



CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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It all starts here *

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Conceptualising GBV
- Gender theory
- Legislation offering protection
- Fragmented IGR System
- Synthesis



INTRODUCTION

- Jadranka Cigelj (1996) states that "The world watches coldly while everything passes through women's bodies. Destroying a woman is destroying the essence of a nation. When they were killing and raping older women they were killing and raping living history. When they were raping younger women they were destroying future generations".
- The paper seeks to advance an approach which addresses violence against women.
 - South Africa, in both regional and international terms, is a country that has one of the highest levels of GBV, with women and girl children as the major casualties and men as the major perpetrators (POWA, 2010).
 - Gender violence cuts across race, class, ethnicity, religion and geographical location (Shadow Report on Beijing, 2010).
 - When evaluating gender inequality in contemporary South Africa, one is confronted with a seemingly paradoxical situation.
 - Constitution vs highest rates of GBV for society not embroiled in armed conflict
 - The reported 55 000 rapes of women and girls per year are estimated to represent only one-ninth of the actual number (Morrell et al., 2012).

CONCEPTUALISING GBV

- According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) GBV is defined as a phenomenon that: "...reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims. This includes a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual abuse of children, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and several harmful traditional practices" (UNFPA, 2013: online).
- Gender plays a role in the manifestation of GBV against women and in the hopelessness experienced by women.
- Gender and its consequences also shape communities, cultures, and countries and is a cultured way of being.
- That said, these definitions are broadly accepted in the public administration study.



- Violence is an illustration of how societal relationships are formed where power and authority are historically determined on the basis of inequality between men and women (WHO, 2002).
- Therefore violence against women is knowingly enabled by gender inequality, and equally GBV is seen as a main contributor to gender inequality.



GENDER THEORY



- The Power and Gender Theory was developed by Connell (1987) and is based on sexual inequality, power imbalances, gender-specific norms and power dynamics in relationships.
- 2 specific aspects which promote GBV are power and culture:
 - Power is defined as the ability to act or influence change in an anticipated way at the individual, interpersonal, institutional and community level (DiClemente & Wingood 2000:543).
 - If one person has power over another that means that the "other" will be powerless.
 - Powerlessness is described by Wallerstein (1992) as referring to alienation, victim-blaming, learned helplessness, internalised oppression or hidden injuries.
- In the context of this paper, powerlessness is one of the founding challenges in comprehensively addressing GBV, only once the victim has regained the power will the GBV be addressed.

GENDER THEORY

- Culture:
 - Kimani (2007) states that men's notion of using violence to get what they want from women is maintained by the culture.
 - She argues that this violence against women is deeply rooted in culture and norms which privilege men and devalue women.
 - What is considered acceptable behaviour is determined by the man and society and failure by the woman to obey with the socially acceptable behaviour leads to violence (Osei, 2011: 29).
 - According to Gros, (1990) the very power exercised by man in an intimate relationship is influenced by the social institution of patriarchy which makes men the dominant sex.
- The Power and Gender Theory has had a great impact on how GBV is viewed through societies and more prominently male's eyes with regard to how women are treated and subjected to domination, control and forceful acts which in turn strip most women of their sense of self-worth, dignity and honour.



- One may argue that the policy, legislative and regulatory framework for co-operative government is complex and fragmented. A raft of policies and laws regulate different aspects of the system of co-operative government. There is no comprehensive policy or law governing all aspects of the system.
- There are various reasons why this is happening, but of biggest concern is that the departments meant to head the fight against GBV, namely DOH, SAPS and DOJCD can provide no evidence of the integration of this function.
- There is no proof that these departments offer a coordinated or integrated answer to the fight against GBV, which means that each department works on its own when addressing gender-based violence.

IGR CHALLENGES

- There is absence of commitment by the spheres with regard to information sharing due to a lack of skilled IGR specialists (Mphasane, 2012: 17).
- Another constraint is that IGR is far more focused on process than on policy content, service delivery and development.
- Ineffective IGR and lack of coordination are often caused by a lack of capacity and management rather than by lack of structures and procedures.
- The very ability to manage the implementation of IGR is a mutual challenge across all spheres.



LEGISLATION OFFERING PROTECTION

- The South African government's National Development Plan, Vision for 2030, places emphasis on building safer communities through an integrated approach (National Planning Commission, 2011:350).
- The South African government, in May 2012, established a Cabinet-level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to address violence against women and children (VAWC) in South Africa.
 - The proposed Integrated Programme of Action Addressing Violence Against Women and Children (POA: VAWC) is essential to this effort.
 - The Programme provides comprehensive, multi-sectoral and long-term strategic interventions, emphasising government accountability, for ending violence (DSD, 2014: 4).
 - The Integrated Programme of Action (POA) highlights the need to work together across government and with all sectors of the society in order to prevent and respond to VAWC.
 - One of the main objectives of the POA: VAWC, is to respond to violence in an integrated and coordinated manner by ensuring a comprehensive package of services to affected women and children (DSD, 2014: 25).

FRAGMENTED IGR SYSTEM

- According to Anderson (1960) in Wright (1978:8), the basic crux of intergovernmental relations is important interactions occurring among governmental institutions in all spheres.
- IGR is regarded as a vital collaboration between government units of all spheres of government (Mphasane, 2012: 7).
- The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 13 of 2005, defines intergovernmental relations as "... relationships that arise among different governments or among organs of state from different governments in the conduct of their affairs".
- Although significant progress has been made since 1996 in structuring IGR, specific shortcomings and capacity challenges need to be overcome.



CHALLENGES

- For the purpose of the paper, specific attention will be given to the two clusters involved directly in addressing GBV, namely, the Justice, Crime Prevention, and Security (JCPS) Cluster and the Social Protection, Community, and Human Development (SPCHD) Cluster.
 - The JCPS Cluster comprises the DOJCD, SAPS.
 - The SPCHD Cluster comprises the DOH.
- The paper argues that GBV cannot be addressed in an appropriate manner if the major role players involved do not form part of the same cluster.
- "The main objective is to ensure proper coordination of all government programmes at national and provincial levels," the Presidency stated (2014), which is unrealistic if the role players involved are not in a position to coordinate their activities.

SYNTHESIS

- The article has argued that dynamics in GBV are shaped by gender-based entitlements, power, objectification and status.
- What is most disconcerting is that the structures, including national, provincial and local government departments as well as national clusters, that have been created to address GBV seem to support and even exacerbate patriarchal values and stigmatising the voices that challenge the status quo.
- From an intergovernmental perspective, GBV offers a unique opportunity for a variety of departments to integrate, coordinate and collaborate in their efforts to address GBV.



SYNTHESIS

- The lack of integration between spheres of government, as is evident from the lack of integration even between clusters and national departments, produces a fragmented IGR system that is unable to address complex social issues such as GBV.
- While recognition is given to the fact that the lack of coordination is often caused by a lack of capacity, the reality remains that victims of GBV will remain silent until the IGR framework created to protect them is able to offer them real protection and becomes an integral part in the fight against GBV.



CONCLUSION

- The article provides for a theoretical understanding of GBV and illustrates the complexity in both defining the concept as well as its manifestations.
- Emphasis is placed on the power relationships which GBV causes and contributes to while government structures that have been created to address it lacks integration, cohesion and coordination in their approach to dealing with GBV.
- The article, although theoretical, provides an understanding of the complexity in framing an IGR framework capable of addressing an issue such as GBV.
- Ultimately, the article explains which theoretical concepts can be used as framework in the empirical gathering of evidence to support the for an integrated IGR response to GBV.

THANK YOU

