Partners for Prevention: Working to Prevent Violence against Women
UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women & UNV Regional Joint Programme for Asia and the Pacific

**Understanding gender, masculinities and
power to prevent gender-based violence**

Mapping Masculinities

*A Framework Analysis of Factors Associated
with Violence against Women in Cambodia*

Working Paper

Contents

Executive Summary

This report serves as a second round of analysis of qualitative data on masculinities and gender-based violence conducted by Gender and Development for Cambodia (GAD/C) in 2009 to further explore men and women's experiences of violence through a framework analysis of gender, violence and masculinities in the Cambodia context.

From 2008 to 2009, Gender and Development Cambodia (GAD/C), with support from Partners for Prevention and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), conducted qualitative field research on gender and violence in urban and rural Cambodia. The field research methodology included 12 focus-group discussions and 40 in-depth interviews with men and women in rural and urban settings, as well as four key informant interviews representing the civil society sector and the local and state political sectors.[1] A preliminary analysis of this research, *Deoum Troung Pram Hath in Modern Cambodia: A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Norms, Masculinity and Domestic Violence*, was released in December 2010 highlighting findings on Cambodian constructions of masculinity, attitudes toward violence against women and inter-related factors that augment the risk of violence.

Using the ecological model as a way to map the social context in which experiences of violence occur, the following analysis explores the Cambodia qualitative data through the four levels of the model: individual, household, community and social, to demonstrate what factors create an environment in which violence against women takes place in Cambodia. Furthermore, it unpacks the linkages that exist between these levels (cited as Ecological Model Links in the footnotes) to present a comprehensive picture, based on the data set, of the intersections and interactions of men and women's experiences of gender inequality, socially predominant notions of masculinities and violence in Cambodia.

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[1] *For more on the research methodology, see GAD/C 2010: 8-10*

Acknowledgements

## Background

Gender order in Cambodia

Gendered norms and behaviours in Cambodia are frequently attributed to notions of masculinity and femininity based on codes of conduct Chbab Proh (rules for men) and Chbap Srey (rules for women). These codes have been documented by a number of studies (GAD/C 2010; Lilja 2010; MoWA 2009; Hill and Ly 2004; Surtees 2003), although the relevance of these codes in modern Cambodia has been challenged in the context of developing a more nuanced understanding of gendered behaviours in Cambodian society (Wong 2010). According to these codes, women are expected to be silent, cooperative, and secondary to their husbands, obeying decisions made by him, caring for household affairs, and raising children. Gender imagery in Cambodia invokes silent, peaceful and obedient women. For men, social expectations include family management, decision-making, financial support and embodiment of characteristics such as bravery, strength and discipline. There are a number of commonly-cited Khmer phrases associated with masculinity. The ideal man (otherwise translated to strong man or real man) is characterized as *pram hadth*, literally translated to mean five-chested man.[2] An incomplete man is *pee hudt*, or two-chested man. Another phrase, frequently associated not only with masculinity but the relationships between men and women, is *doeuk mok*, translated to 'take the lead.' This phrase is frequently referenced in relation to men's role as decision-maker and head of family. In Cambodia, relational gender patterns are emphasized through the mutual reinforcement of these gender norms by men and women, for example when women reinforce expectations of malehood by shaming men who do not achieve social expected indicators of successful masculinity. However, individuals constantly negotiate these socially expected behaviours and the lived experiences of men and women in Cambodia fluctuate across a continuum of gendered behavioural patterns, challenging the strength of these rigidly prescribed expectations.

Objectives

The inherent complexity of gender relations, combined with the range of violent experiences and the dynamic nature of social relationships makes a comprehensive analysis of the linkages between gendered identities and violence, as well as the inter-linkages with other forms of social oppression, an ambitious project. Building off the foundation of the preliminary data analysis report, this second round of qualitative analysis will delve deeper into the experiences and relations of gender in urban and rural Cambodian settings, to unpack how individual and social understandings and constructs of gender affect incidences of violence against women.

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[2] *For further information on this phrase, see GAD/C 2010: 3.*

Using the integrated ecological framework developed by Lori Heise, the analysis attempts to map how gender relations at the individual, household, community and social levels reinforce widely-held, gender-inequitable beliefs, and subsequently foster an environment conducive to violence against women (Heise 1998). Based on the findings from this mapping analysis, the report makes policy and programmatic recommendations to transform the spectrum of gendered social interactions that perpetuate an environment conducive to violence against women, and promote a foundation of gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships to prevent women's experiences of violence.

Figure 1: Social and Ecological Model as an Integrated Framework for Gender and Violence
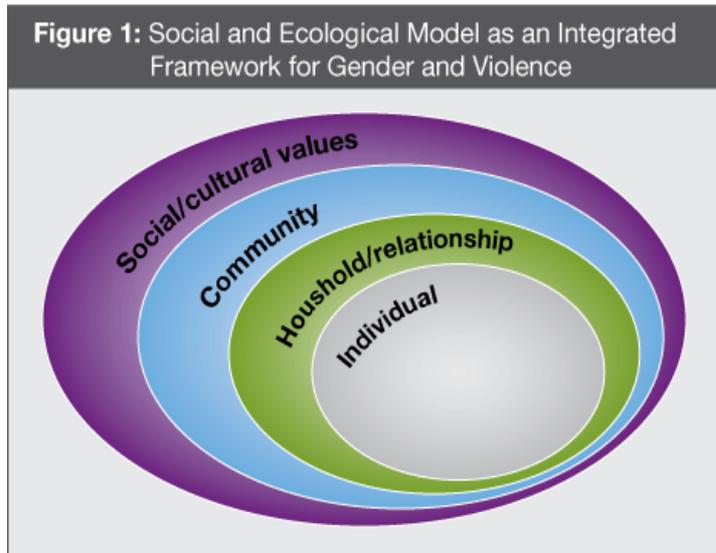
Methodology

Conceptualizing violence against women in Cambodia

Violence against women[3] is a widespread phenomenon in Cambodia, one which intersects with a number of other social issues including trafficking and prostitution, economic growth, the remnants of the Khmer Rouge legacy, educational and employment opportunities, and HIV/AIDS. At the core of prevalence rates of violence against women lies the widespread sanctioning of gender inequitable notions of masculinity and femininity. One survey notes that half of the respondents felt that violence against a wife was justified if she was behaving in a disrespectful or disobedient manner (MoWA 2009). Moreover, while a recent study report by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) from 2009 cites a drop in recorded prevalence of violence against women, other sources suggest the opposite: that prevalence rates are actually on the rise (Lilja 2010:15). What remains consistent, however, are the deeply entrenched notions of masculinity and femininity that are grounded in gender inequitable norms, and the qualitative research conducted by GADC suggests that there is still a wide-spread complacency toward this social issue. The MOWA report does record shifts in attitudes toward domestic violence, notably a rise of recognition of the illegality of violent acts against women, as well as a lower tolerance for violence in general (MoWA 2009: 14). Coupled with the findings from the qualitative research on spaces to engage with men and women on this issue, these shifts signals a strategic opportunity for primary prevention approaches that aim to transform the inequitable gender norms of women and men at the individual, household, community and social levels.

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[3] *This analysis will use the term violence against women to refer to physical, emotional, psychological and structural violence perpetrated exclusively against women by individuals, communities, and social structures. Much of the literature on women's experiences of violence Cambodia uses 'domestic violence' terminology, limiting the discussion to violence perpetrated within the home. While the data set from which this report is based confines itself predominantly to violence within the household (domestic violence), the theoretical framework used here (ecological model) requires a more explicit recognition of the multi-faceted nature of violence perpetuated against women.*

Conceptualizing masculinities

The following analysis maps the linkages between men's perceptions and lived experiences of masculinity in Cambodia in relation to women's experiences of violence. Masculinity can be defined as either identities or a pattern of practices associated with the positions of men in various gender systems. There is no one masculinity, rather, constructions of masculinity vary over time and across and within cultures, creating multiple masculinities. However, there is often a hierarchy of masculinities in which one (or more) pattern of masculinity is socially dominant and others are marginalized (IDS, 2007: 18). Hegemonic masculinity may not be the most common pattern in the everyday lives of boys and men, only a minority of men might enact it. But it is normative in the sense that it embodies the currently most honoured way of being a man, and requires other men to position themselves in relation to it (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Although Cambodian concepts of hegemonic masculinity, as detailed in the codes of conduct, promote a single format for masculine identity, this analysis identifies the existence of multiple interpretations and experiences of masculinities within the lives of the men interviewed for this research. Moreover, the existence of multiple masculinities means that there is a need to unpack the complexities of men's gendered identities in Cambodia, particularly with regards to how masculinities are negotiated over the course of a life.

The socio-ecological model framework

This second round of analysis of GAD/C qualitative data draws on the social and ecological model, an analytical framework used to conceptualize the multi-faceted etiology of violence against women and the inter-leveled linkages that exist between gender and violence across the various levels of social organization.[4] This framework allows for a theoretical approach to violence and gender that accommodates both feminist and broader social science insights to violence prevention.

The analytical utility of the social and ecological model lies in its exploratory approach to social organization, connecting the individual to different levels of their social environments and unpacking the relationships and linkages between individuals and contextual factors that contribute to violence against women, specifically gender, but also other social inequalities such as race, ethnicity or religion.

At the **individual** level of analysis, focus is on personal histories, such as witnessing violence as a child, being abused, or having an absent or discriminatory father, that have the potential to impact adult behaviour and attitudes toward intimate partner relationships.[5] The next level – **household and relationships** - explores the space in which violence takes place, navigating how people engage with each other, and interpreting the subjective meanings of these interactions. Within the household, factors such as family structure, male dominance within the household, marital discord or notions of family space as private are pivotal to understanding the context of gender, power and violence in an immediate space. At the **community** level, gender roles within the community, the predominance of male peer relationships and the influence and leadership of community leaders are factors that can potentially facilitate an environment of gender inequality which is conducive to experiences of violence. Finally, the **social** level reflects the overarching views and

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[4] *Written in 1998, this article does not incorporate notions such as technology and globalization that arguably are creating a new level of social organization that spreads certain values and practices related to gender. For more on a globalized level of Heise' model, see Fulu and Miedema, forthcoming.*

[5] *The model's emphasis on situational and individual factors do not excuse the actions of perpetrators, nor do they minimize the importance of macro level themes such as patriarchy and gender inequality that are directly linked to women's experiences of violence. These macro level themes that broadly define the social environment in which violence occurs are analyzed at the social level of the model and linkages are drawn to the individual factors that lead to violence.*

attitudes that dominate the society at large. The widely-understood rigidity of gender norms and roles, a cultural understanding of what types of violence are appropriate, and the level of acceptance of interpersonal violence all relate to how the individual, the household and the community are situated within the broader social framework of the region or country.

Despite the division of levels in the ecological model, it is necessary to acknowledge the inherent dynamism of the framework. The linkages and influences between levels are constantly in flux. Coupled with the cultural context in which the model is applied – an ecological mapping of gender and violence Cambodia would take into account different cultural and social norms than one in another cultural context– the constant overlap between levels is inevitable (Heise 1998: 276). Mapping the flexibility and dynamism associated with gender and violence provides valuable insight into how gender orders within a country perpetuate an environment conducive to violence against women, subsequently making it a worthwhile analytical endeavor. Moreover, the situational mapping of gender and violence in the Cambodian context, based on qualitative data can be used to identify risk factors and contextual factors that can inform programs and policies.

The conceptualization of gender used in this analysis incorporates the experiences of men and women, the socially-specific masculinities and femininities by which they are gendered, and the relations between them and among the various levels of the ecological model. Subsequently, this analysis recognizes the inherent relationships and hierarchies that are created and reinforced by the gender order of societies. It is worthwhile to note, that gender relations do not occur solely between men and women, but can also take place between and among men, such as the gender hierarchies of masculinities, as well as indirect gender relations that are mediated by the internet, television or radio. This nuanced approach to gender and the gender order allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how gender relations are enacted, and subsequently how they relate to experiences of violence.

Data analysis process

The process of data analysis included in-depth analysis of over twenty interviews with men (categorized into perpetrator and non-perpetrators by the GAD/C data collectors) in rural and urban Cambodia.[6] The interviews were coded, using the ecological model as a framework for the thematic codes. Linkages between the various thematic areas were identified and these linkages were mapped to men's experiences of perpetrating violence against their intimate partners.[7] The original data set also included interviews with women who had experienced violence. While these were not systematically coded as part of the thematic coding, they were reviewed during the initial literature review, and preliminary findings (as well as those developed by GAD/C in the 2010 report) were triangulated with the analysis of the men's interviews.

Mapping Gender-based Violence and Masculinities

The structure of this qualitative analysis is based on the ecological model framework, mapping trends related to gender and violence at the individual, household/relationship, community and social levels. The analysis

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[6] *For more on the methodological process of defining and identifying perpetrators versus non-perpetrators, see GAD/C 2010.*

also notates linkages between the levels, Ecological Model Linkages (EML), in an effort to emphasize the interconnected nature of the various levels of the ecological model. Those noted here are by no means a comprehensive overview of the linkages of gender and violence between levels, nor do they signify static, unchanging relationships that remain fixed over time.
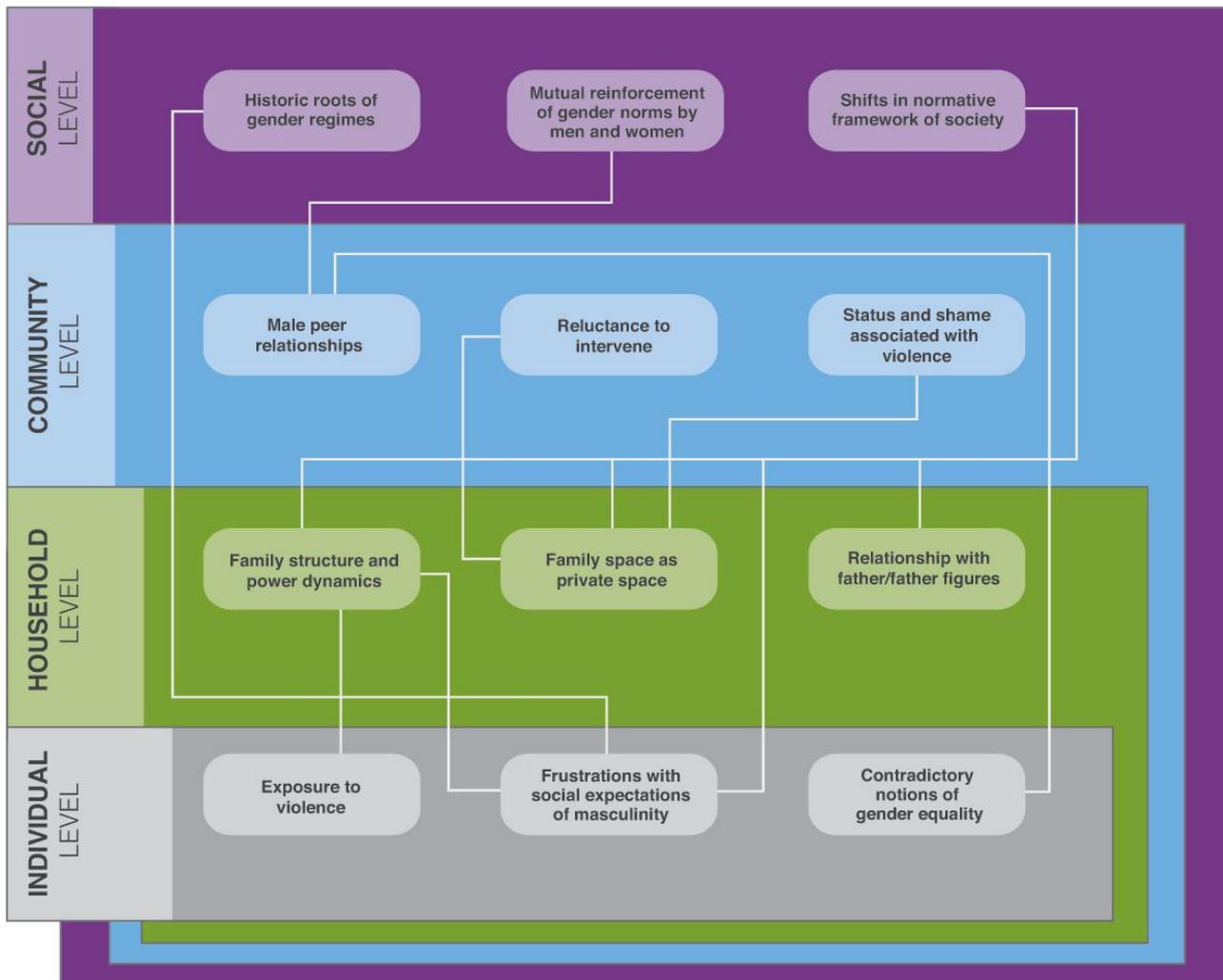
Linking factors related to experiences of violence through the ecological model

The following diagram demonstrates where the gendered experiences of Cambodian men who were a part of this research project fit into the four levels of the ecological model framework. This diagram illustrates how Ecological Mapping Linkages (EML) cross the various levels and become interlinked into a comprehensive snapshot of gender and violence in Cambodia.

Individual Level

This individual level of analysis looks at the experiences of men who were interviewed as part of the qualitative research project. However, in keeping with a gender relational approach to the data, where relevant, the experiences of women will be incorporated.

A number of themes emerged from the research, related to the individual level of the ecological model, focusing on personal histories and experiences that can impact future adult behaviour and relationships. Among the interviews and focus-group discussions, four themes were particularly dominant:

    (1) Exposure to and experiences of family violence;

    (2) Fathers who reinforce separate gender identities and roles of sons and daughters;

    (3) Personal experiences of frustration with social expectations of masculinity;

    (4) Contradictory notions of the meanings and importance of gender equality for Cambodian society, and for the women in their immediate purview.

Exposure to violence

Experiencing violence at the hands of the parent or witnessing violence between parents is widely prevalent in Cambodia. The National Action Plan to Prevent Violence on Women, using statistics from 2005, cites that 64% of people knew of a husband who perpetrated violence against his wife, and 22.5% of women responded as having experienced violence by their husbands (MoWA). A 2009 survey reported that 96% of respondents knew of men who abused their wives using non-physical violence (for example, yelling, shouting, belittling and other forms of emotional violence). Moreover, the majority of respondents of the qualitative data set reported experiencing or witnessing violence as a child. The various forms that violence takes within the household reflect the power dynamics within the family and household structure.[8] Exposure to violence during childhood is part of a learned response to violence that can manifest itself in experiences and perpetration of violence as an adult (Kwong et al. 2003; Whitfield 2003; Widom 1989; Murrell et al. 2007). Violent behaviour of a child's father against his or her mother signals the power relations within the marriage and within the family structure, and those power imbalances can subsequently be internalized by children as blueprints of future relationships. While the majority of respondents who experienced violence as children reacted negatively to their father's actions against his wife, they were also quick to link this violence to traditionally defined gender roles within the family. Commonly-cited explanations for violence included fathers who hit mothers because food was not prepared [women's role as housewife and family care-taker] or because mothers expressed anger at her husband due to his socialization outside of the house [male mobility in community].

> *"The last conflict that happened in my family was that [my father] was frustrated when he got home and didn't see his wife prepare [a] meal for him." – Perpetrator, married less than ten years, urban*

The association of violence with structured gender roles within the family, while not definitively predicting perpetration of violent behavior in the future, suggests that the gendered nature of power is internalized and carried into the next generation of relationships.

Frustrations with social expectations of masculinity

While the overarching codes of conduct lay out what constitutes a socially acceptable masculinity in Cambodia, men are both limited by and negotiate these gender norms on a daily basis. When asked about the social expectations of masculinity, respondents gave similar answers that reflected commonly-held beliefs of what it means to be a man in Cambodia. This included characteristics such as strength, bravery, ability to overcome challenges, and provide for their families. Yet, further exploration of men's attitudes toward gender roles reveals that a number of men are frustrated by these expectations of what it means to be a 'real man,' (*pram hadth*).

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[8] ***Ecological Mapping Link****: For more on violence within the family structure and the implications for power dynamics in family relationships, see Family/Relationship Level of mapping analysis.*

When asked if they believe men are able to meet these commonly-held expectations, many men responded negatively, noting that "[not] all men can meet these social expectations." The men also expressed a sense of frustration with the way others perceive men who fail to meet all expectations, suggesting that men who do not achieve these ideals are considered *ounn*, or cowardly and inferior, or else uneducated and 'un-knowledgable'. Moreover, respondents pointed out that even if a man feels like he cannot achieve all aspects of the ideal masculinity, "men cannot talk about these social expectations because they are afraid of being criticized and discriminated." Indeed, one man responded that those men who cannot achieve these social expectations are limited "because of lack of experiences, knowledge and lack of socialization outside the home, so that they cannot make decision confidently by themselves." Yet a number of respondents were quick to offer some gender equitable statements including the following:

> "I sometimes stay home. I don't work…. my wife is [the] income maker. As a result, I have to do the housework and cooking for my wife…"

The frustrations expressed by these men, underscored by the varying perspectives of masculinities among the respondents, were frequently associated – both negatively and positively – with women's empowerment and the movement towards women's equal rights. A number of the respondents made gender equitable statements on gendered behaviours of men and women, signaling an undercurrent of tension with the gender status quo and the discussions illustrated both a growing awareness of women's rights among men, as well as a recognizable shift away from the relevance of a rigid gender order. "Within the next five to six years women are equal to men because more people now have better knowledge and education." However, another respondent responded to the group's discussion with the comment that "daughters or women have more opportunities than men do. For example, women are especially encouraged to apply for jobs."[9] A deeper look at these notions of gender equality reveals the tensions within Cambodian society regarding the gender norms and roles of men and women.

Contradictory notions of gender equality

To transform an environment that is conducive to violence against women into one that promotes gender equality and healthy relationships requires extensive on-the-ground interactions at the individual level.[10] The data included a number of men who, through the course of the in-depth interviews, presented contradictory notions of gender equality. One man living in rural Cambodia grew up in an environment where brothers and sisters were treated equally, identifies his wife as an equal partner in decision-making and actively avoids violence and disrespectful behaviour towards her. Yet, he firmly believes that women cannot work outside of the home.

> "My siblings and I were sent to school together, and parents gave us equal chance to study…my stepfather encouraged me to be a real man by working hard and saving more money. No matter sons or daughters, he advised us the same way."

> "[If] I wanted to visit my friends I need to inform [my wife] first. If she allows me, I will go and if she did not allow me, I will not go. Some of my friends [say] I am afraid of my wife. [But] my friends will speak and talk about me in one sitting, but I live with my wife every day."

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[9] *Ecological Model Link: For more on shifts toward a more gender equitable understanding of men and women, see Social Level of mapping analysis.*
[10] *See evaluation of gender transformative programs that work with men and boys in World Health Organization (2007). Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions. Geneva.*

> *"To be a real man, I must work hard and do everything for my family. I would not be called a man if my wife worked to support the family."*

This respondent's example reveals how men hold varied notions of gender equality, and that individual's embody a complex array of perceptions and enactment of gender equitable practices and behaviours.

The following three levels – household/relationship, community and societal – illustrate further the linkages between individuals and their gendered identities and experiences with violence, with the broader context of social interaction and organization.

Household Level

The household level of the ecological framework addresses the spaces in which violence takes place, navigating an individual's engagement with other members of the household, and analyzing the nature of these various relationships to explore power hierarchies within the household structure. Exploration of the meanings attached to relationships within the household and the nature of power dynamics allows for an unpacking of the immediate environment where violence occurs that is critical to understand what factors play a role in the prevalence of violence against women, as well as what factors contribute to positive, transformational experiences of gender and how.

Family structure and power dynamics

"We consider family [to be] a social cell," says key informant interviewee, a ministry official, on the role of the family structure in Cambodian society. Indeed, the ecological model links the household or family structure both downward to the individual level (the individual who experiences violence in the household or relationship space), as well as upward along the ecological framework, serving as a mini-cosmos that reflects the broader social gender norms.

The Cambodian family structure is most frequently presided over by the man, who serves as the bread-winner and often the primary decision-maker, while his wife controls household finances and manages other home-based activities (MoWA 2009). The data reflects a level of gender parity in terms of decision-making within the house, as the role of women as financial managers gives them a certain level of agency within the household. However, the extent to which women's roles as financial managers is empowering is limited. In one interview, a man reports forcing his wife to give him money:

> *"When I ask her for money, and she said, "What for? I don't have", I would feel very irritated. But I would ask her again. If she says she does not have it, I would then say, "Let me borrow it." If the answer is still negative then I will get heated. For sure we will have a big problem today because of that. If she had chosen to give me what I asked for, there wouldn't be any problem. Now that she had refused to give me, I would use my men power to force her to give me all the money."*

The power that men have as a result of patriarchal hierarchies within the home signals how financial management of the household does not directly result in women's access to empowerment, but rather in some cases, can put women at further risk of violence.

Furthermore, the belief that men who allow their wives to work outside of their home are not real men was frequently reiterated among the interviews. In response to a focus-group discussion on what it meant to be a real man, one respondent replied:

> *"If his wife acts as an income maker, and a man just stays home doing the washing and get his wife's salary to spend outside – drinking, he is not considered as a real man, [he is] a useless man in the society…People say that this kind of man is very cheap, he always afraid of or overwhelmingly respects his wife."*

The combination of a hegemonic patriarchal structure of Cambodian society, coupled with pervasive notions of gendered divisions of labour, results in an environment whereby women, while in some cases having a degree of autonomy as financial managers, are limited to the household domain. Consequently, their access to and power in the community and social levels is limited. This has consequences for women's access to justice when they do experience violence. The strength of the man-as-breadwinner role in Cambodian society means that women-headed households, or women who have left their husbands, are often placed in a difficult position, both socially and economically. One respondent explains that, "although Westerners may favour divorce as a solution to domestic violence, Cambodian women do not want to divorce their husbands, because of social stigma, economic hardship and the impact on children." The economic structure of the household, where men are the primary breadwinners, coupled with the socially-sanctioned nuclear family structure, makes alternative household structures difficult to establish and maintain. However, a few of the men suggested that women could and should work outside of the home, and recognized that these shifting dynamics at the household level meant redefining masculinity for men. *"Women are household leaders – making incomes for their families, they can still live happy together."[11]*

Relationships with fathers/father figures

The personal history of individuals is also impacted by the relationships that they form with adults – most frequently parents – and examining these relationships can provide insight into adult behaviour and attitudes toward intimate partner relationships. Just as witnessing violence impacts a child's development and notions of appropriate use of violent behavior, so too can the relationship between father and son impact his notions of parenting and fatherhood.

One commonly-cited type of relationship between fathers and children, reflected in the data set, is that of stern patriarch who rejects nurturing relationships with his children. This model is frequently used to illustrate how young men, identifying their father's as masculine role models, inherit gender inequitable perspectives that subsequently impact their future relations with women and children.[12]

Speaking of his father, who perpetrated violence against his wife and children, one interviewee remembers that "even when he was in a good mood the…children still did not dare to say or explain something to him because we were afraid of him." The interviewee, a perpetrator of violence against his wife, associates notions of fatherhood with rejection and fear.

Yet, the data offers powerful examples of how father can play a transformative role by impacting his son's notions of women, gender relations and what it means to be a man. One father, who urged his son to attend classes, rather than skipping them, and pointed out his sons errors in conduct, is remembered by his grown son as offering good life lessons and advice on how to become a better person.

> *"Now I realized that what my father did just wanted me to be good, when I become fatherhood…what I like [about] my father the most was that he was a person who recognized what was right and what was wrong but he was gentle."*
> *- Non-perpetrator married less than 10 years urban*

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[11] *Ecological Model Link: for more on shifting gender roles at the Social Level of this mapping analysis*
[12] *For more on masculinities and fatherhood, see Morrell 2006.*

Moreover, beyond the direct relationships of fathers and sons, the gender dynamics of the family unit also shape an individual's future understandings of the general gender order of society. Many of the respondents cited a strong gender division between sons and daughters, reflecting notions of gender unequal patterns of education and labour of the broader society.[13]

> *"[My father] wanted me to work and earn the income so that I am capable enough to be a husband and a father when I have my own family. 'Be a man, be strong,' he said. And for my older and younger sisters, my father would like them to be a good housewife and look after the children. In my family, men are more valuable, because men are stronger. Any hard work is done by a son [which is] why my father gave me more opportunities ...than [his] daughters." – Perpetrator married less than 10 years urban*

> *"[My father] was very traditional. Regarding [his traditional beliefs], girls [were] not allowed to have an education...I think that it is because of his older habit and perspective adapting from his old generation. He also had sisters and they were not allowed to have [an] education and went away from home. Therefore, he would also traditionally practice as same as before when he had got such daughters."*
> *–Non-perpetrator married less than 10 years urban*

According to studies on fathering and masculinity, men are increasingly ranking marriage and fatherhood as their most important goals (Coltrane 2010). Moreover, there is global-level weakening of the good-provider model of masculinity, as the income necessary to provide for a middle class family increasingly necessitates a dual-family income (Coltrane 2010). The Cambodia research does illustrate the predominance of the breadwinner model as the social blueprint of financial and labour roles of men and women. However globalization, resulting changes in society and the economic needs of the Cambodian family unit are challenging this blueprint, signaling shifts in the gender order at the household and relationship level that are subsequently learned by children.

Family space as 'private space'

A commonly-cited barrier to challenging violence against women in the community is the notion that violence within the home is private and outside the purview of neighbours and the community (GAD/C 2010). Indeed, the idea of a family domain as private is pivotal to understanding the context of gender, power and violence in experiences of marital discord, and planning effective programmes and policies to end violence against women (Surtees 2003). The privacy and isolation of the home is compounded by women's reluctance to report violence to those outside of the immediate family unit. Many women respondents, identified during the preliminary review of the female qualitative interviews, noted that they rarely discussed their experiences of violence, and frequently cited shame as a primary reaction to their experiences. Indeed, a number of them said, during the course of the interviews, that this was their first time talking about violence that occurred in their households. Women reported that they were urged to not discuss family matters outside of the home. One man, after detailing a conflict between himself and his wife, expressed his reluctance to share information about private family matters.

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[13] ***Ecological Model Link****: For more on broad concepts of gendered division of labour, as well as increasing recognition of shifts away from traditional norms, toward more modern notions of gendered labour, see the Social Level of mapping analysis.*

> *"I never told anyone about this conflict ...My wife never told anyone either, because it would so embarrassing to tell others."*

These associations of shame and silence surrounding experiences of violence can create a structure of oppression within the family space that keeps the problem from being effectively addressed.[14] Furthermore, it limits the extent to which gender norms can be challenged within community spaces, as the violence that results from gender inequalities often remains underreported. "We [husband and wife] never have conflict[15] outside the house," says one perpetrator of violence. Moreover, the belief that domestic violence is less severe than violence outside of the household contributes to this silence. "Because that it is their domestic issue… it is not as harsh as when he beats a woman outside."[16]

Community Level

At the community level, analytical mapping identifies what factors and gendered relationships have the potential to facilitate an environment of gender inequality within the community, which is in turn conducive to experiences of violence within the home.

Male peer relationships

Second only to law enforcement, the most frequently cited influence on male behaviour toward women is peer pressure from male friends, and friends and male peers provide benchmarks against which men measure themselves. Most relationships between men involve behavioural issues such as drugs, alcohol and prostitution, that frequently correspond with violent behaviour against women.[17] The respondents reported frequent socializing with other men, often at the expense of their relationships with their wives, who were portrayed by the men as disapproving of their social activities.

However, relationships and hierarchies among groups of men can act as positive experiences as well. An example from the research from a violent perpetrator illustrates the space for engagement of male peers to reinforce how they see each other:

> The perpetrator, who was about to start a fight, was stopped on one occasion by his friends…
> *"I was so angry and wanted to revenge them, but my friends told me not to do so because they were bigger and stronger than me. I felt incredibly ashamed of myself. I was not a real man. We were men; we had to be brave and strong, but we do not kill others because it was illegal."*

As men discussed their friendships and relationships with other men throughout the interviews, they both measured themselves against those in their peer groups, and reinforced a communal understanding of strength

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[14] ***Ecological Model Link***: *For more on shame and honour of the family within the community, see Community Level of mapping analysis.*

[15] *"Conflict" and "grumble" are used frequently, and often interchangeably, in descriptions of inter-marital tensions throughout the qualitative data. The official translation for each term was provided by GADC whereby: **"Grumble"** (Ror Ou) means the wife complains something about her husband in an annoyed way, but it does not always start an argument or physical confrontation and **"Conflict"** (Chumlos) means to have an active disagreement or argument between husband and wife which may cause physical confrontation if there is no intervention.*

[16] *Ecological Mapping Link: see more on acceptable forms of violence at the Social Level of the mapping analysis.*

[17] *For more on bauk and other incidences of violence against women, often sex workers, see: Lilja, 2010; for more on masculinities and male peers, see Grazian 2007.*

as a sign of masculinities, suggesting how men's friendships reinforce gender inequitable notions of masculinity and manhood in Cambodia.

Status and shame associated with violence

There is a level of privacy that is maintained at the community level between neighbours, and even to some extent among extended family members. Issues that arise in an intimate partner relationship are frequently not discussed outside of the partnership or outside of immediate family relationships (mothers, sisters, brothers, etc.). "It is not good to argue, neighbors might gossip about us," says one perpetrator of violence. This reluctance to communicate discord within

> **CASE STUDY: Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of the Victims (2005)**
>
> The Domestic Violence Law of Cambodia builds off the human rights commitments made both within the Cambodian constitution, as well as through international human rights treaties. A report by the Ministry of Women's Affairs emphasizes the law's focus on prevention specifically. "The law aims to...prevent DV [domestic violence] in the future...[and] passed to premote a culture of non-violent behavior."
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> However, the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO) reports that difficulties of implementation, coupled with "engrained attitudes," of Cambodians makes this law particularly difficult to enforce

the family can be attributed to perceptions of relational happiness and harmony that are highly-sought after values in Cambodian culture. "[Society expects] mutual understanding between spouses." Moreover, the lack of communication between spouses in Cambodian society is frequently attributed to peaceful relations within the family, as a woman who adheres to feminine gender expectations – such as silence and subservience to her husband's wishes – is the archetypical female role model.[18]

Reluctance to intervene

Linked to the notions of shame and status among neighbours is the reluctance to intervene in the domestic problems of other families. In instances where violence was particularly serious, respondents suggested that a village leader should be called upon to mediate the issue. However, a number of complexities arise, among them the lack of gender awareness among village leaders, the existing, hierarchical relationships between village leaders, perpetrators and their victims that frequently result in lack of action on the leaders' behalf, and the extent of the leader's political authority that can influence his decision-making.[19] Moreover, data from the interviews suggest that less confrontational, physically aggressive experiences of violence do not seem to be reported to village leaders. "When I meet [a] situation [of violence in a neighbouring family], I'll go to inform the head of village. If I ask them to stop by myself, they won't listen to me. It is their family problem. But if the argument is not serious, I don't inform to the head of the village unless they hit each other. According to my observation, other neighbours also think like I do too..."

Social Level

The social level of analysis demonstrates how overarching views and attitudes that dominate the society-at-large are related to the themes identified in the lived experiences of men and women through the first three levels of the ecological model.

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[18] *For more on spousal discussion and its relationship to domestic violence in Cambodia, see Eng, S., et al., 2010. Domestic Violence against Women in Cambodia: Husband's Control, Frequency of Spousal Discussion, and Domestic Violence Reported by Cambodian Women. Journal of Family Violence. 25: 237 – 246.*
[19] *For more on power and gender in political infrastructures, see Öjendal and Sedara 2006.*

Historical roots of gender regimes

As previously noted, Cambodian society is structured around a set of rigid gender norms that, while they are negotiated and challenged daily by the lived experiences of men and women in Cambodia, nevertheless hold a critical recognition as strong normative values. "We have a code of women's conduct and a code of men's conduct. …these create our society…from ancient times. It is not like the National Assembly's laws. It is a social ethics," says one ministry official. Furthermore, the extent to which interpersonal violence occurs in Cambodia relates to how individual experiences, as well as factors identified at the household and community levels, are situated within the broader social framework of the region. Consequently, the connection between gender and cultural understanding of what types of violence are appropriate is significant to further unpack how gender and violence interplay in the experiences of men and women in Cambodia.

There is a historicity of gender and violence in Cambodia, one that can be traced back beyond the Khmer Rouge period and the historical roots of gender inequality in Cambodian society are readily-acknowledged.[20]

> *"We have a culture of considering men as important in our society. So, what men do is right. In Cambodia, we look at the ancient time starting from Nokor Kok Thlork regime to Queen Liv Yee remine – the roles of men and women have been distinguished until now."*

The legacy of the Khmer Rouge has also shown to be a significant factor in social organization and notions of political power and responsibility at the local level (Öjendal and Sedara 2006). The greeting, 'Korob, Kaud, Klach' (translation: Respect, admiration, fear) is commonly used by Cambodians to address state authorities, signaling the existence of hierarchical relationships between men (those in state-level power versus those who are not) as well as the extent to which power and hierarchy exists within the ecological model mapping of Cambodia. Moreover, the residual impact of this political legacy has shown to be relevant to the increasing recognition of social issues within Cambodian civil society. "In the previous society we were so busy with politics, wars, so we paid no attention to this issue. But after our country enjoyed peace and social development, we start to consider [domestic violence] as important."

Mutual reinforcement of gender norms by men and women

A number of the quotations above cite men's attitudes toward masculinity and femininity in their local contexts. However, women also can play a role in reinforcing gender norms, both pressuring men to conform to social expectations of manhood, and reaffirming the traditional gender order of society. While women respondents suggest that social expectations require them to respect their husbands by not arguing, agreeing and respecting their husbands' word, wives do become pressure points to urge men to fulfill socially dictated masculine characteristics, and both men and women cite this role of women to urge the men in their lives to "be real men."

In one example where wives lead the household (if the husband is unemployed or unwilling to work), one respondent suggested that women use this position of relative power in the household to criticize her husband's inability to conform to masculine ideals of providing for the family. "This can lead to violence because mostly women/wives will criticize that if they are unable to do such works, they should cut their penis for a dog's meal." This citation is particularly revealing, as the intense pressure from women toward men, to be able to provide for their families, and the use of the masculine sex and de-sexing as a metaphorical allegory of financial/breadwinner ineptitude to sexual incompetence, signals the acceptance of both men and

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[20] *For qualitative in-depth interviews on survivors of gender-based violence during the Khmer Rouge regime, see Kasumi, N (2006). Gender-based Violence during the Khmer Rouge Regime: Stories of survivors from the Democratic Kampuchea (1975 – 1979)* Asia Pacific Year Book of International Humanitarian Law, *Vol 2.*

women of the status quo gendered division of social expectations and the strength of this gender role structure within the society.

Shifts in the normative framework of society

A number of linkages exist through this mapping exercise between the three levels of the ecological model. Beyond demonstrating the relational nature of gender and violence, these linkages indicate that processes of social change – particularly increased access and exposure to alternative gender norms – impact the individual experiences violence against women.

> *"Before I thought that there was the division of son's and daughter's jobs but now I don't think so. I'll do all things because now we have equal rights. In the past, there were also women did the plough as well as some men did the cooking, but it was rare…now it's not as rare"*

Another respondent illustrates how new concepts of men and women's roles in society are emerging as he reveals that his:

> *"expectation differs from the society – I would like women to have equal rights and opportunities in all works. I would like husbands to help do their wives' work, and wives can also do their husbands' work,"*

Although the majority of the respondents still subscribe to dominant gender norms, a subsection of the respondents offered new ideas of what the gender order, for example, of income-generating activities looked like. *"Today people don't care or it is not criticized those who work for income or not – it doesn't matter any of those work at home."*

While this trend is not dominant in the qualitative research, it nevertheless represents a space in which gender inequality is being challenged across the levels of Cambodian social organization. Moreover, it demonstrates the different ways in which gender norms are enacted and negotiated by men and women in Cambodia, revealing the variation inherent in the gender order.

Recommendations for Action

The following set of recommendations for policies and programmes is based on the above ecological mapping of the Cambodia qualitative data and will address the following: Foundational principles of prevention activities against violence against women in the Cambodian context;

   (1) Development of prevention-based policies and programmes that address violence against women through the lenses of the various themes identified in the mapping;
   (2) Challenges and resistance to gender transformational approaches in the Cambodian context

While civil society and government ministries have taken steps to create policies and develop programmes that include prevention approaches [see side-bar on Cambodia's Domestic Violence Law], prevention policies continue to be frequently overlooked. Successful primary prevention approaches recognize the need to address underlying root causes of violence against women and consequently target the inequitable gender norms of women and men that define gendered relations at the individual, household, community and social levels. Moreover, prevention activities aim to transform the spectrum of social interactions that perpetuate an environment conducive to violence against women, and promote a foundation of gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships. Subsequently, the mapping and in-depth exploration of gender relations and the gender

order of social organization is critical to be able to analyze how these norms reinforce an environment where violence against women, and where space for transformation exists.

Principles required for successful programmes and policies

The evidence from the Cambodian qualitative data underlines the need for basic principles of engagement for prevention approaches that aim to end violence against women:

Recognizing violence as multi-faceted: Violence against women is not merely physical, and in Cambodian society, where violence outside of the house is largely looked down upon, recognizing other forms of violence between men and women can be subtle indicators of violence in other spheres of their relationship.

> *"If [my wife and I] had some problems, we should forgive each other. If she did [not cook the food on time] we could blame her but couldn't hit her because if I hit her, she would get hurt and lose some money for treatment, too. Blaming is one kind of violence, too. It's called the speech violence." – Perpetrator of violence, married less than 10 years, urban, in response to the question: "what do you do in order to avoid using violence against your wife"*

Acknowledge intersections with other forms of oppression: The complexity of social relations in Cambodia do not merely reflect gender patterns, but also intersects with other forms of social oppression including economic status, ethnicity, and forms of political repression. Unpacking these intersections is a necessary component to further understand why violence occurs in the first place.

Commitment to gender relational programming: Understanding the gender relational nature of experiences of men and women in Cambodian society is critical to effective prevention policies and programs, as targets must include not only the relations between men and women, but also those hierarchies between groups of men and groups of women. Moreover, external factors such as media portrayals of gender are related to the ways that gender is enacted and experienced by Cambodian men and women, and subsequently these indirect gender relations must also be recognized and addressed, particularly as the notion of men as perpetrators and women as victims is firmly established in the Cambodian gender and violence lexicon.

> *"Domestic violence happens mostly to women and it is caused by men. People in general think it is normal." – Key informant interview with ministry official*

Thematic spaces for prevention policies and programmes

The mapping of Cambodian gender relations through the ecological model unpacks a number of experiences at the various levels that provide points of thematic engagement for programmes and policies.

Expanding notions of masculinities: The hegemonic ideal of masculinity that is widely-held across Cambodian culture is increasingly being questioned by men whose experiences with masculinity may differ due to a number of factors such as socio-economic status, childhood experiences or gender working patterns in their household structure. This tension is illustrated in the number of frustrations expressed in the interviews with Cambodian men regarding social expectations of their masculinities. Points where men feel pressured to conform offer spaces to transform understanding and experiences of masculinity.

Cross-cutting acceptance of violence: Women's acceptance of violence against women signals a need to target women, as well as men, for transformation of gender inequitable norms. In much of the data, women, more than men, support the use of violence, particularly as a result of not fulfilling gender-based activities, such as cooking and cleaning.

Well-designed group education or interpersonal interactions: The strength of gender orders and hierarchies at the community and social levels, as evidenced by the qualitative mapping, coupled with the lack of communication in Cambodian society regarding problems and issues that households and families face, suggests that programmes that focus exclusively on the development of spaces for discussion and community campaigns for open-dialogue can provide space for reflection on gender norms, and subsequent nuanced notions of masculinities and femininities at these levels, leading to awareness and behaviour change at the individual level.

Gender roles and early childhood development: The high-incidence of violence experienced during childhood reveals the extent to which the relationship between gender and violence is internalized at a young age. Consequently, there is a need for educational policies and programmes to both address this violence, but also, using a prevention approach to gender and violence, target children's early internalization and enactment of gender norms. "[Cambodian] children learn norms from their parents, both through active socialization and observation… and reinforced by the school, curriculum, community, media and other institutions."[21] The role of institutions in this type of violence prevention programming and policy-making highlights how the linkages between the various levels of the ecological framework must be simultaneously addressed.

Inclusion of inter-level analysis: There is a need to look beyond the individual level of experiences of violence to institutional and social circumstances in which gender and violence are intimately linked. The institutionalization of unequal gender norms at the social level limits the extent of successful gender transformation at the other three levels of the framework. Subsequently, policies and programmes must address structural changes as well. The division of labour referenced in the research offers a stark example of structural rigidity and adherence to traditional gender norms limits the extent to which gender transformation can occur. The stigmatization of women who work outside their households, as part of the formal economy, is frequently referenced both directly and indirectly through the qualitative research. Yet the recognition of change and modernization of this gender order exists and can provide a powerful space where policies (and policy-makers) as well as programmes can make significant headway at the institutional level.

Challenges to prevention policy and programmes in Cambodia

The development of prevention-based approaches to violence against women at all levels of the social and ecological model, must also recognize and address possible areas of resistance toward the gender-equitable transformation that is the goal of primary prevention, and concurrently must identify possible angles that can motive men in a particular environment to end violence. To understand violence as a continuum – from institutional and structural violence down to the individual level of violence – is to understand the breadth and extent of possible (and likely) resistance toward changing gender relational patterns in a society. In the Cambodian context there is a level of normalization that separates violence against women from a more

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[21] *A Preliminary Analysis Report: Deoum Troung Pram Hath in Modern Cambodia: A Qualitative Exploration of Gender Norms, Masculinity and Domestic Violence, Gender and Development Cambodia, 2010, p. 28.*

comprehensive understanding of what forms violence takes in society, and subsequently fosters resistance against gender normative change, as well as against addressing the problem.

Acknowledging resistance in its various forms is a critical component of successful primary prevention. It cannot be denied that men will resist against change at various levels of their experiences.[22] Rather, it is critical instead to delve deeper into existing research to unpack the reasons and rationale for resistance (examples could include privilege or insecurity). Analysis must also recognize that while men are usually in positions of power in gender relationships, they are not always in power in other relationships and broader social settings, and may be discriminated against through other methods of social oppression. The wide-spread discrimination of 'certain' men based on characteristics that are identified as traditionally 'female' – such as working at home and child-care – is one example of this oppression that occurs within hierarchies of men.

Conceptualization of gender equality: Notions of what it means to be gender equitable vary greatly, however, as explained in the analysis above, the research frequently illustrates how one man, one woman, or one group can actively espouse gender equality while simultaneously reinforcing stereotypes, balancing their behaviours against their expressed beliefs regarding the roles of women and men. Developing nuanced notions of gender and violence may create a constant source of tension and resistance.

Attitudes toward public discussions of violence and sex: The socially-sanctioned limits of public discussions on violence and sex can create a barrier to open and honest dialogue about gender roles and violence at the ground level.

Minimization of violence against women as a social problem: To some extent, and among certain actors, violence against women is accepted as a severe social problem in Cambodia. However, despite the work of certain ministries, policy-makers and political actors, there can be resistance all the way from state institutions down to commune leaders and communities as to the existence and severity of the problem, particularly when combined with Cambodian notions of extra-household versus intra-household violence.

Despite these areas of resistance however, the analysis above has provided in-depth information on the Cambodian context that can be used to identify openings where men and women at all levels of the ecological model want to change their own behaviour, and challenge systems of oppression. *"My expectation differs from the society – I would like women to have equal rights and opportunities in all works. I would like husbands to help do their wives' work, and wives can also do their husbands' work,"* said one respondent during a focus group discussion in Phnom Penh. The use of ecological mapping analyses to unpack patterns of gender relations and forces of oppression within a specific community or society offers a valuable tool for policies and programmes to provide opportunities for social change, despite resistance to challenging gender inequality.

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[22] *See Connell, R. Gender relations. In: Gender. 2ⁿᵈ Edition. Cambridge: Polity, 2009.*

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