WORK WITH MEN AND BOYS FOR GENDER EQUALITY: A REVIEW OF FIELD FORMATION, THE EVIDENCE BASE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

ALAN GREIG AND MICHAEL FLOOD
FOR PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2019-2020:
FAMILIES IN A CHANGING WORLD

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SUMMARY

Any assessment of the evidence for gender transformative work with men and boys should consider the conditions that have shaped the emergence of this work. Male-focused gender transformative work has a history, or rather histories. Reviewing its evidence base in light of the forces and factors which have informed its emergence over time enriches our understanding of both the findings from, and the silences within, this body of work.

This paper assesses the evidence base of the "men for gender equality" field in light of three aspects of its emergence as a field, namely: its un-interrogated use of the category of "men," its recourse to social psychological accounts of gender norms and the implications of its NGO form for its ability to collaborate with and be accountable to resurgent intersectional feminist mobilizations. There is a longstanding critique, both within and of the "men for gender equality" field, that its work remains too focused on the individual, and 'his' attitudinal and behavioral change. This paper argues that organizing the "men for gender equality" field around the category of "men" and the problem of "norms of masculinity" has militated against analyses of structural power and social change. The universalist claim of the category "men" has tended to domesticate the paradigm for gender transformative change, foregrounding men's masculinity as the problem (with its individualizing emphasis on male identities and men's behaviors) and subsuming under masculinity the multiple relations of power within which men are positioned (with its homogenizing erasure of men's differing material interests in social change.)

Framing gender transformative work with men in terms of transforming social norms has favoured social psychological accounts of men's subjectivities over sociological perspectives on patriarchal conditions. This turn to social psychology has itself been aided and delimited by the subsumption of men's complex positions in social relations under simplistic accounts of multiple "masculinities." Such accounts, with their reductive rather than complex engagement with manifold and intersecting forces and forms of oppression, have, in turn, limited the field's capacity to develop an explicit agenda for intersectional anti-patriarchal social action and to build alliances with a broader set of social justice struggles and movements.

As a result, the evidence base generated by the field is noteworthy not only for its findings but also its silences. There is a growing body of evidence that well-designed interventions can increase men's and boys' gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors, including with regard to sexual and reproductive health, parenting and care work, and intimate partner violence and sexual violence. At the same time, most interventions are focused only on micro- and meso-level change, their evidence is uneven, and few evaluations examine wider shifts in gender relations or structures of power. The paper proposes four directions for the "men for gender equality" field. It must focus on the gendered operations of power and injustice, specifically the uses to which masculinities are put in the maintenance of social hierarchies. It must press for political as well as policy change. This, in turn, calls for more 'movement' and less 'field': a greater orientation towards anti-patriarchal social action. Finally, such social action requires that evidence-building and evidence-based practice be re-oriented toward the extended timelines and complex processes of social change.

RÉSUMÉ

Toute évaluation des données factuelles en faveur d'un travail transformateur avec les hommes et les garçons dans le domaine du genre doit tenir compte des circonstances dans lesquelles ce travail a vu le jour. Le travail transformateur axé sur les hommes a une histoire ou plutôt des histoires. Examiner les informations factuelles à la lumière des forces et des facteurs qui ont sous-tendu ce travail dans le temps affine notre compréhension des conclusions de ce travail ainsi que de ses non-dits.

Ce document évalue les informations factuelles liées au domaine d'activité « hommes en faveur de l'égalité des sexes » à la lumière de trois aspects liés à son apparition en tant que domaine d'activité, à savoir son utilisation non remise en question de la catégorie « hommes », son recours à des récits socio-psychologiques sur les normes de genre et les implications de son statut d'ONG sur sa capacité à collaborer avec des mouvements féministes intersectionnels ré-émergents et à leur rendre des comptes. Le domaine d'activité «hommes en faveur de l'égalité des sexes» fait l'objet d'une critique de longue date, notamment de l'intérieur, quant au fait que son travail reste trop axé sur la personne et sur son changement de comportement et d'attitude. Ce document estime que l'organisation du domaine d'activité « hommes en faveur de l'égalité des sexes » autour de la catégorie « hommes » et du problème des « normes de la masculinité » a entravé les analyses portant sur le pouvoir structurel et le changement social. La revendication universaliste de la catégorie « hommes » a eu tendance à affaiblir le paradigme en faveur d'un changement transformateur dans le domaine du genre, stigmatisant la masculinité des hommes en tant que problème (en mettant l'accent sur les identités mâles et les comportements des hommes) et résumant les multiples relations de pouvoir auxquels les hommes font face à de la masculinité, homogénéisant et gommant ainsi les avantages matériels multiples que les hommes peuvent tirer d'un changements social.

Formuler le travail transformateur avec les hommes dans le domaine du genre en termes de transformation des normes sociales a privilégié l'émergence des récits socio-psychologiques des subjectivités masculines par rapport à des perspectives sociologiques portant sur la dimension patriarcale. Cette préférence pour la psychologie sociale a été appuyée et définie par la réduction des positions complexes des hommes dans les relations sociales à des récits simplistes sur les « masculinités » multiples. Ces récits, qui se caractérisent par un attachement réducteur à des forces multiples et interdépendantes et des formes d'oppression, ont entravé les capacités du domaine d'activité à élaborer un ordre du jour explicite en faveur d'une action sociale intersectionnelle anti-patriarcale et à construire des alliances avec des mouvements et combats plus larges en faveur de la justice sociale.

En conséquence, les informations factuelles créées par le domaine d'activité sont remarquables non seulement en ce qui concerne les conclusions qui ont été formulées, mais également en raison de leurs non-dits. Il est de plus en plus avéré que des interventions bien conçues peuvent renforcer les attitudes et comportements soucieux de l'égalité des sexes, notamment en ce qui concerne la santé sexuelle et procréative, la parentalité et les soins, et la violence sexuelle et sexiste, notamment à l'égard d'une partenaire. Dans le même temps, la plupart des interventions sont axées seulement sur des changements de niveaux micro- et meso, les informations factuelles sont inégales, et peu d'évaluations examinent les variations plus larges dans les relations entre les hommes et les femmes ou les structures de pouvoir. Ce document propose quatre orientations dans le domaine d'activité « hommes en faveur de l'égalité des sexes ». Il doit se concentrer sur les opérations de pouvoir et d'injustice dans le domaine de l'égalité des sexes, en passant notamment en revue la manière dont l'utilisation du concept des masculinités contribue au maintien des hiérarchies sociales. Il doit préconiser un changement politique et des politiques, ce qui nécessite plus de « mouvement » et moins de « domaine d'activité » : une orientation accrue en faveur d'une action sociale anti-patriarcale. Enfin, une telle action sociale nécessite qu'une pratique fondée sur l'accumulation de données factuelles bénéficie de délais plus grands et de processus de changements sociaux plus complexes.

RESUMEN

En toda evaluación de la evidencia para el trabajo transformador por la igualdad de género con hombres y niños se deberían considerar las condiciones que configuraron el surgimiento de esta labor. El trabajo transformador por la igualdad de género enfocado en los hombres tiene una historia, o mejor dicho, varias historias. El análisis de su base empírica a la luz de las fuerzas y los factores que se han tomado como información para su surgimiento enriquece nuestra comprensión tanto de los resultados de este cúmulo de trabajo como de los silencios que lo habitan.

En este artículo se examina la base empírica del campo de estudio sobre "los hombres por la igualdad de género" a la luz de los tres aspectos que le dieron origen como campo; estos son su uso no interrogado de la categoría "hombres"; su recurso a las explicaciones sociopsicológicas de las normas de género, y las consecuencias de su forma compatible con la de una ONG para su habilidad para colaborar con las movilizaciones feministas interseccionales y de responder ante estas. Existe una dilatada crítica, tanto del campo de estudio sobre "los hombres por la igualdad de género" como dentro de este según la cual su trabajo se centra excesivamente en el individuo, y el cambio de actitudes y comportamientos de ese individuo varón. En este artículo se sostiene que la organización del campo de estudio sobre "los hombres por la igualdad de género" en torno a la categoría "hombres" y al problema de las "normas de masculinidad" ha ido en contra de los análisis del poder estructural y el cambio social. La reafirmación universalista de la categoría "hombres" ha tendido a domesticar el paradigma del cambio transformador de género. Se ha puesto en primer plano a la masculinidad de los hombres como el problema (con un énfasis en la individualización de las identidades masculinas y el comportamiento de los hombres) y se han subsumido en la masculinidad las múltiples relaciones de poder en las que los hombres ocupan su posición (con un borrado homogeneizador de los variados intereses materiales de los hombres en el cambio social).

La estructuración del trabajo transformador de género con los hombres en términos de transformación de las normas sociales ha favorecido los postulados sociopsicológicos de las subjetividades de los hombres en detrimento de las perspectivas sociológicas sobre las condiciones patriarcales. Este giro hacia la psicología social se ha visto ayudado y delimitado por la subsunción de las complejas posiciones de los hombres en las relaciones sociales en explicaciones simplistas de las múltiples "masculinidades". Estas explicaciones, con su vinculación –más reduccionista que compleja– con las numerosas e interrelacionadas fuerzas y formas de opresión, a su vez, han acotado la capacidad de este campo para elaborar una agenda explícita para la acción social interseccional y antipatriarcal y forjar alianzas con un conjunto más amplio de luchas y movimientos por la justicia social.

Como resultado, la base empírica que genera este campo de estudio es digna de mención, no solo por sus constataciones sino también por sus silencios. Existe un cúmulo creciente de evidencias según las cuales las intervenciones bien diseñadas pueden aumentar las actitudes y los comportamientos con igualdad de género entre los hombres y los niños, entre otras cosas, con respecto a la salud sexual y reproductiva, la crianza y el trabajo de los cuidados, y la violencia física y sexual en la pareja. Al mismo tiempo, la mayoría de las intervenciones solo se enfocan en el cambio que se da en el ámbito micro y medio, las evidencias que reúnen son irregulares, y son pocas las evaluaciones en las que se examinan los cambios más amplios en las relaciones de género o las estructuras de poder. En este artículo se proponen cuatro líneas de orientación para el campo de estudio sobre "los hombres por la igualdad de género". Debe enfocarse en las operaciones de género del poder y la injusticia, específicamente en los usos que se les da a las masculinidades en el mantenimiento de las jerarquías sociales. Debe presionar por un cambio político y de las políticas. Esto, a su vez, es más un llamado a un "movimiento" que a un "campo": una orientación más amplia hacia la acción social antipatriarcal. Por último, para esta acción social es necesario reorientar la construcción de evidencias y la práctica basada en la evidencia hacia los extensos plazos y los complejos procesos del cambio social.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

Background

In 2015, the international community, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, charted a course for global development with commitments to gender equality at its heart. At that time, the challenges of gender inequalities were daunting, from women's and girls' food insecurity to the gender pay gap, and from the feminization of poverty to the denial of political participation and representation, and the pervasiveness of gender-based violence against women and girls. "Gender inequalities manifest themselves in every dimension of sustainable development," as UN Women has noted.[1] But a mere few years later, the course set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their multiple commitments to gender equality, appears ever more challenging. From a resurgent authoritarianism to virulent xenophobia and militant ethnonationalism, the orderly functioning of multilateral processes and institutions has rarely been more threatened, and with it the prospects for international cooperation on the ambitious targets attached to the 17 SDGs.

Significantly for the prospects of progress on gender equality, many of the most worrying aspects of the current conjuncture are inseparable from a backlash against the gains won by feminist struggle over the last 40 years. In many otherwise differing societies, a renewed conservatism is evident in relation to gender equality. This trend was noted and discussed at the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi in 2014. As the background paper prepared for the symposium observed:[2]

> These conservative discourses, state-supported in some countries, of a hyper-masculine national identity promote traditional patriarchal roles as a project of nation-building, thereby dangerously conflating patriarchy, patriotism, culture and national sovereignty into a political discourse and positioning progress toward women's empowerment and gender equality as disruptive of a national order.

These trends and conditions make it all the more imperative to take stock of the self-identified body of research on, programming with and policy advocacy by men directed towards the goal of gender equality, which in this paper will be discussed (and problematized) in terms of the emergence and work of a "men for gender equality" field. One indicator for the growth of this field is the emergence of the MenEngage Alliance, a "global alliance made up of dozens of country networks spread across many regions of the world, hundreds of non-governmental organizations, as well as UN partners".[3] In 2009, MenEngage organized the first Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality in Rio de Janeiro, which drew over 400 activists, researchers and practitioners from nearly 80 countries. Five years later, the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi attracted over 1,200 participants from 95 countries. In the closing Delhi Declaration and Call to Action, participants affirmed their shared belief that "achieving gender justice requires engaging men and boys for the benefit of women and girls, men and boys themselves, people of

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1   UN Women 2018: 14.
2   Ricardo 2014: 45.

3   MenEngage 2017: 1.

all sexual orientations and gender identities."[4] Different terms are used to name this field of work, both by those working within it as well as those who interact with it: from "male involvement" to "engaging men and boys" to "men and masculinities work". For the sake of conceptual clarity, this paper will refer to this body of work and its constituent organizations, publications, agendas, and actions as the "men for gender equality" field.[5]

What unites this disparate body of work and its diverse components as a self-conscious "field" is the fundamental feminist goal of building gender equality. This distinguishes it from anti-feminist men's organizing, whose history and contemporary manifestations, especially as they relate to the rise of the far right, are well documented.[6] The "men for gender equality" field is premised on and organized by a defining belief that men and boys must be engaged in efforts to end gender inequalities. This entails an emphasis on involving men and boys in ceasing their own violence against women and girls and challenging the violence of other men, taking up an equitable share of parenting and domestic work, sharing responsibility for sexual and reproductive health with women, and supporting women's economic empowerment and participation in paid work and political life.

Efforts to involve men in work towards gender equality are far from new. The idea that men have a role, indeed a responsibility, in ending gender inequalities has a long history in feminism, whose advocates have often called on men to address their own and other men's involvements in sexism and gender injustice.[7] At various times in history and in many parts of the world, groups and networks of men have mobilized in support of women's efforts to achieve gender justice.[8] While acknowledging this long and variegated history, this paper takes as its subject a more narrowly conceived and self-consciously constructed "field" of gender equality work with men and boys. Here, the term "field" refers to what we might think of as a fabric of organizations, publications, agendas and actions woven around a set of shared assumptions about, and common commitments to, working with men and boys for gender equality.

To describe this body of work as a field is to highlight not only the goals and visions its practitioners share in common but also the ways in which it self-consciously constitutes itself as an actor within gender equality work. This directs attention to processes and spaces of self-constitution, and the audiences to which this body of work speaks as a field. This paper focuses specifically on the self-consciously constructed "field" of gender equality work with men and boys within the processes and spaces of international development and humanitarian assistance. This field comprises the work of a wide variety of organizations, from small advocacy- and service-focused groups running campaigns in local communities to large-scale, well-funded organizations operating not only nationally, but also regionally and globally. Much of the work around the world is done by organizations with broader agendas to do with women, gender and the behaviour or area of social life on which the initiative focuses, such as parenting, violence and health.[9] Prominent organizations within this field of work, as defined by the size of their budgets and significance of their visibility within international development, articulate their missions in similarly broad terms. Promundo, based in the United States, describes itself as "a global leader in promoting gender justice and preventing violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls."[10] Sonke Gender Justice, in South Africa, orients its work towards a vision of "a world in which men, women and children can enjoy equitable, healthy and happy relationships that contribute to the development of just and democratic societies."[11] The MenEngage Alliance describes

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4   MenEngage 2014. "Men and Boys for Gender Justice: Delhi Declaration and Call to Action." Retrieved 16 September 2020 from http://www.menengagedilli2014.net/delhi-declaration-and-call-to-action.html
5   The term "men" rather than "men and boys" is used for the sake of brevity, but should be understood to refer to all age groups.
6   Kimmel and Kaufman 1995; Ferber 1999; Connell 2005; Murdoch 2019.
7   Segal 1997; Bhasin 1999; hooks 2004.

8   Flood 2015.
9   Kimball et al. 2013.
10 See Promundo at https://promundoglobal.org/
11 See Sonke at https://genderjustice.org.za

its work as aimed "toward advancing gender justice, human rights and social justice to achieve a world in which all can enjoy healthy, fulfilling and equitable relationships and their full potential."[12]

This diverse set of organizations, with often broadly defined missions for gender justice and social change, share a common commitment to highlighting and mobilizing men's contributions to gender justice. As the next section will discuss in more detail, this commitment is itself grounded in feminist analyses of patriarchal relations of power, to which the family, as a lived experience and policy problem, has long been central. The "men for gender equality" field has a history, and much of this history locates gender equality work with men within the specific concerns of women's movements and their demands that men do more to address such concerns. Women's struggles for sexual and reproductive autonomy, bodily integrity and an equitable distribution of socially reproductive labour are the wellspring of the "men for gender equality" field's focus on issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including HIV, gender-based violence and the care economy.

If concerns about the family as both site and engine for men's patriarchal subordination of women have often driven the emergence of the field of gender equality work with men and boys, and the issues of care, violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights on which it has focused, then what evidence is there that work with men can make an effective contribution to family-related policies and programmes for gender justice? The focus on "Families in a Changing World" as the theme of UN Women's flagship report *Progress of the World's Women* provides an opportunity to take stock of such evidence. One of the most common articulations, which given its frequency in the literature could be said to be a shared commitment around which the diverse body of work with men for gender equality coalesces as a "field," is that such work must be "gender-transformative." This terminology was first proposed by Gupta, in her influential typology[13] of how different health interventions interact with

gender, identifying a continuum from least desirable to most desirable approaches: gender-unequal (which perpetuate gender inequalities), gender-blind (which ignore gender norms and conditions), gender-sensitive (which acknowledge but do not address gender inequalities), gender-specific (which acknowledge gender norms and consider women's and men's specific needs), gender-transformative (which create more gender-equitable relationships), and gender-empowering (which empower women or free women and men from the impact of destructive gender and sexual norms). A simplified version of this typology was adapted as a four-category programming continuum (gender-exploitative, gender-neutral, gender-sensitive and gender-transformative) in an influential 2010 guide on engaging men and boys in gender equality and health.[14] "Gender-transformative" has now been taken up as an important standard for interventions with men and boys.

As a contribution to UN Women's review of "Families in a Changing World," this paper reviews the evidence for male-focused gender-transformative programming, and related policy development, on issues of the care economy, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Crucially, it situates this evidence review in an account of the formation and operations of the "men for gender equality" field itself, in order to better understand the histories and pressures that have shaped both the nature and impact of work with men for gender equality. In doing so, the paper not only seeks to identify key elements of successful interventions but also to chart future directions for gender-transformative work with men.

1.2
Overview

Any assessment of the evidence for gender-transformative work with men and boys on the issues of concern to this paper should consider the conditions that have shaped the emergence of this work, as well

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12 See MenEngage Alliance at http://menengage.org
13 Gupta 2000.

14 Ricardo and Verani 2010.

as the research and evaluation questions that have been asked of it. Male-focused gender-transformative work has a history, or rather histories. Reviewing its evidence base in light of the forces and factors which have informed its emergence over time enriches our understanding of both the findings from, and the silences within, this body of work.

This paper reviews these forces and factors in relation to three sets of issues, namely issues concerning:

• The political possibilities and limitations of "men" as the category through which the field has called on diverse constituencies of men to take action against their patriarchal gender orders (Section 2).

• Analyses of the operations of patriarchal gender orders which draw heavily on social norms theory, and the confusions to which this theoretical commitment can give rise when it comes to the "men for gender equality" field's desire to develop responses to the structural determinants of such gender orders (Section 3).

• The influence of non-governmental organization (NGO) form on feminist strategies, in relation to the "men for gender equality" field's ability to collaborate with and be accountable to resurgent intersectional feminist mobilizations (Section 4).

Section 2 examines the ways in which the "men for gender equality" field continues to ground its work in the naturalized category of "men," which reproduces rather than questions the male/masculine and female/feminine gender binary which founds gender hierarchies and inequalities. Nowhere is this reproduction more evident than in the domesticated scene of transformative gender change so favoured by the field. In order to get beyond the domestic realm and approach a more structural analysis of, and response to, the functions of gender within hierarchical relations and operations of power, it requires that "men" become men, differentially positioned within these relations and operations, with differing political subjectivities to be mobilized on the basis of these positions. Section 2 argues that organizing men for radical and transformative gender change calls for

the category of "men" to be denaturalized, and used not as a presumptive identity but as a generative identification.

Addressing the question of why the "men for gender equality" field has struggled to develop structural interventions, Section 3 discusses the limitations imposed by its adoption of a social norms framework which, in its implementation, has privileged social psychological accounts of harmful behaviour over sociological analyses of phenomena such as gender-based violence and their embeddedness within hierarchies of power. The field's insistence on framing manifestations of patriarchal relations, from the care economy to violence, as a problem of personal behaviour and the social psychology of norms of masculinity has weakened its capacity to mobilize men to take action on the structural determinants of gender inequalities. Section 4 looks more closely at the impact NGO organizational form has had in further weakening this capacity, most notably with respect to limiting the field's ability to develop and act on an intersectional pro-feminist analysis of inequality and injustice, and the implications of this for the field's commitment to be accountable to intersectional feminist movements.

Based on this review of the forces and factors which have shaped the formation and operations of the "men for gender equality" field, Section 5 reviews the extant evidence base, highlighting its implications and limitations for developing truly transformative anti-patriarchal work with men and boys. Some directions this work should take are explored in Section 6.

2. CATEGORY ERRORS

2.1
Ambivalent thinking

Gender equality work with men and boys has long been marked by a certain ambiguity regarding its defining constituency and guiding purpose. Recalling the early years of men's activism for gender equality in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, Segal remembers confusion: "Men in men's groups were quite often men in a muddle." She neatly summarizes the muddle thus:

> From the beginning, there was debate over whether they should be called Men Against Sexism, and see themselves as primarily a support group for women's liberation, or whether they should be called Men's Liberation, a movement for exploring and transforming male consciousness.[15]

In Messner's account of men's anti-patriarchal activism in the United States, a similar tension is evident, as "from the outset, there was tension in men's liberation's attempt to focus simultaneously on men's institutional power over women and on the 'costs of masculinity' to men."[16] By the late 1970s, "men's liberation had split directly along this fissure." Messner notes:

> On the one hand, men's rights organizations stressed the costs of narrow conceptions of masculinity to men, and either downplayed or angrily disputed feminist claims that patriarchy benefited men at women's expense. On the other hand, a profeminist (sometimes called 'anti-sexist') men's movement emphasized the primary importance of joining with women to do away with men's institutionalized privileges.[17]

Yet fast-forward four decades, and even for avowedly pro-feminist organizations focused on gender equality

work by and with men, there is a sense that this ambivalence still persists. A recent study undertaken by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), based on key informant interviews with, and a convening of, researchers, implementers and funders who are working in the field of "male engagement" in Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East concludes that the "dilemma lies in avoiding the premise that men and boys ought to be engaged in women's empowerment solely or predominantly from an instrumental perspective, serving only the interests of women and girls".[18] The study makes clear that "[e]xperience indicates that program implementers and policymakers should not conceive of male engagement as instrumental to women's empowerment," as "[p]rogress on gender equity will be hampered if men see women's empowerment primarily as a zero-sum game in which men are giving something up in order for women to advance."[19] Instead, the study found "[m]any participants independently express[ing] support for an alternative framing with a larger and more inclusive goal: engaging men as partners—stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, and change agents—in working towards gender equality and gender equity."[20]

This terminology of co-beneficiaries draws on the typology of men's potential roles in gender equality outlined in the background paper prepared for the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi in 2014. Here, it was suggested that the framing of men as allies or partners to women in the latter's struggle for gender justice "does not fully capture men's role or stake in gender equality" by neglecting "the ways in which men's lives also improve with greater gender equality, including with equal rights and empowerment for women."[21] Instead, the paper urges "a more accurate reflection of the range and

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15 Segal 1997: 281.
16 Messner 2016: 8.

17 Ibid.

18 ICRW 2018: 13.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.: 19.
21 Ricardo 2014: 23.

depth of gains from gender equality" by insisting on men's roles "as stakeholders and co-beneficiaries in advancing gender-equality."[22]

Framing men's participation in struggles for gender equality in terms of the benefits to men themselves as well as to women has long been used to motivate men to get involved. As Messner recalls, men's liberation messaging in the 1970s in the United States often sought to link patriarchy's power over women with masculinity's harm to men:

> Savvy men's liberation leaders sought to connect these seemingly contradictory positions by demonstrating that it was in fact men's attempts to secure access to the institutional privileges of masculinity that enforced boys' and men's emotional stoicism, lack of empathy for self and others, physical risk-taking, and unhealthy daily practices like smoking and drinking.[23]

If this effort to connect the privileges of patriarchy with the harms of masculinity was unable to prevent a split in the emergent men's liberation movement in the United States, it's clear that the articulation of a "co-beneficiary" model for pro-feminist work with men still faces difficulties with its simultaneous focus on both patriarchal power and the harms of masculinity. The MenEngage Global Symposium background paper, cited above, itself notes that "there are concerns that the work with men and boys has become a goal in and of itself and that some interventions with men fail to adequately challenge patriarchy and power imbalances in relationships between women and men."[24]

In the same vein, the paper notes that while "there is growing recognition of the need to engage men and boys in challenging patriarchal systems and culture," there is also "concern that men's involvement in these movements reproduces patterns of men's power and privilege and threatens women's leadership of the movement."[25] The Coalition of Feminists

for Social Change (COFEM) agrees. In a 2017 paper, COFEM warns of "a parallel system" emerging, of "male engagement campaigns, programmes, organisations and networks that, although allied theoretically to feminist principles, stand largely independent of the women's movement."[26] In specific national contexts, this critique has extended to a concern that efforts to engage men are distorting the mission of the gender equality movement, leading to what has been called a masculinization of gender equality work. In research on gender equality work with men in the Netherlands, van Huis found that what started as a programming intention to reach out to and connect with men in order to enlist their support for women's empowerment over time became focused on men's own vulnerabilities, to the point where some projects dropped their goal of women's empowerment altogether.[27]

A recent study has identified similar dynamics in transnational spaces and processes.[28] A mixed methodological investigation, including in-depth interviews with staff of NGOs and funding agencies and participant observation at international meetings and conferences, specifies several issues with a direct bearing on the prospects for feminist mobilization. The study concludes that funding mechanisms are (re)producing inequalities among NGOs in the field and that many feminist women have specific concerns about the impact of efforts to engage men on existing funding and political space for women's rights and empowerment. Moreover, it notes that the framing of efforts to engage men and boys increasingly emphasizes men's gendered vulnerabilities rather than women's rights and empowerment. Indeed, the background paper prepared for the second MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi in 2014 highlighted that:

> there are concerns, some founded, others unfounded, that not all efforts under the banner of working with men and boys share a commitment to gender justice. Some are focused only on men's specific gendered

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22   Ibid.: 24.
23   Messner 2016: 8.
24   Ricardo 2014: 43.
25   Ibid.

26   COFEM 2017: 5.
27   van Huis 2014.
28   Leek 2017.

needs, which are real and deserve attention but sometimes fail to adequately address the relational dimensions of gender and to challenge the extent to which men continue to be, in the aggregate, politically, economically, and socially privileged by the current gender system, albeit in ways that are shaped by race and ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age.[29]

Certainly there is variation within the "men for gender equality" field in the extent to which male privilege or male disadvantage is emphasized. The fact of widespread gender inequalities which privilege men as a group and disadvantage women as a group is clearly and widely acknowledged. So too is the idea that dominant constructions of masculinity are not only dangerous for women but also limiting for men themselves. Articulating the benefits to men of gender equality is seen widely as a valuable strategy for inspiring men's support for and commitment to this work.[30] Thus, the argument goes, while men have an ethical responsibility to change the systems which give them unfair advantages and power, they also will gain from doing so, in terms of their personal well-being, their relational interests, and the benefits to the communities in which they live.

What tends to vary across the field of work with men and boys is the degree of emphasis on the limitations, disadvantages or victimization that men experience because of their gender: the harms or costs of masculinity. Debates over how to understand men's positions with respect to these harms persist. One account represents differing understandings of men's position as a triangle, with the three corners occupied by (1) institutional privilege, (2) the costs of masculinity, and (3) differences and inequalities among men. Depending on what they emphasize, particular expressions of masculinity politics can be located at different points on the triangle.[31] Within pro-feminist men's politics, there have been long-running disagreements over emphases on the privileges or costs of masculinity, as the historical accounts described above make clear.

These debates continue both within and about the contemporary "men for gender equality" field, with critics wondering whether this move beyond an instrumental perspective on men's involvement in gender equality work has gone too far. Some experts believe so. During the course of the ICRW study referred to above, concerns were expressed that "moving away from an explicit focus on women and girls in gender equality and equity work obscures the realities of patriarchal power structures" in ways that fuel "the tendency to allow the needs and voices of women and girls to be overshadowed by men taking on the role of protagonists."[32]

The ambivalence, it seems, is still with us. This has implications for the ways in which appeals to, and strategies for, "male engagement" are conceived. There is disagreement over how and why men are or should be motivated to be involved in work on gender justice. Should we appeal to men on altruistic and principled grounds, or in relation to men's own gendered needs and vulnerabilities and benefits to men? For want of better terms, a 'hard' approach involves focusing squarely on patriarchy, power and privilege and the feminist challenge to these. A 'soft' approach gives greater emphasis to gender issues that are less obviously about men's power and more concerned with the benefits to men of greater gender equality. This approach may be seen particularly as a way to encourage men's initial entry, a positive entry point, with 'harder' topics and discussions of patriarchal privilege coming later. There is a risk in the 'hard' approach that men are 'scared off'—that men do not enter this work—and that if they do, they then shut down in hostile defensiveness. There is a risk in the 'soft' approach that the male participants, and educators too, mistake the 'soft' start for the goal or the end of the process of change, and that this work fails to challenge the structures of patriarchy.

Research is beginning to shed more light on how these dilemmas are managed in practice. One study of 346 men who, in the past year, had attended any event concerned with gender-based violence (8.7 per cent from Africa, 6.1 per cent from Asia, 11.5 per cent from Europe,

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29 Ricardo 2014: 43.
30 Flood 2018.
31 Messner 1997; Messner et al. 2015.

32 ICRW 2018: 19.

16.8 per cent from Latin America and the Caribbean and 57 per cent from North America) found that the most highly rated engagement strategies were those that started with topics of importance to men, in supportive male-only spaces or through existing male networks and relationships. The researchers concluded that:

> evidence suggests that men are best engaged when they make a personal connection to the issue of violence, such as through the strategies tested here related to starting conversations with the topics of fatherhood or relationships or by helping men make linkages between personal experiences of victimisation and the violence that women experience.[33]

At the same time, the researchers also noted the "central paradox of men's engagement work, making participation inviting, palatable, culturally compelling, respectful and relevant while retaining a pro-feminist stance and a commitment to promoting gender equity (at least eventually, if not initially)."[34] An earlier and smaller study of 27 men who had initiated involvement in an organization or event dedicated to ending sexual or domestic violence in the United States similarly found that "[m]eeting potential allies 'where they are' also raises the complication of how and when to assist those allies in confronting their unearned social privilege" and recommended a "'both-and' approach that combines tailored outreach with increasingly pointed opportunities to consider issues of oppression".[35]

Research in 2015 with 29 representatives of organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania and North and South America that work with men and boys on preventing gender-based violence specified in more detail the temporality of this 'both-and' approach, distinguishing between strategies for initial engagement (using accessible entry points; making an intentional invitation; enlisting ambassadors; seizing concrete opportunities; and appealing to men's reasons for becoming engaged) and strategies for deepening engagement (basing work on community concerns; taking action beyond workshops; emphasizing a hopefulness about men; and addressing relationships and power.)[36] It is noteworthy, in this study, that a handful of organizational representatives reported struggling with whether engaging men, as a goal unto itself, is even an appropriate or viable pursuit in the context of gender-based violence prevention. They pointed out that such prevention is better approached as a community-wide issue, in which men are involved, not in isolation, but as part of broader community-mobilizing initiatives, a view echoed in a 2015 paper surveying the evidence on working with men and boys to prevent violence against women and girls.[37]

The 'both-and' and 'now-later' approaches described above are, at root, operational fixes to the continuing dilemmas of anti-patriarchal work with men and the tension that persists at the heart of this work. It persists, in part, this paper will suggest, because of muddled thinking about the politics of the work. Addressing the tension between supporting women's liberation from, and/or ameliorating men's suffering within, the patriarchal gender order is, ultimately, not a matter of operational emphasis but rather political address. In this view, the tension is less a matter of confusion about striking the right balance between supporting "women's liberation" and "transforming male consciousness," and much more to do with the confused political subjectivity invoked by the category of "men" itself. Understood as a discursive construction, with a necessary but contingent relation to the vast heterogeneity of the male-'bodied' and masculine-identified, it is important to question the work that the category of "men" does, and can do, for the "men for gender equality" field, in its efforts to mobilize men for gender-transformative change. In effect, this paper contends, the field calls into being the political subjectivity of "men" as agents of change in the project of gender transformation, at the same time as abstracting actual men from the relations of power which are the object of that transformation.

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33 Casey et al. 2017: 14.
34 Ibid.: 15.
35 Casey 2010: 279.

36 Carlson et al. 2015.
37 Jewkes et al. 2015.

This problem of interpellation begins with the domestication of the project of change around which the "men for gender equality" field has constituted itself, discussed next.

2.2
Domesticated framing

The problems of "men" are not the problems of men. As a concept, "men" is put to use by the "men for gender equality field" to both make sense of gender inequalities and to mobilize responses to them. But, as Wiegman argues, there is a necessary gap between a concept and that to which it purports to refer, because the concept is less a window on reality, but rather a construction, and constructor, of it:

> Conceptual rubrics, like identitarian ones, are riven by the incommensurability between what they stand for and what—and who—comprises them. No aspect of these object relations is more critically important than another, but the conditions under which the category operates in critical practice and those it seeks to decipher, represent, and remake are not analytically, psychically, or socially the same.[38]

As with other concepts, the category "men" does not merely express or reflect a pre-existing reality of men, but helps to construct that reality. In this and the following section, it is examined how the category has been used and the 'work' it does to construct certain understandings of and approaches to working with men for gender equality.

"Men" as a category, as a concept, operates in a set of discursive conditions, political and social, psychic and public, which manifest in the many texts produced by and about the "men for gender equality" field. Whereas the concept of "women" in development discourse has been the focus of much critical attention, both feminist, and intersectingly, post-colonial,[39]

less attention has been paid to the uses and effects of the category of "men". Writing of feminist analyses of militarization in the field of International Relations, Stern and Zalewski remind us of "the poststructural suggestion ... that feminist representations of women do not correspond to some underlying truth of what woman is or can be; rather feminism produces the subject of woman which it then subsequently comes to represent."[40] But a similar deconstructive stance towards "men" as a discursive construct, as it is used within the world of international development, has rarely been taken.

Taking such a stance might begin with reviewing the emergence of men, and relatedly 'their' masculinities, as an object of policy attention in international development fora and discourse. The landmark Cairo and Beijing conferences of the mid-90s were critical events in this emergence. The agreed Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo sought to "encourage and enable men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and their social and family roles" (para 4.25), called for the "equal participation of women and men in all areas of family and household responsibilities" (para 4.26), tasked national and community leaders with promoting "the full involvement of men in family life and the full integration of women in community life" (para 4.29), and insisted that programmes be developed to "both educate and enable men to share more equally in family planning and in domestic and child-rearing responsibilities and to accept the major responsibility for the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases" (para 7.8).

As Dworkin et al. note, this "conference spurred a paradigmatic shift on the role of gender in development outcomes and men were increasingly viewed as playing a key role in transforming gender relations to be more gender equitable."[41] A year later, the Platform for Action (United Nations 1995), agreed at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, emphasized that a "critical piece for advancing the

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38 Wiegman 2012: 89.
39 Spivak 1988; Cornwall 2007.

40 Stern and Zalewski 2009: 617.
41 Dworkin et al. 2015: 130.

gender equality agenda is engaging men and boys," and that "[e]qual rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy" (para 15).

In setting this "engaging men and boys" agenda for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, the extent to which it was articulated in the language of the family and domestic partnership was strikingly evident from the outset. In his speech to the Beijing conference, then President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn called on participants to focus on:

> [N]ot just the liberation of women, but also the liberation of men—in their thinking, attitudes and willingness to take a fairer share of the responsibilities and workloads that women carry on their shoulders. To bring about real improvement in the quality of women's lives, men must change. And action must begin at home.[42]

In this framing, women's liberation is linked to the liberation of men, and both are domesticated; gender transformation for men is a matter of taking personal responsibility, which "must begin at home." There are echoes here of the famous insight of second-wave feminism: the personal is political. As Segal notes, much of the early impetus for work by and with men for gender equality in the United Kingdom in the 1970s was driven by feminist campaigns for the redistribution of unpaid care, in that "the main public presence of men against sexism in Britain was probably their involvement in childcare, providing crèches, for example, for women's events."[43] This is to say, men were first brought into fatherhood 'work' in support of a feminist response to the exploitation of women's unpaid labour, and the centrality of this exploitation to patriarchal social relations and the gendered organization of production and social reproduction under

(late) capitalism.[44] Indeed, in Segal's telling, much of the initial push to get more men more involved in child care came from feminist activists, keenly aware that the wildly disproportionate burden of unpaid care work borne by women limited their political organizing and campaigning.

In making the personal political, second-wave feminism insisted that change "at home," in terms of men taking a "fairer share of the responsibilities and workloads," was necessarily a part of political action for broader change in public policy and social attitudes towards the gendered division of labour. But in its subsequent evolution, in both programming and policy discourse, gender equality work with men on fatherhood has tended to organize itself around a more fully domesticated scene. The figure of the responsible, caring father has become a mainstay of the global MenCare campaign and related programmes in recent years.[45] This characterization of the problems of "men" and the gender injustices of the care economy in such individuated terms should be set and seen in the context of the domesticated turn in social policy under conditions of neoliberalism. The obverse of the responsible, caring father, the irresponsible, "dead-beat" dad, has come to feature prominently in public policy debates on "men" and the care economy in recent years. Bedford's investigation of World Bank's gender lending in Ecuador highlighted the institutional pressure to define gender policy in terms of a binary complementarity between men and women, which:

> led poor men to become hyper-visible as irresponsible partners, and as the crux of the gender policy problem. In turn, Bank gender policy was focused on efforts to change them, by encouraging their loving attachment to family and willingness to do domestic labour.[46]

Depicting policy and programme responses to the challenges of the patriarchal care economy in terms

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42 Wolfensohn 1995 cited in Bedford 2007.
43 Segal 1997: 285.

44 Fraser 2009.
45 Heilman et al. 2017.
46 Bedford 2007: 289.

of contrasting father figures has had several effects. Structural questions about the gendered dimensions of care and its provision (whether by the state, private sector, non-profit sector or families and communities) are elided by a focus on personal responsibility and irresponsibility. Men's masculinity becomes the locus of action. Addressing the problems of the exploitation of women's unpaid and underpaid labour in the care economy, and the foundational role this exploitation plays in women's subordination more generally, becomes a matter of transforming the "deadbeat" dad into the caring father: transforming harmful/failed masculinity into responsible/positive masculinity. This formulation constrains the discourse on men and the care economy to either celebrating men's caring masculinity or castigating their irresponsibility.

The politics of this formulation are significant. Bedford notes the insistence on the heteronormative nuclear family as the proper site for policy action, and the complementary strategies of "[g]etting poor women into work and getting poor men into parenting classes" that follow from this framing. She cautions that:

> men are being included in gender lending to help reprivatize caring labour as women move into paid work. In utilizing the complementarity policy rationale, then, feminists are running the risk that their interventions are complicit in the neo-liberal retreat from social provisioning.[47]

Making poor men "hyper-visible … as the crux of the gender policy problem" masks the "neo-liberal retreat from social provisioning," rendering "individual poor men culpable for a range of development outcomes better explained—and resolved—at the suprahousehold level".[48] The template for this was set, a decade earlier, by President Clinton's 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, whose goal, as he put it, was to "end welfare as we know it". Central to this was the figure of the irresponsible father; "the 1996 act reasserted traditional patriarchal chains of financial responsibility, requiring states to track down fathers and obliging mothers to help them do so".[49]

Recent scholarly work on US social welfare policy has drawn attention to the ideological significance of the family in "both the neoliberal demand for the efficient use of resources and the neoconservative insistence on preserving (or resurrecting) traditional roles".[50] As Watkins reminds us, it is important to reflect on US domestic policy on gender issues, given the outsize influence of US feminism(s) on the "global feminism" emerging from the UN Decade for Women; "global feminism flourished under the high meridian of American power and its practice has been deeply informed by US exemplars and expertise; to understand either involves grasping the relationship between the two."[51] With reference to the US context, Cooper charts the discursive importance of 'family values' from the early 1970s onwards as a bridge between neoliberal concerns with financial efficiency and neoconservative anxieties about moral probity.[52] The family became the preferred site and agent of an "ethic of responsibility, both moral and economic".[53] As Cooper emphasizes, "neoliberals and neoconservatives converged on the necessity of reinstating the family as the foundation of social and economic order,"[54] meaning that "[f]amily responsibility—a notion derived from the poor-law tradition of public relief—now became the watchword of neoliberal and neoconservative efforts to reform the welfare state".[55] As a result, "welfare has been transformed from a redistributive programme into an immense federal apparatus for policing the private family responsibilities of the poor, while deficit spending has been steadily transferred from the state to the private family".[56]

For present purposes, what is striking is the uses that masculinity is put to in this melding of neoliberal and neoconservative agendas on the family. In a family understood as nuclear and heteronormative, the

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47   Ibid.
48   Ibid.: 303.

49   Davies 2018: 29.
50   Ibid.: 30.
51   Watkins 2018: 10.
52   Cooper 2017.
53   Davies 2018: 30.
54   Cooper 2017: 49.
55   Ibid.: 64.
56   Ibid.: 21.

father becomes a crucial figure in the proper exercise of the family's moral and economic responsibility. "The fact that neoliberal policies of privatisation and deregulation have gone hand in hand with socially conservative efforts to treat dependency and care as wholly family matters"[57] was enabled by a policy focus on fathers and the quality of 'their' masculinity. Social policy in the United States on family life and the care economy has long drawn on racist ideas about the 'black family', whose pathology is the absent father. Thirty years before President Clinton's legislative attack on the social welfare system, Moynihan's infamous and influential 1965 report on *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action* located the obstacles to African-American economic progress in the crisis of family life in the black community. This crisis, the report claimed, could be traced back to the emasculating effects of slavery and post-slavery racial exclusion, which had resulted in a matriarchal structure in black family and community life that inhibited men from fulfilling their roles as husbands and fathers.[58]

Formulating policy on the care economy in terms of problems with men's masculinity, understood as the quality and qualities of manhood, displaces attention from the structural to the personal level not only by rendering men individually culpable, however. For encoded within this construction and deployment of masculinity are a set of ideas, memes almost, about failed or wounded masculinity that, depending on context, are racist and racializing and/or class-based and subordinating. Instead of analysing the interplay between structures of gender oppression, racial exclusion and economic exploitation, and their impacts on the distribution and valuation of care work, marginalized men's masculinity is pathologized as the social problem to be addressed. The move to characterize this interplay in terms of masculinity finds echoes in the World Bank's gender analyses examined by Bedford in the case of Ecuador. Here, it is the psychosocial effects of poor men's economic inability to live up to the social expectations of manhood, in terms of being the family breadwinner, that become the object of policy concern. "Concern with poor men's irresponsible drinking as a key cause of Ecuador's gender

problems, and as a reaction to wounded masculinity, is ... central to the Bank's recent policy texts," Bedford reports, based on a view that "gender role stress leads poor men, and particularly unemployed men, to be violent and to have reduced capacities for caring."[59] As a consequence, a "simplistic model of gender oppression focusing on poor men's savagery is thus reinvigorated".[60]

Given the above, the most recent recommendations by the global MenCare campaign lay a welcome emphasis on the need to "improve laws and policies" (e.g. on "equal, fully paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents") and to "transform social and gender norms" (e.g. "governments must provide training to change attitudes of service providers such as teachers, child care workers and health care providers".)[61] This emphasis on the need for structural change is further reinforced by its call to "guarantee economic and physical security for vulnerable families." Yet, an orientation towards the individual as the site and agent of change infuses the report. Of its five recommendations, the *State of the World's Fathers* report focuses its fourth recommendation on "father-specific parent training" and its fifth on men's "individual responsibility for achieving equality."[62] Its call for transformation of gender norms prioritizes four strategies, all of which relate to "training to change attitudes" and "media campaigns to inspire men, their families, and their communities to support men's caregiving."[63] Even its discussion of legal and policy change includes reference to the behaviouralism of nudge economics, calling for "poverty alleviation policies" to both "ensure the financial stability of families and to nudge men to do more care work."[64]

The contrast is striking with the recommendations made by UN Women on the gendered dimensions of the care economy in its 2018 report discussing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. It makes explicit reference to the "institutional framework for care," which includes "the family but also the market,

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57 Davies 2018: 28.
58 Moynihan 1965.

59 Bedford 2007: 299.
60 Ibid.: 304.
61 van der Gaag et al. 2019: 10.
62 Ibid.: 11.
63 Ibid.: 57.
64 Ibid.: 39.

the state and the not-for-profit sector, constituting a 'care diamond'."[65] This institutional analysis underpins the politics of redistribution that informs the report's ability to frame the gendered challenges of redistributing care work beyond the gender binary of the heteronormative family unit. It makes clear that "[r]edistribution requires policies that ensure that the provision of care is shared more equitably among families, states, markets and the not-for-profit sector, as well as between women and men within families."[66] As it suggests:

> An advantage of this broad formulation is that it highlights the interdependent relationship between the institutions where care is provided and the tensions that lie at the heart of any care system. Where public care services are being cut back—for example, through austerity measures—the need for care does not disappear. For those who can afford it, market-based services may provide a substitute. But families who cannot afford the charges will fall back on women's and girls' unpaid time—or leave care needs unattended.[67]

The "fatherhood" frame of the MenCare campaign focuses attention narrowly on men and their familial responsibilities towards children. By contrast, UN Women's "broad formulation" enables a consideration of the unpaid and underpaid feminized care workforce, transnational care supply chains, the long-term care needs of care-dependent older persons and the basic infrastructures of water, sanitation, food security, transport and accessible, affordable and quality early childhood education and care that support the provision of unpaid care and domestic work. If the "men for gender equality" field is to embrace this broad formulation and attend to the patriarchal dimensions of the issues outlined above, then it must take care not to be complicit with a public policy discourse on the care economy that centres attention on the family and the pathology of men's "irresponsible" masculinity.

2.3
De/naturalized organizing

There have long been feminist critiques of such narratives of marginalized men's pathological masculinities and the various uses to which they are put in social policy in the Global North and South. But this model still persists, as a way to make men visible as gendered subjects across a range of policy concerns. Accounts of wounded/savage (and usually, Muslim) masculinities are regularly invoked in the flourishing literature on "violent extremism" and "radicalization".[68] In both development and humanitarian discourse, men, as the "other half of gender," have been identified as an important target of policy and programming attention because of their "visible and invisible wounds".[69] In work on the gender dimensions of crisis and post-conflict settings, the figure of the wounded male looms ever larger, damaged by socialization into violent norms and emasculated by economic frustration. "Men who are unemployed, lacking in both income and social recognition and status, are more likely to be violent and participate in armed conflicts,"[70] Vess et al. note, in their work to "promote the better inclusion of male issues and their experiences in the shaping of gender-sensitive peace and security policies".[71]

Such male inclusion initiatives often highlight the complex interplay of factors, "structural and contextual" as well as "individual and psychosocial" that must be analysed. But, crucially, they seek to do so "through the lens of male identities".[72] The extent to which this lens may distort rather than clarify our understanding of truly transformative work has, however, long been in question. At the turn of the century, White, among other feminist scholars, was cautioning that the increasing emphasis given to men's lives within Gender and Development (GAD) discourse was, in contrast with GAD analyses of women's material

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65 UN Women 2018: 219.
66 Ibid.: 224.
67 Ibid.: 219.

68 Seidler 2007; Aslam 2012.
69 Vess et al. 2013.
70 Ibid.: 4.
71 Ibid.: 1.
72 Ibid.: 3.

conditions, "much more individualistic and personal, much more preoccupied with the self."[73]

The problem with this individualistic, domesticated perspective was its analytical weakness in accurately perceiving relations and operations of power, not least because such relations were subsumed under an identity-focused rubric of multiple masculinities. The pluralizing move from the language of 'masculinity' to 'masculinit*ies*' in both scholarship and programming was a desirable one, embodying the recognition that gender intersects with a host of other axes of social difference and seeking to improve on earlier, homogenizing and generalizing accounts. However, in practice the use of 'masculinities' at times has abstracted actual men from actual experiences and relations of power and oppression. The masculinity/masculinities framework "aggregates to itself all other dimensions of social relations," White warned. "Class, race, age, even femininity are rendered simply inflexions of the evermore expansive masculinity which is then made 'multiple' to accommodate them."[74] This subsumption of problems of class-based and/or racialized oppression within the primary analytic category of gender is evident in the ways that working class men's experiences of economic disempowerment or racial/ethnic minority men's experiences of racism are rendered as problems of subaltern masculinities. Such analyses tend to obscure rather than highlight the intersections of gender with the operations of capitalism and racialized state formation, preventing a "more open exploration of class, race and gender as (articulated) sets of social relations".[75]

As White cautioned two decades ago, "the danger of a focus on 'masculinity/ies' is the way that its psychological or culturalist focus can mystify the practical nitty-gritty of gender relations, and the powers that they express." Such mystification "lies in its capacity to displace from the material to the cultural, from the particular to the general, from the outer to the inner, from the social to the psychological".[76] The analytical and political effects of this mystification

are clear: structural problems of systemic racism or the neoliberal assault on state welfare provision or militarism and inter and intra-state conflict are rendered as concerns about wounded masculinities and the behaviours of marginalized men. Through the lens of male identities, "the better inclusion of male issues" in policy attention and programmatic action to address such structural problems is often reduced to parenting classes and fatherhood campaigns, in the case of work on the care economy, and workshops to help men heal from violent masculinities, in the case of work on gender-based violence in crisis and post-conflict settings.[77] Such individual and psychosocial interventions are necessary, of course, and show some signs of being effective at the level of personal change, as discussed in the next section. But this "lens of male identities" makes it hard to see the structural inequalities that public policy and other social change strategies must address, and what this means for anti-patriarchal work with and by men.

The displacements to which White refers are a function of the universalist claims of the category "men" itself, with its domesticated primal scene of change, which insists that "men must change" and that "action must begin at home." For what all men share, this universalist category of "men" suggests, is their experience of patriarchal power in the domestic setting of the heteronormative family. But by insisting on the analytical coherence and programmatic utility of "men" as a category, this domesticated paradigm for gender-transformative change has tended to foreground men's masculinity as the problem (with its individualizing emphasis on male identities and men's behaviours) and subsume under masculinity the multiple relations of power within which men are positioned (with its homogenizing erasure of men's differing material interests in social change).

The depoliticizing effects of this are evident when structural inequalities, and their gendered impacts on the care economy, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence, are framed as a problem of marginalized men's masculinities. Only by engaging with men's diverse and complex experiences

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73   White 2000: 35.
74   Ibid.: 36.
75   Ibid.: 37.
76   Ibid.: 40.

77   Shand et al. 2013.

of the forces structuring inequality and oppression can the "men for gender equality" field call men to be agents of change in truly transformative work on patriarchal relations and systems. But many uses of the category of "men" militate against this more complex engagement, because their putative universalism and domesticated analysis serves to naturalize and reify, rather than problematize and query, the gender identifications and social relations that constitute it. Indeed, a prominent and long-standing theorist of masculinities, Hearn, has argued that "the focus on masculinity is too narrow." Instead, Hearn suggests:

> it is time to go back from masculinity to men, to examine the hegemony of men and about men. The hegemony of men seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices.

In practice, this "involves addressing the formation of the social category of men, and its taken-for-grantedness, as well as men's taken-for-granted domination and control through consent". In this way, Hearn returns us to the need to deconstruct the operations and effects of the social category of "men" discussed at the beginning of this section, recognizing that the category discursively produces what it purports to describe. "The deconstruction of the dominant and the obvious, the social category of men, remains urgent," Hearn insists.[78]

In *Refusing to be a Man*, Stoltenberg[79] articulated this deconstructive approach to men's anti-patriarchal activism, his voluntarist rejection revealing the cultural rather than biological 'nature' of the category of "man/men". But the greatest challenge to the naturalized authority of men, and to the taken-for-granted category of "men" which secures it, has come from trans and non-binary scholars and activists through their insistence on the imbrication of, rather than distinction between, the biological and the cultural.[80] Hearn gestures towards this, commenting that an emphasis on problematizing the "men" category "may indeed offer possibilities of a rapprochement between transgender and queer studies, on the one hand, and materialist, embodied and gender class studies, on the other."[81] But he does not develop the point, and indeed, in the 16 years since he published this article, there is little evidence of such a rapprochement, either at the disciplinary or programmatic levels. With respect to the "men for gender equality" field, issues of trans-masculinities and non-binary genders, if they are discussed at all, are confined to the separated constituency of LGBTIQ+ communities, with the cis-normative and heteronormative foundations of the field left largely uninterrogated. This is acknowledged in a recent MenEngage document, emphasizing a commitment to challenging or deconstructing binary understandings of gender.[82]

But absent such an interrogation, the "men for gender equality" field continues to ground its work in the naturalized category of "men," which reproduces rather than questions the male/masculine and female/feminine gender binary which founds gender hierarchies and inequalities. Nowhere is this reproduction more evident than in the domesticated scene of transformative gender change often favoured by the field. To get beyond the domestic and approach a more structural analysis of, and response to, the functions of gender within hierarchical relations and operations of power requires that "men" become men, differentially positioned within these relations and operations, with differing political subjectivities to be mobilized on the basis of these positions. Organizing men for radical and transformative gender change calls for the category of "men" to be denaturalized, and used instead in ways that are reflexive, critical, and attuned to their political consequences. This, in turn, demands attention be given to the understandings of power developed and deployed by the "men for gender equality" field, to which this paper now turns.

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78 Hearn 2004: 59.
79 Stoltenberg 2000.
80 Halberstam 2005; Nelson 2015; Heinz 2016; Stein 2019.

81 Hearn 2004: 61.
82 MenEngage 2019.

3. THEORY PROBLEMS

3.1

Turning away from structure

That the "men for gender equality" field has struggled to engage with men's diverse and complex locations within patriarchal relations and systems, and the forces structuring social inequalities more generally, is clear from continuing internal and external critiques. The 2018 study by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) of male engagement programming for gender equity and women's empowerment concludes that "[m]ost male engagement programming focuses at the individual level—with some work also being done at the community level—without addressing the broader structures of patriarchy within which individuals and relationships operate". The report urges that "in order to create more sustainable gender norm transformation, simultaneous male engagement efforts need to occur at the institutional and policy levels to create more systematic and sustainable changes."[83] The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM) agrees: "Unfortunately, the framing of much male involvement work focuses solely on the individual and relational aspects of masculinity rather than engaging in more transformative work that challenges the fundamental assumptions upon which masculinities are constructed."[84]

Nor is this critique new. Over 10 years ago, the Institute of Development Studies organized the "Politicizing Masculinities: Beyond the Personal" symposium, and subsequently produced an edited volume based on papers presented there.[85] This work examined from differing theoretical and programmatic standpoints the tendency of the "men for gender equality" field to focus on changing "individual and relational aspects of masculinity" rather than "the institutional and policy levels to create more systematic and sustainable changes". In their 2013 research study with 29 representatives of organizations that engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls in Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and North and South America, Casey et al. similarly found an emphasis on the personal and relational and a "lack of concomitant social change strategies within the institutional, peer, and community networks in which men spend most of their time," noting that this "may undermine or directly threaten men's efforts to address gender-based violence and create equity."[86] Dworkin et al.'s survey of gender-transformative interventions for men in health programming in 2015 concluded with the recommendation that "[g]iven that gender-transformative programming for men currently includes few examples of structural interventions, this is clearly an area that needs to be bolstered in future work."[87]

This absence of structural analysis and interventions is all the more surprising given the origins of pro-feminist work with men in many parts of the world. If the roots of this work can be traced back to the second-wave feminism of the 1970s, it is worth remembering that, in Fraser's telling account, "second-wave feminists extended the purview of justice to take in such previously private matters as sexuality, housework, reproduction and violence against women ... The result was no mere laundry list of single issues." She continues:

> On the contrary, what connected the plethora of newly discovered injustices was the notion that women's subordination was systemic, grounded in the deep structures of society ... This shared commitment to systemic transformation betokened the movement's origins in the broader emancipatory ferment of the times.[88]

83 ICRW 2018: 92.
84 COFEM 2017: 6.
85 Cornwall et al. 2011.
86 Casey et al. 2013: 246.
87 Dworkin et al. 2015: 133.
88 Fraser 2009: 4.

Work by and with men for gender equality often grew out of this broader ferment of emancipatory politics, from the *reformasi* movement that overthrew the Suharto regime in Indonesia to the legacies of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

Amid this ferment, analyses of gender inequalities emphasized, as Fraser notes, the systemic subordination of women, and challenged the public/private distinctions on which patriarchal authority so often relies. Such analyses, Fraser suggests:

> uncovered the deep structural connections between women's responsibility for the lion's share of unpaid caregiving, their subordination in marriage and personal life, the gender segmentation of labour markets, men's domination of the political system, and the androcentrism of welfare provision, industrial policy and development schemes.[89]

That the personal is political meant that the familial must be structural. The previous section sketched the ways in which anti-patriarchal work on the care economy, as taken up by the "men for gender equality" field, has tended to prioritize educational strategies focused on correcting men's irresponsible masculinities and promoting fatherhood responsibilities within the family. This domesticated emphasis has entailed a relative neglect of strategies concerned with addressing the equitable redistribution of care work among families, states, markets and the not-for-profit sector, and the patriarchal barriers to such a redistribution. Looking at work on violence against women, and the ways in which men, as the target of both programming and policy, have been engaged, provides another glimpse of the struggles that the "men for gender equality" field has had in maintaining a structural analysis of patriarchal relations of power and developing or contributing to social change interventions in response.

Concern about violence against women has long been one of the main entry points for men into gender equality work and pro-feminist activism. From the 1970s onwards in many countries, women's demands that their male 'allies' do more to end male violence has been the spur to men's involvement. In India, Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW), an alliance of men working for gender equality since 2001, emerged out of conversations between male activists within social development organizations in the state of Uttar Pradesh and the women's rights organization Sahayog, based in Lucknow, the state capital. Similarly, the Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru (New Men Alliance) in Indonesia, a network of male activists focused on mobilizing men to take action for gender equality, was the product of debates within feminist civil society about the need for men to do more to end male violence, whether in the home, street or workplace,[90] as part of the post-Suharto period of democratization, the *Reformasi*.

Work with men in Nicaragua on violence against women also began in response to political change. Out of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in the 1980s emerged an autonomous women's movement, which, in 1992, established the National Network of Women against Violence. The growth of the network reflected the recognition of violence as a major social and public health problem, especially for women. But, as Welsh notes, by "the early 1990s, it had become increasingly obvious to many women in Nicaragua that if gender equity was to be achieved men, too, would have to change."[91] The Centre for Popular Education and Communications (CANTERA) is one Nicaraguan NGO that has pioneered the promotion of gender awareness-raising and training with men. By 1993, women in CANTERA were challenging the men in the organization to take gender seriously through a critical analysis of masculinity and its links with violence against women and girls. This led in September 1994 to the First National Encounter on Masculinity, organized by CANTERA, and subsequently to the organization's use of popular education approaches with men to enable them to reflect on and change patriarchal attitudes and behaviours.

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89 Ibid.

90 Hasyim 2014.
91 Welsh 2001: 6–7.

If work by and with men for gender equality often began with the issue of violence against women, this work grew out of analyses of such violence as not only endemic but systemic. Such analyses rejected the demarcation of the 'private' domain of the family and the household, and insisted on the structural nature of the patriarchal violence experienced by women, whether perpetrated by husbands, employers, police officers or soldiers. Far from being a 'private' domain removed from the purview of public policy, the family, in feminist analyses of men's violence against women, was a foundational site for the structuring of patriarchal relations and their related violence within society. Hence, the work on what came to be termed "domestic violence" became important as a mainstay of feminist activism against men's patriarchal subordination of women. While differing strands of feminist thought varied in the extent to which this patriarchal violence was seen as imbricated within class relations and/or hierarchies based on other forces of oppression (e.g. white supremacy, caste-based domination), the structural nature of men's 'private' violence against women was taken as axiomatic.

If much of the early work with men on issues of violence against women emerged from this structural analysis and political ferment, how is it that the "men for gender equality" field is widely held to be failing to adequately address the "broader structures of patriarchy"? A partial answer may relate to changes in the "global feminism" that Watkins identifies as emerging from the UN Decade for Women, inaugurated at the first World Conference on Women, in Mexico City in 1975.[92] A full account of such changes, and the ways in which they have entailed a turn away from a structural analysis of and political response to violence, is beyond the remit of this paper. But recent synopses shed light on their broad outlines. In Fraser's view, changes in "global feminism" can be understood in terms of a shift from a politics of redistribution to a politics of recognition:

> In this period, claims for justice were increasingly couched as claims for the recognition of identity and difference. With this shift

'from redistribution to recognition' came powerful pressures to transform second-wave feminism into a variant of identity politics. A progressive variant, to be sure, but one that tended nevertheless to overextend the critique of culture, while downplaying the critique of political economy. In practice, the tendency was to subordinate social-economic struggles to struggles for recognition.[93]

Watkins tells a more complex story of contentions within "global feminism" between an anti-discrimination approach, linked to US civil rights struggles and centred on work and education, and a social-democratic model, which arose from the mass parties of the early Second International.[94] It was this latter lineage, with its emphasis on "socializing the domain of women's 'private' domestic labour"[95] through the collective provision of childcare, cooking, housing, education and health facilities, full female employment and generous maternity leave, that was taken up by the women's liberation movements of the late 1960s. In Watkins' succinct summary, "[w]hile women's liberationists insisted on the overthrow of existing structures, the anti-discrimination approach sought to induct women into them. The strategy was legalist, handing authority over gender relations to the courts."[96]

The Plan of Action announced at the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City marked the high point of social-democratic politics within global feminism, with its focus on health, education and child-care provision, and its roots in the Declaration for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), developed by the 'Group of 77' non-aligned nations at the UN General Assembly in 1974. Over the series of subsequent conferences to monitor progress on this plan, in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995), this emphasis on structural transformation, however, was replaced by the US-led anti-discrimination approach, and its emphasis on individual 'empowerment'. This shift reflected and reinforced the rise of neoliberal political economy.

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92 Watkins 2018.

93 Fraser 2009: 7.
94 Watkins 2018.
95 Ibid.: 20.
96 Ibid.: 12.

Not only did the debt crises and IMF-imposed public spending of the 1980s weaken, materially, the ability of nations in the Global South to implement the commitments made in the Mexico City Plan of Action; there was an ideological resonance between anti-discrimination feminism and neoliberal 'family values'. This had long been the case. As Watkins makes clear, the vision of the US National Organization for Women, that "women might combine marriage and motherhood with a professional career, helped by child-care provision," was directly aligned with the writings of US neoliberal advocates from the 1960s onwards, such as Friedman and Becker.[97] The latter, in his *A Treatise on the Family,* argued that family members could maximize production through a division of labour, each specializing their human-capital investment in either market-oriented or household-oriented activities.[98] Watkins reminds us that the "World Bank's 'feminist turn' was argued on purely neoliberal grounds: 'women's empowerment' would boost economic growth and could help to reduce fertility rates."[99] At the Third World Conference on Women, in Nairobi in 1985, as feminists from across the Global South railed against the damage done by 'structural adjustment' programmes to the potential for feminist public policy, the US delegation, led by the First Daughter Maureen Reagan, pushed an agenda from the "neoliberal anti-discrimination playbook: 'improve women's access to credit', 'promotion of women's occupational mobility', and 'flexible working hours for all'".[100]

A decade later at Beijing, the hegemony of this neoliberal anti-discrimination agenda was complete. "Once the verbiage was peeled away, the operative clauses of the Platform for Action followed a familiar anti-discrimination logic: women's integration into the existing global-capitalist order, underpinned by coercion," Watkins emphasizes. "Discursively, the anti-discrimination approach and 'entry into the mainstream' had vanquished proposals for women's emancipation through a more egalitarian socio-economic order," she concludes. This was true across

a range of policy areas, strikingly so in the case of violence against women. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized a legal-criminal approach, downplaying the need to challenge the patriarchal violence produced by the socio-economic order; "criminal-justice measures would be used to tackle violence against women: toughening penal sanctions, prosecuting offenders, criminalizing pornography and enforcing sexual harassment laws," Watkins notes.[101]

This emphasis on a legal-criminal approach to violence against women, and a desire to toughen criminal justice sanctions, had characterized President Clinton's Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), passed a year before the Beijing conference. While welcomed by some advocates and activists working on violence against women issues, others noted that its punitive ethos and legal-criminal approach extended the retreat from social provisioning most clearly signalled by the welfare reform legislation of the same year, which as noted above, marked the melding of neoliberal and neoconservative 'family values' politics. As critics of the Act noted at the time, its behavioural framing of men's violence and punitive responses to it turned attention away from the systemic nature of patriarchal violence, and embraced the state, itself a perpetrator of many kinds of violence against poor and marginalized women, as the guarantor of women's safety. Subsequent scholarship has amplified this critique and extended it more broadly across the Global South and North, revealing the ways in which 'mainstream' feminism has privileged "carceral" responses to violence[102] and taken up issues of violence as a problem of "governance" rather than liberation.[103] As Kotiswaran argues, this turn towards the state marks a significant change in feminist activism in a country such as India, given that:

> The arc of Indian feminist advocacy against rape thus extends from its opposition to custodial sexual violence inflicted by the police in the 1970s and 1980s to sexual violence

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97 Ibid.: 14.
98 Becker 1981.
99 Watkins 2018: 41.
100 Ibid.: 39.

101 Ibid.: 43.
102 Ritchie 2017; Kim 2018; Terwiel 2020.
103 Halley et al. 2006; Halley 2018; Kotiswaran 2018.

perpetrated by the armed forces in conflict-ridden parts of the country today.[104]

This arc notwithstanding, Kotiswaran argues that Indian feminism "has entered a governance mode in light of three parameters, namely, an increased reliance on criminal law, a deep commitment to a highly gendered reading of sexual violence, and a diluted oppositional stance vis-à-vis state power."[105] It is in the context of these developments and trends that the failures of the "men for gender equality" field to adequately address the violence of the "broader structures of patriarchy" should be understood. In short, these failures may be a symptom of the broader shifts in US and global feminisms previously described, with the "men for gender equality" field echoing these depoliticizing and neoliberal tendencies. After all, it was at the Beijing conference in 1995, which celebrated anti-discrimination feminism and mainstreamed its "'integrate, regulate, incarcerate' model" in Watkins' pithy formulation, that men's domestic 'responsibilities' to promote gender equality and end gender-based violence were first declared.[106] This domesticated framing has also served to set and police the boundaries of what is included in and excluded from the "men for gender equality" field's purview. In the case of gender-based violence, such a framing has focused the field's attention on men's violence against women and girls, and particularly on intimate partner and sexual violence. It has paid less attention to other forms of men's violence against women such as sexual harassment in the workplace and public space, gender-based violence perpetrated by the state, violence against gender and sexual minorities perpetrated by both individuals and institutional actors, and men's violence against other cisgendered, heterosexual men and boys in families and a range of institutional settings, as well as during conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

Definitions of the "men for gender equality" field itself are at stake here. While these forms of violence involve or often involve male victims, initiatives focused on them may not be recognized as part of the "men for gender equality" field because they are not undertaken by the field's core actors and they often have less gender-conscious approaches. Still, one could expand the definition to include the efforts addressing these forms of violence. In any case, this means that campaigns that are more intersectional and structural in character—such as those addressing war and militarism and the recruitment of child soldiers—receive less attention in the field. One partial exception here is sexual violence against men and boys in the context of military conflict. The "men for gender equality" field has taken up this issue to some extent, particularly among international networks and those working in the Global South,[107] in the context of a significant increase in attention to the area this century.[108] There are debates on the area both within and outside the field, with feminist scholars and advocates warning against 'gender-neutral' approaches and arguing that gendered approaches are necessary to understand violence against men and boys and how this is shaped by patriarchal gender hierarchies.[109]

3.2
Turning towards norms

But in what ways has the "men for gender equality" itself reinforced this turn away from structural analyses of and responses to patriarchal violence? One place to look is at the field's use of social norms theory as its dominant paradigm for understanding and addressing men's patriarchal violence, and to explore the extent to which this paradigm helps to "overextend the critique of culture"[110] and reinforce the domesticated, behavioural turn of anti-discrimination feminism. The widespread articulation of the goals of gender-transformative interventions with men in terms of changing "harmful gender norms" is now pervasive across the field. A background paper for the 2012 UN Expert Group Meeting on the prevention of violence against women and girls identified "rigid gender norms, and harmful perceptions of what it means to be

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104 Kotiswaran 2018: 85.
105 Ibid.: 76.
106 Watkins 2018: 59.

107 MenEngage and UNFPA 2013.
108 Du Toit and le Roux 2020.
109 Ward 2016; Du Toit and le Roux 2020.
110 Fraser 2009: 7.

a man or a woman" as explaining men's perpetration of violence against women as well as their high-risk sexual behaviour.[111] A 2018 paper by Promundo,[112] among the most prominent of organizations within the global "men for gender equality" field, makes the connections "between harmful masculine norms and eight forms of violent behaviour," where masculine norms are defined as the "messages, stereotypes, and social instructions related to manhood."[113] In a recent *State of the World's Fathers* report,[114] of the three major factors which continue to impede more equitable caregiving, two are largely specified in the language of norms.[115] Similarly, a comprehensive review in 2015 of what it terms the "limited evidence base" from the "men for gender equality" field concluded that "more effective interventions with men and boys address masculinity—that is they explicitly address the norms, behaviours, and relations associated with ideals of manhood," and that such "programmes have been termed 'gender-transformative', in that they seek to transform gender norms and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women."[116]

But which kinds of work are foregrounded, and which neglected, by this emphasis on norms as a key or primary focus of gender-transformative interventions with men? Cislaghi and Heise, in their review of eight common pitfalls in the application of social norms theory to intervention practice, note the multifarious manifestations of social norms discourse in diverse academic disciplines, as providing an account of the relationship between social context and individual behaviour. With social norms gaining traction as a theoretical basis for intervention design, Cislaghi and Heise

highlight the particular uses to which social norms theory has been put in "understanding how socio-cultural context influences people's health-related behaviour," and that "many interventions in LMIC [low and middle-income countries] aim to change social norms that sustain harmful practices, including ... child marriage, female genital cutting and intimate partner violence". To explicate this relationship between social context and individual behaviour, Cislaghi and Heise suggest that in "their simplest definition, social norms are the informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions in a given group or society." In the next sentence, citing the work of Cialdini et al., social norms are characterized as "one's beliefs about: 1) what others in one's group do (descriptive norms); and 2) what they approve and disapprove of (injunctive norms)".[117]

A certain imprecision in this definition is immediately clear; social norms are both informal rules (presumably social) and "one's beliefs" (presumably personal). As Marcus and Harper emphasize, social norms approaches have long drawn on and oscillated between the quite distinct academic disciplines and theoretical commitments of sociology and social psychology. They note that "[b]roadly, the sociological tradition emphasises the role of norms in constituting society and governing social behaviour, whereas social psychological and game theoretical perspectives focus more on why people comply with social norms."[118] But the differences between these two disciplinary perspectives clearly matter when it comes to designing interventions. From the eight pitfalls identified by Cislaghi and Heise,[119] it would seem that practitioners have largely operated from a social psychological perspective, given that the pitfalls relate to misperceptions of the nature and strength of relationship between belief and behaviour, and the mechanisms of compliance or non-compliance that structure this relationship.

The greater pitfall, however, goes unmentioned: that "the role of norms in constituting society and governing social behaviour" remains neglected as a focus for

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111   Peacock and Barker 2012.

112   Heilman and Barker 2018: 8.

113   Listed as intimate partner violence, physical violence against children (by parents or caregivers), child sexual abuse and exploitation, bullying, homicide and other violent crime, non-partner sexual violence, suicide, conflict and war.

114   Heilman et al. 2017.

115   The three factors are identified as (1) social norms and gender socialization that reinforce the idea that caregiving is "women's work"; (2) economic and workplace realities and norms that drive household decision-making and maintain a traditional division of labour at home and at work; and (3) laws and policies that reinforce the idea that caregiving is women's work.

116   Jewkes et al. 2015.

117   Cislaghi and Heise 2018: 1–2.

118   Marcus and Harper 2014: 5.

119   Cislaghi and Heise 2018.

social norms interventions. Such a focus would require analyses of norms in terms of the operations of power, bound up as they are with the governance of behaviour and the constitution of social hierarchies. This would ask questions about the forces and interests underpinning the "informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions in a given group or society" and the strategies required to challenge these forces and interests. Current uses of social norms theory often make it hard to ask, let alone answer, such questions because they treat very different phenomena, from "tobacco use, sexual violence, and use of recreational drugs" to "child marriage, female genital cutting and intimate partner violence," as in some sense interchangeable examples of harmful social norms in action. But to say that these are all problematic behaviours subject to some mechanism of harmful social influence is in fact to say very little about the specific forces and interests at work in their very differing relationships to the governance of behaviour and the constitution of social hierarchies.

One answer to the question, then, of why the "men for gender equality" field has struggled to develop structural interventions may be its adoption of a social norms framework which, in its implementation, has privileged social psychological accounts of harmful behaviour over sociological analyses of phenomena such as gender-based violence and their embeddedness within hierarchies of power. The previous section discussed the ways in which the field's identification of "men" as its analytic category has, in its domesticating effects, militated against its ability to locate and work with men politically in their differing positions and affiliations within hierarchies of power. Similarly, the field's insistence on framing manifestations of patriarchal relations, from the care economy to violence, as a problem of personal behaviour and the social psychology of norms of masculinity has weakened its capacity to mobilize men to take action on the structural determinants of gender inequalities.

This inattention to structural interventions as a result of the social norms framework is, perhaps, most clear in relation to the "men for gender equality" field's work on gender-based violence. Unlike,

say, behaviours such as smoking and alcohol use, problems of violence are paradigmatically concerned with unequal relations of power. "The use of violence against women by men, whether emotional, economic, physical or sexual, is a manifestation of men's power over women and an instrument through which men's power is expressed and upheld," as Jewkes makes clear.[120] Gender-transformative interventions with men to prevent gender-based violence must, necessarily then, be concerned with transforming unequal relations of power, and the social, economic and political institutions through which such power is structured. Yet, the social psychological biases implicit in the implementation of the social norms paradigm frame the problem of the prevention of gender-based violence in terms of men's behaviour and norms of violent masculinity rather than patriarchal structures and their hierarchies of power.

The implications of this "overextended critique of culture" are evident in the types of programming that have been privileged by the social norms paradigm. A set of five case studies on the use of social norms change initiatives for preventing violence against women and girls and improving sexual reproductive health and rights has recently been collated by the Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP) working group, a "group of nine organizations with robust experience in developing social norms change methodologies".[121] The next section of this paper examines the evidence of behavioural change generated by such work. But what is striking about all these case studies is their focus on norms as being "about an individual's relationships with others around them," which they seek to alter through promoting "changes in the shared beliefs about what is both typical and socially appropriate behaviour among a group of people".[122] Hence, all five case studies feature the use of group-based education methodologies, often in combination with awareness-raising campaigns, to change these shared beliefs and interpersonal relationships. In the case of the IMAGE programme in South Africa, there is also a women's economic empowerment component, but once again

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120 Jewkes 2017: 1.
121 CUSP 2018: 1.
122 Ibid.: 2.

this is individually oriented, through a microfinance component, which administers loans to the poorest women in rural villages to develop income-generating activities. CUSP acknowledges that "changing deeply held norms about women, power, and rights is political work," which "seeks to right injustices and challenge power imbalances, at both the individual and structural levels, to create equality" and "requires politicized organizations that operate based on related values and that are committed to working in ways that reflect these values."[123] Yet, this commitment to political work, and an "intersectional, gender-power analysis," is not evidently translated into programme design. While there is evidence of changes in beliefs and behaviours, the case studies make no mention of a focus on, let alone progress in, changing power imbalances at structural levels.

3.3
Field formation and the limits on social action

What might changing structural power inequalities look like? From a more sociological perspective, the work to change gender norms must also involve analysing and challenging power inequalities, because the function of such norms is to 'naturalize' power inequalities; gender norms serve to normalize patriarchy, putting it "outside the realm of ideas and practices that can be discussed, debated or challenged".[124] As has been suggested, the work involved here needs to go beyond didactic education and awareness-raising:

> This might suggest supporting men engaged in gender-based violence prevention efforts to do policy analysis and advocacy, to conduct evaluations of culturally tailored prevention models in service of achieving 'legitimacy', to reach out with strategic, positive, and partnering messages to local sites of power and authority, and to increase the degree to

which they build cross-organization coalitions that could impact funding, policy, and the gendered distribution of power within community structures.[125]

The "men for gender equality" field itself recognizes the need for work that can challenge "'sites of power and authority," male-dominated as they invariably are. A conceptual model that captures and organizes a broader array of men's anti-violence activities in three distinct but interrelated domains has been proposed, which distinguishes between (1) initial outreach and recruitment of previously unengaged males, (2) interventions intended to promote gender-equitable attitudes and behaviour among men, and (3) gender equity-related social action aimed at eradicating gender-based violence.[126] A more detailed prescription for this third domain of social action, as it applies in work on GBV, has also been outlined by leading figures in the "men for gender equality" field in a 2014 paper on principles, lessons learned, and ways forward. Peacock and Barker (2014) suggest that core elements of broader social action include (1) coalition-building between governmental, private and regional organizations in ways that formalize and institutionalize funding and support for GBV prevention programming; (2) gender-equitable policy advocacy that is coupled with community organizing and public education campaigns to foster an accurate understanding of the benefits of GBV-related policies and that attempts to minimize backlash; and (3) mechanisms for macro-level accountability in which gender justice organizations publicly contest media, policies, or behaviour on the part of political, spiritual and economic leaders that promote or excuse GBV.[127]

Yet, this orientation to social action and structural change remains neglected in terms of both funding and evidence building. Anecdotally, it is clear that a range of "social action efforts" on GBV issues are being undertaken by activists and organizations at local levels; Casey et al., in their overview of gender-transformative work with men, note the challenge of

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123 Ibid.: 9.
124 Marcus and Harper 2014: 29.

125 Casey et al. 2013: 246–247.
126 Casey et al. 2013.
127 Peacock and Barker 2014.

"[c]ataloguing the largely descriptive literature regarding the enormous range of influential social action efforts globally."[128] But this disparate body of work is largely missing from the "men for gender equality" field's own discourse on GBV work, and thus from the reproduction of this discourse in research agendas and donor funding applications. In part, this must be because the range of "social action efforts" undertaken by activists and organizations within the field often fall outside the funding frameworks of national and international donors, whose programming orientation favours time-bound project plans with discrete outputs, measurable outcomes and evaluation methodologies drawn from both public health and social psychology. Social action efforts which, almost by definition, are less discrete and time-bound, with multiple actors working over extended periods towards systemic change are then left to a "largely descriptive literature," and thus excluded from the scope of what is considered to be rigorous evidence.

But field formation dynamics may also play a role in this lack of attention given to social action for structural change. For the analyses on which much social action for gender transformation is based, with their emphasis on the need for structural changes in the distribution and exercise of social, economic and political power, "suggest that as a critical and more holistic domain, social action is inclusive of all genders' and communities' efforts and is therefore the point at which men's engagement ceases to be a separate consideration or goal".[129] In other words, a focus on social action for gender transformation calls into question the rationale for a separate field of "men for gender equality" work itself. For "[w]hile men's organizations' contributions to social action efforts are critical, men's participation is not necessarily the end goal or hallmark of success of these efforts".[130]

If strategies for social action in some ways work against the processes of field formation by which the disparate set of actions by and with men for gender equality come to be demarcated as a field of "men for gender equality" research, programming and policy work, then, arguably, the social psychological emphases on "individual and relational aspects of masculinity" have been fostered by these same processes of field formation, and the pressure to delineate a discrete body of knowledge, practice and expertise. If men's initial involvements in work for gender equality often centred on supporting women's efforts to make public the 'private' oppressions of patriarchy, then as feminism under neoliberalism has tended "to overextend the critique of culture, while downplaying the critique of political economy," so too has the "men for gender equality" field come to privilege concerns about masculine identities and cultures over patriarchal systems and ideologies. In this sense, it might be said, to recall Fraser's account of feminism under neoliberalism, that the "men for gender equality" field itself is bound up with its own "politics of recognition" at the cost of its ability to engage with broader political struggles for redistribution and social transformation.[131]

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128 Casey et al. 2016: 12.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.

131 Fraser 2009.

4. STRATEGY ISSUES

4.1
NGO organizational form and feminist struggles

How has the organizational form of the "men for gender equality" field affected its privileging of a politics of masculine identities and culture over one of social redistribution and transformation? This question is rarely even asked, let alone answered; there is a significant and surprising silence. Surprising, because there continues a lively and contentious debate about the effects of what has been termed "NGO-ization" on feminist struggles and women's movements, not least in relation to issues of violence and the care economy on which this paper has focused. As has been noted, "feminist practices have been increasingly associated with practices of professionalization, managerialism, bureaucratization, and NGO-ization. The impact of these practices and processes on feminist activism are extensively studied and debated in feminist literature."[132] Histories of NGO-ization within women's movements trace its genesis in large part to the Beijing and Cairo conferences in the mid-1990s.[133]

The processes of professionalization, managerialism and bureaucratization which have been taken to constitute NGO-ization within feminist struggles coincided with the emergence of discourses on "male engagement" work with men and boys on gender equality. The ways in which these two histories are related remain poorly understood and little discussed, a silence which has political ramifications. The growth of the NGO organizational form from the 1970s onwards, and relatedly the increasing significance of donor and philanthropic funding, had significant impacts on feminist organizing and movement building. These processes and effects of NGO-ization have often been critiqued for their "successful 'co-option'

of feminist achievements and ends by a variety of non- and anti-feminist forces".[134] In other words, the professionalization, managerialism and bureaucratization that constitute NGO-ization are associated with a patriarchal undermining of feminist struggle with which the field of gender equality work with men and boys should be concerned. That the field itself, in its co-emergence with a potentially depoliticizing NGO-ization, might have contributed to a patriarchal neutralizing of feminist energies and struggles should be cause for disquiet and discussion.

Unpicking the threads that may tie processes of NGO-ization, and their possible depoliticization of feminist movements, to the growing field of gender equality work with men and boys must begin by acknowledging recent research on NGO-ization itself, and the call for a more nuanced account of its processes, politics and effects. "NGOization is a heterogenous practice, malleable in the hands of different organizations, entailing different costs and compromises, and creating new modes of organizing, feminist subjectivities, risks, and vulnerabilities," as Nazneen and Sultan make clear.[135] Roy notes that "Co-option itself has repeatedly proved inadequate to the task of describing the complexities of the present in which gender and 'woman' have gained unprecedented political patronage just as women's movements have become institutionalized."[136] One of the early theorists and critics of NGO-ization, in the context of Latin American feminisms, came to the conclusion that "though professionalization and institutionalization (in the sense of routinization) represent their own vexing challenges for internal democracy within and among movement groups, they do not in themselves determine the types of feminist practices that are prioritized by NGOs".[137]

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132 Nazneen and Sultan 2014: 8.
133 Alvarez 2009; Alvarez et al. 2002; Nazneen and Sultan 2009, 2014; Roy 2012.

134 Roy 2012: 1.
135 Nazneen and Sultan 2014: 11.
136 Roy 2012: 1.
137 Alvarez 2009: 182.

Indeed, far from being politically weakened, there is evidence to suggest that feminist civil society has won significant gains. A much-cited study on policy development on violence against women in 70 countries over four decades (1975–2005) found that feminist mobilization in civil society—not intra-legislative political phenomena such as leftist parties or women in government or economic factors such as national wealth—accounted for variation in policy development. As the study's authors, Htun and Weldon, conclude, "autonomous movements produce an enduring impact on VAW [violence against women] policy through the institutionaliza-tion of feminist ideas in international norms."[138] NGO feminisms exist in complex relations with "feminist mobilization in civil society," in part, because feminist theorizing and organizing have, in Alvarez's reading of Latin American experience, been "sidestreamed," "spreading horizontally into a wide array of class and racial-ethnic communities and social and cultural spaces, including parallel social movement publics."[139] Roy observes a similar dynamic at work in South Asia, noting a long history of women's movements' "alli-ances with other democratic struggles ... around war and militarization, against religious and right-wing fundamentalisms, state repression, sexual violence, and being generally embedded in concerns of both recognition and redistribution."[140] The vigour of this feminist mobilization across a range of social justice issues has been well documented[141] and is evident in many contemporary struggles, from Black Lives Matter in the United States to Dalit women's fight for both gender and caste justice in India to land strug-gles in Brazil and indigenous rights movements across Latin America.

Is there evidence to suggest a similar dynamic with respect to anti-patriarchal work with men, whether as a component of, or in alliance with, feminist mobiliza-tions across a range of social justice issues? An adequate answer to this question awaits further research, but some preliminary observations can be made. Recent studies suggest that one of the main reasons men

become involved in work to prevent gender-based violence is their concern for related social justice issues and their own experiences of oppression.[142] One con-clusion reached by a 2015 review was that "[l]inking gender to other issues of social injustice can facili-tate men working more effectively with women for gender equality."[143] Organizations identified with the "men for gender equality" field, such as Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa, have contributed to feminist mobilizations against the denial of AIDS treatment, the privatization of basic utilities and the detention of migrants and refugees. In a number of countries in Latin America, labour unions and community devel-opment organizations have established groups of anti-patriarchal men, mostly linked to either gender equality or sexual diversity government bodies.[144] Activists within the MenEngage Alliance have recently participated in protests against the Nicaraguan govern-ment's use of lethal force against protesters exercising their legal right to peacefully protest against proposed policy reform.

Yet studies of social movements engaged with a wide range of issues suggest that there is much work still to be done, especially with men within such move-ments, if a broader feminist mobilization is to be effected. A wide-ranging report on gender and social movements makes clear that "even as social justice movements engage in struggles for a diversity of eco-nomic, social and political rights, the aspirations and interests of women within these are either forgotten, assumed to be the same as men's, or equally advanced by the movement's strategic agenda".[145] Many move-ments have actively opposed a focus on gender issues as divisive and disruptive of the larger struggle, often accusing women's movements of being too narrow and myopic. As the report emphasizes, "Sustained change will only take place once actors in move-ments—especially movement leaders—name and begin to engage with the deep structure of patriar-chal gender norms and the ways that these manifest in movement imaginations, power dynamics and roles." Indeed, the report concludes that:

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138 Htun and Weldon 2012: 548.
139 Alvarez 2009: 177.
140 Roy 2012: 6–7.
141 Horn 2013.

142 Tolman et al. 2016.
143 Edström et al. 2015: 19.
144 Di Marco 2005.
145 Horn 2013.

Reflecting on internalised notions of mascu-linity—and hence of femininity—is a critical component of interrogating the deep struc-ture of movements and organisations, since subtle, unquestioned expressions of these, often oppressive to women, are often mani-fested there, and thus cannot be inspected or addressed without examining the deep structure.[146]

How can work on the deep structures, manifest within social movements themselves and within the power dynamics of societal institutions, be taken forwards in support of a broader and more effective feminist mobilization to achieve the goals of gender equal-ity? And what does this mean for work with men for gender equality, both inside and outside of the "men for gender equality" field?

4.2
Masculinities and intersectionality

To answer these questions, it is important to reflect on the implications for political strategy, and relatedly for movement-building, of organizing the "men for gender equality" field around the category of "men" and the problem of "norms of masculinity," both of which, as previous sections have discussed, have mili-tated against analyses of structural power and social change. If the framing of gender-transformative work with men in terms of transforming social norms has favoured social psychological accounts of men's sub-jectivities over sociological perspectives on patriarchal conditions, then this turn to social psychology has itself been aided and delimited by the subsumption of men's complex positions in social relations under simplistic accounts of multiple "masculinities". This is borne out by research undertaken by ICRW on gender equality work with men and boys, based on key infor-mant interviews with researchers, implementers and funders across the world, which notes the persistence

of reductive accounts of this multiplicity and com-plexity. As the report observes:

> Another frequent concern expressed by participants and in the literature surveyed is that men and boys are often viewed one-dimensionally. With that, there is a need to acknowledge diverse and often overlapping identities among men that create differing levels of power and influence.[147]

Similarly, a survey of gender-transformative approaches to improving sexual and reproductive health among men finds that these "clearly privilege gender as the key axis of intervention" and thereby do "not adequately consider that there are differences and inequalities among men that shape both health outcomes and the collective practice of masculinities". In this way, "gender-transformative work misses the intersectional nature of the identities and inequalities that shape men's health outcomes."[148]

The call for a more intersectional analysis of and response to men's differing and complex experiences of "identities and inequalities" is now widespread across the "men for gender equality" field. The back-ground paper prepared for the second MenEngage global symposium in 2014 concluded, "True social change requires working with men and women, boys and girls, and across the various intersecting issues that influence their lives and opportunities."[149] A 2015 review similarly observed that "[w]hen other social inequalities and interests such as class or race converge with—or override—gendered differences, it can affect how men may support women's empow-erment or representation."[150] In its current strategic plan, the MenEngage Global Alliance emphasizes "the importance the network gives to strengthening an intersectional approach to gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights—including HIV/AIDS, GBV prevention, unpaid care and peace and security."[151] And a recent 2019 MenEngage report emphasizes the

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146 Ibid.

147 ICRW 2018: 20.
148 Dworkin et al. 2015: 133–34.
149 Ricardo 2014: 48.
150 Edström et al. 2015: 19.
151 MenEngage 2017: 26.

need for more robust take-up and application of an intersectional framework.[152]

Nor, once again, is this insistence on the need for intersectional analyses and approaches to work with men for gender equality a new phenomenon. In 2005, Connell was noting that "[c]lass, race, national, regional, and generational differences cross-cut the category of 'men,' spreading the gains and costs of gender relations very unevenly among men."[153] From the mid-1990s onwards, Connell, together with other scholars, has done much to theorize and popularize the concept of multiple "masculinities," from hegemonic to subordinate, in order to take account of men's differing positions within multiple hierarchies of power and thus their differing experiences of privilege and disempowerment.[154] That intersectional analyses and approaches to work with men for gender equality should be understood in terms of pluralized masculinities is now an orthodoxy within the field. But the concept of masculinity/masculinities, and its utility in relation to anti-patriarchal work with men, has come under scholarly critique from its inception, not least by Connell herself.[155]

Pluralizing masculinities, far from illuminating the issues of power and oppression experienced by the heterogeneous category of men, risks conflating social psychological perspectives on "different ways of being a man" with sociological understandings of men's multiple positionings within hierarchies of power. This conflation was present from the earliest uses of the term "hegemonic masculinities." Carrigan et al. introduced the term "socially dominant or hegemonic" masculinity,[156] a concept more fully developed a decade later in Connell's foundational book *Masculinities*.[157] While advanced, Roberts suggests, as a theoretical move to locate masculinity in relation to a "theory of power as a central focus to ensure a more thorough account and explanation for the intricacies of gender relations and the nature of intramasculine

domination," there was a confusion at the heart of the concept in relation to its understanding of power, which has obscured rather than clarified gender as a relation and operation of power interlocking with other forces of oppression.[158]

Thus, even as they introduced the concept, Carrigan et al. defined hegemonic masculinity as both a "culturally exalted form of masculinity" and the means by which "particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance."[159] This conflation of different ways of being a man ("culturally exalted form") and different positions in hierarchies of power (materially privileged in "positions of power and wealth") has long undermined the term's analytical acuity and political utility.[160] As Howson notes, "hegemonic masculinity slides in meaning between a political mechanism that is tied to hegemony and the manifestation of the dominant version of manhood."[161]

Such theoretical conflations can feed programmatic and policy confusion when intersectional approaches to work with men for gender equality are conceptualized in terms of plural masculinities. When work with economically or racially marginalized men on preventing violence against women is framed in terms of promoting more positive masculinities, there are few ways to engage these men in confronting the institutionalized forms such violence takes and, indeed, in questioning what justice looks like in situations where the state itself is a source of violence in both men's and women's lives. By the same token, when work with men on the patriarchal care economy, and the disproportionate burden of care borne by women, is articulated as engaging men as caring fathers, there is little scope to question the political economy of social reproduction as it affects the lives of both men and women who share similar socio-economic circumstances.[162]

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152 MenEngage 2019.
153 Connell 2005: 1809.
154 Connell 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005.
155 Connell and Messerschmidt 2005.
156 Carrigan et al. 1985: 552.
157 Connell 1995.

158 Roberts 2014: 2.
159 Carrigan et al. 1985: 592.
160 Flood 2002.
161 Howson 2008: 109.
162 Bedford 2007.

An intersectional analysis of "class, race and gender as (articulated) sets of social relations" should highlight the fact, as Connell herself made clear, that there "are many situations where groups of men may see their interest as more closely aligned with the women in their communities than with other men."[163] But such cross-gender alliances around shared interests of racist or class-based or other forms of oppression, far from being fostered, are undermined by an insistence on subsuming these interests, as men experience them, under the rubric of masculinities—in other words, as a matter primarily of their gendered subjectivity. As with the emphasis on "social action" discussed above, the logic of an intersectional approach to working with men for gender equality is to extend beyond the boundaries of a demarcated "field" of distinct knowledge production and programme implementation. This entails working with the multiple positions that men occupy in hierarchies of power and thus the multiple interests they may have in struggles for economic, racial and sexual as well as gender justice. If gender equality calls for profound structural change, in which men must play their part, then such social change is also bound up with other struggles against injustice and oppression in which patriarchy and its violence is enmeshed.

4.3
Movement building and accountability

That feminist mobilizations matter when it comes to tackling the deeper, structural causes of patriarchal violence is now well acknowledged. As UN Women has emphasized, "Autonomous feminist organizing and advocacy in both national and transnational settings has been the key factor behind securing policy action on VAWG at global, regional and local levels."[164] With reference to the *2030 Agenda* for *Sustainable Development* adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, it is

also clear that "[w]omen's rights organizations were extremely effective in building coalitions and alliances across different interest groups to put gender equality at the centre of the new agenda".[165] The success of women's movements in pushing a transformative agenda for gender change is in part owed to the side-streaming of feminist energies and politics into linked struggles for economic and racial justice. This kind of feminist diffusion is less evident in the case of gender equality work with men, where there has been less recognition of the implications of an intersectional pro-feminism for the movement-building strategies and coalitions that the "men for gender equality" field should pursue.

Many of the concerns raised about the "men for gender equality" field's inattention to movement-building strategies have centred on the competition for funding fostered by donor-driven NGO-ization. As Watkins reminds us, in her account of the evolution of US feminism, which resonates with experience elsewhere, the "foundations' preference for novel projects helped to drive a deeper segmentation of feminist practice, with campaign groups under pressure to promote their speciality as a unique selling point with its own 'organizational niche'," meaning that:

> Instead of bringing different communities of women together, as the early movement hoped to do, the donors' application processes encouraged them to compete against each other in the fight for funds. Later, these processes would become familiar across the world under the name of NGO-ization.[166]

It was amid these "becalmed donor-run zones of the 1990s"[167] that the "men for gender equality" field began to establish itself as an actor within global feminism, based largely on the NGO form. That this has contributed to, or been complicit with, a "deeper segmentation of feminist practice" has been of concern ever since, not least with disquiet that that the "men for gender equality" field has operated too much in competition

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163 Connell 2005: 1809.
164 UN Women 2018: 16.

165 Ibid.
166 Watkins 2018: 24.
167 Ibid.: 59.

rather than collaboration with feminist coalitions and movements. The Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM), among others, has criticized the diversion of donor funding away from programmes working directly with women and girls on issues of violence prevention and protection and towards poorly evidenced gender-based violence prevention work with men and boys. In its study of the US government's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), a leading contributor to GBV interventions in humanitarian settings, COFEM reports that:

> Until 2010, PRM's call emphasized women-focused services, as well as awareness-raising and engagement with men and boys. From 2011 to 2016, calls expressed interest in programs addressing the specific needs of LGBTI [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex] and male survivors as underserved populations, as well as "research on how to more effectively include men and boys in GBV prevention and non-stigmatizing response." During this same period, none of the six calls referenced attention to gender discrimination, women-focused service provision, or empowerment of women and girls.[168]

The background paper prepared for the second MenEngage Global Symposium in 2014 also comments on the "competition for donor funds amongst men's feminist organizing and women's rights networks themselves,"[169] while noting that "[a]nalyses of current funding cycles suggest that work with men still represents a very small percentage of gender equality–related funding".[170] The paper suggests that a greater problem may lie in the structuring of NGO funding, in which donor resources increasingly go to large international NGOs and not to local or national organizations. The relative lack of funding for grassroots women's organizations is now well documented,[171] and it may be that a similar dynamic is at work in the funding for the "men for gender equality" field itself, with larger organizations with a global reach benefiting at the expense of smaller, more local groups. That being said, the clear recommendation emerging from the second MenEngage Global Symposium was that:

> Activists and organizations working with men and boys, again, even if working with men and boys exclusively, should ensure that they are advocating for funding and recognition for gender equality work more broadly, not just for work with men and boys specifically.[172]

For COFEM, the onus is also on donors to "analyse their portfolios to ensure that male engagement groups are not usurping the role of women's rights organisations" at the same time as also ensuring that "any male engagement work supported has practical, measurable accountability mechanisms to local women's movement/organisations."[173] In its most recent strategic plan, the MenEngage Alliance too warns against NGO-ization and depoliticization.[174]

Together with debates about funding, questions about accountability have loomed large in relation to the challenges of ensuring that work with men for gender equality helps to strengthen rather than undermine feminist mobilizations. In its survey of the "men for gender equality" field, ICRW notes that "[a]ll key informants and convening participants valued accountability to the women's movement and to a gender equality agenda; this theme was also strongly reiterated in the literature." The report also makes clear: "What that means in practice, however, is more contentious."[175] The difficulties of putting accountability into practice in the context of work with and by men for gender equality are well known,[176] and over several decades of this work, tools and guides have been developed to strengthen such accountability.[177] In recent years, the MenEngage Alliance has taken a strong lead on strengthening the commitment and

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168 COFEM 2017: 6.
169 Ricardo 2014: 44.
170 Dover 214.
171 OECD 2015, 2016.

172 Ricardo 2014: 44.
173 COFEM 2017: 8.
174 MenEngage 2017.
175 ICRW 2018: 24.
176 Macomber 2018.
177 Pease 2017.

capacity of its members to be more accountable to the work of women's rights organizations, developing a training package,[178] convening a meeting at the 2018 UN Commission on the Status of Women on issues of accountability,[179] and affirming commitments to strengthening accountable practices and partnership building with feminist organizations and activists in its strategic planning.[180]

Key to this work is teasing out the personal and organizational aspects of accountability, in terms of both practices and mechanisms. At the level of personal practice, the work described above aims to ensure that "organizations and practitioners working on male engagement engage constructively with feminist criticisms".[181] Given that collaboration with women's rights work is a stated core principle of the "men for gender equality" field,[182] then it is incumbent upon individuals and organizations within the field to "demonstrate good faith and speak out ... when there is a genuine critique advanced about the nature in which an ally, including male colleagues and partners, is undermining work to address VAWG".[183] The "ally" framework is significant, for the framing of men as allies to women in the struggle for gender equality is, as Casey suggests, "predicated on the notion that institutionalized oppression will persist until members of 'dominant' social groups become actively involved in ending it."[184] To do so in an accountable way has long been understood to mean that allies must follow the leadership of those most affected by the oppression in question. For COFEM, as for many feminist groups and activists, accountability is first and foremost about "[p]romoting and ensuring women and girls' leadership in work" on violence and gender equality more broadly, and "[e]nsuring that male involvement efforts demonstrably empower women and girls."[185]

As already noted, there has been a move within the "men for gender equality" field to prefer the language of "co-beneficiary" and "stakeholder" over that of ally, in order to emphasize the benefits to men themselves of their anti-patriarchal work. But the extent to which this preference signals a dilution of commitment to the principle that those most affected by patriarchal oppression must be in the leadership of movements to address it remains a question of live debate. This debate is complicated by the fact that, at the organizational level, some of the work of engaging men and boys in building gender equality is not done by dedicated male-focused organizations but by women's rights organizations themselves. Over one third of attendees at the second MenEngage Global Symposium self-identified as representatives of women's rights groups. For organizations that focus mainly or exclusively on working with men for gender equality, there seems to be a growing trend for women to move into leadership positions; the MenEngage Alliance secretariat is itself headed by a woman, as until recently was the largest White Ribbon Campaign organization, White Ribbon Australia.

Nor is it clear that there is a singular feminist movement to which the "men for gender equality" field can be straightforwardly accountable. At the very least, it is clear that there are multiple feminisms, with differing and indeed sometimes incompatible perspectives. Different schools of feminist advocacy and theory have incommensurate positions on particular issues from sex work to transgender rights, and on basic questions of ideology or theory, including how to understand gender itself. For example, efforts to engage men in addressing violence against women, pornography and sex work are informed more by radical feminism than other areas of the "men for gender equality" field, reflecting the attention to these issues in radical feminist activism and scholarship. On the other hand, efforts to engage men in supporting women's rights to freedom from discrimination in the workplace are informed more by liberal feminism, again reflecting liberal feminism's focus on (often privileged) women's participation in the public worlds of work, the economy and politics. These diverse influences then shape the strategies and agendas adopted by these different strands of work with men and boys.[186] Informed by

178 MenEngage 2017.
179 MenEngage 2018.
180 MenEngage 2017.
181 ICRW 2018: 24.
182 Peacock and Barker 2014; MenEngage 2017.
183 COFEM 2017: 8.
184 Casey 2010: 267.
185 COFEM 2017: 2.

186 Burrell and Flood 2019.

radical feminism, some violence-focused efforts link men's violence against women to wider patriarchal systems of sexuality and gender, call for a radical challenge to rape culture and sexist constructions of masculinity, and seek to mobilize men with women in activist networks and movements. On the other hand, informed by liberal feminism, workplace-focused efforts have been more likely to focus on individuals' sexist attitudes and behaviours and to call for senior men to act as mentors and advocates for women.[187]

Working through such differences in order to build gender equality coalitions led by those most affected by gender injustice (including people with non-normative gender identities and expressions and sexual orientations) requires a practice of accountability informed by shared analyses of injustice. If progress on issues such as gender-based violence and the care economy calls for an expanded feminist mobilization, then investment is required in strengthening mecha-nisms of accountability and the shared analyses and relationships of trust on which such mechanisms will depend. Significantly, such an expanded feminist mobilization, and men's contributions to it, will likely not be confined to self-identified women's rights organizations or indeed more explicitly feminist formations, as the discussion of sidestreaming above made clear. Making progress on institutional reform and structural change on issues such as the care economy, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights will require different sets of actors to make positive policy change happen, from labour unions and the private sector to criminal justice sector reform initiatives and struggles for racial justice and LGBTIQ+ rights.[188] This broader set of actors with which organizations within the "men for gender equality" field must build working relationships in turn may also have their own tensions, friction and relations with feminist movements, with which any movement-building effort must contend.

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187 Ibid.

188 Htun and Weldon 2017.

5. EVIDENCE BASE

As the "men for gender equality" field has grown, so has an accompanying body of scholarship regarding the effectiveness of efforts to engage men in gender-related change. Most programmes and initiatives have not been subject to robust impact evaluation, as is true for the health promotion and violence prevention fields more widely. Nevertheless, a range of studies show that it is possible to make positive change among men, including change which persists over time. Before exploring this research, however, this paper will briefly examine the notion of 'evidence' itself, and the implications of the patterns of formation of the "men for gender equality" field for what counts as evidence.

5.1
What evidence, which evidence?

In such fields as development, public health and community work, there has been in recent years an increasing emphasis on the need for 'evidence': for the collection of rigorous data regarding the effectiveness of programmes and policies. This is welcome, for without any systematic way of assessing the impact of our efforts, how can we know if we are making a positive difference? At the same time, there are debates over what counts as 'evidence'.

The gold standard of evaluation in much health promotion research is the experimental design, ideally through a randomized controlled trial (RCT). In an RCT, people (or, for example, classes or communities) are randomly allocated to the group receiving the treatment or intervention (the 'treatment' group) or to a group receiving no treatment, a placebo treatment or an alternative comparable treatment (the 'control' group). The analysis involves measuring the difference (if any) in quantitative outcomes between these groups. The standard of the RCT draws on the ideals of evidence and forms of research prominent in medicine and other 'natural science' fields. Randomized controlled trials—and experimental and to a lesser extent quasi-experimental studies more generally—often have been seen as representing the strongest form of evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions. This is visible in discussions of evidence in the "engaging men" field. For example, a review of sexual violence prevention focused on studies with a randomized controlled or quasi-experimental design, although it also included non-randomized studies with treatment and control groups,[189] while a recent review of male-focused sexual violence, domestic violence and intimate partner violence perpetration programmes focused on studies with randomized designs.[190]

However, the RCT ideal also has been criticized, on practical and theoretical grounds. An RCT design may be inappropriate for evaluation of the community-based projects and programmes typical in violence prevention and health promotion. Community organizations often do not have the capacity to conduct evaluations of this nature, and the programmes they run typically have features which rule out an experimental design. Randomized assignment may be impractical, and stakeholders may not be able to wait until the programme is over to see whether it is having desired outcomes.[191] Experimental and quasi-experimental designs by themselves are poor at capturing the complex social and historical contexts and processes of change which structure programme outcomes. Given that many complex, interacting and shifting factors contribute to programme outcomes, one cannot necessarily assume or show that programme implementation occurs

189 Ricardo, Eads et al. 2011.
190 Graham, Embry et al. 2019.
191 Goodman and Noonan 2009.

before the outcomes, or that the association between the programme and desired outcomes is not caused by other factors.[192]

There are also criticisms of the assumptions about methodology and epistemology (the bases of knowledge) which guide RCTs. RCTs historically have been guided by the assumptions that an objective and value-free production of knowledge is possible, and quantitative data necessarily are more valuable than qualitative data. Such assumptions are rejected in more interpretive and constructionist understandings of knowledge, which argue that knowledge is socially situated and shaped by its social and cultural context and the experiences of those who create it.[193]

Evidence-based practice can and should be guided by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Randomized-control trials are one desirable form of evidence, but not the only form, and should be complemented by both quasi-experimental and non-experimental methods. More broadly, a 'critical realist' position on knowledge is valuable. It allows that while purely objective and value-free knowledge is impossible, it is possible to develop robust knowledge of the world,[194] in this case, to develop knowledge of how best to engage men in building gender equality. While the discussion below does report on the extent to which existing studies rely on experimental and quasi-experimental or other designs, this should not be taken as assuming that such designs necessarily produce better data.

The processes of formation of the "men for gender equality" field have themselves shaped the forms of evidence available and the kinds of initiatives for which evidence is emphasized. First, just as the funding frameworks and organizational forms of the field have limited efforts to change structural inequalities, as section 3.2 above noted, they have also limited the ability to gather evidence on those social action efforts that do exist. The funding, design and implementation of many interventions themselves

militate against assessment of broader impacts of these interventions. It is easier to gather data on the impact, among direct participants, of time-bound and discrete programmes or initiatives, than it is to gather data on impacts in the wider communities and settings in which efforts take place and among participants and others over longer time periods.[195] In the violence prevention field for example, recent reviews find that community-level evaluations are rare.[196] There are significant challenges in evaluating violence-related outcomes at the community level, not least of which is gathering robust and relevant data,[197] although there is at least one example of a randomized controlled trial of a community-level intervention, involving matched pairs of intervention and control communities.[198] In any case, relatively little is known about men's trajectories after participation in violence prevention and health promotion programmes or whether men's participation in social action then feeds into wider communities' efforts to support gender justice.[199]

The "men for gender equality" field is marked by the exclusion or neglect of certain aspects of men's and boys' lives and social relations, and this too has implications for the evidence highlighted in and by the field. In the domain of interpersonal violence for example, the relative neglect of men's violence against other men and boys, homophobic violence, military and collective violence, and violence associated with colonialism and imperialism is reflected in the absence of initiatives addressing these forms of violence in the reviews of effectiveness associated with the field. Major reviews of the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts focused on engaging men and boys have rarely, if ever, included evaluations of initiatives focused on these forms of violence,[200] and indeed it may be that such evaluations themselves are rare.

Let us turn now to the evidence base associated with "engaging men" work.

192 Ibid.
193 Pease 2007.
194 Ibid.

195 Casey et al. 2016.
196 DeGue et al. 2012; Fulu et al. 2014.
197 DeGue et al. 2012.
198 Abramsky et al. 2014.
199 Casey et al. 2016.
200 Ricardo et al. 2011; Dworkin et al. 2013; Graham et al. 2019.

5.2
The evidence: Sexual and reproductive health

In the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in attention to men's roles in sexual and reproductive health, based in part on recognition of how masculine norms and gender-inequitable relations constrain both men's and their sexual partners' sexual and reproductive health.[201] A 2007 international review documented 23 evaluated interventions involving men and/or boys in improving maternal, newborn and child health or sexual and reproductive health.[202] Of these, eight were judged as effective, nine as promising, and six as unclear. Four further reviews since then attest to increases in the evidence base on interventions focused on male involvement in maternal and newborn health and sexual and reproductive health.[203] A 2014 review of gender-integrated interventions in reproductive and maternal-child health identified 22 interventions which included men (whether men-only, couples or community-based), addressed gender dynamics, measured relevant behavioural outcomes, used at least a moderate evaluation design, and had been implemented in low- or middle-income countries.[204] The review documented that such interventions have had positive *and* null findings, in terms of whether they shifted gender norms and relations, whether they produced positive change among particular groups of participants, and which behavioural outcomes they influenced.

A recent review identified 13 studies related to male involvement to improve maternal and newborn health over the period 2000–2012. It found that the interventions were associated with "improved antenatal care attendance, skilled birth attendance, facility birth, postpartum care, birth and complications preparedness and maternal nutrition," although their impact on mortality, morbidity and breastfeeding was less clear.[205] Some interventions had positive effects on male partners' support for women and couple communication and decision-making, although some also weakened women's authority and autonomy. Finally, a systematic review of interventions addressing men, masculinities and gender equality in sexual and reproductive health and rights found 39 reviews that included gender-transformative interventions. One third reported positive outcomes, while close to two thirds were inconclusive or mixed.[206]

Initiatives addressing HIV and focused on men overlap with those in the sexual and reproductive domain. While there have been over 30 reviews of the effectiveness of HIV prevention efforts published since 2010, the report concentrates here on the subset of these focused on work with men and published since 2012. In a 2013 review of gender-transformative interventions among heterosexually active men aimed at reducing HIV risks and violence, of the 15 studies, only one included biological outcomes (HIV incidence and sexually transmitted infections transmission) and showed little impact, but 11 examined impacts on sexual risk behaviours (such as condom use, number of partners, purchasing sex, and so on). These studies showed moderate impacts on sexual risk behaviours, with positive changes in half the outcomes.[207]

A meta-analysis of the efficacy of peer-led interventions among men who have sex with men (MSM), focusing on studies since 2012, found that they are effective overall in reducing unprotected anal intercourse, although their efficacy varied by study design.[208] A systematic review of 24 MSM interventions in Europe documented high standards of evidence and strong evidence of efficacy, particularly for interventions comprising condom use, peer outreach, peer-led groups, universal coverage of antiretroviral treatment and treatment as prevention.[209] A recent review of interventions addressing men in sub-Saharan African countries and addressing both HIV and violence against women found 13 relevant studies. There were positive or mixed impacts on biological HIV outcomes, although with few studies

201 Stern 2015.
202 Barker et al. 2007.
203 Kraft et al. 2014; Stern 2015; Tokhi et al. 2018; Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019.
204 Kraft et al. 2014.
205 Tokhi et al. 2018.

206 Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019.
207 Dworkin et al. 2013.
208 Ye et al. 2014.
209 Strömdahl et al. 2015.

measuring post-intervention HIV diagnosis outcomes, and a mixed impact on behavioural risk outcomes.[210]

Finally, a systematic review of reviews of interventions addressing men who have sex with men and published over 2000–2010 found 4 meta-analyses citing 52 unique studies, with 45 of these either RCTs or quasi-experimental.[211] Individual-level interventions showed only inconsistent evidence in reducing unprotected anal intercourse among men who have sex with men; group-level interventions—such those as building skills in condom use, safer sex negotiation and risk reduction decision-making—showed consistent evidence of being effective. Community-level interventions, typically involving peer-led health, had consistent evidence of effectiveness. However, across this literature, many studies rely on unprotected anal intercourse as the main outcome measure, although this is a limited measure of risk, neglecting men who have sex with men's increasing use of risk reduction strategies such as negotiated safety (the non-use of condoms within HIV-seronegative concordant sexual relationships) and serosorting (using knowledge of a sexual partners' HIV status to reduce the risk of HIV transmission during unsafe sex).[212] The HIV literature offers a general endorsement of 'combination prevention approaches, combining social structural, behavioural and biomedical approaches'.[213]

Strategies that have proved effective among men in promoting sexual and reproductive health include peer education in groups, large-scale media programmes, home visits, facility-based counselling, workplace health and education programmes, and community outreach.[214] There are signs that campaigns are more likely to effect change if they use integrated approaches combining, for example, group education, media campaigns, and sexual and reproductive health services, rather than single-focus interventions.[215] An example of an effective community-based intervention is Stepping Stones, which uses participatory learning approaches to build knowledge, risk awareness, and communication and relationship skills relating to gender, violence and HIV. Men who took part in the Stepping Stones programme reported increased knowledge of reproductive health, improved communication skills, and reduced perpetration of partner violence and alcohol consumption. The programme's impact was intensified by a complementary intervention, Creating Futures, a structural intervention focused on strengthening young people's access to education, employment and income.[216] Multilevel advocacy initiatives such as Program H and One Man Can have been effective at engaging men in sexual and reproductive health (See Box 1: One Man Can).

BOX 1:

One Man Can

"One Man Can" (OMC) is a rights-based gender equality and health programme implemented by Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa. It seeks to improve men's relationships with their partners, children and families, reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS, and reduce violence against women, men and children. The campaign adopts comprehensive, multifaceted strategies, "including training and technical assistance to government and civil society organizations, community education—especially through the development and dissemination of digital stories, community mobilization, and advocacy for the implementation of existing gender and HIV and AIDS–related policy and legislation". An impact evaluation found increased men's use of voluntary HIV counselling and testing and increased condom use.

Sources: van den Berg et al. 2013; Colvin 2009; Stern 2015.

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210 Nikolova and Small 2018.
211 Sullivan et al. 2012.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.

214 Stern 2015; Tokhi et al. 2018.
215 Stern 2015.
216 Ibid.

'Gender-transformative' interventions are seen as particularly valuable. Until recently, there had been little direct assessment of whether men's involvement in sexual and reproductive health leads to more equitable gender norms or women's empowerment,[217] but a recent account highlights four case studies of interventions using gender-transformative approaches to engage men in family planning.[218] Two are highlighted. In the Male Motivator programme (Malawi), which uses male peer educators to engage other men in one-on-one discussions over a six-month period, there were positive impacts on participants' use of family planning and contraception, the frequency of their communication with partners, and more egalitarian discussion and decision-making in couples.[219] Another programme, focused on promoting male-centred methods of family planning including condoms and vasectomies (in India and Viet Nam) used methods including research, media engagement, government engagement, capacity-building, networking and community information sessions. It resulted in increases in men's use of contraception and a greater sense of shared responsibility for family planning, as well as improved media coverage and shifts in local government policy.[220] A more recent systematic review urges that efforts to engage men in sexual and reproductive health and rights more intentionally and comprehensively adopt a gender-transformative approach.[221]

As with other aspects of gender equality work with men and boys, efforts to involve men in sexual and reproductive health are marked by the neglect of patriarchal social structures. While 'gender-transformative' interventions are framed in terms of challenging gender norms, relations *and structures*, interventions which actually tackle structures are rare. In a systematic review of maternal health studies published over 2000–2012, of 13 studies examining the impact of male involvement, only one examined any dimension of men's relations with women, and none involved men in challenging patriarchal structures.[222] Similarly,

a review of gender-integrated interventions in reproductive and maternal-child health concludes that interventions should expand the scope of behaviour change interventions to address social and structural factors such as gender inequalities.[223]

5.3
The evidence: Parenting and other unpaid care work

Men's involvement in parenting and care work, and other household or domestic work, is the focus of a growing range of programmes and policies. The literature on the effectiveness of efforts to engage fathers in parenting and care work remains sparse, particularly relative to research on efforts regarding interpersonal violence and sexual and reproductive health. Few evaluations dealing with father engagement have undergone robust evaluation,[224] few parenting interventions disaggregate findings by gender, most address only short-term impacts, and most come from the Global North.[225]

What evidence is there of impact? A 2007 international review documented 16 evaluated interventions aimed at men and focusing on fatherhood.[226] Notwithstanding the very limited evidence available for such interventions, some programmes did show positive effects: on support for children's education, children's behavioural adjustment, and attitudes towards children and female partners.[227] A more recent systematic review of the global review on father participation and impact in parenting interventions found 113 evaluation studies of interventions and a further 86 relevant publications.[228] Although this notes the kinds of outcomes assessed in these studies, it does not report on programmes' actual impact because of the uneven evidence involved.

217 Ibid.
218 Croce-Galis et al. 2014.
219 Shattuck et al. 2011.
220 MacDonald et al. 2013.
221 Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019.
222 Comrie-Thomson et al. 2015.

223 Kraft et al. 2014.
224 Bronte-Tinkew et al. 2012.
225 Panter-Brick et al. 2014.
226 Barker et al. 2007.
227 Ibid.
228 Panter-Brick et al. 2014.

Some fathering programmes focus explicitly on remedying gender inequalities in households and relationships. For example, in the context of men's domination of household and community decision-making in Niger, Ecole des Maris encouraged men to advocate for and help develop health services to be accessed by mothers and children.[229] And in Turkey, the Father Support Program sought to enhance fathers' awareness of their roles in child care and child development, in part to address inequities in care and reduce harsh parenting.[230]

One of the most well-developed efforts to engage men in parenting and household work is MenCare, a global initiative to engage men in promoting family well-being and gender equality as equitable, caring and non-violent partners and caregivers. At least four assessments of this initiative have been undertaken, although of varying methodological quality.

- In Rwanda, in an extension of the MenCare programme called "MenCare+" and comprising 15 sessions of group education, fathers reported in post-intervention focus groups that they had increased their involvements in both caring for children and household work (with wives' corroboration), taken on new roles in the health and care of their newborn and young children, and adopted more equitable communication and decision-making with their female partners.[231]

- In Guatemala, fathers who completed Program P showed substantial changes in their attitudes regarding the roles of men and women in caregiving, household duties, and parenting responsibilities.[232]

- In Indonesia, men who participated in MenCare activities showed improvements in attitudes towards gender equality, more positive attitudes towards contraception, greater involvement in and sharing of childcare, increased relationship and sexual satisfaction, and declines in physical and sexual violence against partners (but no changes in antenatal and postnatal care, risky sexual behaviour, or condom use).[233]

- In South Africa, young men who participated in the nine two-hour lessons in MenCare+ showed improvements in their gender-equitable attitudes and attitudes towards contraceptives and an increase in condom use based on shared decision-making.[234]

All but the first of these four evaluations were based on comparison only of pre- and immediate post-intervention data, limiting any claims about the longer-term impact of the programmes. MenCare's evaluations have also tracked institutional change, with studies in Latin and Central America document-ing such changes as improvements in the health sector's quality of care for men, national policies on men's health, and shifts in how health sector staff view men.[235]

Other community-based interventions aimed at fathers also show some positive results. In the School for Husbands in Niger, involving husbands in health promotion has had positive impacts on reproductive and material health. In economic empowerment initiatives in Rwanda, training for the male partners of female participants led to greater gains in income, male support for family planning, and male involve-ment in childcare compared to the comparison group.[236] A programme in Uganda, the REAL Fathers Initiative (a 12-session father mentoring programme implemented by volunteers that is designed to reduce child exposure to violence at home), found that men who participated in the intervention had lower rates of perpetration of intimate partner violence and physical child punishment after the intervention and at long-term follow-up 8 to 12 months later.[237] Describ-ing 12 well-designed evaluations of fatherhood programmes, a 2012 review documents programmes' positive impacts, e.g. on father–child interactions, fathers' perceptions of the quality of father–child

229 Ibid.
230 Barker et al. 2009.
231 Doyle et al. 2014.
232 ECPAT Guatemala et al. 2015.

233 Haryanto 2017.
234 Kedde et al. 2018.
235 José Santos 2015.
236 Edström and Shahrokh 2015.
237 Ashburn et al. 2016.

relationships, love for and acceptance of children, attitudes about child-rearing, and parental satisfaction and efficacy.[238]

Increasing men's participation in and sharing of caregiving remains marginal in the policies of most governments, and while governments often have policies intended to reduce the burden of unpaid work, very few of these are designed to increase men's uptake of caring responsibilities.[239] Nevertheless, government and workplace provision of paternity leave is an important strategy, particularly in middle- and high-income countries, and a further effective strategy here is non-transferable leave exclusive to fathers.[240]

5.4
The evidence: Intimate partner violence and sexual violence

There is a substantial body of scholarship assessing the effectiveness of efforts to prevent interpersonal violence, particularly domestic, family, or intimate partner violence and sexual violence. This includes four reviews focused on efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention. A 2007 international review documented 15 evaluated interventions involving men and/or boys in preventing and reducing violence.[241] Of these, four were judged as effective (showing a rigorous design and high or medium impact *or* moderate design and high impact), and seven were judged as promising (showing moderate design and medium or low impact *or* rigorous design and low impact). A more recent systematic review examined interventions for preventing boys' and men's violence, including 65 relevant studies.[242] Such interventions can change boys' and young men's attitudes towards rape and other forms of violence against women, and the gender-related attitudes associated with these, but evidence of their effectiveness in changing behaviours is far

more equivocal. Only seven studies with strong or moderate research design demonstrated an impact on the perpetration of non-sexual violence, while only one of the well-designed studies demonstrated a significant impact on sexually violent behaviour. (See Box 2: Safe Dates).

A third systematic assessment focused on experimental or quasi-experimental interventions addressed to heterosexually active men and aiming to produce more gender-equitable relationships.[243] Three of the interventions addressing the perpetration of violence against women were not in the 2011 review.[244] All three reported declines in the perpetration of violence, but only one could be classified as methodologically 'strong'[245] (See Box 3: Phaphama Men). Finally, a 2019 systematic review examined male-focused sexual violence, domestic violence and intimate partner violence perpetration programmes that have been evaluated using randomized designs and have measured changes in perpetration behaviours longitudinally. It reported on nine studies of seven programmes, including two published since the earlier reviews, finding that five of the seven had significant effects on the perpetration of sexual violence, domestic violence or intimate partner violence, although there were also uneven or negative impacts.[246]

These reviews are complemented by a large number of other reviews, syntheses and meta-analyses of the published evidence on violence prevention. For example, two recent international reviews between them cover close to 300 published studies on the impact of violence prevention efforts.[247] While the evidence base is uneven, these reviews too demonstrate that well-designed interventions can shift attitudes and behaviours related to domestic and sexual violence. For example, face-to-face, group education programmes among high school students, university students and other populations have been shown to lessen adherence to rape myths,

238 Bronte-Tinkew et al. 2012.
239 Hassink and Baringer 2015.
240 Edström and Shahrokh 2015.
241 Barker et al. 2007.
242 Ricardo et al. 2011.

243 Dworkin et al. 2013.
244 Ricardo et al. 2011.
245 Dworkin et al. 2013.
246 Graham et al. 2019.
247 Fulu et al. 2014; Ellsberg et al. 2015.

BOX 2:

Safe Dates

Safe Dates is a US violence prevention programme for school-age young people, that includes a 10-session school curriculum, a theatre production performed by peers, and a poster contest. Students who participated in the programme reported less perpetration of psychological abuse, physical violence and sexual violence against a current dating partner than did students in the control group. They also were more critical of norms supporting dating violence and used more constructive communication skills. Four years after the programme, adolescents who had participated in it continued to report less physical and sexual dating violence perpetration (and victimization) than those who had not.

Sources: Foshee et al. 1998, 2004.

BOX 3:

Phaphama Men

Men living in townships in Cape Town, South Africa, participated in a five-session programme intended to examine the personal and community consequences of gender-based violence and HIV, explore behaviour alternatives, and build skills in these. Evaluation involved a quasi-experimental design, with a comparison group receiving a three-hour alcohol and HIV reduction intervention (which did not address gender-based violence and did not include a peer advocacy component).

Participants in the GBV/HIV intervention were less likely to have lost their temper with a woman one month and six months following the intervention, and less likely to have hit or pushed a sex partner at the six-month assessment. They also reported increased talking with sex partners about condoms, and a greater likelihood of being tested for HIV over the follow-up period, although the programme had no impact on reducing unprotected sex acts, reducing numbers of sex partners or increasing condom use.

Source: Kalichman et al. 2009.

weaken violence-supportive attitudes and increase victim empathy.[248] The evidence base for educational programmes' impact on actual perpetration and victimization is weaker, and only a few school-based group interventions can show evidence of positive impact.[249] Communications and social marketing campaigns can produce positive change in the attitudes associated with men's perpetration of violence against women,[250] although a recent review identifies only four methodologically strong evaluations on media and awareness-raising campaigns.[251]

Another stream of prevention activity focuses on education and training among professionals, such as police and health workers, although the evidence base for this work is very small.[252] On the other hand, whole-of-institution efforts at change, for example in schools, do show evidence of effectiveness.[253] Community engagement and community development strategies address the local and collective conditions in which domestic and sexual violence takes place. One important strategy here is economic empowerment, and a review of over 70 interventions concludes that this strategy shows promise in reducing violence against women and girls, particularly if it simultaneously tackles economic and

248 Brecklin and Forde 2001; Morrison et al. 2004; Whitaker et al. 2006.
249 DeGue et al. 2014; Ellsberg et al. 2015.
250 Donovan and Vlais 2005.
251 Fulu et al. 2014.

252 Arango et al. 2014.
253 Fulu et al. 2014.

BOX 4:

Inciting Backlash

Both face-to-face and social marketing interventions at times have worsened men's attitudes or behaviours rather than improved them. Here are three examples:

- In response to a US communications campaign on intimate partner violence, while women's attitudes improved, men moved towards greater acceptance of abuse-related myths. This response was informed in part by men's resentment regarding existing gender stereotypes and their resistance to campaign messages showing men as perpetrators and women as victims.

- In a Dutch campaign addressing males' sexual intimidation of females, among students shown a video focusing on the negative consequences for the young male perpetrator, boys then showed greater acceptance of myths about sexual intimidation and greater acceptance of coerced sex. This may have been because the perpetrator shown was not remorseful and offered justifications for his violent behaviour.

- Among male university students in the United States shown an educational video, there was an increase in reported sexually coercive behaviour among high-risk men (with risk indicated by previous use of sexually coercive behaviour). This may reflect increased reporting because of greater awareness of sexual coercion, a greater willingness to report, or iatrogenic effects where the intervention itself produced a backlash effect.

Sources: Keller et al. 2010; Keller and Honea 2016; Winkel and De Kleuver 1997; Stephens and George 2009.

social factors.[254] There are some signs that engaging male partners and husbands in economic empowerment interventions enhances their effectiveness and lessens the likelihood of male backlash.[255] Social empowerment interventions with vulnerable groups of women or girls, such as sex workers, show positive impact.[256] Community mobilization strategies—bringing individuals and groups together through coalitions, networks and movements—show significant promise for violence prevention.[257] Finally, policies and laws are powerful means to prevent and reduce men's violence against women.[258]

While some of the programmes and initiatives described in this literature are focused on men or boys, many are mixed gender, and many are focused on girls and women. The impact of interventions among mixed-gender participants may differ among males and females. Indeed, in various evaluations, while girls' or women's attitudes towards violence improved, those of some or many boys or men worsened.[259] It should not be assumed therefore that programmes with mixed-gender participants reported as effective necessarily are effective to the same degree or in the same way for males and females.

5.5
The evidence: Other forms of violence

There is less evidence when it comes to engaging men and boys in the prevention of other forms of violence associated with families and relationships, including early or forced marriage and female genital mutilation. A recent report emphasizes that men and boys must be central to efforts to end child marriage, given their roles as potential husbands and decision

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254 Ibid.
255 Slegh et al. 2013.
256 Fulu et al. 2014.
257 Ibid.
258 Ellsberg et al. 2015.

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259 Jaffe et al. 1992; Winkel and De Kleuver 1997; Keller et al. 2010.

makers.[260] It calls, for example, for efforts to work with boys to change the gender and sexual norms which inform child marriage, work with boys as potential grooms, to address the fathers of adolescent boys and girls, and provide gender-transformative training for (often male) local government officials and traditional leaders. The report describes a small number of interventions engaging men and boys, with some reporting positive results, e.g. on men's views of gender relations, men's support for gender equality and female empowerment, girls returning to school, and actual rates of child marriage.

Prevention initiatives addressing child marriage are the focus of several reviews.[261] A 2012 review examined 23 programmes, in 34 articles, addressing child marriage whether centrally or peripherally and including measurement of change in behaviour, knowledge or attitudes related to child marriage. Most programmes used multiple approaches, with the most common approaches in order including empowering girls with information, skills and support networks; educating and mobilizing parents and community members; enhancing the accessibility and quality of formal schooling for girls; offering economic support and incentives for girls and their families; and fostering an enabling legal and policy framework. Of the 23 programmes, only four allowed for highly methodologically rigorous evaluation. Of the programmes examining changes in attitudes or knowledge, half obtained positive results, one third documented mixed results, and one sixth found no change. Of the programmes examining changes in behaviour, most of which were methodologically rigorous, nine of 19 found positive results, seven found mixed results, and two found no change.[262] A more recent review examines high-quality interventions and evaluations to lessen child marriage in low- and middle-income countries, focusing only on those that included behavioural outcomes. Of the 11 interventions identified, six showed positive results in decreasing the proportion married or increasing age at marriage, one had both positive and negative findings, and four had no impact on the proportion married or age at marriage.[263] While both reviews make various recommendations about how to improve the effectiveness of such programmes, they do not comment specifically on how to engage men further in these efforts.

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is widely identified as an issue of public health, human rights and gender injustice, and the focus of a variety of international prevention and reduction initiatives. A recent systematic review examined the best available evidence regarding evaluations of interventions to prevent FGM/C, including eight before-and-after studies.[264] Focusing only on studies with designs containing a comparison group, it assessed eight studies. While all studies were classed as of 'weak' quality, with a paucity of reliable evidence, the review suggests that interventions can be successful in shifting knowledge of, attitudes towards, and intentions regarding FGM/C.

Engaging men and boys in the prevention of FGM/C is not as prominent a strategy as for domestic or sexual violence, perhaps because violence prevention efforts more generally are less well developed here. While there are very little data on men's roles in decision-making regarding FGM, it is possible that men may play a significant role in the perpetuation of FGM as fathers, husbands and community and religious leaders.[265] Existing data suggest that while some men are motivated to support FGM/C, for example because of social obligation, community pressure and investments in patriarchal gender relations, some men are also ambivalent about FGM/C, recognize its negative impact on marital sexual relationships, and are reluctant to have their daughters cut. In some contexts, more men than women want FGM to end, although women and girls tend to underestimate men's opposition to FGM.[266] Three of the eight studies above include sex-disaggregated data, documenting that interventions have led to positive shifts in men's beliefs in the benefits of FGM/C, beliefs about community norms regarding FGM/C, knowledge of

260 Greene et al. 2015.
261 Kalamar, Lee-Rife and Hindin 2016; Lee-Rife et al. 2012.
262 Lee-Rife et al. 2012.

263 Kalamar et al. 2016.
264 Berg and Denison 2012.
265 Varol et al. 2015.
266 Ibid.

the harmful consequences of FGM/C, disapproval of FGM/C, and intentions not to perform FGM/C on their daughters.[267] For example, in a six-month Village Empowerment Programme conducted by TOSTAN in Senegal, there were significant changes in men's intentions to cut their daughters, preference for cut women, and support for the abandonment of FGM.[268] And after health education on FGM and its complications in an intervention in Nigeria, men's opposition to the abandonment of FGM decreased significantly.[269]

5.6
What does the evidence tell us?

In one sense, these findings are positive. They show that well-designed interventions can increase participants' support for gender equality and their gender-equitable practices, including in their families and intimate lives. At the same time, there are important limitations to this evidence base, to do with: (1) the scope of existing interventions; (2) the evidence for their impact; and (3) interventions' challenge to systemic inequalities and injustices.

Starting with the scope of existing interventions, many are short-term, single level, and focused only on micro- and meso-level change. Much of the work has a short-term project orientation rather than a long-term social change orientation, shaped in part by funding cycles that are too short for large-scale social impact. Many interventions work only at a single level rather than at multiple levels of the social order. But effective interventions are likely to be comprehensive: they use multiple strategies, in multiple settings, and at multiple levels.[270] Many programmes focus on change among men and boys only at the levels of individuals and relationships, and few focus on policy, law and institutional change, again reflecting typical funding and organizational priorities.

Moving to the issue of evidence of impact, many interventions aimed at engaging men and boys simply are not evaluated, and when they *are* evaluated, often these are methodologically poor. Studies tend to be quantitative, short-term and focused on clinical outcomes.[271] Rarely is attention given to processes of change or to the impacts of interventions on men's gender identities or their relations with their partners and families.[272] Few evaluations collect data directly on gendered dynamics of power and inequality between men and women. For example, while studies of interventions for male involvement to improve maternal and newborn health showed increases in male partner support and couple communication, these do not necessarily reflect more egalitarian relationships. Indeed, some studies found negative impacts on women's autonomy and authority.[273]

Evaluations often draw only on men's self-reports, a potentially problematic source of accurate data on change among men. Equally, corroborating reports by wives, female partners and others are also shaped by social desirability, gender dynamics and other factors. Men and women in relationships and families may disagree, whether over violence perpetration and victimization,[274] men's participation in maternity care services, couple communication,[275] or other issues. Assessments of impact often are confined only to attitudinal change, although attitudes are not necessarily a good proxy for behaviours or social relations. Assessments which collect data on behaviours (whether fathering practices, violence perpetration, etc.) are stronger, but typically these are also only among the direct participants in the programme. Most violence prevention evaluations, for example, assess the impact only on direct recipients of the intervention and not also on the communities in which it is located.[276] Thus, the question "what works?" often is posed only at the level of the individual project, and it is unknown if the project has led to wider shifts towards gender equality. Given that few impact evaluations involve the

267 Ibid.
268 Diop and Askew 2009.
269 Asekun-Olarinmoye and Amusan 2008.
270 Nation et al. 2003; Casey and Lindhorst 2009.

271 Dworkin et al. 2013.
272 Stern 2015.
273 Tokhi et al. 2018.
274 Chan 2011.
275 Tokhi et al. 2018.
276 Fulu et al. 2014.

collection of longer-term data, there is little knowledge of how change is sustained over time or indeed whether it is sustained.

There are also challenges of transferability, applicability and scalability. Evaluations for some domains of male engagement such as violence prevention are skewed towards high-income countries,[277] raising questions about whether particular initiatives are practical or relevant in other contexts. Because many projects do not go beyond a pilot phase and scaling up is limited, little is known about the feasibility (or cost) of scaling up effective interventions,[278] nor about how to generate community- and society-level change. Large-scale, long-term evaluations are needed, with attention to social, cultural, economic and structural drivers and contexts.[279] All of this means that the "men for gender equality" field's challenge to systemic inequalities and injustices is weak, uneven and contested. As this paper details in previous sections, much of the "men for gender equality" field does little to challenge systemic gender inequalities. In addition, intersectional approaches which address the intersections of gender with other forms of social difference and inequality are only just taking shape. "Engaging men" projects and organizations have uneven links with women's rights work and movements, practices of accountability are underdeveloped though being strengthened, and there are concerns over potential threats to women's funding, voices and leadership. And there are ongoing tensions over how to understand and address areas of apparent male disadvantage, including violence against men and boys and men's health.

Concerns about an evidence base comprising narrowly focused, time-limited, project-level evaluations extend well beyond the "men for gender equality" field, but are of particular salience to the field, given the legitimate questions asked about the directing of resources for anti-patriarchal work towards those who, on the face of it, most clearly benefit from patriarchy. Behind the "what works?" question is a more fundamental question about "is it worth it?" to invest in anti-patriarchal work with "men," and answering this question poses a challenge, not merely of methodology but rather epistemology. If what the "men for gender equality" field needs to foreground are its social action efforts to mobilize differing communities and constituencies of men to challenge patriarchal relations and operations of power, both intimate and institutional, then what kinds of knowledge can sanction and guide this work? This suggests a need for knowledge of change processes, with a temporal dimension (biographical/historical) and a spatial interest in the range of sites in which patriarchal power is exercised and contested. This would be knowledge to deepen our understanding of the dynamics of personal and social change in a social system as complex as the gender order; a complexity born of the specific histories of particular places, and their location within a force field of economic, political and cultural pressures.

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277 Ricardo et al. 2011; Ellsberg et al. 2015; Graham et al. 2019.
278 Stern 2015.
279 Ibid.

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There is a longstanding critique, both within and of the "men for gender equality" field, that its work remains too focused on the individual, and 'his' attitudinal and behavioural change. In its recent review of the field, ICRW notes that:

> Many male engagement programmes focus on individual-level attitude and behaviour change. However, to create sustainable change, male engagement efforts need to focus on transforming gender norms in communities and changing policies, laws, and institutional practices to create more gender-equitable environments.[280]

The review of the available evidence base presented in the previous section bears out this critique. While there is evidence to show that well-designed interventions can increase participants' support for gender equality and their gender-equitable practices, including in their families and intimate lives, such interventions are, for the most part, short-term, single level, and focused only on micro- and meso-level change, shaped in part by funding cycles that are too short for large-scale social impact. This paper identifies significant limitations to the evidence base, related to: (1) the scope of existing interventions; (2) the evidence for their impact; and (3) interventions' challenge to systemic inequalities and injustices.

In its earlier sections, this paper examines the dynamics of field formation and their influence on this "focus on individual-level attitude and behaviour change." It argues that organizing the "men for gender equality" field around an uninterrogated category of "men" and the problem of "norms of masculinity" has militated against analyses of structural power and social change. The universalist claim of the category "men," with its domesticated primal scene of change, insists that "men must change" and that "action must begin at home." But by insisting on the analytical coherence and programmatic utility of "men" as a category, this domesticated paradigm for gender-transformative change has tended to foreground men's masculinity as the problem (with its individualizing emphasis on male identities and men's behaviours) and subsume under masculinity the multiple relations of power within which men are positioned (with its homogenizing erasure of men's differing material interests in social change.) The framing of gender-transformative work with men in terms of transforming social norms has favoured social psychological accounts of men's subjectivities over sociological perspectives on patriarchal conditions, and this turn to social psychology has itself been aided and delimited by the subsumption of men's complex positions in social relations under simplistic accounts of multiple "masculinities." Such accounts, with their reductive rather than complex engagement with manifold and intersecting forces and forms of oppression, have, in turn, limited the field's capacity to develop an explicit agenda for inter-sectional anti-patriarchal social action and to build alliances with a broader set of social justice struggles and movements.

What does this review of the evidence base, and the field formation issues raised above, suggest about future directions for the "men for gender equality" field, if it is to address the structural as well as personal dimensions of change which progress towards gender justice requires? In closing, here are four broad directions of travel for the field, as a stimulus to further debate about its future:

- Focus on the masculinity of hegemony
- Press for political as well as policy change
- Engage in more 'movement' and less 'field'
- Reorient evidence and evidence-based practice to social change.

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280 ICRW 2018: 98.

6.1
Focus on the masculinity of hegemony

For all its talk of and debate about "hegemonic masculinities," there is very little discussion within the texts produced by and about the "men for gender equality" field that addresses the gendered workings of hegemony, in its original Gramscian formulation. This is surprising because what is at stake in the call to develop "gender-transformative" work is the need to reckon with the gendered operations of power that need to be transformed. As Gramsci made clear, these operations work through the engineering of consent as much as the execution of coercion, an engineering that relies on the naturalization and normalization of elite rule and authority.[281] Much has changed since fascist Italy of the 1930s, but it remains true not only that political, economic and cultural elites are dominated by men but also that ideas and ideals of masculinity and femininity naturalize and normalize a hierarchical arrangement of social relations, an arrangement which extends far beyond gender itself. Thus, "gender-transformative" work is necessarily concerned with challenging hetero-patriarchal operations of power as they interact with a broader set of oppressive social hierarchies, and specifically with confronting the uses to which gender is put in legitimating such hierarchies.

Evidence that we are living through a crisis in hegemony is all around us. In their *Notes for a Feminist Manifesto*, Arruzza et al. make clear that:

> we find ourselves at a fork in the road. One path leads to a scorched planet where human life is immiserated, if it remains possible at all. The other points to the sort of world that has always figured in humanity's dreams: one whose wealth and natural resources are shared by all, where equality and freedom are premises, not aspirations.[282]

Posing the decision in such stark terms makes clear what is at stake. As they continue:

In the current vacuum of liberal hegemony, we have the chance to build another feminism and to re-define what counts as a feminist issue, developing a different class orientation and a radical-transformative ethos. We write not to sketch an imagined utopia, but to clarify the road that must be travelled to reach a just society.[283]

One of the clearest signs of the "current vacuum of liberal hegemony" is the rise of a cruder, more coercive 'strongman' politics; this is to say that the functions of masculinity, as a symbolic practice, appear to be changing in response to the multiple crises (economic, ecological and now epidemiological) with which we are beset. It is clear that patriarchal masculinities, significantly racialized in some national contexts, are being invoked by an increasingly authoritarian strain of political thought and practice in many parts of the world.[284] This suggests a need for the "men for gender equality" field to look more squarely at and think more clearly about the operations and depredations of elite rule, and the ways in which ideas and ideals of masculinity are deployed in the maintenance of such rule. Among the heterogeneity of the male-'bodied' and masculine-identified, the vast majority have an existential stake in the feminist vision of a world "whose wealth and natural resources are shared by all, where equality and freedom are premises, not aspirations." But for this stake to become the basis for political action, the "men for gender equality" field can make its own contribution to such a feminist vision by looking beyond the domesticated category of "men" in order to energize the pro-feminist political subjectivity of men.

6.2
Press for political as well as policy change

Policy is a vital tool of large-scale and sustained change. Efforts addressing men and boys must "move beyond small-scale public health interventions to the

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281 Gramsci 1971 in Anderson 1976.
282 Arruzza et al. 2018: 114.

283 Ibid.
284 Ferber 2000; Ging 2017; Greig 2019; HoSang and Lowndes 2019.

large scale of policy levers and initiatives that have better potential to lead to larger-scale, faster and broader change in men's behaviours".[285] The general, gendered organization of policy processes and structures is as important to gender equality as specific policies on particular domains related to gender, so we begin with these, focusing on democratic governance and institutional accountability.

Surprisingly little attention within the "men for gender equality" field has been given to addressing the challenges of greater gender equality in democratic governance and political participation, especially with respect to men's relevance to—and roles in—achieving it. A 2015 review of the state of the evidence for work with men on gender equality across a range of themes identified relatively little evidence on these issues.[286] Considerable research exists on many areas of politics, citizenship and participation generally, as well as studies with a specific focus on women's participation. Nevertheless, little of this has focused on the role of men in substantive ways and little has emerged directly from the "men for gender equality" field. One exception is a recent report on working with men in the law enforcement and justice sectors in the Middle East and North Africa, which emphasizes that governance structures are important in fostering local-level accountability and a national-level push for greater action on gender equality.[287]

More widely, there is growing evidence that patriarchal constructions of manhood are implicated in various political phenomena which contribute to gender inequalities, including masculinized contests over political leadership, citizens' patterns of voting, and the rise of neo-conservative and anti-feminist political movements. The term "political masculinities" is increasingly used to conceptualize the ways in which masculinities are "constructed around, ascribed to and/or claimed by 'political players'".[288] In their introduction to the concept, Starck and Sauer catalogue the proliferating interest in masculinities in a range of academic disciplines concerned with various

aspects of political life, from international relations[289] to histories of war and empire[290] to political science.[291] More recently, Starck and Luyt have emphasized that "the concept of political masculinities can usefully be applied in instances in which power is explicitly either being (re)produced or challenged."[292] Addressing issues of men and masculinities in the realm of formal politics and governance therefore is a vital task.

There are at least four kinds of projects relevant here. First, "engaging men" organizations should support women's rights advocacy focused on politics and governance. They should seek to bolster women's representation in local and national government, given that this is an important influence on system reform.[293] They should address the many informal and formal barriers to women's political voice and visibility, ranging from outright violence and intimidation to the patriarchal cultures and practices of political parties.[294] Second, in the context of widespread resistance among men in various countries to gender equality policies,[295] organizations should work to increase men's support for gender equality measures. Combining gender-equitable policy advocacy with community organizing and public education, they should seek to foster an accurate understanding of the benefits of policies aimed at progress towards gender justice.[296] Third, much more work is needed directly with the men who are political actors, such as politicians, party members and civil servants, in order to help foster political spaces and processes in which progressive policy change for gender equality can be advanced. Fourth, men's organizations should directly challenge anti-feminist backlash and the ideologies about men and masculinities promoted by neo-conservative organizations.[297]

Progress towards gender equality is stymied in particular by institutional inaction and impunity. On violence

285 Flood et al. 2010.
286 Edström et al. 2015.
287 ABAAD and OXFAM 2018.
288 Starck and Sauer 2014: 6.

289 Hooper 2001; Zalewski and Parpart 2008; Enloe 2017.
290 McClintock 1995; Goldstein 2001.
291 Carver 2004; Messerschmidt 2016.
292 Starck and Luyt 2019: 5.
293 ABAAD and OXFAM 2018.
294 Hubbard and DeSoi 2016.
295 Barker et al. 2011.
296 Peacock and Barker 2014.
297 Flood et al. 2018.

against women and girls for example, institutional failures when it comes to system responses are well documented. While progress in many countries has been made at the legislative level, enactment of policy commitments 'on the ground' lags far behind, not least when it comes to women's access to justice.[298] That such law enforcement and judicial mechanisms responsible for these failures of access to justice are male-dominated is also well known, yet relatively little attention within the "men for gender equality" field has been made to criminal justice reform as it impacts on problems of gender-based violence.

Where initiatives have been developed, they have tended to focus on training and capacity-building, such as the work of Rozan with police in Pakistan[299] and the training package of best practices for mainstreaming gender into police activities in peace-keeping operations developed by the United Nations Police (UNPOL).[300] Several studies have shown how gender-sensitive policing has resulted in diminished hostility in citizen interactions, a decrease in violence by law enforcement and an increase in the number of gender-based violence incidents reported.[301]

However, the limitations of a training-only approach are also clear, when mechanisms for ensuring imple-mentation of standards and policies are absent. A recent study of organizations working to engage with men within law enforcement and justice systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, which surveyed work in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and Yemen, reports that:

> When it comes to efforts for engaging men in law enforcement and judiciary systems for gender justice, some organizations stated that building and maintaining good relationships with the different actors was a must, and a key influencer that led to the success of the programs. This was because it allowed access to mobilize youth on the

ground to promote gender justice, which in turn looped back into increasing the inter-est of stakeholders to be engaged in issues of gender justice.[302]

In other words, an inside/outside strategy is required, that seeks to build 'inside' capacity and commitment for institutional reform as well as 'outside' pressure for and accountability to a reform agenda. There are some examples of such a strategy in action, as with Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa[303] and MASVAW in India[304], but they tend to be the exception to the rule that the "men for gender equality" field has been slow to develop work to counter institutional inaction and impunity.

Social action in the "men for gender equality" field should include advocacy in support of mechanisms for macro-level accountability, in which gender justice organizations publicly contest media, policies or behaviour on the part of political, spiritual and economic leaders that promote or excuse gender-based violence.[305] Organizations should work to hold to account both institutions such as the police and criminal justice systems and individual men in public office.[306]

6.3
Engage in more 'movement' and less 'field'

Mobilizing men in support of and accountability to women's rights advocacy and in linked struggles for gender, economic and social justice must be a vital part of work with men. Put simply, we need less 'field' and more 'movement'. Work with and by men should be more strongly oriented towards building movements for social change and strengthening civil society organizations and coalitions. Rather than seeing "engaging men" as a discrete field with its own

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298 UNDP 2010; UN Women 2011; UN Women 2018.
299 Khalique 2011.
300 DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN Women 2019.
301 Seklecki 2000; Davis 2007; Smith 2011; Watters 2014.

302 ABAAD and OXFAM 2018: 19.
303 Peacock and Barker 2012.
304 Das et al. 2012.
305 Peacock and Barker 2014.
306 Peacock and Barker 2012.

logics and intrinsic purpose, it should be seen as a body of practice and expertise that can contribute to broader social justice struggles.

Links between men's work for gender justice and other social justice movements tend to be weak, albeit with national and regional variations. There is value in linking struggles and movements in order to understand the intersections of gender justice and other forms of social justice, build collective solidarity, enhance accountability, and leverage the impact of advocacy efforts.[307] But there is a "lack of focus on building organizations' capacity for advocacy and campaigning" in the "men for gender equality" field, according to a 2018 report by ICRW.[308] This highlights the need to build "the capacity of organizations on how to engage individuals in collective action through campaigns and the media, and how to advocate for policy change." This is certainly required, but what is also clear, especially given the acknowledged importance of feminist mobilizations for progressive policy change on gender equality, is that more work is needed with men to support such mobilizations. In particular, there is an urgent need for work with men on gender equality to help strengthen the visibility and voice of women's rights organizations, especially given the threats posed to democratic governance by resurgent patriarchal authoritarianism and attacks on (feminist) civil society.

A further recommendation is that gender equality work with men "think outside the field," broadening its understanding of and engagement with issues such as care, violence and health beyond the approaches often dominant in the "men for gender equality" field itself. On care and parenting, for example, "engaging men" work has tended to emphasize strategies such as paternity leave and positive images of fatherhood, neglecting a wider engagement with issues such as the organization of care economies and gendered divisions of labour and a wider critique of current welfare state arrangements. Work with men has neglected the structural relations which shape men's and women's involvement in care, although recent reports produced by the global MenCare campaign on the *State of the World's Fathers* do give these more attention.[309]

With respect to issues of gender-based violence, work done by the "men for gender equality" field has tended to focus on interpersonal violence, whether physical or sexual, and only rarely has linked this with work on the institutionalized forms this violence can take, for example in the perpetration of such violence by law enforcement agencies and other state actors, often against marginalized women and girls as well as sexual and gender minorities. The failure to make such connections is especially problematic when it comes to addressing questions of justice. As already noted, gender-based violence prevention efforts targeting men and boys tend to be framed in terms of changing harmful "norms of masculinity," which usually entails community-level interventions using group education and awareness-raising activities. Yet, the pressing need to ensure the proper implementation of existing laws and policies on gender-based violence and to hold law enforcement agencies to account for their own use of such violence against marginalized women and LGBTIQ+ communities is rarely addressed by male engagement programming. To do this effectively will require a more explicit effort to link with organizations working for the rights of marginalized communities, in order to counter the gender dimensions of the violence experienced by these communities.

Critical attention to the ways in which work with men and boys for gender equality is framed is also vital. We have raised cautions regarding the language of men and boys as co-beneficiaries or stakeholders, while agreeing that appealing to how men will benefit from progress towards gender equality is a useful strategy. Whatever terms are employed, work with men and boys must centre attention to the patriarchal inequalities which structure their lives and which intersect with other forms of social hierarchy, and remain accountable to the struggles and movements led by those most directly targeted by such patriarchal inequalities, namely cisgendered women and gender and sexual minorities.

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307 Horn 2013; CARE 2014.
308 ICRW 2018: 93.

309 Heilman et al. 2017; van der Gaag et al. 2019.

6.4
Reorient evidence and evidence-based practice to social change

Given all this, different ways of assessing impact are needed, which answer the "What works?" question less at the level of individual projects and more at the level of social change. Yes, our practice must be guided by evidence, but we require a more politically informed, structurally minded evidence base. We must "count change" not merely at the level of individuals, but also communities, institutions and social systems.

This also requires shifting both the prevailing orthodoxies of evidence and the typical timelines of funding. Efforts to create structural and systems change rarely show up in summaries of evidence-based practice or promising interventions, in part because their time frames and modalities are ill-suited to the methodological constraints of prevailing evidence-gathering approaches. A global study with representatives of organizations that engage men and boys in preventing violence against women and girls found that respondents were clear that there is an urgent need to tackle "institutionalized male power within governmental, media, criminal justice, religious, tribal and other community institutions," but, at the same time:

> felt at a loss as to how to evaluate the nuanced and long-term kinds of individual and social change they were hoping to foster with their work, and lamented the mismatch between the timeline of social change and funders' timelines.[310]

Nevertheless, there are promising examples of this orientation towards the assessment of community- and society-level change. For example, on violence prevention, a recent Australian report provides a guide to measuring population-level, rather than project-level, progress towards the elimination of violence against women, including indicators of short- and long-term progress in addressing the systemic gender inequalities which drive this violence.[311]

Returning to the level of discrete programmes and projects targeting men and boys, there is a growing consensus on "what works" at this level. Programming should have a coordinated focus on multiple risk factors and ecological levels, be based on robust theories of the issue and of how to make change, involve the comprehensive application of multiple strategies at multiple levels, use effective forms of education or communication, be relevant to local communities and contexts, and engage both men and boys and women and girls in gender-transformative ways to reflect on and change gender roles and relations.[312]

There is also some agreement on what issues future programming and research should address. In work on gender-based violence for example, where the "men for gender equality" field has put so much of its attention, there are calls to explore how to take diversities and inequalities among men into account; how to understand the relationships between changes among individuals, in partnership dyads and in communities; and how to coordinate separate interventions working at different ecological levels and targeting different risk factors to achieve reductions in violence.[313]

Much less has been said about the processes by which organizations and activists learn and strengthen the skills they need to put the evidence into practice, as well as shape their own organizational and operational research agendas. In other words, insufficient attention has been given to processes of personal and organizational learning. Too often, the research and documentation activities undertaken to build the evidence base are conducted in parallel rather than in conjunction with day-to-day programme implementation. At the same, investments in the production of toolkits and implementation guidelines are not matched by investments in personal and organizational learning processes. There are examples of such

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310 Casey et al. 2013; 236, 243

311 Our Watch 2017.
312 Flood 2018.
313 Jewkes et al. 2015.

processes in action and the recent emergence of the Prevention Collaborative, with its mission to build individual and organizational capacity for implementing evidence-based GBV prevention, is a welcome development. The MenEngage Global Alliance also provides an institutional framework within which the "men for gender equality" field can share its lessons and improve its practice, and its pioneering use of e-learning methodologies shows promise. Using these processes and frameworks to not only strengthen the practice of gender equality work with men and boys but also strengthen relationships and learning with ongoing women's rights work is a crucial opportunity not to be missed. In any case, the point remains: given the evidence that gender-based violence, inequalities in care and parenting, poor sexual and reproductive health, and a host of other issues are shaped above all by social structures, systems and norms, a truly 'evidence-based' practice must focus on changing these.

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