



SPOTLIGHT ON KNOWLEDGE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ▶ **Adomako Ampofo, A. 2008. [Collective Activism: The Domestic Violence Becoming Law in Ghana](#). *African and Asian Studies* 7 (4) 395-421**

In this paper, Adomako Ampofo discusses the activism and struggles that gave birth to the domestic violence law in Ghana. A professor in African Studies and a women's rights activist herself, Adomako Ampofo traces the trajectory of Ghanaian women organizing for change from the pre-colonial period, through the independent struggles to the passage of the domestic violence bill into law. She particularly highlights the activities of the Coalition of Domestic Violence Legislation, which was established in 2003 to push specifically for the passage of the legislation. She points out that at various times, the Coalition worked closely with, and at other times independent of, or even in conflict with, the state to ensure that the passage of the bill into law became a reality. This paper is a masterpiece on civil society's role in shaping the definition of Domestic violence in Ghana and by extension how this definition changed the discourse of Domestic Violence in the country.

- ▶ **Agüero, J. 2013. [Causal Estimates of the Intangible Costs of Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). IDB Working Paper Series, No. IDB-WP-414**

This report reflects on the causes of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean and provides estimates of the costs of impacts on typically less-well understood areas such as reproductive health, employment and family welfare. Using data from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras and Peru, this document demonstrates a strong causal relationship between physical violence and negative consequences in women's health, personal relationships, child-raising, as well as their ability to participate in labour markets.

- ▶ **Almeras, D., Calderón, C. 2012. [Si no se cuenta, no cuenta: información sobre la violencia contra las mujeres \(If it is not told, it doesn't count: information about violence against women\)](#). Cuadernos de la CEPAL 99, Santiago de Chile**

The document discusses key aspects that contribute to the eradication of violence against women, drawing



from detailed information in three selected countries in Latin America specifically Argentina, Guatemala and Peru. The information provides a baseline to build on to understand the prevalence of the phenomenon and to measure the effectiveness of public policy interventions to prevent, punish and eradicate violence.

▶ **Amoakohene, M. 2004. Violence against Women in Ghana: A Look at Women's Perceptions and Review of Policy and Social Responses. *Social Science and Medicine* 59 (11) 2372-2385.**

This paper examines violence as experienced by Ghanaian women of varying ages, socio-economic status and professional standing. It provides some statistical information of violence against women and a general overview of violence experienced in the country. The author also discusses some statutory and civil society's responses to address domestic violence. She concludes by calling for more direct and expanded forms of support systems for abused women and their dependents from the state.

▶ **Aniwa, M. 1999. Prevalence. In: Coker-Appiah, D., Cusack, K. (eds) *Breaking The Silence & Challenging The Myths of Violence Against Women & Children In Ghana*. Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Centre, Accra.**

This chapter which is one of seven chapters in a ground-breaking book on violence in Ghana documents the extent of domestic violence among women and girls in Ghana. It highlights the fact that while both women and girls experience domestic violence, they experience different kinds of violence precipitated by different factors. Sexual abuse is far more common among women than among girls while physical violence is more common among girls than among women. For women, stepping out of their socio-culturally defined roles is the greatest precipitator of physical violence, while for girls it is disobedience. Above all, this chapter documents the high levels of violence that both women and girls experience in the Ghanaian context; 70% have experienced psychological abuse while 33% have experienced physical abuse.

▶ **Cantalupo, N., Martin, L. V., Pak, K. Shin, S. 2006. [Domestic Violence in Ghana: The Open Secret](#). *Geography Journal of Gender and Law* 7 531-597**

This article is a result of a collaborative project between Georgetown's International Women's Human Rights Clinic and Ghana's Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa – Ghana Alumnae, Inc. ("LAWA Ghana"). It is an elaborate study that provides critical information on the parameters of the domestic violence problem in Ghana. It identifies the causes and complicating factors of domestic



violence such as traditional beliefs, economic dependence and customary practices. The paper reports that widespread acceptance of stereotypical gender roles perpetuates Domestic Violence by discouraging reporting and trivializing abuse. The acceptance of stereotypical gender roles that men are entitled to control women, and women must submit to men also justifies violence. In addition, the authors argue that the acceptance of stereotypical gender roles discourages victims from reporting abuse, which in turn inhibits the response of the community and the State to Domestic Violence. The paper also sheds light on the response of the State and the Ghanaian community to Domestic violence which actually impedes the provision of critical services to survivors of abuse. This article offers insights into both civil society responses to domestic violence and the ways in which social norms may interact with state conceptualisations of domestic violence to shape civil society responses.

- ▶ **Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (Catholic women for the right to choose) (2012).** [Femicide and Impunity in Mexico: A Context of Structural and Generalized Violence](#). Report presented before the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, Mexico.

This is a shadow report elaborated by the organization called Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (Catholic women for the right to choose) which has been presented before the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) during the 7th and 8th Periodic Review of Mexico. It offers a general overview of the obstacles that the Mexican government is facing to address increasing rates of violence against women as well as the lack of institutional guarantees for its prevention, treatment, punishment and eradication. It also offers recommendations for the CEDAW to monitoring the activities that the State is undertaking.

- ▶ **Dennis-Antwi, J., Dapaah, P. 2010. Domestic Violence in Ghana.** *Diversity in Health and Care* 7 (3) 165-167

This paper gives an overview of domestic violence in Ghana, some statistical data on the incidence and the effects of violence on the physical, psychological and mental health of victims of abuse. The authors are a professional midwife and a communication specialist who are confronted with the pain, hopelessness and destruction of domestic violence on a daily basis. They use the paper to support and advocate for enhanced opportunities for women and girls to assert themselves in their homes and relationships. The authors recommend that the Domestic Violence Bill should be implemented in ways that protect victims and punish offenders. This article speaks to a particular kind of civil society response and can be used as a measure of the extent to which civil society responses meet the criteria set forth in this article as well as the extent to which the authors' emphasis on protecting victims and punishing offenders are reflected in the domestic violence bill.



- ▶ **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 2005.** [Buenas Prácticas Para la Erradicación de la Violencia Doméstica en la Región de América Latina y el Caribe \(Good Practices for the Eradication of Domestic Violence In the Latin American Region\)](#). Serie Mujer y Desarrollo 75, ECLAC, Santiago de Chile.

Ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995); and over a decade of adoption of the Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem Do Para Convention), the paper analyses the achievements and challenges for Latin American Countries to meeting international commitments. Even if there are some similarities among legal frameworks adopted by each country, there is a greater heterogeneity in the development of programs, projects and actions to address violence due to the lack of resources, institutional strengthening and fragmentation of initiatives, many of them still localized in civil society organisations.

- ▶ **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2007).** [Ni Una Más! El Derecho a Vivir una Vida Libre de Violencia en América Latina y el Caribe \(Not one more! The right to live a life free from violence\)](#). ECLAC, Santiago de Chile.

This report presents the results of joint work of the organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations in the region. It points out that the eradication of violence against women should become a central objective of public agendas: first, as a human rights issue and as an obstacle to development. However, some obstacles such as lack of technical, financial and human resources, the persistence of cultural factors through patriarchal culture have encouraged and promoted situations of impunity. In that context, the document shed lights on the mechanisms adopted by Latin American countries to address different forms of violence against women, and makes recommendations to strengthen public policies.

- ▶ **Ellsberg, M., Morrison. A. 2004.** [Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Latin America and Caribbean Region: A Critical Review of Interventions](#). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3438. World Bank and PATH, Washington D.C.

Violence against women is a common problem across the Latin American and Caribbean region where it is having serious impacts on the economy, women's health and well-being of a particular country. This document presents an overview of the most common forms of gender-based violence in Latin America, such as intimate partner and sexual violence, and provides an analysis of interventions in four key areas - education, health, justice and victim support services - as well as identifies good practices in law and policy, institutional reforms, community-level approaches, and public strategies aimed at influencing individual behaviour change. Finally, the authors provide recommendations for adopting broader policy measures aimed at eradicating gender violence by removing gender gaps and strengthening women's capacities.



- ▶ **Franceschet, S. 2010. Explaining Domestic Violence Policy Outcomes in Chile and Argentina.** *Latin American Politics and Society* **52 (3) 1-29.**

In this piece, Franceschet (2010) investigates the factors that explain the differential outcomes of the domestic violence policy in two Latin American countries: Chile and Argentina. The author identifies the political decisions made after a law is adopted as one of the crucial determinants of successful legislative outcomes. She demonstrates that the policy outcomes in Chile were more successful than that in Argentina because Chile had more substantial reforms than Argentina. Unlike the Argentinian state, the Chilean state created a centralised state agency that focused primarily on researching, designing, coordinating and evaluating the outcomes of programmes designed to tackle domestic violence in these countries. This one-stop shop approach resulted in more favourable policy outcomes.

- ▶ **Fries Martinez, S. 2008. [Gender, the State and Patriarchy: Partner Violence in Mexico](#).** PhD Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

Sonia Fries addresses the topic of violence against women perpetrated by their partners focusing on the connections between social structures, the State and individual factors that could impact on the risks of violence in a patriarchal, social and cultural context.

- ▶ **Garcia, B., de Oliveira, O. 2010. Cambios familiares y políticas públicas (Family changes and public policies).** Presentation at the session “Areglos familiares formales e informales (Formal and informal family arrangements)” at the X National Reunion of Demographic Investigation in Mexico. *Mexican society of Demography*.

Though violence against women is not the main topic of this text, it offers some really interesting comments and data that indirectly affect violence against women which include the changes in the family and the public policies developed in support of the new forms of families.

- ▶ **Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean 2014. [El enfrentamiento de la violencia contra las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe Confronting violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean](#).** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Santiago de Chile.



Latin American Countries have adopted a variety of strategies in the last 20 years to address violence against women which are necessary to analyse. Different agencies such as the Gender Equality Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) have prepared this report aiming to review the regional situation, the progress of international recommendations, public policies promoted at national level, limitations and challenges faced during this period.

▶ **Giridhar, N. 2012. [The Global Spread of Domestic Violence Legislation: Causes and Effects](#). International Relations Honors Thesis, New York University.**

Giridhar's thesis explores the causes and effects of domestic violence legislation. The author argues that income levels and political systems had a lot to do with whether or not a country had domestic violence legislation. Richer, democratic states were more likely to have domestic violence legislation than poorer, authoritarian states. To investigate the effects of legislation, Giridhar undertakes a study of Malawi where domestic violence legislation was passed in 2006. She concludes that the passage of the law had a positive effect even without effective implementation. Malawians were less tolerant of domestic violence once legislation against it was passed. However, more women (30.77%) were less tolerant than men (6.7%). The author does caution against the assumption that the legislation was the single factor that caused this change in attitude. Other factors such as the advocacy campaigns of the women's movement could also have contributed to the shift in attitudes.

▶ **Gómez, M., Ricciardi, M.V. 2010. *A Place in the World. The Right to Adequate Housing as an Essential Element of a Life Free from Domestic Violence*. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Geneva**

This report presents first-hand evidence of the impacts of domestic violence on women's lives in Argentina, Brazil and Colombia. The authors argue that guaranteeing women's rights to adequate housing is a key element to addressing domestic violence. Therefore, governments must adopt comprehensive policies that guarantee women the right to live in peace and dignity, which includes access to safe-housing, access to shelters for battered women and the effective punishment of abusers.

▶ **Hodzic, S. 2009. *Unsettling Power: Domestic Violence, Gender Politics and Struggles over Sovereignty in Ghana*. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 74 (3) 331-360.**

The author of this paper analyzes how the Ghanaian government constructed the discourse of cultural



sovereignty and used it as the basis for undermining women's rights by appropriating the voice of 'the people' and superimposing notions of 'foreignness' onto both the DV Bill and Ghanaian women's rights activists. Drawing on the historiography of colonialism and ethnography of political performance, she argues that this case illustrates how the discourse of cultural sovereignty is mobilized in a struggle over shifting configurations of gender, political activism, and state sovereignty. Hodzic's paper is crucial to the discourse on domestic violence in the country, as it enlightens its readers about the different strategies the government of Ghana employed to oppose the passage of the DV bill, using four major propositions to undercut the validity of the Bill: it was a foreign imposition; it posed dangers to the Ghanaian family and culture at large; domestic violence was best adjudicated privately (outside the system of civil law); and traditional authorities should mediate and adjudicate domestic violence problems. This paper provides us with a historical analysis of how the domestic violence bill became law in Ghana.

▶ **Human Rights and Advocacy Centre 2012. [Deadly Relationships and Toxic Bonds: Spousal Murders and Rival Killings in Ghana](#). Human Rights and Advocacy Centre, Accra**

The document provides some useful statistics on the incidence and reportage of domestic violence, spousal murders and rival killings in Ghana. It identifies some accepted cultural norms such as traditional gender roles recognizing the male as the dominant figure and 'provider' in the relationship; embedded gender inequalities; ideals of masculinity and associated shame and dishonour when a man fails to control; perception of domestic violence as acceptable in some circumstances, and simply a way of 'correcting' one's wife as responsible for the high incidence and low reportage of domestic violence in Ghana. It recommends that the country should; engage more in youth education programs that reimagine gender roles and norms in Ghanaian society, enforce legislation to recognize the rights of spouses; reframe domestic violence as a human rights issue; increase resources for organizations fighting against domestic violence and such as the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service.

▶ **Hurtado, V., Fries, L. 2010. [Estudio de la información sobre la violencia contra las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe \(Study on the information about violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean\)](#). Serie Mujer y Desarrollo 99. ECLAC, Santiago de Chile.**

In this co-authored piece, the writers stress the importance as well as the challenges of counting and registering cases of violence against women. They also present the existing information on violence against women.



- ▶ **Jimenez, M. 2006. [A diez años de Belém do Pará. Perspectivas de la violencia familiar en el Distrito Federal \(10 years after Belém do Pará: Perspectives on family violence in the Federal District\)](#). Gobierno del Distrito Federal, Mexico DF.**

Domestic violence is the most serious manifestation of power relations, inequality and domination that denies basic democratic values and norms of respect and coexistence in the public and private sphere. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the book analyses whether there have been advances among the strategies adopted in Mexico City after ten years of the adoption of the Belém do Pará Convention.

- ▶ **Kislinger, L., Cedano D. 2005. [Violencia doméstica contra las mujeres \(Domestic Violence against women\)](#). Grupo Parlamentario Interamericano Población y Desarrollo, UNIFEM. New York.**

This paper provides a general overview on domestic violence in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also analyses the international and regional instruments to address violence against women, and shows the relationship between national legislation on domestic violence in different countries. Finally, it offers keys to the design, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of laws and policies on domestic violence against women from a gender and human rights perspective.

- ▶ **Lemon, N., 2013. [Access to Justice: Can Domestic Violence Courts better address the need of Non-English Speaking victims of domestic violence](#). *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law and Justice* 38**

This document highlights the need for providing free professional interpreters as a key element in ensuring access to justice in civil domestic violence cases to non-english speaking victims. This experience could be taken as an interesting example that could be replicated in the Latin American or African case. Courts do not always provide interpreters' services for indigenous peoples which clearly represents a great obstacle to ensuring women's rights to justice. Resources should be allocated to promote this.

- ▶ **MESECVI 2012. [Second Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belem Do Pará Convention](#). Organization of American States (OAS) Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), WashingtonDC.**

This second report from the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) presents an assessment of Latin American and the Caribbean countries' compliance with obligations ratified in the Belém Do Pará Convention aimed at eradicating violence against women. The report summarizes achievements and on-going challenges relating to state legislation,



national policy, access to justice, specialized services, budgets, information and statistics.

▶ **Mills, L., Grauwiler P., Pezold, N. 2006. Enhancing Safety and Rehabilitation in Intimate Violence Treatments: New Perspectives. Public Health Reports, New York University. New York.**

This document offers insights on two treatment approaches: the Battered Intervention Programmes, widely used in the US and other parts of the world including Mexico and the restorative justice programmes. While the first focuses on measures that separate female victims from abusive male partners without necessarily taking into account women's needs, the second option offers women victims an opportunity to participate in face to face meetings with their abusers thus challenging the notions of safety.

▶ **Mitchell, L. 2012. Service Users' Perceptions of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit, Ghana Police Service.**

This study reports the perceptions of 99 women and men who reported cases of violence at one DOVVSU office in Ghana. The study finds that drop out rates were high; seventy percent of those who needed a medical report to proceed with their cases dropped the case. For half of those who did, the lack of finances was a major reason for dropping the case. A second important finding was the fact that DOVVSU operated in an environment with major institutional constraints that made it impossible for officers to deliver impeccable services to survivors of domestic violence. Nonetheless, service users had a very positive perspective on both the process and the outcome. Finally, contrary to international human rights principles, DOVVSU officials often operated within a family values bias seeking to provide protection of the women and not prosecution of the offenders. Service users tended to be more comfortable with protection than prosecution. This helps to explain why service users had a positive outlook on services in spite of the haphazard manner in which it was often delivered.

▶ **Ortiz-Barreda, G., Vives-Cases, C. 2013. Legislation on Violence against Women: Overview of Key Components. Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica 33 (1) 61-72.**

The study aimed to determine whether legislation on violence against women contains key components recommended by PAHO and UN to help strengthen VAW prevention and provide better integrated victim protection, support and care.



- ▶ **Sagot, M. 2008. Estrategias para enfrentar la violencia contra las mujeres: reflexiones feministas desde América Latina (Strategies to confront violence against women: feminist reflections from Latin America. Athenea Digital (14) 215-228.**

The document helps to frame violence against women as a social problem based on gender inequality. From a feminist perspective, Sagot highlights the fact that violence against women should be viewed as the negation of citizenship rights because laws still recognize rights of property, decision-making role and access to power spaces to men instead of women. Effective public policies should recognize and transform institutions and legal frameworks that still limit women from exercising their rights.

- ▶ **UN World Health Organization (WHO) 2014. [Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014](#). World Health Organization, Luxembourg.**

Based on a study of 133 countries around the world, this study, the first of its kind assesses the efforts of various states to prevent violence. The study finds that most states are making some effort to prevent violence in their communities. For each of the services identified, at least a third of the countries surveyed were implementing each of the services identified. Some programs such as child protection services were much more likely to be offered than others such as mental health services. In addition, the report concludes that while the current efforts are commendable, the levels are not commensurate with the extent of the problem. In particular, the authors recommend greater efforts at coordinated services between various institutions as well as implementation of the various laws enacted.

- ▶ **Vargas, V. 2002. Los feminismos latinoamericanos en su tránsito al nuevo milenio: una lectura político personal (Latin American feminisms in their transit to the new millenium: a political and personal approach),. In Mato, D. (ed.). [Estudios y otras prácticas intelectuales latinoamericanas en cultura y poder \(Studies and other Latin American intellectual practices in culture and power\)](#). CLACSO, Caracas.**

This document offers an interesting point of view on the role and challenges of the feminist movements and ideas for the institutionalization of mechanisms to fight violence against women.

- ▶ **Vetten, L. 2005. [Addressing Domestic Violence in South Africa: Reflections on strategy and practice](#). Prepared for the "Violence against women: Good practices in combatting and eliminating violence against women" Expert Group Meeting organized by the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 17th-20th May, Vienna-Austria. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg.**

This paper examines some aspects of the South African government's interventions against violence



against women, and draws some conclusions about strategies and good practices in relation to reforming legislation addressing violence against women. In particular, Vetten analyzes the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 and the state's commitment to its implementation as well as challenges faced in implementation of the law. While Vetten lauds the Act as comprehensive, she identifies the fact that it has never been fully implemented as its main weakness. The author concludes by recommending, among others, that the state makes provisions for the other essential social support required by abused women and to expand its framework guiding thinking around combatting and eradicating violence.



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