Violence against Women as 'Relational' Vulnerability: Engendering the Sustainable Human Development Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women can be conceptualized as a 'relational vulnerability', reflecting women's subordinate status within hierarchical gender relations and the dependencies associated with it. While such violence can take many different forms, this paper focuses on the interpersonal violence of 'normal' times, most often within the home at the hands of intimate partners. The paper provides estimates of incidence, which suggest that it varies considerably across countries and by social group. Factors that lead to violence against women operate at individual, relational, community and societal levels, and help to explain some of this variation. They also suggest the need for interventions operating at these different levels. In conclusion, the paper argues that not only is violence against women and girls a fundamental violation of their human rights, but also has serious consequences for their well-being and capabilities, and imposes significant economic costs. These comprise both the direct financial costs of dealing with the phenomenon and the indirect productivity costs that result from it. Ending violence against women is a key component in any sustainable human development agenda and a critical priority for the post-Millennium Development Goal (MDG) development framework.

Introduction

The 2014 Human Development Report explores the relevance of the concept of vulnerability to a sustainable human development agenda. This paper focuses on violence against women as a widely prevalent, but still under-recognized aspect of vulnerability. Vulnerability is conventionally conceived as a dynamic, multidimensional concept that relates to the choices that people can exercise and the capabilities they can draw on in the face of shocks and stresses. Violence against women, on the other hand, is more usefully conceptualized in terms of 'relational vulnerabilities', forms embedded in highly asymmetrical social relations and the associated dependencies. It is thus endemic to women's experience of everyday life rather than the episodic shocks that feature in a great deal of the vulnerability literature (Kabeer et al. 2010).

This paper argues that violence against women was, until very recently, invisible in the human rights discourse and absent from concerns with human development. Yet such violence infringes on women's fundamental human right to bodily integrity and freedom from fear, jeopardizes their basic human capabilities, and, as a result, undermines their ability to participate as full citizens in the economic, political and social life of their community. Furthermore, the costs do not fall on women alone, but on their children, families and the wider society, constituting a major barrier to the achievement of the broader goals of equitable and sustainable human development.

The paper explores violence against women as a manifestation of 'relational vulnerability' and considers some of the ways in which it might be tackled. First, however, some definitions are necessary to clarify the specific focus of this paper. The World Health Organization (WHO 2002) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (p. 5). According to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), violence against women per se refers to both violence that is directed towards women *because* they are women as well as violence that affects women disproportionately.[1]

The concept of 'intentionality' in the WHO definition distinguishes violence from unintended forms of harm, while the focus on both physical force and power is intended to encompass acts of omission that result from power relations, such as neglect, as well as acts of commission, including threats and intimidation. This is a wide-ranging definition of violence, which includes neglect and deprivation along with all types of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. This paper will concern itself with a narrower version of this definition, and focus on physical, sexual and psychological abuse. It will also focus on the interpersonal forms of violence that characterize 'normal times' rather than the collective forms of violence that define 'extraordinary times' (war, conflict, mob uprisings, revolutions, etc.). Interpersonal violence includes violence between family members and intimate partners as well as between unrelated individuals who may not even know each other. While the former largely takes place within the home, the latter can occur in the streets and other public spaces as well as in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, prisons and nursing homes.

Globally, deaths from interpersonal violence are much higher for men than women, particularly for those aged 15 and above, suggesting that men are at far greater risk of fatal forms of violence than women (WHO 2002). The WHO Global Burden of Disease study ranked interpersonal violence 21st among the causes of disability-adjusted life years lost to premature mortality or lived-with disability for males, and 49th for females (Murray et al. 2012).

Despite this, there are important reasons for giving explicit attention to violence against women. First of all, violence-related *deaths* fail to capture the true *harm* of interpersonal violence. Physical, sexual and psychological violence, as well as threats of such acts, occur daily. Not all such violence requires medical attention, nor is medical attention necessarily sought when it is required. Data on these non-fatal forms of violence are either missing in most countries or collected on an ad hoc basis.

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[1] See: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm. Downloaded 7 June 2014.

Where such data are available and reliable, they suggest that women and girls make up a disproportionate share of those who suffer less visible forms of harm.

Secondly, violence against women is distinguished not simply by the prevalence and degree of different kinds of harm, but also by distinct causalities, consequences and public responses. It differs from the violence experienced by men and boys in the form that it takes. Men are generally victims of street violence, brawls, homicides and other violent crimes, largely perpetrated by strangers or casual acquaintances (Kellerman and Mercy 1992, Eckhardt and Pridemore 2009). Women tend to be most at risk from family members, usually intimate partners, and most often within the home, although they also face particular, often sexualized forms of risk in various public domains, ranging from lewd and offensive comments to violent sexual assault.

Violence against women is also distinguished from violence inflicted on men by the social and legal meanings attached to it. The fact that so much occurs within the private sphere of the family, most often at the hands of intimate partners, has led it to be treated in many cultures as a 'normal' aspect of marriage and family life,[2] expressing men's legitimate authority over women, or a 'private' matter outside the remit of the law. At the same time, for somewhat different reasons, public forms of violence against women do not face the same legal or social sanctions as public forms of violence against men. Indeed, sexual violence against women in the public domain is one of the few examples of public violence where the victim's moral character becomes relevant in shaping public and legal perceptions about the extent of consent or coercion that defined the act—as in, whether or not 'she was asking for it' or 'deserved what she got'.

One other point to note in relation to violence against women is that men inflict much of it, as is true with much of the violence suffered by men. This is not to say that women do not experience violence at the hands of other women, particularly within the home, at the hands of same-sex partners or mothers-in-law, for instance. Moreover, a number of surveys, mainly from high-income countries, have noted the incidence of female violence against men within the home. This is rarely part of a sustained one-way pattern of violence, however, nor is it generally severe enough for men to seek emergency medical treatment. In general, therefore, men are the primary perpetrators of violence against both men and women, a fact that draws attention to the social constructions of gender and masculinity as important factors for understanding violence.

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[2] According to a report on violence against women in Nicaragua presented to the 25th session of CEDAW, "In Nicaragua, many women refer to violence against women as 'the cross one must carry'. In this sense, domestic violence is perceived of as being as much a part of being a woman as childbirth or menstruation and it is so sanctioned by culture that many women cannot conceive of life as being different." See: www.omct.org/files/2001/01/2177/nicaraguaeng2001.pdf.

The second section of this paper provides some estimates of the incidence of interpersonal forms of violence against women within both private and public domains as an indicator of the magnitude of the problem and its variation across the world. The third section explores various efforts to explain the phenomenon in terms of individual, interpersonal and structural factors. The fourth and fifth sections examine some consequences of violence, in terms of both women's well-being and capabilities, and economic costs. The paper concludes with a discussion of the different ways in which the problem has been tackled.

The incidence of violence against women: some estimates

While violence against women appears to be a nearly universal phenomenon, its incidence varies considerably across the world. For example:

A review of over 50 population-based studies carried out in 35 countries before 1999 found that the percentage of women reporting physical abuse by an intimate partner at some point in their lives varied between 10 and 52 percent, while those reporting sexual violence by an intimate partner ranged from 10 to 30 percent (Heise et al. 1999).

A United Nations Children's Fund study (UNICEF 2000) estimated that between 20 and 50 percent of women have experienced domestic violence at some stage in their lives.

The International Violence Against Women Study found that an average of 35 percent of the female population aged 16 and above had experienced violence, with between 20 and 60 percent of this population reporting at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16 (Johnson et al. 2008). Rates of intimate partner violence ranged from 9 to 40 percent and were in general much higher than violence perpetrated by strangers. Furthermore, as True (2012) notes, the study's findings suggest that "(a)cross all countries, the trends of violence committed by intimate partners were astonishingly consistent. Where countries varied most was in trends of violence committed by non-intimates or strangers" (p. 12).

Differences in research design, definitions and methods make comparison across countries and studies difficult. A major study carried out by the WHO in 15 rural and urban sites in 10 countries attempted to rectify this problem (WHO 2005, Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). It sought to standardize definitions, distinguishing between physical, sexual and emotional violence, between moderate and severe violence, and between lifetime and current (past 12 months) violence.

Physical violence against women was defined as: slapping or throwing something that could inflict hurt; pushing or shoving; hitting with a fist or something else that could inflict hurt; kicking,

dragging or beating up; choking or burning on purpose; or threatening with, or actually using, a gun, knife or other weapon.

Sexual violence against women was defined as: being physically forced to have sexual intercourse against their will; having sexual intercourse out of fear; or being forced to perform a degrading or humiliating sexual act.

Emotional abuse was defined as: being insulted or made to feel bad about oneself; being humiliated and belittled in front of others; being intimidated or scared on purpose; or being threatened with harm (directly or in the form of a threat to harm someone the woman cares about).

The findings of the study in relation to partner violence were:

Lifetime prevalence of physical violence ranged from 13 percent in urban Japan to 61 percent in provincial Peru, with most sites falling between 23 and 49 percent.

The incidence of severe physical violence, such as being hit with a fist, kicked, dragged or threatened with a weapon, ranged from 4 percent in urban Japan to 49 percent in provincial Peru.

The lifetime prevalence of sexual violence ranged from 6 percent in urban Japan and Serbia and Montenegro[3] to 59 percent in provincial Ethiopia, with most sites falling between 10 and 50 percent.

Between 20 and 75 percent of women experienced one or more acts of emotional abuse in the past 12 months, most often insults, belittling and intimidation.

Urban Japan reported the lowest percentages of all forms of violence, while provincial Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Tanzania reported the highest.

In most sites, there was substantial overlap in the incidence of physical and sexual violence, and those who had experienced physical violence in the previous year did not experience it as a single episode but on a repeated basis: "Rather than an isolated event, most acts of physical partner violence were part of a pattern of continuing abuse" (Garcia-Moreno et al., p. 1,265).

The findings in relation to violence by non-partners were as follows:

The highest levels of physical violence were reported in Samoa at 62 percent, followed by Peru at 32 percent in provincial settings and 28 percent in urban areas. It was lowest in Japan and Ethiopia at 5 percent. In most settings, one person inflicted violence, but in provincial Bangladesh, Namibia, Peru, Samoa and Tanzania, more than 20 percent of people surveyed mentioned more than one

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[3] Montenegro became an independent country in 2006, after the survey was completed.

perpetrator. The most common perpetrators were fathers and other male family members, but in some cases, such as Bangladesh, Namibia, Samoa and Tanzania, teachers were also mentioned.

Women's experience of sexual violence by non-partners since the age of 16 varied from 10 to 12 percent in Peru, Samoa and Tanzania to 1 percent in provincial Bangladesh and Ethiopia. Perpetrators ranged from strangers to boyfriends to male family members and male friends of the family.

Overall, non-partner violence was higher in urban settings in all countries except Peru.

The study concluded that in most settings, over 75 percent of women who reported physical or sexual abuse said that it came from an intimate partner. Only in urban Brazil and Samoa were at least 40 percent of women abused by someone other than a partner. In Ethiopia, almost all violence is by partners, while in Samoa, non-partner violence constituted the largest part of violence reported by women.

A more recent publication by the WHO (2013) summarized findings from a systematic search of studies that estimated lifetime exposure to physical or sexual violence or both by a current or former intimate partner for all women aged 15 and above. A synthesis of findings from 86 countries suggested that the global prevalence of physical/sexual intimate partner violence among all ever-partnered women was 30 percent. For low- and middle-income countries, this varied from 37 percent in Africa, the eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia, to 25 percent in Europe and the western Pacific. Prevalence was lowest in high-income countries in North America, Europe and Australia.

The same publication also reported on a systematic search of studies that provided separate estimates of non-partner sexual violence, of which a small number included violence in times of conflict. The global estimate for non-partner sexual violence, based on findings from 81 countries, was 7.2 percent. This varied from a high of 12.6 percent in high-income regions and 11.9 percent in Africa to 4.9 percent in Southeast Asia. The report advised caution in the interpretation of these figures because: They were associated with very wide confidence intervals, raising questions about their reliability; the single broad question used to elicit responses was likely to lead to considerable underestimates; and stigma attached to sexual violence could result in underreporting, more in some countries than others, making comparison difficult. In addition, the phrasing of the question focused on coercive sexual acts imposed on women, overlooking various other forms of sexual harassment that might intimidate women in the public domain. The study nonetheless supported the notion that violence against women by non-partners is very much lower than violence by partners.

The report's data on sexual violence, by partners and others, probably represents the tip of a large and ugly iceberg. National statistics generally suggest much higher prevalence than those reported by the cross-country analysis. For instance, Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) estimated that there was a 10-fold underreporting to police of rape and attempted rape compared with representative community surveys in South Africa. A 2010 nationally representative survey by the United States Government[4] revealed that nearly one in five women reported rape or attempted rape compared to one in 71 men (many of whom had been raped as children). Around 50 percent of rapes reported by women were by intimate partners, while 41 percent were by an acquaintance. Around half of male rapes were by an acquaintance and 15 percent by strangers. In addition, one in four women reported being beaten by an intimate partner while one in three had been either raped, beaten, stalked or some combination of these. These were much higher estimates than had been reported by previous surveys, suggesting either an increase in violence or previous underreporting.

Explaining violence against women: individual, interpersonal and structural factors

While these findings bear out the earlier point that violence against women, particularly intimate partner forms, is a near-universal phenomenon, variations in its incidence across and within countries suggests that there is nothing natural or inevitable about it. This is supported by the decline in intimate partner and sexual violence against women in the more affluent countries of the world over the past decade or so, although it is not clear what combination of legal reforms, demographic shifts, social and cultural changes, and state responsiveness explains this trend (Bott et al. 2005). One explanation has focused on the rise of a functioning state able to impose the rule of law on its citizens (Pinker 2011), although, as noted later, the rise of an active feminist movement in most of these countries is likely to have contributed to the willingness of the state to take the issue seriously (Htun and Weldon 2012).

Feminists have analysed violence against women as a product of unequal power relations between men and women, manifested in asymmetries in the gender division of productive and reproductive labour, paid and unpaid work, material resources, social recognition and the distribution of authority and decision-making power (True 2012, Dobash and Dobash 1979). While this is clearly a critical element in any explanation, it does not, on its own, help understand why some but not all men are perpetrators of violence (Heise 1998). Nor does it explain why the incidence

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[4] See: www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/sv-datasheet-a.pdf.

of violence varies within the same country, so that some communities are characterized by higher levels of violence than others, and some groups of women more affected by violence than others.

Structural explanations include both the extent to which societies are characterized by social norms and practices that promote violence against women, as well as the extent to which there are institutional provisions that can help to offset these systemic tendencies, such as those providing support and redress—'sanctions and sanctuaries' (Campbell 1999)—for survivors of violence. As Young (1990) points out, it is not simply the fact of violence against women that makes it a matter of social injustice rather than an individual wrong, but the fact that society at large makes these acts possible and even acceptable (p. 62).

The 'social ecology' framework widely used in the violence against women literature is a useful one, because it draws attention to violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in the interplay between factors that operate at the level of individuals, interpersonal relations, institutional contexts and the wider society (Heise 1998, Bott et al. 2005, WHO 2005). Some of these factors are summarized in table 1 (based on Morrison et al. 2007). Gender inequalities are seen as key factors at these different levels of explanation, but they intersect with other forms of inequality as well as variations in the larger political economy to differentiate the experience of violence for different groups of men and women.

Table 1: Risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence: levels of influence

Individual	Relationship	Community	Societal
Socialization/learning Witnessing intimate partner violence as a child (+) Suffering abuse as a child (+)	*Socialization/learning* Association with gang members, delinquent or patriarchal peers (+)	*Socialization/learning* High neighbourhood crime rate (+) Missing/maladaptive teaching of alternatives to violence (+)	*Socialization/learning* Cultural norms that support violence as accepted means of conflict resolution or to punish transgression
Patriarchal relations and norms Absent/rejecting father	*Patriarchal relations and norms* Male control of household wealth and decision-making Controlling behaviour by husband (+) Multiple partners or wives for husband Differences in spousal age and education (+)		*Patriarchal relations and norms* Norms that support male dominance over children and require women's obedience and sexual availability (+) Policies and laws that discriminate against women in social, political and economic spheres

Human capital/employment Female education level (-) Male education level (-) Women engaged in income generation (+/-)	*Human capital/employment* Economic hardship (+)	*Human capital/employment* Lack of economic opportunities for men (+)	*Human capital/employment* Access to, and control over economic resources for women (+/-)
Life cycle Age of woman (-)	*Life cycle* Length of relationship (-)		
Triggers HIV status of man or woman (+)	*Triggers* Male alcohol and substance abuse		

Note: + indicates a risk factor; - indicates a protective factor; +/- indicates ambiguous factors.
Source: Based on Morrison et al. 2007, pp. 27-28.

INDIVIDUAL AND INTERPERSONAL FACTORS

Individual and interpersonal explanations of violence against women highlight the importance of a life course perspective. Childhood experiences have proved to be one of the most consistent factors in predicting the likelihood of intimate partner violence across a range of countries. Those who witnessed their mothers being beaten by intimate partners were more likely than others to grow up to be perpetrators or victims of violence (WHO 2002, Heise 1998, Abramsky et al. 2011). According to one study from South Africa, men who had witnessed their mothers being beaten were not only more likely to be violent within intimate relationships, but also at work and in the wider community (Abrahams et al. 2005). The general literature suggests that children who were themselves abused, physically or sexually, are more likely to end up in violent relationships. There is also evidence that boys who grew up without a consistent and available father or father figure are more prone to violent behaviour in adulthood (Heise 1998).

Such findings seem to hold even when other factors at individual, family and community levels are controlled for, suggesting that the causalities in question operate to some extent independently of these other factors. What children witness or experience in the early years of their lives thus shapes in important ways the kind of adults they become and the extent to which they treat violence as a 'normal' and even acceptable aspect of intimate relations. Those who subscribe to such attitudes are in turn more likely to be involved in violent personal relationships. These are important findings. They suggest that violence against women is inextricably bound up with violence against children, both boys and girls. Addressing violence against children, particularly within the family where much of it occurs, is an important route to addressing violence against women.

However, there is nothing inevitable about the intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence. Not all children who grow up in violent homes go on to become victims or perpetrators of violence. Other aspects of growing up, particularly educational attainment and the experience of schooling, access to opportunities and resources, the quality of marital life and the kind of community that they grow up in can offset negative childhood experiences or contribute in other ways to lessening the likelihood of violence in later life.

Educational attainment by women and their partners has emerged in studies across the world as an important factor in reducing the likelihood of intimate partner violence, although the level at which this effect becomes significant varies from primary education in some countries to secondary in others (Abramsky et al. 2011). The likelihood of violence is reduced when either partner has achieved some level of education, but the effect is strongest when both partners have achieved it.

At the same time, one of the factors militating against the educational attainment of girls is the high level of sexual violence within schools, from teachers as well as fellow pupils. In one extreme case in 1991, 71 teenage girls were raped by their classmates and 19 others killed at a coeducational boarding school in Meru, Kenya.[5] The violence had been set off by the refusal of the female students to join in a protest against the headmaster proposed by the boys. Less extreme but equally damaging forms of violence occur on a routine basis in many schools. The Demographic and Health Survey in South Africa found that 38 percent of rape victims in the 15 to 49 age group identified a teacher or principal as the rapist. One consequence of sexual violence in schools is the increased likelihood of early pregnancy and/or high levels of students dropping out, thus raising the likelihood of violent relationships later in life. Sitaram and Leach (2007) document the sexual harassment faced by adolescent girls in India, both within the school grounds by male pupils, and on their way to and from school, particularly on public transport. Such experiences can undermine girls' desire to continue at school or give rise to fears that lead parents to withdraw them.

Studies suggest that parents' fear for the physical and sexual safety of daughters is a major reason for keeping girls from school in countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America (Jones et al. 2008, Mirsky 2001). A survey carried out in 2013 involving 200 secondary school teachers from 45 countries found that marriage/pregnancy together with the risk of sexual violence were the most frequent explanations for why girls were not attending school.[6]

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[5] *Chicago Tribune,* 13 July 1991. See: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1991-08-18/news/9103010247_1_st-kizito-kenyan-girls-deaths.

[6] See: www.irex.org/news/what-do-teachers-think-global-gender-education-survey-results. See also Plan International 2012.

Other aspects of relationships important in predicting a high risk of intimate partner violence comprise the number of children women have, including from previous relationships, suggesting the contributing role of sexual jealousies, the reduction of women's bargaining power as a result of responsibility for their children, and the stresses associated with higher dependency burdens. The nature of the relationship between intimate partners can also make a difference, with higher levels of violence associated with cohabitation than formal unions, polygamous rather than monogamous marriages, and payment of dowry, where these practices are common. One other aspect of interpersonal relations consistently associated with higher levels of violence is alcohol abuse, particularly by male partners.

While it might be expected that improving women's access to material resources would improve their bargaining power within intimate relations, strengthening their ability to renegotiate or exit violent relationships and hence reducing the likelihood of violence, the findings are mixed. A systematic review of 22 studies conducted in low- and middle-income countries between 1992 and 2005 found that women's access to paid employment protected them against violence in some contexts, but increased the risk of violence in others (Vyas and Watts 2009). Similarly, both property ownership and access to microfinance had mixed outcomes (Heise 2012, Vyas and Watts 2009).

One possible reason for these inconsistent findings can be found in analysis carried out by Jewkes (2002). She notes that while a consistent trigger for intimate partner violence across different contexts is the transgression of gender norms and the failure to fulfil cultural expectations of good womanhood and successful manhood, what constitutes such transgression is likely to vary by setting, thus leading to cross-national variation in behaviours that are risk factors. Since the cultural norms defining gender roles are likely to vary across contexts, the impact of women's access to material resources may also vary. Where men are accustomed to being the primary breadwinners— and are expected to be so by the larger community—improvements in women's economic status through work, credit or property will most probably challenge prevailing gender norms and threaten men's sense of status and self-worth. For instance, a study in Ethiopia found increased physical violence by partners after women took up jobs in the export flower industry, and concluded, "It appears emotionally costly to men when household roles deviate from those prescribed by gender norms...violence is seen as a way to restore the traditional order" (Hjort and Villanger 2011, cited in Heise 2011).

Within particular contexts, the impact of access to material resources may be conditioned by various other factors making outcomes difficult to predict. For instance, the impact of access to paid work may vary according to the employment experiences of women and their partners. Studies from India suggest that women in regular wage employment were less likely to be beaten than unemployed women or women in casual, poorly paid jobs (Sen 1999, Panda and Agarwal 2005).

Employed women whose husbands lost their jobs during the period of the study were more likely to suffer from violence than those whose husbands' status had not changed. In urban Bangladesh, the association between intimate partner violence and women's employment was found to be confined to less educated women and women who married very young (Heath 2012). As far as property is concerned, ownership of residential property before marriage was more consistently associated with lower levels of violence than ownership of land in India (Panda and Agarwal 2005, Bhatla et al. 2010) while joint ownership was more significant in reducing domestic violence than individual ownership in Latin America. As discussed later, the impact of microfinance may vary by duration of membership in microfinance organizations as well as the extent to which financial services are combined with other measures.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: CULTURAL EXPLANATIONS

Individual and interpersonal factors play important roles in explaining variations in the incidence of intimate partner violence. Some remain important when contextual factors are taken into account—childhood experiences, for instance. Others have their roots in broader institutional and structural inequalities. Inheritance laws, market relations, gender norms, marital practices and class position are all implicated in shaping ownership of assets, access to education, job opportunities and the prevalence of polygamy or dowry payments.

One set of structural explanations focuses on the cultural norms, values and practices that define gender relations, roles and identities in different societies, and provide the background conditions to people's everyday lives. Studies have shown that violence against women tends to be higher in societies and communities that associate ideas about manhood with dominance and aggression, and in which men control family wealth, family decision-making structures are highly patriarchal, and there are divorce restrictions on women. In addition, societies characterized by very rigid models of gender roles and the division of labour, often backed by strict controls over women's sexuality and reproductive capacity, also tend to produce higher levels of violence than others.

Violence directed against sexual minorities is rooted in strong cultural beliefs about what constitutes 'normal' gender identity and sexual behaviour. There is much more research into the issue of violence against lesbian, gay and other sexual minorities in Western countries, where such violence is recognized as a problem, but the phenomenon is far more widespread. There is evidence of growing public awareness elsewhere in the world.

The *Global Rights Shadow Report* notes how a law passed in 2002 by the Honduran Government, ostensibly to grant the police forces substantial power and discretion 'in the preservation of public morality and decency', was used to stigmatize sexual minorities on the

grounds that their rights were incompatible with public decency and morals. Women in Guatemala whose sexual orientation deviated from sexual norms were often subjected to violence, rape and other forms of discrimination and harassment (Cabrera 2010). A report by PRAXIS, a non-governmental organization working with poor and marginalized sections of society in India, used participatory research to document some of the violence, often inflicted by members of their own family, suffered by those who do not conform to sexual norms. The violence, frequently embodied in heteronormative constructions of masculinity, was exemplified by a father who feared his son was going to become a 'deviant': "You are my son. You can drink, smoke and if you want, rape a woman. I will not say anything. But you should not become a transgender" (2013, p. 7).

Cultural norms and customs can give rise to highly gender-specific forms of intended violence. One example is dowry-related violence, often resulting in death through 'bride-burning', which is associated with the failure of a wife and her family to meet the dowry demands of the husband and his family. The violence is generally inflicted by husbands, but mothers-in-law are widely implicated in the literature. Dowry-related violence is widespread in parts of South Asia where dowry is practised, but best documented in India. A 1961 ban has never been seriously enforced, and the practice continues among all classes. Patrilocal marriage patterns, which require women to leave their natal home upon marriage to join their husband's family as 'stranger brides', increases their vulnerability to violence as does the difficulty of divorce. According to India's National Crimes Records Bureau, the number of reported dowry death cases rose from 6,995 in 2000 to 8,391 in 2010—in other words, "a bride was burned every 90 minutes."[7]

While dowry-related violence reflects cultural practices but is not sanctioned by culture, honour killing, most widely documented in North Africa, the Middle East and parts of South Asia, is an example of gender-specific violence rooted in patriarchal cultural norms that tie family honour to female virtue; it thus has cultural sanction.[8] Honour killings are generally a reaction to a perceived transgression of norms governing female sexuality, most notably marital infidelity and premarital sex, but can also be carried out against women who engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour, seek to initiate divorce or separation, or are victims of rape.[9]

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[7] *The Telegraph,* 27 February 2012. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/9108642/Indian-dowry-deaths-on-the-rise.html. Downloaded 7 June 2014.

[8] There have been efforts to justify wife murder in courts in the United States courts using culture as a defence (Okin 1999)

[9] A study of murders of women in Alexandria, Egypt found that 47 percent of the women who had been raped were killed soon after by a relative determined to protect family honour (WHO 2002).

As a systematic review of the literature by Kulczycki and Windle (2011) notes, there are very few studies of the phenomenon relative to its presumed magnitude. A United Nations Population Fund estimate of its incidence in 2000—perhaps as many as 5,000 women and girls were killed each year in the name of 'honour'—has not been updated (UNFPA 2000). National estimates are difficult, as police, court and medical records rarely use honour killings as an explicit classification category for cases of homicide, but smaller scale surveys suggest that it is severely underreported.

Studies suggest that honour killings are more likely to occur among poorer households—possibly because men with little material wealth may attach greater importance to their honour. Most, if not all, victims of honour killing tend to be women, most often young women. The vast majority of perpetrators are men, generally family members, most often the victim's brother, father or husband. But women, particularly older women, with a stake in maintaining the social order and family honour, may be indirectly involved, instigating violence through gossip or pressure on male members or colluding in arranging the death.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: POLITICAL ECONOMY EXPLANATIONS

Structural explanations that favour a political economy approach focus on the intersections of gender with other structural inequalities associated with class, caste, race and ethnicity that render women from subordinate groups more vulnerable to violence perpetrated by men from dominant groups. In India, for instance, Kannabiran (2005) points out that, "while men belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes experience aggravating forms of assault along with the range of discriminations in employment, all of these derogations happen with women in addition to the fact that they bear the brunt of aggravated sexual assault" (p. 7). Dalit women are expected to be sexually available to upper caste men, and their 'non-cooperation' can bring violent retaliation—as can any attempt by them to dress or behave in ways not considered appropriate to their status (Jayshree et al. 2011).

Caste privilege grants a certain degree of immunity to upper caste men. The 1992 gang rape of Bhanwari Devi, a Dalit government development worker in Rajasthan, by upper caste men as punishment for trying to implement the law against child marriage in her village is a case in point. Her rapists were acquitted by the district court in 1995 on the grounds that "since the offenders were upper caste men, and included a Brahmin, the rape could not have taken place since Bhanwari is from a lower caste" (cited in Mathur 2004, p. 212). Bhanwari Devi is still waiting to have her appeal against the acquittal heard by the Rajasthan High Court.

Violence against women does not merely occur across the structural divide. A study by Krishnan (2005) notes that domestic violence appeared to be higher among poor and lower caste households

in rural India. One reason for this was the higher level of alcohol consumption by male family members, described by them as their only respite from the hard realities of their daily lives. They purchased alcohol directly from liquor shops, most often run by landowning castes and located conveniently close to lower caste settlements, or else received it from landowners in lieu of a portion of wages. A second reason was the absence of strong community sanctions on such behaviour.

In Lima, Peru, Gonzales de Olarte et al. (1999) found that a higher percentage of women from poor households suffered from domestic violence than women from non-poor households, and concluded "poverty does seem to matter as a factor that unleashes or magnifies conflicts between partners" (p. 45), but other factors also contributed to the incidence of violence (see Terry 2004 for a broader discussion of the link between poverty and violence against women).

A number of authors have suggested the existence of 'subcultures of violence' among poor and disenfranchised populations (Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967, Amit 1971). They note that low-income and slum neighbourhood areas are often characterized by family breakdown, low chances of schooling and few economic opportunities. Failed by the larger society, men within these communities, particularly young men, seek to assert their masculinity through the exercise of violence against each other as part of gang warfare and criminal activities, and against women and girls, with gang rape frequently featuring as a manifestation of manhood.

Analysis of gang culture in Philadelphia in the United States led Amit to place rape at the centre of subcultures of violence: statistics showed rapists operated in pairs or groups, tended to be 15 to 19 years old and unmarried, came from lower socio-economic classes and lived in the inner city. Seventy-one percent of rapes were planned. Bourgois (2003) has described in graphic detail the horrific everyday violence of gang rape casually perpetrated by young men in East Harlem, New York who were engaged in drug dealing. This was the only form of work for which they had qualifications, while dreaming of finding a way into the legal job market. Recent statistics from the United States suggest that 1 in 10 sexual assaults involves multiple perpetrators; such assaults are generally committed by people unknown to victims.[10]

Other literature also points to gang rape as an aspect of 'subcultural practices' through which men assert their masculinity in contexts of profound marginalization (Wood 2005). Poor townships in South Africa have frequently featured in discussions on this issue. Against a long history of state-sponsored violence combined with high current levels of poverty, unemployment, crime and deprivation, rape appears to play a crucial role in male peer group positioning: "Competition over women has achieved overwhelming importance because it is one of the few available and affordable

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[10] See: www.rapetraumaservices.org/rape-sexual-assault.html.

opportunities for entertainment and arenas where success (in masculinity) may be achieved and self-esteemed may be gained" (Jewkes et al. 2002, p. 1,240). Rape and violence, often carried out in gangs, offer one such route for achieving masculine identity and status. In Johannesburg, surveillance studies of women attending medico-legal clinics following a rape found that one-third had been gang rapes (Swart et al. 2000). One study of perpetrators showed that the men's idea of successful masculinity was the ability to become or remain the family economic provider. In the face of chronic unemployment, feelings of frustration and powerlessness were used as justification for violence against women.

Political economy explanations have also pointed to contradictory dynamics of neo-liberal globalization, which have thrown open new opportunities for men and women, but also generated new forms of vulnerability and subcultures of violence. In some cases, increasing levels of violence reflect economic processes that favour women over men in access to jobs, leading to rising levels of male unemployment and efforts by men to reassert their dominance through violence. In other cases, violence is associated with the nature of the jobs available to men and women, and the processes through which they enter the global economy.

While economic liberalization has brought many more women into the public domain, a large percentage end up in occupations and livelihoods that are largely invisible, informal and outside the remit of the law. Increasing numbers of women migrate to more affluent areas within or outside their own countries in search of work. While there are both 'push' and 'pull' factors behind these migration flows, migrant women generally end up in the most exploitative activities, where their uncertain legal status and social isolation leave them at greater risk of violence. Trafficking exacerbates their vulnerability. According to ILO (2008) estimates, there are at least 2.4 million trafficked persons at any given point in time. Women and girls make up around 80 percent of those trafficked. They are generally forced into prostitution, sex tourism, commercial marriages and other 'female' occupations such as domestic work, and agricultural and sweatshop labour, often under conditions of bonded labour (UNFPA 2006).

Whether they involve trafficking or not, certain female-dominated livelihoods appear to carry a higher risk of violence than others, not only because of hazards associated with these jobs, but also because of the indifference of authorities. Police in some cases may be implicated in sexual violence against women, as the history of the Indian women's movement's campaigns on this issue demonstrates (Kannabiran et al. 2007).

Sex workers appear to be at a particularly high risk of both physical and sexual violence, with the risk even higher when workers' legal status is ambiguous. A survey of female sex workers in two major cities in the United Kingdom revealed that 30 percent had been slapped, punched or kicked by a client while working, 13 percent had been beaten, 11 percent had been raped and 22 percent had

experienced attempted rape (Church et al. 2001). Only 34 percent of those who had suffered violence at the hands of clients reported it to the police. A survey of sex workers in Bangladesh revealed that 49 percent of the women had been raped and 59 percent beaten by police in the previous year (Jenkins 1999). Male workers reported much lower levels of violence. In Ethiopia, a study of sex workers found high rates of physical and sexual violence from clients, especially against child sex workers (Ayalew et al. 2000).

Domestic workers are another vulnerable group, particularly when they are migrants. The high levels of violence and abuse perpetrated against female migrant domestic workers, by both male and female employees, appears to reflect both their location in the private sphere and their lack of the labour protections guaranteed to other workers (Iredale et al. 2003). Only 17 percent of states have ratified the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Political economy explanations have drawn attention to how the forces of globalization and uneven development have created environments in which laws do not apply or are weakly enforced, creating a culture of immunity for perpetrators of violent crime. The high rates of violent, often extremely cruel murders of women in Mexico and Central America has led to the emergence of a new term—femicide—to describe this extreme form of gender-based violence (Cabrera 2010). The northern border city of Ciudad Juárez in Mexico exemplifies this phenomenon (Ensalaco 2006). While the city has historically reported high rates of violent crime, homicide rates of women have accelerated since 1993, and the ratio of female-to-male homicides has risen. Using the term femicide given the extended wave of gender-based violence involving abduction, sexual torture and rape, murder, mutilation and disappearance is intended to capture the apparently systematic targeting of women. Between 230 and 320 women were estimated to have been murdered between 1993 and 2003, with many more 'disappeared'.

The murders fell into two categories: a 'situational' or 'one-off' category that included victims of domestic violence, ordinary and organized crime, and drug trafficking, and 'pattern' or serial killing, mainly of women who worked in the *maquilas*[11] and were abducted leaving work or discos late at night. Explanations focused on some combination of economic, cultural and political factors, including rapid population growth in a frontier city, a transient population of economic migrants with few community ties, and the low salaries and poor working conditions of women in the *maquilas*. Feminists have also noted that the entry of women into the labour market may have

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[11] Export-oriented assembly plants.

provoked a violent backlash by men in a classical *machista* society in which they have been losing out in the job market with the onset of economic liberalization.

Another issue receiving a great deal of attention is the weakness and corruption of government, police and judicial institutions. The failure of state officials to take prompt and effective action in response to the murders and disappearances led a member of the Committee against Violence to comment: "Juárez is an ideal place to kill a woman because you are certain to get away with it" (Dillon 1998). The tendency to blame women for the violence they face in public places is evident in the documentation of the Juárez case, with comments by state officials to the effect that the women in question deliberately put themselves at risk by having a night life, drinking with strangers and engaging in weekend prostitution to make ends meet. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions interpreted such remarks as implying that the women 'asked to be murdered', and as contributing to the impunity of those committing the crimes.

The consequences of violence against women: human well-being and capabilities

Violence against women and children has a range of tangible and intangible consequences. Tangible consequences include both immediate and longer term physical harms. Injuries can be fatal or involve bruises, broken bones, hearing and sight loss, and burns. Longer term harms include heightened risk of other health problems, including chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, and post-traumatic stress syndrome (UNICEF 2000).

Violence before and during pregnancy can have serious health consequences for women and their children. Pregnant women are less likely to gain sufficient weight and delay seeking prenatal care. They are also more likely to suffer from vaginal and cervical infections, kidney infections and bleeding during pregnancy. Violence has been linked to increased risk of miscarriages and abortions, premature labour and foetal distress. Studies have also suggested that violence during pregnancy contributes substantially to low birthweight. For instance, a study from Nicaragua that controlled for other risk factors found that violence against pregnant women was associated with a threefold increase in the incidence of low birthweight. Children of women who had experienced violence were six times more likely than other children to die before the age of five, with one-third of all such deaths attributable to partner violence (Asling-Monemi et al. 2003, cited in Bott et al. 2005).

Sexual violence has other consequences. Survivors of sexual abuse and rape exhibit a variety of trauma-induced symptoms including sleep and eating disturbances, depression, feelings of humiliation, anger and self blame, fear of sex and inability to concentrate (Koss 1993). A rape crisis

centre in Bangkok reported that 10 percent of its clients had contracted sexually transmitted diseases as a result of rape, and 15 to 18 percent become pregnant, figures consistent with data from Mexico and the Republic of Korea. In countries where abortion is against the law or unavailable, illegal forms increase the chance of death or future infertility.

Violence and the threat of violence impact women's abilities to exercise control over their own bodies. Their fear of partners' violent reactions mean that they are less able to negotiate family planning or condom use, and hence face higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS. Banwell (1990) has noted that since some men assert that the use of any form of family planning implies promiscuity on the part of women, they have to forge their husbands' signatures on spousal consent forms in order to avail themselves of these services. Cook et al. (1987) found that when family planning clinics in Ethiopia removed the requirement for spousal consent, clinic use rose 26 percent in a few months.

Violence has repercussions on other aspects of women's lives. As noted, sexual violence or its threat inhibits girls' access to education. There are also reports of the sexual harassment of female students at university level (Possi 1996, Menon 2012) and the resistance of college authorities to taking action if the perpetrator is a member of staff. Violence impacts women's abilities to participate in economic activity outside the home. A United Nations Development Fund for Women study in Mexico found that a primary reason for women dropping out of development projects was threats and violence by husbands who disapproved (Heise 1994). Studies of various development interventions in India report that actual or threatened violence by husbands prevents many women from participating in self-help groups (Sen 1998, Kabeer et al. 2012).

Beyond domestic threats, violence in the public domain can also inhibit women's desire to seek employment or other opportunities outside the home. A study carried out by the Indian Chamber of Commerce after the widely publicized rape of a young student in Delhi illustrates how fear of public violence curtails women's economic options. The study noted the suddenly high attrition among women employees in the female-intensive sectors of business process outsourcing and IT-enabled services. Many other women refused to work after dark.[12] Within Delhi itself, the result was a 40 percent drop in productivity.

The Chamber of Commerce findings highlight one of the consequences of violence against women largely ignored in the scholarly literature, despite being widespread: the extent to which the fear of violence curtails basic everyday freedoms for women. A World Bank report based on focus group discussions carried out with 93 communities in 20 countries across the world suggests that in

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[12] See: www.pressreleasewatch.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/women-workforce-productivity-impacted.html.

many areas, problems of safety impose a virtual curfew on women, particularly after dark (Boudet et al. 2012). Even during the day, incidences of mugging, groping and verbal abuse make public transportation particularly risky for women and girls, curtailing their mobility (ibid., p. 48). While the literature generally suggests a strong correlation between overall levels of violence in a society and violence against women (Jewkes 2002), the risk of assault on women was reported even in communities considered relatively safe by the focus groups.

Surveys on the fear of crime consistently find that women report levels three times higher than those of men, even though their risk of such crime, including physical assault, is, according to official sources, lower than that of men. Research has tended to interpret women's fears in terms of rape and sexual assault, an explanation that focuses on random acts of violence committed by strangers. While 'outside stranger danger' may be part of the explanation, it still leaves women's fear of crime out of proportion to the recorded incidence of rape.

A more comprehensive explanation would have to factor in "the pervading atmosphere of sexual threat to women" (Stanko 1993). Along with the fear of rape, which is known to be widely underreported, Stanko suggests that women's sense of danger stems from both everyday incidents of verbal sexual abuse and harassment they encounter on the streets and at work, and the violence they face from familiar men within familial contexts. As studies show, severe violence at the hands of intimate partners increases women's overall sense of vulnerability. Community safety audits demonstrate how this sense often translates into concerns about the physical environment: Parking lots, public stairwells and public transit, for instance, feature prominently in women's assessments of personal safety. "Women police themselves by restricting their activities in public because of the anxiety about potential violence and by using, in public and private, more safety precautions than do men" (ibid., p. 51).

The fear of sexual violence is thus 'a core component of being female', one that appears to cut across class, culture and levels of development. Gallup data from surveys in 143 countries in 2011 suggest that while men in higher income countries are far more likely than those in low-income countries to feel safe walking alone in their communities at night (82 percent compared to 67 percent), women felt less safe than men in every country. The gender gap in perceptions did not correspond to income levels: Double-digit gaps were found in many middle- and high-income countries.[13]

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[13] See: www.gallup.com/poll/155402/women-feel-less-safe-men-developed-countries.aspx. Downloaded 7 June 2014.

In her analysis of violence against women, Nussbaum (2005) points out that her position as a privileged, white, middle-class woman, born and brought up in a wealthy country that treats rape as a serious crime, did not protect her from the experience of date rape, of violent and damaging sexual assault, and numerous experiences of sexual harassment, including attempted rape. It left Nussbaum with a fear that would not go away, unable to take a walk at night on her own, even in the relative safety of Finland (ranked by the 2013 Global Peace Index as the seventh safest country in the world out of 162).[14]

The same fear was eloquently invoked by a young garment worker in Bangladesh (ranked 105th on the Global Peace Index) to explain why she had felt safer earlier when she was married, despite the violence of her husband, and her constant feeling of vulnerability now that she was a woman on her own: "When I was married, even if I was not earning, at least I was with him. No one could say anything to me. Now, even if they say nothing, I feel afraid, I feel they might. That fear is always there. Don't all women have this fear inside them? I am a woman on my own; I have to go to the bazaar, I have to go here, I have to go there; men stare at me, they pass comments (Kabeer 2000, p. 132).

Violence within the family reverberates over generations. Girls and boys who have either witnessed or experienced violence and abuse within the family are more likely to grow up to be perpetrators or victims. They report a higher risk of early sexual activity, increased sexual risk taking, substance abuse and multiple sexual partners. While such effects may work partly through 'normalizing' violence as an aspect of family life, a growing body of scientific research has also documented that these longer term adverse consequences operate through the effect of 'toxic stress' on a child's brain development (Shonkoff et al. 2011). Toxic stress refers to strong, frequent or prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems in the absence of the buffering protection provided by supportive adult relations.

The risk factors include child abuse or neglect, and the long-term consequences encompass a range of physical and mental illnesses in adult life, such as having trouble maintaining supportive social networks, and higher risks of school failure, gang membership, unemployment, homelessness, violent crime, incarceration and single parenthood. Even more worryingly, adults in this high-risk group who become parents themselves are less likely to be able to provide the kind of stable and supportive relationships that can protect their own children from toxic stress. The fact that this intergenerational cycle of adversity and violence, with its predictable repetition of limited educational achievement and poor health, is mediated in part by social inequalities and disrupted

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[14] See: www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/jun/11/global-peace-index-2013#data.

social networks that contribute to fragile families and parenting difficulties may explain the association between poverty, social marginalization and so-called 'subcultures of violence'. It also underlines why violence poses such a threat to the human development agenda, and why, while women are the most frequent victims of family violence, the problem is one for society at large.

There have been growing efforts to document the tangible and immediate consequences of violence on women's health and physical well-being. But, as Nussbaum points out, there has been less attention to its intangible impacts on freedom of movement, emotional well-being, and capacity for imagination and thought—all key dimensions of human capability. Along with the assault on the personhood, dignity and sense of worth that all violence inflicts on its victims, the consequences of violence against women also reflect its systemic character, and the fact that it is not randomly distributed across the population but directed at a particular group by virtue of their subordination. As Young (1990) puts it, "(T)he oppression of violence consists not only in direct victimisation but in the daily knowledge shared by all members of the oppressed group that they are liable to violation, solely on account of their group identity. Just living under the threat of attack...deprives the oppressed of freedom and dignity and needlessly expends their energy" (p. 62).

The economic costs of violence

Violence against women clearly imposes costs on the wider society in terms of lower worker productivity and income, erosion of its human capital and capabilities, and the perpetuation of the intergenerational cycle of violence. In addition to the denial of human rights, freedoms and liberties, the social and economic costs of violence undermine a country's development achievements. World Bank estimates of the global burden of disease found that in established market economies, gender-based violence is responsible for one in every five healthy days of life lost to women of reproductive age. Worldwide, violence against women accounts for as much death and illness in women aged 15 to 44 as cancer, and is a greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined (Venis et al. 2002). The per capita health burden imposed by rape and domestic violence is roughly equivalent in both industrial and developing worlds, but because the overall health burden is so much greater in the developing world, the percentage attributable to gender-based violence is smaller.

There have been a number of attempts to estimate the costs of violence in financial terms. These relate to both direct expenditures from gender-based violence, including medical care, judicial and legal services, and social services, and indirect costs from lost productivity in both paid and unpaid

work, lost opportunities in domestic and external investment,[15] and lost investments in human capital. Most estimates come from developed countries and tend to focus on direct costs. Some illustrative estimates are summarized in table 2 (reproduced from table 3 in WHO 2004). Various problems have restricted estimates in lower income countries, including the coexistence of formal and informal structures of health provision and economic activity, as well as minimal information technology and record-keeping, and difficulties with data collection.[16]

Existing estimates suggest that the direct costs of treating victims of intimate partner violence in Kingston Public Hospital in Jamaica was $454,000 in 1991 (in 2001 dollars), while the Colombian National Government spent around 184 billion pesos ($73.7 million) in 2003 to prevent, detect and offer services to survivors of family violence; this was equivalent to 0.6 percent of the total national budget (Sanchez et al. 2004, cited in Bott et al. 2005). Morrison and Orlando (1999) found that abused women in Chile had a lower probability of working and earning outside the home, and earned lower wages than non-abused women. They also estimated that lost wages due to family violence amounted to 1.6 and 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Nicaragua and Chile, respectively. Sanchez et al. (2004) found, using 1995 Demographic and Health Survey data, that Colombian women who had suffered physical violence had 14 percent lower earnings than those who had not (cited in Bott et al. 2005). Using 2003 data, Sanchez et al. (2004) estimated that loss of wages due to family violence was equivalent to 0.85 percent of Colombia's GDP. More recently, Duvvury et al. (2013) have estimated that productivity loss due to absenteeism related to intimate partner violence in Uganda and Bangladesh for the main economic sectors was 1.27 percent and 1.28 percent of GDP in 2012, respectively.

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[15] *The New York Times* reported, "Visits to India by female tourists dropped 35 percent in the first three months of this year compared with the same period last year, according to the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India. That three-month period came after the fatal gang rape of a 23-year-old student in New Delhi in December, which brought protesters to the streets and shined a spotlight on the harassment and intimidation women face every day in India." See: www.nytimes.com/2013/06/11/world/asia/rape-cases-are-making-tourists-wary-of-visiting-india.html?_r=0. Downloaded 24 August 2013.

[16] See: www.icrw.org/files/publications/Estimating-the-Costs-and-Impacts-of-Intimate-Partner-Violence-in-Developing-Countries-A-Methodological-Resource-Guide.pdf.

Table 2: Costs of intimate partner violence per selected studies

Peer reviewed articles and government studies			
Study (year)	Study population (location)	Cost categories included (indirect costs in italics)	Total annual costs (2001 dollars)
Australian Institute of Criminology (2001)	Cost of refuge accommodation for victims of intimate partner violence in Australia	Legal services, incarceration, victim compensation (lost earnings and opportunity costs)	$14.2 million
Health Canada (2002)	All types of violence against women in Canada	Direct medical	$1.1 billion
Mansingh and Ramphal (1993)	Kingston Public Hospital, Jamaica, 1991. Costs for treating victims of intimate partner violence	Direct medical	$454,000
Morrison and Orlando (1999)	1997 stratified random samples: 310 women in Santiago, Chile; 378 women in Managua, Chile	Lost earnings and opportunity costs of time	Extrapolated lost earnings: $1.73 billion in Chile; $32.7 million in Nicaragua
New and Berliner (2000)	318 women victims compensated by the Crime Victims Compensation programme in the US state of Washington.	Direct medical (mental health, treatment costs)	$3,087 per patient (median 15 sessions)
Snively (1994)	New Zealand	Direct medical, welfare, legal, policing	$717, 000
Stanko et al. (1998)	Borough of Hackney, United Kingdom, 1996	Public services only; policing, legal, medical, other monetary costs (housing, refuge, social services)	$13.3 million
Wisner et al. (1999)	126 victims of intimate partner violence in a large health plan in the US state of Minnesota, 1992-1994	Direct medical	$4,341 per patient
Studies conducted by advocacy groups			
Day (1995)	Data drawn from surveys in Canada	Direct medical, including dental costs (lost earnings and opportunity costs, other monetary costs, psychological costs)	$1.2 billion

Korf et al. (1997)	Female victims of domestic violence in the Netherlands, 1997	Direct medical, legal services, incarceration, other monetary costs, policing (lost earnings and opportunity costs)	$142.2 million
Womankind Worldwide (2002)	Lost work and legal expenses for private companies in the United States	Direct medical, legal services, policing, (employment and workers' productivity, psychological costs, lost earnings and opportunity costs)	$3.5 billion
Women's Advocates Inc. (2002)	United States overall	Direct medical, legal services, policing, incarceration, other monetary costs such as shelter (lost earnings and opportunity costs, employment and workers' productivity)	$12.6 billion

Source: WHO 2004, table 3.

Addressing violence against women: law, policy and community action

Women's organizations around the world have been at the forefront of efforts to tackle violence against women. They have drawn attention to the virtual curfew imposed on women after dark in most countries through international campaigns such as 'Take back the night', which have subsequently turned into international calls to stop all forms of violence against women.[17] More recently, the 'One Billion Rising for Justice' campaign[18] has mobilized men and women across the world in support of survivors of violence. Such international feminist activism helped to move the issue from the invisible margins of international debates before the 1980s to a central plank of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 (Sen 2003, Keck et al. 1998).

Women's movements have done more than bringing the issue of violence onto the international agenda. As a carefully researched study by Htun and Weldon (2012) shows, active and autonomous women's movements appear to be the single most important factor in explaining state responsiveness to violence against women at a number of different levels, such as through

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[17] See: www.reclaimthenight.org, www.isis.aust.com/rtn/.

[18] See: www.onebillionrising.org/.

specialized legislation dealing with various forms of violence, practical support and legal assistance to women seeking to leave abusive relationships, relevant training to service providers, and targeted support for vulnerable women. This section reviews the various approaches, with an assumption that women's organizations have played consistent and important roles in shaping their content and promoting their adoption.

The integrated analysis of violence against women offered by the 'social ecology' framework highlights the importance of responses at different levels and in diverse spheres. Broader interventions aimed at changing societal norms and practices that have given rise to violence are critical, along with 'sanctuary and sanction' strategies that work with individual victims and perpetrators. An indication of the relatively recent interest in the issue, at least within the academic and policy mainstream, is that there is still little systematic evaluation of the impacts of these efforts. Where evidence exists, it is skewed towards high-income countries, particularly the United States (Bott et al. 2005, Heise 2012, WHO 2010). The extent to which such efforts can be replicated in poorer countries with very different cultures and resource constraints is not at all clear. This section lays out some emerging examples of good practice, rather than summarizing high-quality evaluations, but it will cite evidence on effectiveness where it exists.

TRANSLATING RIGHTS INTO LAW

The most widely used approach at societal level for eradicating gender-based violence has been to embed recognition of violence against women as a violation of women's human rights within international and national systems of governance. This has not been an easy task. The human rights guarantees in long-standing international conventions, such as the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, include the rights to life, bodily integrity, and freedom from torture, and cruel and degrading treatment, but these were not interpreted to include domestic violence, rape, female-selective abortion and infanticide, female genital mutilation and all the other forms that violence against women and girls takes across the world.

These lacunae in the international framework reflected various biases in conceptualizing rights. In particular, there was a strong male bias. As Chinkin (1995) points out: "Human rights legislation has been drafted and applied to guarantee men protection against those harms they fear will be directed against them. It has failed to take account of women's experiences and to provide even theoretical protections against those acts that are directed against women because they are women" (p. 23).

Related to this was an institutional bias: The international human rights framework interpreted the question of violence largely in terms of violence perpetrated by the state. Yet much of the violence against women occurs in the private domain, placing it outside the purview of domestic and international rights legislation. Legal regimes have also long treated domestic violence as a private matter within the family. Some provide legally recognized defences—such as 'honour crimes' or 'crimes of passion'—to perpetrators of violence against women.

CEDAW, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 to address different aspects of gender discrimination, does acknowledge discrimination within the family. It requires the state to take appropriate measures towards elimination, but there is no specific provision on domestic violence against women or on sexual violence encountered in the public domain. The partial nature of this recognition of women's rights at the international level began to change in the 1980s, when the international women's movement coordinated a worldwide campaign to put violence against women on the human rights agenda. Its success in drawing attention to issues, setting agendas and influencing the discursive positions of both states and international organizations meant that the Declaration of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights recognized violence against women in the private sphere as an abuse of human rights, and affirmed that women's rights were an "inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" (Keck et al. 1998, p. 186).

A United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women was appointed after the 1993 conference to prepare a report on gender violence every year, focusing on specific forms. The CEDAW committee also recommended that states ratifying the convention should ensure that laws against family violence, abuse, rape, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence are in place, and should give adequate protection to all women, and respect their integrity and dignity. Appropriate protective and supportive services should be provided for survivors. Gender-sensitive training of judicial and law enforcement officers and other public officials was considered essential for effective implementation of CEDAW. On 20 December 1993, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women signalling that it is to be recognized as a breach of human rights and placing responsibility on the state to uphold the right to live free of violence.

CEDAW has provided an important resource for those seeking legal recourse to protect women's rights to bodily integrity and freedom from violence. It has been used to promote national legislation and protect the rights of those, such as undocumented migrants, who fall between national jurisdictions. Important as legislation may be, however, it cannot on its own eradicate violence against women.

As development literature has amply demonstrated, adoption of a law is not the same as enforcement. The justice system has to be made to work in the spirit of the law if it is to have any

effect. Judges, police, medical experts, social workers and all other actors involved in implementation have important roles to play. At present, very few women trust the courts or the police to act on their behalf. Often these institutions are permeated by the same victim-blaming culture that characterizes the wider society. The WHO study (2005) found that between 55 and 95 percent of women who had suffered physical violence within intimate relationships had never sought help from either formal institutions or traditional authorities.

Further, while legal provisions can offer some degree of protection to those at risk of violence and penalize those who perpetrate it, they are less effective in preventing violence. They may not be accessible for those who need protection most. Legislative initiatives have to be accompanied by policies and measures at different levels, including strategies to empower women to renegotiate or exit abusive relationships, or to seek the help of the law, as well as to transform norms of masculinity and femininity that perpetuate violence. Legal initiatives to make the law more accessible to all, such as through legal aid, may need to be combined with various developmental measures, including the reform of relevant institutions, broadened public health services and various community-based actions.

IMPROVING THE LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Along with legislative reform, efforts have been made to strengthen key law enforcement institutions by training professionals, reorganizing police and courts, and offering a more comprehensive package of support to survivors. For instance, South Africa initiated internal training of its law enforcement institutions after the passage of the 1998 Domestic Violence Act. Elsewhere, non-governmental organizations such as Profamilia in the Dominican Republic, Rozan in Pakistan and the Musasa Project in Zimbabwe have trained law enforcement personnel on issues related to gender-based violence.

Governments have also collaborated with the United Nations to provide training and support to the judiciary through, for instance, the United Nations Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Costa Rica. It works with legal and judicial personnel throughout Latin America to improve the criminal justice system generally, with a particular focus on gender-based violence. Where these efforts have been evaluated, they appear to be "both constructive and urgently needed" (Bott et al. 2005, p. 21). A great deal depends on the quality of content and skills, status and perceived legitimacy of trainers, and participation by staff at all levels, including higher level officials—whose attitudes are crucial for bringing about improvements in practice.

Experiments with all women police stations began in Brazil and have since been tried in other countries in Latin America and elsewhere (Bott et al. 2005). For instance, by 2003, Nicaragua had 17 police stations for women and children operating throughout the country with special funding from donors. Other countries like Zambia have experimented with special police 'cells' for women and children, comprised of one or more police officers working in a regular station but dedicated to gender-based violence.

India has a combination of women's police stations, women's cells within general police stations and police counselling cells (Dave et al. 2000). As might be expected, evaluations are mixed. A study carried out in 2000 of the Special Cell for Women and Children, set up as a collaboration between the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the Mumbai Police in 1984, found that the number of cases referred to the Special Cell increased threefold between 1990 and 1996. An important aspect of this was that referrals by ex-clients accounted for about 40 percent of women approaching the cell, suggesting that their experience had been a positive one. But a more general evaluation concluded, "(A)ll women police stations are seen as token measures and suffer from several inadequacies. The ingrained male bias in the police station against the capabilities of women prevents female staff or complainants from benefiting fully from the stations...The stations suffer from lack of adequate personnel, infrastructure, support and co-operation...Beyond a lack of personnel, women's issues are not seen by police officers as hard core police work and hence there is a tendency to dismiss the work of (these stations) as secondary...The Mahila Police Thanas are an example of an innovative response that has failed due to the lack of a wider integrated policy to facilitate the process of implementation" (Mitra 1999, p. 23).

An overview of the Latin American experience (Jubb et al. 2010) came to similarly mixed conclusions. While "women's police stations have contributed to making the problem of violence against women visible as a public, collective, and punishable matter" (p. 70) as well as offering women new opportunities to defend their rights, there is often a major divergence between the kind of support women are looking for, such as protection, information and leverage to make their partners change, and the formal prosecutions that police staff are trained to pursue. While legal and psychosocial support was often available, the police seldom made necessary referrals. Even when women police stations work well, their efforts may be undermined by other parts of the justice system that are unwilling or unable to enforce the law.

Strengthening law enforcement across the board may be a more effective long-term approach. A 'whole systems' strategy in which all police, both male and female, receive pre- and in-service training on now to treat gender-based violence, while still uncommon, has led to "impressive results" (Morisson et al. 2004, p. 28) in improving the quality of police services for women in Nicaragua.

IMPROVING AND EXPANDING SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The public health system has a key role in addressing violence against women, not simply because of the health consequences, but also because outside informal networks, women are most likely to disclose intimate partner violence, rape and sexual assault to health care providers. The responses of providers may be critical to women's recovery and future safety. As Heise (1994-1995) notes, health and family planning services are among the few institutions that regularly have ongoing contact with women, making health centres ideal for identifying and referring women to other available support services. Furthermore, given that public health programmes have a long history of working to change attitudes and behaviour, a public health perspective can add a concern with prevention rather than solely focusing on medical treatment.

Efforts to make health systems more responsive to gender-based violence would have to go beyond piecemeal measures, such as one-off training efforts for staff, in favour once again of the 'whole systems' approach. This would involve changes in norms, policies and protocols; infrastructure upgrades to ensure private consultations; systems-wide training; adequate resources, including referral networks and directories; and strengthened staff abilities to provide emergency services such as danger assessment, safety planning, emotional support, prophylaxes for sexually transmitted infections and emergency contraception.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere region carried out an initiative to pilot the systems approach in four member associations in Latin America, including ProFamilia (Dominican Republic), INPPARES (Peru), PLAFAM (Venezuela) and BEMFAM (Brazil). Evaluations suggest improvements in provider attitudes and practices, strengthened patient privacy and confidentiality, increased detection of women experiencing physical or sexual abuse, and more specialized services such as legal aid, and counselling and support groups. Many recommendations and tools have been designed, on the basis of this experience, to help organizations in low-income settings (Morrison et al. 2004).

REFORMING THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Reform of the educational system is central in tackling violence. Education, particularly beyond the primary level, is associated in many cases with lower levels of violence. At the same time, sexual harassment within schools, or on the way to school, is a major reason that girls are kept back from school or drop out earlier than boys. As Bott et al. (2005) note, the challenge for the educational sector is twofold: to reduce discrimination and violence within the school setting, and to strengthen the role of education in combating attitudes and behaviour associated with violence against women.

Lessening the distance to schools, and improved infrastructure and communication can help to make the journey to school much safer for girls. Changes also have to take place within the educational system to make schools secure. These can entail working with educators to improve their knowledge, attitudes about and understanding of the problem; promoting a non-violent and gender-equitable culture within schools and the wider community; providing counselling services for students; improving the sexual and health curriculum to address gender power imbalances that lead teachers and students to pressure girls for sex; and mobilizing parents and community members to monitor school safety.

Some of these activities have made a difference. For instance, the TANESA Guardian project in Tanzania aimed to provide girls with mentors who would provide support and advice. It led to an increase in the percentage of girls consulting with their mentors and reporting sexual harassment by a teacher (cited in Bott et al. 2005). Pilot attempts to work with parents, students and communities in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe raised awareness of abuse, increased willingness on the part of parents to report abuse, and encouraged communities to confront the problem without putting individual girls at risk of retaliation (Leach et al., 2003).

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: CHANGING NORMS, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

As studies reviewed in this paper have shown, social norms and values prevailing within communities influence levels of violence against women. So, for instance, while individual attitudes towards the acceptability of violence proved significant in predicting its likelihood in all the sites covered by the WHO multi-country study, these attitudes are more likely to prevail in some contexts than others. Over 60 percent of women accepted men's right to beat their wives under certain circumstances in Bangladesh, rural Ethiopia, Peru, Samoa and Thailand, while 80 percent or more of women in Brazil, Japan, Namibia, and urban Serbia and Montenegro did not accept this under any circumstance.

Among various efforts to bring about normative changes at the community level, a number have been singled out as more effective than others. Among these are Sexto Sentido in Nicaragua and Soul City in South Africa, both undertaken by non-governmental organizations. Both combine education and entertainment, using a multimedia approach (prime-time television, soap operas, radio programmes, school-based work) to target young men and women. A longitudinal evaluation of Sexto Sentido with more than 4,000 young people found significant changes in attitudes and some aspects of behaviour: greater support for gender equitable attitudes, increased communication about HIV and sexual behaviour, increased condom use, and more first-ever HIV tests (Solórzano et al. 2008). An evaluation of Soul City found evidence of greater awareness of the helpline for gender-

based violence, increased acceptance that intimate partner violence was not a private matter and some decrease in the percentage of men condoning violence against women. While Soul City appeared to have stronger impacts on attitudes and behaviours relating to HIV and AIDS than gender-based violence, this may reflect the fact that the violence component was added somewhat later in the programme (Goldstein et al. 2005).

Stepping Stones is a community training package focused on preventing the transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted infections, and gender-based violence, and improving reproductive health. Originally developed in Uganda, it has been adapted in over 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. It uses participatory learning approaches, including critical reflection, role-play and drama, with parallel single-sex groups of men and women. A combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the South Africa programme (Jewkes et al. 2008, 2010) found that while it had little effect on rates of HIV, there was a significant decline in the number of partners reported by men; greater use of condoms; and a substantial decline in the proportion of men who perpetrated physical or sexual violence against partners, or who had raped or attempted rape. Both men and women reported improved communication, increased acceptance of condom use and greater disapproval of violence against women.

Similar findings have been reported from Stepping Stones projects in other places. An evaluation in Gambia that followed participating couples for over a year found that communication and quarrels had reduced, compared to a control group, while participating men were more likely to accept partners' refusal to have sex and less likely to beat them (Paine et al. 2002). In India, where Stepping Stones was implemented by the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust in 202 villages, a study found that respondents reported significant changes in their relationships since their training. Attitudes around male-female roles remained resistant, however, and diffusion in the wider community was limited (Bradley et al. 2011).

Raising Voices is another community-wide, multisectoral initiative pioneered in Uganda (Michau 2007). It has five phases: community assessment to gather information on attitudes and beliefs about domestic violence and build relationships within the community; raising awareness about domestic violence and its consequences within the community and among professionals, such as in social and health services, law enforcement, education and religious communities; building networks of support within the community and professional sectors; integrating action against domestic violence into everyday life and within institutions; and consolidating programmes and activities to ensure their sustainability, continued growth and progress. A preliminary qualitative evaluation suggests that male behaviour had changed because of reduced tolerance of violence by local councils, police and the community at large. Men reported fear of being publicly shamed by having their behaviour within the home exposed.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES TO EMPOWER WOMEN

There is no clear-cut relationship between the incidence of domestic violence and women's access to material resources such as land and employment. Indeed, such access can threaten the status quo within intimate relationships and led to an escalation of violence. There are cases where access to material resources has been combined with efforts to strengthen women's knowledge and capabilities, however, and the results appear to be more positive. For instance, the IMAGE programme in South Africa added a 10-session participatory training component on gender issues to an existing group lending and savings scheme for women organized by the Small Enterprise Foundation in Limpopo. An evaluation two years later found that the rate of physical and sexual partner violence among programme participants had fallen by half. Women's empowerment improved on a range of indicators, including better relationships with partners and a greater voice in household decision-making. The evaluation noted that the difference appeared to reflect the training component more than the provision of credit (Kim et al. 2009, Pronyk et al. 2006).

A longitudinal evaluation of BRAC in Bangladesh suggested that violence against women increased when women first joined the organization and started to receive credit, but that it declined after they had attended skills-training classes (Ahmed 2005). This may reflect the duration of membership, since such classes are offered some time after women have joined, or it may reflect the impact of participating in forms of training that increased capacities to protest against violence.

An evaluation of CYSD, a non-governmental entity that organizes self-help groups among tribal women in Orissa, one of the poorest states in India, noted that longer membership in a self-help group was correlated not only with increased interaction with local government officials and participation in community meetings, but also with public protests against male alcoholism, one of the main causes of domestic violence within the local community (Dash et al. 2005).

In Bangladesh, Nijera Kori seeks to organize landless men and women to know their rights, and take collective action to claim them and protest injustice. It works with the traditional system of arbitration, the *shalish,* to ensure justice for poor and landless groups, and conducts its own dispute resolution processes. A recent evaluation found high levels of collective action by members, with a great deal of this action, by both men and women, focusing on gender issues—violence against women and rape were the most frequently mentioned. Significantly, when asked whether the organization had any effect beyond its immediate membership, the impacts most commonly mentioned by women members were their increased mobility in the public domain and reduction in domestic violence (Kabeer et al. 2009).

A number of community-based initiatives promote women's access to justice at the local level. Research has shown that women turn first to immediate family or neighbours for help; informal local

networks can be crucial in providing first responses to those experiencing intimate partner violence. Amid the complexity of intimate partner relationships, where love and loyalty may coexist with coercion and abuse, criminal prosecutions may not necessarily be appropriate for women who want physical or sexual violence to end, but do not want to break up the family (Larraín 1999). The reluctance to prosecute is likely to be particularly strong where women and children are economically dependent on the partner's earnings. In such contexts, the mobilization of grass-roots women's collectives, mock funeral processions of dowry victims, public shaming of perpetrators, street theatre and local methods of dispute resolution have been effective and potentially sustainable responses (Burton et al. 2002).

A bottom-up legal empowerment approach was adopted by an Indonesian non-governmental organization, the Women Heads of Households Programme (PEKKA), which had been working to empower its members through group formation, education and microfinance activities since 1999 (Venning 2010). In 2005, the group added a legal empowerment component to increase its members' legal knowledge and access to justice. Village paralegals are selected from existing members and trained to provide a first port of call for members with legal problems, including those experiencing domestic violence. This provides a network of support rather than directly enforcing statutory legislation. The group seeks to resolve domestic violence by applying social pressure, on village leaders, for example, to stop domestic violence, or by explaining to perpetrators that their actions are against the law. Paralegals also encourage women to talk about and start to take a stand against this widespread but unacknowledged problem. Cultural and traditional problem-solving mechanisms, whereby village leaders mediate a resolution, are widely viewed as more effective than prioritizing legal prosecution of domestic violence cases "given the social transformational potential of an increase in women's autonomy coupled with disincentives to, and disadvantages in, reporting domestic violence to the legal institutions" (ibid., p. 406). "Paralegals support women as partners, the PEKKA members set their own priorities within their groups, strategies invoked are wider than mere state system strategies and law is just one element of an integrated development strategy, including economic empowerment activities" (ibid., p. 407).

The International Center for Research on Women (2002) has documented a number of organizational efforts to set up local dispute resolution mechanisms to address gender-related issues or to work with existing local mechanisms in India. These included establishing special Women's Courts in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat by the Mahila Samakhya programme, and engagement with the *shalish* process in West Bengal. While the approaches differ, the initiatives work with quasi-legal, locally acceptable processes to gain credibility within communities, engage in collecting and presenting the facts of the disputes, give space to both sides of disputes, and seek to arrive at a mutually agreed solution that prioritizes the restitution of women's rights over the punishment of the perpetrator. Arbitration becomes an alternative to the formal legal system, often perceived as having

a hostile nature and procedures based on proof for dealing with sensitive, complex issues such as violence. Quasi-legal or other traditionally acceptable processes that gain credibility within the community also create a sense of local control and ownership of the problem and its resolution. Increasing a community's capacity to manage the problem of violence in ways that appear to acknowledge its injustice may contribute to longer term reduction in incidences, an issue warranting further study.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES THAT WORK WITH MEN

It is increasingly recognized that violence against women cannot be stopped without greater efforts to work with men, not simply around issues of violence, but also in challenging patriarchal norms and promoting new, gentler models of masculinity. These efforts are critical complements to longer standing interventions to empower women. Once again, evaluations are few and far between, but the available evidence suggests that some initiatives hold considerable promise for addressing the causes of violence. Reviewing 58 interventions that work with communities or specifically with men, Barker et al. (2007) distinguished between gender-neutral programmes that failed to touch on gender-differentiated roles and needs; gender-sensitive programmes that recognized the specific needs and realities of men and women based on the social construction of gender roles; and gender-transformative approaches that actively sought to uproot gender inequalities and promote more equitable relationships. They found that programmes judged as having transformative agendas were generally more effective than the rest in bringing about changes in attitudes and behaviours. They suggested that programmes that went beyond individuals to address the social context—including local relationships, institutions, community leaders and so on—were more effective in bringing about change, suggesting the importance of broad-based efforts. They also pointed out that few programmes with men and boys went beyond the pilot stage or short-term time-frames.

One of the best known, most effective efforts reviewed by Barker et al. (ibid.) encompasses programmes developed by Horizons and partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America based on research on prevailing norms of masculinity in different country contexts. In Brazil, Program H combined interactive group education sessions for young men with a community-wide 'lifestyle' social marketing campaign that used gender-sensitive messages to promote safer sex and healthier relationships. A key component entailed encouraging young men to reflect on how they acted as men and on the ways that gender inequality played out in their own lives. Evaluations suggest that the programme succeeded in encouraging greater support for gender-equitable norms among those who had participated, as well as increased condom use and reduced rates of sexually transmitted infections. In India, Yaar Dosti, a modified version of this approach, also resulted in significant reduction in support for inequitable norms. Although these impacts were not uniform across sites,

there were positive changes in terms of condom use, partner communication, sexual health and partner violence (Verma et al. 2006).

The Ethiopia Male Norms Initiative reported declines in partner violence but little movement in attitudes directly related to violence (Pulerwitz et al. 2010). The percentage of young men who said they had used violence against their partners fell among those who participated in the programme, but showed no change among those who had not. Multivariate analysis suggested that the odds of violent behaviour by participants decreased as time went on.

Conclusion

Violence against women has only recently been recognized by the international community as a violation of women's fundamental human rights, a threat to their basic capabilities, a major factor in the intergenerational perpetuation of violent behaviour within the home and outside it, and a significant impediment to sustainable human development. A long history of invisibility reflects the institutionalized nature of male bias within law and policy, which prevented acknowledgement of gender-based violence and its significance in manifesting patriarchal power relations. Sustained action by women's organizations across the world was needed to bring the issue onto the international agenda and keep it there.

That the struggle continues is evidenced by the fact that while the Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000 by 189 of the world's leaders, included the promise "to combat all forms of violence against women," that commitment never reached the MDGs to operationalize the declaration. The intervening years have seen a major mobilization by the international women's movement to hold the international community to its promise. The global survey carried out by the Association of Women's Rights in Development with 1,119 women's organizations from over 140 countries has identified gender-based violence/violence against women as the number one priority for the post-2015 agenda following the end of the MDGs (Pittman et al. 2012).

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012 acknowledged that the persistence of violence against women has undermined progress on all the MDGs, given its crippling effect on women's ability to contribute to and benefit from broader development processes (United Nations 2012, p. 4). The Zero Draft of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development has included the

elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spaces as one element of the goal to promote gender equality and empower women and girls.[19]

The Open Working Group's report is one more step in a process that will culminate in the post-2015 development framework that will be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. Even if the post-2015 agenda does include a commitment to the elimination of violence against women, however, past experience suggests that the real test lies in translating policy commitments into practical measures, and practical measures into intended outcomes. As the above discussion about different approaches to tackling violence shows, there is no single set of measures that will suffice. Deeply entrenched norms, beliefs and practices underpinning patriarchal power, and their pervasiveness across different institutions, both public and private, mean that any serious effort to address violence must operate on a number of different fronts and in a comprehensive manner. Past experience suggests that support for active and autonomous women's organizations, given their role in keeping this issue at the forefront of the international agenda, remains as vital as ever.

There is one other important lesson from past decades. While women's organizations have put violence on public agendas, they will not be able to achieve the goal of eliminating it without the active support of men. For change to take root, both men and women need to engage in transforming unequal gender relations. Men and boys have as much to gain as women and girls from new meanings of masculinity and femininity, so that they accommodate a greater diversity of ways of being, both those within existing norms and those that challenge these norms. While approaches discussed in this paper do not exhaust all possibilities for bringing about such change, they do provide the basic outlines for an agenda for public action that can provide many lessons and be scaled up over time.

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[19] See: http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html. Downloaded 8 June 2014.

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