MAPPING ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Editor

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First Edition

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Mapping virtual challenges and threats into real actions

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In the world, at the beginning of the year 2022, violence is expressed more forcefully than at other times. Violence is expressed as war in Europe, with all the horrors that war entails: thousands of dead, millions of displaced people, destruction of the physical infrastructure necessary for life and entire cities. In contexts of war, no rights can be exercised. Human rights are systematically violated. Hatred increases and is passed down through generations. Poverty increases and inequalities grow. War tends to expand and affects neighbouring states, directly through refugees and also through the expansion of the fears and hatred that wars generate.

Today, virtual instruments are also widely used and electronic tools are transformed into weapons of war, which have a planetary multiplier effect.

With this European war, the world has lost more than 75 years of stability, 60 years after the missile crisis of 1962, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear conflict. It was a long period in which no reference was made to the possibility of the use of atomic weapons. The danger of the use of nuclear weapons reappeared with force, threatening planetary existence.

At the same time, climate change is becoming the main threat to humanity as a whole. This means that the decisions being taken by the elites vitally affect the existence of the Common Home and of humanity.

If the international order is in turmoil, even more so in the digital sphere. There is a lack of effective global regulation of the international digital system. In the digital sphere, the "law of the jungle" prevails, where a new type of virtual violence is strongly expressed. As a result, hate speech, threats, harassment, and attacks tend to prevail on social networks.

This book by the University for Peace explores new expressions of online violence, virtual violence, which mainly, but not exclusively, affects women and girls. Throughout ten chapters, analyses are made on topics such as online harassment, revenge pornography, the role of civil society, micromachism, the prevention of digital violence, the role of social networks, and the construction of digital communities. Case studies on South Africa, India and Brazil are cited.

The contribution of the Gender Equity Forum (GEF) and that of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) has been fundamental in publishing the results online for a global audience. This is the second book resulting from this strategic alliance. The first was The Journey to Gender. Mapping the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. I express my gratitude, on behalf of the community of the University for Peace, for these sponsorships.

Better knowledge of these new forms of violence makes it possible to design prevention policies and recommendations on the regulation of the digital sphere. The new threats require new and better approaches to effectively meet the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Developing new conceptual maps is essential for a better use of technologies and advances in information and communication and to be able to take a new look at the impact of artificial intelligence and its uses. Global perspectives are needed that are capable of preventing conflicts not only internationally, but also in the domestic sphere and increasingly in the virtual sphere.

Mapping Challenges to Peace in the Digital Age: A Focus on Violence Against Women is a significant contribution with authors from diverse continents, cultures and professional perspectives. My thanks to each and especially to the coordinator, Dr. Mariateresa Garrido. I would also like to thank all those who have collaborated towards this important result.

March 2022

Between offline and online gender-based violence: the challenges ahead

Mariateresa Garrido V.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are part of everyday life. The use of smartphones, social media, and other Internet-based platforms is constantly increasing, and so are the challenges. By 2022, the organization We Are Social reported 4.95 billion Internet users worldwide, which represents 62.5% of the global population. From this number, at least 49.6% are women, 92.1% of total users access the Internet through mobile phones, 58.4% have an active social media account (46.1% are women and 53.9% are men) and spend an average of 2 hours, 27 minutes per day on those apps. It is noticeable that the same study indicates that the top 2 websites visited and apps used are those for chat and messaging and social networks (Kemp, 2022).

Yet, these statistics alone do not present in-depth information regarding the uses of ICT, social media interactions, or an explanation for creating relationships through Internet-based platforms. For that reason, it is important to point out that the same study indicates that the top 5 main reasons to use social media are:

a) Keeping in touch with friends and family (47.6%)

b) Filling spare time (36.3%)

c) Reading news stories (35.1%)

d) Finding content (31.6%)

e) Seeing what's being talked about (29.5%).

These purposes also serve as an explanation why, according to We Are Social, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, and TikTok, are amongst the most popular social media apps. Similarly, it explains why 45.5% of social media users indicated that they followed friends, family, and other people they knew (Kemp, 2022).

In today's world, to be part of the network is essential as it enables the creation of meaningful connections, facilitates strengthening relations

with relatives and friends, and increases educational, working, and other forms of social relations. Indeed, the statistics previously mentioned provide us a general overview of the uses of Internet-based platforms while reflecting the transformation of the social interactions that ICT has produced.

From a quick look, one could stay with the benefits of those statistics; however, it is necessary to move away from this temptation. Differences in access and use of Internet-based applications between males and females must get our attention as it indicates the existence of disparities between genders. It also demonstrates that research is still conducted in binary terms, which impedes us from considering how other groups access and use Internet-based platforms.

Statistics demonstrate that the majority of users are men who want to keep in contact with family and friends. Although there is no problem with this fact, the issue is when the conversations and interactions disseminate or perpetuate gendered violence.[1]

Gender-based violence is a widespread problem that permeates digital spaces. It mainly affects women, but research has also demonstrated its impact on transgender, non-binary, and gender-nonconforming people (Dunn, 2020; Lombard, 2018). Indeed, intersectionality plays a vital role in how gender-based violence affects different people, who are the perpetrators of such violence, and how we research and understand the problem.

We use technology in accordance with our worldview, ideas, values, and needs. In fact, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective, on 2018 indicated

> Owing to the easy accessibility and dissemination of contents within in the digital world, the social, economic, cultural and political structures and related forms of gender discrimination and patriarchal patterns that result in gender-based violence offline are reproduced, and sometimes amplified and redefined, in ICT, while new forms of violence emerge. New forms of online violence are committed in a continuum and/or interaction between online or digital space; it is often difficult to distinguish the consequences of actions that are initiated in digital environments from offline realities, and vice versa (Šimonović, 2018, para. 20)

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1   For the purposes of this book, gender is defined as the "socially constructed roles, behaviours, position, responsibilities and expectations that are ascribed to men (and boys) and women (and girls), differentially informing ideas of how they are meant to behave and act" (Lombard, 2018, p. 1).

Therefore, the questions that we should consider are, how do we bring offline aspects of our daily interactions to the digital world? And what can be done to limit the harmful effects of widespread gender-based violence?

To better understand online gender-based violence[2] (OGBV) we need to consider available data; however, previous research on this topic suggests that it is not well understood and that there is little empirical and diverse data (Dunn, 2020; Šimonović, 2018). This book seeks to contribute with the general understanding of the problem, its interaction with offline violence, and the role of stakeholders in diminishing its effects. Nevertheless, some overarching ideas must be considered to understand this publication better.

The cycle of violence: integration of Internet-based platforms

The most traditional form to research gender-based violence is connected to the cycle of violence, created to explain the lived experiences of many women in intimate partner relations. That approach has contributed to understanding the causes and effects of the problem and even designing appropriate responses. Indeed, the UN Girls' Education Initiative illustrates the gender dimension of violence in physical, psychological, and sexual terms, as shown in the following graphic.

(United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, 2022)

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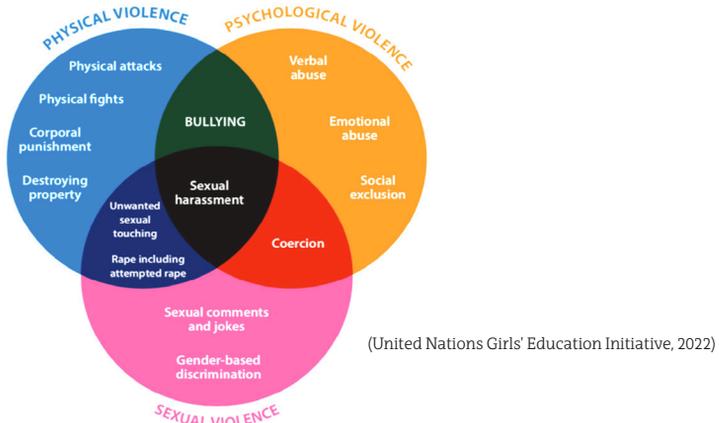
2 For the purposes of this book, online gender based-violence refers to "to any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of ICT, such as mobile phones and smartphones, the Internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately." (Šimonović, 2018, para. 23).

Yet, the digital reality forces us to go beyond that approach to include the use of Internet-based platforms to perpetuate violence and measure the effects it has on survivor's lives[3] because, as Lumsden & Morgan indicate

> Given how closely it is now intertwined with our everyday social lives and social relationships, the 'virtual' is 'real', and has 'real' implications for women, ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups who more often than not are the victims of various forms of cyber abuse. (2018, p. 129)

In the 21st Century we observe how many of these forms of violence has been adapted to online environments. For instance, unwanted sexual encounters now can be presented as unsolicited or unwanted sexual images sent through messaging apps, damages to property can include doxing and disclosing private information through social media. At the same time, harassment and other forms of verbal and psychological violence can now be perpetrated in a networked manner through the use of Internet-based platforms (Dunn, 2020).

Violence is perpetrated using several mechanisms, and the effects of OGBV overlap with offline consequences, being the worst situation the materialization of rape or death threats, and suicide. Yet, this is only at the individual level.

The social impact is unmeasurable. Online gender-based violence directly impacts personal relations, the communities to which the victim belongs, and society at a more extensive scope. Statistics demonstrate that online spaces are used to create and strengthen personal relations, but, as will be discussed in the following chapters, when people experience violence in online environments, they tend to limit their interactions. Withdrawing from the digital world has direct impacts on other spheres of victims' lives, including education, work, finances, and others.

Likewise, communities are formed around identities and shared values. In the case of LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and minority groups, attacks against a member can result in attacks against other members because they can be identified, exposed, and threatened for belonging to the community or for the connection to the original victim.

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3   Although we recognize the fact that most of the survivors are women, we acknowledge the fact that other non-binary and non-conforming groups, and even men in some specific context, are equally affected by gender-based violence.

At the societal level, OGBV perpetuates discrimination and reinforces the oppressive system in which the victim is immersed. This fact limits the possibilities to achieve gender equality, promote and respect human rights, and overall, create a more respectful and peaceful society for all.

Nevertheless, it is noticeable that changes can be produced when OGBV is discussed and addressed. In some cases, the transformation starts with adopting norms and regulations to punish perpetrators of OGBV. In other cases, open discussions create spaces to innovate and develop programs to teach and prevent it. Possibilities are endless, yet these approaches should consider international regulations, as they can set a common standard for regulating online spaces.

International Regulations and Protection

International Human Rights Law provides the standards needed to create safe online spaces. Particularly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to equality (article 1) and non-discrimination (article 2). The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) incorporated these rights and defined what is considered discrimination against women. Article 1 indicates

> For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Similarly, when it comes to the implementation of equality, article 2 (a) established that

> To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle.

However, we cannot forget that the CEDAW was adopted in 1979, decades before the mass commercialization of the Internet. These regulations do not contain specific instructions for states to protect women's rights in the digital era. That is why to better understand their scope in the digital age, in 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women published the general recommendation

35, in which it reminded states that the prohibition of gender-based violence became international customary law and recognized that

> Gender based violence against women occurs in all spaces and spheres of human interaction, whether public or private, including in... technology mediated environments, such as contemporary forms of violence occurring online and in other digital environments (2017, para. 20).

In the same recommendation, the Committee advised states to collect, analyze, and publish disaggregated data on technology-mediated violence against women (2017, para. 34.b). This is a crucial step to guarantee non-discrimination and equality in online environments that, if followed by states, can contribute to decreasing OGBV.

Yet, the Committee is not the only international body concerned with this situation. The international community has noted the importance of protecting and promoting human rights online. Indeed, the UN Secretary General, in 2006, published an in-depth study on violence against women in which noticed that "new technologies may generate new forms of violence, such as internet or mobile telephone stalking" (p. 41). In the same document, he suggested using the Internet for advocacy and campaigns to reduce gender-based violence, disseminate information, promote discussions between stakeholders, and raise awareness.

Similarly, in 2015, through the resolution 29/14, the UN Human Rights Council recognized that violence against women includes cyberbullying and cyberstalking. The following year, in its resolution 32/13, the Council noticed the importance of guaranteeing access to ICT, education and training, condemned OGBV, and affirmed that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online" (2016, para. 1).

However, scholars argue that

> Designing a regulatory framework that ensures the safety of users and the public, whilst facilitating the commercial use and consumer enjoyment of disruptive innovation is by no means easy. (Fenwick, Kaal, & Vermeulen, 2017, p. 567).

Despite the legal developments already mentioned, international law continues to be behind social changes. Technology and relations created around it are growing at a pace that lawmakers cannot follow. For that reason, the idea of having a common goal that surpasses international and domestic regulations is essential.

A common goal: community and trust

Pavan, following other scholars, indicates that

> Because of the absence of a systematic and effective normative framework in the field of online violence at both the national and international levels, intermediaries have no particular obligation to restrict their ToS [Terms of Service] in view of either preventing or sanctioning gender-based digital harms. (Pavan, 2017, p. 67)

This situation calls for our attention and action. The absence of a normative framework does not imply the absence of organized communities that are providing training to developers, support for victims, and recommendations to develop the much-needed regulations.

Community, including non for profit, civil societies, academia (formal and non-formal), and other forms or organizations, play an essential role in developing plans to prevent OGBV. As mentioned before, OGBV is directly linked to offline situations that must be addressed at the social level. Yet, the efficiency of those plans depends on knowing the context in which OGBV occurs, connections with victims, and understanding the root causes of the violence. For these reasons, community engagement is essential to decrease OGBV.

Nevertheless, the community plays another important role: victims' support. Survivors need safe spaces to share their experiences, grief, and recovery. Women can find it online and offline, yet trust is vital. Victims need to believe that they will not experience the same type of violence, nor second or third victimization, and that they will receive the help or support they are looking for. Indeed, this is a common finding of this book that cannot be overlooked. Community and trust require more research that goes beyond the scope of this publication.

Book Structure

The book begins by illustrating some of the changes produced by the use of Internet-based platforms. Thus, the first chapter, written by Ioanna Pervou, challenges us to consider the influence of pop culture in understanding feminism in the digital age and new forms of awareness-raising. She argues that connections between celebrities and victims of gender-based violence allow social discussions that can create communities, empower victims, and, overall, demand the protection of women's rights as a collective.

After this, some of the most worrying aspects of OGBV are discussed: deepfake technology, cyber dating violence, revenge porn, and tertiary victimization. This part of the book begins with Nguyen The Duc Tam's chapter, which explores how men use deepfake technologies to create non-consensual sexual videos and images against women. He also considers some technological, legal, and social measures, that can be used to diminish the consequences of abusive deepfakes.

Chapter three, written by Maria Jara Rodriguez Fariñas and Laura Carrascosa, discusses the effects of sexual cyberbullying and partner cyberviolence against teenagers and emerging adults (women between 17 and 30 years). They present a critical analysis of the studies conducted among this group of women and the psycho-social impact of these types of violence. They conclude that standardization of concepts and more research on this field are needed.

Mikayla Pevac, argues in chapter four, that online environments contribute to creating a third form of victimization. She recognizes that victims usually experience the second form of victimization related to backlash from relatives and friends. Nevertheless, she considers that ICT opened a window for the third form of victimization from Internet users. To illustrate the situation, she presents examples from the United States of America, India, and South Korea.

Then we move on to present initiatives aiming to diminish the impact of OGBV. For this, Panthea Pourmalek and Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos consider the experiences of women peacebuilders to better understand the opportunities and threats experienced by them. It is noticeable that authors considered technology-facilitated violence in local environments under the "continuum of violence" approach. Their findings provide insightful information for the participation of women peacebuilders in post-conflict societies.

Then, Mohamed E. Atta describes in chapter six the role of civil society in combating OGBV. He considers two key roles played by civil society organizations. First, preventing OGBV through education and raising awareness. Second, intervening when it occurs. This intervention can be in the form of reporting incidents, mediating between involved people, and victims' support.

Yet, no consideration of stakeholders is complete if social media companies are not part of the analysis. For that reason, Stephen Nyamu Nduvi discusses in chapter seven their role in preventing and diminishing the effects of OGBV, and the importance of developing clear and

consistently enforced policies and procedures that follow international human rights standards.

From chapters eight to ten we change the focus to country-specific cases to illustrate the cases and solutions developed in different parts of the world. This analysis begins with the example of Brazil and the approach it followed to provide legal solutions to the use of revenge pornography in the country. In this chapter, Caroline Lopes Placca and Natalie Ghinsberg, considered constitutional, civil, and criminal dispositions, in particular Law No. 11,340/2006, known as the Maria da Penha Law, to better illustrate the legal treatment of the problem.

Chapter nine, considers cyberbullying in India. Harshit Agrawal and Nalini Bhattar, illustrate several cases in which caste, religion, and sexual orientation intersect, producing devasting consequences for women. They emphasize the increasing importance of social media in the country, especially during the pandemic of Covid-19, and conclude that cyberbullying is an everyday reflection of gender inequality and harassment in the country.

Finally, we consider the use of social media to reflect gender-based violence in South Africa. In this chapter, Astrid Jane de Oliveira (née Treffry-Goatley), Jenna-Lee Strugnell, Geoff Mamputa, and Stefan Snell, conducted research on social media in which they considered data that identify keywords and illustrate the thematic analysis of OGBV. In particular, they share the results of three themes: lobola in Contemporary South Africa, Girlfriend allowance, and ATM (Automated Teller Machine) Dad.

All of the chapters provide insightful information on the current situation of OGBV. Thus, I invite you to read the book as it provides ideas to move forward in terms of regulations, community building, and prevention. Yet, I acknowledge the fact that other forms of OGBV must be explored, particularly the one experienced by non-binary and non-conforming groups, and for that reason, I also want to invite you to consider researching the gaps we identified in this book or those that are related to your context and were not part of this publication.

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Institutionalizing pop feminism: a key to women's empowerment

Ioanna Pervou

Currently, the majority of states realize and recognize the need for women to be empowered, in order to promote gender equality and build more stable societies. International organizations have experienced and attested how women's empowerment stimulates national and regional stability, thus incorporating gender equality in their official and functional operations (UNSC Res 1325/2000, NATO WPS, 2018). Yet, the process for this change is turbulent, since the enactment of relative legislation on a national level does not always suffice, either due to state reluctance, or because of legislative restraints. In this context, many have already argued that feminist theories need be spread with a view to better illustrate the pleas and arguments of women's movements (Rowbotham, 1992). That is, to create a strong ideological counterweight against political and legislative deficiencies (Mazur, 2002).

However, feminist theories have long been attracting severe criticism, mainly because there seems to be no real connection with society. Traditionally, the archetypical concept of feminism refers to academic inferences, urging for change and gender equality. Only recently, during the last decades societies embraced feminist activism, as the proper way to achieve a change they so longed for (Kalsem & Williams, 2010).

Feminist activism though, requires cumulatively the backing of street demonstrations, to evince the existence of a movement (a), press coverage, to gain public sympathy (b) and also, support by concerned members of parliament (MPs), who will commit to feminist causes (c). Despite coordinated efforts to pull all forces together, feminist activism brought limited results. There are also voices pointing out that it had an adverse effect, as it divided the public (Mackay, 2015). No matter how one perceives feminist activism, there is significant increase in sexist attacks and expansion of insults against women, demonstrating that activism may not always bring the results expected.

In this context, rejuvenating the feminist idea remained an unresolved puzzle (Franklyn, 2021). Many proposed substituting the term with this of

"empowerment", partly explaining why this term is used interchangeably to feminism. Therefore, "empowerment" stands for the "principles, such as the ability of individuals and groups to act in order to ensure their own well-being or their right to participate in decision-making that concerns them" (Levy Simon, 1994, p. 41). This terminological change marks the first shift in the approach towards the consolidation of gender equality.

The goals of this chapter are primarily four: a) to demonstrate how feminist activism is transformed and reshaped in the digital era; b) to analyze how gender empowerment is facilitated through the use of social media platforms; c) to explain how the digital era promotes the idea of relativism in human rights, thus accepting the perception of their end users' and not their theoretical archetypes; and finally, d) to show how popular personalities, celebrities and hashtag campaigns are employed to the achievement of gender equality.

Gender equality in the digital world: from feminism to empowerment

The reconfiguration of feminism evolved gradually, as soon as it became obvious that feminist communities do exist on the web and fill the gap of formal initiatives. Gender empowerment has been facilitated by new tools available and accessible even to the most vulnerable groups (Madra-Sawicka et al., 2020). The use of digital social media has been revolutionary in many aspects, basically because they involve interaction through self-generated content. From this perspective, digital platforms and social media enable empowerment in two ways: they allow users to create freely their own content as a form of expression and inclusiveness (a) and at the same time they offer to users the option to publicly share their information and interact, spreading and sharing their message.

For this reason, it is supported that social media form sort of a "virtual gender asylum" (Chang, Ren & Yang, 2018, pp. 339-340). From this angle, these digital tools are most necessary in societies were gender equality is far from being achieved, and women's rights are not prioritized. However, on a comparative level, it is these very governments which put severe impediments on social media access, occasionally targeted against women (Lafi Youmans & York, 2012).

In general though, it is common ground social media platforms have reconfigured the traditional concept of feminism and feminist activist, by leading gender empowerment in a more tangible era, accomplishing high levels of women's inclusion. From that point on, social media and the digital world have been employed by states and international organizations

for the promotion of gender equality. Having witnessed the power of the medium, they began employing people who enjoy high popularity, so as to spread the message of feminism through digital media. There are two parallel routes leading to women empowerment in the digital era: first, the involvement of women themselves as individuals in such platforms, and second the institutional use of these media for the very same end.

Pop feminism: institutional feminism at the digital era

The institutional rebranding of feminism came in the form of pop feminism. It may be defined as a non-academic approach to feminism, arising from pop culture, taking advantage of digital tools. It is an attempt to influence and further mobilize the public to espouse feminist values and women's rights (Jouet, 2018).

The United Nations (UN) soon recognized the power and dynamics of pop feminism, and launched the "HeforShe Campaign", a Global Solidarity Movement for Gender Equality, in 2014. The inaugural talk of the UN ambassador, actress Emma Watson, went viral and brought feminism to the fore once again. The campaign though, did not rely on the ambassador's high popularity only (Valiantien, 2015); rather, it opted to gain support by internationally renowned personalities, considered leaders in their field of expertise. Thus, the campaign turned to heads of state, universities and the corporate sector (www.heforshe.org, online).

These three pillars include actors from all categories which play all a crucial role in the enforcement of feminist ideas and gender empowerment. First, through state officials the campaign opted for legislative initiatives towards this goal. Second, it approached the corporate sector and in particular some leading multinational corporations, so as to target issues like the payment gap, or abusive behaviors in the working place. These corporations were expected to set the pace and serve as examples for the employment sector in states as a whole. Finally, pop feminism did not denounce the academic strand overall, rather it did not rely solely upon it; ergo, the spread of gender empowerment through educational institutions and the commitment of top universities to this was the strategy's third pillar.

What is more, the 'HeforShe Campaign' sets a new mindset regarding gender equality and empowerment: it does not proclaim patriarchy as the cardinal cause of gender inequality; rather it attempts to make a positive approach through the solidarity the two genders shall share. The strategy does not attempt to juxtapose the two genders; on the contrary it

emphasizes on the concept solidarity between men and women. Thereat, the campaign points out that both men and women have suffered from mistreatment in the course of time. It explains how men have suffered in particular cases due to their masculinity. This strategic choice of the UN reminds that gender equality precedes from gender empowerment (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016).

This strategy is indicative of the UN's deep understanding that the promotion of women's rights is both a legal issue as well as a social process. These two are tallied with one another, resulting in gender empowerment and finally equality. Thereat, it is argued that gender equality cannot be effectively achieved only through favoring supranational and national legislations, introducing – for instance – quotas (Krook & Norris, 2014), but needs solid social underpinnings to motivate society. The institutionalization of pop feminism is a firm political choice, a policy which has to be adopted by the pertinent international bodies.

Overall, there is a shift in the way the international community treats feminism. International actors have simplified the core idea behind feminism, define it as the pursuance of balance and equality, and focus primarily on the means that will allow these notions to spread and get incorporated by societies (Brilmayer, 1993). Pop feminism amplifies people's attention and explains best the message (Fotopoulou, 2016).

Pop feminism in practice: vertical and horizontal examples

Apart from the concept's novelty, pop feminism's effectiveness and usefulness are broader, given that may be deployed both vertically and horizontally. Moving to the first limb of the practical application of pop feminism, this includes the involvement of popular personalities who already enjoy the public's trust, so that one can more easily identify themselves with the ideas of feminism (Spiers, 2018).

Worldwide well-known singers, actresses and artists, or women who leave their imprint in particular domains join their forces with international organizations, or national authorities to promote ideas which fall under the notion of gender equality. These messages reach their target audience through popular social media applications. They use short slogans and powerful images to create awareness on issues of gender empowerment. In this regard, the examples of well-known women who may serve as role models to speak for the gender gap, issues of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, or domestic violence, female emancipation, girls' rights, or overcoming trauma are multiple (Hopkins, 2018).

From the very beginning, it was clear that pop feminism coupled with the application of digital platforms combines potentially influential messengers and very powerful means. From this point of view, pop feminism bears and indispensable advantage: it constitutes a strong strategy from its starting point.

The second most important advantage of pop feminism is its worldwide ambit. Celebrities and other personalities employed already serve as role models for large population groups and many people can identify with them (Wheeler, 2011). Thus, pop feminism includes the idea of human rights relativism. Promotion of gender equality and women's rights does not follow standardized western models. It may well employ people who do not follow western stereotypes with regards to woman emancipation. This flexibility allows for a more inclusive model of feminism, which will embrace equally cultural relativism and thus look upon women's rights not only through Western lens. In particular, the influence of western models on feminism led to deep controversy or even contempt by those who could not identify themselves with remote role models (Nagamia, 2002-2003). In this regard, pop feminism outreaches conventional forms of feminism.

However, this quality of pop feminism is a double cutting knife, since cultural relativity inclusiveness grows its audience, but it may at the same time blur the message conveyed (Puren & Young, 1999). More specifically, it carries the peril of promoting messages which are not clear, or hide embedded misogyny. The most prominent example is the promotion of maternity as the ultimate goal of women's life, a proposition which has long been interpreted as a pro-feminist one, which relates woman empowerment with human nature. Thereat, many voices underline that popular feminism may switch to 'popular misogyny' at once taking also into consideration that digital empowerment comes through short standardized messages (Anderson, 2014).

Moreover, there are two parameters which inflate this danger: first, the use of pop feminism by celebrities as a tool to promote their own interests and not emphasizing on empowerment messages. Occasionally, goodwill ambassadors take advantage of their nomination to boost their carrier and gain further popularity. Although this is an anticipated side probability, in some cases it runs contrary to the very ideas of gender equality. In such cases, pop feminism ambassadors are characterized as self-interested, or worst as populist diluters (Wheeler, 2013).

The second peril of pop feminism relates to those who employ popular people to spread messages regarding important political and

social issues. In particular cases, governmental campaigns ran by regimes which do not embrace gender equality, attempt to spread their policy through popular people. In such cases, the concept of pop feminism and the use of digital platforms rest in the wrong hands. The proliferation of the message managed through pop feminism may be used to the detriment of gender equality, or empowerment. Examples of such national campaigns prioritize the said state's cultural and historical features which require from women to run a modest life and occupy their time mostly with taking care of the household and family needs. As it was mentioned above, pop feminism and the use of social media allow empowerment to be free from stereotypes and adjust to each society's cultural needs. Evidently, there are cases where national campaigns comprehend gender equality through the spectrum of cultural and religious attires (Coomaraswamy, 2002-2003).

To conclude, the practical function of vertical pop feminism is effective and efficient, except for the two dangers presented above: either the misuse of the message by national campaigns, or misconduct by celebrities occupied with social and political issues. Nevertheless, institutionalized, or vertical, pop feminism has limited applications. Such policies and the use of social media platforms may be applied only by international organizations, or states. The significance and value of pop feminism is fully unfolded when it comes to horizontal pop feminism that is without institutional guidance.

When it comes to horizontal pop feminism, one usually refers to activism regarding specific issues around gender equality and empowerment, taking place on the Internet, attracting attention and action by popular personalities (Dadas, 2017). This case it is usually referred in theory as "hashtag activism" or "self-publishing feminism". These terms are used interchangeably, but the key elements which remain the same are four: a) spread of feminist ideas horizontally, with no institutional involvement, b) use of digital platforms for gender empowerment, c) attraction of popular personalities due to extended public interest in a particular issue, d) use of short slogans to promote an idea (Stache, 2014).

To better assess the results of horizontal pop feminism, one needs to measure its effectiveness by the examination of two factors. First, how this particular form of pop feminism contributes to gender empowerment, and second, if it activated legal and social change.

As for the first parameter, horizontal pop feminism has thrived during the last years, when popular personalities decided to take stand on a particular topic and share their personal views, or even more powerfully their personal experiences. Issues of rapes, violence, or revenge porn

are but a few examples of horizontal pop feminism. The usual course of action is that shocking incidents which gained public incidents, pushed celebrities to share their own personal experiences. In this way, they set a good example for victims of gender inequality to talk about issues that until recently were considered taboo, due to the trauma and stigma they create. The most emblematic example of all is the American #metoo movement; it had a worldwide impact when Hollywood stars with innumerable victims and talked publicly. This horizontal pop activism spiraled in many countries all over the globe, due to social media. The movement's hashtag became a trend within hours and opened the file of gender inequality and harassment in the workplace, in many countries (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

This example perfectly illustrates the linkage between pop feminism and digital activism with social and legal change. In many cases digital activism resulted in cementing the legal framework: it extended the limitation period for the reporting of such incidents, gave to victims initiatives to talk openly, and changed the legal sentences (Yin & Sun, 2020). In this regard, the effectiveness of horizontal pop feminism is tangible.

The examples of horizontal pop feminism are various and are not limited in the #MeToo movement. As such, a case which demonstrated the power of the digital world in feminist activism is that of Ireland. In 2018 social media activists brought forward two hashtags to activate Irish citizens to vote in favor of the change in the constitution, granting to women the right to abortion. The first slogan was #repealthe8th, with a clear message to vote for the review of the Irish constitution. The second slogan was #hometovote, to get the Irish diaspora to travel in their home place to exercise their political rights. This is an example of horizontal feminism: the campaigns were initiated by human rights activists, engaging in the domain of gender equality and feminism (Enright, McNeilly & de Londras, 2020). There was no institutional guidance, or a state policy to adopt and follow. This example of activism, also portrays how digital platforms substitute for the gathering of communities which miss the element of proximity. The campaigns managed to spread awareness among thousands of people, who believed in this cause and travelled to Ireland to support the referendum (Calkin, de Londras & Heathcote, 2020).

The above demonstrate that digital media and social platforms add up to the feminist movement, since they offer connectivity and mobility creating an active community. Moreover, the digital world allows people who are not committed to activism, to supports such causes and participate in the public sphere. Therefore, horizontal digital activism leaves an open

door to anyone wishing to take a stance as far as important social and legal issues are concerned.

The pitfalls of pop feminism in the digital era

Although the pop feminism via social media bears a positive sign, there are still pitfalls in its application. Critics focus mostly on the fact that activism on social media and the use of short phrases runs the risk of creating "girl power" messages, "where the language of feminism acts as a poor substitute for real political action" (Riordan, 2001). This line of argumentation follows the exact same rationale as the one mentioning the perils of popular people engaging with feminist activism. It underlines that any social media user becomes easily a "commodified agent" of feminist ideas, without any deeper knowledge on the said topic. Even if this argument is well grounded, it offers no alternate. Digital media succeeded in the reconceptualization of feminism, which remained until then a field of expertise of few. If inclusion and participation are considered as a flawed commodity, then gender empowerment and the activism required thereto will become a purely academic, *numerus clausus* group.

With regards to the second pitfall though there is more to worry. It relates to the commercialization of horizontal digital feminism. In many occasions multinational companies attempted to get involved aspects of gender equality. They adopted the same slogans, and embraced campaign hashtags. Although this practice is not dangerous *prima facie*, there is always the peril of using feminist activism as a commercial strategy to improve corporate purchases. This may lead in long-term to the "depoliticization of feminism" (Banet-Weiser & Portwood-Stacer, 2017).

Although criticism brings to light to significant features regarding this form of feminism, there is only one question to answer: whether we need gender equality and feminist ideas to spread through the public and engage people with different backgrounds.

Gender empowerment through pop feminism: the rise of a new collective right?

Pop feminism alongside digital media has reshaped the forms of activism. Gender empowerment and the ultimate goal of gender equality find their place among Internet users, attracting attention from popular personalities as well. The effectiveness and functionality of this new field for feminist activism is analyzed above. The final aspect of this topic relates to the consolidation of activism to all those who engage in digital platforms

with gender equality. Digital media users form an online society of potential activists, shaping altogether the message of gender equality.

This sort of active participation, on their own initiative, and with the use of their personal digital space leads in the formation and emergence of a new participatory right. By participating in information society and engaging in gender equality causes, digital media users act politically. They enjoy the right of participation in the public sphere. What is more, in cases where world online campaigns run this positive participation for gender equality makes users "digital citizens" in the service of gender equality (Wajcman, Young & Fitzmaurice, 2020).

In this regard, digital platforms enhance participation from more vulnerable groups, like marginalized women, victims of violence, or women who do not enjoy the full palette of human rights in their country of origin. Their personal digital space becomes a place of expression, which would otherwise not exist. It seems that digital platforms, although remote in spatial terms, allow users to freely express their opinions and act for them. It is this remoteness which empowers online movements. This new condition is manifest proof of how digital tools allow online communities to thrive. For this reason, one may well argue that a collective participatory right emerges on the Internet.

As far as gender equality is concerned, this unique collective participatory right is a right to express views and act in favor of women's empowerment. Its content is wide, since it includes the expression of denouncement on official policies, it uses the power of the image to tell stories regarding gender inequality and forms of harassment, and it presses for political and legal change. Therefore, it could be considered as part of the right to express oneself, through the digital community created in the digital era.

This collective digital community evinces how feminist activism has evolved during the last years and it is exemplary of the trend to promote gender equality through social media. Further, it allows for inclusion, and thus there is the widest possible range of participants: from celebrities, to activists and vulnerable groups, marginalized people, or victims of violence. Therefore, it directly involves end users to shape the content of gender equality.

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Fighting Against Gender-Based Abuse of Deepfakes Technology: Are we only tackling the tip of the iceberg?

Nguyen The Duc Tam

Deepfake technology depends on "Generative Adversarial Networks" (GANs) – an excellent deep learning technique allowing a high degree of automation and high output quality – to create manipulated audios and videos that feature real people that seem to say and do things that they have never said or done (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2021; eSafety, 2022; European Parliament, 2022).

Deepfakes have various beneficial utilization in commerce, entertainment, education, medicine, especially when they make models and forecast behavior. Unfortunately, people have exploited technological advancements to generate abusive deepfakes that humiliate and demean women (Meskys et al., 2020; eSafety, 2022).

In this chapter, the author argues that deepfake technology exacerbates gender-based violence and presents multi-layered challenges for gender equality rights. Besides the introduction and conclusion, this chapter consists of three main parts. In Part II, the author evaluates the prevalence of gender-based abusive deepfakes to determine that male perpetrators commonly use technologies to make non-consensual sexual deepfakes against female victims. In Part III, the author investigates multi-layered challenges of abusive deepfakes against gender equality rights. The author concludes that non-consensual pornographic deepfakes have evolved into a new type of gender-based violence against women. In Part IV, the author establishes a comprehensive framework, including technological, legal, and social measures, to diminish the consequences of abusive deepfakes.

Prevalence Of Gender-Based Abusive Deepfakes In The Digital Age

Deepfakes began with pornography. In 2017, a Reddit user named "deepfakes" utilized Artificial Intelligence techniques to replace famous actresses' faces into pornographic videos without their consent (Ajder et

al., 2019). In 2019, this technology was developed into its first app. Although its creator later took the app down, its code is still available on the Internet (Burgess, 2021).

Three innovations have contributed to the ground-breaking advancement in photograph manipulation: (1) computer vision algorithms that systematically identify face landmarks in photos (for example, the location of eyebrows and nose), paving the way for facial identification; (2) the emergence of video- and photo-sharing platforms, which makes vast amounts of audio-visual data accessible; (3) the enhancement of digital forensics, which allows for the automated discovery of forgeries (European Parliament, 2022). Hence, deepfake technology practically enables any ordinary person to generate convincing false videos without any technical knowledge or programming skills (Dodge & Johnstone, 2018). For example, a New York Times writer utilized deepfake technology to transplant his face into an actor's body, resulting in realistic footage (Dodge & Johnstone, 2018). An expert from Reality Defender believes that junior high school students with old smartphones can produce deepfakes (Kendja, 2021).

While celebrities are the primary target of deepfakes, female public figures – and even ordinary women – are increasingly targeted. In some situations, these deepfakes were weaponized to intimidate. For instance, Rana Ayyub – an Indian investigative journalist – seriously suffered from online harassment, including a sexual deepfake, so human rights experts of the United Nations called on the authorities in India to better safeguard her (OHCHR 2018). Helen Mort – a poet and broadcaster from the United Kingdom – recently discovered deepfakes of herself. These deepfakes targeted women to silence and dissuade them from participating as public figures (Dunn, 2021).

Deepfakes are becoming more prevalent. In September 2019, Sensity (previously Deeptrace) analyzed approximately 15,000 publicly accessible deepfakes. They discovered that 96 percent of them were pornographic, and virtually all of them targeted and traumatized women (Ajder et al., 2019). Notably, approximately two-thirds of these sexual deepfakes targeted women in the United States and South Korea (Ajder et al., 2019). In December 2020, Sensity found more than 85,000 deepfakes, and the number of harmful deepfakes approximately doubled every six months since 2018 (Patrini, 2021). Hence, they predicted that there could be 720,000 pornographic deepfakes by the summer of 2022 (Patrini, 2021). Nonetheless, in 2020, Sentinel investigated more than 145,000 online deepfakes, but they only identified that 19 percent of them were pornographic (Sentinel, 2020). However, the bitter truth is like the elephant in the room: male perpetrators

commonly use technologies to make non-consensual sexual deepfakes against female victims (Dunn, 2021).

Multi-Layered Challenges Of Abusive Deepfakes Against Gender Equality Rights

In comparison to men, women endure excessive exposure to sexually abusive deepfakes, threatening their physical and mental security (Venema, 2020). We must consider three factors to determine the ethicality of deepfakes: (1) whether the deepfake depicts a person in ways that she would object, (2) whether the deepfake misleads viewers, and (3) whether the deepfake has a malicious purpose (de Ruiter, 2021). The use of digital data relating to a person's appearance to depict her in ways she would oppose is the most distinguishing feature that makes deepfakes ethically reprehensible (de Ruiter, 2021). Thus, the safeguard against manipulating digital representations of our appearance is a fundamental right in the digital age because our appearance has close connections to our social and personal identity (de Ruiter, 2021).

Non-consensual pornographic deepfakes offend individuals' consent, autonomy, and sexual privacy, thus inflicting the damage of sexual objectification without permission (Learning Network, 2021). These deepfakes go against the legitimate belief that all components of sexual activity should depend on consent (Dodge & Johnstone, 2018). More seriously, deepfakes spread over the Internet, making them incredibly challenging to discover their creators and get rid of the content (Learning Network, 2021).

Abusive deepfakes cause three categories of harm: psychological, financial, and societal (European Parliament, 2022). First, abusive deepfakes inflict psychological consequences for the targets. Victims frequently suffer from sexual assault, harassment, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), depression, anxiety, agoraphobia. Some victims have committed suicide (Dodge & Johnstone, 2018; Learning Network, 2021). Second, deepfakes also induce financial detriments. Victims have lost their jobs, been dismissed from school, and been evicted from their homes (Dodge & Johnstone, 2018; Learning Network, 2021). Third, deepfakes concern grievous societal consequences, especially the silencing effect where survivors prevent themselves from participating in social interactions (Dunn, 2021; Learning Network, 2021).

Particularly, displaying ordinary photographs of children in a sexualizing environment breaches their right to be safeguarded from sexual abuse under Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of the Child, regardless of whether the child is aware or not. Nevertheless, if the child learns about the sexualized pictures or videos, she may experience additional negative consequences, such as feelings of powerlessness, humiliation, and guilt (Red Barnet, 2020).

The consequences of abusive deepfakes are not restricted to a particular category of harm but rather to a cascade of adverse effects (European Parliament, 2022). The fallout does not cease at a specific level either. In the beginning, abusive deepfakes usually target individuals. But later, they may affect certain groups or organizations, such as victims' families and companies. Last, the aggregate effect of abusive deepfakes might cause significant social harm (European Parliament, 2022).

The two-fold nature of the harm adds to the complication of the problem. The first type of damage takes place when viewers believe pornographic deepfakes to be authentic. In this case, detrimental effects are the same as non-consensual pornography. However, the second type of damage exists when viewers know the videos are fake but consciously watch them. Victims are still being objectified against their will. Sexual objectification diminishes individuals into physical objects, destructing women's competence, morality, humanity, and personhood. It may even cause higher tolerance of sexual violence towards women (EndTAB, 2019).

Hence, the consequences of abusive deepfakes are particularly detrimental to women because discrimination and harassment against women are already highly excessive (Sharratt, 2019; Kendja, 2021). Abusive deepfakes have evolved into a new type of gender-based violence against women (Kendja, 2021).

Comprehensive Framework Against Gender-Based Abusive Deepfakes

Deepfake technology is challenging to govern. A blanket prohibition of deepfakes is unfavorable because of two reasons. First, deepfakes have several legitimate applications in various fields, such as commerce, entertainment, education, and medicine (Meskys et al., 2020; eSafety, 2022). Second, deepfakes impact freedom of expression (although they contain purposely misleading assertions) (Chesney & Citron, 2019). For instance, in *United States v. Alvarez (2012)*, the Supreme Court of the United States concluded that "falsity alone" should not preclude an expression from the First Amendment safeguard (United States v. Alvarez, 567 U.S. 709 (2012)). However, many types of expression are unprotectable under the First Amendment due to their tendency to inflict substantial harm and their

minor contribution to free speech, such as defamation, fraud, threats, and criminally motivated speech (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Hence, freedom of expression should not be a shield for abusive deepfakes.

Notably, the DEEP FAKES Accountability Act intends to establish a framework against abusive deepfakes, including watermark, disclosure, criminal offense regime, civil penalty regime, private rights of action, victim assistance, *in rem* litigation against foreign and unknown defendants, modification of existing offenses, and detection of deepfakes (DEEP FAKES Accountability Act, H.R. 3230, 116th Cong. (2019)).

In the European Union, the proposed Digital Services Act provides several policy options against the distribution of abusive deepfakes, including detection of deepfakes, authenticity verification, authenticity verification, appeal procedure, platforms' power to determine the appropriateness of the information, transparency, lower speed of dissemination (European Parliament, 2022). Moreover, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) emphasizes the gendered nature of digital violence, including deepfakes, against women. GREVIO advises States Parties to fulfill their obligations under the Istanbul Convention relating to the prevention, protection, prosecution, and policies against gender-based violence in online and digital environments (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2021).

Hence, the author argues for a comprehensive framework, including technological, legal, and social measures, to mitigate the adverse effects of abusive deepfakes.

1.   Technological measures

Technological tools for deepfake detection are crucial. Nevertheless, detection techniques are effective only if they keep up with the developments of deepfake technology (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Unfortunately, innovations in detection are behind image manipulation techniques (Grant, 2019). Besides, even if such detection techniques exist in social media platforms, they will mitigate the detriments but cannot eradicate them, particularly when abusive deepfakes have limited or isolated dissemination (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

In any situation, technological tools cannot disabuse people when viewers know the videos are fake but consciously watch them, thus objectifying victims against their will. Detecting deepfakes cannot diminish this type of damage (EndTAB, 2019).

2. Legal measures

A few jurisdictions, like China and South Korea, have promulgated laws to fight against abusive deepfakes (Raymond, 2021). In the United States, some states, such as California, Virginia, and New York, have passed laws that ban non-consensual pornographic deepfakes (Ferraro & Tompros, 2020; Dunn, 2021).

The author argues that an adequate legal framework against abusive deepfakes should include (1) criminal responsibility for the production and distribution of non-consensual deepfakes, (2) civil liability against the creators and the distributors of non-consensual deepfakes, or even the social media platforms, (3) legal requirements for the deepfake app developers and the social media platforms, and (4) legal protection for the victims of abusive deepfakes.

2.1. Criminal responsibility for the production and distribution of non-consensual deepfakes

Several existing criminal legislations, including those relating to online stalking, impersonation, and defamation, may be pertinent (Chesney & Citron, 2019). For instance, putting someone's face in a non-consensual pornographic deepfake may lead to charges of both impersonation and defamation if the defendant means to terrify or hurt the victim, and the defendant knows the video is fake (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

In May 2021, South Korean police officers arrested many teenagers, declaring that the creation or distribution of deepfakes was a severe crime (Kendja, 2021). Nevertheless, several European nations have not enacted laws prohibiting the abuse of deepfakes (European Parliament, 2022).

2.2. Civil liability against the creators and the distributors of non-consensual deepfakes, or even the social media platforms

Civil responsibility will become ineffective when victims cannot attribute abusive deepfakes to their makers (Chesney & Citron, 2019). The traceability issue arises because the metadata required to determine the origin of deepfakes may be indeterminate to identify their generators. Cautious creators or distributors of deepfakes may go to great lengths to remain anonymous (Chesney & Citron, 2019). In such circumstances, victims have no practical remedy against creators of deepfakes. Their sole option is to seek redress from the platforms that allow the information to circulate (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

Approaches for holding creators liable include defamation, false light, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. Copyright infringement and the right of publicity claims have slimmer chances (Chesney & Citron, 2019). However, defamation laws are unsatisfactory because they disregard the central problem of abusive deepfakes, *i.e.*, violation of consent (Shaik, 2021). Bringing a defamation lawsuit against non-consensual pornographic deepfake means claiming that pornographic content is detrimental to women's reputations. Such an argument reinforces the patriarchal belief that it is inappropriate for women to be overtly sexual. The fundamental problem of non-consensual pornographic deepfakes is the violation of consent, not the detriments to women's reputation caused by being sexually represented (Shaik, 2021). Hence, the law should treat non-consensual pornographic deepfakes as an online sexual offense (Shaik, 2021).

Social media platforms often play essential roles in the dissemination of abusive deepfakes. Hence, imposing responsibility on platforms can be compelling to prevent the harmful effects of deepfakes (Chesney & Citron, 2019). In certain circumstances, the liability of platforms is the only feasible remedy for victims of deepfakes (Chesney & Citron, 2019). However, in the United States, since 1996, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) has shielded platforms from civil liability for hosting harmful information, subject to very narrow exceptions (Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C § 230). In 2018, the United States Congress enacted the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) to preclude such immunity from digital services that promotes or facilitates sex trafficking (Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Trafficking Act, H.R. 1865, 115th Cong. (2017)).

Regardless of who the respondents are, civil litigation is costly. Such an economic burden may prevent victims from initiating lawsuits against abusive deepfakes (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

2.3. Legal requirements for the deepfake app developers and the social media platforms

The legislature should require app developers to incorporate a disclaimer for manipulated audios and videos (Venema, 2020). Additionally, service providers must obtain express, unequivocal consent of all involved persons prior to approving a request to make a deepfake (Venema, 2020).

App developers and social media platforms should also take initiatives to restrict the dissemination of abusive deepfakes. For example, they may develop their terms of service, community standards, and removal policies

on non-consensual deepfakes (eSafety, 2022). Big Tech companies have realized the dangers of deepfakes, and they are exploring potential solutions to fight against harmful deepfakes (Kern, 2019). However, they must comply with "technological due process", which requires transparency, clarity, and fairness in their speech policies (Citron, 2008).

2.4. Legal protection for the victims of abusive deepfakes

The "Streisand effect" refers to a situation where an attempt to hide something causes the reverse to occur (Cummings, 2021). The "Streisand effect" may prevent victims from bringing claims when deepfakes are humiliating or damaging to their reputation because lawsuits draw attention. Unless victims may use pseudonyms while pursuing claims, litigation can unexpectedly aggravate their injury (Chesney & Citron, 2019). For instance, victims of sexual offenses in the United Kingdom automatically enjoy anonymity, except those of image-based sexual abuse, thus restricting the number of individuals who denounce pornographic deepfakes (Shaik, 2021).

3.   Social measures

Deepfakes rely on the assumption that "seeing is believing". Thus, to fight against this prejudice, digital literacy programs must assist every ordinary person in determining the legitimacy and credibility of videos (Venema, 2020). Experts are researching global standards and introducing them into schools and universities worldwide (Venema, 2020). Young generations must gain essential digital literacy skills and explore online materials to develop their talents and knowledge (Naffi, 2020).

Additionally, many countries have launched nationwide programs to assist victims of non-consensual deepfakes, such as Helpline (United Kingdom), Cyber Civil Rights Initiative Helpline (United States), eSafety (Australia), and Cybertip (Canada) (Learning Network, 2021).

More educational programs to raise social awareness on deepfakes are indispensable (Mackintosh & Kiernan, 2019). Holistically, to blur the technical and generational divides, digital literacy policies should encompass all age ranges and demographic groups in society (Venema, 2020). Digitally equipped citizens are our best hope to respond and get rid of misinformation (Naffi, 2020).

Conclusion

Goal 5 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 5) urges for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls to sustain development (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Unfortunately, in the case of deepfakes, technological advancements are causing more harm than good for women, even intensifying gender-based violence. The Iceberg Model helps illustrate the challenges of abusive deepfakes: they are multi-layered and more complicated than they seem to be at first glance. Hence, a creative yet comprehensive approach is crucial to address such an emerging issue. At the very least, identifying the challenges of abusive deepfakes is an initial step in the journey to mitigate their consequences.

After all, technology can never be blameworthy, but its users and their ways of utilizing it. Thus, the responsibility to embrace technological innovations for social progress and development belongs to every one of us.

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Cyber Dating Violence and Porn Revenge From a Gender Perspective

Maria Jara Rodriguez Fariñas and Laura Carrascosa

The use of new technologies to establish interpersonal relationships is increasingly prevalent. Accordingly, Spanish surveys show that 94.5% of teenagers aged 10 to 15 years use the Internet and 41.4% own a cell phone when they are 11 years old (INE, 2000). Related to the provided data, it is at this stage of the life cycle that we detect an increase in bullying behavior towards peers through technology (Gómez-Galán et al., 2021). Harassing male and female peers through social networks permeates relationships that adolescents establish with their partners. In this sense, as teenagers begin to develop their first romantic relationships, cyberviolence between peers is extrapolated to these types of relationships (Cava, Tomás, Buelga, & Carrascosa, 2020). This is how they learn to relate to each other through violence within their social contexts.

While it happens in all fields of society, both cyberbullying and cyberdating violence are marked by gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes (Cava, Martínez-Ferrer, Buelga, & Carrascosa, 2020; Navarro, 2016). In fact, current research points to higher victimization in the case of women (WHO, 2020).

In this regard, Navarro (2016) concludes that aggressive behavior on social networks tends to be more frequent towards sexual and gender minorities. Consequently, the patriarchal system continues to impose heteronomous and misogynistic beliefs. From this theoretical framework, we understand the exponential growth of sexual cyberviolence suffered by girls in both types of relationships (dating and peer relationships). Indeed, a study conducted in the Urban area of southeast San Diego County, California reported that 53% of the interviewed teenagers received unwanted sexual photos (Reed et al., 2019). The data exposes a transition to the online world that we observe in sexual relationships during adolescence and emerging adulthood, with sexting being one of the most prevalent behaviors (Van Ouytsel & Dhoest, 2022).

Sexting refers to the action of sending of sexually explicit material to a partner or close friend (Pérez et al., 2011). This action does not imply risks for the person who practices it, since they do it voluntarily. The problem occurs when that material is used to denigrate, harass, or humiliate the sender, by sending it to third parties without the consent of the victim, with the potential of producing what had been named in prior scientific literature as revenge porn (Bates, 2017). It is in such situations that serious psychosocial consequences occur in women, due to gender stereotypes. In this context, distorted beliefs about female sexuality cause women to be perceived as sexual objects, promoting certain sexist, vexatious, and humiliating comments in society. Certainly, boys tend to blame women who suffer this type of violence (Serpe & Brown, 2021). Hence, this type of sexual violence causes women to suffer from serious psychosocial consequences that may grow into the most atrocious one, such as suicide (Beechay, 2019).

Based on this background, this chapter analyzes partner cyberviolence in teenagers at the age between 17 and 30, exploring the prevalence of revenge porn and the psychosocial consequences derived from sexist beliefs.

Methodology

In order to carry out this systematic review we employed the PRISMA statement (Preferred reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Urrútia & Bonfill, 2010).

At first, we used Boolean search that allowed us to specify and combine the following metadata: (cyberdating) AND (revenge porn); (revenge porn) AND (sexism), (Image based sexual) and (revenge porn) and revenge porn, introducing the additional filter of the publication date (2017-2022).

With the combination of (cyberdating) AND (revenge porn) no articles were found, with (revenge porn) AND (sexism) we identified 5 articles in total. After review, we included only one of them (Gius, 2022). While performing a second search with the combination (Image based sexual) and (revenge porn), we obtained 13 articles, of which, after content analysis, we selected 3 of them (McGlynn et al., 2020; Karasova & Forth, 2021; Walker et al., 2021).

Due to the fact that the subject matter is relatively new, the keywords used in the different investigations are not yet sufficiently standardized, therefore, we decided to review all the articles identified by the search (revenge porn), meaning a total of 119 articles of which we considered 2 investigations (Otubea et al., 2021; Aborisade, 2022) and 3 essays (Patella-Rey, 2018; Davis, 2020; Sparks, 2021) to contextualize the subject.

Using the different combinations in the search, we identified a total of 127 articles, and after analysis, 6 research articles and 3 essays were selected.

In this manner, we aim to respond to the specific objectives set through this review.

1. Eligibility criteria

In order to search for articles, we used the Web of Sciences (WOS) database to analyze all articles indexed in Journal Citations Reports (JCR). In this way, the review adheres to documents of a standard scientific quality. Since the analysis has been established in a specific time period, we took into consideration only the research published in last 5 years (from 2017 to 2022).

We used the following keywords:

- (cyberdating) AND (revenge porn)
- (revenge porn) AND (sexism)
- (Image based sexual) and (revenge porn)
- (revenge porn)

Taking into account all these criteria, reviewing abstracts and the samples used, we discarded a total of 118 articles, and 9 articles were finally included in the study.

2. Inclusion criteria

- Articles published between 2017-2022.
- Research focused on teenagers aged 17 to 30 years.
- Material published in Spanish and English language.
- Publications that review or analyze data related to revenge porn (understood as the distribution of material with sexually explicit content without the consent of the partner or ex-partner) and sexism.

3. Exclusion criteria

- Articles published prior to 2017.
- Research that studied a sample of ages outside the range (17 to 30 years)
- Publications in other languages than Spanish and English.
- Systematic reviews and gray literature
- Not having access to the full text.

4. Flowchart
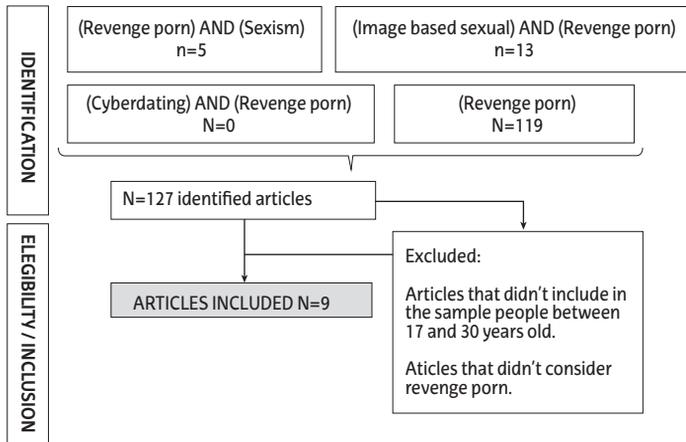
Identification

Eligibility/Inclusion

N=127 identified articles

Included articles =9

Excluded:

Articles with a different age range sample than 17 to 30 years.

Articles that do not study revenge porn.

Results

The following table presents the analysis of the material included in the systematic review.

TITLE	AUTHOR	OBJECTIVE	SAMPLE	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS
Addressing the Blurred question of responsibility: insights from online news comments on a case of nonconsensual pornography.	Gius (2022)	Understand how to approach responsibility, in the construction of a victim-blaming narrative.	Thematic approach to 1494 comments online	Acknowledging having shared memes inspired by their videos. Few spoke about the consequences of his own actions. Victim's actions were constantly under scrutiny by commentators.	Devastating effects and very palpable consequences for the victims. The price paid is proportional to social guilt. Recurring use of traditional topics of violence against women is revealed.
Personality, attitudinal, and demographic predictors of non-consensual dissemination of intimate images.	Karasavva &Forth (2021)	Analyze how demographic characteristics, personality traits predict perpetration and victimization.	810 university students (72,7% female and 23,3% male)	28.5% reported being a victim of image-based sexual abuse. 13.7% were perpetrators. 7.7% were perpetrators and victims. Statistically significant association between the perpetrator and male gender. 56.9% of the victims reported the perpetrator to be their intimate partner or ex-partner. Sexist myths are positively correlated with perpetration.	Victimization and perpetration is relatively common as a considerable number of people have experienced both. As sexting increases, vulnerability and victimization increase.

TITLE	AUTHOR	OBJECTIVE	SAMPLE	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS
It's torture for the soul: The harms of image-based sexual abuse.	McGlynn, Johnson, Rackley, Henry, Gavey, Flynn & Powell (2021).	Compren Understanding the Harms of Image-Based Sexual Abuse	75 interviews with victims-survivors of Image-Based Sexual Abuse in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.	The vast majority of perpetrators were identified as men. The victims relate a total devastation of their lives, it altered their sense of self, their identity, their relationship with their body and with others. Sense of constancy, avoidance Feeling judged, alone and supportless. They identify the Internet as a potential site for re-traumatization.	5 main subjects: social rupture, constancy, existential threat, isolation and restricted freedom. Image-based sexual abuse is recognized as a social construction based on cultural gender values.
Nonconsensual sharing of private sexually explicit media among university students.	Walker, Sleath, Hatcher, Hine & Crookes (2021)	Determine the nature and prevalence of consensual and non consensual sharing of sexually explicit material	391 participants of a mixed method survey	71.10% had sent material with and without consent, the main motivation for sending messages, photos and/or videos was to have fun. There is no association between gender and perpetration or victimization. There was a significant association between perpetration and victimization.	There was no association between gender and perpetration and victimization. There was an association between perpetration and victimization and also between being coerced and victimization.

TITLE	AUTHOR	OBJECTIVE	SAMPLE	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS
Exploring Cyberbullying and its Implications on Psychosocial Health of Students in Accra, Ghana: A Thematic Analysis	Otubea, Primo, Owusu, (2021)	Explore the concept of cyberbullying and its effects on the psychosocial health of students in Accra, Ghana	Subject analysis of 6 interviewed students	The reasons for being a perpetrator are: for fun, revenge, insecurities, jealousy, power play and transfer of emotions. The effects were depression, avoidance, paranoia, suicide, shame, grief, and guilt. Participants tend to see victims as sensitive, easy to break, weak, and emotional.	Both bullies and victims are aware of the effects of cyberbullying and they perceive them as negative. Victims of cyberbullying need the help of a person who really understands them.
Image-Based Sexual Abuse in a Culturally Conservative Nigerian Society- Female Victims' Narratives of Psychosocial Costs	Aborisade (2022)	Explore the social and psychological implications of Image-Based Sexual Abuse victimization	27 interviewed women	Victims were subject to increased social condemnation, stigmatization, and avoidance based on increased blame in their social networks. Evidence of institutional revictimization. Victims reported self-blame, paranoia, anger, guilt, depression, suicidal thoughts and attempt to deal with abuse, secondary victimization, and social isolation.	Image-Based Sexual Abuse victims face social and psychological consequences that separate them from victims of other forms of sexual abuse.

Discussion

This bibliographic review aims to analyze cyberdating violence aged between 17 and 30, where the prevalence of revenge porn and/or image-based sexual abuse is identified. We aspired to identify the psychosocial consequences of the use of image-based sexual abuse and the importance of sexist beliefs and micromachisms in it.

After analyzing the selected studies, we find different meanings that revolve around the definition of revenge porn. Despite the fact that some examined studies use revenge porn as a synonym for image-based sexual abuse (Aborisade, 2022), as the dissemination of non-consensual images (Karasavva & Forth, 2021) or as non-consensual pornography (Patella-Rey, 2018), some of them (Karasavva & Forth, 2021) emphasize that the term revenge porn originated from the media and that it is not appropriate, since not all perpetrators who spread non-consensual private material are motivated by revenge, nor are all visual depictions of nudity or sexual activity pornographic. Otubea et al. (2021) and Walker and et al. (2021) argue that when sending sexual messages, images and videos non-consensually, the main motivation is the fun of the perpetrators. Other critics of revenge porn are based on the term connotation that blames the victim as if they had done something to the perpetrator that would have provoked his revenge (Aborisade, 2022). This controversy has made it difficult to identify studies on the matter.

The rise of technologies and mass media have made it easier for people, and in particular teenagers, to grow under the parameters of techno-socialization, building and recreating new social contexts from socialization through new technologies. The prevalence of sexting, has increased over the last decade (Walker et al., 2021).

The study by Karasavva & Forth (2021), shows that as sexting increases, so does vulnerability and victimization. In most of the reviewed studies, the incidence of the male gender fell on the perpetrator (Karasavva & Forth, 2021; McGlynn et al., 2021); however, in other studies, this association between gender and perpetration could not be verified (Walker et al., 2021). The publication by Walker et al. (2021) identified that women felt pressure from their peers to post sexy images, messages and videos on their social networks. Both the study by Karasavva & Forth (2021) and the study by Walker et al. (2021) found a direct association between perpetration and victimization, since many victims were also perpetrators. In the study by Karasavva & Forth (2021), 28% of the victims who had suffered the dissemination of non-consensual intimate images had a history of

perpetration (31.0% of men and 25.3% of women) and 57% of the perpetrators had a history of victimization (47.4% of men, 58.9% of women).

Sexist beliefs and micromachisms

The mass media play a major role in shaping social values and in the construction of societies. The research carried out by Gius (2021) analyzes the role of media in the story of a 29-year-old woman from a village near Naples in Italy who had been a victim of revenge porn. The media focused on public shaming she had experienced and the legal actions she had taken, yet, little attention was paid to the role played by the perpetrators who spread the videos, or the role of the media that distributed the story. In conclusion, the media reported that the victim had acted with an undue reliance.

Society is built as a moral control agent that shows its own condemnation to those (in this case to the one) who act outside the morally accepted norms. Thus, as Gius (2021) argues, the victims of this type of abuse suffer from social punishment based on humiliation. In the study, Gius (2021) analyzes the comments that users made in the news and shows the breach of trust between the victim and perpetrators as a central element, but the problem is not framed in the structural dimension of violence and abuse. The guilt of the victim was exposed through a paternalistic language of compassion and condolence; however, not explicitly, it was only suggested. This paternalistic language also appears in other studies to conceive the female victim as more vulnerable to cyberbullying (Otubea et al., 2021).

In the investigation of Gius (2021) it is identified comments that directly addressed the sexual behavior of the victim argued that they were sexually promiscuous and morally despicable, and somehow responsible for what had happened. The latest comments reinforce gender stereotypes based on the fact that nothing happens to innocent women. The victim, by transgressing gender norms, became a «bad woman» without any credibility.

The continuous review of the victim's behavior denotes the traditional myths that serve as an excuse for violence against women, reinforcing the idea that the perpetrators are not guilty if the victim is not considered really innocent. Therefore, the perpetrators' actions are excused and the relation between this abuse, gender violence and gender inequality is denied. The discourse on the individual responsibility of the victim reinforces male domination, given the fact that the abuse is understood within the personal

sphere and thus moves away from the understanding of it as another form of systemic violence against women due to the subordination to men.

Victim blaming appears in other studies where the victim is blamed for transgressing moral norms (Aborisade, 2022). Social condemnations that punish people, mainly women, who have transgressed conservative social beliefs and values related mainly to female sexuality, are part of the phenomenon called «slut shaming» (Ringrose & Renold, 2012). As a consequence, victims feel a guilt that is proportional to the traditional values framing female sexuality in different societies with different patriarchal levels.

In societies where sexual violence against women is normalized, it generates a «rape culture» (Ezechi et al., 2016; Krishnan, 2015) that facilitates image-based sexual abuse, among other forms of abuse. Spreading non-consensual sexual images can become a consolidation of certain hegemonic hypermasculinities (Karasavva & Forth, 2021). Aborisade (2022) finds that the dissemination of these images is incited by the prevailing culture of silence and Male Peer Support Theory[1] that can cause the victim to hide the abuse because they fear social stigma.

Male Peer Support Theory that considers image-based sexual abuse to be a means of "making masculinity" (Messerschmidt, 1993) could contribute to explain this type of behavior. Therefore, victims' social standing, systemic structural inequalities such as misogyny and racism in society are intertwined factors to explain the action, the meaning, and the consequences of revenge porn (McGlynn et al., 2021).

In addition, victims situated in more precarious contexts, where greatly unequal power relations prevail, are denied access to legal instruments that would allow them to protect themselves and exercise some type of control, such as recovering and deleting their private material from the Internet.

In conclusion, patriarchal myths, sexist beliefs, and micromachisms acquire a great importance in image-based sexual abuse and in revenge porn. This means that revenge porn becomes a systemic problem rooted in a culture of violence against women. We recognize image-based sexual abuse as a social construction based on cultural gender values (McGlynn et al., 2021).

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1   Male support theory is a theoretical perspective heavily influenced by feminist perspectives of thought and masculinities. It was originally developed by DeKeseredy (1988), However, we place ourselves in the broader concept offered by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1993; 1998) who consider that patriarchal men who live in patriarchal cultures that support rape are going to have male friends who share the same values and beliefs. These men will reinforce beliefs and values that promote the abuse of women, especially those who represent a threat to male patriarchal authority.

Identify psychosocial consequences of the use of image-based sexual abuse

The different studies we analyzed confirmed that non-consensual pornography has devastating effects and consequences in all areas of the victims' lives, altering their sense of self and relationship with their body (personal and bodily integrity) and with others (McGlynn et al., 2021).

The reaction of the public that sees the material, bullying, trolling and the ever-present surveillance create social rupture, constancy, existential threat, avoidance and restrict their freedom (McGlynn et al., 2021). The victim may feel that the authorities fail victims' justice, and therefore, the perpetrators do not consider the legal system to be an impediment (Karasavva & Forth, 2021). In fact, in the research by Karasavva & Forth (2021) more than half of the perpetrators knew that the action they committed was illegal; however, it did not dissuade them from committing the harm. This judicial defenselessness felt by the victims may be one of the reasons why some of them react with a revenge coping strategy that in several cases leads to becoming both victims and perpetrators at the same time (Karasavva & Forth, 2021; Walker et al., 2021). Although, according to the study by Otubea et al. (2021) most victims use emotional coping strategies.

In the scrutinized investigations we detected that the victims suffered from depression, avoidance, paranoia, suicidal attempts (Aborisade, 2022; Otubea et al., 2021), self-blame (Aborisade, 2021; McGlynn et al., 2021; Otubea et al., 2021), pain, guilt (Aborisade, 2022; McGlynn et al., 2021; Otubea et al., 2021), depression, helplessness, low self-esteem, anger, and feelings of worthlessness (Aborisade, 2022).

In addition, those who received threats from their intimate partners described the emotional pain associated with betrayal of trust and self-blame (Aborisade, 2022). In the study by Karasavva & Forth (2021) more than half of the perpetrators (56,9%) were partners or ex-partners. The fear of social reaction to the leaking of their privacy is evident in all the studied publications (Aborisade, 2022; Davis, 2020; Gius, 2021; McGlynn et al., 2021; Otubea et al., 2021;). The sense of shame led a large number of victims to not leave their homes for long periods, to deactivate their social network profiles or open new accounts with false identities (Aborisade, 2022). The online world became a dangerous place with a high potential for (re) traumatization for a vast majority of victims (McGlynn et al., 2021). Hence, image-based sexual abuse originates a sense of isolation from family, friends, the online world, and society as a whole (Aborisade, 2022; McGlynn et al., 2021).

In more conservative societies the social consequences may be even more devastating. Aborisade (2022) conducted a research in Nigeria that affirms that the victims were exposed to social ostracism, completely isolating themselves from their social networks, and a large number of them were punished and condemned by their relatives. In many cases, teenagers experienced truncation of their studies, job loss, loss of marriage and intimate relationship, sexual harassment, restriction of movement and loss of social lives.

Although the data from the different investigations may vary depending on the on the criteria of the sociocultural context where the investigation is conducted: life experiences, age, social identity, etc., all the studied subjects experienced constant (re)victimization since that sexual content, in most cases, continued to be online, causing thus a constant fear that the material would be (re)discovered (McGlynn, 2021); they considered image-based sexual abuse to be ever-present and omnipotent (Aborisade, 2022; Karasavva & Forth, 2021). In addition, the recurrent psychological and emotional distress was due to the continuous taunting they received from family, friends, and significant others (Aborisade, 2022).

This situation led the victims to alter all their relationships, activities and experiences, causing significant harm which permeated their personal, professional and digital social worlds (McGlynn et al.2021). We could speak of a destruction of the self, the world self, and the other (Aborisade, 2022). There is a disconnection between how one perceives oneself and how others perceive it, the evaluations that the rest make about the victim can break the harmony of oneself.

Both social rupture and constancy are seen as an existential threat that transgresses space and time (McGlynn et al., 2021). This leads victims to be under constant surveillance both in their online and face-to-face relationships. After the abuse, victims continue to have trust issues towards men (McGlynn et al., 2021) and towards their romantic partners (Aborisade, 2022). In the study by Aborisade (2022), participants indicated that after they had suffered the abuse and some time had passed they still felt the psychological and emotional effects. This statement is also shared by Sparks (2021) who argues that victims may experience perpetuated suffering.

McGlynn et al. (2021) shows how the victims continuously check the Internet to verify that the materials have not been (re)posted and/or hyper-analyze their social relations in order to know who might have seen their private material, and consequently causes a (re)victimization and a

continuing existential threat. This sustained abuse is much like domestic abuse that stretches out over space and time.

To conclude, we have been able to verify the psychosocial consequences of revenge porn. Despite the fact that there are certain variations depending on the individuals' status and power roles and the levels of patriarchy in different societies, they entail a variety of social and psychological harm that is aggravated in more conservative societies. The psychological traumas caused are prolonged over time due to negative perceptions and attitudes towards the victims that delay or even prevent a full recovery from the abusive experience (Aborisade, 2022).

Conclusions

The objective of this review was to analyze partner cyber violence in couples between the ages of 17 and 30, where the prevalence of revenge porn and/or image-based sexual abuse is identified. The review process has identified some conclusions that must be taken into account, although they are not directly related to the general objective and the specific objectives initially set.

The analysis carried out indicates that image-based sexual abuse, the dissemination of non-consensual images, non-consensual pornography or revenge porn is a very little investigated field, that it is taking special interest due to its prevalence in the context of a technosocialization increasingly growing.

The field of study is so incipient that there is still no standardization of the words that give meaning to this phenomenon. After this investigation, it has been concluded that the words "revenge porn" should not be used to describe such a broad phenomenon where different variables that go beyond "revenge" interact. In addition, it is true that the word itself can have negative connotations towards the victim, as if she had done something to receive this revenge.

The problem with the lack of precise and agreed terms and words complicated the methodological search with metadata, finding few investigations that studied this phenomenon with the criteria of our study, mainly in relation to the age range. Therefore, it is necessary to homogenize the terms for the scientific study of this technosocial phenomenon.

On the other hand, a significant lack of studies that analyze this problem in adolescence and late adolescence has been detected. In the context of technosocialization, it is essential to study sexual abuse based on

private material with adolescents because, as has been verified throughout this review, the psychosocial consequences for the victim and their environment are devastating, sometimes leading the victim to the point of suicide.

In order to fulfill the objective of this study, two specific objectives were proposed: the first one was to analyze the importance of sexist beliefs and micromachisms in image-based sexual abuse. After this review, we can affirm that patriarchal myths and, therefore, sexist beliefs and micromachisms, acquire great importance in sexual abuse based on images. Thus, this phenomenon becomes a systemic problem rooted in a culture of violence against women. Image-based sexual abuse is recognized as a social construction based on cultural gender values (McGlynn et al., 2021).

The second objective was to identify the psychosocial consequences of the use of these images. It has been proven that the psychosocial consequences of revenge pornography, although they have certain variations depending on the status and power roles of individuals and the levels of patriarchy in different societies, entail a variety of social and psychological effects. that are aggravated in more conservative societies. The psychological traumas caused by the malicious use of images and sexually private information are maintained over time due to negative perceptions and attitudes towards the victims that delay or even prevent recovery from the abusive experience (Aborisade, 2022).

"Sexual abuse based on the dissemination of private materials without consent" is becoming a global phenomenon, which increases in the most patriarchal societies where the consequences for the victims are worse. It is necessary to carry out research that contextualizes the consequences suffered by victims in the socio-cultural context of the society in which they find themselves, in order to create legislation and public policies that help combat this new expression of systemic violence suffered by women.

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Tertiary Victimization of Sexual Violence Victims Online: How the Internet Needs to Become a Safer Space for Women

Mikayla Pevac

The Internet is a complex entity that can enhance and harm the lives of those who participate in online interactions. Along with the more positive aspects of the online community, like increased interest in political debate and activism efforts (Duggan & Smith, 2016; Anderson et al., 2018), there has also been an increase in online hate and violence. This chapter will focus on how perpetrators of sexual violence target victims online using popular new digital modes of communication like social media, resulting in the infliction of further trauma beyond the physical world. By discussing the prevalence of cyber-harassment, this complex topic can be brought to the forefront of the discussion on how to make the Internet a safer place for everyone—and especially for the most vulnerable.

Described as the "hidden epidemic" by Koss (1985), sexual violence has been historically underreported, despite statistics that highlight how common is for women[1] to experience sexual violence all around the world (World Health Organization, 2021). Now, due to the Internet's affordances of anonymity (Stoeffel, 2014) and lack of accountability (Salter & Bryden, 2009), there has been a steep rise in the amount of online sexual violence. This increase in "online harassment, alternatively referred to as 'trolling,' 'flaming,' 'cyberbullying,' or 'e-bile," is resulting in the infliction of psychological harm on women all around the world (Clark-Parsons, 2018 p. 2126). Online harassment occurs in multiple forms, from cyberstalking, cyber-hacking, cyber-bullying, cyber-sex trafficking, "sextortion" (sexual blackmail), and the posting of nude or explicit images of videos online (including the posting and selling of digital materials featuring sexual assault).

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1 This chapter relies on the trans-inclusive definition of "woman" as posited by Kirkland (2019) by which all individuals who are "oppressed as women through cultural stereotypes and inter-nalized oppression" must be considered in feminist analyses or risk limiting "understanding of women's oppression" (p. 23).

Beyond the initial trauma of victimization, there is also the potential for secondary trauma in the form of backlash from family and friends—termed the "second rape" (Ahrens et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 1999). Factors like social taboos (Band-Winterstein et al., 2021), misconduct in the judicial and legal fields (Dick, 2020), and fear of retribution (Clark-Parsons, 2018) all culminate in even further trauma being inflicted on survivors. So, the question then remains, how can the Internet be made a safer place?

Beginning with a detailed background of the issue of sexual violence and the practice's ties to patriarchal misogyny, this chapter will draw upon examples of gender-based cyber-crime from the U.S.A., India, and South Korea to illustrate the prevalency of the online victimization of women. Accompanying each example there will be an analysis of the current legal protections (or lack therefore) of each of the respective cultural contexts. Finally, some suggestions for developing clear and consistently enforced policies and procedures by local, national, and international governments will be introduced to best argue that a global commitment to addressing human rights concerns is necessary to keep digital technologies from harming those they were developed to serve.

The "hidden epidemic"

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), sexual violence against women is a "major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights" that must be addressed globally and collectively sooner rather than later (2021b, p. VIII). In 2018, WHO conducted a report on behalf of the United Nations (UN) Women Task Force on Violence Against Women and found that nearly 1 in 3 or about 30% of women worldwide have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (2021a). With the current population of women hovering around 3.9 billion, that means around 1.17 billion people have been subjected to an act or repeated acts of non-consensual physical contact of a sexual nature with another individual that is often, but not always, "achieved by force, through threats or the exploitation of authority (e.g., rape or attempted rape, indecent assault, and forcible sodomy)" (Band-Winterstein et al., 2021, p. 113). The Women Task Force on Violence Against Women also found that most gender-based violence was perpetrated by someone the survivor knew, like a family member, friend, or, most commonly, a former or current intimate partner. Finally, if a woman belongs to a marginalized racial or religious group, is a member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community, disabled, or is from a lower socioeconomic class, especially in countries or regions classified as "least developed" by the UN, then she is at an even higher risk of victimization.

While this chapter focuses exclusively on the women that have been victimized by sexual violence, it must be acknowledged that men are also affected by sexual violence, just to a significantly lesser degree (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Ultimately, gender-based violence is a prevalent issue around the world, and digital forms of sexual violence are just the newest iterations of a widespread human rights problem.

Sexual violence is not only common but is also described as one of the most under-reported crimes (Kelly et al., 2005; Rennison, 2002). There are a multitude of factors that go into a survivor's decision to either informally disclose (like to family or friends) or formally disclose (like to medical or legal institutions) their experience with sexual violence, but most significant are the social taboos that limit a survivor's ability to get support from their community.

According to Band-Winterstein et al. (2021), sexual violence is an under-reported phenomenon because of the intertwining social "taboos, stigmas, and prejudices that shape and frequently accompany the phenomenon, both at the social as well as the interpersonal level" (p. 113). Survivors of sexual violence are often victim-blamed and shamed for being victimized, resulting in the blame being placed on the traumatized victim rather than on the perpetrator.

This kind of negative feedback can leave survivors without the needed support to heal from their trauma; therefore, resulting in a high proportion of survivors suffering from debilitating mental health issues that can affect the rest of their lives (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012; Orchowski et al., 2013). More specifically, survivors have an increased risk of developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and thoughts of suicide than those who have not experienced sexual violence during their lifetime (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2010). This secondary trauma of being met with disdain rather than compassion has been dubbed "the second rape" because of the significant capacity for re-victimization (Ahrens et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 1999).

Due to the social perpetuation of rape myths and other victim-blaming stereotypes—like the common misconception that a woman's outfit can justify unwanted sexual attention—survivors often choose to remain silent about their traumatic experiences rather than risk societal ostracization (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). Perpetrators of sexual violence often target members of vulnerable groups like women from minority racial or ethnic groups, women of a lower socioeconomic background, or single women because they know that these women have less protection by society;

therefore, they are easier to manipulate into silence (Daniels, 2009). Overall, there are multiple societal barriers for survivors that can hinder their path to healing, and most are sustained by ingrained, sexist biases and prejudices that are easily perpetuated on the Internet (Daniels, 2009).

Described by Clark-Parsons (2018) as "networked misogyny", online harassment of women seeks to silence women and retain the sexist, patriarchal status quo. Cole (2015) uses the term "disciplinary rhetoric" to refer to the online hate that is levied against vulnerable individuals or groups to make them reluctant "to speak out against online misogyny for fear of appearing humorless, weak, and censorious or opening themselves up to more attacks" (Clark-Parsons, 2018, p. 2127). Women are especially targeted online because of the ease of online harassment.

Social media platforms and other online communication venues profit off increased participation, so they make it simple for users to locate other individuals online. If users fail to update their privacy settings from the "public" default, anyone can access their personal information. The sharing function on online platforms makes the dispersal of personal material effortless, especially to those who want to target women. Clevenger and Navarro (2021) have coined the term "third-victimization," or tertiary victimization, to refer to sexual violence survivors who are being further abused online by the digitally distributed recordings. Studies of online retaliation, like the one conducted by Holtzman and Menning (2015), exemplify how easy it is for perpetrators to find and harass women online— especially for the survivors of interpersonal violence where they intimately knew their perpetrator (Citron, 2009).

A common example of intimate partner online violence is the practice known as "revenge porn". This practice often involves an ex-partner uploading naked or semi-naked photos or videos to the Internet, without the consent of the featured individual, oftentimes attaching personal information to the content so that the survivor is bombarded with unsolicited online attention (Bates, 2017).

Moreover, there have even been cases where physical acts of sexual violence, like sexual assault, are digitally videotaped and then uploaded to the Internet to further humiliate and harm the survivor (Jones, 2017). The victimization of women using the Internet has emboldened perpetrators with tools to inflict even more psychological pain beyond the physical world.

Digital Victimization In Action

There are different types of online gender-based violence, including: cyberstalking, cyber-hacking, cyber-bullying, cyber-sex trafficking, and (as previously mentioned) the sharing of materials featuring sexual assault, as well as revenge porn. These cybercrimes originate from the same sexist societal prejudice—a misogynistic view of women.

Misogyny is a term used to describe how the engrained sexist thinkings of a society result in societal inequality or inequity for women, for example the gender wage gap. Vickery and Everbach (2018) argue that misogynism marginalizes women to keep them in a status of "second-class citizens," and in this way, men continue to reap the benefits of a more privileged position (p. 7). Sexist ideology is then engrained into online technologies by their creators. For example, in an analysis of the search engine results for the term "black girls," Noble (2018) found that pornographic images dominated the top search results. Therefore, online spaces are not free from the societal biases that justify gender-based violence.

To better understand the role of online technologies in the perpetuation of misogyny, this section offers multiple examples from around the world depicting instances where a woman or women were abused online. Intertwined with each case will be information on the respective country's legal standing on cybercrimes, aiming to demonstrate how a lack of restrictions on Internet content distribution is contributing to the infringement of women's human rights.

The Survivor In Tennessee, USA

In 2017, a woman from Tennessee, USA found out that a video of her sexual assault from three years previous had been uploaded to the Internet (Jones, 2017). The video graphically depicts the incapacitated woman (a minor at the time) being forcefully penetrated by two perpetrators. One of the perpetrators was the survivor's 16-year-old boyfriend at the time, while the other was a stranger. The morning after the assault, the woman awoke with a cloudy memory of what had taken place the night before, but sure that she had been assaulted in some capacity.

Without any proof of wrongdoing, the survivor had tried to move on from that traumatic night—that is until a friend sent her husband a link to the graphic video with the caption "forceful rape." Within the video, the victim can clearly be heard repeating the word "stop", while the perpetrators restrain her. The survivor and her husband came forward anonymously to the press to plea for help in not only holding the perpetrators responsible

but in getting the video removed from the Internet site. The woman from Tennessee is not an anomaly but an example of the wider trend of victims of tertiary violence being targeted online. Perpetrators can capitalize on the Internet's capacity for harassment a number of ways; including, but not limited to: (1) posting rude, offensive, or suggestive comments, (2) sending messages that blackmail or threaten, (3) creating fake accounts to avoid being blocked, (4) messaging repeatedly via email, direct message, or text, (5) hacking into or hijacking accounts, (6) releasing personal or confidential information, (7) posting real or manipulated photos, (8) tracking online movements, (9) accessing the cameras on personal computers and recording, and (10) retrieving physical addresses to physically locate victims. Online tertiary victimization manifests in a variety of ways, and all are relatively easy to perpetrate yet difficult to stop.

On September 12, 2012, the "Cybercrime Prevention Act" was passed in the USA to establish a penal precedent for dealing with crimes that take place online. While the Cybercrime Prevention Act did codify the existence of cybercrime, the law is still lagging behind the increasingly complex nature of the digital crime. Citron (2014) explains that while survivors do have legal options civilly and/or criminally, neither of these options come cheap nor are easily accessible.

In a civil case, the survivor would have to prove that a civil wrong had occurred: including, but not limited to, defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, harassment, and/or public disclosure of a private fact (Citron, 2014). This route is not only expensive but is also emotionally draining for a survivor who has to recount the trauma repeatedly during the multitudes of court proceedings, including when giving witness statements to the police and/or legal teams, preliminary and pre-trial hearings, and even during a criminal trial. Also, USA law will not allow plaintiffs to remain anonymous; therefore, exposing survivors to unwanted public attention (Citron, 2014).

Citron (2014) does explain that survivors have found more success when they have sued the Internet pornography sites for copyright infringement if they can prove they are the photographer (most commonly in "selfie"-style images). Ironically, the copyright laws are more protective of intellectual property than the anti-harassment laws are of women. In the case of the survivor from Tennessee, a civil lawsuit alleging emotional distress would be an easy sell, but it is clear from the video that she was not the one operating the camera, so she could not allege copyright infringement. If the survivor could afford the legal fees and loss of anonymity, this would be one possible avenue of justice women in the USA could explore.

The other option is a criminal lawsuit. Federal cyberstalking laws that have been in effect since 2011 "include language allowing prosecutors to go after people using electronic tools to harass" and "specifically stipulate that an 'interactive computer service' cannot be used to threaten" (Sweeney, 2014, para. 15). Theoretically, these laws include the Internet as a space for violence, but practically these cases are hard to win. In a 2013 revenge porn case in New York, the judge dismissed harassment charges because the defendant did not have direct contact with the plaintiff, therefore ignoring the fact that online communication can facilitate harassment just as much as a phone call (Sweeney, 2014).

Citron (2014) believes that the law should be endowed with more neutral language so that it does not need to be updated with each new technological breakthrough, for example: "Congress [could] replace...the language, 'harass any person at the called number or who received the communications,' with 'harass any specific person'" (Sweeney, 2014, para. 19).

Some states have enacted "revenge porn laws" that have made it a criminal invasion of privacy to circulate sexual images online without consent. In Tennessee specifically, revenge porn is classified as a misdemeanor which are considered "less serious crimes" and can only be punishable up to a year in prison and $2,500 in fines (Mince-Didlier, n.d.). However, under Tennessee's laws, the statute of limitations lasts only a year after the crime occurs. So, since most likely the video of the Tennessee survivor's sexual assault had been on the Internet since the time of the crime (which was three years before), the survivor's chance at a criminal case is effectively nullified. Ultimately, even if the survivor from Tennessee was able to sue her perpetrators civilly or criminally, she would be subject to repeated traumatic triggers. Her anonymity would be stripped away, her financial resources would most likely be drained (the Center for Disease Control estimates that the per-victim lifetime cost of rape is $122,461 USD), or her case might even be deemed unfit for trial (DeGue, 2018).

Overall, updating legal code is not enough to end the re-victimization of survivors, only with changes being made to societal structures of power can equality online be achieved; because when stalkers, harassers, and online bullies can safely operate under the assumption that they'll never be caught, much less tried for their attacks, it might be time to revisit the laws, policies, and practices that protect them as virtual reality becomes our reality. (Sweeney, 2014, para. 31).

The Survivors In India

Described by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) as "the new epicenter of the global pandemic", India has recorded over 26 million cases of Covid-19. Beginning in 2019 and now continuing through 2022, Covid-19 is a highly contagious virus that spreads globally at a rate never seen before. Variants of Covid-19 are hampering eradication efforts, with the deadliest being named Omicron, which caused a "second wave" of high number of cases and dead tolls around the world—most especially in India. Due to the overcrowding in large Indian cities and poor execution of viral containment policies and procedures (Asrani et al., 2021), mutations of the Covid-19 virus have spread across India, causing nearly three million deaths (Cohen, 2022). Amidst the chaos of the pandemic, women turned to social media to ask for help attaining medical supplies like ventilator beds for their sick loved ones. Still, the women's pleas for help to overcome Covid-19 were commonly met with unsolicited sexual images or sexually harassing messages from strangers.

While there is no universal definition of cyberstalking, it typically comprises acts that involve the usage of online communication technologies for sending unwanted sexual comments or sexual advances, attempts to obtain sexual acts (like for one survivor in Delhi, the repeated barrage of perpetrators pressuring her to go on a date with them), unwanted sexual acts (like lewd images), sexual coercion, or the spreading of rumors online. While cyberstalking is not a physical violation of an individual, these crimes result in short and/or long-term mental health issues. In a study conducted by Stevens et al. (2021), victims of cyberstalking and/or cyber-harassment consistently experienced some of the following: "anxiety, depression, sadness, anger, fear, shame, embarrassment, isolation, low self-esteem, paranoia, stomach aches, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harming behavior, and heart palpitations" (p. 371).

Cyberstalking rates have risen exponentially with the pandemic's restrictions on physical contact limiting social interaction. According to the Indian National Commission of Women Chairperson, Rekha Sharma, online harassment and cyberstalking of women in India online increased "500%" in 2020 (Prasad, 2021). However, legal definitions of crimes like cyberstalking are murky at best, and widespread knowledge about these laws is near nonexistent (Mukherjee, 2021).

The Indian Penal Code (IPC) does offer some protection against sexual harassment (Section 354A), and online stalking on Internet platforms like social media (Section 354D). However, they do not protect Indian women

who gave out their phone numbers in hopes of getting access to medical resources because these laws failed to include cell phones as a possible venue for abuse (Mukherjee, 2021). Shouvik Kumar Guha, assistant professor at the National University of Juridical Sciences in Kolkata, explains:

When a victim shares her contact number on social media and a perpetrator uses that number to send unwarranted pictures and messages over the phone, it becomes a matter of conjecture whether that should fall under cybercrime or sexual harassment. (Mukherjee, 2021, para. 8)

This loophole in the law (1) dissuades survivors from viewing the legal system as a viable source of recourse, and (2) allows perpetrators to evade justice (Mukherjee, 2021). Women in India have other resources like help hotlines and the Covid-19 Legal Support Network (an association of lawyers providing free legal aid to people reporting Covid-related crimes) to turn to; but, overall, there is no clear course of action for these survivors.

Victims of cyberstalking are typically instructed to change their Internet passwords, keep records of the harassment, and report the crime to law enforcement—all of which place the responsibility on the survivor to stop the perpetrator. But what about the online platforms that give cyber-stalkers the tools to target women? For example, online social networking and search engine sites, like Facebook and Google, use web cookies (small pieces of code used to identify individual computers) to collect data on their users. Cyber-stalkers can then hack the data collected by the web cookies to access a victim's personal information, including IP addresses and physical addresses (Lakshmanan, 2021). In India, there are no privacy protection laws in place that would limit the collection of data of Internet users by sites like Facebook and Google. The Personal Data Protection Bill (PDP) was introduced in India's upper court system in 2017, yet it was tabled in 2021 pending modifications (Alpha Partners, 2022). Without holding companies responsible for their part in the cybercrimes against vulnerable populations, cyberstalking will remain a common experience amongst women in India.

The cyber-harassers used the lack of privacy safeguards on digital technologies to target the most vulnerable women, ones in need of resources. Tertiary victimization in this case comes not from a prior experience of physical sexual violence, but from the emotional trauma of the pandemic. The pandemic has caused many, if not all, people to experience feelings of bereavement, isolation, loss of income or loved ones, and an overall sense of fear, making even those vulnerable before COVID-19 to become even more so (WHO, 2020). Therefore, the mental anguish of fearing that a sick

loved one might die in combination with unsolicited, unyielding messages via phone or online compounded the trauma experienced by the women in India double or triple-fold.

The Survivors In South Korea

In 2019, K-pop star Goo Hara (legal name Eun-ju Lee) took her own life after learning that a doctor had taken a video of her changing in a local hospital. Hara had nightmares about her perpetrator leaking these graphic images online, therefore smearing her reputation to not only those close to her but to the entire world. In a public statement after Hara's death, her father explained how debilitating the mental anguish could be for a survivor of online sexual violence can experience.

You can kill someone without using weapons. The weight of the harm caused might be the same, but the effect can differ for each person - some might be able to pull through, others like my daughter might not be able to. (BBC, 2019, para. 11).

Digital sex crimes have become so pervasive in South Korea (officially known as the Republic of Korea) that women and girls are experiencing a severe mental health crisis. The usage of spy cameras, also known as "spy cams" or "molka", to capture images of women and girls naked, urinating, or having sex, has become extremely common in the last decade. According to the BBC (2021), "More than 30,000 cases of filming with the use of hidden cameras were reported to police in South Korea between 2013 and 2018" (Bicker, para. 25). These graphic videos are shared or sold online. Co-interim director of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch, Heather Barr, said in an official statement that:

Digital sex crimes have become so common, and so feared, in South Korea that they are affecting the quality of life of all women and girls. Women and girls told us they avoided using public toilets and felt anxious about hidden cameras in public and even in their homes. An alarming number of survivors of digital sex crimes said they had considered suicide. (Human Rights Watch, 2021a, para. 10)

Human Rights Watch (2021b) conducted a 103-page report entitled: "My Life is Not Your Porn': Digital Sex Crimes in South Korea", in which they interviewed 38 survivors and experts about this prolific issue. They also conducted an online survey of 554 other survivors that collected data on the lived experiences of those who had been violated by sharing personal videos or images online. The findings showed that illegal filming in South Korea had spiked between 2008 and 2017, from 585 cases to 6,615—with the likelihood of many more unreported cases.

South Korea ranks substantially low in gender equality, being allotted the 102nd slot out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report for 2021 by the World Economic Forum. Traditional Confucian patriarchal values continue to limit women's ability to work outside the home (Human Rights Watch, 2021b). A South Korean woman's place in society is still linked to her "sexual purity" (Human Rights Watch, 2021b, p. 2). Thus, if intimate images or videos of a woman are circulated online, she can face steep societal backlash resulting in loss of employment or alienation from her community. While the practice of hidden recording is indeed illegal, there are multiple barriers a survivor must overcome before the survivor can attain any form of justice.

The first hurdle a survivor must overcome is getting taken seriously by the gatekeepers of the legal system, the police. Human Rights Watch (2021b) argues that the police routinely "fail...to appreciate how deep the impact of digital sex crimes is on survivors" (p. 5). Not only do the police often not take survivors seriously, but they also can "behave in abusive ways, including minimizing harm, blaming them, treating images insensitively, and engaging in inappropriate interrogation" (p. 5). A major limiting factor is the lack of women in the police force. According to data collected by Kim and Merlo (2010), only 3.8% of the police force identifies as a woman, even though women make up over 50% of the employed workforce. By simply hiring more women, the police could operate more in favor of the women they are supposed to protect.

If the police officially record a survivor's case, it is later turned over to a prosecutor, who decides if the case is viable. Human Rights Watch's (2021b) report found a steep disparity in the types of cases that were being brought to trial.

In 2019, prosecutors dropped 46.8 percent of sex crime cases compared to 27.7 percent of homicide cases and 19 percent of robbery cases, meanwhile prosecutors dropped 43.5 percent of digital sex crimes cases, limited to crimes of sexual violence using cameras, distributing pictures without consent and production and distribution of child and youth sexual exploitation content. (p. 5).

While digital sex crimes do have a slightly better acceptance rate than physical sex crimes, most likely due to the presence of more substantial "proof", almost half of all digital violence survivors are denied legal action (and these are just the cases that have made it this far) (Human Right's Watch, 2021b).

Of those cases that proceed to trial, survivors are required to immerse themselves in the case. They are expected to collect evidence and monitor the Internet for any new videos, thereby forcing them to become "immersed in the abuse" (Human Rights Watch, 2021b, p. 38). Survivors' identities are also not protected during this process, so societal stigmas can affect their relationships and access to employment (Human Rights Watch, 2021b). All these factors further traumatize the survivors to the point where the cost of emotional wellbeing outweighs the possibility for justice.

Finally, suppose a survivor reaches the point where the court finds their perpetrator guilty. In that case, the sentencing is often lax: "in 2020, 79 percent of those convicted of capturing intimate images without consent received a suspended sentence, a fine, or a combination of the two" (Human Rights Watch, 2021b, p. 6). Therefore, even if survivors are successful in their efforts to obtain justice, they are again let down by the justice department's lack of respect for the gravity of the crime. The only other avenue of reparation of damages for South Korean survivors is civil court. Yet, once again, survivors are required to publicly document their names and addresses, leaving them accessible to vindictive perpetrators (Human Rights Watch, 2021b). Ultimately, survivors can find themselves trapped by societal stigma at every turn. Stigmatization refers to "the societal attachment of an 'attribute that is deeply discrediting' [and] that reduces the bearer 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 364). Stigma is attached to an individual or a group as a way of discrediting or even dehumanizing their position within a society. Women online are often met with sexist stigma that aims to silence them from speaking out about gender-based issues, such as sexual violence (Clark-Parsons, 2018). Overall, misogynistic stigma aims to reinforce the sexist status quo.

What is most glaringly understudied is why the creation of these videos is so pervasive in South Korea in the first place? Why do perpetrators think that making these videos is okay? The prevention of these crimes should be of paramount importance to the South Korean government for the sake of all their citizens—these women are friends, mothers, sisters, daughters, and colleagues; therefore, this issue affects everyone. Tertiary victimization online bleeds into the women's everyday lives, even pushing some survivors so far that suicide seems like the only escape (Bicker, 2021). Only "by changing the deep gender inequity that normalizes consumption of non-consensual intimate images", will significant progress be possible (Human Rights Watch, 2021 b, p. 6).

The Protection of Womens' Human Rights Online

The three examples from the USA, India, and South Korea explicate how pervasive and damaging a problem gender-based online violence has become worldwide. Online harassment compounds with the traumatic gender-based violence that women experience in their everyday lives, leaving survivors vulnerable to suffer from lifelong effects: like chronic mental health issues, inability to participate in and/or sustain meaningful relationships, and the likelihood of further victimization—a national study in the US found that women who were sexually assaulted before the age of 18 were twice as likely to be assaulted again (Krug et al., 2002).

The only way to stop this cycle of abuse from being perpetuated online is with the development of clear and consistently enforced policies and procedures will perpetrators be stopped from inflicting harm. The goal must be to make cyberspace safe for all; but, unfortunately for now, the lax safety features, high capacity for anonymity, and lack of legal interference emboldens perpetrators. Commitment by the world's leaders to ensure that human rights on the Internet are of topmost concern must occur so that the new technological tools help society rather than hinder.

A good place to start this process is through increased awareness and enhanced transparency about the ill effect on human rights that an unregulated Internet can have. Some suggestions to make this a reality, include:

- Establishment of local, national, and international commissions that examine the current legal statutes and sentencing for cybercrimes.
- Development of comprehensive plans for how to reduce the prevalence and impact of digital gender-based crimes through education and public awareness campaigns.
- Provide funding for survivors to access for the costs of the removal of harmful material off the Internet, legal fees, and mental health costs.
- Support legislative reforms to help survivors win in civil courts, resulting in access to injunctive relief and damages.
- And, most importantly, act immediately to "reduce gender inequity in society by taking urgent steps to increase women's participation in the legal and law enforcement sectors, political representation, public life, and the private sector especially at higher levels" (Human Rights Watch, 2021 b, p. 7). To do this, countries must close the gender pay gap and put an end to sexist attitudes.

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While not easy or quick points of action, these measures must be undertaken to ensure that the patterns and cycles of abuse outlined in this chapter do not continue to plague the women of the future. Online technologies should enable safe spaces for all, but instead, they are being used as tools for misogynistic violence. Women should not be afraid to open a social media account or worry about how Internet websites are using their private information; there need to be safeguards to protect those most vulnerable. Survivors of tertiary violence are burdened for the rest of their lives with not only the victimization they experience in their offline lives but also with the harassment they are faced with online. More needs to be done to strip the affordances of the Internet that work in favor of perpetrators, like anonymity and personal data collection, and instead work to create an Internet that prioritizes safety. Only by keeping online platforms, government and legal officials, and cybercrime perpetrators accountable for the safety of the Internet will the victimization of women online be put to an end.

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Preventing violence in the digital age: Women peacebuilders and technology-facilitated gender-based violence

Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos and Panthea Pourmalek

Under-regulated digital spaces carry grave risks of fueling violence and conflict, and pose new and different threats to women – including women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. At the same time, the rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) creates opportunities for more inclusive peace processes that better address Gender Based-Violence (GBV), and lead to more localized and sustainable peace. In recent years, the role of ICTs and digital technologies in managing and resolving conflicts has received increasing attention from theorists and practitioners. However, much of the existing literature on ICTs in the context of conflict and peacebuilding focuses on how ICTs may be helpful to mediators and ignores both the opportunities and threats facing women – including women activists and peacebuilders.

In order to fill this gap, in this chapter we explore the question of technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV) through the lens of the experiences of women peacebuilders. Recognizing the importance of local expertise in peacebuilding and violence prevention, we build on in-depth interviews with nearly 80 women peace activists, civil society, and ICT experts from 19 countries. Using this evidence, the chapter adds to extant literature in three key ways.

Firstly, it deconstructs the complex and multidimensional nature of TFGBV using the continuum of violence framework. In doing so, it draws attention in particular to the ways in which TFGBV affects women peacebuilders and activists. This adds to the burgeoning literature that increasingly documents and analyzes the diverse forms of TFGBV, but which – to date – has given little attention to how these types of violence affect women peace activists.

Secondly, by paying close attention to TFGBV that specifically targets women peacebuilders, it contributes to a better understanding of both

the opportunities and barriers for inclusive peacebuilding created by ICTs. Using the framework of the "local turn" approach to peacebuilding, we argue that ICTs bring a promise of making peacebuilding more localized and therefore more effective. However, we also recognize that they can further marginalize local actors and demonstrate how TFGBV contributes to such marginalization.

Finally, it puts forth concrete recommendations for better integration of TFGBV in international legal frameworks pertaining both to women's human rights and to peace and security. We analyze the shortcomings in the treatment of TFGBV in existing legal frameworks – including lack of definitional clarity, unsystematic and inconsistent references, and lack of recognition of both the broader structural causes of TFGBV and the specific violence faced by women peacebuilders and activists.

Methodological note

This chapter builds on the research conducted by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) and ICT4Peace foundation (ICT4P) with support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of International Law, in 2021. In line with feminist epistemology, the research centered the experiences and perspectives of women peacebuilders, activists, mediators, negotiators, and civil society, as well as ICT experts. It consisted of 79 in-depth interviews with participants from 19 countries[1], most of which are undergoing or have recently undergone a peace process. The interviews were complemented by a global online consultation on the challenges and opportunities the digital technologies create for women's peace work and activism, held in July 2021. The authors of this chapter were part of the research team and co-facilitators of the online consultation.

The findings from this research are supplemented by additional review of academic and grey literature, as well as existing laws, policies and strategies related to GBV, women's rights, and peace and security, including cybersecurity.

We begin by providing an overview of the existing literature and debates around the continuum of violence, TFGBV, and feminist and "local-turn" approaches to peacebuilding. We then add to these ongoing debates through an exploration of the empirical evidence emerging from the GNWP/ICT4P research and an in-depth analysis of international legal and policy frameworks.

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1 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Kenya, Moldova, Morocco, Northern Ireland, the Philippines, South Sudan, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, United States, and Yemen.

Gender-based violence as a continuum

GBV does not occur in isolation, but rather is a part and a result of a web of structural inequalities and institutional discrimination. Feminist scholars have referred to this web as the "continuum of violence", which extends from domestic and intimate partner violence, through sexual violence, harassment and abuse in public spaces, to wartime rape (Cockburn, 2004; Davies & True, 2015; Rigual, 2018, p. 9; Wibben, 2019; Yadav & Horn, 2021). The conceptualization of the continuum of violence is an essential contribution of feminist scholars to conflict and peace studies (Wibben, 2019, p. 3). The concept contributes to the blurring and problematizing of the distinction between the "public" and "private" spheres, central to feminist scholarship.

Understanding violence as a continuum highlights that those gendered relations of power operate in, and shape, both realms and that "the harms and oppressions experienced in the private sphere are translated to and reinforced by larger political structures" (Yadav & Horn, 2021, p. 106). As such, all sexual violence becomes "an act of political violence, [which] always seeks to produce and reinforce gender stereotypes" (Davies & True, 2015, p. 497).

Feminist peace scholars have argued that the different types of violence along the continuum are "dynamically connected through social, political and economic factors in the surrounding contexts" (Krause, 2015, p. 16). For example, Davies and True (2015, p. 501) note that "[t]he presence of institutionalized discrimination could be a major permissive condition for rape perpetrators", as — for example — there are likely to be fewer opportunities and incentives to report conflict-related sexual violence in contexts where women are politically marginalized, and where sexual violence is either normalized or tabooized (or, often, both) in peacetime.

Understanding violence as a continuum also allows to identify and analyze through a gender lens a wider variety of types of violence, including "structural violence of poverty [and] the ecological violence associated with the depletion of our planetary resources and natural disasters" (True, 2012, p.5, cited in: Wibben, 2019, p. 3).

A specific type of political violence that has thus far received less attention in the literature on the continuum of violence is the violence directed against women politicians, activists, peacebuilders, social leaders and human rights defenders. Such violence has been increasingly prevalent in recent years (UN, 2021, p. 16), and was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which women peace activists found

themselves "under threat like never before" (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders & UN Women, 2020, p. 10). Crucially, as discussed below, the emergence and advancement of digital technologies and the increased reliance on those technologies during the pandemic has exacerbated the violence women experience in or through online spaces.

Technology-Facilitated GBV in under-regulated digital spaces

Defining violence in digital spaces

Recognizing that technology does not cause GBV, but rather is a facilitating and enabling medium for it, this chapter refers to GBV that happens in or through digital spaces as "technology-facilitated" GBV, in line with recent scholarship on the issue (Brown et al., 2021; Dragiewicz et al, 2018; Douglas et al., 2019; Dunn, 2020; Dunn, 2021; Henry & Powell, 2018; Henry & Powell, 2020), borrowing a framing of the issue first introduced by Nicola Henry and Anastasia Powell (2018).

Just like offline violence, TFGBV is also intimately connected to the underlying dynamics of power and structural, economic, and political inequalities, and it is sustained by discriminatory norms and institutions – sexism and misogyny, alongside homophobia, transphobia, and racism. Individuals are affected by TFGBV on the basis of gender, but also indigeneity, disability, race, sexual orientation, and migratory status (Dunn, 2020, p. 5). In this sense, TFGBV is not entirely new, but connected to the very structures that drive GBV in its conventionally-understood forms.

Dichotomizing GBV as online or offline is problematic and ignores what Henry and Powell (2017) describe as a "context of continued and metamorphic unequal gendered power relations and a broader continuum of sexual violence" (p. 303). The continuum of violence is once again a useful tool for conceptualizing the consequences of TFGBV for women.

By nature, TFGBV intersects and interacts with violence in the offline world, in line with the concept of "cascades of violence", wherein "violence spreads from one space to another, one event leading to another, from powerful to powerless, and reinforces relationships of domination" (Yadav & Horn, 2021, p. 106). The complacency of social media platforms that have failed to remove or penalize sexist and abusive posts (Hudson, 2013) facilitates the flow of GBV between online and offline spaces. For example, Facebook failed to remove for several weeks a live-streamed recording of an offline gang rape of a woman in Malaysia, transforming it into TFGBV with hundreds of viewers as its audience (Chemaly, 2014). Beyond the digital realm, TFGBV jeopardizes women's physical safety, hurts their emotional,

psychological, and social wellbeing, and is a threat to their livelihood and economic security (Dunn, 2020, p. 20-23).

However, TFGBV does have critical characteristics that make it distinct from offline GBV. Online spaces provide unique advantages to perpetrators, such as anonymity, affordability, widened reach, easier propagation of information, and automation of processes like stalking (Fascendini & Fialová, 2011, p. 25-27). These traits are amplified by the under-regulation of online spaces.

The reality and impacts of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

There is a growing body of literature that documents the wide array of ways, in which women experience TFGBV: harassment by individuals or networks, threats, and hate speech; violations of privacy, surveillance, monitoring, tracking, and cyber-stalking; public exposure of private information, doxing, and hacking; misrepresentation and distribution of false information; as well as image-based sexual abuse, including non-consensual dissemination of intimate images, and unauthorized pornography, particularly using synthetic media technologies and 'deep-fakes' (Dunn, 2020; Buzatu et al., 2022; Yao, 2019). The radicalization of men and boys in online spaces can also lead to both online and offline GBV (Shoker, 2020, p. 10-11).

Women in leadership roles, including feminists and activists (Lewis et al., 2016), journalists (Chen et al., 2020), bloggers (Eckert, 2017), human rights defenders (Bartley et al., 2020; Hernawan & Nah, 2020, p. 41; Ichim & Mutahi, 2020, p. 64; Nah, 2020, p. 175), politicians (Krook, 2020, p.115-123), and women peacebuilders often experience TFGBV. They are targeted for speaking on issues of gender and women's rights, for participating in male-dominated public spaces, and for their activism and peacebuilding work. TFGBV impedes this important work – silencing and censoring women, and pushing them away from participation in public life, activism, and advocacy.

As described above, TFGBV departs from conventional forms of GBV in important ways. However, this departure is poorly captured in laws and legislation that cannot keep pace with the rapid evolution of new technologies. While some forms of TFGBV can be treated as criminal or civil offenses, many other types are neither legally criminal or unlawful (Dunn, 2021, p. 759).

When relying on existing or outdated laws, the full experience of TFGBV often falls through the cracks of the closest fit: generic sexual offence or cybercrime laws (Bordachar, et al., 2021, p. 11-14). This is aggravated by the absence of clear reporting and accountability mechanisms on digital platforms, and well-trained and gender-sensitive law enforcement. The transnational nature of digital platforms further complicates legal responses (Dragiewicz et al., 2018, p. 619), particularly when there is considerable variation in laws across jurisdictions (Bordachar, et al., 2021, p. 15; Henry & Powell, 2017, p. 228).

"Local turn" and feminist peacebuilding

For conflict and peace scholars, understanding violence as a continuum is important because it frames war as a result of underlying processes that both predate and outlive the actual armed conflict. Moreover, seeing violence as multidimensional contributes to the trans-scalar understanding of conflict, as occurring simultaneously (but not necessarily in the same way) across different levels of society – from local, to national, regional, and global (Björkdahl, 2021, p. 64; MacGinty, 2021, p. 67). In this chapter, we demonstrate the intimate links between TFGBV, conflict, and women's peace work, and argue that understanding and addressing TFGBV should be an integral part of peacebuilding efforts.

Indeed, both feminist scholars and women peace activists have long understood peace as complex and dynamic. On the one hand, feminist researchers theorized that "peacebuilding is not a linear sequence of short-term initiatives, but must be understood as a long-term practice" (Prügl et al., 2021, p. 8). On the other hand, empirical studies have shown that local women – in particular those that are actively involved in the practice of peacebuilding – view peace as a multi-faceted phenomenon, which encompasses economic wellbeing, protection of the environment, and a culture of harmony and tolerance (Bulduk et al., 2021; Fal-Dutra Santos et al., 2019). In other words, viewed through a feminist lens, peace is far more than an absence of war.

Such understanding of peace lies at the core of the critiques of "liberal peace" approaches, which are "generally incurious about the wider structural factors that led to those problems" (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, p. 767). An alternative is the so-called "local turn" in peacebuilding, which posits that "conflict contexts do not constitute unitary political entities with a uniform amount of peace or conflict affecting the territory" (MacGinty, 2021, p. 66), but rather that conflict and peace are shaped by

the complex political, social, cultural and economic dynamics at the local level.

Local turn theorists argue that to adequately understand peace, it is necessary to pay closer attention to its (often diverse) manifestations at the local level and meanings to local people (Björkdahl, 2021, p. 63). The local turn theories are closely aligned with a feminist approach to peace and conflict studies, which "trains our eye to people's diverse experiences of conflict and peacebuilding in the context of their communities [and] thus provides a unique entry point to the exploration of local practices of conflict transformation and peacebuilding" (Prügl et al., 2021, p. 1). At the same time, peace scholars understand that the "local" is a part of the broader social, economic, political and cultural context and the "ecology of conflict" or a "conflict mesh" it creates (Kaldor et al., 2021, p. 4; MacGinty, 2021, p. 69; Pospisil, 2021, p. 71).

Importantly, the increased use of ICTs in both conflict and peace negotiations contributes to the "enmeshing" of the different levels of conflict, since it allows local actors to become more aware of, and more connected to, global and national ones, and vice-versa. As Bell et al. (2021, p. 9) note, "increased internet access means that it has become easier for local communities to co-draft and circulate agreements via websites and social media". As a result, the local turn approach to peacebuilding "obtains renewed and reinforced significance when examined through the prism of the role of ICTs" (Tellidis & Kappler, 2016, p. 7).

Following the local turn approach, we argue that understanding how local women peacebuilders use ICTs to prevent conflict and all types of GBV – including TFGBV – along the continuum is necessary to develop and adopt effective policies. We explore how ICTs can contribute to either greater inclusion or marginalization of local actors – in particular local women – in peacebuilding. We argue that failure to effectively address TFGBV is not only harmful in itself but also detrimental to effective peacebuilding, since it prevents women peacebuilders from carrying out their work.

The continuum of gender-based violence in the digital age

The research conducted by GNWP and ICT4P provided additional evidence on the prevalence, diversity, and complexity of TFGBV. Nearly all of the women activists interviewed by the research team – including this chapter's authors – reported receiving abusive comments, violent messages, and even death threats online. Women from Armenia,

Colombia, Georgia, Northern Ireland, and South Sudan highlighted that discourse and behavior often become radicalized online since the internet provides anonymity to the abusers (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 26).[2]

Some interviewees emphasized the intimate linkages between GBV occurring offline and online, for example noting that limiting a woman's access to technology can also become a form of abusive control. An activist from Cameroon shared with GNWP/ICT4P team that when her organization offered to buy women smartphones to enable them to join online events they refused, saying that their husbands would take them away anyway (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 26). An activist from South Sudan recalled that her in-laws have asked her to stop using social media, out of concern over how her visibility and activism online could affect her husband's reputation (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 26).

Targeted violence against women activists

The research has provided rich evidence on the specific forms of TFGBV experienced by women activists and peacebuilders. Women activists interviewed by GNWP and ICT4P recalled numerous instances of threats or targeted online campaigns directed against them or other women. One interviewee recalled an online smear campaign launched against a woman peacebuilder because of her work. Fake news about her personal life was disseminated, personal photos of her and her children were posted online without her consent (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 27). Another interviewee recalled instances of women – including a woman chief negotiator – receiving rape and death threats online due to the nature of their work (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 22). The interviewed activists had no doubt that they were targeted by the online violence due to the nature of their work. At the same time, the abuse they experienced was decidedly gendered. For example, abusers used patriarchal gender norms to question activists' suitability as wives or mothers, and thus the value of her work. Death threats were also often accompanied by explicitly sexualized comments and threats of rape and sexual violence.

The result of the multiple forms of TFGBV experienced by women activists and peacebuilders can prompt them to "self-censor" and avoid discussing certain issues online for fear of being targeted and abused – thus having a direct impact on their ability to carry out peacebuilding work. This

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2   In what follows, we cite Buzatu et al., 2022 to reference most of the findings of the GNWP and ICT4P research. For some findings, which were not explored in-depth in the GNWP and ICT4P report, we refer directly to the interviews that were conducted with women peacebuilders in the framework of the research. In these instances, the interviews are referenced using the inter-viewee's country and interview date.

makes TFGBV a critical issue to consider when analyzing peacebuilding processes through a local turn lens, as well as designing programs and processes to support local peacebuilding.

Structural violence and violence of exclusion

The evidence collected by GNWP and ICT4P also points to the prevalence of "violence of exclusion" in digital spaces. The term was coined in the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, which notes that "[y]oung people around the world described their experiences of exclusion as a form of structural and psychological violence" (Simpson, 2018, p. 63). This observation underscores that marginalization of certain groups – such as women and young people – can not only aggravate other forms of violence along the continuum but be experienced as a distinct form of violence itself.

This form of violence affects women of all ages in cyberspace. Globally, women are 13% less likely than men to have access to the internet and 20% less likely to use mobile Internet (International Telecommunications Union, 2020). In addition to infrastructural barriers – such as lack of mobile signal or Internet connectivity in some regions – women face other structural obstacles that prevent them from accessing and using the Internet. High costs of mobile data, Internet connection, and smartphones often disproportionately affected women, who are likely to be financially dependent and earn less than their male counterparts (Alliance for Affordable Internet, 2021, p. 7). Moreover, the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work carried by women – which was aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic – further limits women's time and ability to meaningfully participate in online activities and discussions (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders & UN Women, 2020, p. 8).

Like other forms of TFGBV along the continuum, the violence of exclusion in cyberspace is fueled by gender inequalities and patriarchal norms. At the same time, it also contributes to perpetuating and sustaining them. For example, the failure to meaningfully include women in consultations and discussions about cyberspace means that most of the legislation that pertains to it is gender-blind and ignores the continuum of GBV experienced by women online (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 31).

Women peacebuilders' responses to GBV continuum in cyberspace

Despite the challenges, women – including women peace activists – have used digital tools and spaces to advance their work and advocacy. In their examination of ICTs as a peacebuilding tool, Tellidis and Kappler (2016, p. 10) note that they can "considerably enhance hybrid forms of peace

(…) by fomenting local access to formal peacebuilding practice(s) and thus challenge existing power biases of institutions." This observation has been confirmed by the GNWP/ICT4P research.

Based on the empirical data gathered through the research, we developed a typology of the uses of ICT by women peacebuilders, across three key categories: widening the reach of communications, accessing and analyzing data and information, and carrying out day-to-day activities and institutional strengthening (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 10).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further contributed to increasing women peacebuilders' reliance on digital platforms. Even in contexts, where access to the Internet is very limited, women reported the "shift to digital spaces as a major source of both challenges and opportunities for peace work" (Fal-Dutra Santos et al., 2022, p. 13) and reported "increased use of social media for virtual campaigns, member recruitment, support groups, and networking with other organizations" (Ibidem). As one of the women we interviewed in the framework of the GNWP/ICT4P research noted, during COVID-19, the use of cyberspace for advocacy has become "a necessity, not only an opportunity" (Interview with a woman peace activist from Armenia, April 2021).

Protecting themselves and others online

In order to carry out their work safely and effectively in the cyberspace, women peacebuilders have adopted a range of self-protection strategies. For example, the GNWP/ICT4P research revealed that with the advent of the pandemic, women peacebuilders have begun to create online safe spaces, for example, by convening invitation-only, password-protected online meetings, or switching to the use of more secure messaging platforms such as Signal (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 8).

Moreover, women activists interviewed in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine also identified other specific measures they've used to counter online abuse and targeted smear campaigns. For example, women have responded to fake news about fellow activists with positive messages reinforcing the value and impact of their work (Interview with a woman peace activist from Armenia, April 2021). They have also used their networks to reach out to municipal authorities to create operating procedures for ensuring accountability for cyber-harassment, and worked with journalists to raise awareness about GBV online (Interview with a woman peace activist from Georgia, April 2021). In Ukraine, women activists have created "anti-sexist" networks to protect and support each other and

call out sexist and abusive language online (Interview with a woman peace activist from Ukraine, April 2021).

Additionally, having an online support network made it easier for women peacebuilders to deal with the stress and mental pressure created by their work as well as the abuse they face. As an interviewee from Cameroon put it, "We meet more sisters online. I cannot explain how much support I've received from strangers online" (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 14).

Responding to GBV – both online and in the physical world

Women peacebuilders also use ICTs to respond to GBV and TFGBV across the continuum. Monitoring and documenting violations of women's rights, including instances of GBV, was a key use of ICTs documented in our typology. A good example of such a use is the Ushahidi platform, which gathers information about violent incidents around the world through text messages, emails and Twitter.[3] Women peacebuilders have also used ICTs to document police brutality, for example during the 2020 protests in Colombia (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 15), and to increase the visibility of GBV across the continuum – from domestic violence to attacks on women leaders (Fal-Dutra Santos et al., 2022, p. 14).

Furthermore, ICTs allow women peacebuilders to plan and deliver their life-saving work, including services for GBV survivors. An interviewee from Georgia noted that information collected online allowed them to design better services for women in Armenia and Azerbaijan after the 2020 war (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 15). Women peacebuilders in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Philippines, and Uganda have used ICTs to promote women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, by providing online trainings and connecting women to new markets and potential customers (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 17).

Finally, women peacebuilders and activists have also used ICTs to counteract emerging security threats, and to prevent armed conflict and promote peace. They disseminated information about peace agreements and helped build broad-base support for them, spread peaceful messaging to counteract over-militarized narratives, and provided peace education and campaigns online.

Despite challenges, in some contexts – such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Northern Ireland – women peacebuilders have been able to use ICTs to connect conflicting communities and contribute to building greater trust and empathy. This use of ICTs is critical, as it addresses one

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3   For more information, please see: https://www.ushahidi.com/features

of the key underlying drivers of the continuum of GBV and TFGBV – the patriarchal discourse and over-militarized, violent narratives emboldened by the internet's anonymity. It also further demonstrates the potential of ICTs to not only prevent and address GBV online but also contribute to localized peacebuilding.

Existing legal framework on GBV in the digital age

To fully realize this potential, it is necessary to adapt relevant legal and normative frameworks to ensure that they are sensitive and inclusive of TFGBV and the experiences of women peacebuilders with technology.

TFGBV in international peace and security frameworks

Technology is increasingly recognized as an important factor in peace and security. A small number of resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) recognize the significant and unique potential of modern technologies to promote development and prevent violence.[4] However, these remain largely gender-blind. UNGA Resolutions 71/199 (2016) and 73/179 (2018) note broadly the abuse of women, children, and marginalized groups in the digital age, and the need to consider digital and online spaces in the "prevention of violence, including gender-based violence". However, while UNGA resolutions touch on several important aspects of TFGBV, TFGBV is not conceptualized as a distinct form of GBV.

UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions – including the ten on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) – are further behind: they do not engage with TFGBV at any level of detail. Arria Formula meetings,[5] UNSC open debates, and Secretary General's reports have in some cases focused on cybersecurity and technology. However, gender-sensitivity continues to be the exception rather than the norm in those fora and platforms.

National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS, national-level strategy documents that outline objectives and activities for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 and the nine subsequent resolutions, are another potential medium for addressing TFGBV, particularly as it relates to women peacebuilders and human rights defenders. Analyzing the 89 NAPs available by late 2021, we found that only 28 NAPs reference ICTs in some way. Discussions of ICTs in the NAPs are primarily focused on the positive aspects of technology. Much in line with the uses of ICTs by women

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4 UNGA Resolutions 68/167 (2013), 69/166 (2015), 70/184 (2015), 71/199 (2016), 73/17 (2018), 73/179 (2018), and 73/218 (2019).
5 Arria Formula meetings are UNSC convenings with a relatively flexible procedural framework, during which UNSC members engage in dialogue with representatives of other governments, international organizations, civil society and other non-State parties.

peacebuilders introduced in previous sections of this chapter, NAPs on WPS identify ICTs as tools for community support, economic empowerment, data collection and reporting of human rights violations, capacity-building for better gender mainstreaming, and more inclusive and accessible peace negotiations.

Only a few NAPs address TFGBV. In these cases, the focus is on online attacks and threats against human rights defenders, women peacebuilders, activists, politicians, and journalists. These national-level documents effectively link the presence of new technologies to various components of the WPS agenda. However, they lack a strong engagement with the new and differentiated risks posed by these technologies – even in more recent NAPs produced in a context of accelerating digitalization.

TFGBV in international women's rights and human rights frameworks

The discussion of TFGBV in international-level documents specifically focused on gender equality and women's human rights is similarly scarce and shallow. Moreover, mentions of TFGBV in relation to women peacebuilders and human rights defenders are largely absent from these frameworks.

Several Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolutions discuss technology in the context of human rights.[6] However, only three of them address gender: HRC Resolutions 33/2 (2016) and 38/7 (2018) condemn online attacks and GBV against women, particularly women in public or leadership roles, like journalists and public officials. HRC Resolution 21/7 (2016) also frames the misuse of the technology, Internet, or online spaces as a source of gender-based or sexual violence. While these Resolutions touch on several important aspects of TFGBV, TFGBV is not conceptualized as a distinct form of GBV.

In 2018, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women produced a specialized report on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective. The report is notable for its use of the terminology "technology-facilitated violence against women and girls", which is consistent with the leading nomenclature in the literature on this topic, as discussed earlier in this chapter. It also makes use of important conceptual frameworks by including TFGBV on the continuum of violence and addressing the role of underlying structural discrimination and offers a thorough engagement with the harms of TFGBV for women and girls.

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6 HRC Resolutions 12/16 (2009), 20/8 (2012), 23/2 (2013), 26/13 (2014), 28/16 (2015), 31/7 (2016), 33/2 (2016), 32/13 (2016), 34/7 (2017), 37/2 (2018), and 38/7 (2018).

This report is a strong example of a nuanced, careful, and comprehensive treatment of TFGBV that is absent from more authoritative documents, such as UN body resolutions.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of the most important international instruments dedicated to women's human rights. In a close examination of 949 State Party reports to the CEDAW and the Committee's Concluding Observations submitted between the years 1982 and 2021, we found that only 381 make reference to ICTs or digital technologies (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 31). Considerations of ICTs are mostly geared toward access and use. The digital gender divide, structural and physical barriers to accessing technologies, a need for education, training and increased digital literacy, and the inclusion of women in the technology sector are recurring themes.

When TFGBV is considered in CEDAW reports, digital safety, sexual exploitation, and violence against women in online platforms are the most common framing. However, the reports and Concluding Observations disproportionally focus on the issue of child-pornography, abuse and trafficking of children using online platforms, and online child exploitation. Mentions of youth and girls far outnumber those of women in the context of TFGBV. Moreover, there is little consistency around the terminology used to describe TFGBV, and terms cyber-sexual violence, electronic violence against women and digital violence are used interchangeably. A "technology-facilitated" framing of the issue does not appear. With regards to the relevant legal frameworks, most State Party reports refer to more generic laws (for example, on cybersecurity or GBV) as evidence of legal support for those who experience TFGBV. A smaller number point to existing or proposed laws that are specific to GBV that happens online or in digital spaces.

Much like the UN body resolutions, the CEDAW State Party reports and Concluding Observations treat the role of women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders, and the gender dimension of ICTs and new technologies, as separate from one another. Very few recognize the relevance of TFGBV to peacebuilding and women's roles in it. Only a handful of reports recognize the intersection of the two issue areas – for example, discussing how digital platforms can facilitate violence against women human rights defenders and journalists. This is despite the robust framework for the CEDAW Committee to address issues of women in peacebuilding provided by the General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30).

Considering the centrality and authority of the CEDAW Committee and its outputs in determining the agenda of discrimination against women, the absence of a strong and consistent discussion of TFGBV is especially concerning. A clear definition of TFGBV and its scope is necessary for countries to report accurately on it, and for the Committee to accurately respond in the Concluding Observations. This should include clear consideration of TFGBV as experienced by women peacebuilders, activists and human rights defenders, and clear guidelines on the appropriate legal status and recourse for TFGBV.

Where the current legal framework falls short

In our research at GNWP, we concluded that "within relevant normative and legal bodies, considerations of gender as related to ICTs lack both consistency and depth." (Buzatu et al., 2022, p. 31). The analysis of the same bodies in relation to the specific issue of TFGBV exposes several additional problems.

TFGBV is largely ignored in relevant documents and discussions across key issue areas – cybersecurity, ICTs, women's rights and women's protection, and WPS and peacebuilding. When it is brought up, details in the periphery of the issue are shared repeatedly at the cost of the core. For example, gendered harassment on digital platforms is referenced often, but divorced from its connection to offline harassment, other forms of TFGBV, and underlying discriminatory norms and structural causes. The repetition of the same examples also runs the risk of mischaracterizing the issue or underrepresenting its significance.

These shortcomings are exacerbated by the lack of a shared definition of TFGBV. A wide variety of terms are used to describe TFGBV, often within the same document. Terms like "cyber violence" and "digital violence" frame technology as the cause of violence and obscure the structural causes of TFGBV. "Violence on online platforms", another commonly used label, paints an incomplete picture of TFGBV, whereby technology is viewed as a neutral platform on which violence takes place. The earlier sections of this chapter have outlined in detail why this framing of TFGBV is problematic. More importantly, TFGBV cannot be recognized as a distinct concept if it is never called by the same name. When TFGBV is not fully conceptualized, the shared and cross-cutting elements of this form of GBV are not easily recognizable.

Finally, the treatment of TFGBV in the broader framework does not make effective use of issue linkages. The most consistently used grounding

issue for TFGBV is the right to privacy, and to a lesser extent, the issue of women's participation in public life. While important in their own right, the linking of TFGBV to larger and deeper-rooted agendas – including prevention of conflict and peacebuilding – can help legitimize and better understand this complex and multidimensional issue. Our analysis of over one thousand documents related to CEDAW and the WPS agenda demonstrated a weak and shallow engagement with TFGBV. There is great potential to better link this form of GBV to major conceptual frameworks related to women's rights and peace and security.

Conclusion

Three important conclusions emerge from this chapter's examination of the interactions of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders with ICTs, and TFGBV the context of women-led peacebuilding.

Firstly, the implications of definitional and conceptual issues that are raised by the literature on TFGBV are not limited to academia and carry weight in real life. Our analysis of international peace and security, women's rights, and human rights legal and policy frameworks exposed inconsistencies in the terminology used to describe TFGBV, which prevent the development of a shared and consistent understanding of the phenomenon. What's more, the incomplete conceptualization of TFGBV means that the fundamental structural causes of this type of violence, and the wide variety of ways it can manifest are not adequately captured by the relevant legal frameworks. Legal frameworks can be strengthened by improving the definitional clarity and consistency on TFGBV, and in turn become more effective tools for protecting women peacebuilders and human rights defenders from TFGBV.

Secondly, the continuum of violence framework is a particularly useful tool for capturing the complexity of TFGBV. In this chapter, we discussed the limitations of siloing of GBV as occurring in either offline or online spaces. This is especially the case in conflict contexts, where targeted violence against women activists, peacebuilders, and human rights defenders emerges from the interaction of a multiplicity of economic, social, and political factors. In both future research and policy-making, more attention should be paid to how the different dimensions of TFGBV interact with one another, and how they are both caused by, and perpetuate, underlying structural inequalities.

Finally, understanding the role of ICTs in the context of peacebuilding can help advance and further inform the local turn theories of peacebuilding, and strengthen the understanding of localized peacebuilding in a modern

context. ICTs can be a powerful tool for bringing local actors into national and global peace and security discussions. At the same time, women peacebuilders and human rights defenders are common targets of TFGBV – which becomes a barrier to their inclusion in these important spaces. There is a need for greater attention to TFGBV against women peacebuilders, including the violence of exclusion, in both the literature on TFGBV and on localized peacebuilding more broadly. Further, a better understanding of how women peacebuilders use and interact with ICTs is necessary for technology companies to create safer and more accessible devices and platforms.

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The Role of Civil Society in Combating Online Gender-Based Violence

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There is notably growing interest in online gender-based violence (GBV) and abuse as a violation of human rights (Suzor et al., 2018). Research by Pavan (2017) points out that online GBV is more complex than it appears. The author states that acts of online abuse and harassment are complex and ever evolving, because they are a combination of technological affordances and sociocultural practices. Online GBV is often trivialized as authorities take meagre penal measures against perpetrators (Iyer et al., 2020). She further mentions that, in some cases, women, who have been subject to online gender-based violence by sharing their private information without their consent, have even been punished by the law. Online GBV is easy to commit crime as the perpetrator can commit the harmful act while being in his seat.

Sanusi (2021) identifies civil societies as one of the key players in fighting online GBV. She asserts that civil societies are contributing to shedding light on online GBV internationally, and in Africa particularly, by searching for solutions to the issue and calling intermediaries to take action to moderate online content. Civil society around the world has created positive social changes and outcomes in different places (Cooper, 2018). Hence, it is important to study online GBV and differentiate it from traditional GBV. After that, this paper will explore the potential roles that civil society organizations may play to contribute to the efforts of combating online GBV.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence can be defined as violence that targets an individual based on her or his gender role in society (Benjamin & Murchison, 2004). According to their definition, GBV can affect females or males; however, GBV affects women and girls disproportionately. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women as Proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1993 has defined violence against women as

any act of gender-based violence (GBV) 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 deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (United Nations, 1993).

GBV is to be considered as one of the most common manners in which human rights violations occur globally (Elsherief et al., 2017). It comes in a variety of forms, ranging from unpleasant gestures and threats of physical harm to action such as rape and murder.

Social media have made the online world a place where people can interact and it gives the public the opportunity to express their opinions; however, some abuse this online world and feed its space with continuous violence against individuals (Litchfield et al., 2018). Women have been found to be more likely to be subject to online violence than men (Bartlett et al., 2014). Therefore, online GBV can be considered as traditional GBV that has moved to a new space (Nadim & Fladmoe, 2019). According to Nadim and Fladmoe (2019), online GBV has been increasingly drawing the attention of researchers and the public. In this paper, we will focus on online GBV, and explore the potential role that CSOs can play in combating it.

Online GBV

In her report on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective, Dubravka Šimonović, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, prescribes online GBV as

any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of ICT [information and communications technology], such as mobile phones and smartphones, the Internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or [which] affects women disproportionately. (Šimonović, 2018, para. 23).

There are different synonyms for online GBV among academics, such as technology-facilitated violence, cyberviolence, gendered cyberhate, online misogyny, and online harassment (Kavanagh & Brown, 2019). We mentioned above that GBV comes in a variety of forms, and the same applies to online GBV. It includes a variety of behavior facilitated by means of digital technologies (Suzor et al., 2018). The wide range of these abuses includes physical threats, sexual harassment, stalking and sex trolling.

Being facilitated by different means of technology, online GBV has become more complex than traditional GBV. As online GBV is facilitated by different types of intermediaries associated with different levels of

involvement, it creates different responsibilities (Suzor et al., 2018). These different elements have created a complexity around online GBV and distinguished it from traditional GBV whereas in the later there is little to no intermediaries. But it can be harder to distinguish between the consequences of actions that are initiated online from offline and vice versa, because online GBV is committed in the continuum between online and offline (The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women UN Women, 2020).

Suzor et al. (2018) argue that part of the complexity of online GBV comes from the fact that it deals with conflicting and interconnected rights within a complicated system that has different global actors. The complexity of online GBV is a dangerous feature because it offers perpetrators the chances to get away with their crimes. This complexity makes persecuting perpetrators of online GBV hard.

Moreover, Sanusi (2021) notices that the lack of rules and regulations for online spaces, regarding protecting women from online GBV, makes those who commit such crimes do not face the consequences for what they have done, in most cases. In literature review by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago [NORC], Poole (2020) found that legal systems around the world are not ready to deal with cases of online GBV, because these crimes are not broadly criminalized, with the result that victims' complaints are not adequately investigated.

Online GBV vs Traditional GBV

The characteristics and consequences of online GBV are very similar to traditional (Melovi et al., 2020). But the technological nature of online GBV gives it some unique factors and distinguishes it from traditional GBV. Dunn (2020) explains some of these factors which online GBV have acquired as a new form of traditional GBV. According to her, online GBV may have cross-jurisdictional issues, as it is hard to stipulate one jurisdiction if the crime has taken place in different jurisdictions, because, unlike physical violence, which requires the perpetrators and victims to be in the same place, online GBV can happen across geographical locations, since the perpetrators can access their victims remotely. She adds that another problem is that the perpetrators can remain anonymous, since they are not in direct contact with their victims as they can take advantage of the technology and commit their harmful actions without being identified easily.

In online GBV, it is hard for the survivor to keep away from the perpetrator, as the latter can constantly access the survivor through the

Internet when using connected devices (Dunn, 2020). She adds that digital content can last for a long time and can easily be copied and distributed to a large audience which witnesses the abuse.

Similarly, Abdul Aziz (2017) introduces another difference between online and traditional GBV, regarding the perpetrators. She points out that, in online GBV, there are two kinds or levels of perpetrators - primary and secondary. According to her, primary perpetrators are those who initiate the harmful act, such as uploading the content, accessing personal information, and sending intimate images, while the secondary perpetrators are those who retransmit the harmful data, for example by forwarding or retweeting it.

To better illustrate the differences between online and traditional GBV which the researchers have tried to spot, we will look at these differences by comparing three elements, namely the perpetrator, victim and the act as explained in table 1:

Table 1

Comparison Between Online and Traditional GBV

ELEMENT FOR COMPARISON	ONLINE GBV	TRADITIONAL GBV
Perpetrator	- Can perform the harmful act remotely. - Can be anonymous and is difficult to bring to justice. - Might be primary or secondary.	- Perpetrator must be in the same place as the victim. - Easier to identify and bring to justice.
Victim	- Hard to escape from the perpetrator.	- Easier to avoid perpetrator.
Act	- Remotely. - Lasts a long time as it is digital content. - Through an intermediary.	- Physical. - Direct.

Forms of Online GBV

Earlier, we mentioned that online GBV can be any act of GBV against women that is committed using ICT (Šimonović, 2018). According to Suzor et al. (2018), online GBV includes a variety of forms and wrongful acts committed using ICT. The following are some examples of behaviors that are considered as common forms of online GBV:

Public Disclosure of Private Information (Doxxing). Dunn (2020) asserts that not only the publishing of personal sexual material has a clear impact on women, but also the publishing of other forms of personal information can also cause damage if distributed via ICT. She notes that women can be harmed in communities or families with more conservative or patriarchal values, if personal information, such as intimate images of woman or women in special cloths is published.

Cyberstalking. One of the most common forms of online GBV, according to Sanusi (2021), is cyberstalking. Reyns (2010) argues that there is no consensus on an accepted definition of cyberstalking, but there is a consensus that stalkers pursue their victims using telecommunications devices or via the Internet – in other words, via ICT. Indeed, the author tries to define cyberstalking by referring to behaviors in which an individual or group of individuals uses information and communications technology to harass another individual or group of individuals. He gives examples of acts which can be cyberstalking such as threats, false accusations, identity theft, data theft, damage to data or equipment and computer monitoring. Hicks (2021) identifies using technology to stalk for the purposes of monitoring or tracking someone's activities as one of the most common forms of online GBV.

Trolling. Ortiz (2020), who has engaged in research on trolling, involving asking a number of people about this, defines trolling as a collective form of malicious harassment, designed to provoke another user. She notes that that trolling is undertaken by individuals, but it also involves sharing and collectivity. She comments that respondents also link trolls with the desire to 'exercise power' in targeting women, feminists, colored people and the disabled. It is therefore unsurprising that the description of trolling also aligns with discrimination.

Impact of Online GBV

Although there are differences between them, a study concludes that both online and traditional GBV do not differ when it comes to the impact these forms of violence have (Wilk, 2018). The author points out that online

GBV has immediate and short-term impacts, long-term impacts, and even longer lasting impacts. The study shows that these impacts do not affect women only, but also their relatives, the community and society in general. Thus, the whole of society is likely to suffer from the impact of ignoring online GBV. Ging and Siapera (2018) conclude that online GBV does not merely upset or offend women, but it goes far beyond, jeopardizing their safety and freedom of expression, their productivity and their participation in the democratic process.

In his report, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2018) states that the impact of online GBV can be profound, as the victims suffer anxiety, as well as the real risk of being physically harmed. He gives some examples of rights that clearly can be violated in online GBV, such as privacy, freedom of expression, and full participation in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres. One can say that online GBV has no limitations regarding its impact on victims, because it threatens their safety, rights, well-being and interaction with society.

Succeeding in making real change regarding online GBV requires the active participation of society at every level, including, of course, civil society organizations (CSOs). These organizations around the world have created positive social changes in different places (Cooper, 2018). Civil society has evolved to become a proactive contributor to the efforts to overcome challenges that face society (Sule & Sambo, 2021). It would therefore be useful to define civil society and its actors, as well as what they have done to combat GBV. This will give an overview of the role which civil society may play in combating online GBV.

Definition of Civil Society

According to Henry (2016), the term 'civil society' has been subject to debate, as there is no consensus on it because it is an ambiguous term. There are different definitions for the term 'civil society'. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2009) defines civil society as an arena of voluntary collective actions regarding common interests, goals, and values. It is different from governments, families, and for-profit organizations, indicating that civil society includes a wide range of formal and informal organizations that are neither state-run nor for-profit. Social movements, volunteer-based organizations, faith-based groups and organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations, in addition to communities and people acting individually and collectively, are all forms of CSOs (UNDP, 2009).

The European Union (EU) (n.d.) has another definition for the civil society term, which states that "civil society refers to all forms of social action carried out by individuals or groups who are neither connected to, nor managed by, the State". Contrary to the UNDP definition, the EU definition does not mention whether for-profit entities and businesses are CSOs or not. According to Ingram (2020), businesses sometimes fall under the umbrella of civil society and sometimes not. Civil society has been referred to as the 'third sector' in several writings, because it differs from the public and private sectors (Civil Society International, n.d.). Another definition for civil society is «a web of autonomous associations independent of the state which, bound together in matters of common concern by mere existence or action, could have an effect on public policy» (Taylor, 1991, p. 52).

In his report entitled 'The Future Role of Civil Society', Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, states that the definitions are changing as civil society is recognized as encompassing far more than a mere 'sector' dominated by the NGO community: civil society today includes an ever wider and more vibrant range of organized and unorganized groups, as new civil-society actors blur the boundaries between sectors and experiment with new organizational forms, both online and off. (Klaus Schwab, 2013, p. 5).

Lack of consensus on one definition of civil society can be considered as a good sign, because it gives flexibility to include different actors, purposes, and components.

Actors in Civil Society

Civil society's actors are the players who contribute to tackling challenges that a given society faces. These actors are, for example, but not limited to, NGOs faith-based and interfaith organizations, trade unions, student associations, professional organizations, academic and research institutes, online groups and movements, youth clubs, and other organizations that work for the good of the public and not related to the state nor aim for profit (Cooper, 2018).

According to Carothers & Barndt (1999), the broader concept of civil society enables many actors to be included within its scope. They point out that its scope includes all organizations and associations which exist outside of the state and market. These actors contribute to the development of society through their participation at different levels of interaction, starting from preparing research and advocating on different issues to providing services such as food and healthcare.

Characteristics of CSOs

According to Cooper (2018), civil society entities such as organizations, groups and networks, have different shapes, sizes, structures and platforms, ranging from international NGOs (e.g. Save the Children) and mass social movements (e.g. Black Lives Matters and Me Too) to small, local organizations (e.g. The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights). Civil society organizations work in a vast range of areas, such as education, ending poverty, health awareness, community development, conflict resolution, human rights and providing necessary services such as food and shelter. Civil society organizations vary in their purposes (Edwards, 2011). Exploring the characteristics of CSOs will allow us to understand how we can utilize CSOs them to combat online GBV.

The main characteristics of CSOs, according to most scholars, are that they are voluntary organizations operating through the voluntarism principle of individuals and their contributions, independent from the state, and this independence is not compromised by the requirement that they should be organized according to the laws of the state, since what is meant by independence is that they have autonomy and are therefore not controlled by the state, and they work to achieve their purposes by nonviolent means (Ahmed et al., 2021).

Sofy & Erfan (2014) assert that independence is one of the most important characteristics of CSOs as it allows them to activate their role of articulating the shape of public policy within society. One can note that CSOs have three distinct characteristics: (i) Not for-profit; this element distinguishes civil society organizations from market-driven organizations, (ii) Independence; CSOs enjoy a notable level of independency to distinguish them from the state, and (iii) Voluntary for the good of public; this element defines these organizations and their ultimate purpose.

The Importance of Involving CSOs in Combating Online GBV

Experts from governments, businesses, and international organizations stress on the importance of civil society, seeing it as adding value to them, whether as an official partner, through informal collaboration or through 'spillover' effects (Schwab, 2013). Connolly (2017) concludes that it is important for government to closely collaborate with CSOs to make sure that proposed plans to combat GBV are actually addressing the needs of victims. CSOs are trusted by individuals in the community and authorities (Jamann & Packer, 2020). The Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group (2015), in their policy paper adopted at their 79th meeting,

acknowledge that this earned trust can offer a crucial input to developing policies. A civil society that represents the diversity of the community offers knowledge, experience and expertise in the decision-making process and implementation of policies (The Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group, 2015).

In a submission prepared in South Africa for the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Vetten (2010) asserts that the importance behind engaging CSOs in the efforts to combat GBV comes from the wealth of experience they have gained from working with sexual offence victims/survivors. She adds that many CSOs, unlike governmental departments, provide a full range of services which include psychosocial support, healthcare services and support during the criminal justice process, which has given these organizations a deep insight into the needs and experiences of victims. Hence, it is important for CSOs to be involved in combating online GBV, because of their experience, ability to mobilize, the trust they have earned from individuals and governments, and their motivation to work for the good of the public.

The Potential Roles of CSOs in Combating Online GBV

As mentioned earlier, CSOs vary in terms of the scope of their work, their area of specialization, their purposes and the services provided. In this paper, we will divide the roles which CSOs can play in tackling online GBV into two categories, namely preventive roles, and reactive roles.

Preventive Roles

We aim to identify the roles that contribute to thwarting the occurrence of online GBV and possibly to remove the root causes of it. Educating people about online GBV against women and spreading awareness regarding information services and legal support are considered good prevention programs (Abdul Aziz, 2017). In 2017, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), submitted a report regarding ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, shedding light on approaches for combating online GBV. The report acknowledges the important role of CSOs in preventing online GBV. According to the report, raising awareness, education campaigns, preparing related studies, data collection, and involvement in the policy-making process are important roles for CSOs. An overview of each one of the previous potential roles is necessary for understanding how to these roles can contribute to the efforts of combating online GBV.

Education and Raising Awareness. One of the key findings of the Poole (2020) review of literature regarding the impact of ICT on GBV is that CSOs should include education and awareness in their efforts, as education and awareness can highlight the impact of online GBV and foster cultural changes, in order to reject such behaviors. One of examples of raising awareness as a preventive approach is the 'Awas КBGO!' campaign in Indonesia. In English, it means 'Beware of online GBV'. This campaign, organized by the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet) and operating since 2019, aims to educate the public about online GBV, so that they can know about, prevent and respond to it (Ratnasari et al., 2021). The concerned CSOs have also been releasing informative toolkits about the available resources for combating online GBV through providing the necessary information for the public and survivors.

Research and Study. The report submitted by the OHCHR (2017) recognizes the importance of researching and studying the online GBV phenomenon. The report asserts the need to involve CSOs in conducting these studies and the research. The UN Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women (2006) points out that there is a need to study the use of technology, such as computers and cell phones, and to investigate their contribution to the development and expansion of forms of violence. The study notes that, these new forms of violence must be identified, so that they can be recognized and dealt with. The experience gained by CSOs from working with victims and survivors in addition to their services, which include psychosocial support, healthcare services and other kinds of support, distinguish them from the state and businesses and makes their contribution to studies in combating online GBV is vital.

Lobbying. Lobbying is an activity which can be performed by different entities and movements and focuses on the defense of legitimate interests within the different areas of political decision-making (APRI, Relaciones Institucionales, 2021). In this activity, the CSOs exercise pressure on governments, political parties and /or businesses to take into account a given topic. In recent studies on the role of women in supporting and preventing mechanisms for gender violence in Argentina, Angelini (2018) notes that one of various tasks which CSOs can do is lobbying. According to the study, CSOs and movements can put pressure on governments to adopt documents and actions concerning GBV. Indeed, the author mentions the '*Ni una menos'* movement, is one of world's best known feminist movements in Latin America, as an example of exercising pressure on the state that eventually led the state to meet the movement's demands during the process of the creation of the National Plan of Action (Angelini, 2018).

Wilk (2018) points out that, as a result of years of lobbying by anti-trafficking organizations, the USA recently adopted the 'Stop Enabling Online Sex Trafficking Act'. Lobbying can also be exercised on Internet intermediaries, to combat online impunity and address the various forms of online GBV. CSOs in states where there is no legal framework for tackling online GBV should lobby for new legislation and policies in this regard.

Reactive Roles

In this category, we aim to explore examples for the potential roles of CSOs in intervening when online GBV occurs. UN Women (2020) recommends that CSOs shall maintain and extend their help and support for victims of online GBV, in addition to raising awareness regarding the reporting of incidents. According to the EU (n.d.), CSOs can play the role of mediator between public authorities and citizens. In addition to these roles, Poole (2020) advised CSOs to increase the support for GBV survivors by putting them in touch with services providers. CSOs can provide essential services to survivors of online GBV. We will briefly clarify the above-mentioned potential roles.

Reporting Online GBV Incidents. Šimonović (2018) acknowledges the difficulty for victims to report online GBV. She affirms that women who are victims do not report online GBV incidents because they are afraid to speak out and be blamed. Another obstacle for reporting incidents is the lack of technical knowledge (Šimonović, 2018). These are some of reasons why a number of online GBV incidents go unreported. CSOs can bridge this gap by helping victims to report the incidents. This role is especially vital in conservative and/or poor communities.

Mediation between Victims and concerned Entities. As we mentioned earlier, being trusted by the state and individuals, CSOs can contribute to combating online GBV through mediation between victims and other concerned parties, such as police, family, and court officials. This mediation can have a positive outcome regarding speaking out and report incidents of online GBV. Vetten (2010) emphasizes that CSOs working in the field of GBV are well experienced about the needs of victims and survivors. In addition to mediation between victims and public authorities, CSOs can mediate with other concerned entities, such as businesses and ICT intermediators or companies, in order to communicate what victims want to achieve.

Providing post-incidents support. Many CSOs provide support and services for women who experience GBV. One of these services is legal aid. According to Šimonović (2018), one of reasons of why some perpetrators

go unpunished in online GBV cases is that many victims, especially poorer women, cannot afford the litigation costs. As a result, victims do not pursue the cases in the courts. In this scenario, legal support after incidents of online GBV is essential to avoid the impunity of perpetrators.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Internet is everywhere, and it is hard to avoid being online in these days. Online GBV is one of the most bothering problems for governments, businesses, and civil society, because such crimes are easy to commit, hard to prosecute and, in most cases, the perpetrators of online GBV do not face the consequences of their actions. It is true that online GBV, as a modern phenomenon, is gaining the interest of all sectors; states, businesses, and civil society. This paper sheds light on online GBV and its distinctive characteristics which make it different from traditional GBV. It also shows the importance of including CSOs in the efforts to combat online GBV.

CSOs have been contributing to combating online and traditional GBV in different countries at every level, including working with governments, victims and international organizations. CSOs are proving successful, but there still more to do. The paper discusses the different roles of CSOs and concludes that they can contribute to combating online GBV through preventive and interventive roles. Thus, this paper recommends that CSOs contribute to the following:

• Raising awareness of online GBV and making it a norm that online GBV is no less serious than traditional GBV.

• Lobbying governments, parliaments, and businesses to adopt policies, laws and procedures for combating online GBV.

• Researching and studying this phenomenon examining its root causes and finding solutions.

• Continuing to provide post-incident support for victims of online GBV such as legal help and rehabilitation.

• Mediating between victims and the concerned parties, including governmental officials such as policemen and court officials, and businesses, in order to meet the victims' demands and needs and to work with the concerned parties to facilitate the reporting of online GBV.

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The role of social media in the prevention of online gender-based violence and the diminishment of its effects

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The explosion of technology in the 21st century has created merits and demerits on the usage of Internet and social media platforms which are disproportionate to both men, women, and girls. While social media networks have been used as platforms to empower women and girls, on the flipside, if abused it propagates Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV). Women and girls are more likely to experience severe forms of OGBV than men (UN HRC, 2018). This phenomenon is widespread globally and continues to reinforce gender inequalities at both individual and institutional levels due to lackluster approach by state and non-state actors especially social media company owners to curb this form of abuse. A recent EU-wide study established that an estimated 23% of women experienced online harassment at least once in their lifetime (UN HRC, 2018, p. 5). Adoption of technologies as the mainstays in everyday life can exacerbate and magnify opportunities for online violence against women and girls. This trend if unchecked leads to silencing their voices at both private and public spheres of decision making.

The solutions to mitigating and preventing OGBV are complex due to competing human rights issues and country specific issues on data privacy and protection that require multifaceted strategies to effectively address OGBV (Faith & Fraser, 2018). Key among contributing factors include laxity in development of clear and consistently enforced policies and procedures by technology companies; extent of deployment of technological tools as commitment to ensure that human rights concerns are identified, considered, and addressed; and creating awareness on impact of digital violence at individual and collective levels (Suzor et al.,2018).

This chapter argues that to reverse the trend, technology companies, including social media companies, must be held into account by reinforcing implementation of the aforementioned contributing aspects. Key recommendations include: Specific governments should institute

a multi-agency team to ensure that the Internet intermediaries within their jurisdictions work to effectively address OGBV on their networks by constantly monitoring content traffic on their networks to flag out abuse; The social media giant companies should innovate more responsive Internet and mobile technology-based solutions to enable continuous mapping and monitoring of various forms of online violence and abuses; and the social media companies should partner and collaborate with other stakeholders such as schools to introduce country-specific programs in learning institutions so as to intensify creating awareness on OGBV and mitigating on its adverse negative impact and effects.

Background

OGBV is a modern form of gender-based violence perpetuated through digital technologies with the intention to cause harm. The COVID-19 Pandemic has accelerated the application of technologies as the mainstays in everyday life, including online-working from home, virtual communication, shopping for daily needs and learning processes as a measure to minimize its spread (Dunn, 2021). The phenomenon has adversely affected human security, making it a prevalent online crime (UN Women, 2020a). The situation has continued to propagate online crimes such as online harassment that has, in most cases, been gendered and directed towards women and girls (African Development Bank Group, 2016). This form of violence may occur anywhere in the world as social media provides virtual access of the targeted victims. In 2020, research revealed that 58% of girls surveyed from various countries experienced various forms of Internet abuse (Global Citizen, 2021).

Whereas Internet penetration and usage have greatly led to the empowerment of marginalized groups such as women and girls, it has continued to generate online violence (Šimonović, 2016). There are various forms in which technology aid crimes occur. These include networked harassment by a group to an individual; public disclosure of private information; hate speech; image-based sexual harassment; non-consensual distribution of intimate images; creepshots; sexploitation; sextortion; broadcasting sexual assault; doxing; synthetic media; and stalking and monitoring (Dunn,2021).

The negative impacts of OGBV have the tendency to lead to mental health disturbance including stress, trauma, and depression thereby making the victims afraid to socialize online (Zahra & Yogyakarta, 2022). At the extreme, the hopelessness may lead to committing of suicide if the situation is not taken care of. Evidence from various jurisdictions such as

the United States of America indicates that 4 out of 10 people are subjected to online harassment, and women aged 18-29 years have high chances of receiving inappropriate graphic pictures. Cyber violence against women and girls undermines their core fundamental rights such as gender equality, access to justice, and human dignity (Malanga & Flywell,2021).

The rise of OGBV cases during the pandemic continue to cause harm at personal and systemic level (Bailey et al.,2017). At the micro level, individuals' privacy is invaded and threatened, leading to psychological and emotional harm, with negative professional, reputational, and economic consequences (Zahra & Yogyakarta, 2022). At the macro level, online violence leads to discrimination against women limiting them from realizing of all their fundamental human rights. This continues to reinforce gender inequalities by promoting patriarchal gender hierarchies and institutionally undermining the violence experienced by those targeted by online harassment (Dunn, 2021). Consequently, women and girls' rights of all kinds are threatened (Zahra & Yogyakarta, 2022). Yet, this is not an issue that can be addressed satisfactorily through legal means, nor by individual states alone, and therefore the need for a collaborative multi-agency approach to tame the menace (Suzor et al., 2018).

The United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development-Goal 5 takes cognizant of the need to achieve gender equality by empowering all women and girls (UN, 2015). Specifically, it targets to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private sphere. This links gender-based violence to gender inequality and therefore OGBV must be understood in the broader context of gender inequality (Harris, 2018).

Online abuses of women and girls in private and public spheres of life directly threaten their rights and freedoms while constraining their ability to participate in contemporary social life (Citron, 2014). Nonetheless, conflict between the recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the existence of certain limitations on the duties and responsibilities created by these rights and freedoms continue to undermine meaningful progress in efforts to prevent and mitigate OGBV (Amnesty International, 2018). This conflict stems from a lack of willingness to enforce terms of service by social media companies to address OGBV thereby reinforcing discrimination and abuse of women and girls in both private and public spheres of life. In the lens of international human rights, this phenomenon can limit the ability of women and girls to seek and use information which empowers them to actively participate in their society affairs (Amnesty International, 2018; Jane, 2017).

There are various core international human rights frameworks that could prevent OGBV. These rights include women and girls' rights to live a life free from online violence. While the frameworks were drafted before the advent of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), they offer a global and dynamic set of rights and obligations with the potential and a key role to play in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights (UN Human Rights Council, 2018).

Some of the key human rights instruments include the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Faith & Fraser, 2018). The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also offers leverage on addressing the negative impacts and effects of OGBV through the intervention of technology companies that own the social media platforms. The legal instruments mandate states to promote, protect and fulfill fundamental human rights and prevent human rights violations by non-state actors (Faith & Fraser, 2018).

In efforts to operationalize the instruments, states have the responsibility to establish and safeguard an online environment that is conducive and safe for engagement by all as well as addressing online gender-based abuses (Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project, 2017). Specifically, the global human rights frameworks set out States' obligations to combat all forms of discrimination against women including OGBV. While the technology companies that provide digital spaces for interaction, should have specific human rights responsibilities, the international human rights framework is yet to fully address them legally. For instance, while the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights affirm the responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights in general, they do not make any direct reference to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or other women's rights instruments (UN Human Rights Council, 2018). Therefore, the need to seek interventions on how the same technology through embracing social media positively can be tapped to counter the negative domino effects, remains crucial.

There are various roles which social media platforms can play in addressing gender inequality, especially due to OGBV, and in the following section, three issues are discussed.

Key issues

1. Development of clear and consistently enforced policies and procedures by technology companies

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) requires Internet intermediaries to employ due diligence in order to ensure that their standard operating procedures do not facilitate or enable human rights violations. The Internet intermediaries are companies or corporations with the legal and central role of providing digital spaces for user interaction by storing users' data through cloud storage (UN Human Rights Council, 2018). These companies have the duty to comply with human rights standards, by keeping the data secure, and being accountable for any data breaches in case of insufficient safeguards. Accordingly, they prevent human rights violation by embedding human rights-based approaches throughout their organizational policies. In this regard, these companies have a duty to assess the impact of their services, products, and practices on the rights of their users and how to mitigate the impact, if any. To ensure compliance, stakeholders' engagement and performance tracking of human rights violation are key to undertake (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2011). This will help them to understand the range of human rights issues and be able to develop appropriate mechanisms to track their impact over time.

Clear and consistently enforced policies and procedures by the technology companies would require transparent, sufficient, and comprehensive systems to track the impact of their operations on human rights. Their track systems should enable them to report on abuse on their networks, and also offer counter mitigation measures to the harm caused. However, the dynamism of the technological environment and contextual differences in various social media platforms used in different countries makes it challenging to design and evaluate responses that are appropriate to multiple regions and platform (Becky, 2018).

Whereas social media platforms have the aforementioned guidelines on making women and girls safe online, the Internet intermediary companies focus more on intrusion and expression by states instead of how their own systems and processes impact human rights (Van Geelen, & Myers West, 2018). These companies majorly report on their performance against human rights standards by providing selective and partial data (Parsons, 2017). These reports focus more on obligations to external demands on removing harmful content online while not disclosing the harms their systems may have enabled. Therefore, the terms of service of

the intermediary companies are inconsistently applied and enforced based on the existing lines of structural inequalities in self-regulation (Salter, 2017). This significantly undermines global systematic response to online harassment especially by the various social media companies due to self-regulation which may fail to deliver the remedies needed to cushion OGBV.

While private technology companies play crucial roles in developing and implementing safeguards to counter OGBV, how social media users interpret and identifies violence and abuse on the various platform and how they handle reports of such abuse remains the discretion of the individual users. This remains to be one the greatest undoing for most of the social media companies. Weak reporting mechanisms, and lack of public sharing of comprehensive information on the nature of online abuse against women and girls undermines the company's responsibility under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Amnesty International, 2018).

Inadequate response by social media technology companies to effectively address online abuse in the face of systematic harassment experienced by both women and girls' online dents efforts to curb OGBV by these companies (Amnesty International, 2018). For instance, while Twitter has 'Hateful Conduct' policy, a report by Amnesty International in 2018 indicated that the company does not state who is responsible for oversight and implementation of the policy. Lackluster adherence to laid down legal frameworks and policy frameworks deepens the silencing effect on women participation in public online spaces. Therefore, the phenomenon continues to reinforce gender inequalities at the individual level of private life and broader levels of public life (Becky, 2018).

To avert the laxity of Internet intermediaries in discharging their duties to protect social media users from OGBV, states should continuously monitor the extent to which human rights violations are adequately being voluntarily dealt with by technology companies. Co-regulation between states and technology companies enhances the accountability of the Internet intermediaries in responding and mitigating OGBV. Similarly, binding legal regulations for Internet intermediaries may offer avenues for better articulation of their legal obligations and liabilities at international level (Nolan, 2013).

2. Deployment of new technologies as commitment to ensure that human rights concerns are identified, considered, and addressed

The international human rights law mandates states to promote, protect and respect human rights at national level, including safeguarding an online environment that is safe and conducive for engagement for all. For instance, the UN resolution on the protection and promotion of online freedom as a human right (UNHRC, 2016). Evidence from jurisdictions such as Latin America and the Caribbean points to the use of technological apps such as Safe City, Hollaback, and Harass-map to facilitate OGBV data collection through crowdsourcing (U.S Department of State, 2017). This has enabled law enforcement agencies to take action on various forms of OGBV incidences. Complementing crowd sourcing and digital storytelling with in-person community engagements, increases the levels of accountability and capacity of governments to respond to OGBV. Similarly, in Egypt, initiatives such as "HarassMap", with outreach work in 17 governorates has been applied with the aim of ending the social acceptability of sexual harassment and assault in Egypt (Hayes, 2014).

Internet intermediaries play crucial role in shaping how social media users perceive and manage their personal information. While there are privacy settings that enable users to stay anonymous, the intermediaries have a role to help users to control their personal data since the openness to use various platforms may attract unlawful or offensive use. These are responsibilities that should be realized through the notion of intermediary liability bestowed on technology companies who have the legal liability for data protection breaches (Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project 2017).

According to the Center for Democracy and Technology, (OECD, 2010), intermediary liability arises where governments or private litigants can hold Internet intermediaries liable for harmful content created by users of their services. The offensive content can lead to litigation of the intermediaries since they are legal entities on their own. Yet, Internet intermediaries mainly facilitate dissemination process as opposed to determining what content passes through their technology infrastructure (OECD, 2010).

The place of Internet intermediaries as well as addressing their limitations on regulating use of harmful content is key on mitigating OGBV. Specific countries have checks and balances within the legislative framework at national level to deter online violence against women through the Bill of Rights that creates duties and responsibilities on all persons and entities, upon which a breach may give rise to various forms of liability.

For instance, in Kenya, the 2010 Constitution provides a framework for the recognition and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Kenyans (GoK, 2010). However, Article 27(4) of Kenya's constitution places certain limitations on the duties and responsibilities created by the Bill of Rights. Freedom of expression and freedom of the media do not extend to expressions that amount to propaganda for war; incitement to violence; hate speech; or advocacy of hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement and can be prosecuted in a court of law for violation (GoK, 2010). In addition, the Consumer Protection Bill 2011, Freedom of Information Bill 2012, and the Data Protection Bill 2012 make reference to Intermediary liability, and the breach of right to privacy or unlawful use of information creates liability for the intermediary companies (Munyua et al., n.d.). However, in Kenya, according to the Electronic Transactions Act, 2007, Internet intermediaries do not have an obligation to monitor content traffic on their networks unless they are made aware of an illegal or unauthorized content or activity. This necessitates the government and stakeholders to play that critical role of monitoring abuse of the media platforms by various Internet Service Providers

Technology can be used positively by women and girls to influence decision making at both personal and public spheres. This includes use of webchat series to raise visibility of OGBV as evidenced by in Colombia and Peru in 2017 (U. S Department of State, 2017). However, at the same time it can be used to harm their lives through practices such as voice messaging, location surveillance of survivors, spywares, and misuse of social media platforms. This curtails their fundamental human rights through silencing their voices in online and offline spaces. Technology companies have enhanced access to information by women, girls, and marginalized groups. This has continued to amplify pathways to women's socio-economic and political empowerment through active participation in informed decision-making processes both at personal and the broader scale level. At the same time, the same technology perpetuates online violence that often leads to digital gender exclusion if adequate usage precautionary measures are not put in place.

There is an increasing public interest in the various ways technology-based solutions can be leveraged to support tackling OGBV. Deployment of the aforementioned technological tools such as HarrassMap and SafeCity holds the potential to rapidly address the various forms of harm attributed to both women and girls. Internet and mobile technology-based solutions that tech companies should focus on including continuous mapping of online violence data, access to support from community peers, monitoring

and measuring the impact of interventions (Hayes, 2014). This helps in decision making for mitigation measures including advocating for change. Technology tools that offer technology-based interventions can be grouped into four main categories including crowd sourcing and mapping data, advocacy, tools for survivors and victims, and those for providing voice and empowerment (Burns, 2013).

3. Creating awareness about the impact of OGBV on human rights

While there has been a sharp rise in use of digital technologies by individuals across the world, inadequate awareness on the impact of OGBV in both private and public spheres persists. The ensuing situation affects women and girls more due to gender stereotyping on OGBV. Victims may not be aware of their rights or may face victimization while in the process of finding support or reporting the crime. This may partly contribute to under-reporting of OGBV by both women and girls. Low rates of reporting incidences of OGBV will lead to low prosecution rates and consequently little efforts are made in investigating the scale and impact of the phenomenon, thus limiting collective awareness (Navarra et al., 2021).

While social media networks have been used as platforms to propagate OGBV, on the flipside, it offers opportunities for women and girls to share their experiences about online violence and harassment (Faith & Fraser, 2018). Social media platforms, owned by giant technology companies such as Meta and Twitter, offer broad channels for articulating the harms of OGBV. The platform also provides arena to challenge social norms about acceptable behavior as well as mobilizing for policy change to articulate their human rights demands (Onyemelukwe, 2020).

Challenging social norms about gender roles and how to manage abusive situations allows an openness that was previously rare, creating an enabling environment which is supportive and empowering for women and girls to share their experiences. The huge subscription on the social platforms similarly provides a conducive environment for interrogating existing myths on OGBV while helping to spread alternative narratives solutions that may be available to women and girls living in abusive situations (Onyemelukwe, 2020).The U.S Department of State in collaboration with various social media companies and civil society experts has innovative efforts such Spanish language webchats "*Technología Transformadora*" that helps women, girls, and the youth to explore various challenges and opportunities to address OGBV (U.S Department of State,2017).

According to Word Bank Group, 2003, businesses have some moral obligations towards the society through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and for development. Accordingly, at a time when unequal gender norms and attitudes around online violence are intensifying and young girls are getting exposed to their first experiences of online abuse propagated through social media, technology companies have a moral obligation to mentor them on how to navigate such challenges including being re-victimized. Intermediary companies should put in place systems for cooperating with law enforcement such as takedown (including system-wide removal of content, where possible), or de-linking from the result of searches procedures for abusive and harmful content and the possibility of account termination for misconduct (Chandra-Mouli et al, 2017).

Internet intermediaries could partner with schools to shape and influence people young, especially girls, on their understanding of social media acceptable norms and how to flag out online abuse (Chandra-Mouli et al, 2017). The school public set up offers a primary platform for large-scale awareness interventions on OGBV. The giant social media companies in collaboration with schools can help to formulate school-based interventions aimed at creating awareness and preventing online harassment and assaults. Through Corporate Social Responsibility Programs, technology companies can use schools as an entry point for partnerships in localizing the prevention of different forms of abuse, harassment, and bullying of women and girls online. The companies will be able to easily reach a large audience including students, teachers, and parents in a teaching-learning environment, at any given time, providing an opportunity for mainstreaming primary interventions to OGBV.

For instance, in Malaysia, a school-based intervention dubbed as "CyberSAFE" has seen a 20% increase in students feeling safe using the Internet, where 8 out of 10 students felt better and able to protect themselves online. The program focuses on creating awareness on online relationships, cyberbullying, cyber stalking, online harassment, and promoting mechanisms reporting and disclosing online abuse (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2013). Similarly, schools in Queensland in Australia, have Cyber safety programs to offer guidance and support students, parents, and the community in learning and engaging safely in the digital world while being conscious of the potential online abuses and how to navigate such challenges (Department of Education, 2020). In Queensland, building of awareness within the school communities is undertaken through partnership with stakeholders, social networking providers and other

government agencies. This is a corporate social responsibility program that social media companies could adopt to reach out primary and secondary school students and teachers in efforts to create awareness on OGBV while creating "CyberSAFE ambassadors" in various learning institutions (Faith & Fraser, 2018).

Conclusion

In the era of digitization, many countries continue to experience exponential growth in Internet use. With Internet intermediaries being among the key stakeholders in the development of Internet, they have increasing roles regarding their liability in relation to illegal online activities in order to create a trusted online environment, free from online abuse. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and other international and regional instruments identifies violence against women including ICT- facilitated violence against women as human rights violations (UN Human Rights Council, 2018). As such OGBV continues to be increasingly recognized as a major human rights problem by international and regional human rights instruments especially in the era of COVID-19 pandemic that has accelerated the use of technologies as the mainstays in everyday life (Lewis et al., 2017).

The solutions to mitigating and preventing OGBV are complex due to competing human rights and country-specific issues on data privacy and protection that require multifaceted strategies to effectively address OGBV. International and national legal obligations on management of OGBV will not be sufficient to solve human rights issues on gender inequality and abuse online. This calls for a collaborative and multifaceted response between the state and non-state actors especially social media companies and other oversight entities to better understand the landscape of OGBV and provide tailored responses to it.

Policy recommendations

i. The state agencies and departments in charge of information and communication technology should institute a multi-agency team to ensure that the Internet intermediaries within their jurisdictions work to effectively address OGBV online on their networks. This is because Internet intermediaries do not have obligation to monitor content traffic on their networks unless they are made aware of an illegal or unauthorized content or activity.

ii. Social media giant companies should innovate more responsive Internet and mobile technology-based solutions such as Safe City,

Hollaback, and Harass-map to enable, continuous mapping of various forms of online violence abuses, access to support from community peers, monitor and measure the impact of interventions.

iii. Social media companies should consider creating partnerships and collaborate with schools to introduce country-specific programs in learning institutions to intensify creating awareness on OGBV and mitigating on its adverse negative impact and effects. This will enhance their corporate social responsibilities while strengthening brand visibility.

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The Brazilian Legal System's Treatment of Revenge Pornography and Gender Violence

Caroline Lopes Placca and Natalie Ghinsberg

This chapter considers the legal approach given by the Brazilian law to revenge pornography against women consisting of offering, exchanging, making available, transmitting, selling or exhibiting for sale, distributing, publishing or disclosing, by any means, photograph, video or other audiovisual record that contains, without the victim's consent, a sex scene, nudity or pornography, with the clear intention of humiliating and causing them harm (Law No. 13,718/2018).

Although, in Brazil, it is a crime that can have any person as an active or passive subject and, in both cases, perpetrates gender violence, it occurs mostly against women. According to the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (2017), women are 1.7 times more likely to be victimized by non-consensual pornography than men, a special characteristic that requires specific measures to combat it.

The main objectives are to understand the Brazilian normative set in the criminal and civil scope applied in revenge pornography cases against women, in addition to emphasizing the importance of applying Law No. 11,340/2006 – the main normative instrument to combat violence against women in Brazil – to combat this type of conduct, including the peculiarities imposed on women because of their gender.

Therefore, initially some constitutional rules will be presented that establish important normative bases on the subject. Then, in the civil sphere, the applicability of moral and property damages – provided for in the Civil Code – against the author of revenge pornography and in favor of his victim will be discussed.

In the criminal sphere, article 218-C of the Penal Code will be analyzed, included by Law No. 13,718/2018, and created specially to typify the disclosure of a rape scene, a vulnerable rape scene, or the disclosure without the victim's consent of a sex scene, nudity, or pornography. It also presents the possibility of increasing the sentence if the agent has maintained an

intimate relationship of affection with the victim or has carried out the disclosure of the material with the aim of revenge or humiliation.

Furthermore, the importance of Law No. 11,340/2006, known as the Maria da Penha Law, being applied concomitantly with the aforementioned normative diploma(s) is highlighted, as it presents mechanisms to curb domestic and family violence against women, with measures such as educating the aggressor about the perpetrated violence.

The research problem is to investigate the scope of protection offered by Brazilian legislation to female victims of revenge pornography and how the application of Law No. 11,340/2006 for such cases can help combat this specific form of gender violence.

In the end, the presentation of an overview of the Brazilian normative instruments about revenge pornography is expected, in addition to confirming that the application of the Maria da Penha Law brings an essential perspective to the fight against this crime, considering the peculiarities of this form of violence.

The deductive method, in addition to primary and secondary sources, will be used to reach the main conclusions, among which it is highlighted that although criminal and civil measures are important to repair the damage suffered by female victims, the aggressor's education is indispensable for the non-perpetuation of this form of gender violence.

Gender Violence and Revenge Pornography

With the advancement of technology, new forms of violence emerge, with revenge pornography being an example of this. In general, revenge pornography is understood to be any sharing of an intimate image without the victim's consent aiming to humiliate her (Bolesina & Teixeira, 2021).

The first aspect to be understood when studying revenge pornography is its relationship with the concept of gender and how this term impacts women's lives and the effectiveness or inefficiency of the legal system in combating this crime. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that gender is the social construction of masculine and feminine (Saffioti, 2015, p. 47).

The idea of social construction implies understanding that there are roles to be played by each member of our social group, and these attributions are also forms of social control. In the case of women, sexuality has always been used as a form of dominance and control.

Although revenge pornography can occur against both men and women, the result is especially devastating in the latter case – the focus of

this chapter – precisely because the current society has expectations and exerts control in completely diverse ways with respect to each of the sexes.

Gender acts on both sides, that is, it creates roles to be played socially for both sexes. The pressures faced are different, and logically the intention is not to claim that there is no suffering for men in relation to these expectations, but it is only undeniable that the price that women pay within this dynamic is considerably higher.

A sex video released in which the victim is male has a completely different impact, because socially it is expected that men have an aggressive attitude, that they have sex with several women, demonstrating virility, generating, also, valuation if they act within these parameters. In this context, authors Silva and Pinheiro (2020) emphasize in their research that 60% of men who have already had some sexual content disclosed would share their images again even after unauthorized exposure, whereas among women only 15% of those who have already had any sexual image shared without authorization would send their own sexual content again (Silva & Pinheiro, 2020).

Thus, the social impact of revenge pornography has different effects for each sex. Women are expected to behave in a reserved, chaste, passive manner, and any attitude that deviates from this parameter cruelly devalues them. For women, the dissemination of personal images that contain sex scenes, nudity, or pornography, in a society in which the respect given to them is linked to the fulfillment of certain behavioral standards, is especially traumatic. The consequences are devastating, to the point where there are cases in which the victim chooses to take her own life (Sobreira de Souza & Coelho Silva, 2020).

It is important to understand that this reasoning is not something that only men do with women, since, because they are social dictates, women also judge and have certain expectations regarding other women.

All these aspects are important and must be initially clarified to understand the weight that the female victims of revenge pornography crime suffer. In this case, it is worth noting that gender helps in the construction of the violence suffered by these women, after all, gender violence also ends up being one of the results of this distorted dynamics of gender roles, because the perverse logic concludes that if a woman is not worthy of respect, it is okay to mistreat and humiliate her.

The Treatment Offered by the Brazilian
Legal System to Revenge Pornography

When approaching the treatment that the Brazilian legal system offers to the exposure of pornography without consent, it is essential to present the guarantees given by the Federal Constitution (Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988) to the subject. First, the principle of human dignity is highlighted, which constitutes one of the foundations of the Brazilian Democratic State of Law, under the terms of article 1, III.

In addition, among individual and collective rights and duties, article 5, *caput*, of the same normative device, expresses that all are equal before the law, without distinction of any kind, highlighting the guarantee of equality of men and women (article 5, I) in rights and obligations (Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988). Also, the constitutional text also states that intimacy is inviolable, in addition to private life, honor and image of people (article 5, X), ensuring the right to compensation for material or moral damage resulting from its violation (Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988).

Civil Law has constitutionally regulated the above provisions, in such a way that if one of these guarantees is violated, full compensation for damages is a guaranteed right, covering both material and extra-patrimonial damages.

The classification of damages is as follows: material damage is considered to be the financial losses suffered as a result of the exposure, that is, those of a patrimonial nature, whether the amount that was lost or the amounts that were not gained (Rocha, Pedrinha & Oliveira, 2019, p. 182). On the other hand, the damage suffered to the right of personality will be classified as extra-patrimonial damages (immaterial), among which can be mentioned: "pure moral damage, damage to identity, privacy, intimacy, image, prestige, reputation, aesthetic damage, psychic damage and existential damage" (Rocha, Pedrinha & Oliveira, 2019, p. 182).

Immaterial harm is known to be especially painful for women in a gender-driven society. Among the consequences reported by victims are job abandonment, college abandonment, expulsion from school, parental aggression, aggression against family member by third parties, depression, suicide attempt and suicide, the last three being reported quite frequently (Sobreira de Souza & Coelho Silva, 2020).

It is worth mentioning the enlightening results of a recent survey carried out by Bolesina and Teixeira (2021) on the types of damages recognized and the amounts of compensation granted by the Court of

Justice of the state of Rio Grande do Sul for cases of revenge pornography between 2017 and 2020: of the 25 cases analyzed, 24 recognized only extra-patrimonial damages and 1 recognized both extra-patrimonial and property damages (payment for the victim's psychological treatment). Regarding the compensation offered by the Court to the victims, the average amount was USD 2,085.23 (two thousand eighty-five dollars), with the highest value being USD 5,813.00 (five thousand eight hundred and thirteen dollars) and the lowest, of USD 387.00 (three hundred eighty-seven dollars).As for psychological damage[1] and existential damage[2], despite the fact that they could be considered autonomously to moral damages, they were not in any of the cases (Bolesina & Teixeira, 2021).

Although the research was not carried out at the national level[3], the Court of Justice of Rio Grande do Sul is one of the five largest state courts in Brazil[4], concentrating 64% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 51% of the Brazilian population (National Council of Justice, 2019), which is why it presents a good reflection of the reality in the country.

Another Brazilian legal facet that deserves to be explored are the international and regional instruments that, incorporated by the national order, also act[5] in the internal protection of women's human rights.

The two main Conventions that deserve attention in this area are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women or the Women's Convention (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women or the Convention of Belém do Pará.

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1 Psychological damage is, in short, that which, in order to be alleviated or cured, needs specific treatment, which can be objectively diagnosed by means of expertise, and which causes damage to the human psyche, implying substantial disturbance or alteration in psychological well-being (Bolesina, 2020).

2 Existential damage is characterized as damage to the person's regular professional, social or personal development, generating a negative change to their life project and also quality of life (Bolesina, 2020).

3 In Brazil, revenge pornography cases are taken to the State Court, not the Federal Court, which is responsible for prosecuting and judging cases according to article 109 of the Federal Constitution (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil, 1988).

4 They are, notably: Court of Justice of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Court of Justice of the state of Paraná, Court of Justice of the state of São Paulo, Court of Justice of the state of Rio de Janeiro and Court of Justice of the state of Minas Gerais.

5 International human rights treaties and conventions that have been approved with a qualified quorum (three-fifths of the votes of the respective members) in two rounds in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Federal Senate have the same force as Constitutional Amendments (ECs), according to article 5, paragraph 3 of the Federal Constitution of Brazil (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil, 1988), added by Constitutional Amendment No. 45 of 2004 (Constitutional Amendment n° 45, 2004). The other international treaties and conventions that deal with human rights but that have not been approved by the aforementioned rite have above-legal status, that is, above ordinary legislation, but below the Federal Constitution.

The first, approved by the General Assembly (AG) of the United Nations (UN) in 1979, entered into force in 1981, was ratified by Brazil in 1984, and was internalized domestically by Decree No. 4,377 in 2002. The second was approved by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1994, ratified by Brazil in 1995 and entered into the national order in 1996, by Decree No. 1973 (1996).

The Convention of Belém do Pará establishes, in its article 1, relatively broadly, that any act or conduct based on gender that causes death, harm or physical, sexual, or psychological suffering to women shall be understood as violence against women, while article 1 of CEDAW considers gender discrimination any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of gender in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other fields (United Nations, 1979).

Furthermore, article 3 of CEDAW is also noteworthy in that it requires all States Parties to act appropriately, including legislative measures, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of assuring them the exercise and enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men (United Nations, 1979).

Correspondingly, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women devotes an entire Chapter, III, to the duties of States, including, in its article 7, "c", the obligation to add in their domestic legislation criminal, civil and administrative provisions necessary to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women.

Therefore, given the incorporation of such Conventions into Brazilian national law, what they recognize as violence against women and their provisions on the obligation of each Member State to adopt measures to eradicate gender violence, the importance of both is evident in the fight against behaviors such as revenge pornography, which is one of the forms of gender violence.

In the context of Brazilian criminal law, until the addition to the Criminal Code of article 218-C by Law No. 13,718/2018, the disclosure, in any medium of the Internet or specifically on social networks, without the victim's consent, of photos or videos of explicit sexual content or with nudity, usually carried out by a male aggressor (Sobreira de Souza & Coelho Silva, 2020) as revenge for betrayal, the end of a relationship[6] or the refusal to resume it against his (ex) partner did not have a specific criminal type.

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6   Whether it is by marriage, domestic partnership, dating or any other type of personal/intimate relationship.

Until then, due to a gap in the legislation, such conduct could only be analyzed criminally if it were framed under other criminal types, such as defamation in article 139, insult in article 140, or bodily harm in article 129, all of the Criminal Code (Decree No. 2,848, 1940; Cunha, 2017; Cunha, 2018a); yet, without a perfect fit to any of them.

Finally, it should be noted that the principle of legality[7] within the criminal scope can be unfolded in the principle of minimum intervention, whereby a new type of crime or criminal offense cannot be created when other branches of law can inhibit a certain conduct (Cunha, 2018b); and in the prohibition of the use of analogy "***in malam partem***", that is, the one to create a criminal offense that incriminates, to justify the imposition of penalty or to aggravate it[8] (Cunha, 2018b).

The criminal type of article 218-C of the Penal Code emerges, therefore, in compliance with the principle of legality provided for both constitutionally and criminally (including in its facet of minimum intervention) as a way of filling a glaring judicial gap and, also, in compliance with the requirements of the two aforementioned Conventions regarding the fight of the States Parties against gender violence.

This is because a new behavior – in short, exposing intimate photos or videos of (ex-)partners without consent – has become increasingly common in our reality, leveraged as harm arising from the progress of information technology, technologies, and virtual social relationships (Cunha, 2017).

Unable to satisfactorily being stopped by other branches of law or even existing criminal types, especially when the victim is a woman, as occurs in most cases (Souza & Silva, 2020) as a reflection of social constructions of gender seen in the previous item, the most effective solution, in an attempt to stop such conduct was, therefore, the creation of a new criminal type.

Although the criminal sphere needs to be used in conjunction with other measures to combat gender violence, data shows that the criminal outcome impacts the sharing decision. In a research entitled "Nationwide online study of nonconsensual porn victimization and perpetration" carried out by Cyber Civil Rights Initiative found that 96% of respondents reported that if they knew they would be registered as sex offenders they would not have acted, in the same way that 88% stressed that if they knew

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7   Expressed both in article 5, XXXIX of the Federal Constitution, and in article 1 of the Penal Code itself, according to which "there is no crime without a previous law that defines it, nor a penalty without previous legal punishment" (Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 1988; Penal Code, 1940).

8   However, the so-called "in bonam partem" analogy is possible when it is for the benefit of the defendant and in compliance with the principle of equity (Cunha, 2018b).

they could be arrested, they would not have acted either (Eaton, Jacobs, & Ruvalcaba, 2017, p. 22).

Thus, Law No. 13,718/2018 adds article 218-C to the Penal Code, calling it "Disclosure of a rape scene or a rape scene of a vulnerable person, a sex scene or pornography", criminalizing the act of "offering, exchanging, making available, transmitting, selling or exhibiting for sale, distributing, publishing or disseminating", whether through the Internet or any other means, "photography, video or other audiovisual record that contains a rape scene or rape of a vulnerable person" or even those which "apologies or induces its practice or, without the victim's consent, a sex, nudity or pornography scene" (Decree No. 2,848, 1940).

It determines to the crime the penalty of "imprisonment, from 1 (one) to 5 (five) years, if the fact does not constitute a more serious crime", providing, still, in its paragraph 1, a cause of increase of penalty from 1/3 (one third) to 2/3 (two thirds) "if the crime is committed by an agent who maintains or has maintained an intimate relationship of affection with the victim or for the purpose of revenge or humiliation" (Decree No. 2,848, 1940).

An exclusion of illegality is also provided when "the agent practices the conduct described in the *caput* [...] in a publication of a journalistic, scientific, cultural, or academic nature", as long as "with the adoption of a resource that makes it impossible to identify the victim, subject to prior authorization, if over 18 (eighteen) years old" (Decree No. 2,848, 1940).

Therefore, from then on, there is a specific and adequate criminal type for the treatment and punishment of revenge pornography, allowing Brazil to advance in its national, regional, and even international commitments to combat gender violence. However, the Maria da Penha Law, analyzed below, remains one of the most iconic Brazilian judicial instruments in this sense (Decree No. 2,848, 1940).

The Essentiality of Applying the Maria Da Penha Law to Combat Gender-Based Violence

Law No. 11,340/2006 (2006) (known in Brazil as the Maria da Penha Law) is considered the fifth international instrument and, in Brazil, the most relevant in the combat of violence against women (Silva & Pinheiro, 2020). As revenge pornography is a form of violence against women, its analysis is indispensable.

First, it should be noted that the enactment of this Law was the result of international pressure for Brazil to create mechanisms to curb domestic

and family violence against women. More specifically, in 1988, the case of Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes was reported to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as a result of serious human rights violations committed by the Brazilian State (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2018).

In summary, Maria da Penha suffered two attempts at feminicide – the first, which left her paraplegic – by her then husband, Marco Antonio Heredia Viveros, in 1983. However, the first trial only took place in 1991, eight years later, and, despite the conviction, her aggressor was released. The second trial, held in 1996, had a similar outcome. Even though convicted, the defendant, due to procedural issues, was once again not arrested (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2018).

In 1998, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM) took the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), but the Brazilian State was silent and remained so (Instituto Maria da Penha, 2018), until, in 2001, it was held responsible for negligence, omission and tolerance in relation to domestic violence against Brazilian women (IACHR, 2001) and oriented to take measures to combat state tolerance and discriminatory treatment in relation to violence against women. As one of the results of this conviction, the Maria da Penha Law was enacted in 2006 (Law No. 11,340, 2006).

The purpose of the Law in question is to create mechanisms to curb and prevent domestic and family violence against women, in addition to establishing assistance and protection measures for women in situations of domestic and family violence and, in its article 1, the creation of Courts for Domestic and Family Violence against Women (Law No. 11,340, 2006).

There are some requirements for the application of the normative content in question, which, in short, consists of 3 aspects: that **violence** (physical, psychological, moral, sexual, and patrimonial) is **motivated by gender** and occurs within a **specific scope**. Therefore, it appears that, according to Law No. 11,340/2006, domestic or family violence against women is constituted by any action or omission based on gender that causes death, injury, physical, sexual, or psychological suffering and moral or property damages, whether in the domestic[9], family[10], or in any intimate relationship of affection, in which the aggressor lives or has lived with the victim, regardless of cohabitation.

9   Understood as the permanent living space of people, with or without family ties, including sporadically aggregated people.
10 Understood as the community formed by individuals who are or consider themselves to be related, united by natural ties, affinity or expressed will.

Therefore, it will not be possible to apply the Law in question to all cases of revenge pornography, as not all of them occur within the family, domestic or intimate relationship, but there is a considerable portion that falls within this dynamic, since the sharing of intimate images occurs mostly within intimate relationships.

When analyzing why teenagers share their images, 41% of girls and 35% of boys say they were in a relationship and wanted to do so. Being in a relationship is the main reason given by young people over 14 years old. No other justification has such a wide range, being the main reason for 51% of young people over 15 years old and for 39% of young people aged 14 years old (Katz & Asam, 2020, p. 26).

Hence, the need to apply the Maria da Penha Law is obvious when the case of revenge pornography occurs within a dynamic in which the parties are or were in a relationship.

It is important to emphasize that the application of the Law does not exclude the application of any other legislative instrument, with the possibility of joint application, thus expanding the protection offered to women victims of violence.

Law No. 11,340/2006 expressly specifies 5 forms of violence against women, consisting of physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial, and moral violence.

When analyzing revenge pornography, the issue of psychological violence is indisputable, which the Law defines as any conduct that causes emotional damage and lower self-esteem or even that causes harm or disturbs the development of someone or that seeks to degrade or control women's behaviors, actions, beliefs, and decisions. The Law highlights the use of "threat, embarrassment, humiliation, manipulation, isolation, surveillance [...], persecution [...], insult, blackmail, violation of [...] privacy, ridicule, exploitation and limitation of the right to come and go", also featuring, in addition to the forms described above, the use of any other means that harm the victim's psychological health and self-determination.

The accounts of women victims of revenge pornography show the size of the emotional impact they feel when having their images released (Sobreira de Souza & Coelho Silva, 2020). In the same sense, according to research carried out by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (2017), people who have had their sexual images shared without consent show significantly worse mental health than those who have never been victims.

As for property violence, which, according to the Law, consists of "any conduct that constitutes retention, subtraction, partial or total destruction of its objects, work instruments, personal documents, goods, values and economic rights or resources" is also easily configured, since it is not uncommon for the victim to lose her job, drop out of college and have difficulty returning to the job market (Sobreira de Souza & Coelho Silva, 2020).

For the configuration of sexual, moral, and physical violence, although they do not always happen in the context of the crime of revenge pornography, in some cases it is possible to make this connection. For instance, sexual violence can sometimes occur concurrently with revenge pornography when the aggressor records the attack against the victim and subsequently discloses the content to publicly demonstrate his superiority position and to humiliate the victim of the crime (Silva & Pinheiro, 2020).

On the other hand, moral violence in the context of sharing sexual images can happen when the aggressor discloses personal images linking the victim's name, in addition to other personal data, on prostitution websites, depreciating her honor and public image and causing her embarrassment and decreasing their self-esteem (Silva & Pinheiro, 2020).

Finally, the occurrence of physical violence in the context of revenge pornography can be caused by the psychological health of the victim, who sometimes even takes her own life. In this case, there is a clear relationship between psychological damage (as a consequence of moral, psychological and/or sexual violence) and suicides related to victims of revenge pornography (Silva & Pinheiro, 2020).

The Brazilian Penal Code states that inducing, instigating, or assisting suicide constitutes a punishable conduct and if the attempt results in serious bodily harm, the agent is subject to stricter penalties. Therefore, if it occurs, not only will there be the incidence of the criminal type but also of the Maria da Penha Law.

The Law in question seeks to provide complete protection to the most diverse forms of violence against women also in the context of revenge pornography.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Law provides for urgent protective measures that oblige the aggressor to practices such as moving away from home, domicile, or place of coexistence with the victim; their attendance at recovery and reeducation programs; prohibition of certain conducts such as approaching/contacting the victim; among others.

All these measures help to protect women in a broad way, considering aspects that are sometimes not addressed when Criminal or Civil Law is applied exclusively, without the intersection of a Law designed to deal with gender violence and ensure the safety of women.

Conclusion

The chapter focused on reflecting on the legal approach to revenge pornography in Brazilian law, ranging from Civil and Criminal Law, also highlighting the importance of the hybrid Law n° 11,340/2006 (Maria da Penha Law).

Firstly, the concept of revenge pornography was highlighted, which is, simply, the sharing of image or video containing a scene of nudity, sex or pornography without the victim's consent and intended to cause him or her humiliation, usually by a partner or ex-partner as a response to the end of the relationship, refusal to resume it or revenge for a betrayal.

It was highlighted that gender socially constructs what is understood as masculine and feminine, imposing different patterns of behavior for men and women. Thus, as much as revenge pornography - as well as other forms of gender violence - can occur against both men and women, it is known that the results in the latter case are especially devastating and, therefore, this was the scope of the research.

Following this approach, it was verified that the principle of human dignity is one of the foundations of the Brazilian Democratic State of Law provided for in the Constitution, along with the principle of equality and inviolability of private life, honor and image, ensuring a right to compensation for material or moral damage resulting from its violation, all of which are related to protection against revenge pornography against women.

When addressing non-pecuniary damages, some devastating consequences are highlighted such as job and college abandonment, aggression, depression, attempted suicide and even suicide. With regard to property damage, it was found, in research carried out at the Court of Justice of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, that the average compensation received by victims of revenge pornography is around USD 2,000.00 (two thousand dollars), which points to an insufficiency in the application of Civil Law to safeguard the rights of women in this scope.

Furthermore, Brazil, as a signatory not only to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but also to the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate

Violence Against Women - both of which, incidentally, were internalized by the national legal system - needs to take appropriate measures against all forms of violence against women and to ensure that they enjoy all their rights.

Criminal Law, in turn, used to apply to revenge pornography the criminal type of defamation of article 139, of injury of article 140 or of bodily harm of article 129, all of the Penal Code.

However, as there was not a perfect fit between them and the conduct of disclosing intimate material without the victim's consent, the best way out was the creation of a specific criminal type. This is how, in 2018, Law No. 13,718 added article 218-C to the Penal Code, imposing a sentence of imprisonment of 1 to 5 years and also providing for a cause of exclusion of unlawfulness and a cause for increasing the sentence where the agent has maintained an intimate relationship of affection with the victim or has performed the act of sharing with the purpose of revenge or humiliation.

Notwithstanding, even with the creation of a crime specifically regulated by Criminal Law, Law No. 11,340/2006, also called Maria da Penha Law, main instrument in the combat of gender violence in Brazil, still maintains its importance with regard to revenge pornography against women, especially when it occurs within the family, domestic or intimate relationship of affection, scope in which it is applicable. This is because, in the first place, it is possible to apply the Maria da Penha Law concurrently with other normative instruments, such as the Civil Code or the Penal Code, thus making it possible to expand the protection of women who are victims of violence.

Furthermore, because it contains provisions for 5 different forms of violence against women: physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial and moral, many of which undoubtedly can end up interconnecting with revenge pornography.

Last but not least, the Maria da Penha Law also allows for other measures such as, for example, the removal of the aggressor from the home, domicile or place of coexistence with the victim, the prohibition of certain conducts such as approximation or contact and, especially, the attendance at recovery and re-education programs.

Thus, the concomitant application of different Brazilian normative diplomas when women are victims of revenge pornography proves to be especially beneficial not only as a solution for a specific victim, but to avoid the aggressor's recidivism in crimes of the same nature and, therefore,

to guarantee women's safety and better address gender-based violence against them.

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Cyberbullying in India:
A hindrance to peacebuilding and gender equality

Harshit Agrawal and Nalini Bhattar

With the advancement of technology, humans and human lives are at ease. For all their requirements and problems, they have found a one-stop solution called the Internet. From online shopping to communication to social life to online classes and jobs, one can do anything through the medium of Internet. But as it is said a coin has two sides, though the Internet gives access to information and services it has also opened a pandora box of problems and misuses. One such problem persistent to Internet users (especially to women, minorities, Children and LGBTQIA individuals) is Cybercrime. There are several kinds of cybercrime including cyberstalking, cyberbullying, morphing, phishing, identity theft, etc.

The most worrisome cybercrime that is prevalent in India is cyberbullying. It simply means the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Cyberbullying in nature is similar to other kinds of physical, sexual or emotional bullying which happens in schools, colleges, and the workplace, the only difference is that it takes place online or virtually.

Bullying is an act where there is a clear imbalance of power between the victim and bully. Bullying is defined as "repeated acts of unprovoked aggression that are damaging psychologically or physically for the victim, and where the strength of the aggressor/s and the victim is unequal" (Jankauskiene et al., 2008, p.146). In their book *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*, Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin defines cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014, p.5). The US National Crime Prevention Council defines cyberbullying as "the process of using the Internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person" (Paullet & Pinchot, 2014, p.1).

India with the second-largest Internet users in the world, cybercrime has become a major problem. While greater connectivity through the Internet promises large-scale progress, it also leaves our digital societies open to new vulnerabilities. Cybercrimes know no borders and have evolved at a pace at par with emerging technologies. The ***Global Youth Online Behavior Survey*** (2012) conducted by Microsoft ranked India third in cyberbullying.

According to a survey, 53% of Indian children between 8 and 17 years have been bullied online (Jha, 2012). In another study conducted by McAfee, titled the ***Tweens, Teens and Technology 2014*** which examines the online behavior and social networking habits of Indian tweens and teens, and aims to educate on the impact that risky behavior has on their privacy, reputation and social media experiences. According to the research, half (50%) of the youth in India have had some experience with cyberbullying (been cyberbullied online or witnessed others being cyberbullied), out of which one-third (36%) have been cyberbullied themselves.

Cyberbullying and cyberbullies tend to humiliate, agitate, scare, shame and demean the targeted victims. Despite all these consequences cyberbullying is not recognized as a major issue, in fact PM Narendra Modi has been accused of indirectly facilitating trolling on Twitter to further his agenda of right-wing politics (The Wire Analysis, 2020). In spite of several provisions, laws and punishment, the number of cyberbullies and the number of cyberbullying cases are still prevalent in large numbers. According to data released recently by the National Crime Records Bureau, cases of cyberstalking or bullying of women and children increased by 36% from 542 in 2017 to 739 in 2018. Meanwhile, the conviction rate for cyberstalking or bullying of women and children fell 15 percentage points to 25% in 2018 from 40% in 2017 (Maheshwari, 2020).

Cyberbullying in India: A Legal Perspective

The most frequently used definition of cyberbullying is "an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and overtime against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Smith et al., 2012, p.34).

Laws against cyberbullying

Information Technology Act (IT Act), 2000

The Act was passed by the Government of India with the purpose of dealing with crimes on the Internet. The consequences of cyberbullying leave a life-time impact on the victims but ironically this offense has not yet been introduced in this Act. But there are some remedies for the victims in this Act against cyberbullying:

1. <u>Section 66-C:</u> Under this section if a person dishonestly makes use of the electronic signature, password or any other unique identification feature of any other person**,** he/she shall be punished. The imprisonment may be up to 3 years and/or a fine of Rs. 1 Lakh (or USD $1327).

2. <u>Section 66-D:</u> This section states that if a person cheats someone by portraying their image to someone else on the Internet/social media, he/she shall be punished. The imprisonment may be up to 3 years and/or a fine of Rs. 1 Lakh (or USD $1327).

3. <u>Section 66-E:</u> Under this section one can be punished for capturing someone's private pictures intentionally and putting it on the Internet or social media without their consent. The imprisonment may last up to 3 years and/or with a fine of Rs. 3 Lakhs (or USD $3983).

4. <u>Section 67:</u> Under this section one can be punished if they transfer, circulate or upload vulgar or improper material on the Internet or social media. The imprisonment may last up to 5 years and/ or with a fine of Rs. 10 Lakh (or USD $13277).

· *Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860*

Indian Penal Code is the official criminal code of India. Here also, there is no specific provision, but some sections deal with the offenses of cyberbullying.

1. <u>Section 354-A:</u> Under this section any men showing pornography against the will of a woman; or making sexually colored remarks, shall be guilty of the offence of sexual harassment. With imprisonment of 1-3 years.

2. <u>Section 354-C:</u> Under this Section one can be punished if he captures a woman's images without her consent or permission when she is in her private space. The imprisonment may be of 1-3 years and still if the accused continues the offense, he shall be imprisoned for 3-7 years.

3. <u>Section 354-D:</u> Under this Section one can be punished if they stalk someone or monitor their day-to-day activities on the Internet without their knowledge with an intention to cause them harm or to hurt them. The imprisonment may last up to 3 years.

4. <u>Section 499:</u> Under this Section one can be punished if they defame someone. Defamation can also be on the Internet or social media.

5. <u>Section 507:</u> This section states punishment for criminal intimidation. As per this section whoever commits the offense of criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication or having taken precaution to conceal the name or abode of the person from whom the threat comes, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, in addition to the punishment provided for the offense by the last preceding section.

6. <u>Section 509:</u> Under this Section one can be punished if he tries to insult the modesty of a woman, this can also be on Internet or social media, The imprisonment may last up to 1 year, with/without fine.

Judicial cases on cyberbullying

The following judicial cases illuminate the role of a sensitive and active judiciary in protecting women's rights. The cases listed below reflect the dangers (especially for women) that exist in the digital world. The functioning of Indian judiciary like other governmental institutions is shaped by the patriarchal mores, because of which gender-sensitive judgements are important for restoring the faith of individuals in judicial mechanism.

• *State of West Bengal v. Animesh Boxi, GR No. 1578 of 2017*

In this case, the accused took the possession of some private and obscene photographs of the victims by hacking into her phone, blackmailed her by threatening to upload the stolen pictures and videos on the Internet and subsequently uploaded her private pictures and intimate videos onto an obscene website.

The District Court of West Bengal convicted the accused under sections 354A, 354C, 354D, 509 of IPC and sections 66C and 66E of the IT Act, previously mentioned. The court held that the offense violates 354D of the IPC as the victim was not only stalked online but also suffered from 'virtual rape' every time a user of the openly accessible global website viewed the video. The court commented that deterrence was one of the prime considerations for convicting the accused and an inadequate sentence would do more harm than justice, as it would undermine

public confidence in the seriousness of the issue (Joseph, V., & Jain, M., 2020, October 1).

• *Shubham Bansal v. The State (Govt. of Nct. Delhi), Criminal Miscellaneous Petition No. 2024 of 2018*
In this case, the accused created a false Fakebook account in the name of Nidhi Taneja and included the telephone number of the victim, which caused her annoyance, insult, and harassment. An FIR was registered against the accused. Thereafter, an application was made by the accused for dropping the proceedings against him under Section 66A of the IT Act and Section 509 of IPC, discussed in the previous section. However, the Delhi high Court refused to entertain the application of the accused (Joseph, V., & Jain, M., 2020, October 1).

• *Prakhar Sharma v. The State of Madhya Pradesh, MCRC No. 377 of 2018.* The accused created a fake Facebook account of the victim, posted some vulgar messages along with the photos of the victim downloaded from her original Facebook account. The accused was charged under Sections 66 (c), 67 and 67(a) of the IT Act, demonstrating the importance of this regulation for the prosecution of the cybercrimes (Joseph, V., & Jain, M., 2020, October 1).

Cyberbullying and Women:
An everyday reflection of gender inequality and harassment

In a study conducted by GSMA in 2018 titled *A framework to understand women's mobile-related safety concerns,* people recognized that the Internet is a source of information, entertainment and empowerment, however, there is also a fear of the negative side of the web, such as fear of being exposed to certain content, risks to personal safety, online bullying and harassment, photo/information theft and the perception that inappropriate online relationships can damage reputations. Together with social norms, this fear of the negative side of the web can become a barrier to mobile access for women, either through self-policing or gatekeepers (male relatives or other family members) who restrict access (Croxson and Wilson, 2018, p.14)

India's first cyberbullying case was reported in 2001. A girl named Ritu Kohli filed a complaint in the same year that someone else is using her name in social media and due to which she was deliberately getting obscene calls from various numbers belonging to various states of India and abroad (Adrita, 2020). It was found that a man, named Manish Kathuriua, was illegally using Ritu's name for a website where he used obscene and

obnoxious language and distributed her residential address, telephone number, and invited people to chat with her on the phone.

For the current world and current generation, social media has become a medium of enjoyment. From uploading their trip-pictures, to voicing their cause to simply putting out their thoughts, social media has become a go to place for these things. According to Union Minister Ravi Sankar Prasad, WhatsApp has over 530 million users, followed by YouTube which has over 448 million users in India. Facebook has around 410 million, Instagram has 210 million while Twitter has 175 million users (Chakravarti, 2021). Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and so many other applications, are always there in today's generation's phones. But at the same time, social media simultaneously has become the platform for cyberbullying. There have been cases of the same on Instagram, Twitter, etc. It can take place through posting embarrassing photos of a person, putting hashtags which can be insulting, posting something defaming or cruel comments, creating fake profiles.

Cyberbullying is not just limited to sexual motivated comments, but is also about traditions and dress codes. Many times, actresses, members of parliament or other female public figures are trolled and bullied online because of their clothes. Women's clothing is controlled by male gaze where at one end women are forced to wear traditional clothes like saree and on the other end they are portrayed in the media as highly sexualized beings, dressed in bikinis or lingerie.

In 2017 actress Priyanka Chopra was trolled for her dress while meeting Indian PM Narendra Modi. The actress was questioned for her posture and choice of clothing. She had worn a knee-length floral dress on the occasion and sat with her legs crossed on the occasion. On Twitter people called her "unsanskari" (uncultured) and bashed her for forgetting her traditions (Shiksha, 2017).

In 2019 two female Members of Parliament (MP), Mimi Chakraborty and Nusrat Jahan, were bullied and trolled on the Internet for their dress. Both MPs were sexualized and objectified by Twitter users, who wrote sexist comments like "Now Indian Parliament has glamor", "beauty without brains" (Trends Desk, 2019). On Twitter people wrote sexist and misogynist comments like, "That (the Parliament) is the temple of democracy, not a place for TikTok". One user said that "These dresses will suit a page 3 party, or a public park, or a mall, or a tourist spot, or even a news channel interview. But certainly, these dresses don't suit the Parliament house" (Press Trust of India, 2019).

Many women who achieve visibility in sports, considered to be a male-dominated domain, face intimidating harassment and abuse online. Women are always judged on how they dress; it becomes an obligation for every woman to demonstrate respectability in order to get appreciation and admiration they deserve. In 2017, cricketer Mithali Raj faced abuse that has grown increasingly familiar for female sportspersons. She was trolled for dressing "inappropriately"; the "explosive" dress became one of the many markers of how women are sexualized in sports. Within India, the problem is more nuanced. In addition to sexism and homophobia, caste plays a critical role in determining attitudes. In August 2021, hockey player Vandana Kataria faced overwhelming casteist abuse, in real life and online, after the women team's defeat in the Tokyo Olympic semi-finals (Kalia, 2021).

In November 2021, Indian cricketer Virat Kohli and Indian actress Anushka Sharma's nine-month-old daughter received rape and death threats and the reason was that Virat Kohli, then captain of Indian cricket team, supported his team player Mohammed Shami, who faced harsh online abuse and bullying after India lost to Pakistan by 10 wickets on 24th October 2021 and voiced against religious discrimination Sengar, S. (2021, November 1).

After the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, Bollywood started facing the anger and hatred of netizens. This ire was specific to those who were in close relation to the late actor's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty. Amongst all the close associates was the Bhatt family. Related to this, Pooja Bhatt complained of being the victim of cyberbullying on Instagram. She wrote on Twitter, "what's even worse is that most of the abuse and messages screaming 'Go die' or 'why don't you kill yourself' come from women or at least people pretending to be women" (Bhatt, P. 2020).

Women are often targeted by the patriarchal and misogynistic mindset on social media for voicing their opinions and/or questioning old age traditions. Social media trolls use hateful language to vilify women's voices. Through creating an online environment where women getting rape threats is an everyday scenario, social media platforms are discouraging women to become a part of global Internet. As of 2019, only 33% of women in India used social media, against 67% of men. Data also shows that 52% of women users in India do not trust the internet with their personal information. Women are 26% less likely to access mobile internet due to misogyny, harassment and revenge porn (Mukherjee, Roa and Jain, 2021, p.6).

Cyberbullying and Intersectionality:
Delegitimizing the voices of marginalized

With the digital age, more and more marginalized communities and identities are using social media platforms and are accessing digital technology to tell their experiences and stories. This digital space has become an important part of their lives but still it is full of patriarchy, inequality, discrimination, and hatred. Being at the intersection of caste, class, race, religion, sexuality many women become victims of identity politics, where members of hegemonic communities (particularly men) purposefully degrade and demean the dignity of "intersectional women". The silencing and censoring impact of violence and abuse against women on the Internet can have far-reaching and harmful repercussions on how younger women, women from marginalized communities, and future generations fully exercise their right to participate in public life and freely express themselves online.

Online violence is instituted against anyone who does not fit within or interrogates majoritarian social norms. The language of cyberbullying differs for marginalized women, unlike online violence that privileged women face which are most often only sexual, the violence that underprivileged outcaste, dark-skinned, minority women experiences are intersectional, extreme, unique and invariably high as they are hateful and identity-based aiming to defame, humiliate, delegitimize or undermine an individual. For instance, when women are generally threatened with rapes and slut-shaming, outcaste women are insulted as unworthy or too ugly to rape, or labeled as being a slut is hereditary and predominantly because of being born in the untouchable caste (Munusamy, 2018).

Recently two cases shocked Indian women especially Muslim Women. The two cases namely *Sulli Deals* and *Bulli Bai* were related to virtual auction of Muslim women in India. The former happened on July 4, 2021 while the latter on Jan 1, 2022.

On the GitHub platform, the open app source was formed called Bulli Bai and Sulli Deals (at different times), where people have shared pictures of many Muslim women without their consent and knowledge. Sulli is a derogatory and demeaning term which sometimes is used to define Muslim women. Though, after it came into public knowledge these pictures were taken down as a result of public outrage and complaint by aggrieved women.

Indian journalist Zeba Warsi told Deutsche Welle (DW), an international broadcaster in Germany, that "I felt angry, and really helpless that this is

happening to me and so many other Muslim women in the country" (van Brunnersum & Godbole, 2022).

In recent years India have seen movements lead by Muslim women. Recently the national protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (which grants Indian citizenship to refuges belonging to religion other than Muslim or Christian), saw large scale participation of Muslim women. The visibility of Muslim women in public as articulate, fierce and brave, fundamentally shifts something about how they must be perceived. It is this claim to citizenship, to free speech, that has created no little discomfort. Bulli Bai and Sulli Deals must be located within these larger events of the growing visibility of Muslim women and a growing atmosphere of intolerance to diversity and tolerance of hate speech and acts towards Muslims. They are a way of silencing both women and Muslims, demonstrating that neither is safe in contemporary India (Phadke, 2022).

Another case came into limelight within a month after the Bulli Bai incident. This time Muslim women were target on an audio chat app called Clubhouse. In this people were making obscene and demeaning statements against Muslim women on the topic "Muslim gals are more beautiful than Hindu gals". An audio clip from the app's chat went viral on social media, triggering outrage and calls for stringent action against those involved in it. Then, the First Information Report (FIR) was registered under several sections against this act.

Clubhouse was launched in 2020 which aims for a mass audience. It's simply a place for people to talk to each other. With accounts that do not necessarily need to be linked to real-world handles, guaranteeing a degree of anonymity. The app allows people to engage with each other in rooms very similar to a conference call. In August of 2021, it was launched to public accessibility and before that one needed an invitation to get in.

Delhi Commission for Women chairperson, Swati Maliwal told The Indian Express,

Someone tagged me on Twitter (highlighting) the detailed audio conversation on the Clubhouse app, which targeted Muslim women and girls and made disgusting sexual comments against them. I feel outraged over the fact that such incidents are going on increasing in the country. Strongest action needs to be taken against the culprits and that's why I have issued a notice to the Delhi Police seeking an immediate FIR and arrests in the matter (Express News Service, 2022).

Online trolling and bullying of Indian women are an extension of everyday harassment they encounter in their lives. The online and offline harassment gets multiplied many-fold for women belonging to marginalized communities. Such harassment and bullying are also manifested through online mediums to devalue the voices and experiences of disadvantaged women as unworthy and inappropriate for mainstream society.

In 2018, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey along with a group of female journalists were trolled for holding a poster on "Smash Brahmanical Patriarchy". People on social media, accused him and other female journalists for hurting the feelings of Brahmins (upper-caste group) and labeled twitter as a platform for propagating anti-Hindu, leftist, and Islamic extremism. It was Sanghapali Aruna, who is an anti-caste activist and Executive Director of Project Mukti, who gave Jack two posters, one which read "End Caste Apartheid" and another which said "Smash Brahminical Patriarchy". Aruna was among the women who met with the Twitter team for a discussion on women's experiences of using the platform, from online movements to facing abuse and sexual harassment (Kumar, 2018)

After the controversy, Aruna said that "the intersectionality of Brahmanism (not just casteism) and patriarchy has resulted in unspeakable amounts of harassment on the platform without any recourse". In her view she along with other women were online bullied to denigrate her fight against casteism and patriarchy (Talukdar, 2018).

For an authentic and equal cyber-and-digital space, these platforms need to be free from all kinds and forms of discriminations, prejudices, hatred, and biases. Social media and the digital world have provided a platform to marginalized groups and has given an opportunity to raise their concerns, and to create a space where their voices can reach the masses, something which was not possible with the earlier methods of dissemination of information.

The queer community in India had found a safe space on Instagram to express themselves, connect with each other and share their lived experiences, especially after the Supreme Court in 2018 read down parts of an archaic law (Section 377) that criminalized homosexuality. Of late, that safety has rapidly disappeared in Instagram. The queer community says, is not doing much to help secure the platform. Instead, some members of the community have faced action by the social media platform for "being themselves". For the queer community in India, instant hate has become a lingering problem on Instagram. And there's precious little that the social

media platform can — or apparently will — do about it (Bhattacharjee, 2021).

On June 5, 2021 Indrajeet Ghorpade founder of YES, WE EXIST, an Instagram page for LBGTQ awareness, hosted an Instagram Live event with an aim to encourage queer community in India to share their experiences of coming out. But in few minutes, his live event was flooded with transphobic, homophobic, mean, and hateful comments. He could have reported the incident but reporting these accounts to Instagram was futile, says Ghorpade, as their comments on the Live video had disappeared, and there was no way for Instagram to identify the violation and take action against these accounts (Bhattacharjee, 2021).

There are so many Instagram profiles and pages associated with queer community, where some aim to aware and voice for LBGTQIA+ community while some just share their experiences and creativity through this platform.

Rishi Raj, an Instagram user, used to post queer activism posts on their page. Rishi Raj likes to be referred to as 'they/their'. But they stopped posting because of all the hate and trolling. Rishi Raj says when they posted content on trying to embrace one's own body, they were censored by social media. They say Instagram won't remove similar content of underwear models or similar people. "It infuriates me that my heterosexual or cisgender counterparts don't have to go through the same thing" (Bhattacharjee, 2021). As queer people, even writing the words sexualization and sexuality in our captions makes it weirdly eligible for Instagram to censor us because apparently, they want to create a safe community or a safe space.

In "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace", John Perry Barlow said,

We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth. We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity. (Vanniyar, 2018).

Conclusion

Cyberbullying is often sent anonymously; anonymous bullying can greatly undermine the confidence and sense of safety for those receiving it because it is difficult to prove without the intervention of authorities where the abuse originated. It can create paranoia and often be more

powerful than abuse from someone the person knows. Cyberbullying leaves emotional and behavioral concerns on its victim. The effects of cyberbullying are in many ways worse than traditional bullying, infiltrating every part of victim's life and causing psychological struggles and in some cases result in physical harm or suicide (Van Tiel, 2020, p.6).

Ipsos' Global Advisor study on "Global Views on Cyberbullying" carried out in 2018 in 28 countries, finds that awareness of cyberbullying is increasing globally, up 9 percentage points from 2011. Though global awareness of cyberbullying is high (75%), one quarter of adults have still never heard of it. Awareness is highest in Sweden and Italy (91% each) and lowest in Saudi Arabia (37%). Italy has seen the greatest increase in awareness of cyberbullying, from 57% aware in 2011 to 91% now. The United States also has high awareness (85%), though the level of awareness is relatively unchanged since 2011 (82%).

Cyberbullying not only impacts peace at an individual or psychological level but it has a lasting impact on the community as well national level. With these above-mentioned cases having purposive intent of targeting particular gender, religion, caste and sexual preferences, the overall tranquility is screwed up not only of those being targeted but also of their family, their community and at last, their nation.

Everyone has the right to equal civil liberties and a fundamental right to live a life that is dignified in equality with others. Young people, women, differently abled individuals, members of sexual, religious or ethnic minorities must be encouraged to freely express themselves and exercise their rights in all environments, digital or non-digital. They must be empowered to contribute towards a democratic, global community by sharing their own ideations and opinions without the threat of cyber bullying or harassment.

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Mapping gender norms in public social media: A South African study

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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a human rights issue of global concern that has far-reaching health, economic and social consequences for all societies. GBV occurs in online and offline spaces and while both women and men experience GBV, women and girls experience the highest levels of violence (Abdool, 2021; Crooks 2017; South African Government, 2021). Unequal power dynamics in relationships produce and reinforce GBV on an interpersonal level, while structural forms of GBV – unequal political, economic and social systems – normalize the subordination of women and fuel interpersonal forms of violence (Machisa, Christofides, & Jewkes, 2016; Montesanti & Thurston, 2015). These intersecting levels of GBV have significant consequences for women, their children, families and communities across the world (Ellsberg et al., 2008; World Health Organization (WHO), 2016).

In South Africa, GBV is rife, and it is a major obstacle to the achievement of peace, gender equality and social cohesion (Joyner, 2016; WHO, 2016). Due to widespread underreporting and low prosecution rates, available statistics fail to adequately reflect the true extent of GBV. However, between 2019 and 2020 alone, the South African Police Service (SAPS) reported 53,293 sexual offences while 2,695 women were murdered in South Africa(2020). Global research has confirmed that direct experiences of violence in childhood are known to drive an intergenerational cycle of GBV (Carlson, Ikenberg, & Vargas, 2018; Schmidt, Kolodinsky, Carsten, Schmidt, & MacLachlen, 2007). The cycle of violence is perpetuated through unequal gender norms and reinforced through the attitudes and behaviors an individual learns through their exposure to specific family and community environments in childhood (Bandura, 1997). Consequently, boys who experience GBV and domestic violence, tend to display misogynism, negativity and anger toward women as adults. They are also more likely to try and control their

partners and to be perpetrators of GBV in adulthood (Cunha & Gonçalves, 2015; Schmidt et al., 2007).

This concept of cyclical violence links to Bronfenbrenner's well established ecological model, which acknowledges that a person's behavior is influenced by their interaction with their physical, social, economic and political environments (2001). Accordingly, conflict, post-conflict and high-violence settings are known to give rise to multiple forms of trauma (Machisa et al., 2016). This was evident in South Africa recently, where cases of GBV escalated radically in response to the Covid-19 crisis, particularly during the 'hard lock down' of 2020, when many women and girls faced confinement with abusive male relatives and partners (Dlamini, 2021). Moreover, in June 2020, following the return to lockdown "level three" in South Africa, when alcohol sales reopened and a greater freedom of movement was allowed, femicide and GBV escalated to an even more alarming level. During this period, we received daily reports of women and girls who were being brutally abused and murdered at the hands of men. Tshegofatso Pule, who was eight months pregnant when she was stabbed to death and left hanging from a tree, is one horrific example (BBC News, 2021).

Many South African expressed their feelings of hopelessness and frustration with GBV on social media by sharing stories of violence and by tagging their posts with hashtags such as, "#MenAreTrash". This is a key example of the increasingly important role that social media plays in our everyday lives. Virtual communities and networks offer individuals opportunities to interact and to find solidarity by sharing experiences, information, ideas and interests (Munzel & Werner, 2013; Obar & Wildman 2015). The number of social media users is rapidly growing and so is the amount of time that people spend on social media sites. For example, by October 2020, there were over four billion social media users in the world (Kemp, 2021). In the same year, the number of social media users in South Africa increased by 14% from 22 to 25 million people (Park, 2021). Interestingly, South Africans spend an exceptional amount of time on social media – an average of 3.2 hours a day, compared to the global average of 2.4 hours (Park, 2021).

This rapid growth in social media usage in South Africa presents a valuable opportunity for researchers to learn more about social dynamics in this setting. Here, we report on an ongoing project, piloted in 2020, where we apply advanced social media analytics to investigate the workings of gendered discourses and attitudes in real time and to challenge the cycle of GBV in collaboration with male change agents through online dialogue.

Given our interest in the intergenerational cycle of violence, we explore linkages between children, parents and gendered discourses.

Methodology

Overlapping project phases: Our project has two overlapping phases: Research and Engagement. Here, we share results from our preliminary social media research. While this first phase of the project is more research-focused, the research team will continuously conduct social media analytics over the 12-month life span of this project and will use these findings to inform our online dialogue facilitation. Moreover, the dialogue facilitation team will continue to share insights from their work with the research team to enrich the knowledge generated through this work.

Analytic process: There are four distinct phases in social media data analysis. These are: discovery, collection, preparation, and analysis (Stieglitz, Mirbabaie, Fromm, & Melzer, 2018). The first step in our data discovery phase was to draw up a list of keywords. The research and dialogue facilitation teams contributed to this list collaboratively through a shared spreadsheet. To create this list, the research team drew on existing knowledge, and conducted desktop research, a literature review and a review of social media. Concurrently, three dialogue facilitators recorded insights and keywords gained through exploratory dialogue facilitation. Given our interest in the intergenerational cycle of violence, focused on identifying which linked to social dynamics between children, parents and gendered discourses. Our final keyword list comprised 52 words in isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, English, and slang. We entered this list of words into a social media analytics tool called "Brandwatch" and conducted a search of gendered discourses and attitudes on public social media between 9 December 2021 and 8 February 2022. Next, we "collected" the resulting data and "prepared" it for analysis by refining the query. This was achieved by removing "catchall keywords" and adding additional keywords.

The final step was data analysis. We applied thematic analysis, which involves studying the emerging patterns in the data and exploring how units of meaning connect to form themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can highlight individuals' perspectives, ideas and experiences, and can be used to generate fresh insight into the social dynamics behind human behavior. Accordingly, we analyzed the collected data thematically to interpret the data and to gain insight into dominant themes and trends. The final step in our analysis process involved checking, refining and reviewing each theme and naming these categories to link to the specific data.

Sharing the results. When presenting thematic analysis results, researchers ostensibly share direct quotes from their interactions with participants to ensure there is a close connection between what the participant meant and the interpretation. In our study, we focused exclusively on content that is publicly available. Nonetheless, we are aware that the boundaries between public and private are dynamic and often blurred in the social media space (Markham, 2018). For example, although social media users may consent to sharing their content publicly and with "third parties" at the point of sign up (Samuel, & Buchanan, 2020; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017), they may not agree to their words and personal identities being subject to academic scrutiny and publication. Therefore, to ensure our research is ethically responsible and that we protect the privacy of social media users, we do not include any traceable quotes from social media (Williams et al., 2017).

Findings

Our query on Brandwatch resulted in three dominant themes, which we present below through graphical representations and narrative summaries. The Word Clouds we use offer visual representations of the most prevalent words within the specified date range, while the narrative analyses provide a thematic overview of the conversations taking place on public social media.

Theme 1: Lobola in Contemporary South Africa

Background. "Lobola" is the isiZulu word for a longstanding bride wealth tradition used to form marriages and unite families in many Southern African communities (Malesa & Sekudu, 2021; Yarbrough, 2018). Historically, lobola involved the exchange of cattle, principally from the head of the groom's family to the head of the bride's family. Socio-economic changes introduced by capitalism and apartheid have altered this cultural practice over time (Hunter, 2010). For example, families have become more dependent on wage labor and less focused on agricultural capacity and cattle (Carton, 2000; Hunter, 2010). Therefore, contemporary lobola practices ostensibly involve a cash payment or a combination of cash and cattle. Grooms increasingly assume responsibility for this payment, which usually amounts to several thousand dollars (Hunter, 2010).

Lobola emerged as a dominant theme in our analysis of public social media. Our Brandwatch search resulted in a total of 47,876 mentions over our specified time period. Below, we present these results in graphical format and outline six interrelated subthemes which relate to the topic of lobola.

Thematic analysis

Subtheme 1: We don't want flowers. We want lobola. Many female social media users expressed positive sentiments towards lobola and spoke about this customary practice with a sense of warmth and pride. A number of male users shared personal stories and explained that marriage, for them, was a space for love and for children. There were also female social media users who stated that they prefer men to pursue marriage negotiations with their parents rather than offering gifts of clothes, money or flowers. These individuals advocated for the continuation of this practice, stating that this tradition serves to foster stronger connections between families and is indicative of the man's financial readiness for a family.

Subtheme 2: Why should we pay lobola? In some conversations, we found media users who were more critical of the practice. These users pointed to the financial issues that have arisen as a consequence of the monetisation of this tradition in the context of a struggling economy. These discussions revolved around the intense difficulties young men face nowadays and the mounting pressure they feel from their families to get married and pay their own lobola. A number of contributors spoke about

how young men are faced with the stress of paying back loans, supporting extended families and paying to support their children.

Subtheme 3: Let's "vat and sit." Social media users discussed how lobola could be negotiated differently to make it easier for young couples. For example, partners could choose to have a long-term committed relationship without being married. This practice is referred to in colloquial terms as "vat and sit," which means to take a partner ("vat" means "take" in Afrikaans) and settle down together (literally "sit"). Some suggested that couples could save and pay for lobola together or could consider marrying at a later stage, when a man is more financially stable. Yet others warned against the consequences of not paying lobola or of a bride helping her husband to pay these costs. These consequences included the potential danger of upsetting the ancestors and inciting their wrath.

Subtheme 4: Playing gender roles. A number of social media users questioned the place of lobola in relation to gender equity. For example, while some male contributors questioned how families could demand lobola for a girl who isn't able to cook or clean, certain female social media users objected to being viewed as a man's property. There were also contributors who objected to the societal pressure on men to bear the financial burden of relationships and to pay lobola in a context where men also contribute to domestic duties and many women earn salaries.

Subtheme 5: Do you want a divorced daughter or a dead daughter? A selection of conversations revolved around the relationship between lobola and intimate partner violence. Individuals discussed whether lobola can be repaid if a husband is abusive. Many users advocated that it is better for parents to repay lobola and support a divorce, than to allow her to suffer abuse at the hands of her husband. For this reason, a number of female discussants noted that accepting a high value lobola is dangerous. It is safer for parents to accept a lower amount which can be repaid more easily if a husband "starts acting up."

Subtheme 6: Why pay for community meat? Many of the online discussions around lobola highlighted the intersection between gendered discourse and sexual intercourse. For example, one male social media user expressed reluctance to pay lobola for brides who were not virgins. They questioned why they were expected to pay for a girl who has been used "for free" like "community meat?" Others drew comparisons between lobola

and exchanging money for sex, arguing that women need to understand that sex will always be attached to money. It makes little difference whether one calls it "*mavuso"* or *"lobola." Mavuso* is a colloquial term used to refer to the money a man pays a woman after spending the night together.

Theme 2: Girlfriend allowance

Background: Girlfriend allowance refers to a regular sum of money paid by a man to his girlfriend to ensure the continuation of their relationship. There were a total of 2,550 mentions of this term over our search period. Below we present these results in graphical and narrative format.

Thematic analysis

Subtheme 7: If I don't pay, she will look elsewhere. In many tweets, men expressed how they did not feel secure in their relationships and felt pressured to pay continuously to secure the affection of their girlfriend. If payment is forfeited, a girl will choose another man. This sentiment was echoed in numerous tweets made by female social media users who viewed girlfriend allowance as mandatory and would not tolerate late payments or inconsistency.

Subtheme 8: Men provide and women nurture. In many conversations, male and female contributors referred to gender roles to substantiate why girlfriend allowance prevails and to explain why a man without a stable source of income is innately less attractive to women.

Subtheme 9: Money for sex. While some tweeters appeared to accept this financial practice as normal, others were more critical and compared girlfriend allowance to a form of 'prostitution,' as the exchange of money for sex. However, others argued against this direct association and viewed girlfriend allowance as a form of caring for your partner and helping her to honor her commitments and duties.

Subtheme 10: If I pay, I can cheat. Some male social media users felt that 'money can buy anything' and that monogamy could not be expected of them if they were up to date with their financial contributions.

Subtheme 11: Women must stand for themselves. The theme of girlfriend allowance led to discussions regarding gender equality in relationships. Some social media users felt that equality is the priority and questioned how women can still expect this monthly stipend when we are trying to dismantle patriarchal gender norms. In addition, we found many male social media users questioning the validity of this practice, particularly when both partners in a relationship are earning. This sentiment was echoed in many tweets made by women, who argued that men also have their own needs, responsibilities and goals and should not have to continuously pay for their girlfriends to buy new clothes and do their hair. "What about 'boyfriend allowance?", these men and women questioned.

Subtheme 12: I can't afford girlfriend allowance. In conversations around girlfriend allowance, numerous individuals made reference to the very high unemployment rates and argued that it is often difficult for men to provide financially. These conditions place stress on relationships, particularly for unemployed men, who feel they can no longer afford to date girls.

Theme 3: ATM (Automated Teller Machine) Dad

Background. ATM Dad refers to fathers who provide financially for their children without being physically or emotionally present in their children's lives. Conversations on public social media explored both sentiments towards men who are providing financially for their children and the need for men to be more involved in their children's lives. There were a total number of 1,021 mentions over our search period. Below, we present these results in graphical and narrative format.

Thematic analysis

*Subtheme 13: I'm Grateful: **Cash is king!*** A selection of social media users revealed certain positive sentiments towards ATM Dads. For example, in some tweets, female social media users shared their gratitude towards fathers who provide financially without any constraints or "baby daddy issues." In this respect, an ATM Dad was seen to be preferable to a father who is present, but not able or willing to share the cost of raising a child. There were also individuals who cited their experience of growing up with an ATM Dad, and believed that their child would also be fine.

Subtheme 14: The value of a father who is present. There were many discussions which revolved around the value of a man's physical and emotional presence in a child's life. For example, a number of users argued that it is a question of priorities and stated that even a father without money can make a positive contribution. It is ideal to have "both parents on deck" and children may later resent the absence of their fathers. Nonetheless, while physical and emotional presence were seen to be important, a

number of female contributors argued that financial support is still key because a child cannot "eat" their father's presence.

Subtheme 15: Blaming the mother. Online conversations around this theme also included tweets in which mothers were blamed for the absence of fathers. Some individuals accused mothers of "using" the ATM Dad. Others spoke out against blame, saying that even mothers who raise their children alone, without any support, often face labelling and blame from their communities.

Subtheme 16: I want to see my child! Many male social media users spoke about the question of child access. These individuals often blamed this lack of access on their troubled relationship with the child's mother, who was seen to deliberately block paternal access. These difficulties were particularly pertinent for unemployed fathers, who felt alienated from their children due to their financial circumstances. In response to these tweets, other male users emphasized that a child *'needs'* their father and encouraged men to "go back and fight" for access to what is biologically theirs, urging fathers not to be "pushed away" by bitter and resentful ex-partners.

Discussion

Our social media analysis of gendered discourses in public social media resulted in three overlapping themes and sixteen related subthemes. Below, we unpack these results and discuss how they relate to common threads in writings about GBV in South Africa and beyond.

The discussions presented in the first subtheme (We don't want flowers. We want lobola) are indicative of a wider cultural framework which legitimises lobola as a central marriage tradition in the post-apartheid context (Hunter, 2010). In these online texts, lobola is seen to unite families, to imbue a sense of dignity and to facilitate commitment in relationships. Rather than criticizing the toll of lengthy lobola negotiations, proponents often praise this "waiting period" as a "test of intended husbands' emotional commitment and financial discipline" (Yarbrough, 2018). This uncritical support has allowed this practice to persist despite the significant societal shifts.

The economic impact of lobola is evident in the conversations around the second subtheme (Why should we pay lobola?), where men highlight the financial difficulties they face in a climate of widespread inequality, free-market capitalism and high unemployment rates. These conversations reflect the impact of the changing nature of lobola discussed above (Carton 2000; Hunter 2010), and link to other studies on lobola, which

reveal a causal link between the current economic challenges men face and the declining rate of marriage in South Africa (Posel, Rudwick, Casale 2011; Yarbrough, 2018). For example, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where lobola receives wide support, marriage rates are remarkably low (Posel & Casale, 2013). This evidence had led scholars to argue that this central pillar of marriage is now "its greatest obstacle" (Yarbrough, 2018, p. 649).

Subtheme three (Let's "vat and sit") highlights how many young couples are seeking new ways of being together, such as cohabitation out of wedlock, or saving together to pay lobola. These trends of pooling finances to pay for bride wealth are evident in studies conducted in neighboring countries, including Botswana (van Dijk, 2017). While couples can encounter certain criticism when attempting to circumvent lobola, in some cases, these joint financial efforts increase the wife's status and her negotiating power in the marriage (Guvuriro & Booysen, 2019). These findings relate to an argument made by Yarbrough that "dyadic narratives of marriage increasingly circulate alongside "traditional" extended-family narratives, especially among the young women who strongly support lobola while yearning for gender-egalitarian marriages" (2018, 647).

This emphasis on gender equality is important when one considers the social media conversations highlighted in Subtheme five (Do you want a divorced daughter or a dead daughter?), which link lobola to intimate partner violence. This association is evident in wider studies, where female participants suggested that lobola could legitimize abuse by husbands (Rudwick & Posel 2014). Moreover, a qualitative study conducted by Malesa and Sekudu found that lobola can lead to a husband's violation of his wife's sexual and reproductive health rights, including sexual coercion, and the prevention of contraception (2021). Nonetheless, these authors view this as a misinterpretation of lobola, since this tradition does not make a husband the owner of his wife's body. Rather, this custom legitimizes a husband and his extended family's ownership of the children born from this relationship (2021). Malesa and Sekudu further argue that in the past, lobola could prevent violence by encouraging families to gather together to solve problems like domestic abuse (2021). Nonetheless, the social media conversations in Subtheme five remind us that financial issues, such as the obligation to repay lobola if a wife returns to her family, can limit a woman's agency to remove herself and her children from abusive relationships.

Many of the online discussions around lobola highlighted the intersection between gender norms and sex, including the cultural valuation of female virginity (see Subtheme six). Moreover, some individuals stated

that women need to accept that sex will always be attached to money. This sentiment connects to the predominance of transactional relationships in South Africa (Stoebenau, Heise, Wamoyi,& Bobrova, 2016). In addition to relationships based on girlfriend allowance, there are "blessers" – rich men, who "bless" their women with gifts in exchange for sex and companionship – and "sugar daddies" – older, wealthy men, who exchange sexual relations with younger women and girls for material goods/cash (Duby et al., 2021). It is also important to highlight that the majority of young adults engaging in these practices learn about these trends from social media and also use these digital platforms to find new partners (Moodley & Ebrahim, 2019). While the first two categories are widely written about, very little formal literature exists around the allowances that many girls and young women currently demand from their peer partners.

These three forms of transactional relationships connect to an overarching concept of "provider love," which is grounded in the gender discourse of the male provider. The work of Mark Hunter, a social geographer, has shown that many African women today view monetary assistance as a form of love (2010). Although these extra-marital sexual partnerships are premised on material exchange, they are distinct from formal sex work, since they occur within the context of relationships and often also include an emphasis on companionship and emotional exchange. The male perspectives offered in our social media study are important, since many investigations into provider love are drawn from research with women and girls, and do not reflect male perspectives "around gift giving, the expectations or obligations they might feel as "providers" or their opinions on transactional sexual encounters" (Duby et al., 2021). This is one of the areas where this study can make an important contribution to understanding obstacles to peace in the context of personal relationships in South Africa.

As is evident in the results above, girlfriend allowance has sparked many debates on social media ever since the term was invented. While this practice may be regarded by some as a demonstration of love or care, it is also linked to a desire to move from a lower to higher economic status, a trend which is also known as "upward mobility," (Ranganathan et al., 2018). For example, research conducted in South Africa revealed that girls and young women who engage in transactional sex "have higher odds of consuming items for entertainment that might also lead to risky sexual behaviours and HIV acquisition" (Ranganathan et al., 2018). This is concerning, since our results suggest that men who are up to date with their allowance payments feel no obligation to promise monogamy.

Thus, while girls may exercise agency at the early stages of choosing a man, once the allowance is paid, their agency diminishes (Ranganathan et al., 2018). Therefore, this practice can be seen to perpetuate a particular gendered discourse which reproduces unequal power structures and gender role expectations [Hoss & Blokland, 2018). It also indicates how men can harness "provider love" to attract and control female partners, and to hold the reins in sexual decision making (Stoebenau et al., 2016). This has serious consequences for young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, including their susceptibility to HIV infection and ability to walk away from abusive relationships (Duby et al., 2021).

Our results suggest that girlfriend allowance has become widespread and that men who are unable to afford these 'gifts' may find themselves without a partner. This causes feelings of frustration and failure, which can contribute to misogyny and violence. These sentiments are salient in social media discussions around our third theme: ATM fatherhood. Notions of fatherhood in South Africa have always differed from nuclear family norms due to traditions of extended family living structures and the enduring legacy of the colonial migrant labor system. However, the number of Black children living without their biological fathers is rising (Makusha & Richter, 2012), and the State of South African Fathers (SOSAF) recently reported that almost 70% of Black South African children currently reside in homes without their biological fathers (2021). This report details the crisis of absent fathers in the country, defining 'father absence' as "fathers (whether biological or social fathers) who are physically **and** economically **and** psychosocially absent from their children" (Van den Berg, Makusha, & Ratele, 2021, p. 5).

This trend of absent fathers corresponds with the high number of single mothers in South Africa, which is close to 40 percent, the highest rate in the world (Human Science Research Committee (HSRC), and South African Race Relations Institute 2018). This trend intersects with the declining marriage rates cited above, and the predominance of dysfunctional and conflict-ridden relationships. Moreover, conversations with men cited in the recently published State of South African Fathers (SOSFA) Report, and the discussions about blame highlighted in Subtheme fifteen, suggests that some fathers do not have sufficient contact with their children due to a lack of effective conflict management and resolution mechanisms with partners and ex-partners (Van den Berg et al., 2021).

Research shows that single mothers in South Africa are at greater risk than men of losing their income and that over half struggle to meet household expenses (HSRC, 2021). All fathers who are financially able to

pay maintenance are legally obliged to do so, "but in South Africa there have been challenges in implementing this law and holding fathers accountable" (Duncan, 2011). In this context, one can understand the emphasis on cash payments from fathers highlighted in the social media discussions cited above. However, financial restraints can limit a father's access to his child, particularly when a maternal family insists on the payment of cultural penalties. These penalties often include *lobola* and the payment of "damages" (known as *inhlawulo*, in isiZulu), which applies when a man has disrespected the family by impregnating his girlfriend out-of-wedlock (Van den Berg et al., 2021). While some have found the custom of *inhlawulo* may strengthen bonds between families and improve paternal- child connection and care, marginalised men often cite unpaid, or incomplete *lobola*; and unpaid or incomplete *inhlawulo* as reasons for not having access to their children (Van den Berg et al., 2021).

Men who fail to acknowledge paternity and to pay the required penalties are often dismissed as irresponsible and useless (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012). This assumption of failure connects to prevailing gender norms, including the traditional role of the male provider highlighted in the social media conversations cited above. This social norm effectively curtails the development of alternative gender roles for women and men alike (Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) & Sonke Gender Justice, 2013), leads to anger and frustration and has been identified as one of the key structural drivers of gendered socio–economic power disparities in the region (Sikweyiya, 2016; Van den Berg et al., 2021).

The SOSFA report indicates that men who are unable to conform to successful provider expectations, often retreat from their children's lives, limiting their emotional connection and engagement (Van den Berg et al., 2021).While it is better for a child not to live in the same household as a violent father, the widespread trend of absent fathers in South Africa has significant "consequences for families and for society as a whole" (CSDA & Sonke, 2013, p. 3). For example, fathers who are more involved in their children's lives are more likely "to find and maintain employment, and make more significant sacrifices in their lives to ensure they are able to contribute financially" (CSDA & Sonke, 2013, p. 24). In addition, children who grow up with an absent biological father are known to display more behavioral problems and to experience more life trauma and distress compared to children who grow up residing with both parents (Sikweyiya, 2016; Van den Berg et al., 2021). Growing up with an absent father is also a risk factor for GBV perpetration by boys/men and increases a girl's likelihood of experiences   dissatisfying and violent sexual relationships

(Sikweyiya, 2016). Therefore, to break the intergenerational cycle of GBV, we need to transgress patriarchal and capitalist constructions of masculinity and embrace other forms of father love and father care (Van den Berg et al., 2021).

Conclusion

It is imperative that all citizens realize their basic human right to live in a safe society, without fear of violence and crime. Targeted responses are needed to intercept the cycle of intergenerational violence by dismantling harmful gendered discourse and practices through open dialogue. Given the pervasive nature of GBV in South Africa, these interventions need to work on a mass scale.

GBV thrives in silence, and social media can play a major role in exposing the gravity of GBV and unpacking the attitudes, circumstances and practices that drive it. Moreover, in these stressful and uncertain times of Covid-19, where human interactions are limited due to health concerns and economic restrictions, it is vital that interventions reach people in their everyday spaces and in their homes. This is where mass media and social media interventions can play an important role.

Our in-depth analysis of gendered discourses in public social media over two months offered critical insight into the workings of misogyny in South Africa in real time. Our preliminary results suggest that an overemphasis on the male provider role curtails the development of alternative gender roles for women and men alike. This has serious consequences for gender equality and the emancipation from violence in South Africa.

The work we present is limited by the brief period of research. However, over the coming months, we will continue to conduct social media research and will feed these findings into the engagement phase of our project. In this phase, we will identify men who stand against GBV, recruit them as allies, train them in online dialogue facilitation and support them to create safe spaces where men can come together to share their experiences and to develop solutions to the critical issue of GBV in South Africa.

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