**Geographical Frontiers of Gendered Violence**

This suite of interventions aims to generate belated conversation across geography on gendered violences. As such, it brings together and formalises dialogue convened at the Royal Geographical Society-with IBG (RGS-IBG) Annual Conference 2013 on the theme of ‘new geographical frontiers’. Organised by the Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group (GFGRG) as part of the ‘100+’ series of events marking the centenary of women’s admission to the RGS-IBG, a plenary panel on gendered violences provided case study insights from the Global North and South on this pressing issue. Contributors were posed three questions to shape their respective presentations: first, are gendered violences universally or spatially differentiated and, if so, what does this tell us? Second, how are particular forms of violence shaped by gender and other axes of difference? And third, how do gendered networks (informal and institutionalised) perpetrate or resist particular forms of violence? (1) In response, the interventions attest to gendered violences that are physical, sexual, and/or psychological and extend to rape [interventions 1 & 2], domestic and state-sponsored violence [intervention 3] and religious and racial hate crime [intervention 4]. Whilst far from exhaustive, collectively these interventions highlighted a multiple set of gendered violences that affect the lives of women and men in different settings.

Since the mid-1990s, geographers have worked to expose the gendered violences of public space, particularly in the West. Revolving around women’s fear of violence by men, this literature (e.g. Pain 1991, Valentine 1989) highlighted the apparent paradox of women’s fear of violence from unknown men in public spaces, compared to the greater likelihood of women experiencing violence from known men in the domestic sphere (Mehta and Bondi 1999). This work was later followed by a smaller literature on men’s experiences of violence including Brownlow’s (2005) research on the intersection of ethnicity, class and gender which made African-American men the group most likely to experience violence in public spaces of the United States.

Akin to sociology, which has been less concerned with ‘the specifics of interpersonal violence, domestic violence or violence in intimacy’ (Hearn, 2012: 153), geography has only recently begun re-orienting its focus to ‘private’ spaces of violence. Indeed, this is something raised in Rachel Pain’s (2014a, b) recent work where she writes with specific reference to domestic violence that it remains ‘the elephant in the room. We know it is present, not just as something that happens in distant locations to distant others, but in many of our own lives’ (2014b: 2). The ground-breaking work on geographies of gender and violence that appeared in the 1990s and early 2000s is now being extended in range and enriched by research that explores wider geographies of gendered violences both within, but critically *beyond*, public spaces of the Global North. This emerging body of social, political and development geography scholarship encompasses work as diverse as the gendering of gang involvement and punishment in Brazil (Wilding, 2013); the impact of non-formal education to empower girls to claim rights to be free from violence in Kenya (Cobbett, 2015); and the policing of intimate partner violence in the United States (Cuomo, 2013).

While gendered violences are not by any means a ‘new’ geographical frontier of encounter, the interventions here seek to support and encourage ‘new’ work on this arena of concern across sub-disciplinary boundaries. The interventions illustrate, for example, how gendered violences are both grounded in the everyday, but also surpass the marker of daily struggle. They counter what Anderson and Smith (2001: 9) have described as ‘anemic knowledges predicated on the artificial separation of private and public, body and citizens, domestic and global’. Together all four pieces echo the point made by fellow geographer Cathy McIllwaine (2013: 66) that gendered violences are ‘not only “social” in nature, as it usually assumed’, but are ‘a form of political, institutional and economic violence’. Likewise, Pain (2014a,b) argues, domestic violence needs to be seen as a form of political influence or control achieved through fear, and thus acts as a form of *terrorism*. In this spirit, these interventions signal the need for, and potential of, critical, social, cultural, economic, and political geographies to contribute to the critique of violences and their gendered dynamics.

Indeed, as [intervention 1] goes on to detail with reference to the Badaun rapes in India, this focus on spatialities matters: ‘it is the lack of critical reflection on the spatiality and intersectionality of this violence across the divides of public/private that is ultimately stifling potentially progressive interventions’. Through the lens of different Indian laws and other material interventions (such as better toilet provision), [intervention 1] exposes how women’s access to justice (on the basis of caste, working class status, minor ethnic/religious/tribal affiliations, and across alternative sexualities) is haunted by misogynistic institutional structures and discourses. These inflict their own spatialized violence upon victims’ lives by reinforcing the domestic as the (supposed) sphere of safety and the public of danger. [Intervention 3] also makes connections to work in legal geography and the ambiguity of law as a mechanism of protection and redress. [Intervention 3] highlights the irony of how the Cambodian government have violently legitimated ‘rule *by* law’ against a grassroots network of female citizens opposing the gendered insecurities of forced eviction at the same time as emphasizing to the international community its commitment to ‘rule *of* law’ and human rights through the sanctioning of its first ever domestic violence law. This irony is compounded by a new law which stresses a moralistic commitment to ‘harmony’ and the unyielding continuity of the marital unit to secure the ‘intimate security’ of the nation more than the women it is nominally designed for. Both interventions thus expose how responses formally designed to address gendered violences such as rape and domestic violence hold the very real potential to exacerbate rather than necessarily alleviate injustice.

The two further interventions talk to the theme of the (geo)-politics of hate, namely [Intervention 2] on the relationship between gender prejudice and sexual violence against women; and [Intervention 4] on religiously-motivated violence directed towards those perceived to follow the Islamic faith. As was highlighted by Brownlow’s (2005) US study of African-American men, these two case studies call attention to the intersectionality of gender and other axes of difference prompting specific forms of gendered violences. In these cases, gender (women in India and men in the UK respectively), intersects with class, religious intolerance and cultural violence. Each case study highlights violence as an expression of power, reflecting the perpetrators’ discursive construction of the entitlement to evaluate, judge, and act violently upon certain others in order to control the victims and influence/ direct the wider society to which both parties belong.

At the same time however, [intervention 2] highlights the female vigilante groups which are mobilising and pushing against such exertions of power. Just as ‘the term *precarity* is double-edged as it implies both a condition and a possible rallying point for resistance’ (Waite, 2009: 412 author’s emphasis), gendered insecurities often set the conditions for staged as well as more subtle activisms in everyday social relations (also born out in intervention 2). In this vein, future work in geography has a role to play not only in bringing to light experiences of gendered violences but also giving exposure and support to resistance efforts to bring about meaningful change.

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# Another Rape? The Persistence of Public/Private Divides in Sexual Violence Debates in India

In this intervention piece, I reflect upon the recent spate of highly publicized rapes in India to examine the persistence of public/private divisions in the debates and interventions around sexual violence. Using the example of the most recent case of the Badaun rapes, I suggest that it is the lack of critical reflection on the spatiality and intersectionality of this violence across the divides of public/private that is ultimately stifling potentially progressive interventions in this area. I will suggest that constructing rape as a specialization of ‘urban anomie’, or in Badaun as a consequence of the lack of toilets, establishes rape as an ‘other’ space outside the ‘ordinary’ spaces of political, social and cultural institutions of state, community or family. Instead I propose that the examination of sexual violence that transcend public/private divides will allow us to see rape as embedded within the violence of social power relations across spaces and scales.

## Another rape?

In May 2014, Indians woke up to news of yet another rape – this time a gruesome double murder of two minor girls of the Dalit (untouchable) caste who were abducted, raped and then hung by their scarves from the village tree. It emerged that in the absence of toilets in their home, these two girls had gone together in the dark to defecate in the fields when they were abducted. The police however refused to file a complaint since they were of the same (Yadav) caste as the abductors. Even after news spread of the rape and hanging, and public pressure forced the police to arrest the accused, they expressed suspicion that this was not a double murder but in fact ‘honour killings’ meted out by the family.

The ‘Badaun rapes’ - called after a small village near Delhi where they took place - highlighted in stark contrast to previously high-profile cases that rape was not just an urban phenomenon. Rape cut across rural-urban divides, and were closely linked to other forms of gendered power vested in class, caste, ethnic and religious affiliations. As photos of the hanging girls circulated across social media, they highlighted that although gendered violence might be universal, intersections between the material violence of everyday life (in the absence of toilets), the violence of caste and gendered power, as well as the representational violence in social media were quite specific to rapes in the Indian context. While rape is part of a wider circle of violence that is simultaneously structural, social, cultural and institutional, its deeper connections to a misogynous social and political sphere in India was also revealed through continuous doubts cast by the state and its institutions on its ‘authenticity’ in Badaun.

## State, law and subjectivity

The Badaun rape case is significant since it is situated in the confluence of law, violence, materiality and subjectivity. It has been widely acknowledged that Indian laws as they pertain to women’s rights are contradictory across public and personal spaces (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Williams, 2006). The Indian Constitution makes distinctions between two kinds of rights – Fundamental rights (such as right to life, right to vote), and the Directive Principles of State Policy which are to be encouraged through appropriate policies (such as right to education, freedom from discrimination). These two different sets of rights makes significant distinctions between civil/political and social/economic spheres of Indian citizens in that while the former are enforceable by the judiciary, the social and economic rights can only be regulated and interpreted in the context of their violation of fundamental rights (Baxi, 2005). Thus while rape can be interpreted as a violation of a fundamental right to life (only in case of death of victims), as a violation of gendered/social/cultural right it can only be enforced if appropriate laws/policies exist in this arena.

It is this ambiguity in the sphere of legal rights in India that has produced a fundamental distinction between sexual violence across public and private domains. In India, while fundamental rights to life and freedom in the public sphere assume a western liberal notion of women as equal citizens, in reality this entry is premised on women’s religious identity within the private realm of the family and community. This is evident in the separate Hindu and Muslim personal laws that deal with women’s rights in marriage, inheritance, divorce, child custody and so in different religious communities (Galanter, 1988). The new Rape Law 2013 (enacted after the tragic rape and murder of a Delhi student in 2012) in particular reinforces these public/private divides. While it expands the remit of rape from India’s earlier sexual violence laws to include ‘forced penetration’, at the same time it fails to recognise spousal rape as violence, or indeed fails to categorise child marriage (once it has occurred) as illegal.

While the Indian Constitutional laws construct an ambiguous and often contradictory sphere of gender/sexual rights and freedom, their interpretation and enforcement are subject to the gender ideologies of the state. In 2001, one of the first comprehensive reports on the status of women in India (Menon-Sen and Shivkumar, 2001) highlighted how subjective interpretations of women’s ‘morality’ impacted on the delivery of justice. Around 109 judges were interviewed to assess attitudes towards violence against women, of which 48 percent believed that there were certain occasions when it was justifiable for a husband to slap his wife, 74 percent believed that the preservation of the family should be the woman’s primary concern, even if she faces violence, 68 percent believed that ‘provocative’ clothes are an invitation to sexual assault, 55 percent believed that the moral character of a woman is relevant in cases of sexual abuse, and nine percent believed that a woman who says ‘no’ to sexual intercourse often means ‘yes’. More recently in 2013, the overthrowing of legal challenges to Article 377 (a colonial-era law criminalising homosexuality) by the judiciary suggests that little might have changed in terms of how sexuality and gendered freedom is interpreted in courts in India today.

The violence of law and their interpretation has significant gendered consequences for those on the margins of society. ‘Encounters with the state’ (Das, 2004) when women go to file cases of rape, incest, domestic violence or other forms of sexual violence in India, when women’s families approach the police in cases of dowry, and when disputes around child custody, inheritance, dowry and so on are arbitrated in courts reflect the intersectionality of gendered experiences across lower caste or working class status, minority ethnic/religious/tribal affiliations, and across alternative sexualities. In urban slums in Delhi, women have regularly noted how the police used its subjective judgement of women’s morality to not register cases of rape or domestic violence, even colluding with perpetrators in making counter attacks against the credibility of women’s statements (Author, 2012). In Badaun, this issue remains critical in the tenuous reconstruction and interpretation (both by the police and judiciary) of the double murder as rape or honour killing, and therefore access to justice for the victims’ families. This is precisely so not just because of deeply misogynistic ideologies within the state and state institutions that control law-making and enforcement on sexual violence, but also because of police affiliation with caste communities which shape gendered rights, justice and citizenship for those on the margins of the state and rule of law.

## ‘Community’ as regulators of gendered violence

Links between state representatives (such as the police) and the associated social institutions (such as caste communities) that are empowered by state law-making and enforcement draw rape and a range of other forms of sexual violence within a normalized cartography of caste power and virile North Indian masculinity in Badaun. Several scholars (Das, 2004; Mody, 2008) have outlined that the state has empowered social institutions such as the ‘community’ or ‘family’ as spaces where intimacies are legitimised, valorised or criminalized. As Das (2004) notes, the ‘community has the ability to make substantial acts of violence and acts of moral solidarity’ often legitimised by the state. In doing so, Mody argues that the community is no longer a hypothetical space of social and moral ambivalence, rather a space that is regulated by the state and in turn regulates intimate relationships of power across public and private realms.

Community in Badaun lies on the intersection of caste and class, determined by the materiality of land holding power. The Yadav castes, although listed as ‘other backward classes’ under India’s caste based reservation scheme, are nevertheless a locally powerful community with access to material spaces of land, water, electricity and sanitation. Thus while Dalit women in Badaun are subject to a number of ‘dangers’ as they enter the public domain to access sanitation and other basic services, Yadav women on the contrary are ‘protected’ from these dangers as they are able to enact their daily bodily rituals within their homes. While this protection from the public realm does not acknowledge the complexity of gendered power and violence at home, the perceived ‘danger’ of the public realm nevertheless has led to increased activism around women’s safety on the streets.

## Activism for toilet justice?

The Badaun rape and several other high profile cases have driven a huge shift in public debates in India around rape and sexual violence. These debates have led to the establishment of a new rape law in India, However, the Badaun rape has been key issue for social activism among development practitioners since it provides a simple answer to the question of ‘*how* *could this have been prevented’*. Development activists have lamented that unlike previous cases; perhaps Badaun rapes could have been prevented if toilets were available to the women. The lack of toilets highlights the rising inequalities between cities and their peripheries which have seen increased channelling of state investment and resources towards mega-cities at the cost of increased marginalisation of small cities, towns and villages (Author, 2013). Badaun certainly is a place of ‘exception’ – where the complex intersections of material deprivation with the historical and political marginalisations of low castes and women, produce rape as one of the key manifestations of social and economic disempowerment. Suggesting that toilets could have prevented rape aligns the debate with India’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, to women’s safety and security and to development more broadly. It fits the ideologies of development planners who have long claimed that addressing material inequalities would resolve social inequalities (de Soto, 1989). Crucially, this proposal has seen favour even among design professionals who can at long last highlight the validity of their claims that design can bring about social change.

There is a danger however in overemphasising the links between gendered safety and material interventions. And this lies at the heart of the public/private divisions between rape in the public realm and protection from it in the private realm – reinforced by state, law and society. This materialist interpretation serves not only to distance gendered and sexualised violence from the upper castes in Badaun or middle classes in the city who have access to toilets, but also simultaneously serves to construct rape as a function of material conditions of everyday life. While access to toilets are certainly essential for gendered rights and citizenship (Burra et al., 2003), the ‘toilets to prevent rape’ argument needs to be unpacked in terms of its embedded gendered and potentially misogynistic assumptions. This argument first distracts from the intersectionality of gendered violence and from the deeply embedded gendered ideologies within state, law and society to simplify its solution in the provision of basic amenities. Second, this argument suggests that rape is a product of ‘stranger misogyny’ and that provision of toilets would prevent this potentially dangerous contact with strangers in the public realm. Finally and related to the above, this argument ironically restricts women’s entry into the public domain by suggesting that women within the home are ‘protected’ from gender violence. This is a convenient argument that has been co-opted by the state since it absolves the state of not intervening in domestic violence, incest, spousal rape and several other forms of sexualised violence that takes place within the home and inflicted by the family or community.

By recasting the personal and public divides across gendered power and sexual violence it is possible to interrogate Badaun and other rape cases as a form of spatialized violence enacted over women’s bodies and spaces, not just in the act itself, but also in the solutions proposed. Badaun is particular because the public debates have focussed on material, design interventions. Ironically though Badaun reinforces controls over women’s bodies and spaces through the violence of developmentality. While activism against rape has brought about changes in law and policy, recognising the complex exchanges of gendered and sexualised violence between and across home and outside would lead to better understanding of the spaces, scales and terrains of violence and the multiple ways they lay siege on women’s bodies. This understanding would be crucial to more appropriate gender-just interventions with the spaces of state, law and society.

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**The Genderscapes of Hate: On Violence against Women in India**

*Maa main jeena chahti hoon…..*

These were Jyoti Singh Pandey’s words, addressed to her mother on a slip of paper as she fought hanging on to her fast ebbing life after being gang raped, disembowelled and brutalised in a moving bus on the night of December 16, 2012. Since Indian law disallows rape victims from being named, an English daily conferred the name Nirbhaya meaning ‘without fear’ to honour and humanise the victim and the case subsequently became known as the Nirbhaya case. To this author the name might also symbolise that distant Utopia where women could actually walk without fear.

The Nirbhaya case provoked a nationwide outrage and brought back in to focus the issue of gendered violence, more specifically sexual violence against women in India. The unprecedented public demonstrations were followed by a slew of measures aimed at stemming the recurrence of such violence. However despite these, incidents of horrific sexual violence continue to be perpetuated, almost as if they are occurring in a vacuum, unaffected by the debate, outrage and legislations.

Months after the high profile Nirbhaya case where, according to media reports, the young woman was raped with a rusted L shaped metal rod, beaten and wilfully disembowelled, the media reported on the Gudiya case. Here, a five year old was raped, brutalised with a plastic bottle and stones, strangled and left for dead. This was followed by the rape and murder of two teenaged girls in Budaun, Uttar Pradesh. Rather disturbingly, instead of intensifying the debate on gendered violence and its intersections with caste, this case sparked off a discussion about the need to build toilets to keep women safe, equating the ugly gang rape to a simple lack of toilet facilities (see intervention 1 in this issue for a detailed discussion). Other high profile cases in this time were the Bangalore National Law School gang rape (Oct 2012), the Shakti Mills gang rape in Mumbai (August 2013), and gang rape of the Danish tourist in Delhi (January 2014).

The latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data shows that 93 women are raped in India *every day* (NCRB 2013). To provide a perspective, this amounts to four women raped every hour or about 33,000 in a year. The figure is about three times more than the number of people killed in terror attacks worldwide in 2012 (Country Reports on Terrorism, 2012). NCRB data throws up other disturbing trends as well. Among these is the fact that the incidence of rape and other forms of violence against women has been increasing rather than decreasing. Both child rapes and gang rapes present an alarming increase suggesting the conversion of individual violence into group violence, and the co-option of younger men (often juveniles) into these incidences of group violence. Other than this, involvement of minors in such heinous crimes is also an indication of the percolation of misogyny to younger age groups.

In the Nirbhaya case for example, the most barbaric acts, including enticing the victim unto the bus, beating and raping her with the iron rod and pulling out her intestines were all attributed to the minor involved in the crime.

While gendered violence is universal, the ugly form and proportions it has assumed in India is definitely spatially segregated and needs to be seen within the frame of what I term the ‘Genderscapes of hate’. In using this term, gendered violence is equalised to a spiral of recurrent hate crime where every fresh act of violence is also an act of deep seated gender prejudice. The genderscapes of hate in my view, originate from this prejudice and are maintained through a steady flow of violence directed at women over their life course in their everyday life worlds and lived spaces. The genderscapes of hate then are the lived spaces over which women are constantly devalued, degraded, humiliated and subject to different forms of violence hinging from such discrimination and devaluation within what can be termed a culturally sanctioned misogyny.

Genderscapes have been defined in my earlier work as the fluid and multi-layered space which contains the performances, perceptions and portrayals of gender (Datta 2011). Drawing principally on the works of Appadurai, Le febvre, Sack, on ideas concerning space, the term genderscapes underline fluidity, image and imagination (Appadurai 1996). They denote in Le febvrian terms the lived space *produced* (Le febvre 1974, trans 1991) by the performance of gender (Butler 1990 ) through a repertoire of everyday ordinary acts as well as extraordinary incidents. Both of these eventually implicate each other in reproducing prejudice and consequent violence to maintain a genderscape of hate. I would like to argue here that gendered violence is an integral factor in the process of place making, creating a lived space where such violence is itself normalized.

From Sack’s concept of relational space (Sack 1992) such genderscapes can be seen as being constituted through the realms of Nature, Meaning and Social relations (Sack 1992, Datta 2011). The realm of Nature or natural landscape determines to an extent initial traditions related to the degree of permissiveness for women to be in public space and participate in productive work (see Datta 2011). The realms of meaning and social relations together emphasise and reinforce male power, privilege and entitlement within what Kandiyoti has labelled classic patriarchy (Kandiyoti 1998). In the context of India in particular and elsewhere in general, rites, rituals traditions, colloquialisms and popular culture centre around the productive aspects of patriarchy and continue to reinforce male privilege. Gendered violence becomes a tool to contain real or perceived transgressions and maintain this culture. Sex selective abortions, female infanticide, neglect of the girl child, daughter discrimination, dowry deaths, honour killings, stalking, acid attacks, harassment in the work place, are all part of this chain of degrading gendered violence that women in India are subject to over their life course. Not only does each such incident reify the existing genderscape of hate, but in doing so, it also sets in motion precursors to the next act.

The role of media and popular culture in nurturing these genderscapes of hate cannot be overstressed. Portrayals of women are rarely in opposition to the productive aspects of patriarchy reducing them to objects of desire devoid of any real agency. This devaluation and circumcision of agency in media is matched by the moral policing of extra-legal cultural organisations and community leaders in the name of preserving traditional values. Viewed in this frame, the responses of several public figures in positions of responsibility to horrific instances of gendered violence do not seem bizarre any more. These have ranged from blaming incidents of rape on the victim’s clothes, use of mobiles, failure to invoke fictive kinship with the rapists, her westernized lifestyle etc. Parallely, the actions of rapists have been viewed far more indulgently – for example that they rape due to their consumption of fast food or their adolescent masculinity definitely undeserving of harsh punishment currently mandated by the new rape laws.

Thus, a woman chief minister has routinely decried all reports of violence against women in her state as political conspiracies, protestors against rape have been termed ‘dented and painted’ women by no less than a sitting MP. In another instance, an MP threatened the women of his political opponent’s constituency with rape. Routinely God men and other community leaders have issued similar statements while commenting upon women’s safety or instances of rape. Such statements appearing bizarre and out of place, begin to make sense when read as just another form of violence that is both a product and precursor to the genderscape of hate that is proposed as an analytical framework in this essay. These public stances have an important role in maintaining the genderscape of hate almost in opposition to any positive interventions to dismantle the same. They do so by serving to trivialise the issue of gendered violence, strengthen misogynist attitudes and further devalue women. In the same vein, group violence against women, seen to be on the rise, can be thought of as a silent and tacit patriarchal pact especially when viewed against women’s rising literacy, mobility and participation in paid work. The implicit relationship between the two becomes clear when viewed within the framework of genderscapes of hate.

Institutionalised interventions to gendered violence usually take the form of more comprehensive laws or harsher sentences. Being punitive rather than preventive, they apply ex post facto but do not address more implicit forms of gendered violence that create the genderscape of hate through a realm of meaning and a popular culture that continues to devalue rather than dignify women. In this situation, informal responses to the genderscapes of hate make a compelling statement about gendered resistance and agency in everyday contexts.

Women have formed vigilante groups, used informal networks and emasculated their tormentors using their bodies as instruments of protest. The disrobing of the *Maira paibis* (literally women with the lamp, a traditional women’s group in Manipur) to protest custodial violence unleashed through the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Manipur is a case in point. Similarly, a group of women under the leadership of Sampat Pal in Banda, Uttar Pradesh, began wielding *lathis* (wooden staffs) and intervening in cases of domestic violence. Distinguished by their pink attire, they are known as the Gulab Gang. Following attacks on women in pubs and calls to boycott Valentine day celebrations by a right wing group, women in Mangalore responded by banding together a “consortium of loose, forward and pub going women” and called upon everybody to support women’s freedom by sending pink underwear to the leader of the outfit. Pink underwear arrived in truckloads to the group’s office from all corners of the country. In the same vein, Slut walks, silent marches, street plays and efforts to reclaim public spaces through the subversive act of loitering have been some of the other responses aimed at protesting sexual violence and generating awareness, though mostly in urban areas.

The need of the hour is to view the issue of gendered violence not as a development issue but through the lens of culture rooted in the praxis of everyday life. Dismantling these hatescapes necessitates going beyond legislation to include the strategies of resistance and search for gendered agency in the praxis of everyday life. This is what the framework of genderscape of hate proposed here creates space for.

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**Gendered Violences and Rule *of*/*by* Law**

Gendered violences take myriad forms, often co-existing within the lives of single individuals, families and communities. In this response, I explore two such manifestations that speak to corporeal, material and symbolic dimensions of violence perpetrated primarily against women. Both forced eviction and domestic violence are injustices which sit at the forefront of current international concern, the former described by UN-Habitat (2011) as a ‘global crisis’, the latter priority theme of the 2013 UN Convention on the Status of Women and subject of a UK Select Committee to which I contributed (Author, 2013). Both forced eviction and domestic violence are also ambiguously condoned/ sanctioned, prohibited/enacted, through law.

The European Commission for Democracy Through Law (2011) distinguishes between two modes of law. ‘Rule *of* law’ is a value to be respected and a mechanism via which to guarantee justice and human rights to all citizens. ‘Rule *by* law’, meanwhile, is a distortion that is more easily conceived of as an instrument of power and oppression. While nearly a decade earlier, Holmes (2003: 49) noted that ‘rule of law and rule by law occupy a single continuum and do not present mutually exclusive options’, he also recognized that this ‘does not require us to abandon the important distinction’. In Cambodia, the main country focus of my research, the line between ‘rule *of* law’ and ‘rule *by* law’ potently testifies to the porosity of home and gendered violences that are experienced on an everyday basis within and beyond its limits. As Delaney (2014: np) writes in the first *Progress* report on legal geography to be published, ‘“Law” draws lines, constructs insides and outsides, assigns legal meanings to lines, and attaches legal consequences to crossing them’. Despite the stark absence of feminist geography work in the growing field of legal geographies, my commentary here highlights the pertinence of such evocations in relation to gendered violences.

**Forced Eviction**

The bulldozed line of a wall that once sheltered a family in Boeung Kak speaks to the stark absence of ‘rule *of* law’ and the prevalence, by contrast, of ‘rule *by* law’. The community is the most high profile case of forced eviction in Cambodia after the lake and surrounding area was illegally leased to a Chinese-backed private development company owned by a Cambodian Senator and then flooded. Springer (2013: 608) has argued that forced eviction in Cambodia is ‘an imposition that serves to legitimize violences of property’. This I contend is a *gendered* violence of property. While it is undeniable that forced eviction has an impact on both men and women’s lives, my research suggests that it is women who are disproportionately affected. Based on testimonies from around the world, COHRE (2010) document how forced eviction generates a host of vulnerabilities for women, including, but not limited to: discrimination in respect to property rights and homeownership; exclusion from decision-making and consultation processes due to cultural barriers or gender-specific roles; and isolation from social networks of support.

Physical, psychological and/or economic violence from evictors and/or family members is also a common occurrence within the context of forced eviction (ibid.). In Boeung Kak, this is particularly the case for women who publically contest their dispossession. Abuse by armed police, private forces, and company employees have been systematic. Multiple pregnancy miscarriages from authority barbarism have sadly become a recurrent feature. Yet while these acts are in stark contravention of human rights law the women have themselves been actively pursued via ‘rule *by* law’ in courts under the grip of state power. The government essentially monopolizes the discursive power of law and silences those who too brightly shine light on state complicity in violence against women. Thirteen BK women were jailed in May 2012, the day after ‘illegally occupying’ land, as they tried to re-build. Later, a fellow group member, Yorm Bopha was spuriously convicted of intentional violence with aggravating circumstances and sentenced to three years in prison in December 2012. Going on to be named prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, pressure saw her release on bail in November 2013. Since this time however, the women have been subject to further arrest and imprisonment. Through the means of traffic law, seven received one-year jail sentences just twenty-four hours after their arrest for allegedly blocking a main road outside Phnom Penh’s City Hall in November 2014. Embracing ‘active citizenship’, claiming legally and morally enforceable rights in relation to the state, is a dangerous affair in Cambodia. As Jennifer Hyndman (2001: 214) qualifies, ‘state security and human security are not necessarily synonymous’. As I have detailed elsewhere too (Author, 2014a: np), ‘Women’s public actions [also] reverberate back into the home, profoundly influencing conjugal and parental relationships’. The interviews with Boeung Kak women and their husbands strongly indicate that marital strain and/or breakdown has become a further source of disruption in peoples’ lives. Their very pursuit of intimate security via active citizenship has, in the short term at least, sacrificed it ironically further.

**Domestic violence**

At the same time that the Cambodian government has wielded ‘rule *by* law’ *against* women, they have engaged in legal reform to prevent and redress domestic violence. Somewhat conversely then, while the government have brought *dis*harmony to Cambodian homes - and particularly to women- through forced eviction, they have also looked to engender domestic harmony, a goal enshrined in legal rhetoric. Article 1 in the 2005 Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims includes a clause, which defines its purpose to: ‘preserve the harmony within the households in line with the Nation’s good custom and tradition…’. The 2005 Law forms the basis of a study (2012-2015) funded by the ESRC and UK Department for International Development that I lead. It has explored the hiatus between legal reform and transformative change for women. The mixed-method findings from two provinces, including a large-scale household survey, participatory video drama workshops, and in-depth interviews consistently brings to the fore the normative social pressure exerted on women to uphold the cultural logic of harmony and to ‘endure’ for the sake of family unity rather than end the cycle of violence through law.

‘Governing intimacy’ to use Oswin and Olund’s (2010: 62) turn of phrase is evident in my ongoing research. While a positive move towards ‘rule *of* law’ and justice for victims, it is important not to ignore the lingering danger of ‘rule *by* law’ within legal discourse. Women who experience extreme physical violence are repeatedly told to ‘reconcile’ with their spouses by community authorities from whom they seek legal assistance. The local term for reconciliation *samroh samruol* has the meaning to smooth over and seek harmony. This is ordinarily sought through a meeting orchestrated by a village leader who tries to encourage compromise between parties to reach an agreement marked verbally or by a promissory note (*liket sanya*). As the official glossary to DV Law reads, this meeting in the case of ‘minor’ domestic violence is designed to allow and facilitate the ‘communication process between quarrelling parties that aims at maintaining family life’ (Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) 2007, 11). As I elaborate (Author, 2014b), governmental involvement in lawmaking and their championing of reconciliation has arguably aggravated the potential for further physical violence. It also heightened symbolic violence through the *de facto* hushing of women. As Bourdieu (1987: 812) outlines, ‘Symbolic violence implies the imposition of such principles of division, and more generally of any symbolic representations (languages, conceptualizations, portrayals), on recipients who have little choice about whether to accept or reject them’. From one perspective then, domestic violence law diminishes the ability of women to claim their rights and redress.

**Concluding Thoughts**

In this short piece I have highlighted a range startling fault lines. First, while the 2005 domestic violence law shows a political willingness, in relative terms at least, to tackle gendered insecurity through ‘rule *of* law’, the Cambodian government have concurrently used ‘rule *by* law’ against women who have sought to address gendered insecurities of forced eviction brought to them by the very same government. Second, while legal rhetoric on domestic violence links the security of women to the defense of custom and tradition through ‘rule *of* law’, on the ground this translates into an onus on women to remain within abusive relationships. This creates with it a further hiatus between what is permissible under law and what is possible in practice. Together forced eviction, and domestic violence, highlight the divergence between the rhetoric of human rights and the reality of gendered injustice suffered. They powerfully indicate how women’s lives and the domestic are influenced, and they influence a wider politic. And both speak to feminist engagements with law (largely beyond Geography) which ‘reveal the complex relationship between legal framings and process, and social domains, practices, and institutions’ so much so that the legal sphere can be simultaneously defined as ‘a site of oppression and an important means of social transformation’ (Cornwall, 2013: ix).

Geographers have a valuable to role to play in pushing forward research where the fields of legal geographies, feminist geopolitics, and geographies of home have the potency to further reveal the precarities of everyday life and their gendered dimensions.

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**Gendering Islamophobia, Racism and White Supremacy:**

**Gendered violence against those who look Muslim**

In this piece, I argue that common forms of religiously and racially motivated violence in the UK constitute gendered violence. These forms of gendered violence are especially targeted at Muslims; the perpetrators are overwhelmingly white men and the victims are women but also men who are perceived to follow the Islamic faith. I draw attention to the intersection of gendered violence with other axes of difference including race, masculinity and place to explore the gendering of Islamophobia and racism. In developing strategies to tackle these issues, it is crucial to recognise the ways in which gendered violence is shaped by gendered identities and stereotypes. Here, I focus upon the experiences of Muslim men and women in the UK, including those who may be mistaken for being Muslim as a result of the complex ways in which their style of dress, skin colour, or other phenotypical features – mostly associated with processes of embodiment (Longhurst and Johnston, 2014) - results in them being associated with the Islamic faith and targets of gendered Islamophobic abuse and physical assault. Blackwood et al (2013: 1097) note in their research with Muslims that ‘all those who talked about airport [security] encounters were explicit that the basis of their treatment was that they were Muslims and that anyone who was Muslim (or fitted a Muslim stereotype) was open to similar treatment’ (Blackwood et al, 2013: 1097). Here, the everyday gendered, embodied and emotional encounters across racialised and religious differences connect with broader geopolitical debates and speak to advancing feminist geopolitics, and in particular, ‘an intimate critical geopolitics of the everyday’ (Cowen and Story, 2013: 353).

These observations emerge from a context in the UK where there has been an increasing presence of right wing groups that have undoubtedly been bolstered by ongoing experiences of austerity. In early 2009, emerging from the English football supporters masculine scene, the English Defence League’s (EDL) ‘vocal opposition to what it calls ‘militant Islam’ appears to have garnered considerable support from marginalized and disadvantaged white working class communities’ (Treadmill and Garland, 2011: 621). The EDL – and its sister the Scottish Defence League – regularly hold street protests in cities across the UK. In addition to such groups, there also exist smaller, sometimes shorter-term, localised right wing groups Recent reports about Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK point to the ways in which the actions of those connected with such right wing groups – as well as those who engage in acts of religious and racial hatred without necessarily having a group affiliation – result in persistently unjust, regularly violent and relentlessly unpleasant verbal, physical and emotional attacks against Muslims and those who are perceived to be Muslim. These anti-Muslim attacks range from murder, serious assaults and arson through to spitting, threatening and abusive words or behaviour (Copsey et al, 2013, Lambert and Githens-Mazer, 2010). One of the many problematic aspects of the existence of such right wing groups is that they tend to be dominated by white men who enact specific practices associated with masculinity and white supremacy with victims being women and men who are perceived to follow the Islamic faith. I therefore recast this as a form of gendered violence that is energised by ongoing debates about race and ethnicity, Islamophobia, multiculturalism, citizenship and belonging. This is not only racist violence as it is inflected with gender and bolstered by sexism, patriarchy and white supremacy.

A recent report about *Anti- Muslim Hate Crime and the Far Right* (Copsey et al, 2013) uses figures from the Crown Prosecution Service in the UK in 2011-12 to show that the majority of defendants in both racist and religiously motivated hate crimes were men (83%) with most being white British (73.6%) and aged 25-59 (54.2%). Just under 50% involved offences against the person and 32.5% were public order offences. The primary sites of these reported hate crimes tended to be in public spaces (such as parks, streets, footpaths) although the report comments on the likelihood that these are occurring in the vicinity of religious and community buildings. Clearly, such statistics need to be approached with caution; as a result of under-reporting, hate crime is not well understood by the public, and there are indications that over 50% of hate crime incidents go unreported so many will suffer in silence (Copsey et al, 2013). Incidents may be unreported due to lack of confidence in the justice system, assumptions that the police would not be interested, or the frequency of incidents resulting in non or under reporting.

A small proportion of the perpetrators of hate crime in Britain belong to far right groups, though the majority are ‘characterised by their very ordinariness’ (Copsey et al, 2013: 11). However, those committed by far-right extremists are likely to be more extreme and premeditated than those committed by ‘ordinary people’. With regards to cases of religious hate crime and in situations where the religion of the victim was known, 52% (or 632) of incidents were against Muslims (26 per cent were against Jews and 14 per cent against Christians). As this report makes clear, ‘when it comes to hate crime, most victims are Muslim’ (Copsey et al, 2013: 7). Of the 150 incidents reported through the Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) project between 1 April 2012 and 30 April 2013, 12% involved assault, 12% involved property damage, 11% involved the distribution of anti-Muslim literature and 8% were noted as involving ‘extreme violence’ (Copsey et al, 2013: 15). The gender breakdown shows, again, that just under 80% of the perpetrators of offline incidents were men and most were under the age of 40, with men being responsible for 82% of online incidents. In the case of offline offences, the majority of the victims were women, particularly those who were identifiable as Muslim. The majority of online incidents involved the threat of participating in some form of offline action. Of the online incidents, 70% report a link to the far right (Copsey et al 2013). The online presence of racist groups continues to cause concern; the internet acts as an important communication tool for white supremacist, sexist and Islamophobic groups and individuals. This all points to the diversity of sites at which such racist and religious hatred can be promoted, and the worrying tendency for this is shaped by sexist, patriarchal and chauvinistic values and behaviours. Furthermore, we see here the gendering of both the perpetrators and the victims of racially and religiously motivated violence as the first is motivated by racism that is partly shaped by patriarchy and sexism with the victims being targeted as a result of these racist interpretations of the intersections between gender, ethnicity and religion.

Lambert and Githens-Mazer (2010) produced a substantial report about *Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Hate Crime: UK case studies 2010*, noting that a key motivation behind the increasing numbers of anti-Muslim attacks is the politics of groups such as the BNP and the EDL. They refer to a ‘violent extremist nationalist milieu’ (Lambert and Githens-Mazer, 2010: 33) that is exacerbated by the negative influence of mainstream politicians (the hard line approach to immigration by many of the main political parties being one such example). Furthermore, although most of those who commit ant-Muslim hate crimes are not members of the BNP or EDL, these people have become increasingly angered and convinced by the portrayal of Muslims in the media as extremists and a threat to national security. Some key points discussed by Lambert and Githens-Mazer (2010) include the increasing number of EDL events that provoke fear and intimidation within Muslim communities and that many racist groups have refocused their aims to specifically target Muslims (some gangs, for example, previously not involved in racist activities, are now targeting Muslims). Victims, they observe, are of a ‘discernable and distinctive Muslim appearance’ (Lambert and Githens-Mazer, 2010: 48), and that whilst victims of racist attacks were invariably men, victims of anti-Muslim attacks are often women. The report found that a disturbing number of Muslim women who wear a niqab, hijab or burka were the victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes. These tend to happen in public spaces, on trains, buses, shopping centres and so on – often when other people were there yet did not intervene. Attacks against ‘identifiable Muslims’ (Lambert and Githens-Mazer, 2010: 35) tended to take place near mosques or ‘against Muslims wearing Islamic clothes and, in the case of men, Islamic beards or, in the case of women, hijabs, niqabs or burkas’.

The dominant polices that are targeted at both Muslims and young white men erase the issues explored above (including the gendering of Islamophobia and racism), and instead, exacerbate already existing gendered, racial and religious inequalities and injustices. On the one hand, recent policies targeted at the Muslim community in the UK have focused on counter-terrorism measures and the prevention of violent extremism. The impact of such policies has been well documented in the literature, with concerns expressed about how they construct Muslims as potentially threatening people who have the capacity to engage in extremist behaviours in different places (e.g. Hopkins, 2011, Spalek and McDonald, 2009). Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) note that stop and search under section 44 of the Terrorism Act became the main mechanism through which young Muslim men engaged with the police, observing that since 2001, over half a million stop and searches had taken place but none had led to any convictions in relation to terrorism. Such procedures securitise, stigmatise and marginalise those of Muslim appearance (Millings, 2013), especially Muslim men but also Muslim women, and give additional justification to those with white supremacist and patriarchal views.

On the other hand, from 1997 a key policy targeted particularly (but not only) at white working class youth in the UK was about the label of ‘young people not in education employment or training (i.e. NEET)’; this ‘became the key youth policy of the New Labour government’ (MacDonald, 2011: 430) and arguably continues to be an important focus of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government too. This policy sees the problem with white working class youth as being about education and employment only; and fails to engage with the ways in which some white working class young men engage in sexist, racist, white supremacist actions and behaviours (without necessarily being aware of the illegal nature of many of these) and therefore neglects to offer strategies for the prevention of sexism, racism, religious intolerance and white supremacy amongst young people.

Both of these examples of policies targeted at the key groups who are victims and perpetrators of religiously and racially motivated violence ignore the issue of violence and fail to acknowledge its gendered nature. Meanwhile, mainstream debates about gendered violence almost exclusively cast it as a problem existing within ethnic or religious groups, rather than across them, therefore overlooking the relational nature of this phenomenon. Recognising that gendered violence – a growing and horrific phenomenon in the UK – is profoundly shaped by gendered identities and stereotypes, is crucial to developing strategies to help tackle it.

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