CONCEPTUALISING VIOLENCE:
A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

AUTHORS: SCRIVER, S., DUVVURY, N., ASHE, S., RAGHAVENDRA, S. AND O'DONOVAN, D.
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Definitions are not merely a means of establishing clarity; rather, they shape the field in which a concept is understood, measured and evaluated. Definitions of violence against women establish what acts are perceived as violence by a society and which are not, which acts come into the remit of the law and which go unrecognised, and who is perceived as a legitimate victim or perpetrator. Definitions also lead to measures, directing what types of impacts are accounted for within research and what types of acts or individuals are included within prevalence estimates. It is therefore essential that researchers and activists working in the area of violence against women and girls (VAWG) adopt clear definitions that adequately recognise the variety, scope and impact of violence on women and girls, their families, communities and societies. In this paper, we examine contributions to understandings of violence from a number of disciplines which have shaped and informed the most common conceptualisations of VAWG today. We do so with the objective of identifying the gaps in existing conceptual approaches to VAWG and its impacts, and with the hope of deepening our conceptual understanding of VAWG to improve the approaches and measures used to identify the forms and impacts of VAWG.

1. DEFINING VIOLENCE

Despite the apparent ubiquitous-ness of violence throughout human society, violent acts should not be seen as either 'natural' or clearly defined. Malesevic argues for the social construction of violence noting that 'violence is first and foremost a social relation between two or more living organisms; it is not a biological quality. It is a particular form of social action that human beings alone categorise as violent. It is not a fixed trait but something that is historically generated, structurally shaped and ideological framed' (Malesevic, 2015). This is not to say that violence does not have material impacts, but rather that how violence is conceptualised i nfluences what actions are perceived as constituting violence and how individuals, communities and societies react to such actions. Further, such conceptualisations also influence the means and methods used to measure and define particular forms of violence, including forms of Violence against Women and Girls. In this paper, we examine definitions of violence used by researchers in the fields of peace and conflict, interpersonal violence and VAWG and consider common typologies of violence. We argue that definitions of violence must be broad enough to recognise the multiple forms that violence may take, the variety of contexts in which violence occurs and the interaction between forms and contexts. We note that current models for conceptualising violence against women and girls are often temporally bounded and apply a pillared approach to violence which unrealistically separates forms of violence that more often occur as part of a pattern of violence for

women and girls that plays out over the life-course. Importantly we expand on current knowledge about VAWG and point towards a model to conceptualise the impact of multiple forms of violence across the life-course.

Violence is often perceived as something which one 'knows it, when they see it' resulting in diverse conceptions of violence among researchers, academics and the general public, often marked by disciplinary boundaries and particular interests. Such a lack of conceptual clarity and interdisciplinarity may undermine efforts to understand violence in its multiple dimensions and thus to appreciate its true costs for individuals, families, communities and societies. In order to address this gap and drive forward the conceptual understanding of VAWG and its broad impacts, this review takes an interdisciplinary approach in examining the development of conceptualisations of violence and how these have shaped current understandings of VAWG. Beginning with a significant contribution to definitions of violence from Peace Studies and Political Science, through public health and human rights, we then consider the addition of the capabilities approach to understanding violence before examining typologies of violence.
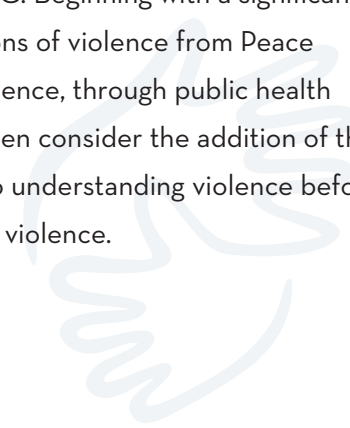
1.1 Early works: expanding the concept of violence

In classic works, violence has often been defined in relation to the intentional use of force to injure or kill (e.g. Dewey, 1916). While this understanding of violence is pragmatically correct, it overlooks the myriad other forms of injury (e.g. psychological, economic, and social) that may be inflicted, the fact that violence may not be associated with a clear actor, and the impact of violations of one's rights, as opposed to the active infliction of injury, on a person's well-being and bodily integrity (Bufacchi, 2005). In 1969 Johann Galtung published one of the most influential examinations of forms of violence which challenged such a narrow conception of violence. His work looked towards violence as a broad manifestation that included both physical and non-physical forms and which could occur on personal and structural levels. Galtung defined violence as 'the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance' (1969:168) and further clarifies that 'violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations' (ibid.). He distinguishes between physical violence and psychological violence, that is, between 'violence that works on the body, and violence that works on the soul; where the latter would include lies, brainwashing, indoctrination of various kinds, threats, etc. that serve to decrease mental potentialities' (ibid.) and does not prioritise the impact of one form over the other.

In addition to the recognition of multiple forms of violence, be they physical or psychological in nature, Galtung also recognised the impact of structural violence, as shown in Figure 1 below. While interpersonal violence has a clear perpetrator and victim, structural violence in contrast is 'built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as un-equal life chances' (Galtung, 1969:171).   He goes on to reflect, 'when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence' (ibid.). Violence may be both interpersonal (from the perspective of the victim and perpetrator) and structural in that it reflects wide-spread inequalities that are not confined to the individual relationship between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s). Structural violence, unlike personal violence, also tends to show considerable stability over time – the norms and values that guide structural violence are difficult to change and slow to adapt (ibid. 173). Such a definition has important connotations for understanding VAWG, which, in its current conceptualisation is perceived as an outcome of structural gender inequalities. Thus, while individual women experience incidents of interpersonal violence, the prevalence of VAWG and the difficulty encountered in reducing VAWG points towards the violence present in inequitable social norms and access to resources, which ultimately underpin individual incidents and experiences.

Fig. 1: Galtung's Typology of Violence (Galtung, 1969:173)

Figure 1. A Typology of Violence
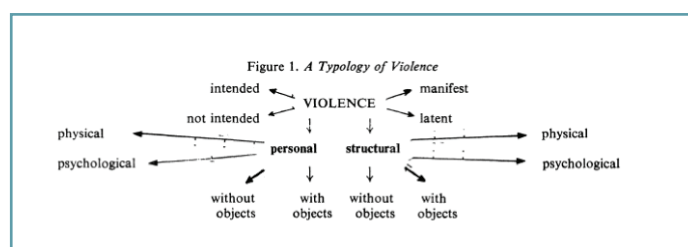
By 1990, Galtung had further expanded on his typology of violence presented in 1969, to include cultural violence as a third element in the personal-structural-cultural nexus. Cultural violence he identified as being largely a legitimator of other forms of violence. He argued that cultural violence 'preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural,

or into not seeing them (particularly -not exploitation) at all' (1990:295). In addition he expanded on the ways in which violence diminishes our potential by looking at the various 'needs' for human development and the means through which violence negates those needs. The four classes of basic needs identified are: survival needs (negation: death, mortality); well-being needs (negation: misery, morbidity); identity, meaning needs (negation: alienation); and freedom needs (negation: repression)' (ibid. 293). He distinguishes between exploitation A, in which inequalities result in death (such as through starvation or disease), and exploitation B, whereby structural inequalities result in on-going human misery (e.g. malnutrition) (ibid. 294).

Fig. 2: Galtung's updated typology of violence (1990)

	Survival Needs	Well-being Needs	Identity Needs	Freedom Needs
Direct Violence	Killing	Maiming Siege, Sanctions Misery	Desocialization Resocialization Secondary Citizen	Repression Detention Expulsion
Structural Violence	Exploitation A	Exploitation B	Penetration Segmentation	Marginalization Fragmentation

The negation of needs approach conceptualised by Galtung is useful in recognising the ways in which violence is perpetrated indirectly and against whole sectors of the population, notably applicable in relation to widespread forms of violence such as VAWG. It permits recognition that VAWG is both direct and structural and its impacts are evident in the negation of all forms of needs.

1.2. The impact of violence and the violence of inequality

Such a needs-based approach is further developed in relation to Sen and Nussbaum's capabilities approach to VAWG. Amartya Sen's work was not focussed on understanding or defining violence per se, but rather at the impact of restricted freedoms (economic, social, political, legal) on human development and well-being. Nevertheless, there are clear connections between Sen and Galtung's work that are relevant for definitions of

violence. The following section from Sen identifies the negation of needs due to structural violence as identified by Galtung:

Sometimes the lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to economic poverty, which robs people of the freedom to satisfy hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition, or to obtain remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or to enjoy clean water or sanitary facilities. In other cases, the unfreedom links closely to the lack of public facilities and social care, such as the absence of epidemiological programs, or of organized arrangements for health care or educational facilities, or of effective institutions for the maintenance of local peace and order. In still other cases, the violation of freedom results directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from imposed restrictions on the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community (Sen, 1999: 4).

Sen's work helps to elucidate the ways in which the restrictions on freedoms impacts on one's life-chances and the capacity to achieve full potential, resulting in structural violence such as experienced by women. Sen's work also highlights the role of norms and values that undergird inequitable economic and political systems, making them resistant to change (Sen, 1999: 9). However, VAWG is not only structural but also experienced at the personal level. Nussbaum's working of Sen's ideas in relation to capabilities provides further clarity in this regard for its application to VAWG.

Nussbaum's work more clearly connects the concept of violence with the concept of capabilities. In her seminal 2005 work, she builds on the list of capabilities initially defined in 2000 (Nussbaum, 2000): life, health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliations, relationship to the world of nature, play and control over environment (2005, 171-173) and applying them to women's experience of violence. While this list of capabilities is more specific than that identified in Galtung's 1990 typology, they share the same basis – violence is the

denial of the needs or capacity to achieve one's potential and further that violence is self-reproducing. Hence, if a woman is restricted in her movements by her husband, the restriction in itself is a form of violence, and it denies her capacity to form affiliations, such as with a woman's organisation or political movement resulting in the denial of her identity or freedom needs – thus resulting in further violence. Such a broad perspective on violence is important in recognising the costs to individuals, communities and economies of violence against women and girls. The denial of needs and capabilities that occurs as and through VAWG has significant costs in relation to health, economic productivity, and emotional attachments to family, community and others. VAWG includes the direct personal violence inflicted on women and girls through IPV, sexual violence, forced marriage, child abuse and others; this project also recognises that the indirect and structural violence, experienced through inequitable norms and gender discrimination, also supports the direct forms and exacerbates the impacts.

1.3. Institutionalising Violence against Women and Girls in International Law

The broadening of understanding of VAWG in social and political theory has also been reflected in international policy. The 1990's ushered in a period of greater interest and concern in relation to VAWG, which had hitherto been largely seen as a collection of individual crimes against the person, restricted and punished through criminal law. Violence in such cases was perceived as personal and primarily physical in nature, although trafficking in women and girls and some other forms of non-physical violence, were also recognised. In 1992, the CEDAW Committee in its General Recommendation 19, of the 11th session, provided one of the first internationally recognized definitions of GBV:
"Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination; violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It

includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty." (CEDAW, 1992)

This definition importantly recognises that GBV may include psychological, sexual and physical violence which may be inflicted through a number of different means. Building on this recommendation of CEDAW, the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) defines VAW as:
"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." (UN General Assembly, Article 1, 1993)

And further clarifies that the definition encompasses, but is not limited to:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.
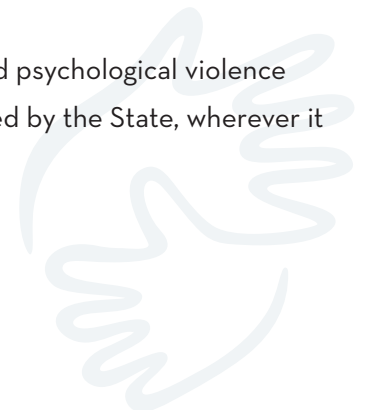
2. ADVANCING CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF VAWG: BROADENING DEFINITIONS AND RECOGNISING LINKS

2.1 VAWG in International Law: from VAWG to GBV

DEVAW built on the argument that GBV can be manifested in various forms and, further, that it could occur in public or private life, thus creating accountability for public bodies in preventing forms of violence that occur within the home or in other private spheres. Article Three of the declaration also addresses structural violence, such as discrimination and inequality, thus reflecting an expanded conception of violence. These definitions have been essential in clarifying the meaning and reach of GBV. However, within these international human rights instruments GBV and VAW are often used interchangeable, with a move towards using the term GBV more commonly, albeit with a focus on violence perpetrated against women by individuals, state and non-state actors.

As the study of VAW and GBV developed and increased the depth and breadth of knowledge about forms of violence disproportionately experienced by women, evidence has drawn attention to the underlying structural causes of GBV as gendered power dynamics.

This focus has increased recognition that these power dynamics that fuel violence against women also fuel forms of violence directed at other groups, such as boys, transgender people and men who have sex with men. For instance, the Secretary-General's Message to Human Rights Council Meeting on Violence and Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity (2012) urged States to 'take the necessary measures to protect their citizens from violence and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity'. International literature has increasingly shifted towards a comprehensive understanding of Gender Based Violence (Duvvury and Scriver, 2014: 11-12). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and implementing partners use an 'expanded definition of sexual and gender based violence', which updates the definition of VAW from DEVAW to include groups of people who may have been excluded by the earlier definitions' focus on violence against women. However, the expanded definition maintains recognition of the fundamental drivers of GBV, introduced by CEDAW and DEVAW: inequitable gender relations expressed through norms, attitudes and social behaviours.

2.2 VAWG in Public Health: establishing a definition and typology of violence

Definitions of violence have clearly gone through multiple variations depending on the disciplinary field and the range of forms of violence encompassed. A broad definition of violence is here advocated that recognises personal and structural forms of violence perpetrated both directly and indirectly. We also advocate for context-specific approach that reflects the ways in which restrictions on liberties and rights, or needs and capabilities, are both a reflection of violence and further exacerbate violence.

The WHO's 2002 World Report on Violence and Health put forth a definition of violence in which violence is: The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation' (Krug, et.al., 2002; 4).

This definition is useful in that it is not limited to the use of force alone but also of power (e.g. political, economic, social) and captures the levels of violence (self-directed, inter-personal, community) as well as outcomes of violence. While the word 'intentional' is harder to justify at the level of structural violence, it is not at odds with the pervasive nature of structural violence: those in power seek to maintain power through inequalities whose result is violence. As far as the evolution in understandings of violence has come, this definition presents the most comprehensive, yet still practically useful, available.

Given the use of this definition of violence, broadly understood, it follows that for the purposes of this project we adopt a similarly broad conception of VAWG. While the expanded version of GBV, recognises that groups other than women and girls may be affected by violence based on gender inequality, we also recognise that women and girls continue to suffer from violence unequally and significantly: in this project we focus on the impact of violence, as defined above, on women and girls. Reflecting this, DEVAW's definition specifically relation to violence against women thus remains the best

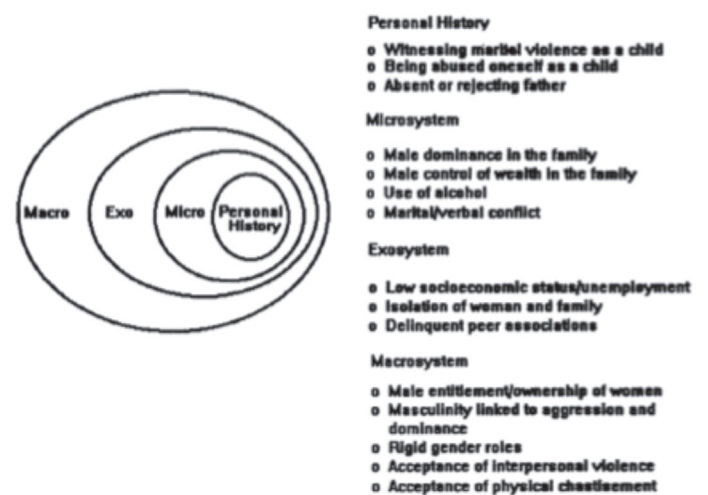### Fig. 3: WHO Typology of Violence

(Krug et.al., 2002:5)

suited to the project with the inclusion of 'girls'. The definition of VAWG that will be used throughout the project is thus: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and/or girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." (UN General Assembly, Article 1, 1993)

The WHO 2002 Report (Krug et.al. 2002) further designed a typology of violence to distinguish between three primary forms of violence: self-directed including suicide and self-abuse, Interpersonal further broken down into violence perpetrated within the family or by a partner and violence perpetrated by a non-related community member, and collective violence which may be social (encompassing also religious), political or economic in nature. It further identifies the violence as being physical, sexual, and psychological or deprivation or neglect. This typology (shown below in Figure 3 above) is useful for clarifying forms of violence by perpetrator and by type. A limitation of the typology, and indeed all typologies, is the inability to identify and describe linkages between forms of violence (either the nature or the perpetrator). Nor is it able to clarify how context influences violence.

2.3 Ecological approaches: Where Context is Key

In order to adequately conceptualise violence against women as 'a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational and sociocultural factors', Heise built on ecological models of violence (Heise, 1998:263-264). The model (see figure 4) distinguishes between various personal and situational/ social levels in order to identify the ways in which vulnerability to violence may be intensified at each level of the model.
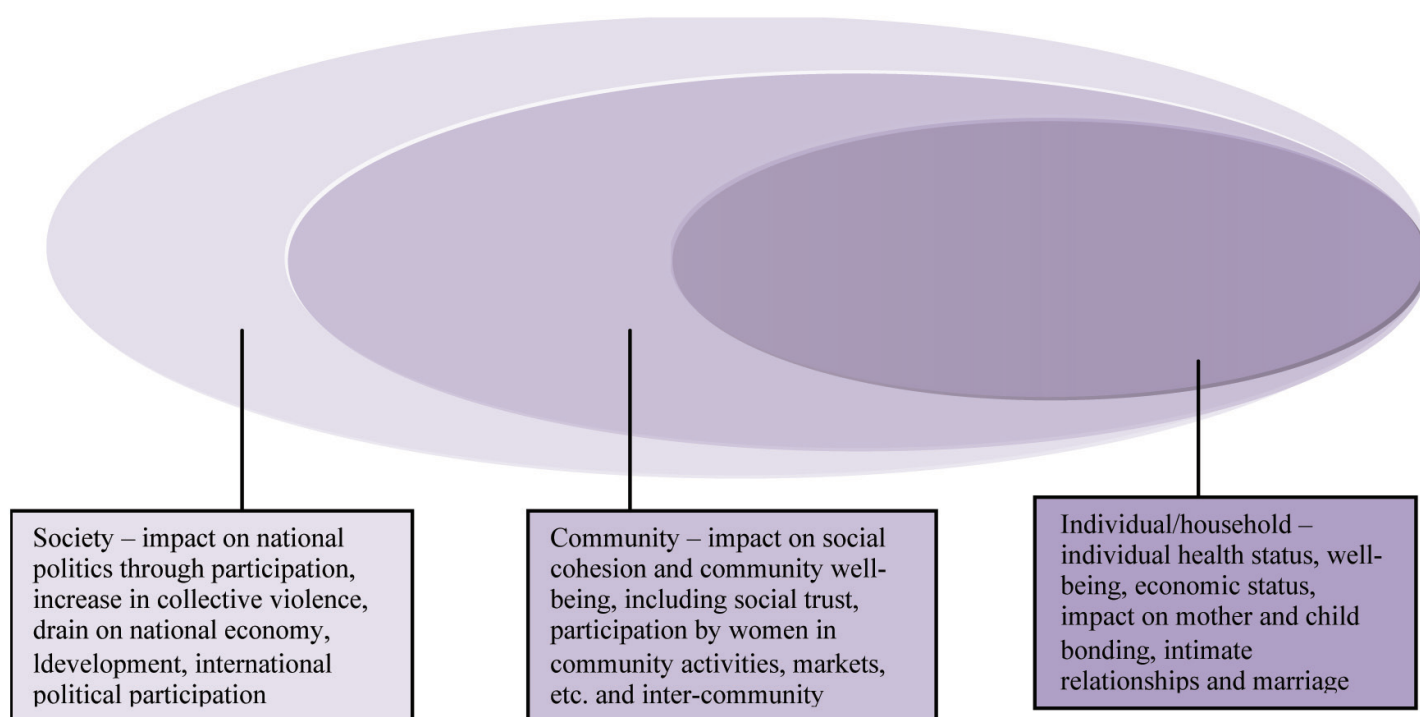
Fig. 4: Ecological model of violence

(Krug et.al., 2002:5)

It is useful to examine the WHO typology in combination with the ecological model to better understand the contextual factors that influence risk of victimisation or perpetration of violence. This model can also be used to help explore the varying levels of impact, or costs, of forms of violence by plotting impacts of each form of violence across the levels of individual, relationship, community and society, as shown in Figure 5.

Fig. 5. Ecological model adapted for costing:

Society – impact on national politics through participation, increase in collective violence, drain on national economy, ldevelopment, international political participation

Community – impact on social cohesion and community well-being, including social trust, participation by women in community activities, markets, etc. and inter-community

Individual/household – individual health status, well-being, economic status, impact on mother and child bonding, intimate relationships and marriage

These models provide a means of thinking through the ways in which forms of violence and costs are linked across multiple levels of lived human experiences. However, understanding the link between forms of violence remains under-examined and the ripple effect across the ecological levels remains under-conceptualised.

2.4 Cyclical and inter-generational approaches

Multiple studies have demonstrated that exposure to violence increases risk of further violence, through perpetration or victimisation (e.g. Scott-Storey, 2011; Campbell et.al. 2008; Alvarez et.al. 2009). Various forms of VAWG similarly increase risk of additional VAWG. Duvvury and Scriver (2014) assessed connections between forms of violence experienced by women and girls in Viet Nam and created a conceptual frame which highlights the inter-linking of violence (2014:25). While each of these forms of violence is driven by inequitable gender norms, exposure to any one form of violence

increases risk of the other forms (Duvvury and Scriver, 2014). While it is clear that experiences of violence are often linked either directly or indirectly through increased vulnerability, and that multiple experiences of abuse are common and result in cumulative disadvantage, compounding over a lifetime (e.g. Alvarez et al., 2009; Banyard, Williams, Saunders, & Fitzgerald, 2008; Campbell, Greeson, Bybee, & Raja, 2008) demonstrating the cumulative cost of such multiple experiences of violence has not been adequately accomplished (Scott-Storey, 2011:135).

Understanding VAWG however requires also the recognition of the cycle through which VAWG operates. Figure 6 highlights the ways through which violence is 'driven by inequitable gender norms, attitudes and behaviours relating to gender roles, family structures and responsibilities and the inequitable development and application of legislation, leading to the normalization and consequently the perpetuation of violence' (Duvvury and Scriver, 2014:13).

Recognising that VAWG is not an isolated incident or series of incidents but occurs within particular contexts that are already marked by indirect violence towards women is important. As the graph above demonstrates, inequitable attitudes result in discriminatory behaviour that undermines women's capabilities and needs resulting in additional vulnerability to violence, the result of which is, in a society marked by such attitudes, a normalization of such violence and the perpetuation of inequitable norms. This cycle also suggests the ways in which costs may accrue and are multiplied at each step of the cycle.

Fig. 6: Cycle of Gender Based Violence
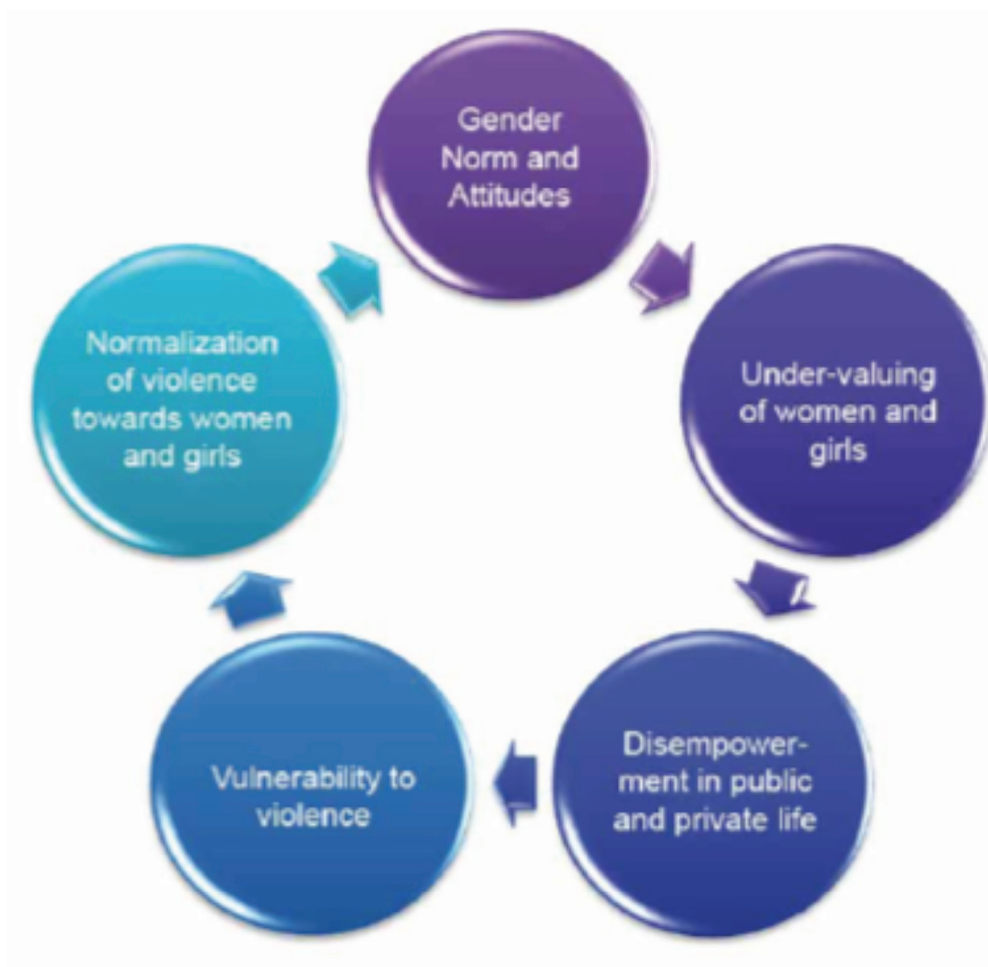
(From Duvvury and Scriver, 2014:13)

3. VIOLENCE IN SPECIAL CONTEXTS – HOW INTERPERSONAL VAWG AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE INTERSECT

It is now common place to note 'context is key' in understanding and addressing VAWG. Yet, theoretically and methodologically, while contextual factors such as poverty and access to services have been well-explored, understanding of linkages between interpersonal and collective violence is in its infancy. Existing literature suggests a cyclical relationship between collective violence, either inter-state or intra-state, and VAWG. Gender inequality, including experiences of violence, increases the likelihood of inter and intra-state violence, while inter and intra-state violence also increases the likelihood of VAWG, both interpersonal and collective types. These linkages are explored further below.

3.1 Risk of inter-state and intra-state collective violence and VAWG

Studies have found that States with higher levels of domestic gender equality were less likely to use violence during inter-state conflicts than States with lower levels of domestic gender equality (Tessler and Warriner, 1997;Caprioli, 2000; Caprioli and Boyer, 2001:515-516). Studies examining intra-state conflict have found similar results – states characterized by gender inequality are more likely to experience intrastate conflicts (Caprioli, 2005; Melander, 2005). Such studies clearly indicate that gender equality is a factor in collective and organised violence; while, none of these studies looked specifically at the link between interpersonal/community violence against women and

girls and increased risk of organised and collective violence the pathways of influence are visible. Caprioli's work (2000, 2001, 2003 and 2005) has focussed on understanding the linkage between gender inequality and inter and intra-state violence. She draws on Galtung's work on structural and cultural violence to explain the link, arguing that structural and cultural violence against women, including discrimination in the labour market, in the legal sphere and in the home, results in the social control of women which is also expressed through direct violence in the home and community. Norms of gender intolerance and inequality which are supported by an 'environment of structural violence [against women and girls]' result in violence 'as a way of life and a valid tool for settling disputes' (2005:165) which is operationalised not only in the home and in the community, but at the negotiating table for national and international disputes. In essence, as Melander describes, 'more equitable societies may be more peaceful because the norms of inviolability and respect that define equal relations between women and men are carried over also to wider relations in society, for example, vis-a-vis ethnic minorities or political opponents' (2005:696). Of note, a second hypothesis that attempts to explain this link, that women are more passive and less likely to make aggressive decisions in negotiating disputes, does not seem to be supported, or has a less significant impact, than the normative context which values men and women equally, in determining risk of organised collective violence (see Melander, 2005).

3.2 Intimate Partner Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations

Theoretically and empirically the association between gender equality, encompassing VAWG, and increased inter-and intra-state conflict seems clear. The link between organised or armed collective violence and VAWG is also evident: there has been widespread note of the use of rape as a weapon of war for instance and the targeting of women and children for sexual violence as a tactic of terror to pacify and de-motivate enemy populations (Chinkin and Kaldor, 2013:176). However, while sexual violence during conflict is frequent and documented, the prevalence of other forms of VAWG, particularly where perpetrated by intimate partners and acquaintances is less well understood.

Jefferson notes the role of inequality in making women targets of conflict-related violence. She explains 'women's subordinate and unequal status in peacetime renders them predictably at risk for sexual violence in times of war' (2009) suggesting that the same factors that expose women to sexual violence outside of conflict are equally at work during conflict and adds further that lack of formal consequences for perpetrators of sexual violence during conflict exacerbate women's vulnerability. Where legal frameworks do not adequately address sexual and intimate partner violence in peace times, there is little hope of these issues being ad- dressed during times of conflict.

Jefferson argues that in Sierra Leone, where men are legally permitted to physically 'chastise' their wives and where marital rape does not exist, 'Men who were accustomed to exercise control over women's bodies in times of peace continued to do so with extreme brutality during the civil war' (2009). Practices such as the forced abduction and rape of women, often described as taking 'war wives' also mimics practices of forced subordination and servitude of women within the home in times of peace.

During conflict sexual violence may be used as an intentional strategy to demoralize and de-motivate populations, as a tool of genocide, or to reward soldiers and combatants. However, sexual violence in conflict situations is also commonly disorganized, spontaneous and perpetrated by both combatants and civilians in a context of lawlessness and chaos (Cohen et.al., 2013). Women and girls are predominantly the target of sexual violence in conflict settings, although men and boys are also targeted. Sexual violence during conflict is often exceptionally violent: gang-rapes, sexual slavery, rape with objects, sexual mutilations, severe beatings, and forced pregnancy are all perpetrated. Furthermore, this violence is not only inflicted upon the victim – sexual violence is often perpetrated in front of family members, and in some states, including Uganda and DRC, family members have been forced to participate in assaults against other family members (Nordas, 2011). The level of physical and psychological injury acquired by survivors and their families is thus likely to be severe. Following the end of violent conflict, the culture of sexual violence that was intensified during the conflict may continue and is exacerbated by psychological distress experienced by combatants and civilians, leading to high rates of sexual violence in post-conflict situations (Kaufman, et.al. 2012: 3).

While sexual violence in conflict-situations has gained international recognition, incidents of violence perpetrated by family members and known others may be masked by the high visibility of this form of sexual violence (Scriver and Mears, 2014; Hossein et.al. 2014). Research has demonstrated that sexual violence by non-combatants, including intimate partner sexual violence, increases during times of political and military crisis (Kaufman, et.al. 2012: 3). Increases in perpetration of violence against women in the home (Clark et.al. 2010; Gupta et.al. 2010) have also been associated with exposure to armed conflict (Catani et.al. 2008; Horn et.al. 2013). In a qualitative study carried out in Sierra Leone and Liberia women described how the civil wars in these states increased their experiences of intimate partner violence as men became accustomed to dealing with

frustrations and challenges through the use of violence (Horn, et.al. 2013). Several studies also found that women who have higher levels of conflict-related abuses also reported higher levels of IPV during and after conflict (Falb et al 2013; Gupta et al, 2012; Vinck and Pham 2013). McWilliams and Ni Aolain have examined links between armed conflict and IPV in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and found multiple causes for increased vulnerability to IPV among women and additional barriers imposed by the conflict to help-seeking and leaving the abusive relationship (2013). They argue that distinctions between the 'ordinary' violence experienced by women in the home is often trivialised in times of conflict resulting in an under-recognition of the impact of IPV and DV, particularly as part of the cumulative experiences of violence women in conflict often undergo. They state, ' the upshot of the conceptual divide invariably leads to an incoherent splintering of the totality of violent experiences for women, a lack of synthesis in accounting for subjective traumatic experiences and ultimately a lack of cohesive accountability for women victims of intimate violence' (2013:10).

Studies on interpersonal violence perpetrated against women and girls in the home suggest a number of the factor that promote violence are exacerbated during times of conflict. An overview of the literature suggests the following:

- Forms of violent masculinity idealised
- Availability of weapons
- Lack of policing on the ground
- Distrust of security institutions
- Perception of IPV and DV as 'soft' forms of violence = 'ordinary' violence vs. 'extra-ordinary' violence
- Prioritisation in media and government of conflict-related violence and deaths vs. those catego rised as domestic or private
- Re-entrenchment of traditional gender norms in the 're-building of the nation'
- Economic stress
- Challenging of gender roles, e.g. when men are displaced due to conflict or leave the community to fight, women may take on additional leadership roles in the household and community that lead to conflict over roles when men return.
- Fear of seeking formal help due to being perceived as an informer or being mistreated if from a rebel community
- Restrictions on women's ability to leave a relationship due to insecurity, displacement etc.

While the above factors may exacerbate existing VAWG or lead to new cases of VAWG, it is the same inequalities that permit and promote VAWG during times of peace that continue to influence and intensify VAWG in times of conflict and in post-conflict situations.

4. DRIVING THE AGENDA: IDENTIFYING GAPS AND MEANS FORWARD.

Research on violence against women and girls has made significant in-roads over the past 30 years to ensure recognition of this social problem across the fields of public health, sociology, and gender studies. However, it remains a marginalised issue within the disciplines of economics and international relations and security studies. This is due in part to the focus of research on individual health impacts and on household level economic impacts. The relationship between VAWG and social cohesion and political stability is under-theorised

and under-examined, while the research on the costs of violence has yet to be able to account for the multiplier effect of economic impacts. Ensuring adequate recognition of VAWG as not only a public health issue but a development issue requires extending the discourse on VAWG into new disciplines and fields.

In Figure 7, below, we conceptualise the impact pathways of VAWG as they ripple through the levels of individual and household, communities and businesses, and society and economy.

Fig. 7 Impacts of VAWG on the Economy: A Conceptual Model
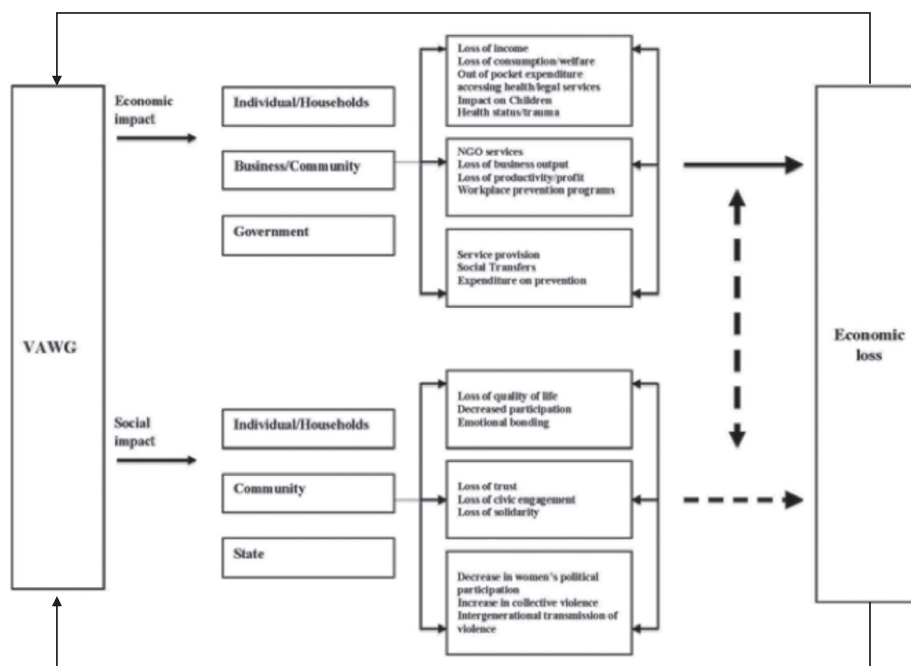
The model shows how VAWG has both economic and social impacts. It also depicts how these impacts occur not only at the individual level (such as through missed days at work, health costs due to injuries or psychological distress) but also at the community/business level and at the government state level. Economic impacts at each of these levels, including lost personal and household income, loss of economic outputs for businesses that erode national tax takes, and expenditures incurred by NGOs for provision of services to survivors of VAWG, undermine economic growth. Social impacts also accrue through the individual, community and state level. These impacts have serious consequences for well-being and capabilities, for social cohesion and participation, and for social stability. These impacts cannot be immediately monetized; however, it is hypothesised that over time many of these impacts are translated into economic impacts through for instance, chronic disability, limited access and performance in education, and increases in social instability and conflict. These combined impacts result in total loss to society and economy. It is important to note that the overall loss in turn affects VAWG, so the relationship is not unilinear but a circular flow.

Recognising that the impacts of VAWG at these different levels interact with each other, as do both social and economic impacts, it is insufficient to simply aggregate costs across levels. Research must focus on exploring these diverse and dynamic impacts with a view to highlighting their macro-level influence on both economic and social development. Extending our conceptualisation of VAWG to recognise that it is not separate from other forms of violence, both structural and inter-personal, but is a driver of, and driven by, social and economic processes, allows for a holistic approach to understanding the impacts of VAWG that provides a more accurate account of the impacts of VAWG on society as a whole.

5. CONCLUSION

The review of literature examining conceptualisations of VAWG demonstrates a growing understanding of the complexity and interconnection between types of violence, contexts and consequences. Nevertheless, there are clear challenges and gaps that remain unaddressed in conceptualising and understanding the impact of VAWG. These include:

- The cumulative costs (social and economic) of multiple experiences of violence across the individual life-time.
- The differential impact of cumulative costs within particular contexts (economically and/or politically fragile, conflict-affected, stable and democratic), particularly where indirect/structural forms of violence are visible (e.g. gender-based social, political or religious discrimination)
- The process through which social costs become materialised as economic costs over time.

Addressing these gaps would a) provide insights useful for prevention interventions by emphasizing the importance of experience of violence over the life cycle and its consequences for cognitive ability, self-esteem and agency; b) expand our understanding of the link between social and economic costs over time, c) provide insights on the links between individual and situational experiences of violence, firstly in terms of the link between forms of violence and secondly, between violence and situational context. Building on the conceptual framework presented here, it is necessary for research to provide empirical evidence of such linkages and to explore the diverse pathways between VAWG and development.

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