

Personal Resources, Power Negotiation and Violence in Gay Intimate Relationships

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20 September 2017

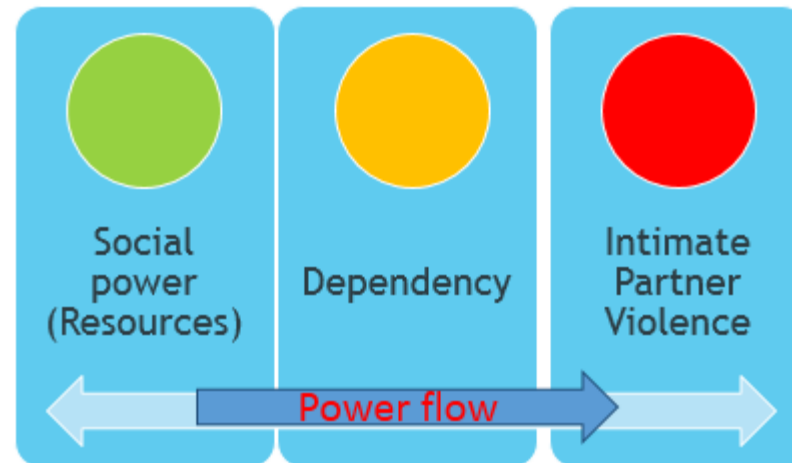


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Introduction: Power, Resources & IPV

- “in no known societies do women dominate men. In all societies that accumulate wealth, men, on average, enjoy more power than women...” (Pratto and Walker (2004: 242)



Recent South African IPV Statistics & Cases

- ▶ South Africa Demographic Health Survey 2016 reports:
 - ▶ 1 in 5 (21%) partnered women (18 years and older) has ever experienced physical violence by partner
 - ▶ 6% of ever-partnered women (18 years and older) have ever experienced sexual violence by any partner
 - ▶ 16% of divorced or separated women had experienced sexual violence by a partner while 10% of women in partnership had experienced sexual violence by a partner

IPV MAY/JUNE 2017

- 22 year old Karabo Mokoena's case
- Bukelwa Moerane's case

Karabo Mokoena's mom: I said to her, 'Sandile is going to kill you'



Citizen reporter



'I was in an abusive relationship' - kidnapping survivor

05 June, 01:23 PM

Before Bukelwa Moerane was involved in a kidnapping incident, she ended her abusive relationship with her four-year-old daughter's father.

Moerane says she was lucky to get out of the relationship.



Research Questions

- ▶ If gender relations are power relations and men are always dominant in such relationships, *how is this inclination mediated in a male-only partnership?*
- ▶ *Who, between interracial gay partners, emerges as more 'powerful'?*

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

- ▶ **Qualitative research techniques:** semi-structured interviews, observations, snowball technique
- ▶ **Settings:** Johannesburg Suburbs
- ▶ **Population:** 10 middle-class interracial gay couples (20 gay men)
- ▶ **Age:** 23 - 58 years
- ▶ **Fieldwork Period:** 8 months
- ▶ **Data Analysis:** Thematic Analysis (Interpretivist approach)
- ▶ **Social exchange theory:** more resources= more power

Findings: Resources and Power Exchange in Gay Relationships

- ▶ George (24 years old, black South African, Graduate):

*"I don't really argue with him much on **finances because he provides more...He dictates what I wear** at times if we are going out together. **He goes through my mobile phone every time...**I do not think our racial backgrounds impact on the way we share power. It is more of resources"*

- ▶ Kadi (33 years old, non-South African black, Graduate)

*"...I respect my partner because he is **older and provides more...** Sometimes I allow him to be the boss, that is, I allow him to **make final decisions** on some issues. I was not compelled to do it; **I just wanted him to be in-charge**"*

- ▶ Juke (37 years old, non-South African black, Businessman):

*"**My previous relationship was full of abuse** but my current partner is so sweet...**He makes most decisions. This is because he is older and more experienced than me**"*

Discussion

- ▶ It is evident that there is power differential in the relationships studied
- ▶ Resources (mostly financial resources, age and experience) play important roles in power negotiation and decision making than gender relations
- ▶ Race seems to have no significant impact on power negotiation, however, partners with most resources were White and older
- ▶ Generally, partners with most financial resources have more power in the relationship
- ▶ There is an indication that dependent partners have relegated power and strive to valorise power equality in their current relationships
- ▶ Dependency/Survival = power relegation and acceptance of violence

Conclusion

- In summary, although participants in my study strive for equality in their relationships, power differentials and dependency are present due to age differences, experience and financial resources rather than racial differences

Thank you very much for your attention!

Questions or comments?

Acknowledgement

- ▶ Special thanks to National Research Foundation (NRF) and the University of Johannesburg-Commonwealth Scholarships for the successful completion and dissemination of this study
- ▶ A special recognition to SVRI team (including their partners) for awarding me a full bursary to present my work at the 2017 SVRI Forum in RIO, Brazil
- ▶ Special thanks to my SVRI mentor, Prof Jan Coles: Monash University Australia, for her invaluable comments and guidance