Them and Us: Talking about Perpetrators of Sexual Crime

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Outline of Presentation

- Extent of Sexual Violence in Ireland
- Lot of Victims – Lot of Perpetrators – Where are they?
- Individual / Psychological Perspectives
- Dynamic Perspectives....
- Social / Sociological Perspectives ..... 
- Responses
30.3% Irish Females, 23.6% Irish Males - sexual abuse in childhood

25.6% Irish Females, 12.4% of Irish Males - sexual assault in adulthood

42% females and 28% males sexual violence over life-time (SAVI, 2002: xxxii)
Lot of Victims: Lot of Perpetrators

- Lot of Victims
  1: 2.5 females;
  1: 4 males.....

- Lot of Perpetrators
  Estimate: 6% of men sexually abuse minors..... (Marshall UK and Hanson Canada)

1% Sexual Offenders imprisoned
SAVI (2002) Reporting Rates

- Adult Sexual Assault: 1% of Irish male victims; 7.8% Irish female victims reported to An Gardaí

- Child Sexual Abuse: 1% of male victims and 10% of female victims reported

- 14% in other jurisdictions

- 2007 18% of Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) service users reported, 2009, 27% and 2011 30%
Attrition rates increase [decline in sexual violence cases prosecuted e.g. in rape cases 73% in 1977; 19.5% in 2007; 15% in 2012 (Lovett and Kelly, 2009; CSO, 2014)]

The proportion of Garda recorded sexual offences leading to court proceedings declined markedly during the period 2003-2012.

Conviction rate low [100 cases of rape, 8 convicted] (Hanley et al, 2010) [Just over 2% rape cases 2007 resulted in conviction] (2006) Ireland 20 out of 22 European countries
Reasons for Low conviction Rates for Rape in Ireland

- Evidential deficits or case withdrawn by the victim

- Evidential deficits especially common in situations where (1) the victim had consumed alcohol, (2) the victim had a mental illness and/or (3) the suspect was known to the victim (Hanley et al)

- Except in ‘wholly exceptional’ cases a conviction of rape will attract a custodial sentence
Who are the Perpetrators?
Where are the Perpetrators?

- People we know
- In Communities

Them or Us?.... Them and Us....
Psychological Perspectives of Sexual Violence Perpetrator

- Low Empathy for Victim
- Cognitive Distortions – about women and children
- Deviant Sexual Preferences
- Attachment, Intimacy Deficits and Emotional Loneliness
- Poor Emotional Regulation…. Anger, depression, Anxiety
Dynamic Perspectives

- Power and Control
- Anger (Men who rape) – Pseudo –sexual crime
- Clumsy ‘Attempt’ at Intimacy
- Opportunity
- ‘Grooming’.....
- Always know what they are doing- Always a decision - Rational Choice
Discourse: Changing Understanding of The Perpetrator

Creation of Types: Identity Totalized – Behaviour and Personhood construed as Evil/Sick (The Role of Professionals and the Media)

Labelling, Shame, Classifications and Stigma – wipes out man’s entire social and personal profile

Social Violence…. As Context…. 
Public discourse one of Retribution….but evidential threshold and adversarial system limits justice responses for victims, accountability for perpetrators and healing for both…..

Risk management and Public Protection / Notification preferred to the more Rehabilitative or Restorative ideals

Social Isolation – work, accommodation etc.

Families of Perpetrator suffer as do families of Victims
Socially sanctioned practices of dehumanisation, oppression and marginalization are endorsed.

No appropriate language to describe Cultural Trauma.

Paradoxically, he who is seen as most threatening lives in a highly threatening and uncertain world.
Rituals and Restorative Justice

- Expert on Rituals of Condemnation / Weak on Rituals of Redemption / Transformation

- Expert at Social Exclusion: Weak on Social Inclusion

- Restorative Justice – Additional Response Mechanism
  - Justice Response for Victims
  - Accountability Mechanism for Perpetrators
  - Healing Mechanism for both and the Community
Thank You

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