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Violence Against Women in the Philippines

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Abstract

Violence against women is a public crime and human rights violation that has negative social, economic, and health consequences for women and their communities. Violence against women must be studied in a specific context in order to understand how social and cultural norms affect the issue. Based on face-to-face semi-structured interviews with UN Women, relevant nongovernmental organizations, academics, and government services for gender-based violence victims, this study looked into the current legislation, actions and policies being carried out by different actors to address violence against women in the Philippines. The data was analyzed using a combination of the Public Health Model created by the Center for Communicable Diseases, and the Integrated Ecological Model by Lori Heise. This study found that violence against women is a widespread issue in the Philippines. However, the lack of a central data bank to consolidate the data from various government services makes the existing data unreliable. Moreover, despite the existence of laws and services to address the issue, government services are inadequate and merely responsive rather than preventive. Nongovernment organizations and academics play a complementary role where the government services fall short. This study also found various factors about the Philippine culture that serve as risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior. By identifying these different factors, this study opens the door for two main possibilities: negative cultural factors that pose a risk or affect reporting behavior can be turned around to become protective factors instead; and the existing positive aspects of the culture that serve as protective factors must be taken advantage of by making them widespread.

Table of Contents

List of abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
DepEd	Department of Education
DEVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
GBV	Gender-based violence
IAC-VAWC	Inter-Agency Council for Violence Against Women and Children
IPV	Intimate-partner violence
LGU	Local Government Unit
MCW	Magna Carta for Women
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCR	National Capital Region
NDHS	National Demographic Health Survey
NGO	Nongovernment organization
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PNP	Philippine National Police
PNP WCPC	Philippine National Police Women and Children's Protection Center
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
QCPD	Quezon City Police District
RA	Republic Act
VAW	Violence against women

VAWC	Violence against women and children
WAGI	Women and Gender Institute

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a widespread human rights and public health issue. It has profound social, economic, health, and familial consequences on the survivors and their families. It hinders development as it affects a woman's reproductive, physical, and mental health; limits their ability to earn an income; and impedes their ability to make decisions about their own health and matters about their children (Vyas & Watts, 2009). Worldwide, an estimated 30% of women over 15 years old have experienced physical or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives (Palermo, Bleck, & Peterman, 2013, 2014; World Health Organization, 2017). Violence against women (VAW) cuts across social, economic, and national borders. VAW must be studied in relation to a specific context in order to better understand the nature, extent, risks, and effects of the issue due to varied cultures and social settings in developing countries. In addition, since GBV is often underreported, the existing data on the prevalence and trends are based on the sub-sample of individuals who have chosen to report. These individuals may be different from those who do not report, thus leaving a significant group unreached by services and support programs that are based on the data from those who chose to report (Palermo et al., 2013).

In the Philippines, 19% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence, yet only six percent report to a formal source (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). As academics continually emphasize how GBV is highly contextual, this study aims to determine the cultural factors in the Philippines that contribute to the prevalence of GBV and to the low rates of reporting. Moreover, this study aims to understand what the different stakeholders are doing to address GBV. To accomplish this, this study will use a qualitative approach guided by the Public Health Model (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.) and the Globalized Integrated Ecological Model (Fulu & Miedema, 2015; Heise, 1998). These models will be used for a holistic and in-depth understanding of the existing figures of GBV, cultural factors that affect it, and how different actors address the issue. Data will be collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews from actors directly involved in addressing GBV, including the UN, nongovernment organizations, government offices, and academics.

This study aims to improve the understanding of current action being done by different actors to address GBV in the Philippines, and how these actors perceive the issue and factors surrounding it. In order to achieve this, this study intends to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines perceive gender-based violence?
  - 1a) What data do the organizations have, what are their sources, and how is it used to address GBV?
  - 1b) What do they identify as risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior?
- RQ2: How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines address GBV?
  - 2a) What strategies and programs are the organizations doing to address GBV and do they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these programs?

This study is divided into six chapters. The Literature Review chapter will discuss the existing literature surrounding GBV and VAW both in other developing countries and in the Philippines. The Methodology chapter will discuss the process of the fieldwork in the Philippines, the participants, and the models for analysis. The Findings chapter will discuss the results of the interviews. The Discussion chapter that will use the theoretical models to analyze the results, followed by the Conclusion.

2. Literature Review

This chapter discusses the existing literature surrounding GBV. It starts with a general overview of existing studies in other developing countries and how the issue relates to reporting, economic empowerment, and urbanization. This is followed by existing literature in relation to the Philippine context. This includes statistics, policies and government services, reporting behavior, and Philippine culture. Lastly, the chapter discusses the Public Health Model and the Global Integrated Ecological Model, and how these models will be used in this study.

2.1. GBV overview

Gender-based violence (GBV) is physical, sexual, or psychological violence committed against individuals or groups based on their gender. Although both men and women experience GBV, most of the victims are women and girls (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.; United Nations, 2014). Despite the prevalence of GBV, it is widely

underreported. Common reasons for not reporting and seeking formal help include shame and stigma, lack of awareness or access to services, distrust of health workers, financial barriers, cultural beliefs, fear of the offender, and fear of discrimination and stereotyping from law enforcers (Palermo et al., 2013). Studies have paid little attention to reporting behavior of GBV in developing countries (Palermo et al., 2013). Palermo et al. (2013) analyzed reporting behavior in 24 developing countries and found that although 40% of GBV victims disclosed the incidence to someone, only seven percent reported to a formal source. They also found that in half of the countries analyzed, increasing age is positively correlated with formal reporting. In addition, never married women were less likely to report than currently married women, while formerly married women were most likely to report to a formal source. The study also presents mixed results for the relation of education, wealth, and urban residence to formal reporting. In four out of the 24 countries, educational attainment was positively correlated with formal reporting. In Africa, higher wealth increased the probability of formal reporting. Roughly 20% of the countries analyzed show that residing in urban areas increased the likelihood of formal reporting. Cultural, political, and religious differences play an important role in the regional differences of reporting patterns, which further emphasizes the need for context-specific studies on the issue.

One of the most common reasons for not reporting found in the study by Palermo et al. (2013) was the belief that there was no use in reporting. Those who experience GBV are more likely to turn to informal reporting means such as customary legal systems. A study by Bøås, Divon, and Sayndee (2016) on GBV and access to justice in Ganta, Liberia shows the distrust of the people in the weak formal institutions. The legal justice system is often ineffective and resolution is not immediate, which leads to women turning to customary conflict mechanisms instead. These mechanisms use social relations and communal responsibility to attain substantial resolutions. However, the type of perpetrator also determines which justice system the victims turn to. If the offenders are members of the community, majority of the respondents preferred to use the customary system. If the offender is a stranger or foreigner, or if the case involves rape, respondents agreed that it should be reported to the legal justice system. Bøås et al. (2016) also note that although the customary legal system offers resolution, it could be reemphasizing biased gender relationships and customary tyrannies, as gender roles in Liberia are often deeply rooted in cultural practices and social constructions.

Different studies have shown mixed results on the effect of education, age, work or economic empowerment, urbanization, and wealth to the exposure and risk of intimate

partner violence (IPV). Education generally has a positive effect on decreasing risk of IPV (Dalal, 2011; Sambisa, Angeles, Lance, Naved, & Thornton, 2011; Vyas & Watts, 2009). Similarly, increasing age decreases the risk of IPV (Dalal, 2011; Palermo et al., 2013; Sambisa et al., 2011). Sambisa et al. (2011) and (Palermo et al., 2013) suggest that increasing age leads to more autonomy, less dependence on the partners, more experience to avoid situations that elicit abuse, and more support from the kin and family, which in turn decreases the exposure to IPV. Sambisa et al. (2011) and Vyas and Watts (2009) found that wealth and higher socioeconomic status (SES) is mostly a protective factor from IPV. However, Vyas and Watts (2009) express skepticism at this suggestion, as it is possible that victims from higher SES are less likely to report IPV due to stigma.

Economic empowerment is strongly advocated by the UN and WHO as a protective factor for violence against women (Dalal, 2011; World Health Organization, 2017). However, studies have shown inconsistent effects of economic empowerment to IPV exposure. In theory, women may have a higher status in their household when they contribute financially, which decreases their vulnerability to abuse. On the contrary, this could also challenge the power balance and status quo, leading to an increased risk of abuse. Increasing a woman's access to resources could also empower her to attain a better situation for herself, but in situations of economic uncertainty or seasonal work, it may not be enough to enable women to challenge or leave an abusive relationship (Vyas & Watts, 2009). Dalal (2011) found that working women were more likely to experience IPV than those who did not work. The results also differentiate the exposure to different types of abuses (physical, emotional, sexual) based on the nature of the work, such as seasonal or occasional work, or having to travel for work. Additionally, it was found that women who earned less or equal to their husbands experienced less violence, while husbands without income were more abusive than those who earned less than their wives. Women with bank transactions faced less risk of abuse than those without bank transactions. Although economic empowerment could have potential benefits to decrease the risk of IPV, the relationship must be understood in a specific context.

Some studies have focused on the relationship between urbanization and GBV. Differences have been noted in terms of prevalence, exposure, and risk-factors for GBV in urban and rural areas. A study by McIlwaine (2013) focuses on the paradoxes of urbanization and GBV in the global south, as the poor existing data makes it difficult to accurately compare the urban and rural areas. On the other hand, Sambisa et al. (2011) chose to focus on physical spousal violence against women in urban areas of Bangladesh, as current studies

tend to focus on rural areas. They emphasize the relevance of studying IPV in the urban setting as rapid urbanization is occurring in the developing world, and it is crucial to identify appropriate intervention and prevention strategies suited towards the urban context. They found higher rates of IPV in the urban slums, and lower rates in the non-slum areas. Dalal (2011) found that women from rural areas were more exposed to sexual violence, while women from urban areas experienced more emotional and less severe physical violence. Contradictory findings were also highlighted by McIlwaine (2013), where in countries such as the Philippines, Bolivia, Haiti, and Zambia, IPV was more prevalent in urban areas than rural areas, while in Kenya, Moldova, and Zimbabwe, GBV by a non-partner violence was more prevalent in urban areas, and IPV was more prevalent in rural areas.

Urban settings offer better access to social, legal, and health services. However, it could also foster fragmented social relations, and pressures from urban living which can trigger a higher incidence of violence (McIlwaine, 2013; Palermo et al., 2013, 2014). Urban conditions of poverty and certain occupations can exacerbate stress-induced violence and increase the vulnerability of women. McIlwaine (2013) found that certain physical settings increase the risk of GBV. These include sanitation facilities situated far from homes, places where drugs and alcohol are bought and consumed, and certain open public spaces such as isolated parks, riverbanks, basketball courts, and places where gangs meet. Aside from physical vulnerabilities, the changes in economic, social, and institutional roles also affect GBV in urban cities. As gender ideologies and patriarchal structures are loosened and challenged in cities, it can lead to a lower tolerance of GBV. Formal institutional support is more widely available and accessible in urban settings. Women also tend to be more economically and socially independent, which gives them more resources to challenge or seek redress for violent experiences. On the contrary, urban settings can also fragment social relations, which could increase the risk of GBV.

Gender-based violence is not determined by a single cause or situation. Rather, it is often rooted in social constructs of gender roles and conservative patriarchal structures that exist in communities and the wider society (McIlwaine, 2013; Sambisa et al., 2011). The risk factors and the patterns in the prevalence of GBV are not static. These factors are highly dependent on the context, and on how political, economic, and social factors foster an environment for GBV.

2.2. Violence against women in the Philippines

The Philippines ranks eighth place in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018). It is among the top 14 countries who have exceeded the goal to close the gender gap by 80% in terms of Economic Participation and Opportunity, and is part of the top five countries where women equally attain managerial positions. It ranks among the first in Educational Attainment, where the gender gap is closed, and holds the 13th place for Political Empowerment. It also brags closing 80% of the overall gender gap, with the rates as high as it has ever been for the country (World Economic Forum, 2018). Despite the impressive figures, the most recent National Demographic and Health Survey (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) reports that 19% of women over 15 years old have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Regional rates vary, but it is interesting to note that the National Capital Region had one of the lowest rates of spousal, sexual, and physical violence within the past year the survey was conducted (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

Spousal violence includes physical, sexual, and emotional violence (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). One out of four ever-married women between 24-49 years old have experienced spousal violence. The most common form of violence they have experienced is emotional, followed by physical, then sexual. Among the women who have experienced spousal violence, 37% have sustained injuries. In terms of occurrence, spousal violence was found to increase as the number of children increases, and to decrease as wealth increases. The results also show an intergenerational effect wherein women who have witnessed spousal violence between their parents are more likely to experience spousal violence themselves (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

Physical violence is described as being hit, slapped, kicked, or physically hurt by someone (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). The survey found that 17% of women between the ages 15-49 have experienced physical violence. Younger women (15-19) are less likely to have experienced physical violence compared to older women (40-49). However, the difference is fairly small, as 13% of younger women have experienced physical violence compared to the 18% of older women. Similar to the results of spousal violence, women in the lower wealth quintiles are more likely to experience physical violence compared to those with more wealth. Among currently or previously married women, the most common perpetrators were the current or former husband/partner. For the never-married women, the most common perpetrators for physical violence were a parent or step-parent (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

Sexual violence is described as being forced to have sexual intercourse or to perform any sexual acts when they did not want to (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). Five percent of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing sexual violence. Three percent of women with no children have experienced sexual violence, while nine percent of women with more than five children have experienced sexual violence. Less women in the wealthier quintiles have reported experiencing sexual violence compared to those in the lower wealth quintiles. Among ever-married women, over 80% of the perpetrators were their current or former husband/partner. For the never-married women, the most common perpetrators were friends/acquaintances, other relatives, current or former boyfriends, or strangers. However, physical and sexual violence do not always occur separately. Of the 19% who have experienced either physical or sexual violence, 4% have experienced both (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018).

For reporting behavior, NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) found that among the women who have experienced physical or sexual violence, only one out of three (34%) sought help to stop the violence. 25% of the women have disclosed the incident to someone but did not seek help, while 41% have never sought help or told anyone. This means that 3 out of 5 women suffer in silence. The survey found that the women in the age group of 20-24 are the most likely to seek help. However, only six percent of the women sought help from the police – a figure quite close to the seven percent found in the study by Palermo et al. (2013). The women more commonly turn to their own family, friends, or neighbors for help. Despite the low turnout for reporting to the police, there is a high awareness of available government services for help. Over 80% of the women knew that they could seek help from the Department of Social Welfare, the local Violence Against Women desks, or the Philippine National Police Women and Children Protection Desk (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). The low reporting numbers despite the high level of awareness of available services could reflect a distrust in the public system, as Bøås et al. (2016) and Palermo et al. (2013) have found in their studies.

A study by Hindin and Adair (2002) focuses on the relation of household decision-making to IPV in Cebu, Philippines. The study conducted in-depth surveys and interviews as part of the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey. The survey contained a decision module with questions about who in the household decides about buying certain products and how money is allocated. They found certain sociodemographic characteristics where IPV is more common, such as urban areas, households with fewer assets, younger age of the wife and husband, unemployed husbands, and husbands that are not frequent churchgoers. Their

study found no significant correlation with education, the employment status of the wife, or church attendance of the wife. They found a U-shaped pattern for higher levels of IPV when the husband and the wife dominate decisions in certain domains, while women experience less IPV among couples who practice joint decision-making. As men dominate more domains of household decisions, the higher the likelihood of IPV. Similarly, Berbarte, Acedegbega, Fadera, and Yopyop (2018) found that male dominance in household decision making is a contributing factor to IPV. However, Hindin and Adair (2002) also found that as women dominate more domains of household decisions, the higher their risk to IPV as well. In terms of income distribution, they found that women who earn more than 50% of the total household income are more likely to report IPV. However, employment status and relative earnings showed no significant correlations to IPV. Although higher household wealth was associated with lower risk of IPV, rural households with lower household wealth experienced less IPV than urban women. They suggest the contradictory results could be related to how certain factors in the urban setting affect the risk factors and occurrence of IPV.

2.3. VAW policies and services in the Philippines

The Philippines has numerous laws that address violence against women. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines lays out several provisions on women, which are the basis for protecting their rights and recognizing their value. The Philippines is also a signatory to the major international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). To showcase its commitment to CEDAW, the Philippine government passed Republic Act 9710 (RA 9710) or the Magna Carta of Women. It is the local translation of CEDAW provisions and aims to recognize, protect, fulfill, and promote the human rights of Filipino women through elimination of discrimination. The Republic Act 9262 (RA 9262), also known as the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act, or the Anti-VAWC Law, is a more specific law that addresses violence against women. This law criminalizes violence against women and their children, and outlines protective measures for women and appropriate sanctions for perpetrators (Foundation for Media Alternatives [FMA] & Association for Progressive Communication [APC], 2013; Santos, 2009). In addition, several other laws also address different issues of gender-based violence: Anti-Trafficking in Persons act or RA 9208, Anti-Rape Law or RA 8353, Rape

Victim Assistance and Protection Act or RA 8505, Anti-Sexual Harassment Act or RA 7877, Anti-Mail Order Bride or RA 6955, and the most recent Safe Spaces Act or RA 11313.

The Anti-VAWC Law includes various services to protect victims of violence against women. It recognizes violence against women and their children as a public offense, which allows any citizen with knowledge of the crime to file a complaint. To make reporting more accessible at the local level, it requires every police precinct in the country to have a women's desk, and that a woman police officer must investigate rape cases. Additionally, every province and city is required to have a rape crisis center. It also entitles the victims to support from various government services, including legal assistance, medical assistance, temporary shelter, counseling and psychosocial services, recovery and rehabilitation programs, and livelihood assistance (SALIGAN, 2007). However, the study by Santos (2009) on the implementation of the Anti-VAWC Law emphasizes the lack of public awareness and understanding of the law, for both citizens and public officials. Some participants in the study mentioned cultural notions that hinder the implementation of the law, such as the idea that intimate partner violence is normal in a relationship and a private matter, women are at fault for the violence because it is their role to keep the harmony in a relationship and in the family, or that their abusive partner will eventually come to his senses once his anger subsides. Nguyen (2019) found similar accounts of police officers being biased and not taking reports seriously. However, Article 5 of CEDAW states that the state must address social and cultural norms that promote discrimination against women. These include cultural practices and stereotypes that foster the inferiority of women (United Nations, 1979).

There is a wide range of institutional mechanisms and government services for women. The Anti-VAWC Law established an Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children (IAC-VAWC) that comprises of government agencies assigned to create programs and projects to eliminate VAWC according to their various functions. These include:

- Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
- Civil Service Commission (CSC)
- Commission on Human Rights (CHR)
- Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC)
- Philippine National Police (PNP)
- National Bureau of Investigation (NBI)

- Department of Justice (DOJ)

- Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

- Department of Education (DepEd)

- Department of Health (DOH)

- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)

Non-government organizations and women's human rights advocates also contribute a significant role in addressing VAWC. The various government services rely on the expertise NGOs for training and crafting programs (Foundation for Media Alternatives [FMA] & Association for Progressive Communication [APC], 2013; Santos, 2009). Each government agency has different functions to address violence against women and children in accordance with the law. At the ground level, the Women and Children's Desks required in each Local Government Unit (LGU) are the first to receive reports about VAWC. The PNP and the NBI are in charge of investigatory services and procedures for reported VAWC cases, while the DOH provides medical services, and the DOJ assists with legal and prosecution services. The DSWD provides psychosocial and rehabilitation services, as well as temporary shelters, and the LGUs, under the DILG, are also tasked to work with the DSWD in recovery and livelihood assistance for the victims upon release from the rehabilitation centers (Foundation for Media Alternatives [FMA] & Association for Progressive Communication [APC], 2013; SALIGAN, 2007).

However, Santos (2009) found several shortcomings of different government agencies. Not all cities and provinces had rape crisis centers and most of which were located in large hospitals. Moreover, the rape crisis centers are mostly located in city centers, which is difficult to access for those living in the surrounding far-flung villages. Women living in these areas often do not have the financial means to afford the long commute. In relation, a participant from the DOH expressed concerns about the lack of resources to establish and maintain a rape crisis center in every province and believed the centers should be funded by the LGUs. Conversely, the LGUs also complained about their lack of funds to do so. The existing rape crisis centers are unable to operate 24 hours a day, which leaves the risk of women to be treated by untrained staff on the sensitive matter. Some local government units were also found to misuse the five percent budget allocated for Gender and Development activities, while others found the budget too little, which made them skeptical to accommodate all the complaints they receive (Santos, 2009).

The study by Santos (2009) pointed out the poor data collection system of VAWC cases in the country. The various government agencies have separate data collection mechanisms, which makes consolidation and comparison difficult due to the inaccuracies and possible overlaps. There is no standard monitoring and documentation system, nor is there a central national institution to collect and monitor the VAWC data across the country (Santos, 2009). This makes it difficult to comprehend the national situation on VAWC, which is crucial in addressing the problem and improving its services.

In writing, the Philippines has numerous laws and services that cater to victims of violence against women. Despite that, one out of five women still experience VAW. Even worse, only six percent of them sought help from the public system. These figures, as well as studies by Santos (2009) and Foundation for Media Alternatives [FMA] and Association for Progressive Communication [APC] (2013), indicate that there is still a lack of implementation and awareness of the law, and inefficient public services.

2.4. VAW reporting in the Philippines

Violence against women is widely underreported. Santos (2009) found several reasons Filipino women choose to remain silent about the abuse: shame, self-blame, fear of the abuser, insufficient resources to pursue legal action, inaccessible reporting facilities, or being pressured by others to resolve the issue and to iron out the relationship with the abusive partners. The participants of the study only reported the abuse as a last resort, if the children were also at risk or if their own lives were seriously jeopardized.

Every police station in the country is mandated to have a women's desk. However, Santos (2009) found various issues with the protection of violence against women and children at this level. Some of those mentioned were insufficient knowledge of the law, gender insensitivity, dismissing cases due to the absence of physical injuries as "evidence," delayed responses, being advised by police officers to make peace with their abusive partners, and police officers' fear of criminal liability. Some police officers complained of being countercharged for trespassing, arresting without a warrant, or arbitrary detention of the accused. However, the law clearly states that any person intervening in accordance with the law to ensure safety for a VAWC victim is exempt from criminal, civil, or administrative liability.

In one interview from Santos (2009), a woman reported the abuse to local district officials but was met with hesitation in pursuing her complaint. The mediators were friends

with her husband and got free vulcanizing services from his shop. After issuing a local protection order for the wife and arresting the husband, he was released immediately after he convinced the police to let him go. Even worse, the police speculated that the wife was filing a case against the husband in order to get the income from his vulcanizing shop. The police reasoned the lack of witnesses as evidence for the case, and even advised her that domestic violence is normal within a relationship (Santos, 2009). Similarly, Nguyen (2019) mentioned the problem with smaller, tight-knit communities is the higher chance for corruption among the local officials and gossip within the community. This makes it more difficult for victims to face the stigma of having a broken marriage or family. This shows that more local levels of reporting are not always ideal because of the familiarity within such communities.

Victims of intimate partner violence rarely pursue a criminal case against their abusive partner. Instead, they prioritize moving to a safer place and fixing new arrangements for their own work and their children's schools. Many victims are economically dependent on their abuser, which could also prevent them from leaving the relationship. The legal process is costly and time-consuming, both of which many victims cannot afford. Nonetheless, when women ultimately choose to seek government services for protection and justice, they face various problems and obstacles within the system that further discourage them to push through (Santos, 2009).

2.5. VAW in relation to Philippine culture

Cultural stereotypes can contribute to the persistence of violence against women and influence reporting behavior. Some studies have found that cultural stereotypes expected of a Filipino woman and a power imbalance in existing social structures instill a tolerance of violent behavior (Berbarte et al., 2018; Molin, 2018; Santos, 2009; Tanyag, 2018). Studies also found the strong influence of the Catholic church on policies and moral codes and the religious roots of valuing a woman's virginity as factors that foster tolerance of violence against women (Estrada-Claudio, 2002; Manalastas & David, 2018; Yarcia, de Vela, & Tan, 2019).

Stressful situations, such as experiencing repeated natural calamities, can exacerbate existing social structures that encourage violence against women. Studies by Nguyen (2019) and Molin (2018) found that risk factors associated with the perpetration of GBV post disasters are strongly rooted in social structures rather than being due to the impacts of the disaster. The social structures that encourage such violence include power imbalances,

unequal gender norms, patriarchal structures, a macho culture, rigid gender roles, a binary understanding of gender identities, and a normalized violent behavior of men. Violent behavior is often triggered by situations following a disaster, such as a loss of livelihood, lack of coping mechanisms to deal with traumatic experiences and new gender roles, men's jealously, and tensions formed by changed power dynamics in a relationship. The act of GBV is often used to regain the lost sense of power and masculinity. Overall, Molin (2018) found a lack of programs to deal with GBV post-disasters, and the potential of humanitarian sectors to address the issue. Nguyen (2019) found that despite the presence of laws that address GBV, there is a gap between the written law and the actual implementation. Molin (2018) also emphasized the need for long-term and multidimensional efforts from an extensive range of actors to address the root causes of the issue.

In the Philippine culture, the caring roles of women are attributed to being self-sacrificial and altruistic. A study by Tanyag (2018) on women's role during post-disaster displacement found that women are expected to adjust and sacrifice their own needs for those of the family, community, and state. The unpaid care work they provide is expected to adapt to the situation and is even necessary for the survival and recovery of the community. This feminization of care validates and maintains the cultural stereotype of self-sacrificial and altruistic behavior expected from women and girls. The silent and non-complaining ideal of a Filipino woman is one of the reasons Filipino women are model domestic and care workers all around the world. In fact, this sacrificial and altruistic stereotype of Filipino women is what supports household and national economies (Tanyag, 2018). However, Santos (2009) points out that this same stoical stereotype also affects how women respond to violence against them, specifically to intimate partner violence. They are programmed to silently cope with and adjust to the situation, or to turn the blame on themselves. In line with this, Berbarte et al. (2018) found the strong patriarchy and caring roles of women are sociocultural factors that promote IPV. Moreover, women fear the backlash of not being able to save their relationship or to keep the family together in a culture where the family and marriage are sacred institutions (Santos, 2009).

Philippine culture highly values family, more so in the context of marriage. The study by Santos (2009) on the implementation of the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004, found that women choose to stay silent on intimate partner violence in order to keep the family together for the children's sake. Both women and government officials in the study were unaware that violence against women is a public crime and thought of IPV as normal within a marriage or a relationship. Because of this notion that IPV is a

couple's private business, both the women and public officials think that it must be sorted out between the partners and therefore public intervention is unnecessary (Santos, 2009). These widespread cultural notions not only fail to protect women from violence, but also foster the tolerance and silence on violence against women.

Despite the separation of the Catholic church and the Philippine State, the Catholic church plays a significant role in dictating moral codes of Philippine culture. Over 80% of the Philippine population practice Roman Catholicism, brought by the nearly 400 years of Spanish colonization. Many traditional discourses rooted in the Spanish colonization and Catholic values still penetrate gender ideals in present society (Nguyen, 2019). The Catholic's teachings encourage chastity among women and subservience to their husbands. Moreover, the Catholic church is very vocal on opposing policies related to sexuality. Its substantial influence makes abortion, divorce, sex work, same-sex marriage, gender identity recognition, and commercial pornography illegal in the country. It promotes pro-life and family values and opposes divorce, euthanasia, abortion, total population control, and homosexual relationships, or coined in the acronym 'DEATH' (Manalastas & David, 2018; Yarcia et al., 2019).

The Catholic church and religious groups strongly advocate for protecting Philippine morality and the institution of marriage. They use arguments relating to values, beliefs, and ideologies rooted in the messages of Catholicism and historic structures of Philippine society to oppose the Anti-Discrimination bill, divorce, and contraception. Such issues are likened to being sinful, not normal, unnatural, and immoral (Manalastas & David, 2018; Yarcia et al., 2019). Tanyag (2018) was informed by a local NGO that many priests are unaware of sexual and reproductive health issues and rights, and instead foster blind obedience over informed decision making. In CEDAW's concluding observations on the 7th and 8th periodic reports of the Philippines, the committee highlighted the persistence of the dominant stereotype of women's primary role as child bearers encouraged by culture and religion. Such stereotypes stem from the deep-seated Catholic influence, in which the ideal woman is likened to the Madonna that encourages values of martyrdom and virginity (Tanyag, 2018).

In the Philippine culture, virginity lies on a double standard. Female virginity is often regarded as virtuous, while male virginity is not given equal importance. Even in the Philippine legal discourse, the term "virtuous female" is used to refer to an "unmarried female who is a virgin." This clearly shows the gendered notions on virginity in Philippine society (Manalastas & David, 2018). A survey by Manalastas and David (2018) found that 60% of Filipinos believed it was very important for a woman to remain a virgin until

marriage, while 28% found it important, and only 12% said it was not important. This view on women's virginity was spread out across different demographics, regardless of age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, or location. Manalastas and David (2018) also conducted qualitative interviews and focus group discussions which revealed that female respondents rarely referred to religion or community perception as the reason for valuing virginity. Instead, the "women only expressed concern about what their husbands would think and how it would reflect on their husbands' social status" (Manalastas & David, 2018, p. 39). On the other hand, 45% of men in their survey disapproved of men having pre-marital sex. This shows an in-group bias of men being more lenient with themselves regarding sex. One reason is that virginity among men is stigmatized and ridiculed in the culture. Manalastas and David (2018) suggest that women themselves endorse and sustain the cultural beliefs that limit their sexual agency.

The emphasis on a woman's virginity and purity leads to the objectification of women and isolation of her value. A study by Estrada-Claudio (2002) analyzed how rape incidents were presented in Philippine tabloid articles. The stories describe rape as the act of taking away a woman's purity and virtue, equating a woman's value solely on her sexual experience instead of her character or achievements. The victim is often described as losing her womanhood after being raped by a man, but no equivalent is said for men in rape stories or in the general culture. The rape stories liken losing one's womanhood to losing her purity and honor, emphasizing that a woman's worth is anchored on her physical body and sexual innocence. This reflects on the Philippine culture wherein the Virgin Mary is set as the standard of a woman's purity and character. In relation, Manalastas and David (2018) found that women's virginity is perceived as a gift given to or a prize for men in marriage. The view of claiming a woman's virginity as a prize for men constructs women as merely static objects (Manalastas & David, 2018). The restrictive views on women's sexual agency is shaped by the expectations and opinion of men, which gives the power and agency to men rather than to women themselves.

Similarly, the study by Estrada-Claudio (2002) highlights the objectification of female physicality and sexuality. In tabloid news reports of rape stories, men are described as a lusting predator and often refer to his occupation and relationship to the victim – father, employer, uncle, etc. These descriptions elevate the rapist into a position of power, referring to him as the subject and the helpless female victim as the object. Women are depicted as the object of a man's passion and desire, making her female identity conditional to the satisfaction male lust. Moreover, the stories interpret the single act of rape capable of making

a person lose or be alienated from all her worth. The stories illustrate "a personhood that is constructed around the physical state of one's body and the exclusivity of a man's sexual access to it" (Estrada-Claudio, 2002, p. 114).

Estrada-Claudio (2002) also found that the articles often describe rapists as pathological or psychologically ill. This construction creates an unjust stereotype that conceals the fact that normal men do commit rape. Additionally, rape victims are stereotyped into behaving a certain way by detailing her body, her clothes, and her emotional and traumatized state. However, not all rape victims express the same crying behavior expected of them. Stereotyping such behavior and reactions could bring on more damaging effects on the survivor, as "rape survivors take on cultural cues that victimize them and stigmatize them" (Estrada-Claudio, 2002, p. 28). These cultural stereotypes promote feelings of shame, dehumanization, and degradation, as depicted in the stories about rape.

Violence against women is a global problem with long-lasting consequences. The existing studies, both in the Philippines and in different countries, all emphasize the crucial role that social constructs and contexts play in the perpetration and prevalence of violence against women. Age, economic empowerment, urbanization, and educational attainment could be risk or protective factors for women who are victims of violence. However, social and cultural beliefs also contribute to the tolerance of violence against women. Studies about gender-based violence in the Philippines found that the roles and characteristics expected of a woman, as well as the influence of the Catholic church on laws and values, are instrumental in the persistence of violence against women and reporting behavior in the country. Although violence against women is a global phenomenon, it must be studied from a local perspective in order to address the root causes of the issue.

2.6. The Public Health Model

The Public Health Model by the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) (n.d.) is designed to address violence and health problems on a large scale. The public health approach is rooted in a multi-disciplinary scientific base and encourages involvement from various sectors such as health, education, justice, social services, and the private sector. Cooperation from diverse stakeholders is crucial in addressing violence and providing the most benefit for the largest number of people. The model has four steps: 1) Define and monitor the problem, 2) Identify risk and protective factors, 3) Develop and test prevention

strategies, and 4) Assure widespread adoption (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.).

The first step is to define and monitor the problem. This step aims to understand the who, what, when, where, and how of the issue. The data needed includes the trends and frequency of the violence, where it occurs, and who the victims and perpetrators are. Such data is usually sourced from police reports, hospital charts, registries, and population surveys among others. The second step is to identify risk and protective factors. According to the CDC (n.d), a risk factor is a "characteristic that increases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence," but does not necessarily mean that they will always cause violence. While a protective factor "decreases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence because it provides a buffer against risk." Identifying the risk and protective factors are important in order to focus prevention efforts. The third step is to develop and test prevention strategies. Planning and designing prevention programs must be evidence-based and drawn from research literature, assessment data, community surveys, and stakeholder interviews. Afterwards, programs must also be evaluated in order to assess their effectiveness. The fourth step is to assure widespread adoption. Once the prevention programs have been determined effective through the third step, they must be implemented on a broader scale. Widespread adoption could include training, networking, technical assistance, and evaluation (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.).

2.7.Integrated Ecological Model

Early theorists view gender-based violence as either caused by individual violence, or social and political factors. However, later literature began to explore a more complete understanding of GBV as caused by several factors on multiple levels (Heise, 1998). Heise (1998) emphasizes the need to understand not just the violent behavior of men, but also why women are often the target. Her Integrated Ecological Model helps organize and integrate findings from the different disciplines that seek to explain the cause of GBV, and provides the possibility of discovering a combination of variables that will help to understand the varying trends of abuse in different settings (Heise, 1998).

Heise's (1998) Integrated Ecological Model consists of four levels: 1) individual, 2) relationships, 3) community, and 4) societal. The first looks at individual factors rooted in one's personal history. These are factors that an individual brings to their behavior and relationships, such as experiences during the developmental years that shape their response to

the relationship and community stressors. Risk factors could be witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child, age, education, or income. The second level is relationships or the microsystem, which is the immediate context where abuse occurs. Risk factors for this level are male dominance over the household economy and decisions, marital conflict, or alcohol use. Marital conflict is often prompted by matters that throw off the existing power structure, such as higher educational attainment of the wife, drinking habits of the husband, or division of labor. Alcohol use can both be the reason of conflict and can increase the husband's aggressive behavior. The third level is the community or exosystem, which comprises of formal and informal institutions and social structures. The risk factors include unemployment or low socioeconomic status, social isolation, or living conditions. Lastly, the macrosystem consists of the general views, attitudes, and beliefs in the surrounding culture. Risk factors involve a notion of masculinity linked to dominance, toughness, and honor; rigid gender roles; sense of male entitlement and ownership over women; and social acceptance of punishment of women. This proposed ecological approach to GBV acknowledges the interplay among social, situational, and sociocultural factors (Heise, 1998).

To build on the Integrated Ecological Model, Fulu and Miedema (2015) include a fifth level of globalization. They stress that globalization is not just an economic phenomenon, but also a gendered social transformation in which societies are affected unequally. They propose the fifth level of globalization as the overarching context of the model. Fulu and Miedema (2015) use two case studies from the Maldives and Cambodia to illustrate how globalization leads to social change that influences risk and protective factors for VAW. The case study on Maldives show how globalization is disintegrating the traditional cultural protective factors for VAW. While in Cambodia, globalization has strengthened the discourse on local legislation for VAW and increased local awareness.

Fulu and Miedema (2015) propose four thematic areas under globalization, namely: global ideologies, economic integration, religious fundamentalism, and global cultural exchange. The case studies present how the global ideologies of women's rights and democracy have both positive impacts and setbacks on the discourse of VAW in the two contexts. The influence of economic integration is most obviously exemplified in women's economic empowerment through participation in the workforce, and economically motivated migration and urbanization. Growing religious fundamentalism encourages conservative religious trends, which in turn affects national laws on violence, divorce, and gendered roles in the public sphere. Lastly, globalized cultural influences reshape ideas of masculinity and femininity, and serve as a possible catalyst for promoting violent masculinities among men.

This shows how although GBV is highly contextual, it is no longer limited to national borders. Global influences also affect the reshaping of risk and protective factors for GBV and is therefore relevant in order to holistically understand the issue.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines perceive gender-based violence?
    - 1a) What data do the organizations have, what are their sources, and how is it used to address GBV?
    - 1b) What do they identify as risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior?
- RQ2: How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines address GBV?
    - 2a) What strategies and programs are the organizations doing to address GBV and do they monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these programs?

It is important to note that this study focused on GBV against women and uses both terms VAW and GBV.

3.2. Selection of Respondents

This study used a qualitative approach for a more in-depth analysis and understanding of VAW in the Philippines. Due to time constraints, the interviews were limited within Metro Manila, Philippines. There were two levels of sampling. The first level is the context, which is UN, nongovernment organizations, government services, and academics in Metro Manila. The second level is the individual organizations or participants that represent each category in the first level. 11 units were originally selected based on the criteria that they 1) have an office in Metro Manila, 2) advocate against VAW or GBV, and 3) have an ongoing or past project working with VAW or GBV. The original selected participants are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Participants	Context
UN Women Philippines	UN agency
Care Philippines	International organization
Oxfam Philippines	International organization
Saligan	Local organization
WeDpro	Local organization
Spark	Local organization
Women's Crisis Center	Local organization
Philippine Commission on Women	Government agency
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Protective Services Bureau	Government agency
Miriam College Women and Gender Institute	Academics
University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender Studies	Academics

The fieldwork in Manila was planned for December 2019 to January 2020. I began contacting the participants via email in June 2019. Out of the 11 selected participants, the following were not interviewed because they could not be contacted, declined to be interviewed, or could not find a common schedule for an interview: Care Philippines, Oxfam Philippines, WeDpro, Women's Crisis Center, Philippine Commission on Women, and the University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender Studies.

Because not all original participants could be interviewed, I re-selected additional participants based on both the original criteria and using a snowball sampling method. The list of participants is found in Table 2 below:

Table 2

Participant	Date and location	Context
UN Women Philippines	10/12/2019 Un Women Philippines office	UN
Philippine National Police - Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC)	11/12/2019 PNP WCPC office	Government agency
Quezon City Police District (QCPD) - Women and Children Protection Desk	17/12/2019 QCPD office	Government agency
Department of Social Welfare and Development	10/01/2020 DSWD office	Government agency
Saligan	18/12/2019 Saligan office	Local NGO
Spark	09/01/2020 Spark office	Local NGO
Empower	01/02/2020 WhatsApp audio call	Local NGO
Embassy of Sweden	09/01/2020 Embassy office	International embassy
Miriam College Women and Gender Institute (WAGI)	16/12/2019 WAGI office	Academic
Lawyer	18/12/2019 Lawyer's office	Academic

UN Women Philippines was selected to represent a UN body. UN Women Philippines had a previous project on sexual harassment called Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, and has an ongoing project on VAW among migrant female workers called Safe and Fair.

Saligan, Spark, and Empower were selected to represent a diversity among local NGOs. Saligan focuses on empowering women through the law and legal services. Spark advocates for women's rights and gender issues by engaging communities. Empower works

to eliminate GBV through education. Empower was also recommended by Spark for their involvement in the *#RespetoNaman* campaign.

The PNP WCPC oversees the Women's Desks found in every municipality around the country. They were selected to provide a national or overall perspective of their function. On the other hand, the QCPD Women and Children Protection Desk was recommended by UN Women Philippines due to their previous collaboration on the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Project. The QCPD was also selected to provide a more local perspective on a city-wide scale.

The Embassy of Sweden was selected for their involvement in the *#RespetoNaman* campaign and active advocacy for gender equality. They were selected as an additional international or outsider's perspective. However, because no other international organization was interviewed, the Embassy of Sweden serves as the only international organization in the sample.

WAGI was selected because it is a research, training, and advocacy center for women's rights and gender equality. The lawyer was selected based on their legal, academic, and organizational experience with family law and women and children's rights.

3.3. Data collection

I conducted individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews with nine participants between 10 December 2019 and 10 January 2020. An additional interview was arranged via audio call on 01 February 2020. The interviews were held at a time, date, and location convenient for the participants. The date and location of each interview is presented in the table.

The semi-structured interview allowed flexibility for the discussion. An interview guide (see Appendix A) was sent to the participants beforehand. The same interview guide was used during the interviews. There were two different interview guides, one for organizations and another for academics. The questions were derived from the main research questions and theoretical frameworks. The interview guide contained questions about 1) data and statistics, 2) laws and services for GBV, 3) factors that affect GBV, and 4) the organization's or the academic's work on GBV. Additional questions were also asked during the interview when deemed appropriate.

Although the interview guides were in English, the responses were in both English and Filipino. This was not an issue as I am fluent in both languages. The interviews were

recorded using my personal smartphone with the participant's consent. I also took down notes for each interview. The interviews were then transcribed afterwards.

For future data collection, I recommend allotting sufficient time to obtain interviews, especially for government agencies. Because I was not in the Philippines until the actual fieldwork, it was difficult to get in touch with government agencies because they did not have available or working emails available on their websites. If they did have contact details, it was only a landline number, which was not possible to call from abroad. In addition, it took several weeks of calling different sections of the government agencies before I was connected to the right point person, and even more time afterwards before I could get an interview schedule. As a result, although I originally planned four weeks for fieldwork, it took closer to seven weeks to complete – and even then, I was not able to conduct all of the planned interviews.

3.4. Ethical issues

The participants were informed of their rights and role in the study within adequate time beforehand. The participants were sent a softcopy of the Information Sheet (Appendix B) upon initial contact. This contained details of the study and the participant's role in it. Once the participant agreed to an interview, they were sent a softcopy of the Consent Form (Appendix C) informing them of their role and rights in the study. During the physical interview, I provided each participant with hardcopies of both the Information Sheet and two Consent Forms, one for myself and one for the participant to keep.

The data collection process was approved by the *Norsk senter for forskningsdata* (NSD) prior to the fieldwork. The participants' personal identities are anonymized. They are only regarded by their organization's name throughout this study. All collected data are stored securely on a private device with restricted access. All directly identifiable and personal data are stored separately from the collected data. Personal data will be stored until 30 June 2021.

3.5. Data analysis

The data was analyzed using a combination of the Public Health Model and the Integrated Ecological Model. The Public Health Model was used as an overarching tool to assess the organizations' data on GBV, how they perceive the issue, and how they address GBV through their campaigns and strategies. As mentioned in Chapter 2.6, the Public Health

Model has four steps: 1) Define and monitor the problem, 2) Identify risk and protective factors, 3) Develop and test prevention strategies, and 4) Assure widespread adoption. The Integrated Ecological Model will be used for Step 2 of the Public Health Model for a more in-depth analysis of the risk and protective factors identified. In addition to the risk and protective factors, I included a separate category for factors that affect reporting behavior as they did not fall under the two other categories. The Integrated Ecological Model was used to organize the three different factors into five levels: 1) Individual, 2) Relationships, 3) Community, 4) Societal, and 5) Global. These five levels allowed for a more in-depth analysis and contextual understanding of the factors.

4. Findings

This chapter arranges the data collected from the interviews according to the structure of the interview guides (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The interviews were conducted as described in Chapter 3.3. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the questions asked and the order of the questions varied for each interview. Other factors such as the flow of the conversation and the limited time for some interviews also affected which questions were asked. Despite this, all interviews covered the four main themes of 1) data and statistics, 2) laws and services for GBV, 3) factors that affect GBV, and 4) the organization's or the academic's work on GBV.

4.1. Definitions and data

Question: What is your definition of gender-based violence (GBV)?

UN Women defined VAW as "acts of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether in public or private." They use the definition found in DEVAW. As a UN entity, their definition is aligned with the established normative frameworks that define GBV and VAW.

The respondent emphasized the gendered aspect of the definitions of VAW and GBV – that women are considered a vulnerable group because of their historical oppression and unequal power relations that puts them at a disadvantaged position. Although GBV happens globally, it must be understood in its specific context because it is within the society that the structural inequalities, stereotypes, norms and attitudes towards gender play a specific role in the issue.

PNP WCPC, QCPD, and Spark also defined GBV as violence done against a person specifically because of their gender. QCPD noted that although GBV could also happen to men, majority of the victims are women and girls.

QCPD pointed out that GBV is one of the most notable human rights violations in any society. UN Women highlighted that VAW and GBV are public issues and even a health epidemic. This means that:

> it's not only an issue of women and girls, but it's a societal issue. It's an issue where women and girls continue to be at risk, and also our men and boys continue to be at risk as well for displaying these behaviors. And so the cycle of violence continues, and it also figures in the different overarching structural violence like poverty, criminality, [and] the way our society would define a public threat.

Spark highlighted the fact that the organization is specific about using the term GBV instead of VAW because of the wider extent of GBV. Although they focused on sexual violence at the beginning of their *#RespetoNaman* campaign, they have expanded the scope to violence against the LGBT community as well.

Question: What are the different types of GBV?

UN Women, Spark, PNP WCPC, and QCPD categorized VAW into four types: sexual abuse, physical abuse, economical abuse, and emotional or psychosocial abuse. PNP WCPC mentioned that VAW could be a range of different things, such as domestic violence, public harassment, or rape. Spark believed that not enough attention is given to emotional and economic abuse:

> One of the most untalked about [forms of abuse] would be emotional abuse or verbal abuse. We don't even have data or statistics to back up how many women or how many people experience verbal abuse in the Philippines because it's not really considered as abuse yet. One of the other things that isn't normally talked about is economic abuse – how women and girls really have less opportunities because of the culture that we have.

Questions:
What statistics do you have of GBV?
Where do you obtain your data?
How is this data used by the organization?
Have the incidents increased or decreased over the years? Why?

All of the respondents derived their data from the National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2017 and or from the Philippine National Police. The NDHS data is available online. The PNP data is not openly accessible to the public online and must be requested from their office.

UN Women conducted a survey for their Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces program. They found that three out of five women experience sexual harassment at least once in their lifetime. They used the initial statistics to dig deeper into the existing norms and attitudes surrounding the issue. This data was used to exhibit the pervasiveness of the issue, and to analyze how it could be used for interventions that would prevent, respond, and hopefully eliminate VAW.

Most of the respondents mentioned acquiring GBV data from the Philippine National Police. The PNP WCPC confirmed that they are the repository for all of the national data related to GBV. However, they only count the cases that were filed or elevated before the court. They said that the data patterns are inconsistent and varies per region and per year. The QCPD explained the process of consolidating data: the city's police department collects the data from Women and Children Protection desks located in every municipality. They submit this data to the regional police department, who then forwards the data to the national police department.

Locally, the QCPD uses the citywide data as a basis for their advocacy campaigns, information sessions dialogues with the local communities about the rights of women and children. They believe that the city has low figures on VAW, which could be attributed to the strong support of the local government in creating local ordinances to protect women and children. However, the respondent was aware of the double meaning behind the increase or decrease of statistics. The decrease in number of reports could mean there are less incidents, but it could also mean that victims choose not to report, while an increase in reports could also mean that people are more aware of their rights and services.

The PNP's data on VAW is not available online or for the public and must be requested from their databank. I was able to obtain the data from 2017 to 2019, which contains the number of VAW cases, categorized by region and by the type of case filed. The number of filed cases decreased over the years, from 25,805 in 2017 to 18,699 in 2019. In all three years, roughly 75% of the cases filed were violations of the Anti-VAWC Law (RA 9262). The second most reported cases (10-12%) in all three years were rape, followed by

acts of lasciviousness[1] (8-10%). The type and number of reports vary per region throughout the years, but it is interesting to note that the National Capital Region (NCR) – which is where Metro Manila is located – is always among the top three regions with most cases reported.

The DSWD also collects their own data but did not have accurate data about the nationwide number of GBV cases. The data they collect is different from the PNP data because they only count the cases based on those who have sought assistance from their services. These services include psychosocial intervention, temporary shelter, or financial, medical, or legal services. They shared their data with me from 2019, which had the number of clients in their two shelters which house GBV victims. The data is also categorized by the type of violation or abuse. The data shows that there is a total of 564 clients in the two shelters in NCR, some of which are children. The majority of the clients are victims of trafficking, followed by prostitution, and illegal recruitment.

Empower mentioned some statistics surrounding GBV:

One rape [happens] every 45 to 53 minutes depending on what source you go by. Our conviction rate has been 3% for rape in this country. We have 75,000 children being trafficked online every day and 750,000 pedophiles online every hour internationally who are the customers for these children. … 75% of all rapes are for children under the age of 14 here, [and] the age of consent is 12 years old.

They collect their data from various online sources, aside from using the data from PNP as well. They use this data in forums to correct some belief patterns among the Philippine society.

Empower believed that there is a general increase in GBV cases but said there is no definite way to compare whether the situation is worse or not. They believed GBV has increased since the rise of the internet because it has fueled online trafficking, and that "a general apathy towards those kinds of things [and] of the rape culture there is in this country – that nobody is really afraid of committing crimes because nobody's gonna do anything about it" also contributes to the prevalence of GBV.

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[1] Acts of Lasciviousness falls under Article 336 of the Revised Penal Code. It consists of any lascivious act without sexual intercourse; uses force, threat, or intimidation; and the victim is deprived of reason.

Question: Do the victims share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?

All of the respondents did not feel that VAW victims could be categorized or shared similar patterns or demographics. Spark expounded that based on their experience meeting people through their campaign, VAW could happen to anyone and most of the time people do not exhibit any signs that they have experienced it.

Question: Do the perpetrators share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?

UN Women emphasized because VAW can happen anytime and anywhere, the perpetrator can just as well be anyone – an intimate partner, an employer, an acquaintance, or a stranger. They did not find any pattern of the perpetrator in their sexual harassment survey. All types of boys and men admitted to committing sexual harassment, from professionals, to college graduates, and unemployed. However, they noted that for sexual violence there is a higher percentage that the perpetrator is someone the victim knows or trusts.

In their data, the PNP WCPC categorizes the perpetrators into a family member or an outsider. They noticed that more of the perpetrators are family members of the victims. The QCPD also noted that the perpetrators are often intimate partners or acquaintances of the victims.

Question: Where does the abuse occur? Are there patterns in the context or situation of the abuse?

UN Women emphasized that VAW can happen anytime, anywhere. Their previous project Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces focused on sexual harassment that happens in public spaces. They found that most of it takes place in public transportation and in the streets. For their current Safe and Fair program, they focus on VAW that happens beyond the Philippine borders. However, they believed that IPV and sexual violence mostly happen in the victim's home. QCPD also noted that majority of violence committed against women and children happens within their households because the perpetrators are often someone they know.

4.2. Laws

Questions:
Are you aware of the laws in the Philippines that address violence against women?
How effective are they?

How are they implemented?

Until 1997, the Philippine law considered rape as a crime against chastity. WAGI and Empower pointed out that the laws have come a long way since then, because now it is acknowledged as a crime against persons. The lawyer said that it is only the Philippines that recognizes the battered woman syndrome. Although the laws have improved, Saligan pointed out that some laws are still not gender-fair, such as the treatment of adultery and concubinage, the absence of a divorce law, and the fact that the age for consent is 12. They said that although we are slowly progressing, the cultural barrier remains an obstacle.

Question: Is CEDAW being used or implemented? If so, how?

UN Women works to ensure that a country's policy frameworks are aligned with the normative frameworks, such as CEDAW. They the substantive equality approach of CEDAW as a basis for all their programs, whose end goal is to transform the relations of men and women.

Saligan indirectly uses CEDAW as it is incorporated in the Magna Carta of Women, which is its domestic translation.

Spark indirectly uses CEDAW in their *#RespetoNaman* campaign and hopes to use it more for action-based movements.

WAGI incorporates CEDAW in their yearly International Human Rights and Governance course.

QCPD uses CEDAW as a reference for their programs.

4.2.1. *Strong policies and government support*

Policies are crucial in changing people's norms and behaviors. UN Women believed that this can be achieved through working closely with public authorities. An example is their work with Quezon City for UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces program. The program enacted a local ordinance against catcalling, which catapulted into a national law now known as the Safe Spaces Act or RA 11313. In relation, the QCPD believed that strong support from the local government plays a huge role in implementing the laws. Women and children's rights has been a main advocacy of the current mayor, who was also previously the vice mayor. It was during her term that projects surrounding women and children's rights were established and strengthened. This shows how much can be achieved if the government prioritizes a certain issue.

However, UN Women warned that laws are like a double-edged sword because:

we use policy frameworks for rights claiming – not only for rights claiming but operationally as a basis for the programs and the projects, where funds and resources are allocated for. But if we have laws that may reinforce these stereotypes or these harmful beliefs, then it is also detrimental to women and girls.

WAGI stressed the importance of internalizing the law in order for it to be preventive instead of responsive. People must understand that the law exists because VAW is morally, ethically, culturally, and religiously wrong instead of simply acting against fear of punishment.

4.2.2. *Poor implementation of the law*

Most of the respondents believed that the laws addressing GBV are great on paper, but lack implementation and public awareness. The Embassy of Sweden stated that the lack of implementation stems from the lack of trained service providers: "Our laws are quite good actually, but they're not implemented. There's a lack of implementation, lack of trained police officers, lack of trained social workers, lack of trained school faculty members, health workers in this area."

While the DSWD believed there are good laws in place to protect and promote the rights of VAW victims, "what we are needing is more on advocacy so they can be aware of their rights. *I know that the law is strong, but we lack* advocacy and implementation." Empower reiterated the fact that lawyers and judges themselves must also be aware of the current laws: "we don't have mandatory briefings for lawyers and judges. We're still dealing with ignorance from the people who are supposed to be dealing with the law, and that's a big problem."

Saligan specified that "the problem with law-making is it's done in the national level, and then the implementation is expected at the local level. And then they expect the local government to easily implement those laws." However, there is often a gap in coordinating and cascading information to the local governments on their roles in implementing laws. This causes the local implementation to not be immediate and prone to misinterpretation.

4.2.3. *Police officers' fear of retaliation*

The lawyer specified another issue in implementing the law is the police officers' fear of retaliation from the victims. Oftentimes, the victims report an incident and ask for the

perpetrator – who is often their husband or partner – to be arrested. However, when the time comes to testify or go to a prosecutor, the complainant beg the police officer to release the perpetrator and accuse the police of illegal detention if they refuse to release him from prison. This has caused a negative attitude among police officers in taking and pursuing VAW cases.

4.3. Services

Questions:
What are the available services for GBV victims in the Philippines?
How accessible are these services for people in the cities and provinces?
Do you think these services are effective? Could they be improved? How are they contributing to the increase/decrease of GBV statistics?

4.3.1. *Undertrained, inefficient, and uncoordinated services*

UN Women categorized the essential services for GBV into three areas: 1) health, which comprises psychosocial, medical, and sexual reproductive health; 2) justice and policy, which includes legal and police assistance; and 3) social support, which consists of shelters, economic assistance, and counselling services. Although these programs exist in the country, they are lacking coordination and efficiency. Service providers in the health, justice, police, and social services sectors face several challenges. They are overworked, untrained, and have to manage with limited facilities. Despite the mandated budget for gender and development in each sector, reports show they are underutilized. The respondent felt that there must be more effort to build the capacity of these government services as well as to effectively utilize their budgets. The respondent also pointed out that gender equality and eliminating GBV are not treated with enough public urgency. These issues are not priorities on the government's agenda or even integral in the country's development agenda, which is why the programs for these issues remain at the margins.

UN Women also stated that some service providers still embody a victim-blaming stance. From their experience on the ground, police officers still tend to ask the victim what she was wearing, how she acted, what time she was out – that although they need collect facts of the crime, they still lack gender sensitivity training. This shows one of the main structural challenges, that there is a lack of institutional recognition of VAW, which reflects on a misalignment among its personnel.

Although all public hospitals are mandated to accommodate VAW victims, the PNP WCPC believed that the DOH falls short on this role. Based on their experience, public hospitals and doctors refuse to entertain some victims and refer them to the police instead. They reason out the lack of rape kits, or that the incident has exceeded 24 hours, but the PNP WCPC felt that the DOH would rather not get involved in the process of filing a case. In addition, Spark mentioned that in order to pursue a rape case, the victim needs a medical-legal examination which only few hospitals in the country have. PNP WCPC finds that the DOH lacks commitment and proactiveness in addressing VAW cases. Another issue is that most hospitals only think of maternity or OBGYN when considering women's needs and are not always equipped or prepared for VAW cases.

Multi-cooperation among the different government agencies is essential. The PNP WCPC explained that once a VAW incident has been reported to the police, they are allowed to carry out a warrantless arrest of the perpetrator up to three days after the crime was committed. After the three-day period has passed, the report must undergo the regular filing process, which is more inconvenient. The victim is referred to different agencies that can be a hassle and discouraging to pursue. Some police officers also lack gender-sensitivity trainings, which could lead to re-traumatization for the victims.

Saligan, Spark and WAGI believe that although services that cater to VAW victims exist, they are not enough and not tapped into their full potential. Saligan finds that services are still centralized in a sense that victims still need to travel to the main cities in order to access them. Spark said that temporary shelters or rehabilitation centers for victims have limited resources. They are at full occupancy and do not have the operational capacity to take everyone who comes in, but are also unable to refuse someone who seeks help.

DSWD laid out the range of their services for GBV victims. They are mandated to provide social protection for these victims and have both center-based and community-based services. These include temporary shelters, financial, medical, legal, and psychosocial assistance. The PNP WCPC mentioned that the social services are often insufficient. They felt that social workers are overworked and there is a lack of infrastructure and shelters for GBV victims.

4.3.2. *One-stop shop protection center*

On a different note, the QCPD exemplified how VAW services can be delivered efficiently. They have a Quezon City Protection Center, which serves as a one-stop shop for

VAW victims. Here, the victim can find a social worker, doctors, a lawyer, and an investigator. By centralizing the essential services, the victim goes through an easier and smoother reporting process. According to the QCPD, though they have local city ordinances for VAW, they choose to file a complaint that violates the national law instead. This way, the perpetrator faces a higher penalty.

4.3.3. *Local levels of reporting can be problematic*

Although VAW services are made available at a very local level by having VAWC desks in each district, Spark points out that this can sometimes be problematic especially for tightknit communities. In such communities, people are familiar with each other and there is bound to be gossip. Even worse, the perpetrator could be friends with the police officers or someone in position, which could hold influence over those in charge of handling the reports. So even though the Women's Desks or VAWC Desks can be effective due to their near proximity, it could also pose problems especially if the officers are not well-trained.

4.3.4. *NGO services fill in the gaps*

NGO services also serve an important role in filling the gaps of the government services. The PNP WCPC confirmed that private NGOs, private donors, and foundations are essential for GBV services. According to Saligan, the NGOs provide the expertise, capacity, and resources to complement government services. This is because the government system is devolved into smaller local governments, they often rely on help from NGOs. One example is the Naga city government who has partnerships with different NGOs. This way, once a victim comes in and is assessed, she can easily be referred to the appropriate NGO if the local government service providers are unable to cater to the victim.

Another example of how NGOs work with government services is Empower and Spark's project to bring in more efficient rape kits. Empower mentioned how they collaborated with the British Embassy for these rape kits and will train the PNP and NBI officers who handle rape cases. Empower believed that there needs to be more effort from the service providers to go against rape. The respondent felt that:

> the departments that are in charge of taking care of these things are not being supported enough or don't get enough publicity. They need a bit more support, they need a bit more help, they need a bit more strategy.

4.4. Awareness

Question: Do you think people are aware of the laws and/or services that address GBV?

All respondents acknowledged a lack of awareness about the issue, the laws, and the services. WAGI stressed that:

> I think if I had to zero in on the one thing that needs to be improved so these policies can be more effective, it's education and awareness at the cultural level. At the level of the every day. … An effective law should be preventive of violence, not *merely* responding to violence.

WAGI also noted that there is a coexistence in the country between communities with high awareness on the issue, and more backward communities that still promote patriarchal values. The PNP WCPC felt that despite their information drives and various campaigns, the reach is limited, and a lot of people remain ignorant. People are not educated enough on the fact that VAW is a public crime, and that there are laws to protect women against violence. The QCPD believed that awareness of the laws should not only be among women, but also among men and possible perpetrators. The men should also be aware that these acts are against the law that have serious legal consequences.

One possible cause of the lack of awareness of VAW is due to the normalization of violence in the culture. Spark explained that girls learn to live and cope with violence from a young age because it is a normal daily experience. Based on Empower's experience talking to women in lower socioeconomic classes, oftentimes they do know what rape and sexual harassment are, but simply accept them as a norm – partly because they do not know what do about it, or because they fear victim-blaming.

According to Saligan, many of the population are unaware of the laws and their rights because of the exclusivity of the law profession. In addition, many laws that address GBV are still not mainstreamed in law school, which adds to the problem of the law practitioners being unaware themselves.

Lack of awareness could stem from a gap in the basic education system. According to DSWD, it is better that awareness about GBV issues and laws should start in school. DSWD believed that other than a lack of awareness about the issue, there are also misconceptions about what consists of GBV. People often associate GBV with the LGBTQI community. However, people must be aware that other issues, from sexual harassment to trafficking, all fall under the umbrella of GBV.

4.5.Reporting

4.5.1. *Inefficient reporting system and lack of gender-sensitivity training*

There were several concerns regarding the reporting system and government services for VAW victims. The victims either do not know where to report or get referred to different agencies due to a lack of coordination among the different service providers. According to UN Women, WAGI, Spark, the Embassy of Sweden, and DSWD - police officers and other service providers lack gender-sensitivity training and still have a victim-blaming mindset that could lead to further traumatization for the victim. The victim goes through a lengthy process in order to file a case and often has to repeat her story several times to the different agencies. This process leaves the victim feeling more disempowered and hopeless about attaining justice. According to UN Women, "it also subjects women who are already suffering from trauma or abuse to further re-victimization … it doesn't help them recover when they cannot access these services or when they're having different problems in accessing these services."

4.5.2. *Fear of stigma and victim-blaming*

One factor why women do not report is due to fear – of stigma, of being blamed for what happened, and of being publicly shamed. According to Empower, "there's still a victim-blaming culture, so even if they are aware of the services, they don't use them because they know that they'll get blamed for what happened to them and shamed." The victim fears that the community will talk about her and treat her differently. The victim could also be blamed for letting the abuse happen and for not being able to keep the marriage or family together.

4.5.3. *Perpetrator is a family member or husband/partner*

The fact that the perpetrator is a family member or the woman's husband/partner is another crucial factor that hinders her from reporting, but for different reasons: fear of retaliation, economic dependence, self-blame, or emotional attachment to the partner. According to the PNP WCPC, QCPD, and the lawyer, the woman could be economically dependent on their partner. She cannot afford to file a case or even live separately from him because she has no means to support herself and her children.

Another hindrance is the woman's fear of retaliation and power of the perpetrator. The perpetrator could have more money, power, and connections that he could use to influence the case. The woman also fears being hurt or violated even more once the perpetrator finds out she reported him to the police.

According to the lawyer, if the perpetrator is the woman's husband or partner, her love and emotional attachment to him could also hinder her from turning him in. She could be afraid of losing him and hopes that he will change for the better, or believes that she still sees the side of him she fell in love with, or accepts the beating as his way of showing love. She could also be concerned about maintaining his reputation and keeping his job. The woman might also blame herself for the violence – she thinks that she deserves the beating, or that if she improves herself the violence will stop.

4.5.4. Lack of awareness and normalization of violence

According to Spark, sometimes the abuse is something that is already normalized in the woman's life that she does not even realize it is wrong. The lawyer states that the woman could think of beating as a normal part of the marriage or is unaware that she has the right not to be beaten. She could also have been raised to believe that the woman's role is to please the man or that IPV is a private matter that no one else should interfere with.

4.6. Economic empowerment

Question: Does economic empowerment affect GBV? If so, how?

Nearly all the respondents believed that economic empowerment plays a crucial role in encouraging a woman to escape an abusive situation. Many women in the Philippine society, especially in the lower socioeconomic status, are financially dependent on their husbands/partners, which makes it difficult to leave the relationship if he is also the perpetrator. The women have no means to support their children and have limited opportunities to earn a living. According to UN Women, "economic empowerment is integral in women finding their autonomy and being able to get out of the abusive situations." Spark believes this stems from the cultural notion that men are supposed to be the breadwinners:

> We think that men are the ones who go out and get a living and that's why we think they're the ones who should get an education. And it really limits the potential of girls in that when they grow up to be, even if they grow up to becomes wives, they get stuck in abusive relationships whether it be physical or emotional abuse BECAUSE they have no economic capacity to fend for themselves.

Additionally, QCPD believed that it is in the culture for women to endure any type of hardships for her children and family. So if the woman is completely dependent on her abuser, then she will endure the suffering for her and her children's survival.

However, there is also a flipside to economic empowerment. According to WAGI, "because you're economically empowered, you can bolt out of your home and leave your husband. But because you're economically empowered, you have a face to keep, a social status. So you can't just bolt out of your home." This is also one of the reasons why victims in the higher socioeconomic status do not report or seek help.

4.7. Educational attainment

Question: Does educational attainment affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, risk, and reporting? If so, how?

Spark believed that the lack of education can be a contributing factor to VAW. Less educated people receive less economic opportunities, leaving them to remain in poverty. This could lead people to monetize abuse out of desperation. The respondent stated that "it's also a consequence of poverty, … [and] it's still intertwined with how the development of our country has been slow and [how] the marginalized communities have been disregarded or left behind."

The QCPD said that they are unable to tell the educational attainment of the perpetrators or victims. However, they assume that most of those who report VAW to the police come from the middle or lower class because those in the upper classes will hire private lawyers instead.

4.8. Socioeconomic class

Questions:
Does socioeconomic class affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, reporting, perception, etc?
What are the differences and/or similarities? If so, how?
Does educational attainment affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, risk, and reporting? If so, how?

VAW cuts across all socioeconomic classes. However, there are differences in terms of awareness and access of services, social reputation, powerful perpetrators, and the living situations.

PNP WCPC felt that the socioeconomic status does not affect VAW in any way and that it could happen to anyone.

The QCPD believed that VAW is more common among the lower SES because the couples often fight about money, which then leads to violence.

4.8.1. *Awareness and access to services*

Women from the higher SES have more access and awareness to services. Saligan felt that educational attainment affects VAW in relation to their social status. Based on their experience, they noticed that women from both higher and lower SES are unaware of or misunderstand the law. They also observed that women from higher SES do not consider the financial cost of filing a case as a hindrance to reporting, while women from the lower SES find it difficult to capture the length and expense of filing a case, and upon learning this would rather not pursue it anymore. DSWD also noted that victims from the lower SES are less knowledgeable of their rights, the process, and the available services.

4.8.2. *Social reputation*

Women in both the lower and higher SES are affected by the stigma of being a VAW victim. However, UN Women, WAGI, the lawyer, and Empower all emphasized that victims from the higher SES are more conscious about their social reputation. They have more to lose and would rather not give up their lifestyle. As Empower put it, "in the upper class they don't talk about it as much – there's this thing about keeping appearances, so they shun it and pretend it didn't happen." On the other hand, women in the lower SES have less to lose, and it is easier for those who are not legally married to separate their partners.

4.8.3. *Powerful abusers*

UN Women, WAGI, and Empower believe that women in the higher SES fear retaliation from the perpetrator, especially if he is more powerful and influential. According to Empower, "if your rapist has power, or if you've been raped by someone who has connections, it's very difficult to convict him."

4.8.4. *Living situation*

Even though VAW happens in all SES, it is more hidden among the higher SES because of their living situation. According to the lawyer, "you grow up with parents who to the public eye are perfect, but at home you know that your mother's being abused, except that nobody hears it because you live in a big house with concrete walls." WAGI says that in richer communities, the abuse is more hidden because it happens in bigger houses in exclusive gated communities. Unlike in poor areas, you can hear the shouting and beating

because people live in small, tight, shanty houses. Empower believed VAW is more prominent in poor communities because of their living situations as well. People live in small shacks where everyone sleeps in the same room, and kids openly witness their parents' sex life and violence.

4.9. Urban and rural settings

Question: Does the rural or urban setting affect GBV? If so, how? What are the differences and/or similarities?

VAW happens in both the urban and rural areas. However, some respondents pointed out the main difference is the access to services. UN Women, Saligan, and Empower stated that the services are located in the city centers, which makes it difficult to reach for people living in the outskirts and rural areas. VAW victims from the rural areas will have to travel for several hours to reach the city center. Once they reach the city center they might have to stay overnight and spend on food, turning it into a costly and time-consuming journey that many poor people cannot afford.

Based on Spark's experience reaching out to communities around the country, they noticed that people in the rural areas asked more exploratory questions in terms of what they could do within their community to address GBV. The respondent got the impression communities in rural areas "know each other well enough to feel like they have a community that they can develop or that they can work with or influence."

4.10. Age

Question: Does age affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, risk, and reporting? If so, how?

Most respondents did not believe that the victim's age affected the occurrence of VAW. However, UN Women and Spark believed that there is a difference in terms of reporting, as older women are more aware of the violation and have more opportunity to report. Children, on the other hand, are the most vulnerable age group. According to UN Women:

> there is an observation that yes, adult women are more able to report, especially if they're more aware that it is a violation. But for younger girls, girl children, first it's really more on their awareness if … what is happening is a violation … In terms of reporting as well, they are in the context where they would NEED someone else like an adult, a family member would support them. But there is also a question whether

THEY would tell their parents or their adult family members – especially if the perpetrator is also a family member.

4.11. Marital status

Question: Does marital status affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, risk, and reporting? If so, how?

Saligan and QCPD did not think that marital status affects GBV or VAW. QCPD noted that they receive reports from both married or unmarried couples and do not notice any specific difference.

WAGI felt that marital status affects VAW in terms of their ability to leave the relationship. The respondent pointed out that it is more likely that couples from the lower SES are not married because maybe they are unable to afford a wedding celebration. This means that they are only living in together, which makes it easier for them to separate or leave the relationship because there is no formal commitment.

Spark mentioned how marital status affects GBV in different ways. Firstly, "people still give primacy to virginity or 'saving yourself' for marriage," so if an unmarried woman gets pregnant, she is expected to marry the person who impregnated her. On another note, if an unmarried woman gets raped, people might label her as damaged goods. Secondly, the respondent believed that "women who are married and are in abusive relationships do suffer more because they are trapped," both due to the absence of a divorce law or economic dependence on the husband. Lastly, some communities do not consider marital rape wrong because of the belief that "just because you're married you can do whatever you want [because] the husband owns the wife."

4.12. Globalization

Question: Does globalization affect GBV? If so, how?

Globalization creates more opportunities for women, more freedom of movement, more avenues for self-expression and public participation, and more access to information. Yet respondents mentioned two issues that have globalized violence: technology and overseas workers.

4.12.1. Technology and the internet

Technology and access to the internet has been a useful tool for information dissemination. The PNP WCPC uses technology for advocacy work and raising awareness in communities. The internet has also fueled Spark's advocacy because people are more aware of global issues:

> We jumped off of the culture that is already post-#MeToo, so people were more accepting of what we have to say and everything we put out there. And it's also a way of people to get more engaged and more aware of the issue.

Despite that, the internet has become a tool for globalizing violence. PNP WCPC and DSWD emphasized that the internet contributes to the growing incidents of online trafficking, child pornography, and mail-to-order brides. The PNP WCPC added that the internet allows too much access for anyone, especially children. It pollutes the minds of the younger generations and sometimes leads them to become perpetrators themselves or create their own scandals.

4.12.2. Overseas Filipino Workers

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are a big part of the Philippine economy. But VAW among OFWs is not given enough attention. Spark believed that "this is also an aspect of GBV that isn't usually talked about … especially with our context in the Philippines, that we send out so [many] but we can't assure their safety." WAGI felt that GBV has become globalized because the government has not shown its political will to address it at the national, regional, or global levels:

> Overseas workers are supposed to be … a major pillar of our foreign policy, right? And one of the major issues of OFWs is GBV. So we hear from the service providers and we hear stories from the returnee migrant workers that the support is never enough. At the end of the day I think it's because of this very lack of political will … coming from both the sending and the receiving countries of OFWs. Yet, we're everywhere. I think we are still more concerned about the remittances than we are about the number coffins that come back.

Based on WAGI's work with this issue, domestic helpers going abroad are warned about things they should avoid doing to lessen the chances of getting raped or abused during their orientation – implying a victim-blaming stance that women do things to bring the violence on themselves.

UN Women sees this as a critical issue and has an ongoing program for women migrant workers called Safe and Fair:

> It has this unique element to it because we are looking at violence against women that happens beyond our sovereignty … That is why we look at the different roles of the government, civil society, the labor union, the private sector, employers' organizations, recruitment agencies, migrant groups communities – to be able to provide a response. … We're looking at strengthening the coordination of all these services. Should there be abuses or violations against women migrant workers, they will be able to access not only any kind of service, but more coordinated services.

4.12.3. Broadens perspectives

Empower pointed out how globalization could broaden one's perspective on GBV. The respondent felt that Filipino women who work or travel abroad have more exposure to sexual education and a better understanding that VAW is wrong. The women could also see how other countries address VAW through their culture and policies and realize the difference of the situation in the Philippines.

4.13.   Religion

Question: Does religion in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?

4.13.1. Political influence

Despite the Philippines being secular, the Catholic church still holds significant influence over local policies and values. Spark believed that the Catholic church has had a hand in the general fight for women empowerment in the Philippines because "the state and the church has been too intertwined … when it comes to policies [for] women." The Embassy of Sweden also noticed the presence of the Catholic church: "I think the Philippines stands out a bit because … the Catholic church is so strong here, and that … hinders broader and deeper education on sexual education and matters related." UN Women believed that the Catholic church's strong opposition to certain issues reflects the strong patriarchy within the institution:

> The fact that we don't have a divorce law because of the conservative and religious fronts that oppose it, [and that] our laws on sexual reproductive health rights … also

faced a lot of resistance … These are just essentially patriarchal institutions. We can see that these institutions are gatekeeping certain values … that pose harm to women. The Catholic church remains a barrier due to its strong political and moral influence, despite the evolution of other factors. According to WAGI:

We know [the church is] very much against a lot of laws like the RH (Reproductive Health) law, divorce, even the SOGIE (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression) equality bill. But what was amazing to me in the research I did was it was an unwavering block. It didn't matter whether we didn't [have international conventions] at one point but we do now – the Catholic block was strong. It didn't matter whether public awareness was low and then after ten years it became high – the Catholic block was still unwavering. It didn't matter that we had no legislators supporting it and then ten years later we had legislators supporting it – the Catholic block was still an unwavering block. So … everything improved but that block.

4.13.2. The absence of a divorce law

Divorce continues to be illegal in the Philippines. Spark believes this has a significant effect on married women suffering from IPV because they become trapped in the abusive relationship. DSWD finds that this stems from the Catholic teachings that marriage is a religious sacrament that cannot be broken.

4.13.3. Catholic values and teachings

Saligan pointed out that even the marriage itself, from the pre-cana sessions to the vows and readings during the ceremony promote patriarchy:

Even the pre-cana isn't gender sensitive … It's a process before the wedding in church, [and] it's like a talk [that says] women should give in, should be more patient. Even [during] the wedding ceremony, the readings … [are] *extremely* gender insensitive.

Empower felt that many women are still traditionally raised by their parents to follow the teachings in the bible: "Even in the bible – you should obey your husband, you should agree with him – your right to think is completely thrown out the window because according to God, you must pleasure your man." DSWD found that the disconnect between the Catholic teachings and the more open-minded legislations causes confusion among people:

The church has different ideas, the legislators have different ideas. The legislators are becoming more open-minded, but [religion says] these have been the historical teachings from the start, these are what we must obey, and we are committing a sin if we don't follow them.

4.14. Culture

Questions:
Does the Philippine culture affect GBV? If so, how?
Do gender roles and stereotypes in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?

4.14.1. Culture of silence

There is a strong culture of silence in the Philippines that prevent women from reporting GBV. UN Women believed the silence is rooted in "the predominant view of looking at GBV as a family [matter] or private issue." The PNP felt that people did not want to bring shame to themselves and their family, which is why they choose to remain silent. Saligan believed that the silence stems from social expectations that women should be strong, should stay silent, or that they brought the violence upon themselves.

4.14.2. Victim-blaming

Empower emphasized the widespread victim-blaming culture exists in the Philippine society. Victims still fear getting blamed and shamed for the incident. DSWD noted that many women still get harassed because people misinterpret how they dress or how they interact with others – which should not be a hindrance for the woman because there should not be any victim-blaming.

4.14.3. Family value

The family is highly valued in the Philippine culture. Respondents felt that this hindered women from reporting abuse, especially for IPV. Saligan said that "*the Philippine culture imposes that* you try to keep the family intact. … So you'll try all possible remedies to the situation." The absence of divorce, the difficulty of getting an annulment, and a woman's economic dependence on her husband adds pressure to keep the family together. According to Spark, "women who are married and are in abusive relationships do suffer more because they are trapped. Either because they can't file for divorce or annulment, or because

50

they're economically attached to the husband and they feel like their kids wouldn't have a future if they leave so they just take it and live with it."

However, the strong family value has the potential to break down traditional gender stereotypes. Spark observed that in the urban poor areas, people are less inclined to care about traditional roles expected from a man and woman. Couples are starting to realize that during the hard times, both the man and woman must work in order to support their family.

4.14.4. Stoical Filipino woman

A unique stereotype and expectation of Filipino women is to be stoic. Several respondents used the Filipino word "matiisin," which could be roughly translated to self-sacrificial or forbearing, but a more accurate equivalent would be stoical. The QCPD believed that Filipino women are known to be stoical and patient. This expectation, combined with the family value, encourages women to endure absolutely anything for their children and family. Women prioritize the life and future of their children over their own. However, Saligan noticed that women also highly value keeping the relationship or marriage intact. Based on their experience, women often tolerate economic or physical abuse, but only start to seek help when the partner cheats on her – thus threatening the unity of the relationship.

4.14.5. Gender stereotypes

Traditional gender stereotypes also exist in the Philippine culture where certain roles are expected of men and women. DSWD pointed out that the Philippine culture still encourages gender biases that women are supposed to remain at home, while men are supposed to be breadwinners. The lawyer felt that from birth, "the girl is raised to look after everyone, the boy is raised to be the leader of the family." Parents have little expectations for the girl's career and have more ambitions for the boy. Therefore, they use all their resources for the boy's education and limit the opportunities for girls. Spark re-affirmed this idea by explaining that

> women and girls really have less opportunities because of the culture that we have.
> We think that men are the ones who go out and get a living and that's why we think
> they're the ones who should get an education. And it really limits the potential of girls
> in that … even if they grow up to becomes wives, they get stuck in abusive
> relationships whether it be physical or emotional abuse [precisely] because they have
> no economic capacity to fend for themselves.

On the contrary, QCPD and Spark felt that the traditional gender stereotypes are slowly changing. QCPD mentioned how all the laws created for women has had an influence on the changing roles. The respondent noted that women can also do what men do, and that many mothers have jobs. They also gave an example of the increasing number of women police officers.

Spark noted that the roles have also been changing in more metropolitan cities and urban areas. More people are starting to realize that it does not matter what men and women are expected to do, and both have to work in order to provide for their families. In addition, the rise of women working overseas can reverse the roles – some men stay at home and look after the family while the women are abroad working. However, the respondent felt that although there are small improvements, the traditional gender roles remain prominent in many communities.

4.14.6. Patriarchal society and macho culture

Respondents felt that the Philippine society is still predominantly patriarchal. UN Women stated that the patriarchy is "anchored on gender-based stereotypes [and] traditional norms or attitudes towards gender, [which] contributes [to] the perpetration of violence against women." Spark felt that society still gives primacy and more leniency to men. Empower said the lack of education in the country fuels the existing patriarchy: "That's part of the problem, they're so used to it [because] they grow up with it. It's like terrible Stockholm syndrome, everybody has accepted patriarchy for so long that it's just the way it is."

In addition to patriarchy, the macho culture also sets certain expectations for men. PNP WCPC believed that some perpetrators do not necessarily commit VAW out of sexual craving, but to prove that he is stronger and more powerful than the woman – precisely because of this macho image that is expected of men. The macho culture is not just about physical strength, but also about sexual triumph. According to Empower, the notion that "the more women you have sex with, the better [because] you're more of a man" contributes to VAW. WAGI refers to this as toxic masculinity and emphasized that it is one of the main culprits of VAW. Both WAGI and QCPD believed that this toxic masculinity affects men as well, because it hinders them from reporting violence done to them. WAGI said that violence against men is also an issue because "men are not supposed to experience violence … because they're supposed to be macho, always strong, never weak." QCPD explained that

men choose not to report such incidents because have to protect their status and image as a strong man.

WAGI stressed that toxic masculinity is a gender stereotype that needs to be problematized and understood even more, because men must "realize that they are hanging on to the same stereotype that puts them in positions not just as perpetrators, but also as victims." WAGI pointed out that at least women are aware of the misogyny and are fighting against it. But if men want to get involved, they must look at themselves and re-define masculinity. Otherwise, people will continue to look down on them and think: "they just have no self-control, they're like animals, they'll do it anywhere, their brains are in their penis, they can't help it."

4.14.7. Purity and conservativism

A woman's virginity is highly regarded in Philippine culture. Women are encouraged to abstain from sex until marriage. WAGI noted that this emphasis on purity and conservativism contributes to VAW. Spark pointed out that a common idea in the Philippines is "saving yourself for the person you marry. [But] if someone who isn't married [gets] raped, people think she's damaged goods." Empower also said that "if a woman has sex [and] gets pregnant, [she] has to marry that guy, or she gets shamed and bullied into thinking she a slut, she's a whore, [and] nobody wants her." Empower believed that this stems from the idea of *Maria Clara*, which is a local term that refers to a traditional, ideal, pure woman.

Furthermore, Empower mentioned that "the Philippines is the top on Pornhub for watching virginity porn for 19 and under. There's a thing here about being able to take the virginity [or] chastity of a woman … because it's honed by our culture."

4.14.8. Normalized violence

Sometimes women are unaware that the violence committed against them is wrong because it has been normalized in their lives. Spark noted that "sometimes it's just something that girls learn to live with, or learn to cope with. [It's] something normal that they experience every day." Empower noted that sometimes people do know what rape and sexual harassment is, but simply accept it as a norm. According to the lawyer, if a child witnesses violence between her parents and even experiences violence herself, she grows up believing that it is normal behavior.

4.14.9. Beso culture

In the Philippine culture, acquaintances often greet each other with a light kiss on the cheek. In Filipino, this gesture is called *beso*, which is similar to the French gesture *bise* of a platonic cheek-to-cheek touch. Children are taught to practice this gesture from an early age because it is seen as a sign of respect when greeting someone older. Interestingly, two respondents mentioned how this gesture could lead to a tolerance of GBV. According to the lawyer, pedophilia and incest begin when parents force their children to hug or kiss an adult. If the child refuses to do so but the parents insist, the child's instinct for danger disappears because they are taught to obey and tolerate something they are not comfortable with. Spark warns parents that "[they] shouldn't force kids to hug. Ask permission, give them body autonomy, teach them that they get to decide who touches them."

4.14.10.   Sex as a taboo subject

Talking about sex is extremely taboo in the Philippine culture. People are not receiving enough or appropriate sexual education neither at home nor in school. Saligan said sexual education is an important factor in GBV

> *because* they don't know if it's wrong or right. In fact, what's funny about Philippine culture is we don't talk about it at all at home, and it's taboo in Catholic schools. So you learn it by experience [and] you talk about it among your peers *who also don't know anything.*

Empower felt that religion is a contributing factor to sex being a taboo subject:

> [The church doesn't] want sexual stuff being spoken about, so we're basically living in a culture where people are watching sex all the time … but there's no sex education. So you're teaching people about the bad stuff, not the good stuff … Nobody's guiding them, there's no teachers who can tell them about sex, … families refuse to talk about sex with their kids [because] it's so taboo. You're not allowed to have sex and you're not supposed to talk about it, but then you're supposed to get married to the first person you date, you're supposed to have kids and have sex – but you don't know anything about it. So a lot of people are being abused and molested because they don't even know … what's happening.

Sexual education must also include gender-based violence. The lawyer believed that protection and prevention must be taught in school. According to WAGI:

One of the scripts that is missing – I call it an invisible script – is the script about violence … especially in a sexual context. What do you do when … a boy insists [on doing something] you don't want? … Your parents don't tell you anything, your teachers don't talk about it, so it's an invisible script. … No one's ever prepared for it. No wonder [in] the literature that talks about [this] fight or flight mode that women have, they're freezing – [they say] "I just froze," right? Why do you think they freeze? Because no one talks about it. Nobody's prepared for it.

4.14.11. *Cycle of violence*

According to Saligan, the fact that gender-based violence is not discussed in schools contributes to the cycle of violence. If the child grows up witnessing abuse between the parents, they will think it is normal because no one is teaching them otherwise. The lawyer stressed that other than the lack of sexual education, the concept of a good relationship must also be taught in school:

What is not taught in school is the concept of love and trust within a relationship. Be it male, female, or same sex. If you grow up parents with a good marriage, then you imbibe it. But if it's a bad marriage, then you don't have a clue. So you end up probably with an abusive man.

4.14.12. *Traditional education*

In the Philippines, majority of the private schools are separated by gender – there are different schools exclusively for boys and exclusively for girls. The lawyer felt that creating this distinction between genders shapes the notion of gender-based violence:

When you were in preschool, the teachers wouldn't separate you … boy or girl was irrelevant. They don't think about sex, they don't care. So boys play with barbie and girls play with trucks. They don't do that anymore once you get to grade school. It's traditional education which creates all these obstacles in a person's mind. Because gender-based violence, it doesn't exist before 6. But at 6, they know the difference [because] they see it practiced.

4.15. Organizations' work in addressing GBV

Questions:

What are your current or recent projects on GBV?

How and why were these projects formed?

How is the project organized?

What is the goal of the project?

Who are the stakeholders in the project/s?

Who is involved in implementing the project?

Who is the target audience of the project?

How do the victims know about the project? How are they protected?

Was the project evaluated? How?

Did the project end or continue? Why? How has the project grown since?

4.15.1. UN Women

UN Women Philippines is a project office that implements programs from the headquarters and ensures that the country adheres to the normative frameworks. They work with the government, civil society, and various stakeholders by providing technical guidance and capacity building. To complement those efforts, they also work with local communities by supporting and assisting them in rights claiming by engaging the government. Their previous program was the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative whose goal was to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and violence in public spaces. Currently, they have the Safe and Fair program which falls under the overarching program of Ending Violence Against Women. The program focuses on ending violence against women migrant workers by engaging various stakeholders. The program is currently on the second out of five years.

The Safe and Fair program is a collaboration between UN Women and the International Labour Organization. The project engages a tripartite structure of the employers, the government, and the workers. The project also involves women's groups, NGOs, and communities that work on GBV issues and women's rights. Through this, it brings together the different migration sectors and VAW service providers.

The program has three objectives: 1) to strengthen the labor migration governance by making it more gender responsive, 2) to reduce the risk of VAW through coordination of quality services, and 3) promote data and knowledge on VAW migrant workers.

The program addresses the invisible status of VAW among migrant workers in the overall VAW data. The respondent pointed out the consequences of not segregating VAW according to migratory status:

[for] those who are leaving the country, we don't see that angle of that information about why they leave the country. This could be driven by VAW experience [but] these are not documented at all. So when they leave the country, we see that this woman is already experiencing violence, and we didn't even provide services for her. So for example, this same migrant women worker would work and experience sexual abuse, which compounds her trauma, and then she returns home and [is still] faced with a very violent situation in her family or in her household.

The respondent also noted how OFW domestic workers are being treated is largely unrecognized. On top of that, these women stay silent about experiencing VAW abroad because they fear being blamed or stigmatized, and bringing shame into their family. Therefore the project aims to challenge these behaviors and views.

4.15.2. Government services

The Philippine National Police's Women and Children Protection Center (PNP WCPC) is the unit that supervises the Women's Desks around the country. Each police station in every municipality is mandated to have a Women's Desk that caters to GBV issues. The WCPC was formed as a separate operational unit in 2012, but the Women's Desks in every police station was mandated in 1998 through the RA 8551. The PNP WCPC is also the repository for all the data of the GBV reports.

The main function of the Women's Desk is to handle reports on GBV. PNP WCPC explained the process for different types of reports. If a rape is reported to them, they immediately refer the woman to a doctor for genital examination in the crime lab. The respondent noted that there should be at least one doctor in the crime lab of each province. The police can carry out a warrantless arrest on the perpetrator within three days of the crime. On the other hand, if a sexual harassment is reported, the person has to fill out forms with information about the incident. The police has to get a sworn statement of the acuser, of other witnesses, and will try to locate and arrest the perpetrator if possible. The reporting process also involves the different government services such as the DSWD, DOH, DOJ, etc. However, the respondent mentioned the lack of coordination among the services, and the lack of capacity of some of the other services to cater to all the cases they receive. In addition, the respondent noted that although they conduct information drives, many are still unaware of the reporting process.

The Quezon City Police District's (QCPD) Women and Children's Protection desk manages the Quezon City Protection Center. The center contains all the services needed by a VAW victim such as doctors, a social worker, a lawyer, and an investigator. The Protection Center was established in 2011 under the term of the then-Vice Mayor, who is now the current mayor. The Mayor would like to put up more protection centers in the city.

QCPD also refers to the number of VAWC reports as a basis for how effective their activities and protection center are. However, the respondent was aware of the double meaning of an increase or decrease in reported cases – an increase could mean more people are aware and avail of the services but it could also mean there are more incidents, while a decrease could mean there are less incidents or just that less people are reporting.

In addition, QCPD works with the 142 *barangays* or local villages within the city. Their goal is for people to understand that the local government is on the side of the women in fighting against the abuses committed against them. They also encourage women to report abuses against them by creating an easy walk-in and referral system. They conduct capacity building seminars and train the local officials and VAW Desk officers on how to address complaints. Every training session is evaluated by giving the participants a form to fill out. QCPD also tries to make the walk-in reporting system in the local villages as simple and smooth as possible by working with NGOs and shelters for their referral system.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is mandated to provide social protection for victims of abuses, including GBV. They provide rehabilitative services for victims including temporary shelter, financial aid, medical and legal assistance, and livelihood trainings. After discharge, the victims are handed over to the local government for aftercare. In NCR, they have one shelter that caters to women victims of RA 9262 violations, illegal recruitment, and trafficking. Although they have a set package of services, they can tailor the services based on individual need. Every year, they conduct a Performance Implementation Review to evaluate their programs. They have a workshop to discuss what has been done in the previous year and what can be improved for the upcoming year. The respondent felt that they have some services that need to be re-evaluated and established. For example, the respondent felt the need for a stronger strategy in order to ensure the aftercare of the victims. The respondent felt that they need to improve the networking and coordination among other agencies that can employ the victims once they are discharged from the centers.

4.15.3. NGOs

Saligan is a legal resource NGO that advocates for legal empowerment. They believe in working with the law for the benefit of women and GBV victims instead of the laws being used against them. They have four core programs that integrate women's rights: litigation, legal education, advocacy, and research and publication. They offer limited litigation services because of certain criteria, but they open their doors to free legal consultations for victims of GBV. For the legal education program, they conduct campaigns and paralegal training programs with community leaders and government agencies, such as police officers and the DSWD. To complement this, they also conduct research and publication to create materials and translate the laws. In addition, they do policy advocacy work wherein they look into how the laws can be improved. They have two evaluation systems: one is an internal evaluation mechanism conducted twice a year, and they have an external evaluator every three years to study the impact of their work.

Saligan was established in 1987. Since then, two additional branches have been established in Bicol and Mindanao. The respondent noted how the organization has grown thematically: they have moved away from advocating solely for women into gender identity and the LGBTQI community; from responding to violence, they expanded to women's participation, and then to gender-responsive local policies.

Spark was established in 2012 as an organization that worked on gender and development training for government agencies. From then, it has grown into doing different things, including economic empowerment, girls rights and education, and advocacy and campaigns. It has also expanded from advocating for women and girls to including LGBT, and will soon delve into sexual and reproductive rights.

Spark is currently running a campaign called *#RespetoNaman,* which can be translated to "respect, please." *#RespetoNaman* started during the 2018 18-Day Campaign to End VAW. From there, it grew into a year-long nationwide campaign that is still ongoing. The campaign started in Metro Manila but has expanded to different parts of the Philippines such as Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Dumaguete, and Naga. The main feature of the campaign is the Don't Tell Me How to Dress Exhibit. This was inspired by an exhibit in Thailand by Cindy Bishop, which displayed clothes people were wearing when they were sexually abused or assaulted.

Spark partnered with Cindy Bishop and brought their own version of the exhibit to the Philippines. They collected stories from different women and girls by conducting a focus group discussion with a psychologist to find ways on how to present their stories. They also lifted a few stories from news articles. They display the exhibit in different cities around the

country, often in public spaces such as universities, shopping malls, and city halls. Alongside the exhibit, they conduct forums and talks about GBV, which include medical and legal professionals to speak about different aspects of the issue.

The target audience of the project, aside from the general public, is younger generations including high school and university students. Spark believes that it is important to raise awareness among the younger generations. Their partners for the project are UN Women, the Office of the Vice President, Empower, the Embassy of Sweden, the British Embassy, Terres des Hommes Netherlands, and local partners in every location they visit.

As the campaign is still ongoing it has not yet been evaluated, but Spark intends on getting an external evaluator to conduct an impact study. For the upcoming year, Spark will use the campaign towards establishing policies and concrete actions towards the issue.

Empower is an NGO that stands for the compassionate education of the Filipino people. They are currently working on the *#RespetoNaman* campaign with Spark. Empower serves as a resource speaker and conducts forums in schools and in different locations around the country alongside the Don't Tell Me How To Dress exhibit. The respondent did not elaborate on the *#RespetoNaman* campaign because they were aware of my previous interview with Spark and believed they provided enough information about the campaign. Separate from the work with Empower, the respondent also personally works with different government agencies to improve the rape services and systems.

The Embassy of Sweden has worked with Spark on the *#RespetoNaman* campaign and Don't Tell Me How To Dress exhibit from the very beginning. The idea of the campaign started when the respondent met a member of Spark and discussed why the #MeToo movement did not take off in the Philippines as it did in other countries. They felt the need to address the issues of sexual abuse and harassment in the country, and soon came up with the *#RespetoNaman* campaign. Because of the Swedish government's Feminist Foreign Policy, the embassy is proactive in pushing for women's rights and equality. The embassy has been supporting the project by helping organize events. The ambassador also acts as a front figure for the campaign by giving speeches and raising public interest.

4.15.4. Academic work in the field of GBV

Questions:

What is your field of expertise in GBV?

What is the current research in your department on GBV?

What is GBV studies in the Philippines lacking?

How are you or your department bridging the gap between the academics and practical application of addressing GBV in the Philippines?

Do you have any publications, articles, or reports related to GBV?

The respondent works in the fields of sexual rights, collaborative governance, and social movement building. WAGI focuses on the practical application of addressing GBV by integrating the issue in all their work, including the school's curriculum and employees, programs in the local community, projects with partners, and annual training courses. WAGI has an annual Mid-year Training Institute where they run courses on different topics, including Gender Fair Education, Gender Sexuality on Student Youth Well-Bring, International Human Rights and Governance, Gender Responsive Budgeting and Planning, and Migration. Currently, they are working with UN Women for the Safe and Fair program. Their role is to train the service providers for OFWs on case management for the whole process, from the worker's pre-departure to the return. The respondent felt that GBV studies in the Philippines lacks problematizing masculinity. The respondent noted that the field of GBV research needs to understand the problem more before jumping into solving the problem.

5. Discussion

This chapter discusses GBV in the Philippine context based on how the findings relate to the existing literature. This section answers the two main research questions: 1) How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines perceive gender-based violence? And 2) How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines address gender-based violence?

This chapter is organized according to the steps of the Public Health Model. Part 1 discusses the current situation of GBV in the Philippines based on the existing statistics, laws, services, and reporting behavior. Part 2 discusses the risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior. These factors are categorized using the Integrated Ecological Model's five levels: individual, relationships, community, societal, and global. Part 3 discusses what the different actors are doing to address the issue and the factors identified in Part 2. Lastly, Part 4 discusses this study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

5.1.Step 1: Define and monitor the problem

The Public Health Model (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.) calls for cooperation from various stakeholders in order to address violence and health problems on a large scale. The model has four steps: 1) Define and monitor the problem, 2) Identify risk and protective factors, 3) Develop and test prevention strategies, and 4) Assure widespread adoption.

The first step to define and monitor the problem aims to understand the current situation of the issue. This includes data regarding trends and frequency of the violence, where it occurs, and who the victims and perpetrators are. This section defines GBV and VAW, and discusses the current situation in the Philippines – including VAW statistics, laws, and services based on this study's findings and existing literature.

5.1.1. Definition

Gender-based violence is "any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender" (United Nations, 2014). Although both men and women experience GBV, most of the victims are women and girls (European Institute for Gender Equality, n.d.). The UN defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1993).

VAW includes physical, sexual, and psychological violence that occur within the family, community, or condoned by the state. These include but are not limited to sexual abuse, battering, marital rape, sexual harassment, trafficking and forced prostitution, FGM, dowry-related violence (United Nations, 1993). WHO estimates one out of three women have experience physical or sexual violence in their life. 30% of women worldwide reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

VAW is a form of discrimination that inhibits women from enjoying their fundamental rights and freedom. It is a public health problem and a public crime that affects not just women, but their families and communities as well. CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 45 emphasizes that VAW is a human rights violation rooted in structural discrimination, which states are legally and morally obliged to address through legislative, administrative an institutional measures (OHCHR, n.d.).

5.1.2. Statistics

The most recent Philippine National Demographic Health Survey (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) was conducted in 2017. The survey is mainly used to monitor the country's population and health situation. The survey sample composed of 25,074 women between the ages 15-49. The sample population includes women from both rural and urban areas, and from each of the 17 regions. The survey (ibid.) categorizes violence into three: spousal violence, which includes emotional, physical, and sexual violence by a husband/partner; physical violence by a non-partner; and sexual violence by a non-partner.

The NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) indicates that 19% of all women, both ever-married and never-married, have experienced sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. Among married women, 24% have experienced spousal violence by their current or former partner, while overall 17% have experienced physical violence and 5% have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner. The National Capital Region, where Metro Manila is located, is among the regions with the lowest rates of all three spousal, sexual, and physical violence.

Of the 24% of women who have experienced spousal violence, the most common experience is emotional violence (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). Despite the prevalence of emotional violence, Spark noted how it is the most undiscussed form of violence – including both economic and verbal abuse. Perhaps unlike physical or sexual violence, emotional violence is often intangible and psychologically manipulative. This makes it more difficult to realize the abuse by the victim herself, and more difficult to grasp because of the lack of physical evidence.

All three categories of violence showed that women in the lower quintiles are more likely to experience them compared to those in the wealthier quintiles (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). However, the findings from the interviews show that VAW cuts across all social classes. Yet it could be less reported among the higher SES out of concern for maintaining a certain image and fear of powerful perpetrators. Reporting behavior in relation to SES will be discussed later in Chapter 5.2.

The NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) found that the most common perpetrators for physical violence among never-married women were a parent or step-parent. This reflects on how the Philippine culture and laws still tolerate corporal punishment. The Family code Art 220 (8) indicates that any parental authority over children

may "impose discipline on them as may be required under the circumstances." ("The Family Code of the Philippines," 1987). In 2019, the country's current president Rodrigo Duterte vetoed a proposed bill 'An Act Promoting Positive and Nonviolent Discipline, Protecting Children from Physical, Humiliating, or Degrading Acts as a Form of Punishment,' arguing that using corporal punishment to discipline children has its merits (Ranada, 2019). This is a clear violation of the country's commitment to CEDAW, as it continues to promote cultural norms and policies that allow violence against not just women and girls, but children in general.

The PNP data on VAW from 2017-2019 showed that around 75% of the cases filed were violations of the Anti-VAWC law. However, the data does not specify the category of the violence, whether it was physical, emotional, sexual, or economic abuse. The broad range of the law encompasses different types of abuse from rape to stalking. The lack of specificity in the data makes it difficult to address the issue. The PNP data also shows the second most reported number of cases were rape, followed by acts of lasciviousness throughout the three years. Acts of Lasciviousness fall under Article 336 of the Revised Penal Code, consists of any lascivious act without sexual intercourse; uses force, threat, or intimidation; and the victim is deprived of reason.

The PNP data also shows that the National Capital Region is among the top three regions with the most number of reports throughout the three years. On the contrary, the NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) shows that NCR has some of the lowest incidents of spousal, physical, and sexual violence. This contradiction could indicate a higher awareness of the violations and of reporting mechanisms in NCR, or more accessibility of reporting mechanisms. The findings from the interviews show that reporting services are more accessible in urban areas, which supports the theory that there is a higher number of reported cases in NCR because Metro Manila, which is the urban capital of the country, makes up majority of NCR. Although urban centers or big cities are still present in other regions, it is most concentrated in NCR.

The 2019 data provided by DSWD states that they have two shelters in NCR for women and children victims of GBV with a total of 564 clients. The most number of clients – 219 out of 564 – are victims of trafficking. However, the PNP data from NCR in 2019 only shows 3 reported cases under the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act, and 40 total reports nationwide. Although the second most reported number of cases to the PNP were rape (348 reports in NCR and 2,227 nationwide – possibly excluding rape that falls under Anti-VAWC law committed by intimate partners), the DSWD shelters only house a total of 25 victims of

rape. Similarly, Acts of Lasciviousness which is the third most reported crime in 2019 (410 in NCR and 1,872 nationwide – again, possibly excluding acts of lasciviousness that falls under Anti-VAWC law committed by intimate partners), the DSWD shelters only house two victims of this crime. This discrepancy in the data makes it difficult to know the difference as to why people access DSWD services but do not report the case to the police and vice versa.

In addition, the PNP data is difficult to compare throughout the years because of the differing categories. In the 2017 and 2018 data, there was a separate category for "Rape," "RA 8505 or Rape Victims Assistance and Protection Act," and "Abuses against chastity." However, rape has no longer been considered against a crime against chastity since 1997. It is also unclear if this data counts rape that falls under the Anti-VAWC law committed by an intimate partner. In the 2019 data, the "rape" and "RA 8505" categories were removed, and two new ones added: "Anti-Rape Law of 1997 or RA 8353" and "Rape with homicide." This could indicate the inconsistency of how reports are categorized in the different regions and within the PNP system itself.

There is no central data bank that consolidates the reports from the various government agencies and that indicates the overlaps and gaps in the data. This shows the separate data collection mechanisms of the different government agencies, and the absence of a central data bank to consolidate the different data. Santos (2009) also highlighted the difficulty of consolidating and comparing VAWC data precisely because of this. The lack of a standard national monitoring and documentation mechanism makes the various data collection prone to inaccuracies and overlaps. This makes understanding the overall national situation on VAWC difficult, which is necessary in order to deal with the problem and improving the services.

The data shows that VAW is still prevalent in the Philippines. One out of five unmarried women experience physical or sexual violence, and one out of four women experience IPV. Despite this, there is limited data available on VAW in the Philippines. The National Demographic Health Survey, which is what many respondents use because it is openly available to the public, is only conducted every five years. Although the PNP WCPC and DSWD collect their own data, there seems to be no centralized national data bank or collection means for VAW cases among the government agencies.

5.1.3. *Laws*

The Anti-VAWC law or RA 9262 is the main law that addresses violence against women in the Philippines. It recognizes VAW as a public crime, which allows any citizen with knowledge of a crime to file a complaint. Its broad coverage criminalizes most acts that can be done against a woman – including marital rape, economic abuse, and emotional abuse – as well as offers various services to victims of VAWC. This is a big step from rape being acknowledged in the law as merely a crime against chastity. Yet the Anti-VAWC Law has its limitations – it is only applicable to intimate partnership. This means that the violence must be perpetrated by a current or former husband, partner, or anyone the woman has had romantic or sexual relationships with.

Additionally, the findings from the interviews show poor implementation and lack of public awareness of the laws. Despite the numerous laws that address different GBV issues, the general public often remain unaware of their rights. The findings from the interviews and the study by Santos (2009) point out that some of the service providers – even lawyers and judges – are unaware or misunderstand the laws. Furthermore, many service providers are not properly trained, especially with gender sensitivity. The laws then become useless when it is poorly implemented by those who are supposed to carry out its provisions and is combined with lack of public awareness of these laws.

Strong policies backed up by government support is crucial for effective implementation of laws and programs. This is seen in the UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces program which enacted a city ordinance in Quezon City against catcalling. The success of this ordinance made Quezon City a benchmark for other cities that followed soon after, and that eventually turned into the national law RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act. The Quezon City Protection Center also serves as an example of how VAW services can be improved if prioritized by the government. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.3.2.

Santos (2009) mentioned the existence of cultural notions that hinder the implementation of the laws and that continue promote VAW. Yet both CEDAW and the Magna Carta of Women or RA 9710 – which is the domestic translation of CEDAW – indicate the state's responsibility to address social and cultural norms that foster discrimination against women. Chapters 5.2 and 5.3 will discuss the cultural factors in relation to VAW, and what different stakeholders are doing to address them.

There are several laws in the Philippines that address different GBV issues. However, the findings show that they lack implementation and public awareness. Strong policies should go hand in hand with strong government support, as this is what can catapult action and effective implementation.

5.1.4. Services

The findings from the interviews show that despite the availability of services for GBV victims, they are often inefficient, uncoordinated, and undertrained. UN Women noted how some service providers lack gender sensitivity training and have a victim-blaming mindset. An example is how police officers ask the victim what she was wearing or how she was acting, implying that they could have done something to provoke the violence. Santos (2009) also found that sometimes police officers dismiss cases due to the absence of physical evidence from injuries, or advise women to make peace with her abusive partner and that his anger will eventually subside. Such behavior shows insufficient knowledge and implementation of the law by the service providers, leads to re-traumatization of the victim, and causes discouragement and distrust of the laws and reporting system.

Both the findings from the interviews and Santos (2009) found the lack of resources and services for rape victims in public hospitals. Not all public hospitals have rape kits, and the few rape crisis centers are located in larger hospitals. Some hospitals only consider maternity or OBGYN services for women, and are not equipped to take in VAW cases. In addition, the hospitals that do have the facilities to cater VAW victims, as well as other services, are mostly located in city centers. This indicates how services are not devolved enough, which makes it difficult to access for those living in more far-flung rural areas.

The service providers are uncoordinated, and the victim goes through a lengthy and complicated process when reporting a VAW incident. The victim gets referred back and forth between different service providers (e.g. police, social services, hospital). Again, this can add to the confusion and frustration that discourages the victim to pursue the case. As previously mentioned, the Quezon City Protection Center illustrates how services can and should be centralized that will make the reporting process as convenient and as smooth as possible. The Quezon City Protection Center houses all the necessary services providers for a VAW victim – a police officer, a lawyer, a social worker, an investigator, and doctors. The victim only has to go to one place to report and does not have to waste any more time shuttling between the different service providers. This could encourage more victims to report and seek the help and justice they deserve.

The findings from the interviews show how police officers' fear of retaliation can impede them from taking in VAW cases. Police officers have reported how some victims who make a complaint against their abusive partners rescind their complaint, and beg the

police officers to release them from prison or accuse the police officers of illegal detention. Santos (2009) also found that police officers get countercharged by the victim for trespassing or arresting without a warrant. These experiences cause a negative attitude among police officers in pursuing VAW cases. Yet the Anti-VAWC law states that anyone who acts in accordance with the law to intervene in VAWC cases will not be held criminally, civilly, or administratively liable. Therefore, police officers should not let fear of retaliation hinder them from doing their duty in responding to VAW cases.

The Magna Carta of Women requires every district to have a VAWC desk managed by the local district officials, and every municipality to have a Women and Children's Protection Desk managed by the police. These lower levels of reporting make it more accessible for victims. However, findings from the interviews show how this can be problematic because people are more familiar with each other in smaller, more tightknit communities. People could gossip about the incident, or the perpetrator could use his connections to sway the officials to his side. An example in Santos (2009) study shows how the local officials favored the perpetrator, who is the victim's husband, because they were friends with him and got free services in his vulcanizing shop. This is a reflection of the country's culture and tolerance of corruption. This proves how crucial it is to have well-trained service providers, across all levels, and across all services.

Santos (2009) and Foundation for Media Alternatives [FMA] and Association for Progressive Communication [APC] (2013) found that non-government organizations and women's rights advocates are instrumental in addressing VAWC. The findings from the interviews reaffirm the complementary role of NGOs for the shortcomings of the government services. NGOs, foundations, and advocates provide expertise, trainings, capacity, and resources to government services. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.3.

Although different services for VAW victims exist, the findings show several shortcomings. The service providers are uncoordinated, undertrained, and have limited resources. NGO services are also crucial in supplementing the deficiencies of the government services by providing expertise and resources. The poor government services for VAW could affect the victim's reporting and help-seeking behavior.

5.1.5. Reporting

Palermo et al.'s (2013) analysis of reporting behavior in 24 developing countries found that only seven percent of GBV victims reported to a formal source, while 40%

disclosed the incidence to someone. In the Philippines, the figures are even lower – 41% have never sought help or told anyone, 25% disclosed the incident to someone but did not seek help, 34% sought help to stop the violence, and only six percent sought help from the police, despite 80% awareness of the available services and reporting mechanisms (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). This implies a possible distrust in the formal reporting system and public authorities (Bøås et al., 2016; Palermo et al., 2013).

Bøås et al. (2016) found that people in Ganta, Liberia distrust the formal institutions because of the legal justice system was ineffective and resolution was not immediate. Similarly, the findings from the interviews show several issues regarding the formal reporting system and services for VAW victims in the Philippines. The reporting process is uncoordinated and time-consuming that leaves the victim feeling more disempowered and discouraged about attaining justice.

Other common reasons for not seeking formal help include: shame and fear of stigma, self-blame, unawareness or inaccessibility of services, financial barriers, fear of the abuser, cultural beliefs, or being pressured by others to make peace with the abusive partner (Palermo et al., 2013; Santos, 2009). The findings from the interviews also show various factors that could affect reporting behavior, and a general lack of awareness surrounding VAW. Many remain unaware of the issue, the laws, and the available services. These suggest that the high levels of unawareness could stem from the lack of education and cultural norms, that could lead to misconceptions or normalization of violent behavior.

Although the NDHS shows that 80% of Filipino women are aware of the available services and reporting mechanisms, the findings suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, the low numbers of help-seeking behavior could indicate a distrust in the public system, unawareness, or cultural and societal factors that hinder women from reporting. These factors will be discussed in following section Chapter 5.2.

5.1.6. Summary

VAW is a prevalent issue in the Philippines. Although there are laws and services to address VAW, there is high unawareness and they are poorly implemented. This affects the help-seeking behavior of VAW victims, in combination with cultural factors that hinder them from seeking help. However, there is limited VAW data available because there is no central data bank to consolidate the reports from different the government services. As Step 1 of the Public Health Model indicates, defining and monitoring the problem is critical in order to

effectively address the problem. Not having centralized national data makes it difficult to grasp the full extent of the issue.

5.2. Step 2: Identify risk & protective factors

The second step of the Public Health Model (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.) is to identify risk and protective factors. This step incorporates the Globalized Integrated Ecological Model (Fulu & Miedema, 2015; Heise, 1998), which provides a scale for these factors. A risk factor "increases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence," while a protective factor does the opposite by providing "a buffer against risk" (Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, n.d.).

In addition to risk and protective factors, I included a separate category for factors that affect reporting behavior. Several factors from the findings are unique because they are neither risk nor protective factors – rather they hinder victims from reporting the violence or seeking help. This means that they have already experienced violence, so the factors do not increase their risk or protection from becoming a victim of violence.

The risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior are arranged according to the Integrated Ecological Model's five levels: 1) Individual, 2) Relationship, 3) Community, 4) Societal, and 5) Global. The Integrated Ecological Model allows a more contextual understanding of GBV. It is important to understand the three factors in this light so that prevention efforts can appropriately address the root of the problem. A table that categorizes the factors into the five levels can be found in Appendix D.

5.2.1. Individual level

The individual factors consist of one's personal history that affect how an individual responds to relationship and community stressors or to a violent situation. In the Philippine context, protective factors on the individual level are increasing age and economic empowerment, higher SES; risk factors are younger age, the cycle of violence, low educational attainment, the segregative educational system, and the *beso* culture; and factors that affect reporting behavior are both high and low SES.

Age can be both a protective and risk factor for VAW. Increasing age is a protective factor, while younger age is a risk factor. The literature found that increasing age both decreases the risk of IPV, and increases the likelihood of formal reporting (Dalal, 2011; Palermo et al., 2013; Sambisa et al., 2011). The NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA

& ICF, 2018) shows that only 12% of older women (40-49 years old) experienced spousal violence in the past year in contrast to the 23% of younger women (15-24 years old) that did. The literature suggests that this is due to more autonomy, less dependence on their partners, more experience to avoid situations that elicit abuse, and more support from the family and community, which decreases their exposure to IPV. The findings from the interviews also show that older women are more aware of the violation and have more opportunity to report. In contrast, younger age is a risk factor because younger girls are less aware of the violation and of their rights. Minors are also reliant on an adult to report the incident and to take formal action. This could be an added risk, especially if the perpetrator is a family member or acquaintance, and if the guardian of the child does not believe them.

The cycle of violence is a risk factor. The literature and findings from the interviews show that women who witnessed spousal violence between their parents are more likely to experience spousal violence themselves (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018). The findings from the interviews indicated the connection of the cycle of violence to education – if GBV and the concept of a good relationship are not taught in school, then children who grow up in violent homes might normalize the behavior because no one is teaching them otherwise.

The *beso* culture is a risk factor. *Beso* is a common gesture in the Philippines where people greet each other with a cheek-to-cheek touch. This is a risk factor because when it is taught from a young age, a child learns to obey and tolerate something they are uncomfortable with. This affects their instinct for danger and carries on to how they internalize body autonomy later on in life.

Economic empowerment is both a risk and protective factor for VAW. The UN and WHO promote economic empowerment as one of the key protective factors from VAW. Both the literature and the findings from the interviews show that economic empowerment increases a woman's financial independence (Dalal, 2011; UN Women, 2017; World Health Organization, 2017). This could increase their bargaining power and status within the household, which could decrease their vulnerability to abuse. It could also increase their ability to leave abusive relationships. However, Vyas and Watts (2009) noted that economic empowerment could be a risk factor for VAW. It could challenge the power balance and status quo within households and communities, which could lead to adverse reactions especially in more conservative settings with traditional gender norms.

Economic empowerment in relation to socioeconomic status affects reporting behavior. The literature found that increased wealth and higher SES can be a protective factor

from IPV (Sambisa et al., 2011; Vyas & Watts, 2009). Palermo et al. (2013) also found that higher wealth increased a woman's probability of formal reporting in Africa. The findings from the interviews show that women in the higher SES have more resources to pursue a legal case against the perpetrator. However, the findings from the interviews also suggest some factors that prevent Filipino women in the higher SES from reporting. Vyas and Watts (2009) noted how victims from the higher SES are less likely to report IPV due to stigma. Similarly, the findings from the interviews show that women in the higher SES are more conscious about their social reputation and keeping appearances, which hinders them from disclosing and reporting the violence. In addition, another hindrance is that women in the higher SES fear retaliation from powerful perpetrators. As mentioned in the previous section Chapter 5.1.4, this is applicable for both higher and lower SES, especially in the Philippine culture where corruption is widespread and tolerated. Another risk factor among higher SES is their living situation. In the Philippines, people from the higher SES live in bigger houses and gated communities. This seclusion allows VAW to remain more hidden.

There are also different factors that hinder victims in the lower SES from reporting. Victims in the lower SES might be less aware of their rights and of the full extent of the reporting process. On top of that, they might not have the time and money to report the case. For IPV, this is also related to a woman's economic dependence on her abusive partner – although this could also be applicable for women in both lower and higher SES which will be discussed in Chapter 5.2.2.

Lower educational attainment could be a risk factor for VAW. The literature says that educational generally decreases the risk of IPV (Dalal, 2011; Sambisa et al., 2011; Vyas & Watts, 2009). The findings from the interviews show that one possible reason is the lack of education leads to less economic opportunities. This could result to people monetizing abuse by participating in cybersex crimes or online sex trafficking out of desperation or simply not knowing any better.

In relation to education, the segregative educational system in the Philippines could be a risk factor for VAW. One of the respondents mentioned how separating schools for boys and girls introduces a gender distinction from a young age, which could indirectly dictate gender stereotypes.

5.2.2. Relationship level

The second level looks at the microlevel or relationships. This includes the immediate context of the abuse, and the meanings assigned to an individual's interactions with close relationships. In the Philippine context, a protective factor at the microlevel is joint decision-making; a risk factor is if only the husband or the wife dominate household decision-making; while factors that affect reporting behavior are marital status, and if the perpetrator is the woman's husband or partner.

For the context of IPV, decision-making between couple can be both a risk and a protective factor. The study by Hindin and Adair (2002) in Cebu, Philippines found a U-shaped pattern for household decision-making. Couples who practice joint-decision making is a protective factor, but when the man or the woman individually dominates household decisions, the risk for IPV increases (Berbarte et al., 2018).

The fact that the perpetrator is the victim's husband or partner can affect reporting behavior. The findings from the interviews show factors that could hinder the woman from reporting her abusive partner are fear of retaliation, economic dependence, self-blame, or emotional attachment. The woman could fear physical retaliation from the husband, or that he could influence authorities using his power, money, and connections. It is also more difficult for the woman to report the perpetrator and leave the abusive relationship when she is economically dependent on him. This economic dependence is fueled by macro level factors such as the patriarchal culture and persistence of traditional gender stereotypes that limit a woman's educational and economic opportunities. On the contrary, the woman could still be emotionally attached to her partner and hopes that he will change for the better or think that she deserves the beating.

A woman's marital status affects IPV reporting behavior both ways. The literature found that never-married women are less likely to report to a formal source than currently married women, and formerly married women were the most likely to report (Palermo et al., 2013). However, the findings from the interviews show that in the Philippines, it is easier for women who are not married to leave the abusive relationship because there is no formal commitment. While it is more difficult for married women to leave and report the abusive relationship, partly because of the absence of a divorce law in the country. The value given on marriage, and the discouragement of pre-marital sex also affects rape victims in a sense that if an unmarried woman gets raped, she could be perceived as damaged goods. In relation, if an unmarried woman gets pregnant, her family and society expect her to marry the father of the child. This illustrates how the culture puts emphasis on marital status.

5.2.3. Community level

The third level is the community or exosystem. This includes the immediate context of the abuse, including formal and informal social structures that affect it. In the Philippine context, protective factors in the exosystem are urban settings and tightknit communities; the urban setting is also a risk factor; while both the rural and urban settings are factors that affect reporting behavior.

The urban setting can be a protective factor, a risk factor, and affects reporting behavior. Literature shows that living in urban areas increases the likelihood of formal reporting (McIlwaine, 2013; Palermo et al., 2013). The literature and the findings from the interviews suggest that formal reporting mechanisms and services are more available and accessible in the urban setting. In addition, more women could be economically and socially independent, that allows them to report the violence. As a protective factor, the urban setting can challenge and breakdown patriarchal structures and gender ideologies, that could also lead to a lower tolerance of GBV. Yet this could also turn it into a risk factor, as men might feel threatened by the power imbalance and result to violence to prove or regain their masculinity. This is linked to gender stereotypes in the macro level to be discussed in the next section Chapter 5.2.4. Another reason the urban setting could be a risk factor is because the poor living conditions and certain occupations could aggravate stress-induced VAW.

The study by Dalal (2011) in India found that more women from rural areas experienced sexual violence, while more women from urban areas experienced emotional violence and less severe physical violence. However, NDHS (Philippine Statistics Authority - PSA & ICF, 2018) shows less than a 2% difference in the experience of physical, sexual, and spousal abuse between rural and urban areas in the Philippines. The findings from the interviews also show how the rural areas can be a protective factor, but also a hindrance to reporting and help-seeking behavior. A respondent noted how communities in the rural areas are more tightknit, and express more willingness to address and eliminate GBV within their community. Still, formal reporting mechanisms and services are less accessible and available for those living in rural areas because the services are centralized in city centers.

5.2.4. Societal level

The fourth level is the societal or macro level. This includes cultural values and beliefs that influence the lower levels. In the Philippine culture, protective factors at the societal level are strong policies, government support, internalizing the law, and family value;

risk factors are the Catholic church's influence on policies and morality, the emphasis given on a woman's virginity, and traditional gender stereotypes in relation to patriarchy, macho image, and women assuming a caring role; while factors that affect reporting behavior are the stoical stereotype of a Filipino woman, high valuation of family, the culture of silence, and sex as a taboo subject. Many of the factors at this level also affect factors at the lower levels.

The Catholic church is a risk factor for VAW because of its influence over local policies and values. Both the findings from the interviews and the literature emphasize how the Catholic church has opposed several issues that affect policies for women, such as divorce, reproductive health rights, abortion, sex work, and gender identity recognition (Manalastas & David, 2018; Nguyen, 2019; Yarcia et al., 2019). The Catholic church's teachings liken such acts to be immoral, sinful, and unnatural. It also promotes patriarchal values from the bible and incorporates these into the marital process, by encouraging women to obey their husband, to be patient, to give in, and the like. The absence of a divorce law, which is related to the Catholic church's strong opposition to it, also affects reporting behavior and poses an additional risk because it makes it more difficult for the woman to leave an abusive relationship.

The cultural emphasis on a woman's purity or conservativism is a risk factor for VAW. Both the findings from the interviews and the literature prove that there is still a dominant notion in the Philippine culture that women should remain a virgin until marriage (Manalastas & David, 2018; Nguyen, 2019). This notion stimulates the objectification of women in two ways: a woman's virginity is regarded as a prize for men, and that if a woman gets raped or pregnant before marriage she is regarded as damaged goods. These ideas imply that a woman's worth lies on her virginity, physical body, and sexual experience rather than on her character or achievements (Estrada-Claudio, 2002). This also ties back to the Catholic religion wherein the Virgin Mary is an icon for the ideal woman. The Philippine culture also has a local version for the ideal Filipino woman called *Maria Clara*, who is a character from a local novel that portrays her as a demure, innocent, and chaste woman. Putting these figures on a pedestal encourages Filipino women to embody such virtues, and for men to expect a certain version of the ideal woman. However, they could be encouraging values that tolerate and even promote VAW.

Traditional gender stereotypes are a risk factor for VAW. Such stereotypes that give power to men such as patriarchy and macho culture increase the risk of VAW (Berbarte et al., 2018). The literature shows how stressful situations could trigger violent behavior towards women because of the expectations of such gender roles (Molin, 2018; Nguyen, 2019). The

findings from the interviews show that these social structures give primacy and leniency to men, which puts women at a disadvantage because it limits their educational and economic opportunities. In addition, the macho image expected of men, which connotes physical strength and sexual triumph, encourages violent behavior among men and could lead to the objectification of women. This also puts men at risk as victims because men are expected to be strong and not show weakness. Additionally, this macho image constructs a stereotype of a perpetrator as a strong, violent sex-maniac, that also conceals the fact that any type of men can be perpetrators (Estrada-Claudio, 2002). This macho image, also referred to as toxic masculinity, not only puts women at risk for VAW, but is also harmful for men themselves.

On the other hand, the stereotypes expected of a Filipino woman is a risk factor and affects reporting behavior. As mentioned previously, because men are expected to be the breadwinners and leaders of the family, women are then expected to assume caring roles within the household. This limits their economic and educational opportunities that could serve as protective factors, and also leads to women's economic dependence on their husbands. Another expectation of Filipino women in is to be stoic. The literature suggests that the caring roles expected of women are attributed to being self-sacrificial, altruistic, silent, and non-complaining. These characteristics make Filipino women ideal domestic and care worker, but also affect how women respond to violent situations (Nguyen, 2019; Santos, 2009; Tanyag, 2018). The findings from the interviews show that this expectation of women to be *matiisin* or stoic encourages women to endure hardships and difficulties without complaining. This is related to other factors that affect women's behavior such as family value and the culture of silence, which will be discussed later on. This stoical expectation of women could also be drawn from the cultural and religious icons for ideal women mentioned earlier of the Virgin Mary and *Maria Clara.*

The high valuation of family in the Philippine culture is a protective factor and affects reporting behavior. It can affect reporting behavior in connection to the stoical expectation of Filipino women in the context of IPV. Both the findings from the interviews and the literature show that women stay in abusive relationships for a combination of reasons: for the sake of their children, because culture and society insist the woman is responsible for keeping the family together and that a broken family is not ideal, and or because the woman is economically dependent on her husband and will have no means to support herself and children (Santos, 2009). The findings from the interviews also show that the difficulty of getting the marriage annulled and the impossibility of divorce can be an additional hindrance. Once again, this is tied to the teachings of the Catholic church that the marriage is a sacred

institution thus claiming that divorce is immoral. Women are more likely to report the abuse or leave the relationship if her children are at risk or if her life is at stake. Conversely, the findings from the interviews show that family value can be a protective factor for VAW. Because the family is very important for society, it has the potential to breakdown harmful traditional gender roles. A respondent observed that couples are starting to realize that they must do whatever they can to support their family, even if it means that both the husband and wife work, or that the wife has to work while the husband stays at home to care for the children.

Another cultural notion that affects reporting behavior is the culture of silence. Many victims of VAW do not disclose or report the incident for various reasons: both the public and service providers are unaware that IPV is a public crime (Santos, 2009), believe that it is a private matter, and believe IPV is normal in relationships; women are expected to be stoic; a victim-blaming mindset (by both the victim and society) that the woman brought the violence upon herself; or women fear the shame and stigma of being a victim, or the backlash for not being able to save the marriage.

Sex as a taboo subject is a risk factor and promotes a culture of silence. The findings from the interviews show that talking about sex is taboo in the Philippine culture. People do not receive sexual education at home nor in school, and pre-marital sex is discouraged by society and by the Catholic church. Therefore, people do not know wrong from right which in turn affects their response to situations of sexual violence.

Strong policies, government support, and internalizing laws can be protective factors for VAW. The findings from the interviews show that policies are crucial in changing norms and behaviors, but must be backed by strong government support. Government support can catapult policies and programs to address different issues effectively. In addition, a respondent stressed how laws must be internalized by the general public in order to be preventive and not just responsive. People need to realize that the laws are in place because VAW is morally wrong, and not simply fear punishment.

5.2.5. Global

The fifth level is the global level. This looks at how globalization affects social changes that impact VAW. In the Philippine context, protective factors on the global level are the internet and technology, women OFWs, and working or studying abroad; similarly, risk

factors are the internet and technology and women OFWs. No factors were found to affect reporting behavior.

Technology and the internet can be protective and risk factors. As a protective factor, they are useful tools for advocacy and information dissemination for stakeholders raising awareness about different issues, women's rights, and the like. Information is now easily accessible for almost anyone with a smartphone and connection to internet. It also allows people to become more interconnected with and updated on global issues. However, as a risk factor, technology and the internet have also catapulted online and global GBV. The respondents noted how the internet has made online trafficking, abuse, and harassment easier than ever.

The increase of women overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) can be both protective and risk factors. It is a protective factor because women become more economically empowered. It can also breakdown traditional gender roles, as some wives work abroad to provide for the family while the husbands stay at home to take care of the children. However, it also puts women at risk for VAW outside Philippine sovereignty. It is a growing issue that Filipino women working abroad are being abused by their employers. Yet the respondents felt that there is not enough political will from the Philippine government and from the receiving countries to address the issue and assure the women's safety.

In relation, working or studying abroad can become a protective factor for VAW. It can broaden one's perspective as to how other countries are address GBV. Women can learn about their rights and the violations, and realize the difference between how the issue is addressed in the Philippines and in other countries.

5.2.6. Summary

Culture is a combination of ideas, norms, and behavior unique to a specific group of people. These factors specific to the Philippine context are not isolated within each level. Rather, these factors affect each other and at times, are also a combination of being a risk factor, a protective factor, and affect reporting behavior. Sorting these cultural factors into the five different levels and into the three categories gives a clearer understanding of how to address each factor and on what scale. By pinpointing the risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior, stakeholders can create specific campaigns and projects, and improve laws and services to eliminate VAW. The next section will discuss how various stakeholders are addressing the factors identified in this second step.

5.3. Steps 3 & 4: Develop and test prevention strategies, assure widespread adoption

The third step of the Public Health Model is to develop and test prevention strategies, and the fourth step is to assure widespread adoption. These strategies must be based on the data collected from steps 1 and 2. This section discusses what actions the different groups of stakeholders – UN Women, NGOs, academics, and government services– are taking to address VAW, how these actions are evaluated and eventually adopted into a larger scale.

5.3.1. UN Women

UN Women's Safe and Fair program addresses the issue of VAW among OFWs. As mentioned in Chapter 5.2.5, VAW among OFWs is largely unrecognized and lacks political action. What complicates the issue even more is that the violence happens outside of Philippine sovereignty, which means there needs to be international coordination between the sending and receiving countries. The role of UN Women is to ensure that governments adhere to normative frameworks by providing technical guidance and capacity building.

UN Women's Safe and Fair program addresses the poor services and reporting system for VAW among OFWs. The program aims to strengthen the coordination among the different stakeholders involving OFWs, as well as training service providers on how to address VAW with gender sensitivity. In this situation, UN Women seems the most equip to lead such a project because they have the capacity and resources to involve various stakeholders, including international entities such as the ILO. At the same time, UN Women must be at the forefront of implementing women's rights and CEDAW. As the project is still ongoing, it is not yet evaluated. However, it is also being implemented in other ASEAN countries.

By strengthening the VAW services for OFWs, it also encourages women's economic empowerment, which is a protective factor against VAW. This indirectly leads to breaking down traditional gender stereotypes and allowing women to be more participative in the workforce. More accessible and coordinated VAW services also encourages women to speak out and addresses factors that affect reporting behavior, such as the culture of silence, fear of shame and stigma, and the stoical stereotype expected of Filipino women.

5.3.2. Government services

The services of PNP WCPC and DSWD are mandated by the law. For PNP WCPC, this means managing the Women's Desk in every police station nationwide. This makes reporting services more accessible at a local level. For DSWD, this means providing social assistance for VAW victims.

It is interesting to note that there is a relatively small number of victims in the DSWD NCR shelters, despite the statistics from the PNP having some of the most VAW reports from NCR. Although not all victims need to be relocated to shelters, there could be another list of the victims who seek assistance but choose not to avail of the temporary shelter. Yet this could also indicate a lack of awareness of their services, or a lack of resources from DSWD to take in more victims. One of the respondents mentioned the lack of infrastructure and shelters of the DSWD, which is why private foundations and organizations that run shelters are just as essential. However, another respondent also mentioned how these private shelters lack the operational capacity and resources to take in more people. This shows that there is a demand for these services, and that the supply – both public and private services – is not enough to meet this demand. Although the DSWD conducts a yearly evaluation on their services, they admitted that their services are insufficient to meet the demand, and that there are other services that still need to be re-evaluated, strengthened, and established. On top of that, there is a lack of awareness about the services and rights of the victims – which means that there could even be a greater demand for it.

The findings also show some shortcomings of other service providers. Some police officers fear retaliation and are hesitant to accept cases. Both the police and other service providers continue to have a victim-blaming stance and gender insensitivity when handling VAW cases. There is also a lack of medical services in many areas. Moreover, the findings from the interviews seem to consistently point out the lack of coordination among service providers which makes it even more difficult for victims to seek the help they deserve. This could lead to distrust in the public system, affect reporting behavior, and hone the persistence of negative stereotypes and risk factors for VAW. However, the government services – more than anyone else – should be at the forefront of implementing laws and protecting human rights.

QCPD proves how government services can be improved. Although QCPD falls under the PNP, the local police and government have taken their own initiative to provide better services for VAW victims by creating a central Protection Center where the reporting process is streamlined and all the essential services are available. QCPD leads an example for

other cities to follow. In order for widespread adoption, other local governments need to take the same initiative in improving their local services.

The interviews with the government services reaffirm the fact that government actions are not enough. Both respondents from PNP WCPC and DSWD admit the shortcomings of their services and other government services, which points to the fact that addressing GBV does not seem to be the government's priority. From my interviews with the respondents from the government services, only the respondent from QCPD seemed proud to share that GBV is a priority of the local government, that it is being taken seriously, and that they are actually taking action to address it.

5.3.3. NGOs and academics

The *#RespetoNaman* campaign, which Spark, Empower, and the Embassy of Sweden are all involved in, aims to educate and raise awareness about GBV. The campaign's Don't Tell Me How To Dress exhibit targets the general public in the areas it is displayed, but the campaign also conducts forums for university and high school students.

Because the campaign is currently ongoing, it is still in the process of developing and testing its strategy. However, the campaign has already grown since it started. It was originally part of the annual 18-Day Campaign Against VAW in 2018, but carried on being a year-long campaign that is still ongoing. It has also expanded its location to different cities around the Philippines. Furthermore, the campaign is growing thematically from raising awareness to more concrete actions that can influence and improve policies. Spark intends to conduct an external evaluator to analyze the effectiveness of the campaign later on.

The *#RespetoNaman* campaign addresses the lack of awareness and education on the issue, laws, and services for GBV. By targeting both the general public and younger audiences, it addresses the negative cultural factors that contribute to GBV, such as the notion that VAW is a private matter, the victim-blaming culture, the culture of silence, sex as a taboo subject, and the traditional gender stereotypes. It also influences reporting behavior through its forums and exhibit by showing the prevalence of GBV and breaks down stereotypes of who the victims and perpetrators could be.

The campaign has two notable aspects on how it uses protective factors to its benefit. The first is how it targets younger audiences. This makes it more feasible to address the negative aspects of the Philippine culture that contribute to the prevalence and risk of GBV because it is changing the mindsets of the younger generations. The second notable aspect is

how the campaign uses technology and the internet as a protective factor. The campaign started after the global #MeToo movement, which helped the *#RespetoNaman* campaign gain online traction. Apart from the Don't Tell Me How To Dress exhibit and forums, the campaign uses online platforms to raise awareness, engage the public, and help people realize that they are not alone in experiencing GBV. Furthermore, the campaign has a publicly available database with a list and map of hospitals that cater to abuse victims. Although the database is limited for the time being, Spark intends to develop it further by adding other types of services available, such as mental health facilities and halfway homes.

Saligan is an NGO that focuses on legal empowerment. Their goal and programs specifically address the lack of awareness and misconceptions surrounding the laws for and the rights of GBV victims. They have programs that target victims, service providers, government agencies, local governments, and community leaders. It is important that they are educating both those who should be implementing the law, and the women who should be aware of their rights. In addition, their advocacy program looks into how the laws can be improved, while their research and publication programs translate laws so that they can be easily understood. This is important because it complements their other efforts which strengthen the implementation of the laws. Moreover, many of the cultural factors that contribute to the persistence of GBV are rooted in misunderstandings or unawareness of the laws and people's rights – not just of the public, but of those implementing the laws themselves.

Similar to NGOs, academics plays a complementary role in addressing VAW in the Philippines. WAGI works with students, service providers, local communities and other organizations for their different expertise on gender topics, where GBV is always incorporated. WAGI's role in their current project with UN Women for the Safe and Fair program is to train service providers on how to handle GBV cases.

NGOs and academics play a crucial role in addressing VAW. Despite the fact that the government services are mandated to carry out their services for VAW victims, their actions seem to only be responsive but not preventive. Both the original document and the most recent General Recommendation No. 45 of CEDAW stress the need – and legal obligation of the state – to address cultural norms, stereotypes, practices, and beliefs that promote discrimination against women. Yet both the literature and the findings from the interviews emphasize how NGOs fill in the gaps where the government services are lacking.

NGOs and academics provide expertise and resources for government services through different means – by providing various training sessions, creating programs,

improving current services, etc. A concrete example is how Spark and Empower teamed up with the British Embassy in Manila to source better rape kits from the UK for the local government services that handle rape cases. Although this aims to improve government services, it shows how the initiative to do so comes from the NGOs.

It seems as if government services simply do what they are required – which is mostly to provide reactive services – while NGOs are more proactive in taking preventive measures. CEDAW's General Recommendation No. 45, and their concluding observations on the 7th and 8th periodic reports of the Philippines, highlight how critical it is to address cultural and social factors that promote VAW – specifically the dominant stereotype in the Philippines of women's primary caring role, which is encouraged by culture and religion.

The findings from the interviews show that little has changed from Santos (2009) study on the implementation of the Anti-VAWC law that was published 11 years ago. VAW data of the different government services are still not uniformed or centralized, and government services remain uncoordinated and inefficient. Although my interviews with some government services showed that the respondents were familiar with the different GBV laws, the respondents from the NGOs mentioned their experience on the ground of service providers still not being fully aware of the laws or not properly implementing them. Furthermore, the findings from the interviews reaffirm the fact that some service providers are undertrained, lack gender sensitivity, and continue to have a victim-blaming stance. In addition, many of the general public remain unaware about VAW – that it is a public crime, and there are laws to protect women from it, and laws to provide services for victims. One point that seems to have improved from Santos (2009) study then and now is the cooperation between the government services and NGOs. The findings from the interviews show that although government services are reliant on the help of NGOs and academics, there is an effort to work together to address the issue. Both the respondents from the NGOs and the government services mentioned different programs or services that the two sectors collaborate on.

The findings from the interviews reveal several aspects of the Philippine culture that contribute to the persistence and tolerance of VAW. The fact that talking about sex – at home, in school, or among friends – is taboo in the Philippine culture could contribute to high unawareness about the issue and the laws surrounding it. The findings from the interviews also point out the fact that although GBV services exist, they are still centralized and not easily accessible for those living in far-flung rural areas. This could be due to the geography

of the country being naturally spread out. Therefore, there must be more of an effort by the government to ensure accessibility of the services in all parts of the country.

Many of the respondents focused the discussion on their experience with VAW cases perpetrated by a husband or partner. This could indicate the high occurrence of IPV in the country, which confirms the NDHS results that one out of four women experience spousal violence. This is tied to other cultural factors, such women's economic dependence on their husband, the unawareness of IPV being a crime and of the laws, the strong patriarchal culture, and the stoical expectation of Filipino women. On the same note, the stoical expectation of Filipino women is also rooted in other cultural factors, such as the Catholic church's teachings, the caring roles expected of women, and the value society puts on a marriage and the family.

The findings from the interviews also bring new insight on how factors related to globalization – such as technology and the internet, and women OFWs – affect GBV both in a positive and negative light. Although OFWs have been an integral part of the Philippine society and economy for many years, little attention has been given to women OFWs experiencing GBV.

5.4. Reflections, limitations, and recommendations

The factors identified in Step 2 paint a negative image of the Philippine culture. The goal of this study is to understand how the Philippine culture affects the persistence of VAW in the country. The Philippine culture, just like any other culture, plays a role in shaping people's behaviors and beliefs. In this case, the study identifies the aspects of the culture that promote GBV. This study validates the significance of understanding GBV in relation to a specific context. However, it is recommended that future studies look into how the culture can be positively used to eliminate VAW.

In addition, the Philippine culture is deeply intertwined with Catholic values and the country's colonization periods. The Philippines was a colony of Spain for over 300 years – which is the reason for the strong presence of Catholicism, followed by over 40 years as an American colony. I recommend future research to study how the cultural factors and values are rooted in these aspects of the country's history, either in relation to or independent from the Catholic influence. It would also be interesting to explore GBV and the oppression of women throughout history, from pre-colonization to present day.

This study touches on how poverty affects some of the factors identified – mostly, how it affects women's economic empowerment, education, and living situations. There is no way to ignore that poverty is rampant in the Philippines, and that it affects and is linked to several issues. However, as a Filipino woman myself, I believe that most of the other factors identified are applicable to all social classes, although they could be manifested in different ways. While I am not a victim of GBV, I understand and have experienced negative aspects of the Philippine culture, and several factors mentioned in this study.

This study points out shortcomings of the government services. Having grown up in the Philippines myself, it comes as no surprise to find that government services are lacking and unreliable. This could stem from the country's slow development and widespread corruption. Focusing on the government services in relation to the Philippine culture is recommended for future studies.

The study shows that Filipino women are not unempowered. Rather, the culture encourages women to be strong but in a negative way. Filipino women are expected to be stoic – to endure hardships without complaining. This is one of the main factors that applies to many of the other factors that affect reporting behavior. This stoical characteristic exhibits strength, and although it is admirable, this study shows how it can also be detrimental for women – especially for victims of GBV.

This study mentions how the *beso* culture could be a risk factor. The *beso* culture is not unique to the Philippines and variations (such as hugging or kissing the cheek) are done in other cultures. It could be a starting point for future studies to explore the significance of those gestures in relation to psychology or child psychology, and how this could affect a person's response mechanism to abusive or violent situations.

This study reveals how some factors about the culture can be a combination of being a risk factor, protective factor, and affect reporting behavior. One example is family value – because the family is highly valued, it can hinder a woman from reporting her abusive husband because the culture gives emphasis on keeping the family together for the sake of the children. On the other hand, because family is important, it could breakdown traditional gender stereotypes because both the husband and wife are willing to do anything to support the family. Another example is how the rise of women OFWs can be both risk and protective factors – women are economically empowered because they are able to work and earn an income, but it also puts them at risk for GBV abroad. Because factors can both positively and negatively affect GBV, it shows the possibility of turning negative factors around to become protective factors instead. I would recommend future studies (or anyone who wants to use

this study for their campaign, project, or program) to look into two things: 1) how the identified risk factors can turn into protective factors, and 2) how the protective factors can be made widespread.

In relation to how the rise of women OFWs can be both a risk and protective factor, it would be interesting for future studies to delve deeper into how their experience abroad shapes them. Specifically, how their family dynamics and values change upon returning to the Philippines. It could also be studied in relation to the country or region they worked in.

Several respondents mentioned the rise of GBV against the LGBTQI community in the Philippines. The focus of this study is limited to GBV against women. However, it is recommended for future studies to look into GBV against the LGBTQI community in relation to the Philippine culture and global movements.

5.4.1. *Methodology limitations and recommendations*

The sample population of this study's methodology has some limitations. First, the study did not adequately represent all the government agencies of the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children as listed in Chapter 2.3. Only two (PNP and DSWD) out of the twelve government agencies were interviewed. There are other key government agencies that address VAW, such as the Philippine Commission on Women (who declined participation), Department of Health, Department of Justice, and Department of Interior and Local Government that could have provided broader insight on the government's actions.

Second, the study was not able to interview some of the originally planned participants. The study was not able to adequately represent international organizations and academics. The intended participants to represent the international organizations were Care Philippines and Oxfam Philippines. However, Oxfam Philippines was unresponsive, and Care Philippines had to cancel the planned interview. In addition, the interview with the second academic (University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender Institute), did not push through due to a schedule mismatch.

I recommend future studies that would like to focus on government action to interview more or all government agencies under the Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children. I also recommend interviewing more government agencies, academics, and private foundations and shelters for GBV victims.

In relation to government services, I recommend future studies to interview GBV victims on their experiences of accessing the available services. This could include their awareness and understanding of the services, their feelings during the reporting process, how they were treated at each stage, and the follow through.

6. Conclusion

VAW is a widespread issue in the Philippines. Although there is poor data on the prevalence of VAW, the existing data shows that it affects women of all ages, socioeconomic status, and all regions of the country. This qualitative study answers the two main research questions 1) How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines perceive gender-based violence? and 2) How do UN Women, relevant NGOs, academics, and government services for GBV in the Philippines address gender-based violence? This study conducted semi-structured, in-person interviews with 11 respondents to represent the various stakeholders. The data was then analyzed using a combination of the Public Health Model and the Integrated Ecological Model.

The country has several laws and services to address VAW and various GBV issues. However, the poor implementation and high unawareness of laws and government services, in combination with cultural factors, affect the help-seeking behavior of VAW victims and can pose as risk factors for VAW rather than protective factors. Moreover, the VAW data is limited, erratic, and unreliable because there is no central data bank to consolidate the reports from the different government services. This makes it difficult to grasp the full extent of the issue throughout the country.

There are numerous aspects of the Philippine culture that are risk factors, protective factors, and factors that affect reporting behavior. 1) At the individual level, protective factors are increasing age and economic empowerment, higher SES; risk factors are younger age, the cycle of violence, low educational attainment, the segregative educational system, and the *beso* culture; and factors that affect reporting behavior are both high and low SES. 2) At the relationship level, a protective factor is joint decision-making; a risk factor is if only the husband or the wife dominate household decision-making; while factors that affect reporting behavior are marital status, and if the perpetrator is the woman's husband/partner. 3) At the community level, protective factors are urban settings and tightknit communities; a risk factor is the urban setting; while both the rural and urban settings are factors that affect reporting behavior. 4) At the societal level, protective factors are strong policies, government

support, internalizing the law, and family value; risk factors are the Catholic church's influence on policies and values, the emphasis given on a woman's virginity, and traditional gender stereotypes in relation to patriarchy, macho image, and women assuming a caring role; while factors that affect reporting behavior are the stoical stereotype of a Filipino woman, high valuation of family, the culture of silence, and sex as a taboo subject. 5) Lastly, at the global level, protective factors are the internet and technology, women OFWs, and working or studying abroad; similarly, risk factors are the internet and technology and women OFWs.

The identified factors are not isolated within each level. Using the Integrated Ecological Model revealed how the factors affect each other in different levels. The Public Health Model shows how some factors are a combination of a risk factor, a protective factor, and a factor that affects reporting behavior. Using the two models to categorize the factors provides a clearer understanding of how to address each factor and on what scale. Pinpointing these factors also allows stakeholders to address specific issues through programs, laws, and services in order to efficiently eliminate VAW.

The laws mandate appropriate government agencies to provide services for VAW victims. The PNP WCPC oversees the Women's Desk in every police station nationwide, which makes reporting services more accessible at the local level. DSWD provides social assistance through various means. However, the study reveals that the different government services – not limited to the PNP and DSWD – are uncoordinated and the personnel undertrained, which affects reporting behavior, leads to a general distrust in the public system, and hones the persistence of negative stereotypes and risk factors for VAW. The QCPD provides an example of how government services for VAW can be improved with the help of strong policies and government support.

There are NGOs that focus on different aspects of VAW. The *#RespetoNaman* campaign by Spark, Empower, and the Embassy of Sweden raises awareness by educating the public and the youth, and addresses negative stereotypes in the Philippine culture that affect GBV. Saligan focuses on legal empowerment through their programs, while WAGI works with students, service providers, local communities, and other organizations using their academic expertise. Additionally, UN Women ensures that the government adheres to normative frameworks by working with the local government and civil society, and by providing technical guidance and capacity building. Their current Safe and Fair program sheds light on a largely unrecognized issue of VAW among OFWs.

The country's commitment to CEDAW underlines the government's role to address cultural and social factors that promote VAW. Although various services exist to address VAW, it seems that government services are only responsive to VAW. NGOs and academics fill in the gaps of where the government services are lacking by providing expertise and resources, and by taking the lead in preventive action against VAW.

Despite this study's limitations in terms of scope and methodology, it opens up several starting points for future research. This study focused on the cultural aspects that negatively affect GBV in the Philippines, either as risk factors or factors that affect reporting behavior. However, it shows how aspects of the culture can also serve as protective factors. Moreover, this study provides cultural factors specific to the Philippines that can be used by various stakeholders in addressing GBV through campaigns, programs, policies, and services.

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<center>**Appendix A**</center>

<center>**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ORGANIZATIONS**</center>

Tria Marie R. Garcia
Master's thesis, 30 ECTS
Master of Science in International Development Studies
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

GBV data, statistics, patterns

1. What is your definition of gender-based violence (GBV)?
2. What are the different types of GBV?
3. What statistics do you have of GBV?
   a. Where do you obtain your data?
   b. How is this data used by the organization?
4. Have the incidents increased or decreased over the years? Why?
5. Do the victims share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?
6. Do the perpetrators share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?
7. Where does the abuse occur? Are there patterns in the context or situation of the abuse?
8. What are the available services for GBV victims in the Philippines?
   a. Do you think people are aware of these services?
   b. How accessible are these services for people in the cities and provinces?
   c. Do you think these services are effective? Could they be improved? How are they contributing to the increase/decrease of GBV statistics?
9. Are you aware of the laws in the Philippines that address violence against women?
   a. How effective are they?
   b. How are they implemented?
10. Does socioeconomic class affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, reporting, perception, etc? What are the differences and/or similarities? If so, how?
11. Does the rural or urban setting affect GBV? If so, how? What are the differences and/or similarities?
12. Does economic empowerment affect GBV? If so, how?
13. Does the Philippine culture affect GBV? If so, how?
14. Does religion in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?
15. Do gender roles and stereotypes in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?
16. Does globalization affect GBV? If so, how?

Organization's work in addressing GBV

17. What are your current or recent projects on GBV?
    a. How and why were these projects formed?
    b. How is the project organized?
    c. What is the goal of the project?
18. Who are the stakeholders in the project?
    a. Who is involved in implementing the project?
    b. Who is the target audience of the project?
    c. How do the victims know about the project? How are they protected?
    Was the project evaluated? How?
19. Did the project end or continue? Why? How has the project grown since?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ACADEMICS

Tria Marie R. Garcia
Master's thesis, 30 ECTS
Master of Science in International Development Studies
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

GBV data, statistics, patterns

1. What is your definition of gender-based violence (GBV)?
2. What are the different types of GBV?
3. What statistics do you have of GBV?
    a. Where do you obtain your data?
    b. How is this data used by the organization?
4. Have the incidents increased or decreased over the years? Why?
5. Do the victims share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?
6. Do the perpetrators share common traits, demographics, personal history, etc?
7. Where does the abuse occur? Are there patterns in the context or situation of the abuse?
8. What are the available services for GBV victims in the Philippines?
    a. Do you think people are aware of these services?
    b. How accessible are these services for people in the cities and provinces?
    c. Do you think these services are effective? Could they be improved? How are they contributing to the increase/decrease of GBV statistics?
9. Are you aware of the laws in the Philippines that address violence against women?
    a. How effective are they?
    b. How are they implemented?
10. Does socioeconomic class affect GBV? In terms of occurrence, reporting, perception, etc? What are the differences and/or similarities? If so, how?
11. Does the rural or urban setting affect GBV? If so, how? What are the differences and/or similarities?
12. Does economic empowerment affect GBV? If so, how?
13. Does the Philippine culture affect GBV? If so, how?
14. Does religion in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?
15. Do gender roles and stereotypes in the Philippines affect GBV? If so, how?
16. Does globalization affect GBV? If so, how?

Academic work in the field of GBV

17. What is your field of expertise in GBV?
18. What is the current research in your department on GBV?
19. What is GBV studies in the Philippines lacking?
20. How are you or your department bridging the gap between the academics and practical application of addressing GBV in the Philippines?
21. Do you have any publications, articles, or reports related to GBV?

<div align="center">**Appendix B**</div>

<div align="center">**INFORMATION SHEET**</div>

Tria Marie R. Garcia
Master's thesis, 30 ECTS
Master of Science in International Development Studies
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Problem Statement
Gender-based violence (GBV) is a widespread human rights and public health issue. It has profound social, economic, health, and familial consequences on the survivors and their families. While the Philippine excels on the gender equality charts, its situation on gender-based violence says otherwise. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2018), 17% of Filipino women still experience GBV, and only 34% report the abuse. There is limited information and academic literature on the topic of GBV in the Philippines. The existing studies, both in the Philippines and in other countries, all emphasize the crucial role that social constructs and contexts play in the perpetration and prevalence of GBV. Thus, a more context-specific approach is needed to better understand the nature, extent, risks, and effects of the issue due to the varied cultures and social contexts in developing countries.

Objective of the study
This study aims to contribute a more contextual understanding of GBV and to improve the understanding of current actions being done by different organizations to address the issue. This increased knowledge could then encourage more effective programs that would reduce GBV in the Philippines.

Research design
This study will use a qualitative approach, including a literature review and interviews with key informants such as yourself. The key informants have been strategically selected from different sectors, such as UN and international organizations based in the Philippines, local NGOs, and academics. The data will be analyzed using content analysis guided by the Public Health Model and the Globalized Integrated Ecological Model. An interview guide will be sent at least one month prior to the scheduled interview.

Why you have been selected
The organization you work for matches the pre-determined criteria of respondents for this study. Your professional background and experiences will contribute valuable knowledge and insights to this study.

Anonymity, recording, usage and storage of data, results, and publishing
Your personal identity will be concealed and will remain anonymous. Interviews will be audio recorded. Data collected (audio recordings and transcripts) will be stored securely and will be accessible only to the researcher. Data collected will be used only for this study. A separate Consent Form will be provided.

You will receive a copy of the final draft of this study before it is published, and the final copy after it is published. The published version of the study will also be available in Brage,

NMBU's open digital research archive. The study may also be used for additional publications such as relevant academic journals.

We will only use your personal data for the purpose specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

We will process your personal data based on your consent.
Based on an agreement with NMBU, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

About the researcher
My name is Tria Garcia and I am doing my master's degree in International Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. I am from the Philippines and I am passionate about development issues. I obtained my bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Ateneo de Manila University in 2015. My previous experiences include working in the marketing, education, and nonprofit sectors in the Philippines. In Norway, I did an internship with the Norwegian Refugee Council. I am currently completing the last year of my postgraduate studies.

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CONSENT FORM

<u>Participant</u>:

____ I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided
____ I have been given opportunities to ask questions about the study
____ I have been given adequate time to consider my decision
____ I agree to take part in this study out of my own free will
____ I agree to have my interview audio recorded
____ I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in this study with attribution to my
organization
____ I understand that my personal details will be kept anonymous
____ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

<u>Researcher</u>:

____ I have thoroughly explained the purpose of this study and the role of the participant to
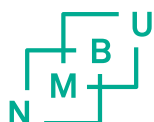the best of my ability.

Name of researcher: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

FACTORS SORTED BY TYPE AND LEVEL

	Protective factors	Risk factors	Factors that affect reporting behavior
Individual	Increasing age Economic empowerment Higher SES	Younger age Cycle of violence Low educational attainment Segregative educational system *Beso* culture	Higher SES Lower SES
Relationship	Joint-decision making	Only husband or wife dominates decision-making	Marital status Perpetrator is husband
Community	Urban setting Tightknit communities		Rural setting Urban setting
Societal	Strong policies Government support Internalizing the law Family value	Catholic church's influence Emphasis on a woman's virginity Traditional gender stereotypes Patriarchal society and macho image Women's caring role	Stoical stereotype of women High valuation of family Culture of silence Sex as a taboo subject
Global	Internet and technology OFWs Working or studying abroad	Internet and technology OFWs	