzi Armstrong / lynzi.armstrong@vuw.ac.nz
Dr Fiona Hutton / fiona.hutton@vuw.ac.nz

This research has received ethical approval from the VUW Human Ethics Committee #0000027570

Appendix C – Information Sheet



The Male Gaze: An exploratory study of young mens' understandings of rape in Aotearoa New Zealand

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Jahla Lawrence and I am a Master's student in the Criminology programme at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is about exploring New Zealand mens' attitudes and perceptions towards sexual violence, looking at the way that men understand the issue of sexual violence, the causes of rape and the likely people to be involved.

Your participation will support this research by explaining your understanding of sexual violence, and looking at how your attitudes, perceptions, and understandings may be similar or different to other New Zealand men. By adding your perceptions to this research, you will be helping build on our understanding of different mens' viewpoints in this area. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee 0000027570.

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because you are a cis-gender, heterosexual New Zealand male between the ages of 18 and 30. If you agree to take part I will interview you in a semi-public location mutually agreed between the two of us. I will ask you questions about your perceptions of sexual violence and rape culture and provide some vignettes that you can respond to. The interview will take about an hour I will audio record the interview with your permission and transcribe (write it out word for word) it later. You can choose to not answer any question or stop or pause the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You may also bring along a support person if you wish. You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any time before October 31st 2019. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential. Confidentiality will be preserved except where you disclose something that causes me to be concerned about a risk of harm to yourself and/or others. This means that the

researchers named below will be aware of your identity but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation.

Only my supervisors and I will read the notes or transcript of the interview. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed five years after the research has finished.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Master's thesis and may potentially be used in academic publications or conferences, or for non-academic publications and platforms i.e., The Spinoff.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study before 31st October 2019;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview recording;
- receive a copy of your interview transcript;
- read over and comment on a written summary of your interview;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor:

Student:

Jahla Lawrence
jahla.lawrence@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisors:

Name: Dr Fiona Hutton/Dr Lynzi Armstrong
Role: Senior lecturer in Criminology/Lecturer in Criminology
School: Social and Cultural Studies
Phone: 04 463 6749/04 463 5372
fiona.hutton@vuw.ac.nz or lynzi.armstrong@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convenor: Dr Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.

Appendix D – Consent Form



The Male Gaze: An exploratory study of young mens' understandings of rape in Aotearoa New Zealand

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

This consent form will be held for five years.

Researcher: Jahla Lawrence, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from this study at any point before 31st October 2019, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.
- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed five years after the research has finished.
- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors. Confidentiality will only be broken if I disclose something that causes the researcher to be concerned about a risk of harm to themselves, myself, and/or others.
- I understand that the findings will be used for a Master's thesis, and a summary of results may be used in academic reports and/or presented at conferences and/or published on non-academic platforms i.e., The Spinoff.
- I understand that the recordings will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors.
- My name will not be used in reports and utmost care will be taken not to disclose any information that would identify me.
- I would like a copy of the transcript of my interview: Yes ☐ No ☐
- I would like a summary of my interview: Yes ☐ No ☐
- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below. Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix E – Socio-Demographic Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Pre-interview questionnaire:

The Male Gaze: An exploratory study of young mens' understandings of rape in Aotearoa New Zealand

Day and Date:

Location of Interview (City):

1. What age range do you belong in?

18-20	
21-23	
24-26	
27-30	

2. Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?

NZ European/Pākehā	
Māori	
Samoan	
Cook Island Māori	
Tongan	
Niuean	
Chinese	
Indian	
Other	
Please state: b)	
Prefer not to say	

3. What education have you had?

Primary school	
Secondary school (1-2 years)	
Secondary school (3 years or more)	
University, Waananga or other tertiary	
Prefer not to say	

4. What is your religion?

Christian	
Muslim	
Non-Religious	
Hindu	
Other	
Please state:.....	
Prefer not to say	

5. Please chose a pseudonym to be known as in this research.

.....

Appendix F – Sexual Violence Support Services

Support Resources for victims/survivors of sexual harm

Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation - works with survivors of sexual abuse and their whānau - of any age, gender or ethnicity. They provide a 24 hour crisis line. They also provide support and counselling services for anyone who has experienced rape or sexual abuse, or who is concerned about a friend or family member.

- 24/7 Crisis support 04 801 6655 and push '0' at the menu.
- www.wellingtonhelp.org.nz

MOSAIC - a Wellington-based registered charity and support agency for male survivors of sexual and child abuse in New Zealand. Their purpose is to empower male survivors of sexual abuse in their recovery process, and to work towards changing the way the community views sexual abuse of Kiwi males.

- Confidential Listening Service Line (call or text): 022 419 3416
- enquiries@mosaic-wgtn.org.nz
- www.mosaic-wgtn.org.nz

Wellington Rape Crisis - a registered charity who provide support to women and gender diverse survivors of rape and sexual violence.

- support@wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz
- Drop in (no appointment necessary) Level 4, 220 Willis St, Te Aro, Wellington

SafetoTalk - offer free confidential contact with a trained specialist to those who have experienced any form of sexual harm and/or those who believe someone close to them has been harmed.

- Live chat online: www.safetotalk.nz
- Free call: 0200 044 334
- Free text: 4334
- support@safetotalk.nz

Hutt Valley Sexual Abuse Support and Healing (HV SASH) – a 24/7 service that provides rape and sexual abuse crisis support, forensic medical examinations, advocacy and counselling. Providing a free service to all women, men and children who have been currently or historically sexually abused or raped.

- 24/7 Crisis line: 0200 22 66 94
- Office number: 04 566 5517
- support@hvsash.org.nz
- www.hvsash.org.nz

Support Resources for perpetrators of sexual harm

WellStop - provides assessment and a range of treatment services to adults who have engaged in sexually harmful/abusive behaviour. We work with a range of people including those with learning/intellectual disability. We are also able to provide support and education to families.

- Call: 04 566 4745
- enquiries@wellstop.org.nz
- www.wellstop.org.nz

Extra support resources

Youthline - established to ensure young people, their families and supporters know where to get help and can access support when they need it.

- Free call: 0800 376 633
- Free text: 234
- talk@youthline.co.nz
- Chat online: www.wellington.youthline.co.nz

1737, Need to talk? - is New Zealand's new national mental health & addictions helpline number. When someone texts or calls 1737 a trained counsellor will work with the person to develop a care plan. This could include referral to another service, additional counselling or provision of information and support. Anyone feeling stressed, anxious, worried, depressed, needing advice on mental health or addictions issues can call or text us.

- Free call: 1737
- Free text 1737

Appendix G – Interview Guide

Participant Interview Guide

The interview will begin with a series of questions designed to put the participant at ease, how old they are, have they lived in Wellington all their life? If not where else have they lived etc., and will also include some basic demographic questions e.g. ethnicity, gender and so on. The aim of this is to set the scene and to relax both the participant and the researcher. The interview will be constructed to cover core issues with all participants, but to allow the interview to incorporate unexpected issues and comments. Before starting the interview I will also provide participants with a copy of contact details for support agencies and a koha for their time.

During the interviews scenarios will be introduced to stimulate talk on the topic of rape culture and sexual violence. It is acknowledged that this is a sensitive topic so the scenarios may help to prompt conversation around these difficult issues. Three different vignettes will be used, they are on the attached document.

Introduction and informed consent:

- Introduce myself
- Explain the project and why I am doing the research
- Ask if they have any questions about the interview or the research
- Ensure that the information sheet has been read and consent form signed
- Inform them that they can pause or end the interview at any time, or turn off the recorder at any time.

Interview Questions:

- Can you start off by telling me a little bit about you and what inspired you to take part in this project?
 - How much understanding of sexual violence do you feel you have, and how did you come to learn about it?
 - Have you heard of the term ‘rape culture’? What do you think it means and what’s your opinion on it?
 - I am going to read out three examples of sexual violence, after each one I want you to tell me what you think about it, who do you think is responsible, what should have happened differently, what could have stopped it etc.
1. John and Jane are friends, they are at a party and everyone is pretty drunk, Jane is dancing and drinking a fair amount. John asks Jane if she wants to go upstairs to the bedroom, she says no and keeps dancing. Later on, John asks her again and this time she doesn’t say anything, he leads her up to the bedroom, she lays on the bed and doesn’t move much, John has sex with her and then leaves and joins the party. The next morning Jane accuses John of raping her whilst she was too drunk to say no.

2. Violet and Jack have been dating for about one year, they are in a monogamous sexual relationship. One night, Jack indicates he wants to have sex with Violet but she says that she is too tired and just wants to sleep. Jack tells Violet that if she loved him, she would have sex with her, and that as his girlfriend it is her responsibility to make sure that he is sexually satisfied so that he won't cheat on her with someone else. Violet gives in and has sex with Jack.

 3. Rachel works at a bar downtown, and has a bit of a reputation for sleeping around, drinking and partying. One night after work, at around 3am, Rachel is walking to her car when a man is waiting for her. She recognises him as a customer from the bar who occasionally comes in but doesn't talk much, just watches her work. He pulls out a knife and forces her to unlock the car, and pushes her inside telling her that she is going to have sex with him. Rachel is scared, and crying, but doesn't fight back because she is scared that he might hurt her with the knife. Once in the car, the man forces her to have sex with him, afterwards he strokes her hair and tell her that he loves her, and offers to drive her home.
-
- Who do you think is vulnerable to experiencing sexual violence?
 - To what extent do you think some people are more likely to experience sexual violence than others? Why do you think this?
 - Who do you think is vulnerable to perpetrating sexual violence?
 - To what extent do you think some people are more likely than others to perpetrate sexual violence? Why do you think this is?
 - What role, if any, does alcohol play in sexual violence?
 - Why does sexual violence happen?
 - To what extent do you agree that victims are never to blame for sexual violence?
 - What do you think are the consequences of sexual violence are for the victims?
 - What do you think are the consequences of perpetrators of sexual violence?
 - Do you think these should change in any way?
 - How do you think we should prevent sexual violence?

Closing:

Summarise the content of the interview, ask if there is anything that the participant would like to add or discuss, remind them of self-care practices after discussing potentially distressing content and the agencies available on the support services sheet. Further, ask if there are any comments they would like to make before thanking them and ending the session.

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