

**REPLICATING THE UN
MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY
ON MEN AND VIOLENCE:
UNDERSTANDING WHY
SOME MEN USE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND HOW
WE CAN PREVENT IT**

**Gender Politics of
Policy Research
Protocol**

**PARTNERS FOR PREVENTION: A UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN AND UNV REGIONAL JOINT PROGRAMME FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
PREVENTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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This study protocol is designed to be used in conjunction with:

- *Toolkit for Replicating the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence: A Step-by-Step Guide*
- Quantitative Research Protocol
- Qualitative Research Protocol
- Ethical and Safety Guidelines for Research on Gender-Based Violence
- report templates

Gender Politics of Policy Research

Purpose of the protocol

This Gender Politics of Policy Protocol is a guide to conducting research on institutional and structural factors associated with violence against women. Such research aims to deepen our understanding of the structural conditions that fuel violence against women and the changes that are needed to enact public policy to address those conditions.

The gender politics of policy research component of the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific was conducted at the national level in Cambodia, India and Indonesia, and regionally. The UN multi-country study's Gender Politics of Policy Research Protocol outlines the background, objectives and structure of the original research and explains options for replicating this methodology in any setting. The protocol should be used in conjunction with the gender politics of policy research tools and the Step-by-Step Guide, part of the overall *Toolkit for Replicating the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence*. These will help you to develop a national research protocol.

Gender politics of policy research background

As described in the guide, the gender politics of policy research is one component of the overall UN multi-country study methodology.¹ The gender politics of policy research can be conducted on its own or with the other components for a more comprehensive picture of the social structures and the underlying norms, attitudes and behaviours related to men's use of violence against women.

The framework for the gender politics of policy research component was developed in consultation with a range of actors and experts in the field during a regional research meeting in Bangkok (6–9 July 2010).

As discussed in the conceptual framework document, there is now a substantial body of work on various aspects of men's gender identities and practices, and there is a growing focus on how the patriarchal system as well as the power and privileges of individual men work to the detriment of women—but also, in certain specific instances, to the detriment of some men.

The ways in which violence supports patriarchy—those structures and institutions created to sustain and recreate men's dominance and power over women—have long

¹ In addition to the gender politics of policy research, the quantitative research component was conducted in six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka), and the qualitative research component was conducted in five countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia (Aceh), Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam).

been documented by feminist scholarship and activism. More recently, research studies and programme interventions have sought to better understand and address the connections between masculinities and the nature and impacts of violence that supports patriarchy. This work has variously drawn on tools and literature from psychology and sociology to conceptualize the masculinity of violence, with the intention of developing strategies for working with men and women to prevent violence against women.

In recognizing that there is not a singular masculinity but rather multiple forms of masculine expression and practices² that can and do change over time, the masculinities work with men has expanded to also look at how men can choose non-violent, gender-equitable ways to be a man. By doing so, men are thus challenging the hegemonic practices of masculinity. To support men in challenging hegemonic masculinity, much of the focus of the masculinities work with men has been on the internal and interpersonal dimensions of men's experience of the gender order. Through education campaigns and intensive group discussions, this work has sought to address men's individual internalization of gender norms and how this plays out in their attitudes and violent behaviours. It is these attitudes and behaviours that constitute the primary focus of the quantitative and qualitative components of the UN multi-country study methodology.

At the same time as examining the internal and interpersonal dimensions of men's experience of the gender order, it is also important to consider the institutional and ideological dimensions of its workings. To prevent violence against women, it is essential to understand the ways in which gendered violence is reproduced by the policies and cultures of political, economic and social institutions and legitimized by ideologies that sanction hierarchies, based not only on gender but other axes of inequality, including sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, caste, religion/faith and age.³ This institutional and ideological focus serves to emphasize that violence is not simply the behaviour of individuals but is structured by and within unequal social relations as a tool of oppression. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore not only individual men's experiences and perpetration of violence but also the broader environment of policies, institutional cultures and ideologies that enable violence to occur.

For example, it could be useful to explore men's roles within the context of policy and policy-making. As the policy makers and power holders in societies across the region, elite men are a critical constituency for driving policy changes. As the managers and staff of political, economic and social institutions, men can assume an essential role in ensuring that progressive policies are enforced. As gendered beings, men can also benefit from changes in the gender order, alongside women, because violence harms some men at the same time as it oppresses women. Many men experience oppression on the basis of class exploitation, racism, homophobia and caste and/or faith-based discrimination, thus they share a common interest with women in demanding policies for greater social justice, including gender justice.

² For more on how masculinities are conceptualized for this research, see the Step-by-Step guide.

³ For the operational definition of institutional violence, please refer to the Preferred Terminology guide.

Research to generate this greater understanding of the policies, institutional cultures and ideologies that create an environment in which violence against women occurs is the focus of this third component of the UN multi-country study methodology.

Gender politics of policy research objectives

Using ethnographic and sociological methodologies, research on the gender politics of policy aims to:

- deepen our understanding of the structural conditions that fuel violence against women and the changes that are needed in making and enacting of public policy to address these conditions;
- help identify strategies and opportunities for promoting gender equity within key institutions, policy-making processes, non-governmental policy actors and the social discourses within which public policy is framed;
- help specify the changes that are needed in men's gender practices and identities that will serve to promote gender equity within public policy towards the goal of preventing violence against women.

Gender politics of policy research questions

The Gender Politics of Policy Research Protocol explores the following research questions:

1. How are men positioned as a constituency for gender change within public policy and discourse? How could they be better positioned?
2. In what ways do the gender regimes of key institutions and specifically the practice and representation of masculinities that in part comprise these regimes, reproduce or challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?
3. What does this suggest about the ways to change these key institutions so that public policy can more effectively challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?
4. In what ways are policy-making processes gendered and how can policy-making processes and public policy more effectively challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?
5. In what ways do non-governmental actors involved in social justice struggles over public policy serve to either reproduce or challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?
6. How can the work to engage boys and men, alongside girls and women, for violence prevention connect more closely with non-governmental actors so that public policy can more effectively challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?
7. What opportunities and strategies exist to shape a social discourse on men, gender and violence and create an environment for public policy that can more effectively challenge the structural conditions that fuel violence against women?

Research methodologies

There are multiple methodologies that can be used to conduct gender politics of policy research in your setting. The following outlines some of the approaches and research questions that were implemented as part of the UN multi-country study's gender politics of policy research.

Policy scans

The research methodology most commonly used to look at public policy in relation to men, violence against women and gender equity is a desk-based scan of existing legislation and policy, coupled with a desk-based and, more rarely, a field-based review of policy implementation. Such policy scans provide an invaluable 'snapshot' of the policy situation and a baseline against which to assess progress in changing policy.

Such scans also provide a useful means of identifying the discourses and paradigms that are shaping policy thinking. Selective use of policy scans, especially in contexts in which basic information on policies affecting men, violence against women and gender equity has not been collated can be a useful first method to employ. It is suggested in this research methodology that desk reviews be supplemented with interviews with critical policy actors to make an initial assessment of how law and policy are translated into action, with the ultimate purpose of determining the levels of and barriers to implementation. Policy scans undertaken as part of the gender politics of policy research should not be confined to policies on violence and gender equity per se but should seek to review the range of public policies that impact on gender equality and violence.

Ethnographies of institutional gender regimes

Insights are also needed on the institutions and processes by which policies are developed and the implications of the gendering of the institutions and processes for different policy outcomes. Only on the basis of such insights can initiatives be designed that will shape institutions and processes in ways that produce more effective public policy responses to violence against women.

Feminist scholarship has long been interested in the gender 'workings' of public policy institutions and their implications for public policy responses to the problems of gender inequity. As Bedford notes (2007, p. 290):

"Contributing to this scholarship, development specialists have examined how best to promote feminist agendas within non-feminist organizations, and in so doing they have highlighted similar themes regarding the persistence of bureaucratic hostility to gender interventions, and the dangers of co-optation (e.g. Goetz, 1997; Miller and Razavi, 1998; Jacquette and Summerfield, 2006)."

Recent research efforts have drawn on "theoretical developments in the sociological study of gender arrangements in large organizations" (Schofield, 2005, p. 1) and focused their analysis on the "gender regimes" of specific institutions or sets of institutions. This

approach is interested in the influence of ideas about and practices of gender on the formal and informal functioning of specific organizations and institutions more generally (Connell, 2002).

Specifically, this research method can examine the practice and representation of masculinities within such regimes and their impact on the understandings of and responses to violence against women. Such studies include semi-structured and open-ended interviews with a range of institutional actors and decision makers and with service users and related parties. Where possible, participant observation of critical events and moments in the gendered 'life' of the institution are also used. Preliminary findings and interpretive frameworks can be shared and discussed with a liaison group that comprises institutional actors so that the research process becomes a tool of reflection and discussion within institutions. Through ongoing consultation and feedback loops, this reflection and discussion can refine the research process.

Although not conducted as part of the original UN Multi-country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific, the following topics could be included in the study of institutional gender regimes:

- Studies of police and law enforcement agencies, especially in relation to their roles in the enforcement of laws and policies on violence against women.
- Studies of prisons and detention centres and, specifically, the impact of institutional gender regimes on the nature and extent of, as well as responses to, sexual and gender-based violence on the 'inside'.
- Studies of multilateral and bilateral institutions and the donor community, especially in relation to the evolution of the 'men and masculinities' discourse within gender and development policy-making and programming and its impacts on gender and development priorities and funding.
- Studies of the workplace and, specifically, the construction of femininities and masculinities in relation to gendered divisions of labour.
- Studies of the health sector and its responses to violence against women.
- Studies of the education sector, especially in terms of the school and college as settings in which femininities and masculinities are constructed and the kinds of violence thus produced.
- Studies of organized religion and the trends and dynamics of the gender politics within such institutions and its implications for societal understandings of and responses to violence against women.
- Studies of the media industry and, specifically, the production and circulation of femininities and masculinities within and by media organizations and their impact on societal understandings of and responses to violence against women.

Policy life histories

The gender politics of policy research could include studies examining the gendered dynamics and pressures shaping the development of public policy on gender equity and violence against women. For example, the UN multi-country study's methodology included an examination of the Right to Respect whole-of-government violence prevention policy developed in Victoria, Australia (Dyson, 2012).

This method can involve a study of the range of institutions and forces at play in shaping the course of a particular policy, from initial conceptualization and deliberation to implementation. As with the study of institutional gender regimes, research on policy life histories includes semi-structured and open-ended interviews with a range of institutional actors and decision makers as well as users and related parties. Emphasis should be placed on tracking key events, critical moments and turning points in the 'life' of a policy and the gender politics of the forces and factors at play.

Policy life histories could include the following topics:

- Studies of policies on domestic and sexual violence, sex trafficking and sex work as well as on gun violence and small arms control.
- Studies of the relationship among justice systems and their implications for understanding of and responses to violence against women, such as the emergence of Sharia law in relation to customary and Western legal systems and jurisprudence.
- Studies of women's empowerment strategies within poverty-reduction policy analysis and practice and, specifically, the construction of femininities and masculinities within such strategies in relation to the depictions of and responses to violence against women.
- Studies of emerging policy thinking and practice on fatherhood, the construction of femininities and masculinities therein and implications for the ways in which problems of families and violence are framed and linked.
- Studies of regulations on the portrayals of violence and masculinity within the media, the ways in which such regulations produce and circulate representations of femininities and masculinities and the impact of these representations on the understanding of and responses to violence against women.

Gender politics of social movements analysis

The gender politics of policy research can investigate the gender politics of non-governmental actors engaged in specific social justice struggles over public policy. By developing sociological studies of the masculinities of social justice organizations and movements, this type of research seeks to highlight the ways that working with men on gender equity can engage more closely with non-governmental actors involved in social justice struggles.

Studying the gender politics of social movements should include individual and group interviews with actors, leaders and decision makers, using semi-structured and open-ended interview protocols. Data from these interviews, combined with a review of the organizational documentation of internal policies and procedures, as well as of programme activities and evaluations, are used to analyse the gender politics that characterize both the formal and informal ways of working. To acquire a better sense of the 'gender cultures' that inform the workings of social movements, participant observation should be used where possible to track critical events and key moments in specific campaigns undertaken by civil society groups engaged in social justice struggles.

The study of gender politics of social movements could include the following topics:

- Studies of civil society groups working to challenge state violence and, specifically, the extent to which these groups link their work on institutionalized violence against women with responses to personal violence against women and the visions of and approaches to justice that they advocate.
- Studies of human rights struggles, especially in terms of the practices and representations of femininities and masculinities within these struggles, and their implications for rights-based responses to violence against women.
- Studies of economic justice struggles and the extent to which such struggles are examining and addressing the changing political economy of gender and developing strategies to engage their 'membership base' in tackling violence against women and promoting greater gender equity within their communities.
- Studies of practices and representations of femininities and masculinities within groups working on women's empowerment and, specifically, on the gendered division of labour within the care economy and their implications for links with 'men and masculinities' work and engaging men in a more gender equitable division of labour.
- Studies of the links between groups working on 'men and masculinities' and groups working on rights for sexual or gender minorities, the extent to which their respective policy change agendas converge and diverge and the opportunities for closer collaboration in the shared struggle for gender and sexual justice.

Social discourse analysis

The gender politics of policy research also can draw on methods and protocols from media studies and social discourse analysis to examine the generation and circulation of social discourses on men, gender and violence. This will generate data with which to better understand the gendered ideological contexts within which public policy institutions and processes are operating. Studies of social discourse can examine the production, dissemination and consumption of gendered texts, narratives, symbols and representations of men and gender and violence across a range of institutional settings, including the media and corporate advertising as well as academic and religious institutions.

Social discourse analysis could include the following topics:

- Studies of the production and circulation of femininities and masculinities within nationalist ideologies and their associated militarism and the implications for understanding and responding to violence against women.
- Studies of the gendered ideology of the 'male breadwinner' within formal policy discourse and informal public opinion pieces, the pressure being placed on this ideology by the changing political economy of gender and the opportunities thereby created for promoting greater gender equity.
- Studies of the ways in which changing gender roles in the family are being represented in formal policy discourse and informal public opinion and the implications for understanding and responding to violence against women.

- Studies of discourses on the ‘crisis in masculinity’ as they circulate within formal policy discourse and informal public opinion, the ways in which such discourses link issues of men, gender and violence and the implications for developing more effective violence against women prevention work with men.

Implications for action

Better policies on men, gender and violence require a better understanding of the gender politics of policy-making. Research on the gender politics of policy will deepen our understanding of the changes that are needed in men’s gender practices and identities and thus help promote gender equity within the making of public policy and, ultimately, preventing violence against women. Such research seeks strategies and opportunities for reconfiguring men as a constituency for gender change and promoting gender equity within key institutions, policy-making processes, non-governmental policy actors and the social discourses within which public policy is framed.

In doing so, it can strengthen the capacity to develop more effective policies on men, gender and violence within:

- the State and, specifically, its gender machinery to develop and advance effective policies across a range of government departments in order to better engage men in work on gender equity and the prevention of violence against women;
- civil society organizations and social movements in order to better engage with policy-making processes through ‘insider’ advocacy and ‘outsider’ campaigning and thus develop and advance agendas on effective policies on men, gender and violence;
- the United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral institutions in order to articulate and support more effective policies on men, gender and violence and related programming interventions.

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