Gender-based violence in universities

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LAWGEM Panel on GBV

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Perpetration, Perpetrators, Perpetrating

or

Doings, Doers, Doing

Perpetrators
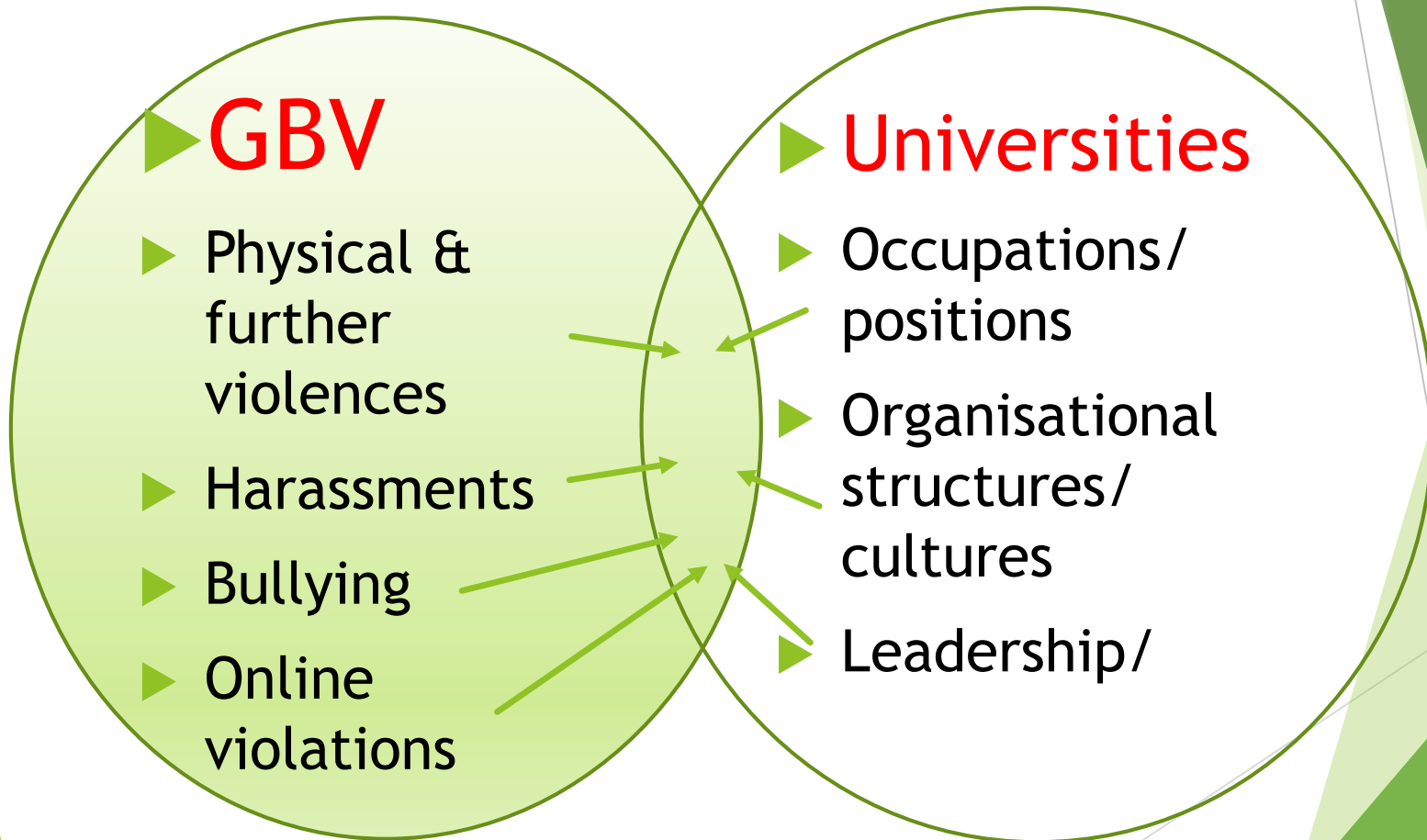
So, who are the perpetrators of GBV?

How do recognise a perpetrator?

2 basic issues

- What is GBV?

- What characterises universities/RPOs?
- strong age-, ethnic-, gender-differentiation, especially vertically
- relatively fixed layers of older professorial and senior staff, predominantly men + shifting, temporary populations of members, students and less established staff
- both formality & informality, bringing social/interpersonal ambiguities
- presence of hierarchical aged, gender, social, sexual and intense emotional dynamics
- both strong pressures and opportunities to conform, and at least in some traditions the occasion to subvert that conformity

Wider societal inequalities and oppressions, e.g. racism

GBV

▶ Physical & further violences

▶ Harassments

▶ Bullying

▶ Online violations

Universities

▶ Occupations/ positions

▶ Organisational structures/ cultures

▶ Leadership/

men do most, if not all, physical, sexual violence

▶ (refuting gender **symmetry** debate …)

▶ interpersonal violence,especially planned, heavy, repeated, physically damaging, non-defensive, premeditated, non-retaliatory, sexual, multiple forms

▶ Also economic, collective, institutional, (often also interpersonal)

▶ so need an understanding of different ways of being men/masculinities

sexual harassers …

- Pina et al. 2009. An overview of the literature on sexual harassment. Perpetrator, theory & treatment issues *Aggression & Violent Behavior*

- **Societal/Organisational** (gender) inequalities/cultures: *permissive climate/*peer relations; policy absence

- **Individual**: mainly male, disagreeability, closed to experience, *authoritarianism*, irresponsibility, aggression & its legitimation, narcissism, *sex-power association*

- **Relational**: Motivation, overcome internal & external inhibitions, overcome victim's resistance

bullies

Blackwood & Jenkins 2018. "Me? a bully?": The different faces of the perpetrator in workplace bullying. In Cruz et al. eds. *Pathways of Job-related Negative Behaviour*, Springer

"popular media continue to label perpetrators in simplistic terms, they fail to account for influence of work environments, leadership qualities & work demands …"

- **"bad egg":** Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychoticism, aggression, disinhibition, trait anger, low self-control

- **good colleague turned bad**

- **abrasive performance manager**

- **cyberbully**

- **the mob**

- **depersonalised:** organisational structures & processes

(accused) bullies

Jenkins et al. 2012. Bullying allegations from the accused bully's perspective. *British J of Management* 23, 489-501 (n=24)

Denial?: "All participants reported they had carried out some kind of negative workplace behaviours against others at some time during previous 12 months. However, when describing the negative behaviours, they denied that these behaviours were a pattern of bullying, rather, were reasonable, **although unpopular,** aspects of their role"

- ▶ more highly employable?
- ▶ upwards bullying

Digital/online violence & abuse

▶ ... pervasive

▶ instant or time-delayed

▶ multiple forms

▶ not going away

▶ extended in time and space

Occupational/positionalities

▶ academics, adminstrators, other employed staff, students, doctoral researchers

▶ Different relations to universities

▶ Changing impact of online

Perpetrating within/by groups/organisations

▶ "addition to individually focused forms of GBV, also at **more collective, group and organisational** levels … group/organizational/ research cultures that promote, or even enact, gender-based violence directly/indirectly, e.g. hostile environments, psychological violence

▶ faciliators of GBV, not only 1 perpetrator!

▶ *What can you get away with?*

▶ **Responses** by others, colleagues, bystanders, managers: *collusions, cover-ups, exclusions, secondary harms, punishing complaints, revenge*

Jeff Hearn et al. eds. *The Sexuality of Organization* Sage 1989; Jeff Hearn & Wendy Parkin *Gender, Sexuality & Violence in Organizations*, Sage 2001

Crucial impact of leaders/heads of unit/managers/rectorate

▶ **Can also be perpetrators,** used to being listened to, presenting themselves, adapting to different situations; used to speaking on behalf of organisation, may identify themselves with organisation

▶ can be challenge distinguishing organisational & interviewee's front

▶ Importance of training, being aware of GBV, gender power

Laissez-Faire versus Authoritarian

▶ That facilitate, even condone, individual gender-based violence

▶ worst combination of high-performance teams/orgs and laissez-faire management: 'High-Performance Work Practices and Interpersonal Relationships: Laissez-Faire Leadership as a Risk Factor' *Frontiers in Psychology* 2022, Salin, Baillien, Notelaers

▶ A survey conducted in Belgium ($n = 374$). In the absence of *laissez-faire* leadership, HPWPs are associated with less incivility, thus suggesting better interpersonal relations. However, HPWPs may lead to increased competition and thereby somewhat more incivility, under conditions of *laissez-faire* leadership. In terms of practical implications, investing in HPWPs may reduce incivility and improve relationship wellbeing. However, HPWPs need to be combined with *active* leadership to avoid negative consequences.

Some references

▶ Pina et al. 2009. An overview of the literature on sexual harassment: Perpetrator, theory & treatment issues *Aggression & Violent Behavior*

▶ Blackwood & Jenkins 2018. "Me? a bully?": The different faces of the perpetrator in workplace bullying. In Cruz et al. eds. *Pathways of Job-related Negative Behaviour*, Springer

▶ Jenkins et al. 2012. Bullying allegations from the accused bully's perspective. *British J of Management* 23, 489-501

▶ Hearn & Parkin 2001. *Gender, Sexuality & Violence in Organizations* Sage

▶ Salin, Baillien & Notelaers 2022. High-Performance Work Practices & Interpersonal Relationships: Laissez-Faire Leadership as a Risk Factor *Frontiers in Psychology*

▶ Hall, Hearn & Lewis 2022. *Digital Gender-Sexual Violations*, Routledge

Not only 'perpetrators'

▶ **Perpetrating** rather than perpetrators

▶ **Processes versus incidents**

▶ **Mutual perceptions of GBV**

Thanks for listening!

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