Challenges and Opportunities: Exploring the Contexts of Men's Gender Justice Roles in Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines

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Abstract

Activist researchers and organizational and community leaders from Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines established a transdisciplinary action research partnership to explore the layered contexts of gender-based violence (GBV) in each of our regions and build a community of research and practice focused on understanding the challenges, benefits, and transformative impacts of men's violence prevention work. We anticipated our partnership would deepen our knowledge of contextual and cross-regional factors, including colonial and postcolonial history, patriarchal norms, race/ethnicity, religion, militarism, socio-economic development, and other issues underpinning GBV and its prevention. This article explores these shared realities and local and contextual conditions of GBV within and across our diverse regional contexts and the presence of men's prevention work. Through this paper, we sought to establish the roots of an emerging global research initiative embedded within community and activist work. We explore the opportunities, tensions, and challenges while developing a transdisciplinary community of research and practice and the importance of international collaborations in addressing a pervasive social issue such as GBV.

Keywords: men's roles in violence prevention, gender-based violence, international, transdisciplinary, Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is pervasive, so much so that it leaves 1 in 3 (30%) women worldwide subjected to either physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes.[1] Around the world, men commit most violent crimes, which include sexual assault, physical assault with a weapon, and homicide.[2] Feminist researchers and prevention advocates emphasize that in addition to reproducing violence against women (VAW) and girls, men's violence and rigid gender/sexuality stereotypes and expectations also have negative consequences for men and boys and everyone on the gender spectrum.[3] The adverse impacts on men include challenges to their physical and mental health, elevated suicide rates, risk-taking, addictions, and gender role expectations that deter help-seeking.[4] Minerson, et al. argue that these are the "costs of masculinity" for men and boys.[5] Further, research focused on sexual stigma and homo/bi/transphobic violence underscores the consequences of nonconformity to inflexible gender scripts,[6] which Murphy argues are "the common

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[1] UN Women, *Rapid Gender Assessments of the socioeconomic impacts of Covid 19*, United Nations, 2021.

[2] Corin Bailey & Charlene Coore Desai, "The effects of exposure to community violence on levels of aggression: Evidence from a sample of Jamaican children," *Childhood*, 19 (2): 188-203; Laura Savage, "Female offenders in Canada, 2017," in *Juristat: Canadian Center for Justice Statistic* 1 (Jan. 10, 2019), 3-20; World Health Statistics, *Monitoring Health for the SDGs*, World Health Organization, 2016.

[3] Liza Lorenzetti et al., "Men's Survey: Exploring Well-Being, Healthy Relationships and Violence Prevention," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 30, no. 1 (2021): 28-48.

[4] Andrew Case and Derrick Gordon, "Masculinity and health: Embodying the cultural paradox for Caribbean men across the diaspora," in *Caribbean psychology: Indigenous contributions to a global discipline*, edited by Jaipaul Roopnarine and Derek Chadee,171-204, American Psychological Association, 2015; Brendan Gough & Irina Novikova, "Mental health, men and culture: how do sociocultural constructions of masculinities relate to men's mental health help-seeking behaviour in the WHO European Region?" *Iris. Institutional Repository for Information Sharing*, World Health Organization, 2020.

[5] Todd Minerson et al., "Issue brief: Engaging men and boys to reduce and prevent gender-based violence," in *Status of Women Canada*, White Ribbon, 2011, 13.

[6] Karel Blondeel et al., "Violence motivated by perception of sexual orientation and gender identity: a systematic review," in *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 96, no. 1(2018): 29–41L; Maurice Kwong-Lai Poon, "Beyond good and

threads uniting violence against women, gays, lesbians, and trans folks."[7]

There has long been acknowledgment among feminists and other advocates that men have a responsibility for taking action toward gender justice and ending men's violence, thus contributing to decades of women's efforts.[8] The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations in 1979, sets forth measures to eliminate gender-based discrimination in all its forms and manifestations. Among its imperatives, the Convention underscores the responsibility of both men and women in raising children. The 1994 Cairo Program of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action[9] emphasized this emerging focus, which was followed in 1997 by a UN consortium entitled *Men's Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace*.[10] Building on this momentum, the UNFPA[11] released a technical paper on partnerships with men in reproductive and sexual health and rights with three basic expectations: (i) partnership in sexual and reproductive health, (ii) gender-equitable men, (iii) men taking ownership of problems and being part of the solution.[12] The Millennium Development Goals (MDG),[13] which highlighted issues of

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evil: The social construction of violence in intimate gay relationships," in Ristock J. L. (Ed), *Intimate partner violence in LGBTQ lives*, 102–130 (Routledge, 2011).

[7] Michael Murphy, "An open letter to the organizers, presenters and attendees of the first national conference for campus-based men's gender equality and anti-violence groups," *Journal of Men's Studies* 18, no.1 (2010), 103.

[8] Walter DeKeseredy and Molly Dragiewicz, "Shifting public policy direction: Gender-focused versus bi-directional intimate partner violence," *Domestic Violence Info* (2009); Rita Dhungel, *Reintegration of Trafficking Survivors in Nepal* (Doctoral thesis, University of Calgary: Calgary, Canada, 2017); Aamir Jamal, "Engaging men for gender justice: Overcoming barriers to girls' education in the Pashtun tribes of Pakistan," *International Journal of Social Welfare* 24, no.3 (2015): 273-286; Rachel Jewkes, "Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention," *The lancet* 359, no. 9315 (2002): 1423-1429; Michael Kaufman, "Building a movement of men working to end violence against women," *Development* 44, no. 3 (2001): 9–14.

[9] United Nations [UN], *Program of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development*, United Nations, 1995.

[10] Kaufman, "Building a movement."; UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1997.

[11] Sylvie Cohen and Michéle Burger, *Partnerning: A New Approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health*, United Nations Population Fund, 2000.

[12] Ibid.

[13] United Nations, *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics,* United Nations, 2010.

gender inequity in the areas of wealth distribution, education access, and political representation, showed some progress internationally in girls' education and maternal/child health by 2015.[14] Presently, the UN's focus on 17 Sustainable Development Goals includes SDG 5, to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."[15] SDG 5 remains a lofty and prolonged ideal, requiring an urgent call to accelerate progress through progressive laws and policies.[16]

Despite the slow pace of systemic change and societal shifts to more equitable social norms and power relations, numerous initiatives and social movements have arisen to encourage men's involvement in ending intimate partner violence (IPV) and promoting gender equity. The synergies and linkages within these movements are reflected in a recent series of global meetings convened among international partners in MenEngage, titled *Ubuntu Symposium: Peacebuilding and Countering Militarism*.[17] While there is evidence of a call to critical action in this area, there is limited academic research on the impact of men's participation in gender justice work and the presence or potential of transformative change from this engagement.

Responding to the need for cross-regional and community-centered research to further explore and assess men's engagement and roles in violence prevention work, activist researchers and organizational and community leaders from Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines gathered on virtual platforms to establish a transdisciplinary action research partnership. We sought to explore the layered contexts of GBV in each of our regions from which to build a community of research and practice focused on understanding life histories, ecological factors (from macro to micro levels), challenges, benefits, and transformative impacts of men's violence prevention work.

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[14] United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, United Nations, 2015.

[15] United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals*, United Nations, 2015.

[16] United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022*, United Nations, 2022.

[17] Shantel Marekera, *MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium summaries: Backlash and fundamentalism*, MenEngage Alliance, 2021; Piotr Pawlak, *MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium summaries: Peacebuilding and countering militarism*, MenEngage Alliance, 2021.

Community-centered research methods were employed to gain men's perspectives on GBV prevention and to expand their involvement. We also anticipated that our partnership would both elucidate and deepen our shared knowledge of contextual and cross-regional factors, including colonial and postcolonial histories, race/ethnicity, religious extremism, fundamentalism, militarism, socio-economic development, and other factors, that underpin GBV and its prevention.

While each region involved in our collaboration differs in socio-political, cultural, and economic demography, studies overwhelmingly demonstrate that intergenerational patterns of abuse (all genders), socialization to traditional male and female roles, and male dominance in both public and private life contribute to interpersonal violence regardless of context.[18] Colonization, neo-liberal and ultra-national patriarchal politics, economic disparity, community violence, war, racism, and other structural inequalities continue to be deeply associated with higher rates of IPV.[19] This article explores these shared realities and local and contextual conditions of GBV within and across our diverse regions and the presence of men's prevention work. Through this paper, we sought to establish the roots of an emerging global research initiative embedded within our team's community, activist, and academic work. We also discuss the opportunities, tensions, and challenges of developing a transdisciplinary community of research and practice and the importance of international collaborations in addressing GBV.

Our research team includes the following authors: a Canadian-based anti-racist feminist scholar and organizer of Italian heritage; A Pashtun Pakistani-born Canadian activist scholar, advocate, and researcher for men's engagement in gender justice, prevention of violence against women and girls education; a Canadian-based justice scholar and activist of Norwegian, German,

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[18] Mla Htun & S. Lauren Weldon, "The civic origins of progressive policy change: Combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975-2005," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 3 (2012): 548-569; World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, WHO int., 2021; Y. Joel Wong et al., "Meta-analyses of the relationship between conformity to masculine norms and mental health-related outcomes," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 64 (2017): 80–93.

[19] Liza Lorenzetti and David Este, "War and Partner Violence," *Settlement of Newcomers to Canada* 12, no. 1 (2010): 76-82; Marekera, *MenEngage*.

and Scottish ancestry; a Canadian-based feminist and anti-racist community social worker and emerging activist-scholar from Dutch heritage; a Nepali-born Canadian feminist scholar, community-based participatory action researcher, a community builder; a Pashtun Pakistani-born political scientist engaged in studies on men's role in gender justice in Pakistan; a Filipino-born scholar engaged in multicultural studies and a gender advocate in Canada; a Philippine-based scholar and gender advocate; a Caribbean-based feminist scholar and activist, and a Mexican Mestiza social work practitioner and researcher for newcomers and refugees' mental health and well-being in Canada. A common thread amongst the team is a passion for community-based research and the power of storytelling. The team adopted critical narrative as an inquiry method for the project to amplify stories of personal transformation.[20]

GBV and Men's Engagement in our Regional Contexts

GBV, rooted in structures, systems, and cultures, can be viewed as "any form of violence used to establish, enforce, or perpetuate gender inequalities and keep in place gendered orders."[21] GBV occurs among individuals, within family, community, and institutional spheres, with several scholars interlinking male violence in the home and the larger realities of state, government, and societal sanctioning of men's GBV.[22] These associations are evident in literature that exposes "the gendered nature and global experience of violence across a spectrum of domains, including women's sexual exploitation, violence against women within the context of war, and the control of women's reproductive and

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[20] Helen Hickson, "Becoming a critical narrativist: Using critical reflection and narrative inquiry as research methodology," *Qualitative Social Work* 15, no. 3 (2016): 380-391.

[21] James Lang, "Elimination of violence against women in partnership with men," in *Background document for UNESCAP's subregional training workshop on elimination of violence against women in partnership with men,* 2003, 3.

[22] Rita Dhungel, "Reintegration of Trafficking."; Aamir Jamal, *The gatekeepers: Engaging Pashtun men for Gender Justice and girls' education*, Iqbal International Institute for Research and Dialogue, International Islamic University, Islamabad, 2018; Rachel Mayanja, "Armed conflict and women - 10 years of security council resolution 1325," *UN Chronicle* XLVII, no. 1 (2010).

marriage rights."[23] IPV, the most pervasive form of GBV, includes "physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviors by an intimate partner."[24] Transnational scholarship indicates similar patterns of GBV and forms of IPV across the globe, although with varying scope and intensity.[25] In times of social or political turmoil, including the recent COVID-19 pandemic, GBV and IPV are intensified, and help-seeking becomes more difficult.[26] This was exemplified by a drastic increase in GBV during the pandemic, which was further complicated by underreporting, limited legal, social, and economic support, and the lack of well-prepared intersectoral services, among other factors, resulted in acute vulnerabilities and consequences.[27]

The team conducted a contextual analysis of GBV in the countries/regions of Canada, the Caribbean, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines. We delved into the historical and geopolitical specificities that shape and re/produce GBV within our contexts. We also explored the genesis or longstanding presence of men's work in GBV prevention and gender justice within each region. Rooting our work within this contextual knowledge, this analysis established the grounding for our cross-global collaboration and collective discourses, which are presented further in this paper.

The Canadian Context and Men's Responses to GBV

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[23] Liza Lorenzetti, *Engaging men in domestic violence prevention: A collective-cultures approach* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Calgary, 2016), 24.

[24] World Health Organization, *Violence against women*, WHO int., 2021, 1.

[25] United Nations Women, *Caribbean Women Count: Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub*, Caribbean Women Count, 2020; Ministry of Health, *Nepal demographic and health survey 2016* (Nepal: Ministry of Health, 2017); Samuel Perreuault, "Gender-based violence: Sexual and physical assault in Canada's territories, 2018," *Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics* (2020): 4-39; Women's Rehabilitation Centre Nepal, *Annual factsheet on gender based violence against women and girls* (Nepal: WOREC , 2022); Rukshanda Zarar, "Domestic violence against women: A complex issue in Pakistan," *Investigations in Gynaecology Research and Women's Health* 2, no. 3 (2018): 1-3.

[26] Samantha Bradley, "Domestic and family violence in post-conflict communities: International human rights law and the state's obligation to protect women and children," *Health and human rights* 20, no. 2 (2018): 123–136; United Nations Population Fund, *Delivering in a Pandemic: Annual Report*, UNFPA, 2020.

[27] Debora de Souza Santos et al., "Domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic: A scoping review," *Forensic Science International: Reports* 5 (2022): 1-6.

Men in Canada are responsible for most serious forms of IPV, causing psychological, social, and physical injury, loss of work, and loss of life.[28] Canadian women experience almost 80% of police-reported IPV and are 4.5 times more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide.[29] GBV cannot be uncoupled from Canada's colonial nation-building history and ongoing systemic oppression, which have designed and reinforced gendered, sexist, racist, and heterosexist systems and norms.[30] Through these systems, settler colonial patriarchy is a consequence and catalyst, contributing to toxic masculinity, rigid gender roles, and violence across the gender spectrum.[31] In Canada, this is most evident in the extreme violence against Indigenous women and communities.[32] Racism and economic disadvantage exacerbate GBV and other forms of violence in racialized and migrant communities.[33] Policies that support and create barriers to gender justice and GBV prevention in Canada are inextricably associated with the lack of basic income legislation, the colonial Indian Act, and migration and labor policies that unevenly affect women. Specific to IPV and sexual violence, it was only 40 years ago (1983) that ground-breaking Bill C-127 first made sexual assault a criminal offense within marriage.[34] In the early 1990s, pro-arrest and pro-prosecution policies and the inception of specialized domestic violence courts emerged in several jurisdictions, however, punitive measures have primarily focused on Indigenous and

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[28] Shana Conroy et al., "Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018," *Juristat,* 39, no. 1 (2019).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Edward Ou Jin Lee, "Tracing the coloniality of queer and trans migrations: Resituating heterocisnormative violence in the Global South and encounters with migrant visa ineligibility to Canada," *Refuge* 34, no. 1 (2018).

[31] Liza Lorenzetti et al., "Understanding and preventing domestic violence in the lives of gender and sexually diverse persons," *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 26, no. 3 (2017): 175-185.

[32] National Inquiry, "Reclaiming power."

[33] Nelllie Alcaraz et al., "Hiding for Survival: Highlighting the Lived Experiences of Precarity and Labour Abuse among Filipino Non-Status Migrants in Canada," *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* 6, no. 4 (2021): 256–67; Cindy Holmes & Sarah Hunt, "Indigenous Communities and Family Violence: Changing the Conversation," 2017.

[34] Caroline Alphonso and Marjan Farahbaksh, "Canadian Law Only Changed 26 Years Ago. Globe and Mail," *Globe and Mail*, April 1, 2009.

racialized,[35] and the dual-charging of Black women.[36] In 1995, Canada introduced Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) for advancing gender equality,[37] an intersectional policy lens for analyzing the implementation and impact of policies and programs on the experiences of women, men, and gender-diverse people.[38] Organizations such as Women of the Métis Nation/Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak[39] introduced their Métis-specific approach to GBA+ to address the importance of centering Indigenous and intersectional lived experiences within the initial framework. Fundamental to responding to the violence against Indigenous communities is implementing the 231 Calls for Justice from the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.[40] If implemented, these imperatives would be among Canada's most important policy directives for expanding human rights. Despite some policy advancements, the application and actualization of rights and social responsibilities in Canada is slow and has been met with increased countenance from well-organized alt-right groups and populist leaders' intent on truncating gender and sexuality rights.

More recently, primary prevention educational and trauma-informed programs for men and boys have been expanded and disseminated through community organizations, social media, and political campaigns.[41] An example is *WizeGuys*, coordinated through the Calgary Center for Sexuality in Alberta, which prioritizes sexual health, gender equity, and positive relationships for male-identified

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[35] Leslie M. Tutty et al., *What's Law Got to Do with It?: The Law, Specialized Courts and Domestic Violence in Canada* (Commorant Books, 2008).

[36] Patrian Duhaney, "Contextualizing the Experiences of Black Women Arrested for Intimate Partner Violence in Canada," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 21–22 (2017).

[37] WomenAct, "Policy impacts on violence against women in Canada: A review of literature on selected policies," WomenAct, 2018.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Women of the Métis Nation/Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak https://metiswomen.org/

[40] National Inquiry, "Reclaiming power."

[41] Caroline Claussen, "The WiseGuyz program and gender transformative change: Playing the long game," (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Calgary, 2020); Lorenzetti et al., "Transforming masculinities through cross-cultural collaboration: Reflections on building a Community of Practice," *Journal of Participatory Research Methods* 4, no. 2 (2023).

youth.[42] The WizeGuys program has demonstrated success in decreasing participants' damaging views of masculinity, expanding gender expressions, and decreasing detachment and dominance.[43]

The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), initiated in 1991, is the most established organization in Canada with a mandate to involve men in violence prevention and is now active internationally. Among the WRC's flagship activities is a *men's pledge against violence*.[44] In recent years, Canada's WRC has adopted an intersectional analysis, aligning with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action of 2015, and a focus on ending "anti-Black violence, racism, misogyny, colonialism, and homophobia."[45]

While there is value in intervention and prevention programs for men, there are limited research-informed strategies that are culturally relevant and resonate with the experiences of Indigenous and ethnoculturally diverse communities. One example, *Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin* in Ojibway, or *I Am a Kind Man,* a program by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers, incorporates an "Indigenous approach to healing that recognizes the distinct histories, unique cultures, and shared traumas of all Indigenous people negatively impacted by colonization."[46] Seven traditional Anishinaabe grandfather teachings (wisdom, truth, love, respect, bravery, honesty, and humility) guide this transformative work.

The Alberta Men's Network (AMN) is another culturally relevant initiative that emerged in 2014 as a community-led gender justice organization supported by the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW). In 2016, AMN collaborated with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, designing a province-wide survey to gather men's insights on well-being and healthy relationships.[47] Over 2000 men from diverse backgrounds identified the top five contributors to well-being and healthy relationships: family, financial stability, friends, a good job, and appropriate and stable housing. Men emphasized the need for positive role models, support, and mentors. While almost half of respondents indicated that they had a

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[42] Claussen, "The WiseGuyz."
[43] Ibid.
[44] White Ribbon Campaign, 2022.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers, 2021.
[47] Lorenzetti et al., "Men's survey."

role to play in violence prevention (45%), many were unsure (44%), and some did not see themselves as part of the solution (11%).[48] The findings provided a pivotal launching point for AMN's ongoing community-based work, violence prevention training, peer support for local leaders, and other culturally relevant engagement strategies.[49]

The Caribbean Context and Responses to GBV

Across the Caribbean, significant numbers of women and girls continue to be harmed by men's violence. A series of women's health surveys supported by UN Women and the Caribbean Development Bank was undertaken in five Caribbean countries between 2016 and 2019.[50] Drawing on this data, the *Caribbean Women Count: The Ending Violence against Women and Girls Data Hub* reports that physical and sexual IPV rates are highest in Guyana, with 38% reporting lifetime experience and 11% reporting current incidents. Rates were lowest in Jamaica, with 28% of women stating that they had experienced physical and sexual IPV in their lifetime. [51] Regionally, an average of one in five women from the study's countries reported experiencing non-partner sexual violence. Earlier studies highlighted that five of the world's top twenty recorded rape rates occurred in the Caribbean.[52] The latest comparable data suggested that Caribbean countries rates of rape were 67.29 in Bermuda (2010), 45.21 in Suriname (2004), 30.63 in Grenada (2010), 28.62 in St. Kitts and Nevis, 25.61 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2010), and 24.93 in Barbados (2009) which were in the top twenty country rape rates in 2023.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] See Alberta Men's Network. http://www.albertamen.com/

[50] Cecile Pemberton & Joel Joseph, *National Women's Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago*, Inter-American Development Bank, 2018; Carol Watson Williams, *Women's health survey 2016: Jamaica*, Global Database on Violence Against Women, 2016; Manuel Contreras-Urbina et al., "Guyana Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey Report," UN Women Caribbean, 2019; Joel Joseph et al., "National Women's Health Survey for Suriname," 2019; Claudia Nicholson and Halimah DeShong, "Grenada Womens Health and Life Experiences Study 2018 Report," *UN Women Caribbean*, 2020.

[51] United Nations Women, "Caribbean Women Count."

[52] World Population Review, 2019.

Femicide is also prevalent in the region, with Grenada, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago recording an increase in the rates per 100,000 women from 2019-2020. During the same period, femicide rates decreased in three countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, and Jamaica.[53]

Although women can also be violent to men and boys as partners and family members, GBV is predominantly perpetrated by men and, as documented in the Women's Health Survey data from five countries, includes child sexual abuse and incest, non-partner sexual violence, IPV, and sexual harassment. Violent forms of masculine power were entrenched in the region through histories of colonialism, slavery, indenture, and forced conversion to Christianity, which subordinated Black and Brown women in terms of their bodies, labor, fertility, and sexuality, established racialized and heteropatriarchal hierarchies, and provided even oppressed groups of men with access to ideological and material relations of domination that continue to define the region today.[54]

Decades of Caribbean feminist activism to transform norms regarding gender and sexuality and their intersectionalities have resulted in slow and uneven change, with a widespread masculinist backlash emerging from the mid-1980s.[55] In the following decades, LBGTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) movements emerged in close collaboration with feminist struggles to transform patriarchal beliefs and values as institutionalized in state law and policy and have been part of calling for accepted alternatives to hegemonic masculinities.[56] Nonetheless, persistent structural

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[53] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *The pandemic in the shadows: Femicides or feminicides in 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021.

[54] Ann Marie Bissessar and Camille Huggins, eds., *Gender and Domestic Violence in the Caribbean* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Ramona Biholar and Dasia Leslie eds., *Critical Caribbean Perspectives on Preventing Gender-Based Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

[55] Halimah DeShong and Tonya Haynes, "Intimate Partner Violence in the Caribbean: State, Activist and Media Responses," Global Public Health 11, no. 1–2 (2015): 82–94; Gabrielle Jamela Hosein, "Masculinism, Male Marginalisation and Intimate Partner Backlash in Trinidad and Tobago," *Caribbean Journal of Criminology* 1, no. 4 (2019): 90–122.

[56] Kofi Campbell, *The Queer Caribbean Speaks: Interviews with Writers, Artists and Activists* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Andil Gosine, "CAISO,

conditions related to poverty, debt, and unequal terms of trade and trafficking have fed increasing community, gang, and crime-related GBV in the twenty-first century.[57]

It is significant to note that men and boys have been highly visible in public debates for four decades. Issues related to boys and education, men's roles in family life and employment, men's health, suicide, and homicide rates created a discourse of *male marginalization.* This backlash blamed Caribbean women for men's issues, violence, and feelings of loss of power but brought a focus on masculinities into the public domain.[58]

In the Anglophone region of the Caribbean, programs focusing on prevention and knowledge dissemination emerged in the 1990s. These included men's networks and organizations, male-centered programs in the state gender bureau, UNIFEM programming to promote more equitable sharing of care responsibilities, court-mandated perpetrator counseling, and international organization-funded sports and arts outreach, and community policing and peace-building programs targeting men through gang and community violence interruption and income opportunities. For example, the civil society group Fathers Incorporated, which focused on working-class men's roles in family life, began in the late 1980s.[59]   In Guyana, Help and Shelter was founded in 1995 and focused on domestic and sexual violence and child abuse, and included counseling sessions for men referred by the court over seven weeks. In this decade, the Men Against Violence Against Women civil society group was formed in Trinidad and Tobago. In Belize, Men Against Domestic Violence was started in the early 2000s.

Trinidad and Tobago established a Male Support Programme in its Gender Affairs Division in 2001 to provide information on

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CAISO: Negotiating sex rights and nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago," *Sexualities* 18, Issue 7 (2015): 859-884.

[57] Rhoda Reddock, ed., *Interrogating Caribbean masculinities: Theoretical and empirical analyses* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004).

[58] Eudine Barriteau, "Conclusion: Beyond a Backlash – The Frontal Assault on Containing Caribbean Women in the Decade of the 1990s," in *Gender Equality in the Caribbean: Reality or Illusion*, 201-232, edited by Gemma Tang Nain and Barbara Bailey, 2005.

[59] Reddock, *Interrogating Carribean masculinities*.

men's health and development, parenting, healthy masculinities, and the role of men in eliminating GBV. Sessions were conducted in schools and other public places such as community centers, and men mobilized through community male role models. In 2009, Jamaica established the Male Desk in the Gender Affairs Bureau. In 2010, Guyana established the Men's Affairs Bureau under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Protection. As with other Caribbean countries, decades of efforts included establishing male leaders, mentors, and counselors, conducting media campaigns, developing training curricula, and undertaking sensitization for men. This emphasis continues today. For example, in The Bahamas, the Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence included engaging men in examining existing beliefs and norms, implemented with the collaboration of the regional men's network, CariMAN.[60] In Belize, the National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan of 2017-2020 sought to increase understanding of gender and violence among men and boys and have them be actively involved in reducing GBV by the year 2020.[61] Regional and national campaigns, social media outreach, and mentorship and training programs have also used spiritual and art practices that are part of diasporic Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean communities and Indigenous cosmologies.[62] However, because Caribbean men have been considered to be in "crisis" and "at risk," not enough of this men's movement-building effort has been informed by pro-feminist politics and inclusion of sexually diverse and gender non-conforming persons.[63] Indeed, some organizations, such as Men Against Violence Against Women, soon became led by

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[60] National Taskforce for Gender-Based Violence, "Strategic Plan to Address Gender-Based Violence," The Commonwealth of The Bahamas Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, 2015.

[61] Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, 2017.

[62] Edward R. Maguire and C. Jason Gordon, "Faith-based interventions to reduce gang violence in the Caribbean: Reflections from a professor and a priest," in A. Harriott and C.M. Katz eds., *Gangs in the Caribbean: Responses of state and society*, 307-336 (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2015); Brenda Gopeesingh, "An Ongoing Journey in the Pursuit of Agency: The Hindu Women's Organisation of Trinidad & Tobago," *CRGS* no. 6, ed. Gabrielle Hosein and Lisa Outar, 1-17 (2012).

[63] Wesley Crichlow et al., "Vulnerability, Persistence and Destabilization of Dominant Masculinities: An Introduction" *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 8 (2014): 1-14.

arguments for men's rights. Nonetheless, scholarship examining men's understanding of violence points to the value of continued intergenerational engagement of boys, young adults, and men in violence prevention.[64]

The Mexican Context and Responses to GBV

Mexico is one of the deadliest countries for women to live and exist.[65] Amnesty International reported that ten women are murdered daily in Mexico. [66] Mexico's rate of femicide rose at least 145% between 2015 and 2019,[67] and numbers have not decreased.[68] According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía,[69] in 2021, 128 million people reside in Mexico; 65.5 million are women (51.2%), of which more than 50.5 million (77.1%) are 15 years of age and older. INEGI further reported that among women aged 15 and over, 70.1% had experienced at least one occurrence of any form of violence (i.e., psychological, economic, patrimonial, physical, sexual, or discrimination) throughout their lives. Psychological violence was most frequently reported (51.6%), followed by sexual violence (49.7%), physical violence (34.7%), and economic, patrimonial and discrimination violence (27.4%); INEGI concluded that this has been escalating. Violence against women (of any kind throughout life) is more frequently reported by people residing in urban areas (73.0%);[70] between 25 and 34 years (75.0%); with a higher level of schooling (77.9%), and who are separated, divorced, or widowed (74.0%).[71] Human rights and feminist organizations have questioned

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[64] Joseph and Jones "Understanding violence."

[65] Angel Gurria, "Gender equality and the empowerment of women for inclusive growth in Mexico," *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development*, June 4, 2020.

[66] Amensty International, *Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The state of the world's human rights* (Amensty International Ltd., 2021).

[67] Patrick McDonnell & Cecilia Sanchez, "In Mexico, a grisly killing inflames debate about femicide," LA Times, August 2020.

[68] United Nations Women."Take five: Fighting femicide in Latin America," United Nations, 2017.

[69] Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), "Violencia contra las mujeres en México," INEGI, June 2023.

[70] Ibid.

[71] INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares (ENDIREH)*, INEGI, 2021.

the official national numbers for femicide, firmly believing that the numbers are much higher, which exposes the gender inequality present in official reports.[72] While femicide rates in Mexico are on the rise, there are significant deficiencies in obtaining accurate records that collect nuances on women's deaths to differentiate between intimate femicide, non-intimate femicide, and femicide based on extended family and friends connections.[73]

Years of working on a human legal rights approach to re-classify women-centered penal crimes from *homicide* to *feminicide* (or femicide, the murder of women and girls because of their gender) have sought to highlight the fact that many women are murdered by their partners, former partners, or family members.[74] Despite the Mexican Federal Code change in 2007, McGinnis stated that Mexico began counting and including femicide data in 2012. [75] It has been very significant for Mexican women to typify and legally distinguish femicide from homicide. However, the advances created by the femicide legislation have not translated into establishing institutions to monitor and investigate the different forms of violence, nor effective implementation of the penalization for the crimes and hate crimes, in particular, against women and gender minorities.[76]

There is growing discontent over systemic violence against women and girls.[77] In Mexico, the National Citizen Observatory on Femicide is a collaborative initiative of 40 organizations that work together, calling for action to bring justice for victims of femicide.[78] Community-based organizations and feminist groups have called for

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[72] United Nations Human Rights (UNHR), "Report on femicide. Violence against women, its causes, and consequences," United Nations, 2021.

[73] United Nations Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Femicide or feminicide as a specific type of crime in national legislation in Latin America: an on-going process," United Nations, 2015.

[74] Theresa McGinnis, "Transmediation as a powerful tool to promote a sociopolitical process in a digital writing workshop for Central American immigrant students," *Talking Points* 32, no. 1 (2020): 2-9.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Araiza Díaz et al., "La tipificación del feminicidio en México. Un diálogo entre argumentos sociológicos y jurídicos," *Revista interdisciplinaria de estudios de género de El Colegio de México* 6 (2020).

[77] Amelia Cheatham, "Mexico's Women Push Back on Gender-Based Violence," Council on Foreign Relations, March 12, 2020.

[78] UNHR, "Report of femicide."

nationwide strikes and protests for the last 15 years.[79] Yearly demonstrations show significant discontent, with abundant evidence found in both mainstream and social media photos documenting how women and children raise their voices to express their concerns about feeling unsafe.[80] Mexico and other Latino American countries yearly celebrate March 8th for International Women's Day.[81] Women organize public activities, including a 14-hour strike calling for women to stay at home and not participate in schools and workplaces, and other initiatives to impactfully demonstrate the extent of women's disappearance from public life and increase men's awareness of women's issues.[82]

The last four Mexican presidents, including current leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, have campaigned on promises to decrease femicide and human crimes against women; however, there have not been sufficient nor efficient governmental measures,[83,] and protesters continue to accuse leaders of overlooking GBV.[84] Despite the government introducing concrete actions to eradicate violence against women,[85] Mexico has not developed best-practice models to improve public policies to effectively protect women and other gender identity minorities, raise awareness, or educate men and citizens.[86] However, there is an active presence of civil society and social movement campaigns focused on using the names and

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[79] Lucía Álvarez Enríquez, "The Feminist Movement in Mexico in the 21st Century: Youth, Radicality and Violence," *Revista mexicana de ciencias políticas y sociales* 65, no. 240 (2020): 147-175.

[80] Thamara Martínez-Vargas, "Las mujeres en México se sienten más inseguras que nunca," El Economista, January 2018; Rompeviento TV, "Feminismo(s) frente a la violencia feminicida de México. Mesa política de perspectivas," March 2, 2020.

[81] Agenicia Reforma, "¿Qué Hay Detrás Del #9M? ," Debate, August, 2020.

[82] Luis Pablo Beauregard, "México Secunda Una Histórica Huelga de Mujeres Después de La Abrumadora Marcha Del 8m," El País, March 2020.

[83] Lidia Arista, "Las Mujeres Enfrentan UN Sistema de Justicia 'INEFICAZ', Reconoce Olga Sánchez," Expansion Politica, November 26, 2019.

[84] Cecilia Farfán-Méndez, "Why gender violence in Mexico persists-and how to stop it," Americas Quarterly, May 2022; Oscar Lopez, "Mexico: Outrage as Amlo suggests critics guilty of 'gender-based violence' against him," The Guardian, August, 2023.

[85] Secretaria de Seguridad y Protección Ciudadana, "Presenta SSPC acciones para prevenir, atender, y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres," Gobierno de Mexico, November 2021.

[86] Díaz et al, "Vargas, "La tipificación."

identities of actual women and girls who have been victimized by violence to humanize them, emphasizing that they are not "objects" but humans whose names should not be forgotten. Some campaigns have targeted raising awareness about women's safety, while some non-profit organizations have intentionally focused on working to transform masculinities. In the case of Casa Tonalà in Mexico City, this organization facilitates conversation among men to increase accountability and ownership of toxic masculinity views and ways to relate with others.

UN Women and the Mexican government have partnered to improve equality among women and men.[87] Out of 32 provinces, 22 have created a program to educate, promote, and raise awareness of gender inequalities. However, there are still significant concerns related to these programs' quality, content, and accessibility. Although the Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres[88] stated that they follow national and international standards and frameworks, Mexicans are still waiting for a more effective intervention to stop femicides. Mexicans wonder if agreements to eliminate all forms of violence against women have a meaningful impact on the country.

Pervasive violence within Mexico has been the subject of international attention. While only one or two decades ago, touristic areas of the country were famous for being less dangerous and with limited risks for interpersonal violence, nowadays, this is not the case.[89] Some countries' governments have occasionally cautioned their citizens to avoid traveling to Mexico for safety reasons.[90] At the same time, a minority and privileged group of Mexicans have been able to relocate to other countries in search of safety.[91]

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[87] Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, "Violencia contra las mujeres en México," INEGI, June 2023.

[88] Ibid.

[89] El Universal, "Mexico is one of the worst countries to be a woman," El Universal, March 2020.

[90] Julia Jaines, "Places the U.S. Government warns not to travel right now," Usnews, July 2023.

[91] Camila Caridad Rivas & Jorge Gomez Estay, "The invisible minority," Montreal Latin American immigrants, Thecitymag, May 2022.

The Nepalese Context and Responses to GBV

The prevalence of patriarchal and patrilineal systems in Nepal exacerbates women's vulnerability to GBV. These social systems relegate women to subordinate positions in society, contributing to the alarming rates of GBV women face in the country.[92] Patrilineal social systems endorse men's *ownership* of women.[93] Hegemonic masculinity and the belief in male superiority are often recognized as the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination against women. However, it is essential to acknowledge that women's experiences of GBV are also influenced by socio-economic and political factors within their respective contexts.[94]

In Nepal, GBV affects more than one in four women and girls;[95,] and it is undeniable that women are more vulnerable and exposed to violence due to a lack of education, targeted financial support, and legal assistance.[96] GBV includes domestic violence, marital rape, dowry-related violence, child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, witchcraft accusations, Chhaupadi (the social tradition and the monthly practice of isolating women during their menstruation), and trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation.[97] According to the United Nations Population Fund, in a survey of 900 Nepali women, 48% had experienced violence, although 61% never told anyone about their experience.[98] A study on violence against women and girls in Nepal (N=1875), conducted by Women's Rehabilitation Center found that between 2021-2022, 65% of respondents experienced domestic violence, and 29% and 16% of women, respectively, experienced physical violence and sexual violence; 90% of perpetrators were male.[99] The same study further

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[92] Bijeesha Budhathoki, "Violence against Women in Nepal: It's Men's Responsibility to Eliminate It," Onlinekhabar, November 30, 2021; Dhungel, "Reintegration of Trafficking."

[93] Kunta Devi Pun et al., "Violence exists to show manhood: Nepali men's views on domestic violence," *Global Health Action*, 13, no. 1 (2020): 1-12.

[94] UN Women, *Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, 2015.

[95] World Health Organization, "World Health Statistics 2022," WHO, 2022.

[96] Dhungel, "Reintegration of Trafficking."

[97] UNFP, *Delivering in a Pandemic.*

[98] Ibid.

[99] WOREC, Annual Factsheet on Gender Based Violence Against Women and Girls, Nepal: 2022.

reported that violence survivors may suffer from physical and psychological agony, including ineffective abortions, coerced or unwanted pregnancies, painful fistulas, STDs like HIV, and occasionally even death. In collaboration with international development partners and agencies, Nepal has committed to enhancing gender equality and advancing women's empowerment by developing gender-responsive laws, policies, and programs.[100] Recently, Article 38 of the 2015 Nepal Constitution protects women's rights to participate in all state structures and bodies based on the principles of propositional inclusion.[101]

In addition, the National Plan of Action against Trafficking of Women and Children, 2012, and the National Strategy to End Child Marriage, 2016, included strategies to increase gender equality.[102] Violence against women has become a topic of discourse in the public sphere[103] bolstered by the involvement of several international and local agencies; community-led responses to GBV through educational campaigns and women's empowerment movements continue to emerge. Yet, GBV remains pervasive across rural and urban areas,[104] and therefore, violence prevention efforts require transformative strategies, approaches, and direct actions that not only challenge patriarchal paradigms but also help to develop transformative legal and judicial frameworks.[105]

Following similar global trends, transformative strategies focused on engaging men and boys in preventing violence against women and gender justice initiatives are emerging in Nepal.[106] Saathi, a nongovernmental organization established in 1992, aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and promote a "Violence Free Model" through research, networking, educational campaigns, and advocacy.[107] Men's organizations that support gender justice and fight toxic masculinity and patriarchy, notably

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[100] UN Women, *Annual Report 2019-*2020, 2020.
[101] Government of Nepal, 2019.
[102] UN Women, *Annual Report*.
[103] WOREC, *Annual Report (20178/79)*, 2023.
[104] Sharma, Namrata, and Nepali Times, "In Nepal lockdown, a domestic violence spike," *Nepali Times* 5 (2020); WOREC, *Annual Report*.
[105] Asian Development Bank [ADB], *Annual Report 2010 Vol. 1*, 2010.
[106] Hami Dajubhai (n.d), An Equal and Prosperous Society where people enjoy their rights, opportunities and live a dignified life.
[107] Asian Network of Women's Shelters [ANWS], n.d.

MenEngage Nepal and Hami Daju Bhai (Nepali Brothers), have made significant contributions to address GBV through advocacy and education campaigns at both family and community levels.[108] For example, in a recent media interview, the president of Hami Daju Bhai narrated that men are still in positions of power, and thus, working with men is necessary to achieve the aim of ending violence against women and promoting gender justice far more quickly.[109] Despite the recent initiatives by local agencies and UN organizations' efforts in this area, the government of Nepal's long-term commitments to ending GBV may be questioned due to the absence of transformative gender-based policies, strategies, and tactics. To effectively improve men's participation in community-based transformative responses to GBV, collaborative efforts must focus on grassroots initiatives and community-based participatory action studies that amplify men's involvement in public engagement/dialogues and educational campaigns on GBV.

The Pakistani Context and Responses to GBV

In Pakistan, GBV is a perennial public health issue and a multifaceted social challenge.[110] Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey reported that 26% of women experienced emotional abuse, while 23% faced physical violence.[111] Kabir et al. indicated these rates are higher, with 32% of women having experienced physical violence and 39% physical and emotional violence from their spouses. [112] Further, 35% of women have faced multiple physical injuries, and one out of nine women have encountered violence during their pregnancy.[113] According to the Aurat Foundation's 2019 report, there were 778 recorded cases

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[108] MenEngage Alliance, n.d.

[109] Budathioki, "Violence against Women."

[110] Muhammad Ibrar and Raazia Hassan Naqvi, "Women seeking divorce due to marital violence: A case study of Malakand District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province, Pakistan," *JL & Soc'y* 48 (2017): 123.

[111] Pakistani Demographic and Health Survey 2017-2018, 2018.

[112] Rusell Kabir et al., "Exploring the relationship of Domestic violence on Health Seeking behavior and Empowerment of Women in Pakistan," *Epidemiology Biostatistics and Public Health* 14, no. 1 (2017): 12231.

[113] National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS), Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13, NIPS and ICF International, Islamabad and Calverton, 2013.

of women being killed, representing a 20% increase in violence against women compared to the previous year. Moreover, due to socio-cultural and political reasons, approximately 70-90% of domestic violence incidents in Pakistan go unreported and, therefore, often obfuscated from public discourse.[114] Drawing on these facts, Pakistan has been placed 145th out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum's survey.[115]

GBV in Pakistan has been attributed to various reasons: lack of socialization, economic dependency, strict gender norms and values, illiteracy, and sociopolitical conflicts.[116] Several studies suggest a religious-cultural nexus that makes violent behavior toward women acceptable.[117] LaBore et al. maintain that domestic violence is inextricably linked to "the patriarchal family structure and cultural context, [where] domestic violence is normalized, resulting in meager reporting rates."[118] In some cases, domestic violence is rationalized based on "grave and sudden provocation" by the female victim.[119] Given this context,

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[114] Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, *State of Human Rights in 2019*, 2020.

[115] World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021 Insight Report, March 2021.

[116] Raazia Hassan Naqvi et al., "History of Social Welfare and Domestic Violence Shelters called Dar ul Amans: A Case Study of Punjab Province Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 10, no. 2 (2018): 94-106; S. Naz & N.I. Malik, "Domestic violence and psychological well-being of survivor women in Punjab, Pakistan," *Journal of Psychology and Clinical Psychiatry* 9, no. 2(2018): 184-189.

[117] Paciello et al., "Stability and change of moral disengagement and its impact on aggression and violence in late adolescence," *Child development* 79, no. 5 (2008): 1288-1309; Jamal, "Engaging men for gender justice: Overcoming barriers to girls' education in the Pashtun tribes of Pakistan," *International Journal of Social Welfare* 24, no. 3 (2015): 273-286; Arielle Sagrillo Scarpati and Afroditi Pina, "On national and cultural boundaries: A cross-cultural approach to sexual violence perpetration in Brazil and the United Kingdom," *Journal of sexual aggression* 23, no. 3 (2017): 312-327.

[118] Katherine LaBore et al., "Prevalence and Predictors of Violence Against Women in Pakistan," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, nos. 13–14 (2021): NP7246–NP7263, 1.

[119] Zarar, "Domestic violence."

women are expected to remain tolerant and obedient despite physical and emotional abuses.[120]

The Government of Pakistan instituted gradual policy initiatives for the protection of women against violence in the form of legislative acts through the support of various local social movements and international human rights organizations, more notably after 2010 when the National Assembly of Pakistan passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan resulting into greater devolution of power and provincial autonomy.[121] The provinces of Sindh and Balochistan passed Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Bills in 2013 and 2014, respectively, "seeking the protection of women from physical or psychological harm."[122] The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act 2021, passed by the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, sought "the implementation of a district protection committee, helpline, shelter homes, women's protection officers, and monetary supports."[123] These legislations and reforms, however, lack a comprehensive approach, which is still needed to bring about a positive transformation within society. Violence prevention advocates urgently advocate for reforms in the police, courts, and society, utilizing both formal and informal channels rooted in indigenous contexts within Pakistan to address and mitigate the issue of GBV.[124] Despite the wide prevalence of GBV in Pakistan, it is encouraging to note that a good number of Pashtun/Pakistani men are coming forward to challenge existing gender norms and harmful patriarchal practices in their communities. Jamal, who pioneered the initiative, noted, "in almost every Pashtun village

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[120] Jamal, "The gatekeepers."

[121] The Gazette of Pakistan, 2010.

[122] Baluchistan Provincial Assembly Secretariat, The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2014 (ACT NO. VII OF 2014) 2014, p. 1; Provincial Assembly of Sindh, The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013   SINDH ACT NO. XX OF 2013.2013, 1.

[123] Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act 20212021, 1.

[124] Jamal, *Transforming Masculinities – Gender Justice and Prevention of Violence against Women* [Keynote]: International Symposium - Engaging Men in Gender Justice: Indigenous Voices and Local Contexts, Peshawar, Pakistan, March 15, 2023, March.

and town I visited, I found such men who were deeply concerned about gender disparities and oppressive cultural practices."[125] Jamal's groundbreaking work has inspired men to work for girls' education and gender justice in the Pashtun region of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Jamal argues that "any social movement for gender justice will be successful only when men are involved."[126]

In recent years, several local and international non-governmental organizations have initiated programs engaging men as partners to prevent domestic violence and promote gender equity in their communities, including *UN Women, Pakistan*, *Rozan, Sahil, Amal, and Haashar Association.* These organizations provide health interventions to victims of domestic violence and conduct behavioral training for men to develop alternative narratives to existing gender norms.[127] These grassroots initiatives in some urban and rural areas of Pakistan have inspired positive change in other regions.

Rooted in the local context, Jamal's work has sparked a new dialogue and given rise to an indigenous social movement in the region that focuses on Engaging the Gatekeepers (men) to support gender justice, prevent violence against women, and promote girls' education. Jamal visits northwest Pakistan annually and organizes advocacy groups of students, social activists, scholars, and community elders. He conducts "Men's talks" and provides training at local villages and academic institutions on gender justice issues, promotion of girls' education, and prevention of domestic violence. The social movement has employed innovative strategies and tools to unite diverse forces, like holding talks among men in *Hujras* (community centers of Pashun men) and *Mosques* to highlight the issues of GBV and gender justice. By expanding this community-based comprehensive approach, men can deeply reflect on their positions of power and authority in a patriarchal society. This transformative process will enable them to transition from being opposers to becoming active supporters of gender justice and the prevention of GBV.

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[125] Jamal, "The Gatekeepers," 201.

[126] Ibid., 172.

[127] Maria Beatriz Orlando & Seemeen Saadat, "Engaging men and boys in Pakistan to help end violence against women," World Bank Blogs, November 29, 2015.

The Philippine Context and Responses to GBV

The Philippines is a paradoxical country, ranking 1st in Southeast Asia for gender equality,[128] yet deeply entrenched in sexism and patriarchy. Despite progressive policies, women and girls still face challenges due to economic mismanagement, with 21.6% living below the poverty line. This situation has led to outmigration. In 2021, the number of Filipino migrants had nearly reached 2 million.[129] These migrants include women escaping domestic violence.[130] This reality was underscored in a recent Canadian report that focused on "reunification violence"[131] among Filipino immigrants who described living in violent relationships after years of separation and being reunited in Canada.

Violence against women in the Philippines is prevalent, with IPV being the most common, although rates have decreased. IPV prevalence has reduced from 24% in 2017 to 18% in 2022 for ever-married women. Though primarily victims, 7% of women with a history of IPV victimization report having initiated physical violence against their partner. Notably, those who experienced physical IPV (32%) are more likely to initiate violence compared to those without such experiences (6%).[132] Since the 1990s, the Philippines has passed laws to institutionalize a societal response to structural and GBV. Yet, they have fallen short in providing avenues for male participation in changing the climate to non-violence[133] and providing appropriate intervention and support to men.

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[128] World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021 Insight Report, March 2021.

[129] Philippine Statistics Authority, "2021 Overseas Filipino Workers (Final Results)," 2021.

[130] The Focus, Domestic violence and migration in the Philippines, No. 67, 2014 pg 30.

[131] Danielle Nerman, "Reunification and domestic violence in the Filipino community," CBC News, April 2, 2021.

[132] Philippines Statistics Authority, *2022 Philippine National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) Key Indicators Report*, February 2023.

[133] The laws include are Republic Act 6955, Republic Act 7610, Republic Act 7877, Republic Act 8505, Republic Act 8353, Republic Act 8972, Republic Act 9208, and Republic Act 9262.

Davao City, a Southern City on the island of Mindanao, where the global research partnership on men's violence prevention work is to be conducted, reported 469 cases of abuse, with 228 cases in the year 2008 and 242 cases of abuse in 2009.[134] The study of this reported violence found the risk of abuse to be significantly higher for female victims. Sexual abuse was the most common form, while physical and psychological abuse were more often related to parental discipline rather than IPV.[135]

Davao City's activism stands out in Mindanao due to its history of oppression. In the 1980s, after Martial Law, Davao City became a laboratory for urban guerrilla warfare by the Communist Party of the Philippines[136] resulting in thousands of deaths. Davao City earned the moniker "murder capital."[137] Women were also victims of this civil unrest. Of the 11,103 Government-recognized victims, 1,754 – or about 15.80% – are female, and of these, 381 are victims of rape, 282 are of killings and forcible disappearances.[138]

Davao City rose from the plunder of Martial Law and communist abuses, thriving economically and becoming socially aware. It pioneered gender mainstreaming with the first-ever Gender Code.[139] In more recent history (July 2018), President Rodrigo Duterte, well-known for his derogatory statements and treatment of women,[140] signed the Safe Spaces Act, which covers all forms of gender-based sexual harassment committed in public spaces,

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[134] Lungsod ng Dabaw, "Davao City 2016 State of the Women and Children Report," Women and Children Protection Unit, Davao City, 2016. No recent studies were conducted yet on these abuses.

[135] Adrian Mernillo Tamayo et al., "Abuse and Violence of Women and Children in Davao City," May 7, 2015.

[136] William Chapman, "A Philippine Laboratory Of Revolution," The Washington Post, May 19, 1985.

[137] William Branigin, "Davao Known as Philippines' 'Murder Capital'," Washington Post, August 8, 1985.

[138] "Women and Militarization," 2-3; Data from the Resource and Archives Division of the Human Rights Violations Victims' Memorial Commision (HRVVMC).

[139] City Government of Davao, *City Ordinance No. 5004. An Ordinance Providing for a Women Development Code of Davao City and for other purposes*, Integrated Gender and Development Division, 2016. The gender development code ensures the integration of all gender related activities in all aspects of local governance.

[140] Michelle Abad, "How Duterte Normalized Sexism in the Philippine Presidency," Rappler, June 21, 2022.

educational or training institutions, workplaces, as well as online spaces.[141] However, his war on drugs resulted in over 12,000[142] mostly male deaths, leaving many women widowed and children orphaned.

Davao City's clarion call to engage boys and men in gender justice was initiated by a group of physicians (men) and civil society workers as a direct response to the harsh experiences of many women. Additionally, it was deemed necessary to complement the work of women's organizations in providing safe houses, legal and medical support, and integrating gender and domestic violence in medical and social sciences courses. It was also a call to hold men accountable and actively address domestic violence.

In 2002, Davao City conducted the first-ever Philippine research on men.[143] The study highlighted that men's role in domestic violence is associated with their traditional gender roles. The study also showed men as both victims and perpetrators of violence. While some men expressed a desire to be positive role models, the study showed that 33% of men (103/311) experienced domestic violence, with 27% (85/309) experiencing physical abuse. The study also showed that 9% (9/104) have admitted to sexually forcing their female partners. Exposure factors significantly associated with domestic violence included childhood domestic violence experiences and being abused by a wife or live-in partner.[144]

Support for the research recommendations spurred a movement of men called Men's Responsibilities in Gender and Development (MR GAD). The MR GAD expanded its training citywide. The training is to shift norms on gender roles, address domestic violence perpetrated by men, and for men to acquire skills in creating safe spaces. In 2015, the Population Commission of the Philippines supported piloting MR GAD in 7 regions in the Philippines.

MR GAD's trailblazing work in Davao City has had a powerful impact, spreading globally with MR GAD Canada, which was established in 2017. Its gender-transformative programming is

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[141] Republic of the Philippines, "Republic Act No. 11313 or The Safe Spaces Act (Bawal Bastos Law), June 1, 2022.

[142] Human Rights Watch, Philippines' War on Drugs.

[143] Romeo Lee et al., "Filipino Men and Domestic Violence. A Men's Involvement in Reproductive Health Initiative," De La Salle University, 2000.

[144] Ibid.

recognized regionally in Asia and Africa. A local collaborative effort approved "An Ordinance Institutionalizing Men's Responsibility in Gender and Development (MR GAD) in Davao City" on July 27, 2021, focusing on engaging men and boys and promoting gender equity through training and services. The experiences of MR GAD offer valuable lessons for engaging men and boys, but dismantling prevailing sexism and patriarchy remains crucial to achieving a more equitable and egalitarian society built through the hard work of both women and men.

Literature Summary and Cross-Regional Implications

As exemplified in our analysis of the literature, GBV remains a pervasive and unending global concern.[145] Woven throughout the regional narratives, the historical and current-day presence of GBV as a shared social occurrence connects to socio-political norms, systems, and practices. While each country represented in this synthesis has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), vast and diverse expressions and enactments of GBV persist, including sex and other labor trafficking, child/adolescent marriages, and early or forced pregnancies, women's economic dependence on men, IPV and domestic murder, among others. Notably, countries within our collaboration differ in terms of reported rates of violence perpetration/victimization within the population and the presence and implementation of progressive policies and practices. However, common threads include the enduring influence of rigid gender norms and role expectations and the uneven impact among minoritized populations within and across state contexts. Other commonalities include intersectional factors such as wealth inequities, historically rooted colonial legacies, nation-building, civil conflicts, and the connections between progressive policies, women's political empowerment and the prevalence of IPV.

Notably, the presence of men in organized movements to transform GBV and engender men's participation and accountability for gender equity varies vastly across our collaborating countries. In specific contexts, such as the Caribbean, men's violence prevention

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[145] UN Women, *Rapid Gender Assessment* (n.d.).

work has become institutionalized through the establishment of targeted gender policies and state machinery and the emergence of organizations and trained gender justice professionals. However, progress in meeting SDG 5 remains slow. In other contexts, including Nepal and Pakistan, the seeding of gender equity work is diffuse and less professionalized, loosely led by men with diverse professional, community, and family roles who see a need to be engaged. The overlapping of social movements and men's paid labor in eradicating GBV is an area for further study.

Contending with the insights that emerged through our literature analysis, coupled with the decades of community work and scholarship within our team, the subsequent section of our paper consists of co-reflections[146] aimed at advancing our local, regional, and cross-regional work in violence prevention and gender equity. This cross-national and transdisciplinary boundary-crossing aims to enrich our team's capacity to identify distinct and common learning goals and influence transformative change and solidarity action that interlinks research, practice, and social change.[147] This is discussed in the following section.

Reflections: Opportunities, Tensions, and Strategies of Cross-Regional Work

International transdisciplinary research and practice is most impactful as a cooperative team effort,[148] when motivated by "the need to address complex problems that cut across traditional disciplines, and the capacity of new technologies to both transform existing disciplines and generate new ones."[149] Transdisciplinary collaborations create space to unite like-minded researchers and organizational and community leaders on a shared platform.[150]

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[146] Kenneth Gergen, *An invitation to social construction* (SAGE Publications, 1999).

[147] Nancy Poole & Judie Bopp, "Using a community of practice model to create change for Northern homeless women," *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 10, no. 2 (2015): 122–130.

[148] Lorenzetti et al., "Transforming masculinities."

[149] A.S. Cohen Miller and Elizabeth Pate, "A model for developing interdisciplinary research theoretical frameworks, " *The Qualitative Report* 24, no. 6 (2019), 1211)

[150] Alex Vestal and Jessica Mesmer-Magnus, "Interdisciplinarity and team innovation: The role of team experiential and relational resources," *Small Group*

Transdisciplinary spaces can offer a "place to practice equity in relationships, provide a space for critical self-reflection, and envision just futures together."[151]

A necessary value base in international movement-building, including international transdisciplinary research, can emerge from critical dialogues that center on the impact of power, gender, geopolitics, culture, local knowledge, and other intersectionalities within the dynamics of the group.[152] While international and transdisciplinary collaborations are increasingly important in addressing major social issues, conscious and dedicated commitments to the ethics of international partnerships are necessary to increase relational accountability and community impact. Our emerging community of research and practice has enabled our team to work within and across diverse geographies, ethnicities, genders, races, ages, religions, and national contexts. This partnership has brought opportunities, elucidated tensions, and engendered important learnings among our cross-regional team members. Among these, discussed in this paper, are the concepts and practices of inter-relational capacity building, the importance of navigating and disrupting colonial patterns in Global North/South partnerships, and men's and women's roles in GBV research, activism, and community work.

Inter-relational Capacity Building

For our project, we adopted the Triple Capacity Building (TCB) approach suggested by Hok Bun Ku and colleagues, which promotes a mutual relationship wherein collaborating groups, including educators/researchers, organizational and community leaders, and students, take multiple roles in teaching and learning. Capacity building in this context "discovers and mobilizes… strengths… internal resources, past successes, and other positive

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Research 51, no. 6 (2020): 738-775; Dawn E. Trussell et al, "Negotiating the complexities and risks of interdisciplinary qualitative research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 1609406917711351.

[151] Lorenzetti et al., "Transforming masculinities," 15.

[152] Ibid.

qualities."[153] The various research activities and intentional building of a transdisciplinary community of practice fostered inter-relational capacity-building opportunities and consciousness-raising amongst the research team. Learning, reflecting, and supporting one another was a priority of this research initiative that became more intuitive as we built relationships and moved from our disciplinary, contextual, and regional silos.

Our cross-regional team of 18 members actively participated in a two-year intensive collaboration, during which we hosted four free educational public webinars on how men worldwide are engaging in gender justice and violence prevention and one webinar from Canada, the Caribbean, Nepal, and Pakistan, respectively. Collaborators from each of the four regions presented the policies, practices, and social norms impacting gender inequality and the gender justice efforts occurring within their specific geographic and socio-cultural contexts.[154] In total, we engaged 329 participants from 28 countries in these webinars. Cross-regional research training was conducted virtually to ensure that team members would have opportunities to teach, learn, contribute, and provide mentorship to one another. Topics covered in the research training included narrative inquiry, qualitative interviewing, data collection, data analysis, Dedoose data analysis platform, digital storytelling (DS), and decolonial research partnerships. This opened space for team members from all regions to share and discuss different approaches in research and how to meaningfully connect this work to specific regional contexts.

Our project employed digital platforms to connect with global partners and audiences to share and mobilize knowledge. The different areas of focus across our regions (i.e., the Caribbean: colonization, masculinities; Canada: anti-racism and decolonization; Nepal: faith, culture, patriarchy; Pakistan: girls schooling; etc.) provided   vast   knowledge   and   deepened   intersectional understandings of the contextual nuances in which this work was taking place. From the interconnections and relationships fostered through sharing our contexts and the opportunities and struggles of

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[153] Hok Bun Ku et al., "Triple capacity building as critical pedagogy: A rural social work practicum in China," *Journal of Transformative Education* 7, no. 2 (2009): 147.

[154] Lorenzetti et al., "Transforming masculinities."

our work, a sense of mutuality and belonging began to emerge among us. By recognizing gaps in our contexts, we have been building our capacity as transdisciplinary researchers, educators, and activists who are better prepared to collectively imagine, and practice informed, effective, and ethical international violence prevention work.

Navigating and Disrupting Colonial Standards in Global Divides between North and South

Present within all international organizing are power and relational inequities characterized by colonial Global North/South academic practices that must be consciously navigated and disrupted. These colonial standards imply that the work is conducted in English, occurs within the North American workday and time zone, and that a hierarchical decision-making process is at play. Within the context of our project, we were partially successful in disrupting these structural and relational inequities. For example, as a means of establishing relational accountability[155] and commitment to the work, our team generated a document of mutually agreed-upon expectations.[156] This became a 'Guiding Charter' on how our team would work together in a spirit of peacebuilding.[157] All team members were invited to participate in the design and implementation of the project. Members contributed their insights into the transnational and geopolitical contexts relevant to their regions to bring about a larger conversation on how to implement the projects in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways that would represent to communities within the different areas. By navigating these systems/structures, we have more concisely identified some of the tensions discussed below.

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[155] Andrew Gilbert and Yvonne Sliep, "Reflexivity in the practice of social action: From self-to inter-relational reflexivity," *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, no. 4 (2009): 468-479.

[156] Lorenzetti et al., "Transforming masculinities."

[157] Ibid.

Language of Collaboration and Use of Terminology

One evident tension and imbalance within our collaboration is using English as the primary language of team communication.[158] While all team members can communicate in this common language, first-language users experienced the benefits, comfort, and privileges of sharing their knowledge in a maternal tongue. Informal discussions among some team members elucidated this tension, particularly felt by some student research assistants who found it challenging to speak in large-group conversations over Zoom.[159] A more equitable process would be where all exchanges would be translated and interpreted simultaneously and continuously. Differences related to socio-cultural, linguistic, and socio-political regions were most evident in terminology in different regions and cultures. For example, the centering of feminism and feminist movements and politics in work was prevalent and commonplace among some partners and decentered or avoided in other contexts. Other languages to speak to gender (in)equity, such as 'gender justice' were more readily used and resonant among some project members. Often, these differences and the political undertones or intentions associated with language were noted by woman-identified project members, which highlighted considerations precisely related to navigating gender-transformative collaboration with men. Regional research materials, including recruitment documents, were amended to use language that would be most relevant and accurate for each region.

Time Zones, Festivals and Celebrations

An obvious barrier to international work is the navigation of multiple time zones. This team worked across six time zones (Atlantic Standard Time (GMT -4); Mountain Standard Time (GMT -7); Nepal Standard Time (GMT +5.45); Pacific Standard Time (GMT -7); Pakistan Standard Time (GMT +5); Philippine Standard Time (GMT +8). This meant that almost none of our project meetings occurred within regular work hours for some regional partners, with many team members staying up until midnight or waking up at 5 am.

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

Due to a strong team commitment, everyone was flexible, and meetings were recorded for those who could not attend.

One unexpected benefit of our diversity was learning about, supporting, and celebrating team members during their different festivals and celebrations. These included Dashain, Diwali, Eid, Ramadan, Carnival, Independence Day, and Christmas. To continue to work on the project or include all members in decision-making while each region was celebrating its own festivals was sometimes a challenge. For example, most of our Nepalese team members returned to their home provinces during the 10-day Dashian National Festival, where there was often no access to the internet to participate in meetings. Project work often stopped in countries where Christmas was celebrated as a national holiday.

Women's Roles and Gender Collaborative Efforts Towards Engaging Men in the Work

This collaboration brought together team members across genders to work on men's engagement in violence prevention. Through our discussions and reflected in the literature, women team members discussed women's leadership roles and the emotional labor in pushing forward with the work of engaging men within patriarchal societies that marginalize women's radical politics. Some of the tensions lay in the realities of women surviving gender inequity and violence and, at the same time, working to lead the community out from under this oppression. For instance, cultural practices and norms that prohibit women from speaking up aloud in any public sphere until they are invited to do so are a reality for women experiencing gender inequality in Nepal. This undoubtedly presented a challenge for the co-author, a Nepali by birth. However, throughout this process, team members have negotiated what it means to work together as women, men, and all genders in GBV and gender justice research and practice, as well as the intersectional experiences of doing this work. The principles of our COP brought awareness of the opportunities and jeopardies in gender collaborative work, which enabled us to peacefully express and negotiate them, which is itself an achievement of our community of practice. This engendered trust and solidarity among women team members that our experiences and politics as feminists in

GBV/gender justice work would be validated and amplified. Further, women brought forward perspectives and strategies from decades of work with men, which were helpful in our collaboration and, by extension, the research and practice strategies proposed for our ongoing work in developing men's violence prevention roles.

Reflections Moving Forward: Implications for International Movement Building

Discussions on navigating international transdisciplinary research and movement-building openned spaces for greater ethical engagement and alignment with living the stated values of violence prevention and peace-work. The opportunities, learning, and tensions within our local and cross-regional spaces provided opportunities for individual and collective learning and the negotiated process of building consensus across differences. Together, we grew in appreciation for the multiple pathways identified by team members to support transformational work within our varied contexts. Through our dialogical process,[160] local knowledge, strategies, and experiential wisdom were viewed as sources of cross-national learning. Also, political solidarity-building grounded our work in everyday approaches to building inclusive communities and international frameworks that enshrine equality, justice, and peace. This work has contributed to an emerging body of research/focus area/ transformative discourse on men as allies in advancing gender justice, reaching beyond the boundaries of research and practice collaborations, and manifesting into international movement-building. Further, this process within the team exemplified the groundwork and strategies required to foster cross-regional and transnational men's engagement efforts at a global scale and perhaps an expansion across the globe. Our developing social movement has generated critical consciousness and growing dissatisfaction with gender injustices and rigid gender norms while generating greater awareness of the heterogeneous work and its outcomes across our transnational contexts. This knowledge has implications for and resonance with the gender justice and GBV prevention efforts that target men's engagement. Without genuine attention to socio-cultural/religious, geopolitical,

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[160] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Continuum, 1970).

and intersectional factors that frame the contexts within which violence occurs, minimal impacts can be made toward its transformation. Specifically, a sole focus on gender inequality without attention to historical and present-day factors related to colonization, border and civil conflicts, and disparities due to class, racial, and ethnic differences will not draw in the local strategies and solutions that will accelerate and mainstream men's gender justice roles.

There continues to be a need for anticolonial and anti-oppressive models to deepen the work and impact of communities of practice focused on conducting and mobilizing social justice and practice and strengthening cross-regional collaboration toward achieving the SDGs. Local knowledge, strategies, and experiential wisdom were given a platform to be shared with an international audience, enriching the project's ability to reach diverse audiences from 28 countries and informing the collective work of CoP members. Our intention in documenting and sharing this CoP framework is that it may be employed and enhanced through the work of colleagues who are advancing collective and interdisciplinary violence prevention agendas and other social justice collaborations across global contexts.

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