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Seattle University

Gender-Based Violence:

The Role of Guatemala's Government in the Rate of Violence Against Women

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

In Candidacy for the Degree of

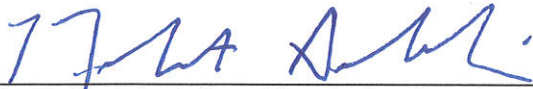
Departmental Honors in International Studies

By

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of the Guatemalan government in reducing the rates of violence against women and argues for the implementation and enforcement of prevention strategies by the government. Guatemala has some of the highest rates of femicide and general violence against women worldwide. As a result, the government has been heavily criticized both within Guatemala and internationally with regard to its efforts towards eliminating this issue. The United Nations states that “States have clear obligations under international law to enact, implement and monitor legislation addressing all forms of violence against women” (United Nations, 2010), and therefore the government of Guatemala has the responsibility of providing support and solutions for its female citizens. Government efforts have been prioritizing the creation of legislation and support programs to aid women *after* violence has already taken place. However, there is a need for the prevention of violence against women to be emphasized from the government, as this is what will educate society on the value of women and prevent further cases of violence against women from occurring in the first place.

Keywords: Guatemala, violence against women, gender-based violence, femicide, prevention strategies

Introduction

Guatemala is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman. It has been estimated that over 6,500 women were murdered between 2000 and 2012 (Musalo, 2014). Femicide, or the killing of a woman simply because “they are a woman” (Cosgrove; Lee, 2016), has reported rates of 10 per 100,000 women in the population (Musalo, 2014). In comparison, Ecuador, which has roughly the same population as Guatemala, reports only 3 femicides per 100,000 women (Musalo, 2014). In general, violence against women has been increasing at alarming rates. In 2000, there were 213 reported femicides, 383 in 2003, 665 in 2005 and 722 in 2008 (Carey, 2010). Violence against women is defined as “any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (Cosgrove; Lee, 2016). As a result of these statistics regarding violence against women, the government received criticism regarding their efforts, or lack thereof, to reduce the rates of violence. This position comes not only from the survivors of violence but also from the international community. Foreign governments, international human rights agencies and various NGOs have either investigated or commented on the issue (Musalo, 2014). However, the Guatemalan government has implemented various laws, such as the Intra-American Convention to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence Against Women in 1995 (“1995 Law”), the Law Against Intrafamilial Violence in 1996 (“1996 Law”) and the Law Against Femicide and other Forms of Violence Against Women enacted in 2008 (“2008 Law”) which criminalized violence against women (Ruiz, 2018). Regardless of these laws, Guatemala has not been able to adequately address the issue of violence against women as their efforts have largely been focusing on providing support for women after violence has already occurred. This is due to many factors, including bias within government agencies, lack of funding, societal views of women, and a lack of understanding, confusion and/or disregard of what violence against women truly entails. Rather than focusing government efforts on resources for women *after*

violence has taken place, the government of Guatemala should be prioritizing prevention strategies in order to deter gender-based violence from occurring in the first place.

Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence is defined as “any act that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (Russo; Pirlott, 2006). It is more inclusive than “violence against women” as it also accounts for those with non-binary gender identities as well, whereas violence against women refers to violence against those who identify as female. This paper will use both terms – it is important to note, however, that the conversation in Guatemala surrounding this issue most often refers to only women. Non-binary gender identities are not discussed as frequently, both within the public and private spheres.

Research Design and Methods

Primary and secondary research was utilized for this research. Primary research obtained during a research trip to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala in 2018 was used in order to provide context to the issue of violence against women through the voices of current government agencies. Through interviews with various government officials, including the director of the Women's Fiscal Agency, the Coordinator of the Attorney General's Office, and a public defender, I gained a deeper understanding of the efforts and motivations behind individual state functionaries working towards reducing violence against women in Guatemala. By conducting interviews in the field, I was able to learn about how individual offices functioned in relation to cases of violence against women. This information provides insight into government efforts and the impact each office was making.

Secondary research gathered through online databases and the Seattle University Library was also utilized for three primary reasons. The first was to gain a deeper understanding of the historical factors that have led Guatemala to have such a high level of violence against women. Understanding the events that led up to the implementation of certain laws, for example, is crucial as it elaborates upon why the government decided to respond a certain way. The second was to understand how women are seen within society today, which becomes crucial in order to provide an accurate presentation of the current day situation taking place in Guatemala. The third was to learn about how other countries, notably Zambia, have implemented prevention strategies in their own policies to eradicate violence against women.

Literature Review: Laws and Regulations on Violence Against Women

Much of the information in this paper has been sourced from articles that examine the laws and regulations the government has enacted as a result of the high rates of femicide and violence against women. It will also further look into the specific legal processes involved in charging the attackers and how this has changed overtime. This analysis will provide an understanding of the efforts of the state and what actions the government has taken in order to reduce gender-based violence.

Angelica Chazaro and Jennifer Casey (2006) discuss how crimes of sexual violence and domestic violence are addressed in Guatemala and how perpetrators are legally charged. The authors pinpoint the specific steps when someone is charged and also describe what is and is not considered to be a sexual crime in Guatemala. They also go into detail about how various laws that were created for the protection of women ultimately fail to provide them with the safety that they seek from their perpetrator. For example, the 1996 "Law to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Intra-Family Violence" fails to protect women, as it was understood that if a crime occurred within a family setting, the perpetrators can only be charged with assault if the injuries persist for ten days or more (Chazaro; Casey, 2006). This implies that the violence and assault

must be so serious that the injuries last for over a week. This law also fails to address other forms of violence that arise from physical assault, such as psychological violence (Chazaro; Casey, 2006). The authors further critique this law, explaining how it fails to help women at the critical moment where the law could actually prevent a woman from being murdered. Chazaro and Casey also examine other themes as well, such as the role of the prosecutors, Guatemala's existing obligations, and various initiatives that were created as a result of gender-based violence. It also analyzes the context of the violence by providing background information, specifically about violence in the home, sex discrimination in the workplace, how women were treated during the 36-years of the Guatemalan Civil War, and patriarchal traditions. They also discuss the backlash of women in the public sphere, the increase of crime nationally, the role of the police in reducing or even committing the murders, and the way in which victims are treated and victim-blamed. These themes all come together to provide context into why violence against women persists today.

Additionally, Sarah England (2014) discusses the current Penal Code and the section of it that specifically discusses sex crimes. The section, titled, "Crimes Against Sexual Liberty and Security and Against Modesty"¹ has six different crimes listed: rape, sexual relations with a minor, dishonest abuses (considered to be sexual acts other than vaginal penetration), kidnapping with sexual purposes, corruption of minors (such as prostitution), and crimes against modesty (such as pornography, trafficking, etc.). The author discusses how sex crimes are considered to be "minor/private crimes", meaning that they are "not always subject to state criminal prosecution" (England, 2014, p. 131). According to the Penal Code, many sex crimes are eligible for "substitutive measures" which often translates to mediation instead of a criminal trial. This is done in order to lessen the number of the cases filed (England, 2014). As a result, the woman in this situation must negotiate with the person who has inflicted violence on her,

¹ Translated from Spanish - originally "De los delitos contra la libertad y la seguridad sexuales y contra el pudor"

which has the potential of causing further traumatization. From there, as the man is not in police custody, he is often able to threaten the victim and her family into staying quiet and not pressing charges, and the woman ultimately has no protection from him during the entire process.

Because of this, many women are not able to successfully charge the person who committed violence against them. The message to men, in effect, is that “the punitive consequences of violence against women are few if any” (England, 2014, p. 131). Additionally, women may tend to drop the charges as a result of not being able to afford legal aid or taking time off work. Often, it becomes necessary for women to travel to where institutions of justice are located, which may be far. Paying for the necessary documents may also become an issue (England, 2014).

Furthering this, the judicial process in Guatemala is extremely slow, and successful outcomes regarding crimes of this nature are very unlikely. Many women do not receive support from their families or communities as a result of the common belief that “men are naturally violent and that women who are sexually violated or victims of domestic violence have brought it upon themselves” (England, 2014, p. 131). Ultimately, this source will be used to examine the processes that women must go through in order to file a complaint or charge their attacker.

Additionally, Hector Ruiz (2018) provides a history of various laws regarding violence against women and their effects on society after their implementation. It also examines the progress, or lack thereof, of government efforts. It places a special emphasis on the most recent law implemented, the Law Against Femicide and other Forms of Violence Against Women (enacted in 2008), in light of a variety of recent sociopolitical events that have taken place in Guatemala. From there, Ruiz examines the statistics regarding complaints and punitive sentences, and discusses the “alarmingly disproportionate relationship between the number of complaints received and the number of sentences issued” (Ruiz, 2018, p. 108). Even though the number of complaints received regarding violence against women have been increasing (31% from 2011 to 2013), the rate of sentences issued only rose by 1.22% (Ruiz, 2018). This source provides an understanding of recent trends in the legal system of Guatemala.

The existing literature and publications on violence against women in Guatemala fail to identify the lack of attention placed on prevention strategies in Guatemala. Most authors tend to focus on the efforts of the government in helping women *after* violence has occurred. This paper will discuss the importance of shifting government efforts in Guatemala on prevention of gender-based violence in order to tackle the issue before it even begins.

Background: The History of Violence Against Women in Guatemala

Gender Relations Within Society –The First Half of the Twentieth Century

A variety of historical events have contributed to the high rates of violence against women in Guatemala today, and evidence of this kind of violence not being addressed seriously by the government has roots that go as far back as the turn of the twentieth century. During many cases brought to trial, the idea of women being inferior to men was explicitly expressed. David Carey Jr., a professor at the University of Southern Maine, outlines two justifications from men with regard to why they hit their female partners. Juan Sian, a male defendant, claimed that he hit his wife because she “did not want to obey what [he] commanded” (Carey, 2010, p. 146). Similarly, Eduardo Gramajo hit his partner because of “a bad response she gave” (Carey, 2010, p. 146). In these cases, the social hierarchy between men and women becomes very clear – men are considered to have power over women and are able to control them as they please. Even the specific words that Sian chose to explain what occurred between him and his wife illustrate the authority that men hold over women – he *commanded* that she obey him. The option of free will was never considered. When a woman chooses to speak her mind, they are expected to be punished (Carey, 2010).

During this time, the treatment of women from men strongly paralleled the treatment of citizens by the government. From 1898 – 1944, Guatemala was ruled through authoritarian regimes. Just as men demanded obedience from women, the government demanded obedience from society and would even resort to murder in order to protect their interests.

Guatemalan society had become “exploitative and exclusive [in] nature”, and a was now a state that “protected [its] dominant and social status” (Kit, 1993, pp. 31). The government asserted their power through fear in order to “keep people in line”, just as men asserted their power through violence in order to control women (Carey, 2010). This kind of “gendered terrorism” allowed men to commit violence against women without ever facing serious consequences from the government (Carey, 2010). Whether it was done intentionally or not, violence against women became a way for the government to ensure that part of society was kept living in fear and less likely to challenge the state and its ways. The demands of the authoritarian regimes and the demands of men within society reinforced each other and only upheld the patriarchal values set within Guatemala.

This pattern continued into the twentieth century, without any hope of change from the government. Benito Ajsivinic, a day laborer, was accused of beating his sick wife in bed and explained to the court that he was justified in his actions as she did not do enough to take care of her son and her house (Carey, 2010). Despite the fact that the judge ruled in his wife’s favor, she was still not safe from her abuser. While he was sentenced to only ten days in prison, he was able to post bail after one night in jail (Carey, 2010). As half of the people convicted of domestic violence could afford to pay bail and thus avoid incarceration, the legal system and government of Guatemala failed their responsibility of protecting female citizens.

The Guatemalan Civil War – The Second Half of the Twentieth Century

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the tension between gender relations came to an all-time high as a result of the Guatemalan Civil War. The military began an oppressive regime against who they deemed to be insurgents. Initially, some indigenous Maya supported revolutionary movement as they saw them as a means of addressing the economic, social, and political marginalization they had experienced since the days of the Spanish conquest (Guatemala, n.d.). This connection between the guerillas and the indigenous

community became a main focus for military rulers, and ultimately all Maya communities became enemies of the state. The Maya were seen as allies of insurrection, and military rulers began to order the commission of human rights violations as the indigenous had become a threat to their political power (Guatemala, n.d.). As a result, the government opted to silence the indigenous populations by massacring them. With support from the United States government, over 200,000 Guatemalans were killed or forcefully disappeared between 1960 and 1996. (Historical Clarification Commission, 1999).

During this war, the treatment of women became more violent on a larger scale than ever before. Of the 42,275 victims specifically registered by the Historical Clarification Commission, 25% were women. While this number is lower than the amount of men that were victims of the war, it is important to note the symbolism and meaning behind the death and abuse of so many women. As “[w]omen are understood to be central to the continuity of Maya culture in their role as mothers of future generations and teachers of Maya cultures to their children” (Hanlon; Shankar, 2000, p. 34), organized sexual violence was used as a strategy by the state to break women and indigenous society from the inside out. Sexual violence was ordered by high command resulting in army soldiers and security officers being responsible for 94.3 percent of all sexual violence during the war (Sanford, 2016). As sexual violence was ordered by those who held authority and power within the government, many received impunity for their actions.

The gendered nature of the war and the policies the armed forces used to target women contributed to the normalization of sexual violence within society. According to a 2011 study conducted by Cornell Law School, most perpetrators from the war were never prosecuted and many continue to work for the Guatemalan police and security forces (Manjoo, 2011). The study also states that the high levels of domestic violence and femicide (both of indigenous and Ladina – a mix of European and Guatemalan - women) within society today “are intricately linked to the country’s past internal conflict” (Manjoo, 2011, p. 28). As the attitudes of some

people within the government today continue to remain the same towards violence against women, it becomes difficult for substantial change to be achieved.

Societal and Cultural Value of Women

In order to understand the bias that many men have towards women, it becomes important to recognize the societal views towards women in Guatemala. Masculinity within Guatemala is "*íntimamente ligada a las nociones de violencia*", or intimately linked to notions of violence (England, 2013, p. 61). Many studies have shown that gender-based violence is "shaped by levels of gender inequality and norms that discriminate against the status of women" (Musalo, 2014, p. 108). Violence against women reinforces the idea that women are seen as subordinate to men. Any challenge to this model leads to documented cases of violence. The more educated a woman is, for example, the more likely she is of becoming a victim of violence. Women who have completed the 8 years of secondary school and/or more have the highest rates of violence, with 52.2 percent, while those without any education have the lowest percentage of violent incidents, at 38.0 percent (Wilson, 2014, pp. 6). Furthermore, women who worked in the workforce and outside of the household experience more abuse than housewives (49.6 percent as compared to 46.6 percent) (Wilson, 2014, pp. 6). They also "showed higher incidences than housewives of emotional abuse (42.1 and 36.7, respectively), economic abuse (30.5 versus 28.8 percent), physical abuse (10.5 versus 8.8 percent), and sexual abuse (9.1 versus 7.1 percent)" (Wilson, 2014, pp. 6). A woman who works outside of the house implies that her husband is not strong enough to provide for her, and also brings about jealousy. In fact, jealousy was cited as the most common reason why young married women stopped working once they married. To many, a working woman is seen as potentially available to other men (Wilson, 2014, p. 6). Ultimately, these points all reinforce the idea that women are expected to stay within a certain level of intelligence and agency. The assumption that a woman outside of the home is "available" to other men perpetuates the idea that women are property. In order to

protect one's property, it is seen as beneficial to keep women close to the home, in order to monitor them and ensure that they are "kept in line."

Outcomes of Believing Women are Inferior

Enforcers of the Law are Less Committed to Adequately Addressing Violence Against Women

As a result of this widespread mentality and view of women within society, those who are called to enforce the laws themselves are not exempt from this outlook – many government officials have their own biases and beliefs towards the issue of violence against women. There is a lack of understanding the risks of this type of violence, as many women are urged by police, judges, and prosecutors to reconcile with their abusers instead of seeking protection from them (Musalo, 2014). Even when a protective measure is set in place, such as a restraining order, enforcement on the part of the police is limited (Musalo, 2014). Consequently, many women feel less supported and are therefore less likely to pursue or even bring their cases forward. A study conducted by the Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres from 2010 showed that 95% of the cases that had been entered into the justice system were dropped by the claimant (Musalo, 2014). This is a clear example of many people within government offices not understanding the true risks of this type of violence, as many women who are forced to continue living with their abusers ultimately may become victims of femicide.

This lack of interest in resolving cases of violent crimes against women on the part of officials has led to a misrepresentation of the true numbers of women experiencing violence. Many agencies that receive complaints do not ultimately forward them to the Ministerio Público or MP (the agency responsible for starting a criminal investigation), which is required under the 2008 Law. Many of the prosecutors who do receive these cases, however, fail to adequately investigate either because they personally believe that violence against women is not a serious issue or because they are more inclined to agree with the opposing party as a result of gender-bias (Musalo, 2014). These biases often lead to delays in the process for many women, and the

need for women to make multiple appearances in court or with prosecutors often leads to them abandoning their cases as well (Musalo, 2014). Even if a case finally does make it to trial, many judges are set in their beliefs and are less inclined to convict the defendant if the only evidence is the woman's word (Musalo, 2014).

Furthermore, even if a case is successfully prosecuted and the defendant is convicted of committing violence against a woman, they often easily able to avoid severe punishment. Guatemalan permits convicted defendants to pay a fine in order avoid incarceration. The fine is relatively small, usually between five and 100 Quetzales per day (approximately \$0.60 - \$13 per day) (Musalo, 2014). In 2009, 36 of the 45 convictions out of the 13,650 registered cases of violence against women resulted in these sentences, with on the 9 resulting in incarceration (Musalo, 2014). As a result of this, many abusive men are easily released back into society where the likelihood of them repeating their crimes is high.

Existing Laws Do Not Adequately Address Violence Against Women

In addition to the attitudes towards violence against women within the justice system, the laws that have been implemented to reduce the violence do not adequately address the issue itself. Article 4 of Guatemala's Constitution states that "all [...] human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights" and that "the man and the women, whatever their civil status may be, have equal opportunities and responsibilities" (Guatemalan Constitution). While this has been implemented on paper, it hasn't been enforced even within the existing legislature in the country. It is true that many laws have been enacted that are aimed at the reduction of violence against women in Guatemala, including the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence against Women in 1995 and the Law Against Intrafamilial Violence in 1996. However, despite these laws, there was still a lack of complete understanding with regard to what violence against women fully entailed. The 1996 Law, for example, did not criminalize violence against women (Ruiz, 2018). Its main purpose was to provide protective orders and

prevent *further* instances of abuse. Therefore, it solely aimed to support women *after* they had been abused. Additionally, both the 1995 Law and 1996 Law failed to acknowledge rape within a marriage as a crime (Chazaro & Casey, 2006). As a result, those who committed acts of violence towards their spouse or live-in partner could not be prosecuted. This aligned with the societal norm that men have control over women. Even after the implementation of the Law Against Femicide and other Forms of Violence Against Women in 2008, many continue to carry the limited understanding of what violence against women truly entails. In fact, some judges, prosecutors and other main figures within the political and legal system of Guatemala have made negative comments about the 2008 Law and its validity constitutionally and have refused to enforce it (Musalo, 2014).

Current Government Efforts

While Guatemala has much to improve with regard to its efforts at preventing violence against women, most sources and authors completely overlook the existing individuals working to eliminate the violence. Various government officials have dedicated their lives to providing support to victims of violence, along with doing what they can to educate their communities in order to prevent violence from occurring. During a 2018 research trip to Quetzaltenango, the second largest city in Guatemala after Guatemala City, many government officials working with the issue were interviewed. Fevy Gramajo, a lawyer with the Public Defense in Quetzaltenango, discussed her motto of “attending to the victim” (Gramajo, 2018). She also prioritized the role that education can play, saying that the ministry of education should be creating better lessons on the prevention of violence against women beginning in kindergarten. She emphasized the necessity of “teaching other patterns” and that girls should learn from a young age that they have values, while simultaneously learning about how to develop self-esteem (Gramajo, 2018). Education, she is convinced, then becomes a key factor in ending violence against women.

Additionally, Julia Vicenta Paxtor Quixtan, the director of the Attorney General's office in Quetzaltenango, explained how she has "committed much of [her] life to the theme of gender[-based] violence" (Paxtor Quixtan, 2018). She explained the importance of the 2008 Law as it first acknowledged prevention. The necessity of a law which recognized the rights of women was stressed – when women's rights are valued, only then can violence against women significantly be reduced. With regard to her work, she acknowledged the weight she carries as a result of it. After working with the law for 30 years, she mentioned the need to "stay strong and continue on" when she feels hopeless (Paxtor Quixtan, 2018). For her, this tends to happen in cases in which they "cannot locate the aggressor" (Paxtor Quixtan, 2018). Despite the fact that they receive new complaints daily and that it "rarely stops," Julia works hard to ensure that each woman she meets feels "worthy" (Paxtor Quixtan, 2018).

In addition, Claudia Paz y Paz, the first female Attorney General of Guatemala, was an extremely important figure for women throughout Guatemala. As a woman in a position of authority, she was able to have the voices of women heard. After her term as Attorney General, which spanned between December 2010 and May 2014, she became notable for her aggressive prosecution of organized crime (Kahn, 2013). Even more distinguished, however, was her hard work that led to 10 times more cases of violence against women resolved than any previous administration (Kahn, 2013). For many, she became a role model for women across Guatemala. This work was prominent less than even two years into her term, as she was named one of the "five most powerful women changing the world" by *Forbes* magazine in 2012 (McPherson, 2012).

Through her hard work and commitment to women's issues, Claudia Paz y Paz was able to restore the faith that Guatemalans' held in the rule of law. After the 36-year civil war, and the little resolution that came from it, Guatemalans (especially women) have lived with a lack of trust in the government and its organizations. Paz y Paz, however, came into office declaring violence against women a government priority (Claudia Paz y Paz, n.d.). Despite the numerous

threats she has received against her life (Kahn, 2013), Claudia Paz y Paz continues to work hard every day to ensure a stronger Guatemala.

Most authors fail to mention people like Fevy Gramajo, Julia Vicenta Paxtor Quixtan and Claudia Paz y Paz despite their extensive work. They are key figures in the effort to reduce violence. Many officials spend most of their lives working to accomplish the goal of eradicating violence against women. Julia, with her 30 years of experience, has witnessed many changes and successes within Guatemala. She has seen how the Guatemalan government slowly is not only accepting violence against women as a social issue but also making significant changes to bring many women justice. She continues to work every day to bring further change and help as many women as possible.

It is important to acknowledge the work of these individuals as this recognition is fully deserved. Their work and compassion become monumental to each individual affected by violence. While each person may have their own motivation for working with issue, seeing that each individual case brings them one step closer to justice in the country will only inspire other women to seek the support that they may need or desire.

The Necessity of Prioritizing Prevention

Because of the fact that there is a misunderstanding of what gender-based and sexual violence entails, the government's efforts have been focusing mostly on support, resources and aid *after* violence has already occurred. However, in order to truly reduce the rates of violence the implementation of strategies and/or programs that aid in the *prevention* of violence occurring in the first place becomes crucial. Some have even gone as far as saying that "[violence against women] can only end when a society decides a woman is worth the same as a man and has the same rights; when it is not acceptable for a woman to be beaten by her partner and her cries are heard by neighbours and no-one intervenes" (Wignaraja, 2010). Laws and legislation cannot help behind closed doors. As a result, a shift in the perception and value of women becomes

necessary, before supplying all resources, funding, and government aid to programs that help women after violence has already begun.

The 2008 Law calls for the government of Guatemala to promote and monitor awareness-raising campaigns, facilitate dialogue and promote public policies, which all fall under the category of prevention. However, it has become clear by various members of non-governmental groups that the government has not been focusing on this portion of the 2008 Law (Violations of Women's Human Rights, 2010). Therefore, evaluating the way in which other states have used prevention as a strategy to reduce levels of violence against women can provide insight into the ways in which Guatemala can facilitate their own strategies. In this context, Zambia and its government efforts can be used as a case study. According to the United Nations Global Database, 43% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 experience sexual violence and/or intimate partner violence in their lifetime (UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women). As a result of these high rates of violence against women, a national campaign against gender-based violence was launched by the government in 2009. The theme of the campaign, "Abuse, Just Stop It", declared zero tolerance against perpetrators of gender-based violence. The president at the time, Rupiah Bwezani Banda, stated that "[his] government attached great importance to creating conditions where women and children, and indeed men, live in harmony" (Zambia Launches Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence, 2009). This campaign marked the beginning of a variety of government-promoted prevention strategies, including school debates, drama shows, and a mobile video van showing films and documentaries on gender-based violence. Information regarding violence against women had already been running on community radio stations before the official launch of the campaign.

While a formal evaluation of these prevention strategies has not been completed, the fact that Zambia's male president not only admitted but offered solutions to violence against women is crucial. Many people within society look to government officials for support. President Banda may have been a form of hope for many women.

Possible Prevention Strategies

A key prevention strategy is education. Not only is it important to teach girls their own value, but also teaching men about the value of women. In an op-ed written by the UN Resident Coordinator and UNHCR Representative in Zambia, it was stated that education should focus on “respect, civic consciousness, and ethics and values that promote the principles of equity, fairness and justice.” It should also “[ensure] greater equality of access to resources, be it land, credit, homes and jobs - so women are empowered and able to have their own means of resources - economic empowerment. This allows them to leave abusive relationships and stand on their own as needed” (Wignanaja, 2010).

Additionally, the creation of laws themselves are also a form of prevention. While laws serve to punish and prosecute those who have violated what they state, they also serve as a means to deter people from committing crimes in the first place. Fevy Gramajo mentioned, however, that more laws could always be created but “young boys will still be seeing their fathers hitting their mothers” (Cosgrove; Haugen, 2018), commenting on the issue of violence against women remaining hidden within one’s home.

Considering Guatemala’s culture, historical context, and current legislation, it seems as though these prevention strategies would also aid in reducing levels of violence against women in this country. However, one cannot assume that strategies that work in one country will work in another. As Guatemala differs from Zambia in a variety of ways, such as location, population and historical context, it is important to note that it cannot be fully expected that the prevention strategies in Zambia will also fully serve women in Guatemala.

Conclusion

As the government of Guatemala has the responsibility of protecting all citizens, including its female citizens, it must ensure that complete understanding and lack of bias

towards violence against women is achieved within the government and government agencies. While it is important to also ensure that bias and personal beliefs are changed at the civil level in order to ensure that the value of women is accepted and fully understood, a priority should be given to educating the judges, prosecutors and police officers that are brought cases related to women. It is still important to help women who are experiencing violence and are in need of support. However, a clear lack of equal attention is being given to the different stages of violence, including prevention, when violence is currently taking place, and after (when a woman has left her abuser/is seeking protective measures or is a victim of femicide).

Future research into this topic will entail an evaluation of various campaign projects both within Guatemala and other states that are working towards eradicating violence against women. This will allow for a fair assessment as to whether or not certain prevention strategies are truly helping to reduce the levels of violence against women. Additionally, further conclusions will be drawn from the primary research obtained through the research conducted in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala in 2018. It will be used to emphasize the work of various government agencies and state functionaries, as many do not give them credit for their work and determination to ending violence against women.

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