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# Intimate Partner Violence and Civic Education in Liberia: A Mixed-Methods Study of Service-Seeking Behavior and Civic Knowledge in Two Monrovia Settlements

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2009

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# *ABSTRACT*


INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN LIBERIA:
A MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF SERVICE-SEEKING BEHAVIOR AND
CIVIC KNOWLEDGE IN TWO MONROVIA SETTLEMENTS

By Erin Bernstein

*Background*
Challenges to implementing effective intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention strategies in post-war environments include displacement, damaged economies, and shifting gender roles. Liberia offered minimal IPV services before the war (1989-1996, 1999-2003). Ten years into post-war recovery, Liberia has instituted one of the first national action plans to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Despite these advances, IPV remains highly prevalent and little is known about the overlap between people's knowledge of the law and whether and how they access IPV services.

*Purpose*
The study examined perceptions and accessibility of civic education and services following IPV in West Point and Peace Island, two urban settlements in Monrovia. It seeks to: 1) to determine community members' civic knowledge and trusted civic education sources, and 2) to document preferences in IPV services, perceptions of such services, and barriers to access.

*Methods*
We conducted eight structured focus group discussions (FGDs) (West Point: n=32; Peace Island: n=40) to determine available and preferred post-IPV services, service accessibility, civic knowledge, and sources of civic education. We also conducted five in-depth interviews and one FGD with purposively selected service providers to determine lessons learned for IPV prevention. Grounded theory guided qualitative data analysis on effective violence prevention mechanisms and perceptions of service accessibility and rights-based programming. A cross-sectional, three-stage, random cluster survey (West Point: n=212; Peace Island: n=183) assessed dispute prevalence, civic knowledge, trusted civic education sources, and services needed to reassert one's role in the community following IPV.

*Results*
Disparities in how information links to services may depend on who generates and disseminates information and/or provides services. Differences in men's and women's acceptance of messages and interventions also emerged, illustrating that gender considerations also shape people's interaction with services and rights-based initiatives.

*Conclusion*
Organizations working at the community level should disseminate rights-based and IPV messaging through trusted sources of knowledge and utilize actors in the community as agents of civic education. In addition, integrating information on IPV services with civic education in Liberia could enhance the policies' relevance to nongovernmental services and adequate support of governmental services.

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## *FIGURES AND TABLES*

## *ACRONYMS*

| | |
|---|---|
| **CJA** | Community Justice Advisor |
| **DRC** | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| **FGD** | Focus group discussion |
| **GPS** | Global Positioning System |
| **IDI** | In-depth interview |
| **IPV** | Intimate partner violence |
| **IRC** | International Rescue Committee |
| **LNAP** | Liberian National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 |
| **NGO** | Nongovernmental organization |
| **NRC** | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| **PRS** | Poverty Reduction Strategy |
| **SGBV** | Sexual and gender-based violence |
| **TCC** | The Carter Center |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNMIL** | United Nations Mission in Liberia |
| **WISE** | Women's Rights through Information, Sensitization, and Education |
| **WPW** | West Point Women |

# *INTRODUCTION*

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

### *Sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia*

For 14 years, Liberia experienced a violent civil war (1989-1996, 1999-2003) that killed a quarter of a million people, devastated the country's once-promising economy, and left its infrastructure in ruins (Casella et al. 2005). Over half of the population fled across the border or to other parts of Liberia due to extreme brutality. Estimates indicate that approximately 40% of people experienced sexual violence during the war, two-thirds of whom were women (UN 2011). Other reports estimate that anywhere between 18-78% of Liberian women and girls suffered from one or more acts of sexual violence during the war (Tomczyk 2007; Omanyondo 2005; WHO 2002). Varying sample sizes, sample populations, and sampling techniques yield this breadth of estimates. Additionally, the sensitive nature of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) leads to irregular underreporting (Peterman et al. 2011).

Sexual violence during the war in Liberia included transactional sex in addition to rape and other forms of sexual assault. Due to insecurity, minimal resources, and men's restricted ability to work during the war, some women intentionally engaged in sexual relations with combatants to acquire food and protection (UN 2011). Some husbands and wives made this decision jointly, though marital tensions pervaded (UN 2011).

While mass sexual violence may characterize Liberia's civil war, intimate partner violence (IPV) more relevantly represents the experiences of post-war SGBV survivors (women, in particular) (Tomczyk et al. 2007; Warner 2007). According to the 2007 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey, 47.1% of women aged 15-49 years reportedly experienced any form of spousal violence in the previous year (physical: 33%; sexual: 9.6%; emotional: 34.5%) (LISGIS 2007). Women indicated lack of awareness or skepticism of the concept of marital rape, possibly leading to underreporting of spousal sexual violence. Spousal violence increased with husband's education up until secondary school, dropping sharply with

more schooling (none: 47.6%; primary: 49.1%; secondary: 51%; more than secondary: 44.6%). IPV, of course, does not only victimize women; 5.9% of women also reportedly committed violence against their current or most recent husband or partner in the past year (husband/partner employed: 5.5%; husband/partner unemployed: 7.4%). Social desirability bias may have led to underreporting of violence, particularly among female perpetrators.

International, governmental, and nongovernmental bodies in Liberia often use the term 'SGBV'. This paper, however, primarily employs the term 'IPV' (used interchangeably with 'domestic violence') to a) accurately reflect the realities of SGBV in the two study communities (i.e., predominantly between married or domestic partners) and b) call attention to how IPV may be excluded from governmental and nongovernmental policies and interventions addressing SGBV. While 'SGBV' explicitly takes into account the challenges of social gender norms, 'IPV' more appropriately includes both women and men as both perpetrators and victims. The author recognizes, however, that 'IPV' does not overtly link violence to social gender norms. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, she defines IPV as both a subset of SGBV (i.e., tied to structural gender norms and/or post-war shifts in gender roles) and as a form of violence linked to other factors (e.g., household stressors, history of abuse, etc.). This paper uses both terms. 'IPV' will denote the specific experience of sexual and physical violence between domestic, married, and/or intimate partners; 'SGBV' will encompass the former and also refer to stranger- and non-partner-perpetrated sexual and gender-based violence.

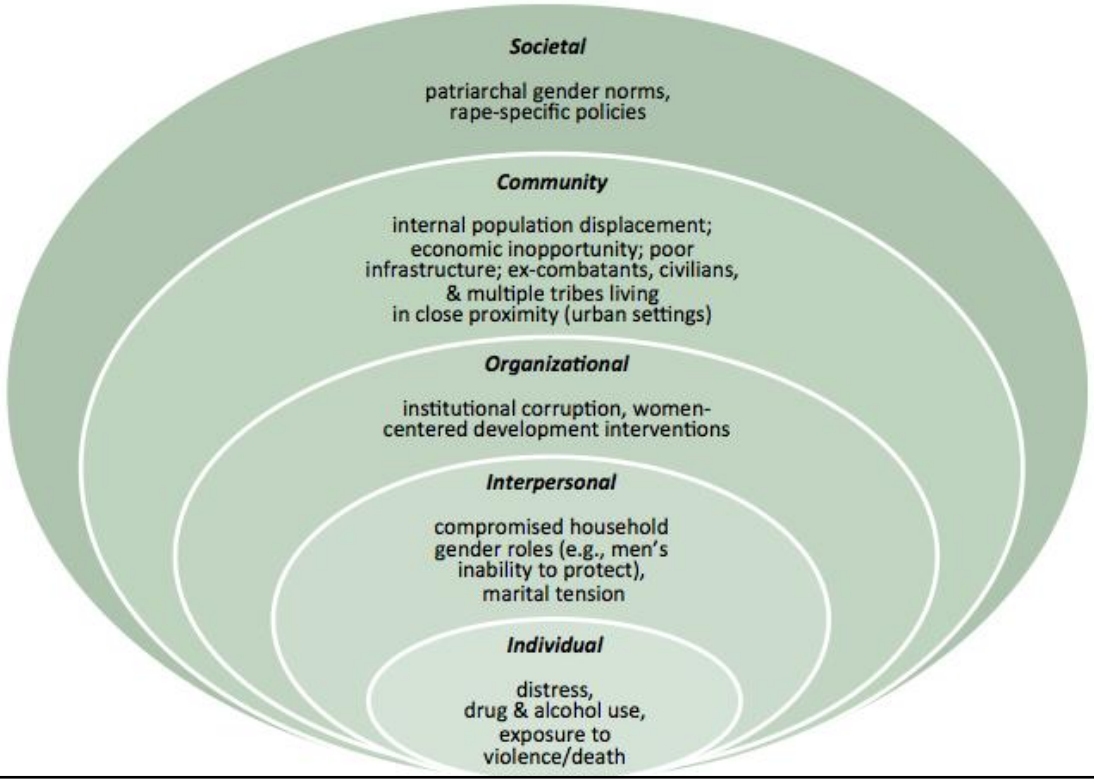
*Intimate partner violence in post-war settings*

Armed conflict and exposure to violence contribute to a number of issues complicating effective IPV prevention in post-war environments (Annan & Brier 2010) (Figure 1). Such challenges include destroyed infrastructure, devastated economies, and shifting gender roles (Merry 2006; Vyas & Watts 2008). The social-ecological model seeks to understand the complexities of violence by describing the

interplay between individual and environmental factors, namely how behaviors and social environments shape each other. The framework includes individual (knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, background), interpersonal/relationship (social networks and support systems), organizational (social institutions, organizations, and rules), community (relationships between community networks and policies or standards within such networks), and societal factors (social norms, polices, systems) that influence each other and people's wellbeing (Dahlberg & Krug 2002).

Despite known post-war challenges, minimal literature exists on IPV in these contexts (Stark 2010; Warner 2007). For women and some men, a 'post-conflict' period is difficult to define; sexual and domestic violence persist (Meintjes et al. 2001). Feminist theorist Cynthia Cockburn (2004) refers to this as the "continuum of violence", noting that women experience domestic, stranger-perpetrated, and structural violence before, during, and after war (UN 2011).

**Figure 1.** Social-Ecological Model for Post-War and IPV Factors




*Adapted from Dahlberg & Krug (2002)*

*Policy in Liberia*

Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) outlines the government's vision for development (2008-2011) and implicitly includes gender equity in its aims for peace-building and poverty reduction (GoL 2008). The PRS seeks to:

- "address the consequences and legacies of violent conflict
- "address the structural conditions, processes, and attitudes that sustain social and political division and encourage the use of violence
- "support those structures, institutions, practices, and attitudes that strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence" (GoL 2008)

Explicitly, however, the PRS denotes 'gender equity' not as a value but rather as a "means of maintaining peace, reducing poverty, enhancing justice, and promoting development in the country" (GoL 2008).

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has thus prioritized efforts to address SGBV. The international community has lauded Liberia's success in implementing United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions 1325[1] and 1820, which directly address sexual violence committed against civilians. Resulting policies include a punitive rape law, a special court for prosecuting rape crimes, and the Liberian National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (LNAP). The Ministries of Gender and Justice established the latter, which is predicated on four pillars: protecting women and children from SGBV; preventing SGBV; promoting women's human rights; and engaging women in peace processes (GoL 2009). Additionally, the Liberian National Police has established Women and Children Protection Sections in over 21 locations in Liberia with specific duties to protect women and children from SGBV (GoL 2009). Presently, the Liberian government has drafted a domestic violence law that includes protective orders and criminalizes physical, sexual, and/or

[1] UNSCR 1325 was the first Security Council Resolution to highlight the positive role that women can play in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peace-building, and post-war recovery.

psychological violence between two people engaged in a domestic relationship[2] (Domestic Violence Act 2012).

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

IPV has health, social, and economic implications for families and communities worldwide. SGBV in war contexts has increasingly garnered media and research attention, but few studies have explored the unique challenges to IPV prevention and rehabilitation in post-war settings (Stark 2010; Warner 2007). Post-war reconstruction generally centers on building state-based security. Enhancing governmental and nongovernmental service provision, however, also contributes meaningfully to peace-building and development agendas. Liberia offered limited social services for IPV before the war, and survivors had little redress in the formal system. Ten years into post-war recovery, Liberia has elected Africa's first female president and established targeted policies for SGBV. Despite these advances, IPV remains prevalent (LISGIS 2007; Stark 2010; Tomczyk 2007; Warner 2007) and little is known about the overlap between people's knowledge of the law and whether and how they access IPV services.

**PURPOSE STATEMENT**

*Objectives*

This case study seeks to examine perceptions and accessibility of civic education and IPV services in Peace Island and West Point, two urban settlement communities in Monrovia, Liberia. It serves two objectives: 1) to determine community members' civic knowledge and identify trusted civic education sources, and 2) to document preferences in IPV services, perceptions of such services, and

[2] "'Domestic relationship' means a family relationship, a relationship similar to a family relationship or a relationship in a domestic situation that exists or has existed between a complainant and a respondent…" (Domestic Violence Act 2012)

barriers to access. Conducted in collaboration with The Carter Center's (TCC) Access to Justice Program, the study also seeks to align with TCC 's aims to strengthen justice mechanisms and service delivery within the contexts of community needs and human rights frameworks.

*Research questions*

1. What information do community members in Peace Island and West Point receive on rights and Liberian formal law, particularly pertaining to SGBV and IPV?
2. Where do community members receive this information, and which sources do they trust?
3. What services would victims and their supporters seek to use after an SGBV or IPV incident?

**CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH**

This study will contribute to the limited body of knowledge on the interplay between civic education and IPV services in post-war settings. More specifically, it analyzes IPV service provision in the context of post-war reconstruction and development policies. The study will immediately inform TCC's civic education interventions in Peace Island and West Point. Additionally, it will provide general recommendations for streamlining macro-level policies and micro-level interventions, particularly regarding IPV.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*Civic education* pertains to the provision of information on rights and formal laws.

*Empowerment* refers to the "process of gaining control over the self, over ideology and the resources which determine power" (UNDP 2000). Identifying the ineffective nature of standard top-down development approaches, academics, politicians, and development workers sought to revamp development in a way that honored populations' participation in decision-making and outcomes (Sharp et al. 2003)s. This led to the adoption of the term 'empowerment'. Critics have considered the term condescending, as it seems to indicate notions of self-help (Isserles 2003). Others deem it too vague, failing to take into account different perceptions of power (i.e., power 'to' vs. power 'over') (Sharp et al. 2003).

*Gender* is a "social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles" in society (USAID 2011). It is a subjective, nonpermanent, evolving term determined by culture, religion, history, and other social factors. 'Gender' is often misappropriated in identifying the 'sex' of a person. It is also often solely associated with women and girls, though practitioners in complex humanitarian emergencies must also identify situations that disproportionately affect men and boys in crisis settings.

*Gender-based violence (GBV)* is a term that refers to any act of violence "perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between men and women" (WRC 2011). Underreporting and inefficient recording of GBV incidents by authorities limits the amount of accurate data on GBV prevalence (Grown et al. 2005). Both GBV and insufficient data are exacerbated in conflict situations. Examples of GBV include domestic/relationship violence, rape, forced conscription, trafficking, honor killings, and female genital cutting, among others.

*Gender equality* is a development *goal* that can be attained when men and women acquire equal rights, independent of their gender roles in society (USAID 2011).

*Gender equity* provides the *means* to realizing gender equality through a process of fairness to both men's and women's access to resources and opportunities (USAID 2011).

*Intimate partner violence (IPV)* is a specific form of sexual and gender-based violence defined as "physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse" (CDC 2010).

*Sex* refers to the biological, reproductive identification of males and females. It is often misused as a synonym for gender.

*Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)* is "violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender," and, "any act, attempt, or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result in, physical, psychological, and emotional harm" (IRIN 2004).

## *REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE*

### INTRODUCTION

This study examined perceptions and accessibility of civic education and services following intimate partner violence (IPV) in West Point and Peace Island, two Monrovia settlement communities. To understand the gaps in knowledge on these issues, this literature review draws on nongovernmental organization (NGO) reports, evaluations of NGO interventions, scientific evidence, and theoretical analyses spanning the fields of public health, anthropology, political science, economics, and sociology. The literature contextualizes governmental and nongovernmental interventions targeting IPV and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Such approaches include: community education and awareness campaigns, economic interventions, male integration, traditional mechanisms, and policy. Whether discussing micro-level issues (e.g., individual needs, behavior change models, etc.) or macro-level issues (e.g., structural gender norms, legal infrastructure, etc.), the literature describes challenges and examples of promising interventions. Some studies provide evidence from post-conflict settings, though most focus generally on resource-poor countries. Finally, the terms 'IPV', 'SGBV', and 'domestic violence' are used interchangeably in the literature. Though this study looks primarily at IPV, it is important to understand where IPV sits in the context of broader SGBV interventions in terms of relevance, prioritization, and social acceptability.

### NONGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED IPV INTERVENTIONS

Many NGOs strive to take a holistic approach to IPV prevention by simultaneously targeting root causes of violence and addressing consequences of violence through restorative health and psychosocial care (Betron 2008; McCleary-Sills et al. 2013; Wathen & MacMillan 2003; WHO 2005). Such interventions seek to reduce IPV by increasing knowledge of human and women's rights, the availability of IPV-related health and social services, and the number of people who feel IPV is never justifiable

(Annan 2009; Wagman et al. 2013). Some approaches build on existing community-driven initiatives (e.g., women's groups, community watch groups, etc.) centered on reconciliation, access to justice, financial savings/assistance, and safety patrol (Moser 2007). Most community-based NGO interventions, however, utilize a combination of methods, often concurrently, to facilitate changes in attitude and behavior surrounding IPV (e.g., media, community groups, innovative programming, etc.). Translating international and national policies into community knowledge and practice, nongovernmental interventions may also serve to normalize new gender ideologies.

*Community education and awareness*

Gender disparities in information access, particularly pertaining to security and peace-building processes, has led IPV awareness-raising campaigns to explore avenues of communication that reach marginalized populations, including women (Malhotra et al. 2009; Moser 2007). Radio programming is the most common far-reaching medium (Dralega 2011; Hassan 2006; Moser 2007; Ryan 2008), generating public dialogue on "women's issues" and sexual health and behavior (UNMIL 2013). Educational entertainment ('edutainment') addresses these issues through dramatized scenarios about power dynamics, decision-making, and gender roles in relationships (Jewkes et al. 2007; Stepping Stones 2011; Usdin et al. 2005). Such programs appear to show more evident success in reducing IPV compared to one-time mass media campaigns (e.g., 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence) (Morrison et al. 2007). While other factors may contribute to such success (e.g., advanced economic opportunities and educational attainment), this demonstrates the importance of tactical, sensitive, and long-term investment in behavioral interventions.

In the first decade following the end of apartheid, a South African edutainment program recognized the limited success of individual-centered behavior change approaches and built its intervention, Soul City, with the knowledge that individuals live in a broader context. As such, Soul City

sought to target all levels of the social-ecological model through radio and television programming (Usdin et al. 2005). The program drew on relatable characters to enable "parasocial interaction" (Papa et al. 2001), a phenomenon Usdin et al. (2005) describe as allowing "for audiences to experience the lives of the characters vicariously…to enhance feelings of individual, self, and collective efficacy." Soul City portrays positive attitudes and behavior while educating audiences about IPV prevention and response actions (Usdin et al. 2005). In doing so, the program highlights the success of post-war interventions aiming to influence change at both the macro and micro levels.

Localized sensitization integrates these messages into a more direct community education platform (Dziewanski 2012; NRC 2010). In a review of community-based approaches to women's engagement in peace-building processes and sexual violence prevention, Moser (2007) indicates that women perceived informal education mechanisms to be most effective (e.g., dialogue in communal spaces and door-to-door education). One lauded intervention is the Norwegian Refugee Council's Women's Rights through Information, Sensitization, and Education (WISE) project. WISE partners with Liberian men's and women's groups comprised of local actors likely already involved in religious, community, or civil society groups (Dziewanski 2012). These 'early adopters' undergo training in identifying SGBV risk factors and consequences and are encouraged to develop their own community education and advocacy campaigns (NRC 2010). Rigorous longitudinal evaluations of such interventions, however, are minimal (Morrison et al. 2007). Furthermore, though informal interventions appear most successful, the sustainability of using unpaid intermediaries as educators is unclear.

*Economic interventions*

Implicit strategies that aim to redistribute gender inequalities include interventions supporting women's economic and decision-making autonomy (Annan 2009; Moser 2007). A systematic review of data from 41 sites in low- and middle-income countries found that women with higher socioeconomic

status and education generally experienced less risk of IPV (Vyas & Watts 2008). Women's involvement in income-generating activities, however, showed no clear pattern; some studies yielded protective associations, while others indicated increased risk of IPV (Vyas & Watts 2008).

A study measuring IPV prevalence and the impact of a women-focused micro-credit program in Bangladesh found the latter. Despite the decrease in IPV over the course of participants' involvement in the program, significant predictors of violence included age of household head, woman's age, educational attainment, and household poverty status (Ahmed 2005). This indicates that cultural attitudes or household norms are inherent in the success of economic interventions intending to decrease IPV (Dalal 2011). One national study in the United States confirms this, as it found little evidence to support the theory that IPV is associated with married men who have few resources; rather, IPV is positively associated with married men (primarily "traditional husbands") who have few resources relative to that of their wives (Atkinson et al. 2005). Thus, as power theorists would argue, it is the relative difference in resources that generates tension between partners, not the volume of resources (Bell & Naugle 2008; Straus 1977).

The gaps in these studies indicate the need to explore behavior change theories (individual-focused) and economic theories (household-focused) within the broader context of sociological factors. Most pressing is understanding how political factors influence interpersonal relationships, especially as this pertains to economic empowerment and IPV prevention.

An example of an intervention that successfully adapted to broader social realities is the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) economic empowerment program in Burundi. An 18-month randomized impact evaluation found that adding a couples' discussion series in the program significantly reduced IPV and increased women's decision-making and household negotiation abilities (Annan 2009). To inhibit women-focused interventions from inadvertently putting the onus of violence prevention on

women and/or increasing women's risk of IPV, IRC engaged men in discussion group sessions that sensitively challenge gender norms about finances and household decision-making (Annan 2009).

*Engaging men and boys*

To address economic, educational, health, and decision-making disparities between women and men, women-focused development policies emerged in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s (Grown et al. 2005; Molyneux & Razavi 2005; UN 1995). Decades of discussion surrounding the concept of women's empowerment focused first on broad development initiatives trickling down to address women's needs. This then shifted to address women's development needs independently from men's. Recognizing the ineffectiveness of separate women-focused initiatives, the international community called for mainstream policy to integrate 'women's' or 'gender' issues (Grown et al. 2005; UN 1995).

Critics argue that gendered development stresses differences between women and men while neglecting the similar interests among them (Baldez 2011), particularly given the fact that "women rarely operate as autonomous individuals in their communities and daily lives" (Chant 2000). Excluding men from women-focused initiatives may also exclude them from dialogue centered on improving gender relations (Chant & Gutmann 2002). Thus, actively involving men and boys in gender-oriented development is a worldwide recommendation, particularly for IPV prevention (Bhandari 2005; Barker et al. 2007; Colvin et al. 2009; Ferguson et al. 2004; Greubel 2012).

Interventions draw on four theories: social learning (skill-building interventions and modeling good behavior to address abusive behavior learned at home), social norms (interventions that expose peers' behaviors and attitudes to address misconceptions of perceived standard behavior), belief system (interventions upholding perceptions of oneself), and bystander (interventions equipping people with the civic knowledge and tools to challenge violent attitudes and behavior) (Colvin et al. 2009; Ricardo et al. 2011). Such interventions are either direct (i.e., aimed directly at men through community outreach,

mobilization, and mass media campaigns) or indirect (i.e., targeting underlying gender norms through male integration in health programs) (Barker et al. 2007; Pulerwitz et al. 2010).

Colvin et al. (2009), of South Africa's Sonke Gender Justice Network, highlight that challenges to involving men in gender equality work extend beyond social and political barriers; they also include conceptual barriers. "These challenges include conventional constructions of masculinity that prescribe men's role and practices within narrow, 'cultural' confines" (Colvin et al. 2009). They subscribe to Ricardo et al.'s (2011) social norms theory by targeting men's perceptions of behavioral norms in light of the reality. They note:

> On one hand, this represents a threat to the struggle for gender equality since it makes men more likely to emulate what they perceive to be the reigning social norms, even when these have little basis in fact. On the other hand, this gap represents an opportunity for reframing the ways men interpret and experience their worlds. (Colvin et al. 2009)

By incorporating men and boys in policy advocacy and behavior change interventions, Sonke Gender Justice redefines men's roles as partners in gender equality rather than simply protectors of women and/or perpetrators or SGBV.

A review of 58 evaluations of interventions involving men and boys found that direct programs or programs that integrated both direct and indirect components were most effective for behavior change (Barker et al. 2007). This was particularly evident among direct interventions that were also rated as gender-transformative (rather than gender-neutral or gender-sensitive) (Barker et al. 2007). The success of these interventions depends on the degree of societies', communities', and individuals' uptake of altered gender norms, especially as they pertain to IPV. Few evaluations, however, exist for natural behavior change (i.e., without an intervention) and interventions exploring concepts of masculinity (Barker et al. 2007).

Despite NGO interventions' tendency to focus on the individual, gender-oriented development fundamentally aims to reframe people's perceptions of gender norms. This should theoretically increase women's status on a societal level and decrease IPV (Michau & Naker 2003; Wagman et al.

2013). An IPV prevention intervention in Uganda, for example, utilized the transtheoretical model[3] of behavior change in a 10-year project assessing community members' perceptions of IPV and readiness for change (Wagman et al. 2013). The intervention sought to define IPV and raise awareness of its consequences, build networks to prepare community members for attitudinal and behavior change, and integrate IPV-prevention actions into policies and everyday life (Wagman et al. 2013).

Noting the minimal literature on "unintended consequences of gender empowerment", a qualitative evaluation of this project analyzed community members' interpretations of new understandings of gender roles (Mullinax et al. 2013). While there was consensus regarding women's limited rights, definitions of gender equality varied. This yielded difficulty in individuals' uptake of these ideologies into their own relationships (Mullinax et al. 2013). The study also found that this shift in gender norms "could expose women to adverse consequences, such as violence, infidelity and abandonment with increased sexual health risks, and potential adverse effects on education" (Mullinax et al. 2013). Though longitudinal and designed to fit community members' readiness for change, interventions like this still encounter resistance, especially from those who believe these interventions challenge their cultural values, exclude men, and stigmatize men who participate (Merry 2006; Wagman et al. 2013). The dichotomy between peoples' recognition of women's structural disadvantages and needs versus their fears of the consequences of gender empowerment points to the need to merge macro-level concepts pertaining to gender with micro-level practices and interventions.

[3] The transtheoretical model of behavior change frames when (stages/phases of change) and how (processes/mechanisms of change) people change their behaviors. The stages include: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation-for-action, action, and maintenance. Processes include: consciousness raising, social liberation, emotional arousal, self-reevaluation, reward, countering, environmental control, and helping relationships. (Sharma & Romas 2012)

*Traditional mechanisms*

Traditional approaches respond to IPV and other forms of SGBV through symbolic ceremony and customary law or mediation, as has been noted in war-affected countries, including Sierra Leone, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Liberia (Nabukeera-Musoke 2009; Okello & Hovil 2007; Schia & de Carvalho 2009, 2011; Scott et al. 2012; Stark 2006).

Ceremonies have been found to be effective in some cases and exclusive or irrelevant in others. A qualitative study (Stark 2006) on Sierra Leonean cleansing ceremonies found that such rituals were valuable for girl soldiers' spiritual and psychosocial healing following sexual violence. The literal act of washing enabled a cleansing of spiritual pollution and bad luck survivors were thought to have brought to the community (Stark 2006). The ceremony's "symbolic gesture of community reconciliation" was also effective in altering community members' perceptions of survivors and reducing their stigmatization and rejection (Stark 2006). In northern Uganda, however, ceremonies used in the past for resolving large disputes and now for post-war reconciliation between victims and returning soldiers have minimal capacity to handle SGBV cases (Okello & Hovil 2007). Displacement aggravates their irrelevance, in that disrupted communities and various ethnic groups now cohabitate (Nabukeera-Musoke 2009; Okello & Hovil 2007).

Missing from the literature, however, is a rigorous analysis of these ceremonies' and systems' effectiveness in handling IPV cases (i.e., SGBV cases based in the household and not immediately tied to the experience of war, whether through war-related rape, child-soldiering, wartime transactional sex, etc.). There is evidence, however, of community mediation mechanisms addressing IPV. The effectiveness of such mechanisms is mixed, as are communities' perceptions of their usefulness.

In DRC, people prefer to seek justice for SGBV through the legal system, though two-thirds of SGBV survivors reported being forced to undergo community mediation (Scott et al. 2012). Other reports, however, indicate communities' trust in culturally grounded processes; Liberians are inclined to

settle disputes through traditional services when formal legal interventions prove inadequate due to poor infrastructure, limited resources, and low civic knowledge within legal institutions. This is especially true in cases of IPV, for which no clear national law exists.[4] Rather than dismissing customary law and advocating solely for formal legal structures, NGO and government interventions must recognize traditional mechanisms as complementary to formal systems undergoing reconstruction (Flomoku & Reeves 2012; Moser 2007; Schia & de Carvalho 2009, 2011).

Generally, few studies exist on the effectiveness of traditional mechanisms. This is particularly the case for traditional mechanisms addressing SGBV and, more specifically, IPV. Furthermore, little evidence exists on strategies linking traditional mechanisms to governmental institutions, especially in terms of providing civic education on IPV to traditional and community leaders.

## GOVERNMENTAL APPROACHES

### *Legal infrastructure*

Legal scholars Ní Aoláin, Haynes, and Cahn (2011) highlight that "if civil society promotion masks the assumption that women operate best outside of the formal power structures in the world of NGOs and community work, then this essentializes women's roles in problematic ways." Concurrent with NGO interventions, reliable legal systems must support new gender ideologies by holding policy-makers and citizens accountable. Innovations that radically reshape gender norms may only succeed in a political climate prepared for such change, which brings into question the readiness of post-conflict countries already undergoing multiple levels of social and political reconstruction (Malhotra 2009). Morrison et al. (2007) note three areas for improving SGBV survivors' access to justice: "[improve] laws and policies, [strengthen] institutions in the criminal justice system, and [implement] batterer treatment programs".

[4] The Liberian government had not yet enacted the Domestic Violence Act at the time of writing.

Such approaches should offer protection, provide opportunities for redress, and regulate consequences for perpetrators (Morrison et al. 2007). In some low- and middle-income countries, legislative reform has made criminal prosecution mechanisms easier, abolished conditions granting rapists impunity if they marry their victims, and criminalized IPV, although laws against stranger-perpetrated and minor rape tend to garner more social acceptance than those against IPV (Bott et al. 2005).

Analyses of these interventions fail to consider, however, the reality that many people prefer traditional mechanisms due to their accessibility and relative trustworthiness (Flomoku & Reeves 2012). Despite apparent progress in reform, legal systems in low- and middle-income countries often operate with limited budgets, low human resources capacity, and unwillingness to enforce IPV and SGBV laws (Bott et al. 2005; Morrison et al. 2007). Investing in a formal system that does not work seems senseless, then. As previously discussed, Okello and Hovil (2007) note that even informal systems lose their relevance and clout due to experiences in war (e.g., displacement, post-war reconstruction, etc.). In a summary of The Carter Center's Access to Justice Program, Flomoku and Reeves (2012) also describe the influence of war on weakening traditional justice mechanisms: "A lack of resources and unclear mandates have undermined the ability of chiefs and elders to resolve local disputes. Some traditional practices are inconsistent with national laws and international standards" (Flomoku & Reeves 2012).

In addition, efforts to strengthen countries' legal capacity to prosecute IPV and SGBV crimes extend beyond policy reform. Structural changes include establishing referral systems across sectors, supporting traditional justice mechanisms, and instituting IPV- and SGBV-specific governmental infrastructure (e.g., gender advisors, district gender coordinators, women's protection police units, shelters, special courts, etc.) (Bott et al. 2005). Schia and de Carvalho (2009) discuss the interplay between SGBV programs and general efforts aimed at reconstructing legal institutions in Liberia. They argue that government programs addressing SGBV (e.g., Women and Children's Protection Unit in the

Liberian National Police) may undermine SGBV-reduction efforts, as they entail specialized programming and do not work to support the general legal infrastructure (i.e. strengthening reporting, prosecution, etc.).

*Civic education: diffusion and uptake*

Civic education avenues navigating challenges of rights uptake resulting from "global inequalities of resources and power" (Merry 2006) include paralegals (Maru 2006) and community justice advisors (TCC 2008). Through mediation, legal referrals, and information on rights and laws, local actors vernacularize transnational human rights policies and serve as intermediaries between national policies and local realities. An international network still guides them, though (Maru 2006; Merry 2006; TCC 2008). As a result, human rights may never be truly indigenized and change perhaps not so transformative (Merry 2006).

Organized group civic education aims to mitigate resistance to human rights frameworks by localizing rights education. Medica Mondiale's Political Participation of Women in Peace and Security Policy Program (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Liberia), for example, provided consulting meetings and trainings with local activist women (Raab 2012). The program's effectiveness depended upon the knowledge of local facilitators and project coordinators, as well as the participants' readiness to understand the materials (e.g., educational background, activist history, etc.) and willingness to be politically engaged (Raab 2012).

Diffusion of innovations and their benefits to women depends on three factors: relevance to women's interests, rapidness of the innovation's spread, and ease of spread from early adopters to the broader population, particularly poor women (Malhotra 2009). The origin of interventions and avenues of diffusion also factor into their successful uptake; state-generated interventions may have widespread reach with low direct and immediate impact, whereas grassroots interventions incrementally impact

individuals and households amidst structural gender inequality (Malhotra 2009). Despite the need for political will to institutionalize new gender norms (Shawki 2011), well-supported legal reform tends to focus on top-down structural reform, while civic empowerment (e.g., legal aid and rights education) receives little support in its effort to target households and individuals (Maru 2006). Challenges to civic empowerment, however, include the slowness of legal aid and civic education's lack of immediate tangible changes (Maru 2006).

Studies hypothesize that in countries with disproportionately large populations of children and adolescents compared to adults, adolescents' peers influence their civic development more than adults (Hart et al. 2004). In such communities, civic participation of youth bulges (cohorts aged 16-25) is common and often associated with conflict or social revolution (Galston 2001; Urdal 2006). Indeed, some have noted that "an increase of one percentage point in youth bulges is associated with an increased likelihood of conflict of more than 4%," with particular vulnerability to violence centered on youth facing institutional crowding and unemployment (Urdal 2006). This stems from heightened civic participation in adolescence despite low civic knowledge, the latter yielding "weakly rooted political ideologies, shallow understanding of public policy, distrust [of] existing societal institutions, and [intolerance] of minority groups" (Hart et al. 2004).

Youth bulges may also lead to positive and active civic participation. A study of 28 countries found that child saturation is actually significantly associated with civic knowledge and voluntary service (Hart et al. 2004). Few recent studies, however, exist on countries with high civic knowledge and low political participation (Bratton et al. 1999). Even fewer, if any, have assessed the intersection of civic education and IPV services uptake.

Some, though, have evaluated civic education in relation to political participation, but rigorous studies are minimal in emerging democracies (Finkel & Ernst 2005; Raab 2012). Studies have found that cvic education has more of an effect on political knowledge rather than actual political skills, as social

contexts and individual receptiveness determine uptake (Finkel & Ernst 2005; Kahne & Sporte 2008). An evaluation of civic education in Zambia (Bratton et al. 1999) confirms this; despite evidence of civic knowledge, civic education was only effective (i.e., led to civic action) among people who were prepared for the messaging, whether through school, media, or other avenues. Thus, social groups without access to this information may be at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding civic education and acting on it (Bratton et al. 1999).

**SUMMARY**

The literature provides an understanding of the scope of governmental and nongovernmental interventions targeting IPV and SGBV through policy and behavior change. It supplies evidence on approaches tailored to specific levels of the social-ecological model (i.e., societal, community, organizational, interpersonal, and individual). Additionally, some literature identifies the challenges of implementing IPV and SGBV policies and programming in post-war environments, including weakened customary law (Flomoku & Reeves 2012), low-capacity statutory justice systems (Bott et al. 2005; Morrison et al. 2007), and "cultural" resistance (Colvin et al. 2009; Merry 2006; Wagman et al. 2013). Minimal studies, however, investigate civic education as a medium for political knowledge translation, avenue for merging traditional and state-based law, and channel for restorative and preventative IPV interventions. This case study seeks to enrich the literature by exploring two communities' civic knowledge and trusted civic education sources in the context of their preferences in and perceptions of IPV services.

## *METHODOLOGY*

### INTRODUCTION

This mixed-methods study examined perceptions and accessibility of civic education and intimate partner violence (IPV) services in West Point and Peace Island, two communities in Monrovia selected to represent urban settlements receiving interventions through The Carter Center's (TCC) Access to Justice Program. Since 2006, TCC has collaborated with Liberian government ministries and other stakeholders to help "create a working and responsive justice system consistent with local needs and human rights, paying special attention to rural areas and the needs of marginalized populations" (TCC 2013). TCC achieves this through four approaches: strengthening justice administration; providing civic education on the rule of law; improving access to justice mechanisms; and engaging in policy reform (TCC 2013). In 2011, TCC expanded its Access to Justice Program to Montserrado County, namely West Point and Peace Island.

This study examined the current provision of IPV services by analyzing empirical data in light of post-conflict peace-building and development policies and determining best strategies for IPV prevention in urban Liberia. The data provide information on perceptions of safety, reasons to seek services following IPV, barriers to seeking services, and perceptions of services' trustworthiness. The study will inform TCC's civic education interventions by providing information on communities' knowledge of rights and laws (particularly pertaining to IPV), where people learn rights and laws, and which sources of knowledge they perceive as most trustworthy.

### STUDY SETTING

Formally established as a township in 1960, West Point is Monrovia's oldest urban settlement and home to 50,000-70,000 people (EWER 2012; Williams 2011). Eighty-one percent of the population claims to practice Christianity, with 14.8% identifying as Muslim (EWER 2012). The population includes

all 13 of Liberia's tribes, though the Kru (30.8%) outnumber the others (Grebo: 13.2%; Bassa: 9.9%; Vai: 8.2%; Kpelle: 7.4%; Kissi: 5.5%; all others under 5%) (EWER 2012). Estimates indicate that one-third of the residents arrived as displaced persons during the wars (Williams 2011). Residents built the settlement on recovered, publicly owned land and have developed an administrative unit that grants West Pointers squatters' permits. Given its governmental autonomy, West Point also houses a police station, magisterial court, and paved access road.

Initially a forested and unpopulated bluff surrounded by swampland, Peace Island is now home to approximately 30,000 residents[5]. Many of the residents settled on the unclaimed land as displaced citizens and ex-combatants after the second war ended in 2003 (Williams 2011). The settlement's ambiguous ownership has led to periodic threats of eviction and a failure to install government services, including a police station, paved access road, and electricity (Williams 2011). While both communities have similar demographic characteristics, they differ in access to governmental and nongovernmental services (e.g., police, court, NGOs, etc.), allowing for investigation of the issues in two different service regimes.

**STUDY POPULATION SAMPLE**

The research team employed a multi-method approach using focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDI), and a survey. The survey and FGDs gathered information on community members' perceptions, sources of knowledge, and preferred services; IDIs and one FGD garnered service providers' views of effective strategies and services. The survey sample population consisted of women and men, aged 18 years or older, who represented various ethnicities and geographical locations in the

[5] No census has been conducted in Peace Island, thus ethnic and religious information do not exist. The population estimate is based on conversations with community leaders.

community. Purposive samples of service providers also consisted of women and men, aged 18 years or older.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

### *Qualitative*

The study team consulted community leaders prior to study implementation in both communities. In Peace Island, these included community-appointed, non-tribal leaders. In West Point, community leaders included members of the community women's group, elders' council, and community-appointed leadership. As gatekeepers, these contacts gathered the target qualitative sample for each sex-segregated FGD. Through phone communication and physically walking to people's homes, they collected names of willing participants who represented various ethnic groups and geographical locations in the community. The study team conducted a one-day training with research assistants—male and female Liberian university students or graduates with previous research experience—in project aims, project methods, ethics, confidentiality, and acquiring verbal informed consent. Prior to each FGD, research assistants participated in an additional two-hour training specific to that particular FGD.

In Liberian English, female research assistants facilitated FGDs with women, and male research assistants facilitated FGDs with men. The author attended each FGD and IDI, the latter she conducted herself in English. With permission, the author audio-recorded all but one FGD and one IDI, while simultaneously taking notes. Technological issues required the author's extensive note taking during this FGD and IDI, as audio recording was not possible. The author and two Liberian research assistants transcribed all audio-recorded FGDs and IDIs.

The first set of four FGDs sought to ascertain available and preferred services for IPV, as well as perceptions of safety, in West Point (women: n=8; men: n=8) and Peace Island (women: n=10; men:

n=10) (Appendix B). Centered on a community mapping exercise, participants identified formal services in their communities and responded to questions about preferred referral pathways in four scenarios: theft, rape, domestic violence, and child abandonment. The second set of four FGDs gathered participants' perceptions of and access to education on rights and Liberian formal law in West Point (women: n=8; men: n=8) and Peace Island (women: n=9; men: n=11) (Appendix B). Participants first free-listed rights they knew and where they learned such rights. They then combined common responses and sorted main known rights into piles with main sources of knowledge. Participants repeated the free-listing and pile-sorting exercises with laws.

To complement broad community perspectives on services, the research team conducted one FGD and five IDIs with service providers to determine lessons learned for IPV prevention (Appendix C). Only West Point governmental and nongovernmental service providers participated since no formal IPV services exist in Peace Island. Questions explored individuals' perceptions of survivors and perpetrators of IPV and centered on perceived effective or ineffective community education mechanisms. Participants included: a men's group trained in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) community education, the advocacy coordinator at an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), a community legal advisor for a program jointly affiliated with a local and international NGO, a women's group SGBV liaison, a member of a women's protection police unit, and a member of the United Nations-instituted community policing forum.

*Quantitative*

Six Liberian research assistants enumerated a cross-sectional, three-stage, random cluster survey through structured interviews in Liberian English. In collaboration with TCC, the research team developed an original two-part survey: the screening survey consisted of 37 questions, which gathered demographic information and experiences of disputes (i.e., theft, property, debt, loving, child support,

beating, rape, abuse of authority, labor, killing) in the past 12 months; the main survey consisted of 19 questions for each dispute the participant experienced, as well as an additional 145 questions pertaining to perceptions of security, civic education, and health services. The research team adapted response options to questions on reintegration (e.g., "What makes a person a contributing member of a community?") from a qualitative study on reintegration of war-affected women in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and northern Uganda (McKay et al. 2010). TCC's Community Justice Advisor training materials (TCC 2008) informed the survey's civic education questions. Only respondents who experienced at least one dispute participated in the main survey. Time and financial constraints restricted the ability to replace households screened out of the main survey.

Consistent for both male and female respondents, they survey examined patterns of communities' service-seeking behavior, civic knowledge, and satisfaction with dispute-resolving services. Three days of survey training built on qualitative training (i.e., project aims, project methods, ethics, and confidentiality). New material included training in random sampling and using iPods. Research assistants also provided constructive feedback on rewording survey questions.

Research assistants randomly selected community members in Peace Island [n=305 (women: n=161, men: n=144)] and West Point [n=346 (women: n=173; men: n=173)]. They screened selected participants for involvement in a dispute in the past 12 months. Those who had experienced at least one dispute participated in the main survey [Peace Island: n=183 (women: n=118, men: n=66); West Point: n=212 (women: n=81, men: n=131)]. The research team calculated the sample size based on availability of funds for enumerators and survey participants. Given the 3:5 population ratio for Peace Island and West Point, respectively, the research team allocated 40% of the funds to Peace Island and 60% of the funds to West Point. Satellite images of the communities enabled the research team to define clusters based on Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates (Appendix D). The research team determined the number of clusters based on enumerators' ability to enumerate a cluster per day.

In Peace Island, the team selected GPS coordinates to section off clusters of 136,604 square feet. After numbering these zones, the team randomly selected 34 numbers using R (R Development Core Team 2010) and sampled the corresponding clusters.[6] Research assistants each enumerated one cluster per day. They counted the number of households in each cluster and, using a random number generator sheet, selected households to survey. They then randomly selected an interview participant from the number of household residents over the age of 18, again using a random number generator sheet. In West Point, selected GPS coordinates sectioned off clusters of 25,091 square feet. The team then randomly selected 25 numbers using R (R Development Core Team 2010) and sampled the corresponding clusters. The research team enumerated fewer clusters in West Point than in Peace Island, as enumerators were paired for safety reasons. Two days after initiating the survey in West Point, the team randomly reselected clusters due to danger in certain areas threatening the enumerators' security. In reselection, the team excluded clusters that local knowledge and FGDs indicated were dangerous. GPS coordinates for each household were recorded for survey replication.

Main survey questions centered on respondents' involvement in a dispute in the past 12 months included: type of dispute, relationship to perpetrator, order of services sought following the incident, and final result of the dispute. Questions also asked about what qualifies a person as a contributing community member, what services would be needed to assist a person in reasserting his/her role as a contributing community member after experiencing rape and/or spousal beating, sources of civic education, and trustworthiness of these sources. Following questions on sources of civic education and perceptions of such sources' trustworthiness, the survey asked the following questions to assess participants' knowledge of Liberian formal law:

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[6] GPS coordinates for Peace Island were replicated from a New York University (NYU) study (Berber et al. 2013). The NYU research team mapped individual households in Monrovia proper and randomly sampled households based on GPS coordinates assigned to them. Using Google Earth, the Emory team applied this technique to West Point.

- Can a husband be found guilty for raping his wife?
- Can a woman rape a man?
- It is a crime to beat one's wife?
- Does a perpetrator need to be present in order for a person to report a rape?

Designed over a two-month period, the resaerch team field-tested the survey in a neighboring community excluded from the study. Enumerators then implemented the survey via iPods over the course of two weeks. Enumerators also recorded each day's GPS coordinates, enumeration zone code, screening survey code, main survey code (identical to that of the screening survey), number of households in each cluster, number of people (aged 18+) in selected households, person selected from household (number from random number generator sheet), total number of disputes, and whether the participant took the main survey. Screening survey codes were cross-checked with main survey codes to catch any recording errors. Other quality control measures included checking enumerators' recorded GPS coordinates of surveyed households to ensure that they fell within the range of GPS coordinates assigned to each enumerator for that day. At the end of each enumeration day, the research team uploaded the completed electronic surveys to iSURVEY (iSurveySoft 2013), a password-protected cloud software application that hosted the iPod-based survey. Upon study completion, the research team downloaded all survey data from iSURVEY and stored them in a Microscoft Excel file.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The author analyzed each data source separately. Grounded theory guided qualitative analysis of FGDs, which aimed to assess perceptions of IPV services, service accessibility, IPV reduction and prevention strategies, and civic education. The author used MAXQDA 10 software (MAXQDA 2013) for qualitative coding and analysis, which, for the population sample, focused on safety, reasons to seek out services, normative violence, and trust. Analysis of the service provider sample also included perceptions of effective strategies and services.

The author cleaned quantitative survey data in Microsoft Excel and analyzed them in Stata 12.0 (StataCorp 2011). Categorical variables included: location, sex, education (0=none/did not complete primary school; 2=completed primary school; 3=completed secondary school or higher), characteristics of a contributing community member, reintegration services needed, civic education sources, and trustworthiness of these sources. The author performed a frequency procedure with 95% confidence intervals on all variables. She recoded responses of 'don't know' to questions assessing civic knowledge as incorrect answers, and she created an index variable of civic knowledge to determine the number of questions respondents answered correctly (0=no civic knowledge; 1=low; 2=moderate; 3=high). The question regarding wife-beating was excluded from the index, given that Liberia's domestic violence law was under review and not yet enforced at the time of data collection and writing.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Emory University determined that this study (IRB00057556) did not require IRB review "because it [did] not meet the definition(s) of 'research' or 'clinical investigation' involving 'human subjects' as set forth in Emory policies and procedures and federal rules" (Appendix A). Prior to FGDs, IDIs, and survey interviews, the research team received verbal informed consent from participants, given low literacy rates in both communities.

## *RESULTS*

### DANGER AND SECURITY

Among all screened women and men aged 18 years or older (n=651), people reported debt as the most common dispute in the past 12 months (Peace Island: 19%, CI: 16.2-22%; West Point: 21.4%, CI: 18.6-24.5%). West Point respondents (20.8%, CI: 18-23.9%) also commonly reported beating, generally defined as physical abuse by an unspecified perpetrator. Peace Islanders (14.8%, CI: 12.4-17.5%), however, reported beating as frequently as property disputes in the community (13.8%, CI: 11.4-16.4%; West Point: 11%, CI: 8.9-13.4%). Both Peace Islanders and West Pointers reported an equal prevalence of rape in the past 12 months (4.6%, CI: 3.2-6.4%), reflecting prevalence rates similar to that of labor disputes (Peace Island: 5.2%, CI: 3.7-7.1%; West Point: 3.5%, CI: 2.4-4.9%).

Of those who reported rape (n=10 in each community), Peace Islanders noted strangers as the most common perpetrators (50%, CI: 21.2-78.8%; West Point: 40%, CI: 14.2-70.9%), whereas West Pointers indicated neighbors as the frequent perpetrators (60%, CI: 29.1-85.6%; Peace Island: 10%, CI: 0.5-40.4%). Among those who reported beating in the past 12 months, 28.6% (CI: 15.5-45.1%) of Peace Islanders (n=35) and 33.9% (CI: 22.9-46.3%) of West Pointers (n=62) indicated family members as the perpetrators. The majority of Peace Islanders (n=19) and West Pointers (n=38) reported that the perpetrating family member was an intimate partner (husband/boyfriend: 73.7%, CI: 50.9-89.7%, and 34.2%, CI: 20.5-50.2%, respectively; wife/girlfriend: 10.5%, CI: 1.8-30.6%, and 18.4%, CI: 8.4-33.1%, respectively).

When asked to conceptualize danger, participants' immediate responses centered on violence perpetrated in public most commonly by a stranger. Peace Islanders' unprompted perceptions of such violence focused on perpetration as a result of other extreme behaviors (e.g., alcoholism or drug-use), rather than the violence perpetrated by neighbors or community members. One man stated, "*Most often, you do not see people who are normal to behave like that. You see those who are alcoholics and*

*who are taking narcotic drugs."* Additionally, participants tended to immediately identify statutory stranger rape before discussing domestic violence, as one woman described: "*My own child—she is five years old. A 25 year-old man might want to be with her. So, that bad thing there. So, that raping*."

When asked about the safety or lack of safety in their community, Peace Islanders referred to fears of strangers to the community. In particular, they discussed concerns of being evicted by the government or international agencies, given that most residents on the island do not own land deeds. Strangers, they claimed, are identifiable: "*If someone comes in our midst, we know them. So, we know to keep an eye on them. If strange people get into this place today, we want to know what that person is here for*" (Man, Peace Island). Their initial perceptions of danger and safety centered on the community's one entrance, which community members perceived as protective, given the difficulty one entrance/exit poses to criminals looking to escape. One man noted, "*We have water surrounding here. Even a criminal knows that it is dangerous to come in here because it's only one way*."

**SERVICE-SEEKING BEHAVIOR**

Among those who reportedly experienced rape in the past 12 months (n=22), 40.9% (CI: 22.1-62%) indicated taking the case to the police first. Women's groups (18.2%, CI: 6.1-38.2%) and family members (13.6%, CI: 3.6-32.8%) were other common first points of contact. Most respondents reported that they resolved the case through a legal ruling (52.4%, CI: 36.4-67.8%) or punishment of the perpetrator (e.g., jail, police reprimand, etc.) (19.1%, CI: 6.1-38.2%). If unresolved at the first service sought, respondents (n=16) noted that they would take the case to the police (43.8%, CI: 28.2-59.3%) or religious leaders (37.5%, CI: 24.4-54.9%).

Focus group participants identified two key reasons survivors and survivors' family members seek out services following IPV: to support the survivor's wellbeing (treatment for injuries and mental health, crime investigation/perpetrator punishment, and safety) and to generate evidence of the

reported crime. Women provided only two of the 17 responses, both of which centered on the survivor's wellbeing.

Most respondents identified treating the survivor's physical and mental health needs following rape or domestic violence as most important in supporting the survivor's wellbeing. They noted health facilities as places to treat violence-related injuries and sexually transmitted infections. After taking the survivor to the police and health facilities, West Point men indicated that the survivor should be taken to the community's women's center for both safety and counseling because, as one participant said, "*once you are raped, it plays on your mind. You need people to talk to you, to counsel you to be prepared to stay in the community*".

The majority of survey participants validated this for instances of rape, as 92.9% (CI: 88.4-96%) of Peace Islanders (n=182) and 89.2% (CI: 84.4-92.8%) of West Pointers (n=212) indicated that counseling services would enable a rape survivor to feel like a contributing member of a community[7] following the incident. Other most commonly noted services following rape included peer or family support (Peace Island: 62.6%, CI: 56.3-69.2; West Point: 71.2%, CI: 64.9-77%) and education (Peace Island: 31.9%, CI: 25.4-38.9%; West Point: 29.7%, CI: 23.9-36.1%). One missing Peace Island respondent was excluded from analysis.

Following non-sexual IPV, half of all respondents indicated that counseling services would enable the victim to return to feeling like a contributing member of the community (Peace Island: 57.1%, CI: 49.9-64.2%; West Point: 46.7%, CI: 40.1-53.4%), though this was still the most commonly cited response. Peer or family support was also a common response (Peace Island: 36.8%, CI: 30-44%; West Point: 42.9%, CI: 36.4-49.7%). Over a third of all respondents, however, indicated that no services would

[7] The top three responses to qualities that define a person as a contributing community member included: participates in community social activities (Peace Island: 74.7%, CI: 68-80.6%; West Point: 76.4%, CI: 70.4-81.8%), keeps community clean (Peace Island: 70.3%, CI: 63.4-76.6%; West Point: 72.6%, CI: 66.3-78.3%), and makes decisions that affect the community (Peace Island: 63.7%, CI: 56.6-70.5%; West Point: 75.5%, CI: 69.3-80.9%).

be necessary, as beating by a partner does not change a person's contribution to the community (Peace Island: 34.6%, CI: 28-41.8%; West Point: 42.9%, CI: 36.4-49.7%).

Focus group participants further indicated that community leadership and police should be notified to investigate the crime and determine the perpetrator's punishment. Participants identified formal mechanisms (e.g., police and court) as last-resort options only in cases of beating and only if partner communication and informal interventions failed. As one Peace Island woman indicated, "*I will first of all call my family. If we can't settle the matter amicably, then the police will eventually have to intervene*." Another Peace Island woman claimed that she would go to the police if community leaders could not adequately handle the case. Male and female service providers confirmed this order of seeking services given the perception that formal mechanisms can destroy relationships, though "*the police try to convince men that they [police] are not there to ruin their relationships at home*" (Woman, women's protection police unit).

> *"We think the issue of court could lead to breaking the relationship, and so one of the best things we think is to make the man, or the husband, to understand he is wrong-doings…and that he can see reason that we are, not in those days where those things were happening and people saw them as a means of punishment to their wives."* (Man, community policing)

Survey results pertaining to service-seeking behavior following beating countered this indication of formal services as last resorts, perhaps because beating was not defined specifically in terms of IPV. Of those who reportedly experienced beating in the past 12 months (n=104), 50% (CI: 40.5-59.5%) claimed to seek the help of a family member, compared to 32.7% (CI: 24.2-42.1%) of respondents who went immediately to the police. Most respondents (32.4%, CI: 24.7-40.6%) indicated that they resolved the dispute through family mediation at the first service sought, whereas 17.7% (CI: 12.2-24.9%) claimed that a legal ruling solved the case. Forty percent (CI: 30.2-49.7%) of respondents (n=72) reportedly sought help from religious leaders if the case was not settled at the first location.

Men in both communities identified friends, neighbors, and relatives as first points of contact to provide evidence or act as witnesses after a spousal beating has occurred, whether perpetrated by a

man or woman. Men in both communities also identified the need to take a rape survivor to a health facility to establish evidence that a rape did indeed occur, whether to support police investigation or authenticate the claim. This is due to the belief that, as one West Point man noted, "*sometimes, people will lie that they have been raped*".

> *"After it has been established, and the record establishes that it is true, the police get the record that the person has been tampered with. They would do the final investigation and serve the person with the necessary punishment."* (Man, West Point)

**SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY**

A number of logistical, economic, and social barriers inhibited community members' access to services following IPV, while some respondents noted general unavailability of health facilities (West Point and Peace Island) and police stations (Peace Island). The most common logistical impediment was a lack of means (e.g., no ambulance, gas, or vehicle) to get to a health facility or police station. In Peace Island, this was exacerbated by distance to such services, which one respondent indicated as a reason to use informal mechanisms:

> *"…the police station is far from here. So, you have to arrest [citizen's arrest] the person and carry that person to the chairman. Then after that, the chairman can say, 'Oh, let's take the person to the police.' So, we would call the police."* (Man, Peace Island)

Economic barriers included an inability to afford hospital admission, court fees, and transportation to services and could sometimes deter community members from pursuing cases through formal mechanisms. One West Point woman identified bribery as an impediment to utilizing services, particularly in cases where survivors' families accept bribes to supplement their lack of income. She noted, *"Sometimes the parents of rape victims can hurt me, too. Some of them can compromise with the doers…and they accept it because they are poor and caution the victim to deny that the doer did nothing to them."* Other women echoed this as a barrier, further noting normative structural violence with police corruption and bribery. One West Point woman, in particular, claimed that without the support of the women's center, "*the police will play with the case. They will jail the doer for some time*

*and free him just like that, once his family give them some money*." The SGBV liaison for a women's group in West Point also indicated the tendency for police to release perpetrators from jail, further describing the police's reasoning and the difference between private and government lawyers:

> *"They said we were not having private lawyer. So, the government lawyer, they play with the case just like that…If you want for a government lawyer to really preach for you, you got to give him something. The private lawyer, you already paid him cash, you see? So, he will do more. But government lawyer, he won't do nothing good."* (Woman, SGBV liaison for women's group)

Explicitly, social barriers to accessing services were only identified in situations in which women perpetrated IPV. Men in Peace Island referred to community members' and service providers' lack of seriousness in investigating domestic violence claims by men—"*this is the kind of case that is always compromised*"—indicating that service providers perceive female-perpetrated IPV as "just a simple thing". Members of an IPV community awareness men's group attributed this lack of seriousness to the newness of women's rights.

> *"You know, the passion for this violence against women thing just came about. It's a new thing in our society. So, if you went to the police station, you say, 'Look, my wife beat on me,' or, 'My wife denied me food,' people will laugh at you! Because they feel that authority power is for you as a man. Why sit there and allow the woman to stop you from eating? So, you will not discuss it properly."* (Man, men's group)

Implicitly, however, both women and men in Peace Island discussed normative familial violence in perceptions of men's ownership of their wives. One man discussed men's perceptions of their wives: "*Some men will say, 'I paid the dowry for my woman. She is my property, and I can treat her however I want to treat her*.'" Another indicated that such perceptions can derive from religious leaders:

> *"For a pastor to marry the man or the woman, the first thing they would tell the woman is, 'Your body no longer belongs to you. It now belongs to your husband. So, anytime the man is prepared, you should also be prepared.'"* (Man, Peace Island)

**TRUST**

The perceived trustworthiness of services and/or institutions also played a role in participants' decisions to seek services following IPV. Participants noted trust in structural leadership (traditional and

governmental), familial/domestic relationships, and NGOs. Only Peace Island residents identified traditional leadership (e.g., community leaders, elders' council, women's group) as the governing body within the community. One man referred to the masculinity of community leadership, stating, "*we, the men, have structured the leadership here. This leadership is responsible to coordinate or state the affairs of the community*." When asked about rules by which community members live, both women and men implicitly referred to the effectiveness of and trust they put in traditional leadership. This is evident in one woman's description of Peace Island's zonal governance and enforcement of community rules: "*People used to curse and misbehave, but since the introduction of these rules, there is a deterrent. Violators are fined and counseled by community elders*."

As a result, Peace Island men indicated that the community chairman should always be notified of IPV cases. Participants claimed that this was not necessarily to inhibit survivors from seeking formal services. Rather, since traditional leadership governs the community, informing the chairman of cases allows transparency of the goings-on in the community and gives survivors the option of going through traditional leadership to seek formal services. One man noted, "*The community leadership will help you…They call the police to get the perpetrator. Another man indicated that whether or not you prefer traditional services over formal services, "the information should be sent out there [to the community chairman]…He is not going to stop you from going elsewhere*."

Peace Island men also identified situations in which traditional leadership was not trusted. Although men discussed a general problem of female-perpetrated violence being compromised at all levels of authority, they noted a preference in carrying such cases to the police to avoid community members' humor regarding the situation.

> *"You know, it's funny in a Liberian setting that a woman can beat a man. For me, I've seen it. There was a lady who usually beat her husband. So, for me, if I see my man in that kind of condition, I prefer taking the case to the police. I take the case to the police because if I carry it to the community people, it would be compromised. It would even be funny. People would be laughing."* (Man, Peace Island)

Among women in both communities, distrust was associated with governmental institutions, particularly the police. Peace Island women discussed that in addition to not having access to their lawmakers, they believed their lawmakers did not practice ethically. Although some women claimed to carry cases to the police, others claimed that "*the police are very corrupt and unprofessional*" (Woman, Peace Island). Others expressed frustration with governmental institutions blaming their inability to assist with cases on lack of resources, including, "*no gas in the car to carry rape victim to hospital*" (Woman, West Point). One West Point woman described the court's tendency to delay cases: "*There are cases that were carried some two to three years now, and those cases are yet to be judged*" (Woman, West Point).

Two people referred to the trustworthiness of families and/or domestic relationships. A Peace Island woman noted her preference to engage her family in settling issues of domestic violence before taking the case elsewhere, while a West Point man discussed the general protection families provide:

> *"If we look at the main place, it is family. Family gives you the protection! If you are sick, your parents send you to the hospital—it is protection! So, even if somebody sends you to the hospital, you are fighting, they will be able to get involved to see how they can resolve it. So, all of their protection comes from the family."* (Man, West Point)

One Peace Island resident referred to community members' trust in outside groups to provide education on sexual behavior and IPV due to young people's unwillingness to receive information from family members. She noted that young girls "*don't want to listen [to their parents]. But when you come as [research assistant's name], when you tell her something, because you came from a far place, she will listen*." Other indications of trust or distrust in NGOs came primarily from service providers. One provider acknowledged NGOs' accessibility and resourcefulness in supporting her community-based organization's work, using one incident as an example:

> *"We have one lady here, her boyfriend chop her and took her finger and leave from there. She here. So, when that thing happened at night, and they called upon the women to charter taxi to carry her to JFK [Hospital]. When we carried her to JFK, they charged 14,000 [Liberian dollars], and we were not having that money. Just to put her finger back…So, when we came, we went to IRC and appealed to them to pay that hospital bill so that lady cannot be crippled because no*

> *money… They paid the hospital bill, and we paid small, small…So, we get the lady back, and thank God, she didn't die. But that lady, the finger did not go back. It dead. It did not go back."* (Woman, SGBV liaison for women's group)

Male service providers, however, discussed their distrust in NGOs as a result of negative experiences and poor entries into their communities. One likened his experience as an NGO-trained volunteer community educator to his experience as a volunteer during the war:

> *"I worked with a relief organization, and I was supposed to steal! …They give the food for us, and we go out there and distribute the food. But we had to steal! Now, it's unimaginable that someone would be sharing thousands of bags of rice, and the few doing the distribution are not earning anything. You call it volunteers…We had to steal the food! Which was not right! But we did it because we were not considered as workers, you see? I was trained by [NGO 1] before [NGO 2] for the same GBV [gender-based violence] process. But I left because I didn't want people telling me—people that are paid in their offices. They don't know better than I?"* (Man, men's group)

**PERCEPTIONS OF RIGHTS-BASED PROGRAMMING**

When discussing the influence of rights-based programming in Liberia, both Peace Islanders and West Pointers noted the external influence of such ideas and interventions—that is, the recognition of IPV-oriented programs and human and women's rights as brought to Liberia from elsewhere. Women's perceptions focused on the effectiveness of civic education conducted by outsiders. One woman discussed the need for workshops in Peace Island, "*to teach us. Here on Peace Island, we are not educated on all these things, all the laws.*"

Men, however, highlighted what they perceived as the conflicting nature of human rights. On the one hand, foreigners promote human rights, which include protection, choice, and access to services. Men's confusion arises when the same foreigners condemn behaviors that result from rights to choice and could lead to sexual and domestic violence (e.g., choice of drinking alcohol).

> *"…they say that the country is poor because what they say about 'human rights, human rights.' Because they say that everybody has the right to do the one, everybody has the right to the one. So, this poor country is open. 'Child rights, child rights.' So, other rights, if you want to get drunk, you can get drunk. The country is polluted with all of these things. The white people brought it. We're confused now! [laughs]"* (Man, Peace Island)

Service providers also identified the concept of "outsideness" in terms of IPV interventions and training, as well as the idea of "women's rights" in general. A male member of the community policing forum highlighted the overlap of various organizations working on women's rights. He named women's groups, three international NGOs, one indigenous NGO, and a Liberian government agency, which all come *"in the community preaching almost the same thing, coming from different, different directions."*

Participants also discussed the role of NGOs and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in implementing programs (IPV, security, etc.) and in providing financial and training resources to communities otherwise unequipped with the knowledge to handle IPV. The SGBV liaison for a West Point women's group, for example, discussed her experience accessing such resources: "*They [international NGO] trained us how to carry victim to hospital…Because after when they leave, we can do it on our own. So, we went to see how they carry the victim [to the health facility]. When the victim goes, we follow her to make sure the treatment ends*."

Additionally, service providers discussed the general newness and seeming foreignness of rights agendas. One respondent indicated feeling threatened by perceived accusations of normative violence, while another noted, *"some of us are getting used to the issue of peace-building"* (Man, community policing). A member of a West Point men's group described the tendency to defend "African culture" from "Western ideologies" before succumbing to such ideologies:

> *"Today we are telling you, we say, 'Look, while it is true that this child is yours, this child has rights, too. You don't just beat on him or her.' So, as an African, before our training, our involvement, we felt convicted. I mean, this is what we do! It's our way of life! So, we are convinced that, indeed, the accusation that we are perpetrating violence is true!"* (Man, men's group)

**REDUCING/PREVENTING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

Participants noted three platforms for violence prevention mechanisms and/or responsibilities: governmental/structural, community-based, and individual. At the structural level, West Pointers highlighted the need for accountability in government institutions. Despite the women's protection

police unit housed in the police station across the street from the women's center, a West Point woman called for the installation of female police officers in the women's center to balance male officers who compromise cases:

> *"We want women police officers to be assigned with us in the women center to help properly manage those crimes those carry out against women because most of the men police officers can manipulate judgments because they feel it is their friend man."* (Woman, West Point)

Two Peace Island men discussed the government's responsibilities in terms of providing economic interventions. They identified that for "normal" men, poverty and unemployment serve as underlying causes of such violence. One man stressed, "*When a man is normal and maybe has a wife or whosoever—and this man cannot attend to this woman any longer because the man cannot provide—at the end of the day, it will end in violence!*" This is particularly true in households where a man's inability to provide for his family undermines his perceived role as household head and thus leads to decreased respect by other household members: "*Because there is no job, a man cannot provide. The man is not respected in the home. So, at the end of the day, violence. …the government needs to be able to make effort to see whether they can provide jobs where at least everybody can find way to be busy"*

Some community members discussed the need for community education on IPV and consequences through flyers and dramas (Man, West Point), behavior courses in school curricula (Woman, West Point), and sensitizing community and religious leaders (Man, Peace Island). Service providers spoke to five components of community education: men's involvement, women's self-sustainability, awareness of consequences (financial, physical, and legal), targeting youth, and portrayals of positive behavior.

Respondents identified different reasons for involving men in IPV prevention; one centered on recognizing men as common perpetrators, and the other stressed the importance of using men to ensure that other men receive and respect women's messages. The SGBV liaison for a women's group noted, "*When we get up to talk to the people as women, they will say we're stupid. But if men stand in*

*front there to talk, they will listen. Because they will say, 'Eh! If my friend man will talk to him, I need to change.'"* A member of the men's group confirmed that partnering with women in has brought the women "relief", in that the men's group *"convinced the other men to believe the women."*

One service provider, however, identified the social consequences men face in educating their peers on IPV: "*Even our own program, we used to have a male here who was so involved. They were calling him, 'You, you are a female.' Yeah, they were adding 'female' to his name. So, by them, you are no longer a male*" (Woman, international NGO advocacy coordinator).

Service providers acknowledged that IPV and general violence are best prevented through women's economic empowerment and educational attainment. The SGBV liaison for a women's group described the women's center's adult literacy program as an example:

> *"Sometimes in the night, you see some big, big [adult] women come to school here [women's center]. In the night… Because they understand that if you keep your money in your house, the rogue [thief] will come and take your money. But if you know how to read and write small, small, you carry your money to the bank. And your money will be safe in the bank. Those are the things we tell them. 'Come to school so you can learn how to read and write so you can save your money through savings.'"* (Woman, SGBV liaison for women's group)

Service providers also discussed that effective community awareness addresses consequences of IPV, particularly in terms of legal punishment. They noted that, generally, people do not know the stipulations of Liberian laws regarding IPV. One woman described her conversation with a young man:

> *"We tell them the punishment. …a young guy—maybe he was not even 20 years old—and he was in love. He had a girlfriend that was below 16. And we said, 'Even if you have a girlfriend that is below 16, you are raping the girl…And when the law get to know about it, you will be charged for rape. Because anybody that is below the age of 18, you have sex with that person, that is rape. That's what Liberian law says.' And they find interest in it. They say, 'Oh, really?' We say, 'Yeah.'"* (Woman, community civic educator)

When discussing the perceptions of the most effective IPV intervention strategies, participants largely focused on the need to educate youth. A community civic educator echoed this sentiment, expressing her concern for future generations of Liberians who are uneducated about IPV. She

explained, "*They are doing things they are not supposed to do. So, in the next five years, we may not even have decent men and women…they may not be in a position to show responsibility."*

The advocacy coordinator at an international NGO referred to lessons learned from a prevention campaign involving negative images of men's behavior (e.g., explicit sexual and physical violence against women). Met with men's defensiveness, the NGO altered the campaign to depict positive images of loving and responsible husbands and fathers (e.g., putting a crying baby back to sleep while the man's wife sleeps). The anticipated effect, she described, would be that *"men will look at that image and say, 'Oh, I want to be like that man.' Where the man is respecting the woman, you know? … So, men want to be looked at as role models."*

A men's advocacy group, however, discussed that the community education its group provides emphasizes men's wrongdoings:

> *"We go in there and tell them that it is wrong for you to beat on your wives…It is wrong for you to deprive your family of saying their feelings. Because some people, when they are angry, they say, 'Well, I will not provide food money because the woman has refused… She has refused me to have something to do. That's why I'm not feeding her.' So, we go out and tell them, 'That's wrong. You don't have to stop your family from eating because someone did something wrong in the family.'" (Man, men's group)*

Women in both communities identified women's moral responsibilities as preventive measures against sexual violence, particularly in terms of dressing modestly. Women's practical responsibilities, though, included taking proper safety precautions in potentially dangerous situations, as well as economically sustaining oneself: *"We want skill training center for girls because when you work and get your own money, man will not bluff you"* (Woman, West Point).

Peace Island men noted men's responsibilities to be both employed and educated on "women's rights" and laws pertaining to sexual violence. One man stated, *"…you will find that most of the violations that come from sexual-based violence come from men. There must mostly be women's rights. So, their education to women's rights will really help to improve and decrease these violations."* A West Point men's advocacy group, however, highlighted the difficulty of changing one's behavior, particularly

when a man is a known community educator. One member described the story of another member who asked to terminate his participation in the group due to the domestic violence he experienced from his wife:

> *"He said he would go up there and advocate that men should not carry on violence. And she attacked him. And he said she said, 'You see, you are a [member of the men's advocacy group]. You can't do beating. You can't do nothing.' He said, 'Because I have changed.' And it took a long time. And he come back to the person and said, 'Being a [member of the men's advocacy group], you never put up resistance. And you don't want people to say you're a [member of the men's advocacy group] who is fighting. Because you have to set an example.'"* (Man, men's group)

Such challenges extend beyond working through one's "African culture" (Man, community policing), as they entail social perceptions of strong men and women's opportunity to take advantage of men trained in IPV prevention and women's rights advocacy.

Members of the men's group further described the effectiveness of educating men on the practical reasons to refrain from IPV. Expounding on this, they highlighted the economic consequences of IPV (i.e. court fees, potential bribes, and/or hospital bills). One man noted, *"…if you beat on your wife and hurt your woman while fighting in the process, they [police] will come and arrest you. So, you go out there and you go spend some money at the police station. If you don't have money, then you go sit down in police cell."* Another man discussed how that money is "spoiled" and no longer useful for household expenses: *"…you consider it spoiled money because that money—I keep my money to feed my wife and children, send my children to school and buy other things for our home."*

**CIVIC EDUCATION**

Both communities noted their right to education, though only women specified the right to educate their children. Other common rights across focus groups included freedom of speech, general freedom, employment, and protection. Women and men in Peace Island highlighted the right to live in

Peace Island, Liberia, or anywhere they chose, perhaps in response to common fears of being evicted from the island (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Reported Known Rights and Corresponding Sources of Rights Knowledge among Women and Men (Aged 18+ Years), Peace Island and West Point, 2012

| PEACE ISLAND | | | | WEST POINT | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Women (n=9)** | | **Men (n=11)** | | **Women (n=8)** | | **Men (n=8)** | |
| *Rights* | *Sources* | *Rights* | *Sources* | *Rights* | *Sources* | *Rights* | *Sources* |
| children's education | school | education | school, workshop | children's education | school | education | family |
| free speech | school | free speech | police | -- | -- | free speech | radio |
| -- | -- | health | school, workshop | health | parents | health care | community |
| -- | -- | freedom | court | freedom | human rights books | -- | -- |
| employment | friends | employment | court | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| living in Liberia | oneself | living anywhere | court | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| -- | -- | protection | police | -- | -- | protection | family |
| helping others | friends | freedom of religion | culture | food | oneself | fairness | church |
| comfort | family | movement | police | report crimes | NGOs | play | family |
| | | having a family | Family | | | being respected | family |

In free-listing sources of rights knowledge, Peace Island women identified familial or social sources [parents (n=3), school (n=2), children who attend school, market, church, community/friends (n=3)]. West Point women listed similar social sources [parents, school (n=2), children (n=2), friends/community (n=7)], as well as authority sources [elders, court (n=3)], Bible, NGOs, human rights materials, and themselves (n=3). Most Peace Island men claimed to learn of their rights from school

(n=8), while other common sources were parents/home (n=3), court (n=3), and community (n=3). Other listed sources included radio, workshops, constitution, and police. Most West Point men identified similar sources, including school (n=6), parents (n=5), radio (n=3), court (n=2), and community (n=2). Additional cited sources included church and palava hut discussions.

Women and men in both communities identified their knowledge of three prominent laws: prohibition of murder, rape, and theft. Generally, women indicated familial or nongovernmental sources of knowledge (e.g., school, parents/children, Bible, NGOs), whereas men highlighted formal services and media (e.g., police, radio) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Reported Known Laws and Corresponding Sources of Knowledge of Laws among Women and Men (Aged 18+ Years), Peace Island and West Point, 2012

| **PEACE ISLAND** | | | | **WEST POINT** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Women (n=9)** | | **Men (n=11)** | | **Women (n=8)** | | **Men (n=8)** | |
| *Laws* | *Sources* | *Laws* | *Sources* | *Laws* | *Sources* | *Laws* | *Sources* |
| do not kill | school, Bible, family | do not kill | school | do not kill | Bible | do not kill | police |
| do not rape | NGOs, workshops | do not rape | school | do not rape | court | do not rape | radio |
| do not steal | school, Bible, family | do not steal | school | do not steal | Bible | -- | -- |
| do not beat wife | lawmakers | -- | -- | -- | -- | do not beat wife | radio |
| do not fight | court | -- | -- | -- | -- | do not fight | police |
| do not lie | Bible | do not lie without proof | court | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| honor flag | school | | | tenant's rights | school | keep community clean | community |
| | | | | do not abuse children | court | do not mine sand | community |
| | | | | legal protection for debts | court | pay taxes | community |

In addition to such familial sources of civic education, Peace Island women free-listed the court (n=2) and elders. West Point women also cited these sources. Peace Island men mostly indicated that they learn of Liberian formal law from school (n=8), court (n=5), constitution (n=5), home (n=2), culture, and community. Most West Point men listed radio (n=7) as their main source of civic education, though other common sources included the community (n=5), school (n=4), church (n=2), and authority figures (e.g.,. traditional and appointed community leaders, police, etc.) (n=3).

Quantitative findings confirmed community members' tendency to learn rights and Liberian formal laws from informal sources (Table 3). Survey respondents, however, did not cite authoritative sources (e.g., police, courts, community leadership, etc.) as frequently as focus group participants did. The two most commonly indicated sources of civic education in both Peace Island (n=183) and West Point (n=211) were media (79.2%, CI: 72.9-84.7% and 86.3%, CI: 81.1-90.4%, respectively) and friends or word-of-mouth (44.8%, CI: 37.7-52.1% and 49.8%, CI: 43-56.5%, respectively). Peace Islanders' third most commonly cited source was school (32.2%, CI: 25.8-39.3%), whereas West Pointers identified community legal advisors as the third most common (37%, CI: 30.7-43.6%).

Two-thirds of participants in both communities noted media as the most trustworthy source of civic education (Peace Island: 66.1%, CI: 59-72.7%; West Point: 64%, CI: 57.3-70.3%), followed by community legal advisers (37.7%, CI: 30.9-44.9% and 29.9%, CI: 24-36.3% respectively) and school (35%, CI: 28.3-42.1% and 34.6%, CI: 28.4-41.2%, respectively). Sex-disaggregated results reflected similar sources of knowledge (media, friends/word-of-mouth, community legal advisers) and perceptions of trust, with no difference between women's and men's responses. One missing West Point respondent was excluded from analysis.

**Table 3.** Actual and Trusted Sources of Civic Education [Frequency, (95% CI)] among Women and Men (Aged 18+ Years), Peace Island and West Point, 2012

| | **PEACE ISLAND (n=183)** | | **WEST POINT (n=211)** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Actual* | *Trusted* | *Actual* | *Trusted* |
| *Council of elders/ community leaders* | 22.4 (16.8-28.9) | 19.1 (13.9-25.3) | 22.7 (17.5-28.8) | 13.3 (9.2-18.4) |
| *Commissioner* | 2.7 (1-6) | 7.6 (4.4-12.2) | 10.4 (6.8-15.1) | 5.7 (3.1-9.5) |
| *School* | 32.2 (25.8-39.3) | 35 (28.3-42.1) | 28.4 (22.7-34.8) | 34.6 (28.4-41.2) |
| *Church* | 16.4 (11.6-22.3) | 13.7 (9.2-19.2) | 21.8 (16.6-27.8) | 11.4 (7.6-16.2) |
| *Community legal adviser* | 31.1 (24.8-38.1) | 37.7 (30.9-44.9) | 37.0 (30.7-43.6) | 29.9 (24-36.3) |
| *Police* | 20.8 (15.4-27.1) | 18.6 (13.4-24.7) | 28.9 (23.1-35.3) | 18.5 (13.7-24.2) |
| *Friend/word-of-mouth* | 44.8 (37.7-52.1) | 26.2 (20.2-33) | 49.8 (43-56.5) | 28.4 (22.7-34.8) |
| *Women's Group* | 21.9 (16.3-28.3) | 19.7 (14.4-26) | 28.4 (22.7-34.8) | 19 (14.1-24.7) |
| *Men's Group* | 11.5 (7.4-16.7) | 14.2 (9.7-19.8) | 18 (13.3-23.6) | 16.1 (11.6-21.5) |
| *International NGO* | 5.5 (2.8-9.5) | 5.5 (2.8-9.5) | 8.5 (5.3-12.9)s | 4.7 (2.4-8.3) |
| *Liberian NGO* | 7.7 (4.4-12.2) | 7.1 (4-11.6) | 10.4 (6.8-15.1) | 5.2 (2.8-8.9) |
| *Neighbor* | 24 (18.3-30.6) | 14.8 (10.2-20.5) | 31.3 (25.3-37.8) | 14.7 (10.4-20) |
| *Media* | 79.2 (72.9-84.7) | 66.1 (59-72.7) | 86.3 (81.1-90.4) | 64 (57.3-70.3) |
| *Nowhere* | 19.7 (14.4-25.9) | 15.3 (10.6-21.1) | 11.8 (8-16.8) | 6.2 (3.5-10.1) |

**CIVIC KNOWLEDGE**

In Peace Island (n=183), 43.7% (CI: 36.7-51%) of respondents answered all three questions about Liberia's IPV laws correctly[8], compared to 36.8% (CI: 30.7-43.6%) of West Pointers (n=212) (Table 4). Less than 9% (CI: 5.7-13.5%) of West Pointers, however, had no civic knowledge, compared to 10.9% (CI: 7-16.1%) of Peace islanders. More men (51.4%, CI: 43.3-59.4%) than women (33.3%, CI: 27.7-39.4%) demonstrated high civic knowledge. Of those with no civic knowledge pertaining to IPV, 6.2% (CI: 3-11%) were men, and 11.7% (CI: 8.1-16.1%) were women. Educational attainment yielded no explicit pattern of civic knowledge, although fewer respondents with low or no education (36.8%, CI: 29.2-44.9%) had high civic knowledge, compared with those who completed primary school (44.2%, CI: 36.7-51.9%) and secondary school or higher (37.5%, CI: 27.9-48%).

**Table 4.** Community Members with Civic Knowledge of Liberian Formal Laws Pertaining to Intimate Partner Violence [Frequency (95% CI)], Women and Men (Aged 18+ Years), Peace Island and West Point, 2012

| | **PEACE ISLAND (n=183)** | **WEST POINT (n=212)** | **WOMEN (n=249)** | **MEN (n=146)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *A husband can be found guilty for raping his wife* | 73.8 (67-79.8) | 75 (68.8-80.5) | 73.1 (67.3-78.3) | 76.7 (69.3-83) |
| *A woman can rape a man* | 63.9 (56.8-70.7) | 64.2 (57.5-70.4) | 59 (52.8-65) | 72.6 (65-79.4) |
| *A perpetrator does not need to be present to report a rape* | 63.4 (56.2-70.1) | 64.6 (58-70.8) | 58.6 (52.4-64.6) | 73.3 (65.7-80) |

*Respondents answered 'yes', 'no', or 'don't know' to questions assessing civic knowledge. Responses of 'don't know' were included with incorrect answers during analysis.

Three-fourths of Peace Islanders (73.8%, CI: 67-79.8%), West Pointers (75%, CI: 68.8-80.5%), women (73.1%, CI: 67.3-78.3%), and men (76.7%, CI: 69.3-83%) know that a man can be found guilty for

[8] Can a husband be found guilty for raping his wife? Can a woman rape a man? Does a perpetrator need to be present in order to report a rape?

raping his wife. About two-thirds of Peace Islanders (63.9%, CI: 56.8-70.7%) and West Pointers (64.2%, CI: 57.5-70.4%) know that it is possible for a woman to rape a man, according to Liberian formal law. More men (72.6%, CI: 65-79.4%) than women (59%, CI: 52.8-65%), however, know that this is true. Approximately two-thirds of both Peace Islanders (63.4%, CI: 56.2-70.1%) and West Pointers (64.6%, CI: 58-70.8%) also know that a perpetrator does not need to be present in the community or at the police station for a victim to report a rape. Three-fourths of men (73.3%, CI: 65.7-80%) know that this is true, compared to 58.6% (CI: 52.4-64.6%) of women.

## *DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

### DISCUSSION

*Macro vs. micro approaches*

The study found that macro- and micro-level factors contribute differently to civic knowledge and use of intimate partner violence (IPV) services among community members in Peace Island and West Point. Macro-level factors shape the dissemination of civic information and availability of services. They include demand, resources, political will, and gender norms. Micro-level factors relate to whether and how people receive civic information and utilize services. They include trust, readiness, social acceptability, and logistic and economic means. Disparities in how information links to services may depend on who generates and disseminates information and/or provides services (i.e., foreign vs. state-based). They also depend on whether the availability and quality of services adequately meet demand.

**Figure 2.** IPV Civic Education and Service Provision Pathways

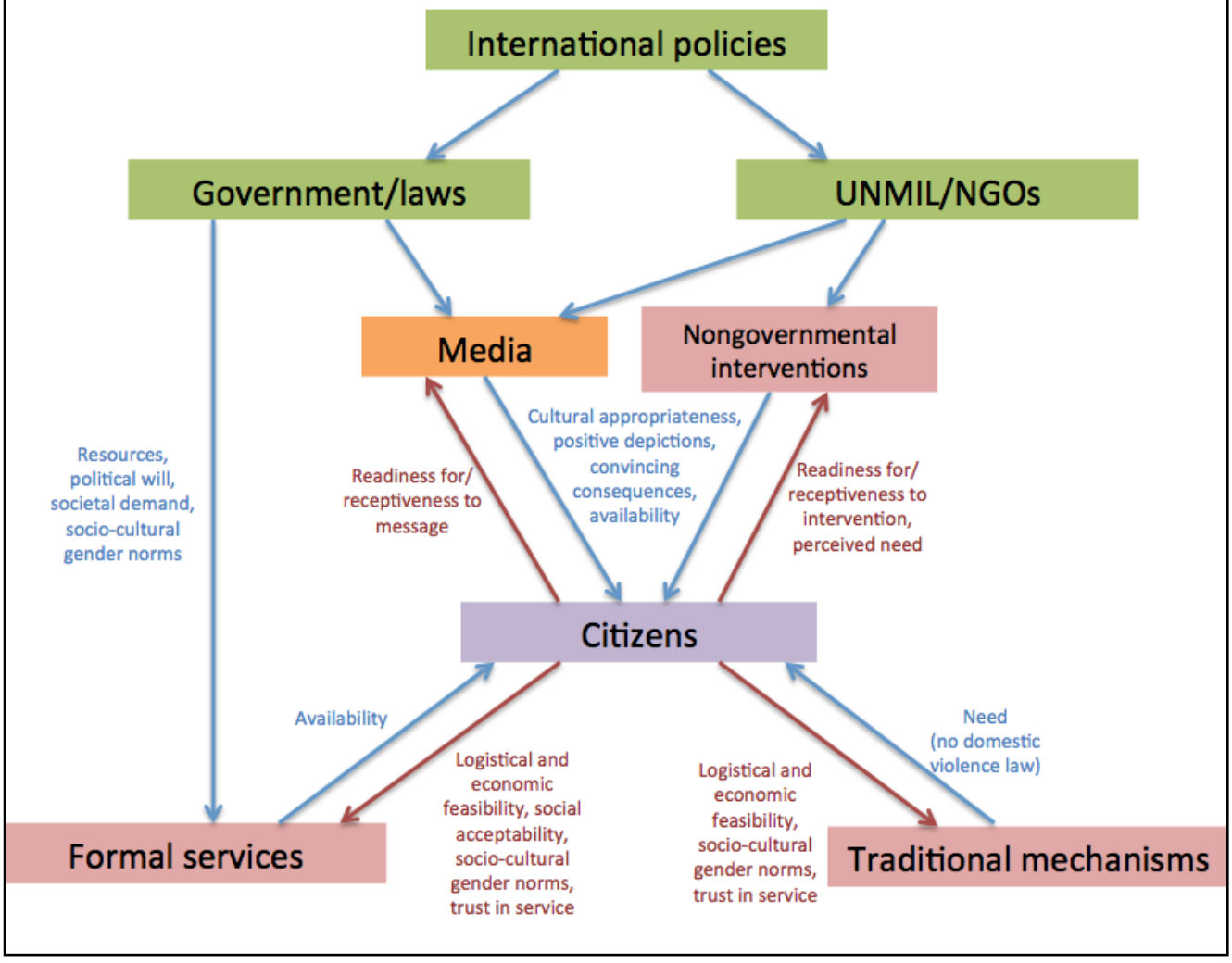

Figure 2 illustrates the pathways for IPV civic education and service provision based on qualitative findings and evidence in the literature. The framework includes decision-making and/or service-providing bodies [international policies, Liberian government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)], interventions (nongovernmental, formal, and traditional), media, and citizens. Blue arrows and text indicate factors that inhibit or enable the reach of resources, policies, and information to citizens. Red arrows and text indicate factors that inhibit people from or enable them to access, receive, and/or accept such resources, policies, and information.

Understanding the nuances in definitions and perceptions of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and IPV enables an understanding of disconnect between macro- and micro-level approaches. For example, when discussing danger, participants tended to focus on strangers/outsiders as perpetrators for both general danger and rape. Most survey respondents who reported rape reported that the perpetrator was a non-partner. Underreporting of marital rape may have resulted from social desirability bias, a lack of civic knowledge, and/or the assumption that Liberia's rape law only criminalizes stranger-perpetrated rape or rape of a minor. This supports Bott et al.'s (2005) indication that despite legislative reform easing prosecution mechanisms, laws criminalizing stranger-perpetrated rape and rape of a minor garner more political and public support than those centered on marital rape.

Indeed, Liberia's rape law demonstrates this as it does not explicitly qualify marital rape as a criminal offense. Despite national and international activism to overtly include marital rape in the law's definition of rape, the notion "was defeated by the majority male-dominated legislature" (Bruthus 2007). The existing rape law does not explicitly *exclude* marital rape, however, which means that formal justice mechanisms could theoretically prosecute these cases. As such, community members preferred traditional mechanisms for resolving IPV cases and formal services for handling stranger-perpetrated rape and rape of a minor. This disparity in service-seeking behavior may be due to confusion about the

existing rape law, as well as the fact that the Liberian government had not yet enacted the newly drafted domestic violence law at the time of data collection and writing.

Logistical and economic barriers to accessing services, as well as service unavailability and/or inadequacy, also contribute to differences in people's service-seeking behavior following IPV. No obvious difference in formal versus informal service-seeking patterns between the two communities emerged in the qualitative data. Generally, however, Peace Islanders seemed to speak more favorably of informal or traditional services. Peace Islanders also noted *unavailability* of formal services, whereas West Pointers more frequently discussed *inadequacies* of formal services. Despite the communities' similar demographics, this difference is likely due to their different service regimes (i.e., no formal services and minimal NGO interventions in Peace Island, compared to a police station, magisterial court, and multiple NGOs in West Point).

Most people cited media (radio, specifically) as a prominent civic education source, confirming previous studies on far-reaching IPV awareness-raising campaigns (Dralega 2011; Hassan 2006; Moser 2007; Ryan 2008). External sources, such as UNMIL and NGOs, generate much of the rights-based messaging through media (UNMIL 2013). Despite the inclination to take stranger-perpetrated rape and minor rape cases to governmental services (e.g., police), respondents still indicated distrust of the formal system. This was mainly due to issues with ethical practice, confidentiality, and availability of resources. Thus, although people receive rights-based information, their inclination to utilize formal services appears minimal. This points to the reality that even as new gender ideologies normalize at the individual and/or community levels, limited political will and financial and human resources at the governmental level cannot meet the demand (Bott et al. 2005; Morrison et al. 2007).

IPV legal and social services in countries recovering from war must occur simultaneously. The former targets structural violence and aims to ground social services in a legitimate political context; the latter meets individual needs and seeks to influence behavior change on a community-wide level (Ní

Aoláin et al., 2011; Bott et al., 2005; Malhotra, 2009; Morrison et al., 2007). Linking IPV social services to peace-building and development objectives (particularly those centered on building state legitimacy) may strengthen both sectors.

*Gendered perspectives*

The study also highlighted differences in men's and women's acceptance of messages and interventions, illustrating that gender considerations also shape people's interaction with services and rights-based initiatives. Men expressed explicit resentment towards women-centered interventions and noted the disadvantage they face when seeking services following female-perpetrated IPV. This could, in turn, exclude them from discussions on gender relations (Chant & Gutmann 2002).

Women, however, did not outwardly attribute their experiences of deficient service provision to the fact that they are women; they referred to general corruption and inefficiency without ascribing barriers in access to gender-biased social norms. Women tended to report positive attitudes towards NGOs and rights-based programming, noting their effectiveness and the need for resources. This may result from women-centered development and human rights programming (Grown et al. 2005; Molyneux & Razavi 2005; Baldez 2011). Men, however, generally referred to these interventions' invasive nature. They highlighted organizations' poor community entry, the threatening nature of women's rights agendas, and overlapping programs.

Some men referred to the imposition of Western ideologies on 'African culture', a phenomenon anthropologist Sally Engle Merry (2006) describes as "resistant ethnic nationalism" and a "political misuse" of culture. She further explains, "The way culture is conceptualized determines how social change is imagined" (Merry 2006). If perceived as stagnant or institutionally dictated, interventions succeed through micro-level education and macro-level structural change, respectively. Resistance to new ideologies is normal, and change is gradual. The dilemma of localizing human rights, however,

stems from deciding whether to ensure they are easily accepted (i.e., “packaged in familiar terms”) or transformative (i.e., “challenge existing assumptions about power and relationships”) (Merry 2006).

Respondents indicated that NGOs accomplish this through a number of mechanisms promoting IPV prevention. They noted that the most effective of these are community education initiatives and programs supporting women’s economic empowerment and educational attainment, confirming previous studies on effective prevention programming (Annan 2009; Usdin et al. 2005; Jewkes et al. 2007). Respondents also discussed the effectiveness of male-focused awareness campaigns, particularly those depicting positive male roles and modeling non-violent behavior (Usdin et al. 2005).

Additionally, men spoke to the effectiveness of campaigns that emphasize practical reasons to refrain from IPV (e.g., preserving marriage, household finances, etc.), which are reasons that did not surface in previous literature. They also expressed the belief that male perpetrators are abnormal (e.g., alcoholics, drug abusers, etc.). They described that “normal” men who perpetrate IPV do so as a result of poverty and unemployment. Further research should explore the effectiveness of interventions targeted to non-vulnerable populations. For example, people may perceive an impoverished man as useless, justifying condemnation of violent behavior. People may respect an economically or socially powerful man, however, causing people to ignore or perceive his violence different.

**LIMITATIONS**

Despite its contributions to a limited body of knowledge on civic education and IPV services, this study has a number of limitations. First, the study assessed civic knowledge and perceptions of services separately. Statistical analyses of existing survey data could have yielded associations between civic knowledge and services uptake among those who utilized SGBV services in the past year. The sample size would have been too small, however, due to underreporting (particularly of spousal abuse), low incidence of rape compared to other disputes, and the fact that the survey screened for people who

experienced a range of disputes in the past year. Indeed, the survey sample size was small given the study's financial constraints. This may thus exaggerate the findings, especially for questions on SGBV or IPV. Similarly, only three questions assessed respondents' civic knowledge pertaining to SGBV and IPV. Future studies should more rigorously evaluate civic knowledge, particularly in comparison to knowledge of other laws.

Furthermore, power dynamics between the research team and participants, especially during qualitative data collection, could have influenced responses. Considering gatekeepers (e.g., community leaders) recruited focus group participants, focus group findings may reflect social desirability bias in favor of personal and community interests. The study may thus have also excluded community members with differing perspectives, namely those who were a) not willing to participate in the study, b) without cell phone communication with community leaders, and c) not favored by community leaders. Finally, the findings only pertain to Peace Island and West Point communities and may not represent the realities in all of Monrovia or Liberia. Survey findings only represent people within these communities who reportedly participated in a dispute in the past year. The results do, however, serve as evidence of an understudied topic and have implications for enhancing programming in urban settlement communities in Liberia.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Carter Center*

**1. Train and utilize community leaders and activists as agents of civic education.**

Investigation into the degree of partnership between The Carter Center's (TCC) Community Justice Advisors (CJAs) and West Point Women (WPW), a women's and SGBV advocacy group, showed evidence of collaboration. WPW indicated that its own group members receive and handle small cases. They transfer large cases to the CJAs due to West Point's size and WPW's limitations in financial and

human resources to handle all cases. The SGBV case manager stated, *"We work voluntarily. But when people got money, they pay people—they pay people—to come serve as a [CJA]… So, we carry cases to them so they can able to charge it because they are on salary."* WPW and other West Point community members also expressed resentment towards TCC for excluding West Pointers as CJAs. A community policing member stated the need for community advocates to be present in communities during times of high crime (i.e., at night or over the weekend). Given that CJAs in both West Point and Peace Island do not live in the communities in which they work, TCC should consider providing basic civic education training to key point people (e.g., community leaders, WPW, community policing).

Although Peace Islanders did not echo this resentment, the community leadership and youth association both expressed unprompted desire to receive and disseminate information on Liberian laws and legal processes. Given Peace Islanders' tendency to defer to community leaders for IPV cases, this supports Schia and de Carvalho's (2009, 2011) call to uphold trusted traditional mechanisms while generating knowledge of and demand for sound state-based justice systems.

**2. Target mass civic education to where people primarily learn rights and laws.**

People in both communities generally reported that they learn of their rights and Liberian formal law from the same sources they trust for this information: media (radio), CJAs, school, and friends/word-of-mouth. To ensure the CJAs' maximum effectiveness in both communities, TCC should consider opportunities to expand the scope of the CJAs' work and breadth of information dissemination. As noted above, such avenues could include training community leaders and youth association members. This is particularly relevant for men, who tend to cite authoritative sources (e.g., community leadership and police) as sources of civic information. TCC should also target messaging to familial and social sources (e.g., church and market) to enable equal information access to women. Perhaps a direct result from nongovernmental women's rights interventions, women also identified NGOs as sources of

civic education. TCC should thus explore opportunities to coordinate with NGOs working in these communities to streamline messaging, particularly pertaining to SGBV and IPV (West Point: International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, Norwegian Refugee Council, etc.). NGOs Concern Worldwide and Christian Association for Regional Development both operate in Peace Island, though their work on SGBV is unclear.

**3. Educate communities on Liberia's upcoming domestic violence law.**

Liberian activists have driven the drafting of Liberia's upcoming domestic violence law. It will include protective orders and criminalize physical, sexual, psychological and/or economic violence between two people engaged in a domestic relationship[9] (Domestic Violence Act 2012). At the time of writing, the drafted domestic violence law would also address study participants' concerns (e.g., violence while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs would not qualify as a defense; definitions of perpetrators and victims are not gender-specific) (Domestic Violence Act 2012). While the law stipulates the use of outreach programs to generate public awareness of domestic violence issues, TCC should consider complementing this with programs to educate communities on the new law. Particular emphasis should continue TCC's mission in equipping citizens with civic knowledge in order to generate demand for accountable legal processes. TCC should also explore ways to educate communities on services (e.g., perpetrator rehabilitation/counseling, safe houses, etc.) and support (e.g., emergency financial compensation to victims and families) provided under the new law (Domestic Violence Act 2012). Recognizing that provision of such resources may lag behind implementation of the new law, TCC should also be careful not to promote false expectations of state-based services and support.

[9] "'Domestic relationship' means a family relationship, a relationship similar to a family relationship or a relationship in a domestic situation that exists or has existed between a complainant and a respondent…" (Domestic Violence Act 2012)

Given that one-third of community members indicated that services were not necessary following non-sexual IPV, monitoring of knowledge diffusion on the domestic violence law should explore whether it a) reaches citizens' common knowledge, b) leads to increased use of social services following IPV, c) increases satisfaction with service outcomes compared traditional services, d) effectively meets survivors' needs if civic education is provided to traditional leadership, and e) alters community members' perceptions of IPV survivors and the importance of IPV services.

*General*

**1. Merge macro-level policies and micro-level interventions.**

In countries recovering from war, reconstruction efforts tend to prioritize state-based security and democracy. Equally crucial, however, is the equitable provision of social services. Nongovernmental sources appear to dominate rights discourse and civic education, whereas governmental dissemination of information is less clear. Given the disconnect between what people seem to know about the law and their utilization of services, integrating information on IPV services with civic education could better harmonize policies and services. This could thus contribute to long-term development and legitimizing the state. People claim to seek health services, if available, though they seem to eschew legal services in favor of traditional mediation, particularly in cases of IPV. Establishing IPV laws is only one component of prevention, then; merging macro-level approaches (e.g., laws, national action plans adhering to international human rights frameworks, etc.) with micro-level social services and NGO interventions is vital.

**2. Rigorously study association between civic knowledge and service-seeking behavior.**

With the influx of national policies adapted from international frameworks (e.g., Liberia National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325), future studies

should assess the extent to which knowledge of such policies influences people's desire and ability to access IPV services. First, qualitative studies should assess communities' readiness for and interpretation of IPV messaging. Quantitative approaches should then holistically assess people's IPV civic knowledge through more extensive questions on laws and legal processes. Questioning should also compare knowledge of SGBV and IPV laws to general civic knowledge. Furthermore, quantitative studies should measure the association between civic knowledge and service-seeking behavior, recognizing availability of services as a likely confounder.

**3. Critically reflect on implications of SGBV- and IPV-centered research questions and interventions.**

While specific SGBV and IPV research and interventions may contribute to gradual diffusion of human rights ideas (women's rights, in particular) (Merry 2006), actors in this field must consider implications of such specialized approaches. First, does the language framing these approaches promote inaccurate concepts of 'gender' (i.e., gender only pertains to women)? Could this, in turn, ostracize men (e.g., male adopters of women's rights ideas; male survivors of SGBV and IPV; non-perpetrating, economically vulnerable men excluded from development initiatives)? In addition, do these approaches diminish the seriousness of other forms of violence, especially in places where general civic knowledge and access to justice are minimal? How does this affect people's responses to SGBV and IPV interventions?

## CONCLUSION

The public health implications of intimate partner violence (IPV) affect communities worldwide. The complexities of post-war environments compound challenges to IPV prevention and response. Such factors include population displacement, a low-functioning formal sector, economic inopportunity, compromised traditional mechanisms, foreign interventions, and gender norm-shifting. Liberia has

enacted governmental policies addressing sexual and gender-based violence in broad terms, while nongovernmental organizations tend to target IPV more directly. This case study of two Monrovia settlement communities sought to contribute to the limited body of knowledge on the overlap between civic knowledge and IPV service-seeking behavior. The study found gendered differences in perceptions and uptake of civic education and IPV services. Additionally, disparities exist between macro- and micro-level interventions. To address these findings, organizations working at the community level should disseminate rights-based and IPV messaging through trusted sources of knowledge and utilize actors in the community as agents of civic education. In addition, integrating information on IPV services with civic education in Liberia could enhance the policies' relevance to nongovernmental services and adequate support of governmental services. This could, in turn, legitimize the state and contribute to long-term development.

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***MANUSCRIPT***

# INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN LIBERIA: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY IN TWO MONROVIA SETTLEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Post-war environments create particular challenges to implementing effective prevention strategies for intimate partner violence[10] (IPV). Such challenges include destroyed infrastructure, internal population displacement, devastated economies, and shifting gender roles (Merry, 2006; Vyas & Watts, 2008). Minimal literature exists on post-war IPV (Stark, 2010; Warner, 2007); in particular, we know relatively little about the overlap between people's knowledge of the law and whether and how they access IPV services. Liberia is one such example; despite the political and legal advances since Liberia's civil wars (1989-1996, 1999-2003), IPV remains highly prevalent (LISGIS 2007; Tomczyk et al., 2007; Warner, 2007), and we do not yet know the extent to which Liberians access IPV services.

For 14 years, Liberia experienced a violent civil war that killed a quarter of a million people, devastated the country's once-promising economy, and left its infrastructure in ruins. Over half of the population fled across the border or to other parts of Liberia due to extreme brutality. Estimates indicate that approximately 40% of people experienced sexual violence during the war, two-thirds of whom were women (UN, 2011). In addition to rape and other forms of sexual assault, sexual violence during the war also included transactional sex. Due to insecurity, minimal resources, and men's restricted ability to work during the war, some women intentionally engaged in sexual relations with combatants to acquire food and protection (UN, 2011). Some husbands and wives made this decision jointly, though marital

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[10] We define intimate partner violence (IPV) as "physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse" (CDC, 2010). For the purpose of this paper, we identify IPV as a specific form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The United Nations defines SGBV as, "violence that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their gender," and, "any act, attempt, or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result in, physical, psychological, and emotional harm" (IRIN, 2004). Acknowledging that international, governmental, and nongovernmental bodies in Liberia use the term 'SGBV', we use 'IPV' to a) accurately reflect the realities of SGBV in our study communities (i.e. predominantly domestic, rather than stranger-perpetrated) and b) call attention to how IPV specifically may be excluded from governmental and nongovernmental policies and interventions.

tensions pervaded (UN, 2011). Indeed, IPV now characterizes the experiences of SGBV survivors in post-war Liberia. As of 2007, 47.1% of women between the ages of 15-49 reported to have experienced any form of spousal violence in the previous year (DHS, 2007).

In countries recovering from war, reconstruction efforts tend to prioritize state-based security and democracy. It is equally crucial, however, to provide equitable social services. Under the presidency of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, post-war Liberia has prioritized efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Such efforts include enacting a punitive rape law, establishing a special court for prosecuting rape crimes, and developing a National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. In this case study of two urban settlement communities in Monrovia, it is clear that information about Liberia's rape laws[11] is reaching people. People claim to seek health services, if available, though they seem to eschew legal services in favor of traditional mediation, particularly in cases of IPV. Establishing IPV laws is only one component of prevention, then; merging macro-level approaches (e.g., laws, national action plans adhering to international human rights frameworks, etc.) with micro-level social services is vital.

IPV legal and social services in countries recovering from war must occur simultaneously. The former targets structural violence and aims to ground social services in a legitimate political context; the latter meets individual needs and seeks to influence behavior change on a community-wide level (Ní Aoláin et al., 2011; Bott et al., 2005; Malhotra, 2009; Morrison et al., 2007). Linking IPV social services to peace-building and development objectives (particularly those centered on building state legitimacy) may strengthen both sectors. Seeking to understand whether civic knowledge is relevant to service-seeking behavior following IPV, this study examined perceptions and accessibility of civic education and services following IPV in two settlement communities, West Point and Peace Island.

**METHODS**

From May to July 2012, we conducted eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with women and men, aged over 18 years. We conducted four FGDs in each community: two with women, and two with men. Participants represented various ethnic groups and geographic locations in the community. FGDs gathered data on community members' perceptions of IPV services and sources of civic knowledge. Five in-depth interviews (IDIs) and one FGD with purposively selected male and female service providers[12] garnered service providers' views of effective IPV reduction strategies and services.

A cross-sectional random cluster survey (Peace Island: n=183; West Point: n=212) of women and men, aged over 18 years, assessed the following: services needed to assist a person in reasserting his/her role as a contributing community member after experiencing rape and/or spousal beating, sources of civic education, and trustworthiness of these sources. To assess participants' knowledge of Liberian formal

[11] At the time of data collection and writing, Liberia had drafted but not yet established a new domestic violence law.

[12] The sample of service providers included: a men's group trained in SGBV community education, the advocacy coordinator at an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), a community legal advisor for a program jointly affiliated with a local and international NGO, a women's group SGBV liaison, a member of a women's protection police unit, and a member of the United Nations-instituted community policing forum.

law, the survey asked whether a man could be found guilty for raping his wife[13], whether a woman could rape a man, and whether a perpetrator needed to be present in order for a person to report a rape. We field-tested the survey in a neighboring community excluded from the study and implemented over the course of two weeks.

We used grounded theory to analyze qualitative data and assess perceptions of IPV services, service accessibility, and civic education. We cleaned and analyzed quantitative survey data in Stata 12.0 (StataCorp, 2011).

**RESULTS**

*Service-seeking behavior*

Participants identified two key reasons why survivors and survivors' family members seek out services following IPV: to support the survivor's wellbeing and to generate evidence of the reported crime. Women provided only two of the 17 responses, both of which centered on the survivor's wellbeing.

Most community members (Peace Island: 92.9%; West Point: 89.2%) indicated that following rape, counseling services would restore rape survivors' perceptions of themselves as contributing members of a community[14]. Other most commonly noted services following rape included peer or family support (Peace Island: 62.6%; West Point: 71.2%) and education (Peace Island: 31.9%; West Point: 29.7%). Following spousal abuse, half of all respondents indicated that counseling services would enable the victim to return to feeling like a contributing member of the community (Peace Island: 57.1%; West Point: 46.7%). Respondents also commonly noted use of peer or family support (Peace Island: 36.8%; West Point: 42.9%). Over a third of all respondents, however, indicated that no services would be necessary; partner beating does not change a person's contribution to the community (Peace Island: 34.6%; West Point: 42.9%).

Participants stated that they would notify community leadership and police to investigate the crime and determine the perpetrator's punishment. They identified formal mechanisms (e.g., police and court) as last-resort options only in cases of beating and only if partner communication and informal interventions failed. As one Peace Island woman noted, "*I will first of all call my family. If we can't settle the matter amicably, then the police will eventually have to intervene*." Service providers confirmed this order of seeking services, given the perception that formal mechanisms can destroy relationships. A female member of the women's protection police unit described efforts to counter this perception: "*The police try to convince men that they [police] are not there to ruin their relationships at home.*"

In addition, a number of logistical, economic, and social barriers inhibited community members' access to services following IPV. Some respondents also noted general unavailability of health facilities (West

[13] The current rape law does not define perpetrators and thus does not explicitly include marital rape. It does not, however, explicitly *exclude* marital rape.

[14] The top three responses to qualities that define a person as a contributing community member included: participates in community social activities (Peace Island: 74.7%; West Point: 76.4%), keeps community clean (Peace Island: 70.3%; West Point: 72.6%), and makes decisions that affect the community (Peace Island: 63.7%; West Point: 75.5%).

Point and Peace Island) and police stations (Peace Island). The most common logistical impediment was a lack of means (e.g., no ambulance, gas, or vehicle) to get to a health facility or police station. In Peace Island, distance to services exacerbated this, which one man indicated as a reason to use informal mechanisms: *"…the police station is far from here. So, you have to arrest [citizen's arrest] the person and carry that person to the chairman. Then after that, the chairman can say, 'Oh, let's take the person to the police.' So, we would call the police."*

*Trust*

Participants' perceptions of services' trustworthiness also played a role in their decisions to seek services following IPV. Peace Island residents identified traditional leadership (e.g., community leaders, elders' council, women's group) as the governing body within the community. When asked about rules by which community members live, both women and men implicitly referred to the effectiveness of and trust they put in traditional leadership. As a result, Peace Island men stated that the community chairman should always be notified of IPV cases to allow for transparency of the goings-on in the community and to give survivors the option of going through traditional leadership to seek formal services.

Peace Island men also identified situations in which they did not trust traditional leadership. Although men discussed a general problem of all levels of authority compromising female-perpetrated violence, they noted a preference in carrying such cases to the police to avoid community members' humor regarding the situation: *"If I see my man in that kind of condition, I prefer taking the case to the police. I take the case to the police because if I carry it to the community people, it would be compromised. It would even be funny. People would be laughing"* (Man, Peace Island).

One Peace Island woman referred to community members' trust in outside groups to provide education on sexual behavior and IPV due to young people's unwillingness to receive information from family members. She noted that young girls "*don't want to listen [to their parents]. But when you come as [research assistant's name], when you tell her something, because you came from a far place, she will listen*." Other indications of trust or distrust in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) came primarily from service providers. One provider acknowledged NGOs' accessibility and resourcefulness in supporting her community-based organization's work.

*Perceptions of rights-based programming*

When discussing the influence of rights-based programming in Liberia, both Peace Islanders and West Pointers noted the external influence of such ideas and interventions (i.e., the recognition of IPV-oriented programs and human and women's rights as brought to Liberia from elsewhere). Women's perceptions focused on the effectiveness of having outsiders conduct civic education. One woman discussed the need for workshops in Peace Island, "*to teach us. Here on Peace Island, we are not educated on all these things, all the laws.*"

Men, however, highlighted what they perceived as the conflicting nature of human rights. On the one hand, foreigners promote human rights, which include protection, choice, and access to services. Men's confusion arises when the same foreigners condemn behaviors that result from rights to choice and could lead to sexual and domestic violence (e.g., choice of drinking alcohol). One Peace Island man said, "*The country is polluted with all of these things [rights]. The white people brought it. We're confused now! [laughs]."*

Additionally, service providers discussed the general newness and seeming foreignness of rights agendas. One respondent indicated that he perceived NGOs accusing Liberian men of normative violence. Another noted, *"some of us are getting used to the issue of peace-building"* (Man, community policing). A member of a West Point men's group described the tendency to defend "African culture" from "Western ideologies" before succumbing to such ideologies: *"As an African, before our training, our involvement, we felt convicted. I mean, this is what we do! It's our way of life! So, we are convinced that, indeed, the accusation that we are perpetrating violence is true!"* (Man, men's group).

*Civic education and knowledge*

When asked to write down where they learn their rights, women identified familial or social sources (e.g., parents, school, children who attend school, market, church, and community/friends). Most men, however, claimed to learn of their rights from school. They noted that other sources include parents/home, court, community, radio, workshops, constitution, and police. Women and men in both communities also identified laws that they know, the most prominent being prohibition of rape, murder, and theft. Generally, women indicated familial or nongovernmental sources of legal knowledge (e.g., school, parents/children, Bible, NGOs), whereas men highlighted formal services and media (e.g., police, community leadership, radio).

Survey respondents did not cite authoritative sources (e.g., police, courts, community leadership, etc.) as frequently as focus group participants did. Peace Islanders and West Pointers most commonly identified media (79.2% and 86.3%, respectively) and friends or word-of-mouth (44.8% and 49.8%, respectively). Two-thirds of participants in both communities noted media as the most trustworthy source of civic education (Peace Island: 66.1%; West Point: 64%), followed by community legal advisers (37.7% and 29.9%, respectively) and school (35% and 34.6%, respectively).

In Peace Island, 43.7% of respondents answered all three questions about Liberia's rape law correctly[15], compared to 36.8% of West Pointers. Less than 9% of West Pointers, however, had no civic knowledge, compared to 10.9% of Peace islanders. More men (51.4%) than women (33.3%) demonstrated high civic knowledge. Of those with no civic knowledge pertaining to IPV, 6.2% were men, and 11.7% were women. Educational attainment yielded no explicit pattern of civic knowledge, although fewer respondents with low or no education (36.8%) had high civic knowledge, compared with those who completed primary school (44.2%) and secondary school or higher (37.5%).

**DISCUSSION**

Liberia has been the focus of much international work and funding centered on SGBV. Currently, Liberia's formal SGBV policies only include rape, with no explicit inclusion of marital rape (though they does not explicitly exclude it). Concurrent with mass messaging on Liberia's rape law, many NGO interventions target IPV specifically. A disconnect may thus exist between policies, NGO interventions, and local realities.

[15] Can a husband be found guilty for raping his wife? Can a woman rape a man? Does a perpetrator need to be present in order to report a rape?

Findings from Peace Island and West Point indicate that community members preferred traditional mechanisms for resolving IPV cases and formal services for handling statutory and stranger-perpetrated rape cases. This may be due to the fact that the Liberian government had not yet enacted the newly drafted domestic violence law at the time of data collection and writing. Given that a third of community members, however, deemed that social services were not necessary following non-sexual IPV, subsequent research should explore whether the new domestic violence law a) reaches citizens' common knowledge, b) leads to increased use of social services following IPV, c) increases satisfaction with service outcomes compared traditional services, d) effectively meets survivors' needs if civic education is provided to traditional leadership, and e) alters community members' perceptions of IPV survivors and the importance of IPV services.

Furthermore, most people cited media as a prominent civic education source. External sources, such as NGOs and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, generate much of the rights-based messaging through media. Despite the inclination to take statutory and stranger-perpetrated rape cases to governmental services (e.g., police), respondents still indicated distrust of the formal system. This was mainly due to issues with ethical practice, confidentiality, and availability of resources. Thus, although people receive rights-based information, their inclination to utilize formal services appears minimal. Preliminary work[16] also suggests that women and men perceive governmental and nongovernmental services differently.

Despite its contributions to a limited body of knowledge on civic education and IPV services, this study has a number of limitations. First, we assessed civic knowledge and perceptions of services separately. Future studies should more rigorously evaluate communities' civic knowledge. Such studies should also quantitatively explore associations between civic knowledge and utilization of services. Additionally, the power dynamics between the research team and participants, especially during qualitative data collection, could have influenced responses. Finally, the findings only pertain to Peace Island and West Point communities and may not represent the realities in all of Monrovia or Liberia.

The results do, however, serve as evidence of an understudied topic and may apply to urban settlement communities in other post-conflict and developing countries. Nongovernmental sources appear to dominate rights discourse and civic education, whereas governmental information dissemination is less clear. Integrating information on IPV services with civic education in Liberia could better harmonize policies and services. This could, in turn, legitimize the state and contribute to long-term development.

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***APPENDIX A: IRB NOTICE***

EMORY UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

April 18, 2013

**RE: Determination: No IRB Review Required**
**eIRB#: 00057556**
**Title:** *Formal Approaches to Social Reintegration of Sexual Violence Survivors and Perpetrators in Post-War Liberia*
**PI: Dr. Pamela Scully/ Erin Berstein**

Dear Dr. Scully and Erin:

Thank you for requesting a determination from our office about the above-referenced project. Based on our review of the materials you provided, we have determined that it does not require IRB review because it does not meet the definition(s) of "research" or "clinical investigation" involving "human subjects" as set forth in Emory policies and procedures and federal rules, if applicable. Specifically, in this project, you will interview members of state-based institutions and community members to examine the prevalence and systems to re-integrate after post-sexual violence. With your goal being to inform or modify a public health system, this project does not require IRB review.

Please note that this determination does not mean that you cannot publish the results. If you have questions about this issue, please contact me.

This determination could be affected by substantive changes in the study design, subject populations, or identifiability of data. If the project changes in any substantive way, please contact our office for clarification.

Thank you for consulting the IRB.

Sincerely,

Aric Edwards, BA
Research Protocol Analyst

## *APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES*

**FGD 1: SERVICES**

*Introduction*

Hi, everyone. Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion. My name is _____, and this is my assistant, Erin. We will have refreshments for everyone at the end of the discussion. You will also be compensated for your time at the end of the discussion.

Over the next few months, this research team will be conducting group discussions with women and men in West Point and Peace Island. It is part of a project looking at what people think of SGBV services in the community. Erin and her colleagues are from Emory University in America. They are students who do not work for an organization here, but they plan to use this information to support the work that some organizations are doing here. These organizations include The Carter Center, International Rescue Committee, etc.

We are mostly interested in learning what communities think of these services. We value your views and opinions. They will be helpful in understanding how to improve these services.

Your participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you are uncomfortable at any point, you are welcome to leave. We do value your opinions and hope you will stay to share your views.

Before we begin, let me tell you a little bit about how we will conduct the group discussion today. This conversation is completely confidential. That means that we must agree as a group to not talk to people outside of this group about any person in this group and what they said during the discussion. Everything we talk about will only be used for this research project. Do we all agree to respect each other's privacy and keep the discussion confidential?

[Pause for agreement]

After the discussion, all identifying information like names of people will be taken out. Does anyone have any questions about confidentiality?

[Pause for questions]

Please feel comfortable talking, agreeing, and disagreeing with one another. Please also respect others' points of view. There are no right or wrong answers. We will not go around the room for answers to questions. You may join the conversation at any point, but please allow one person to speak at a time.

During the discussion, Erin will be taking notes. So she do not have to worry about writing every word on paper, she would like to tape record the discussion. The reason for recording is so that we do not miss anything that is said. As mentioned before, anything that is said today will remain completely confidential. We will only use first names during the discussion. The recording will be securely stored so only the research team can access it.

Is it OK with everyone that we record this discussion?

[Pause for permission.]

Great. Thank you. The discussion will last 1-2 hours. What questions do you have before we start?

*Opening Questions*

To start, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please say your first name and your favorite Liberian dish. I'll start. My name is…

First, let's talk about our community.

[Lay out large piece of paper and hand participants black markers.]

Using the black marker, please draw a map of the community. You can use the marker to locate places you go to on a weekly basis (like schools, churches, markets, clinic, etc.).

The map does not need to be perfect. It's just to give a general idea of what the community looks like.

[Allow 3-5 minutes]

1. Tell me about the map that you have drawn of the community. (Probe: What did you draw?)
2. What are some of the things you have done together that have benefited the community?
3. What are some of things that are giving you a hard time in this community?

*Safety*

With the blue marker, locate places in the community where you feel safe.

4. What places have you drawn on the map?
5. Why do you feel safe in these places?

With the red marker, locate places in the community where you feel unsafe.

6. What places have you drawn on the map?
7. Why do you feel unsafe in these places?

*Services*

Let's talk a little bit about services in the community.

8. In the case of theft, where would you go for help? Please draw these services on the map.

9. **FOR WOMEN:** If someone got your friend pregnant and then left, where would your friend go for services? Please draw these services on the map with the green marker. / **FOR MEN:** If the girlfriend of your friend leaves the community and leaves the child with your friend, where should your friend go for help? Please draw these services on the map with the green marker?

10. If a person in the community is raped, where would this person go for services? Please draw these services on the map with the green marker.

11. If your friend's partner beat him or her, where would your friend go for help? Please draw these services on the map with the green marker.

*Ranking Services*

12. In the first scenario (theft), where would you go first?

13. Where would you go second?

14. In the second scenario (child abandonment), where would you go first?

15. Where would you go second?

16. In the third scenario (rape), where would you go first?

17. Where would you go second?

18. In the fourth scenario (beating), where would you go first?

19. Where would you go second?

*Closing Questions*

We have talked about a lot of issues and services.

20. What are the best ways to address the problems we have talked about today?

Please draw your ideal community.

21. What services do you think should belong in your community?

We appreciate your participation. Your perspectives and opinions are valuable in helping us understand how to improve services in the community. Thank you.

**FGD 2: CIVIC EDUCATION**

*Introduction*

Hi, everyone. Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion. My name is _____, and this is my assistant, Erin. We will have refreshments for everyone at the end of the discussion. You will also be compensated for your time at the end of the discussion.

Since May, this research team has been conducting group discussions with women and men in West Point and Peace Island. It is part of a project looking at what people think about SGBV services in the community. Erin and her colleagues are from Emory University in America. They are students who do not work for an organization here, but they plan to use this information to support the work that some organizations are doing here. These organizations include The Carter Center, International Rescue Committee, etc.

For this conversation, we are interested in knowing what you think about rights and laws. We are also interested in knowing where you learn rights and laws. We value your views and opinions. They will be helpful in understanding how to improve these services.

Your participation in this discussion is voluntary. If you are uncomfortable at any point, you are welcome to leave. We do value your opinions and hope you will stay to share your views.

Before we begin, let me tell you a little bit about how we will conduct the group discussion today. This conversation is completely confidential. That means that we must agree as a group to not talk to people outside of this group about any person in this group and what they said during the discussion. Everything we talk about will only be used for this research project. Do we all agree to respect each other's privacy and keep the discussion confidential?

[Pause for agreement]

After the discussion, all identifying information like names of people will be taken out. Does anyone have any questions about confidentiality?

[Pause for questions]

Please feel comfortable talking, agreeing, and disagreeing with one another. Please also respect others' points of view. There are no right or wrong answers. We will not go around the room for answers to questions. You may join the conversation at any point, but please allow one person to speak at a time.

During the discussion, Erin will be taking notes. So she do not have to worry about writing every word on paper, she would like to tape record the discussion. The reason for recording is so that we do not miss anything that is said. As mentioned before, anything that is said today will remain completely confidential. We will only use first names during the discussion. The recording will be securely stored so only the research team can access it.

Is it OK with everyone that we record this discussion?

[Pause for permission.]

Great. Thank you. The discussion will last 1-2 hours. What questions do you have before we start?

*Opening Questions*

1. What are some community rules you have here?

2. Who gave you the rules that you live by here?

*Rights*

[Give each participant a marker and four small pieces of paper.]

First, I want to talk about your rights.

3. When you think of human rights, what comes to mind?

4. What rights do you know? Please write one on each piece of paper that I have given you. If you need help writing, Erin and I can help you.

[5 minutes for activity]

Now, please put all of your papers on the table. Together, let's group the ones that are similar to each other.

[3 minutes for activity]

Good work. What are the main groups of rights that we have written?

[Read them out loud. Erin will write them new small pieces of paper.
Give out four more pieces of paper to each participant]

Now I would like to know where you learn these rights.

5. On each piece of paper, please write down one place or person where you have learned about these rights.

[5 minutes for activity]

Like we did before, please put all of your papers on the table. Again, let's group the ones that are similar to each other.

[3 minutes for activity]

Good. What are the main places we have written?

[Read them out loud. Erin will write them on large piece of paper.

Erin will lay out large piece of paper with all of the places/people written on it.
She will also present the smaller pieces of paper with the main rights that participants know]

This large piece of paper has all of these places listed on it. These small pieces of paper have the main rights that you know.

6. For each of these rights, please put the paper on top of the place where you learn these rights.

[5-7 minutes for activity]

*Laws*

[Give each participant a marker and four small pieces of paper.]

We are going to do the same activity, but this time we will talk about Liberian formal law.

7. What formal laws do you know? Please write one on each piece of paper that I have given you.

[5 minutes for activity]

Just as we did before, please put all of your papers on the table. Let's group the ones that are similar to each other.

[3 minutes for activity]

Good. What are the main groups of laws that we have written?

[Read them out loud. Erin will write them new small pieces of paper.
Give out four more pieces of paper to each participant]

Now I would like to know where you learn about these laws.

8. On each piece of paper, please write down one place or person where you have learned about these laws.

[5 minutes for activity]

Like we did before, please put all of your papers on the table. Again, let's group the ones that are similar to each other.

[3 minutes for activity]

What are the main places we have written?

[Read them out loud. Erin will write them on large piece of paper.
Erin will lay out large piece of paper with all of the places/people written on it.
She will also present the smaller pieces of paper with the main laws that participants know]

This large piece of paper has all of these places listed on it. These small pieces of paper have the main laws that you know.

9. For each of these laws, please put the paper on top of the place where you learn these rights.

[5-7 minutes for activity]

*SGBV*

10. How can people use their knowledge of rights and laws to prevent conflicts?
11. What laws and rights relate to sexual and gender-based violence?
12. What do you think people can do to prevent sexual and gender-based violence?

*Closing Questions*

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. We have talked about many issues today.

13. Of everything we have discussed, what is most important to you?
14. How can people improve relations in the community?

We appreciate your participation. Your perspectives and opinions are valuable. Thank you.

## *APPENDIX C: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE*

*Introduction*

Thank you taking the time to be interviewed today, and thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. My name is Erin Bernstein. I am from Emory University in the United States. I am conducting a research project on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) services in Liberia. I am here today to talk with you and others working on this issue to learn about your work. I am interested in learning what you think works for preventing and responding to SGBV. I am also interested in learning what you think could be improved

Since May, I have been conducting group discussions with women and men in West Point and Peace Island. It is part of a project looking at what people think about SGBV services in the community. Like I said, I am a university student. I do not work for an organization here. I do plan to use this information, though, to support the work that some organizations are doing here. These organizations include The Carter Center, International Rescue Committee, etc.

Your experiences and perspectives are valuable, and I am here to learn from you. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. That means that you are not forced to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Please let me know if you are uncomfortable answering questions. We can stop at any time.

This is a sensitive topic, and I thank you again for agreeing to speak with me about it. I want to assure you that I am comfortable speaking about any topics that may come up. This conversation is completely confidential. That means that I will only use the information you are providing me for this project. Any research documents relating to this discussion will not mention your name. Also, only I will listen to the recording.

It is important that I accurately capture all that we say today, since it is hard for me to write down everything. With your permission, I would like to record our conversation. May I record the discussion?

[Pause for permission.]

Thank you. I have a list of topics I would like us to talk about, but please feel free to bring up any other issues that you feel are relevant. There are no right or wrong answers, and I am most interested in your personal opinions. The interview will last about an hour. Do you have any questions before we start?

[Pause for questions.]

*Opening Questions*

First, I'd like to learn about you and your organization.

1. Tell me about what you do here at [name of organization].

2. Who do you provide services for?
   Probe: gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, socio-economic status, location

*Organizational Definitions*

I'd like to learn more about who you serve and what definitions you use.

3. How does your organization define 'SGBV'?

4. When your organization talks about perpetrators of SGBV, who are you referring to?

5. When your organization talks about survivors of SGBV, who are you referring to?

*Services and Civic/Community Education*

6. Tell me about the services your organization provides that relate to SGBV.

7. Please describe the community education your organization provides.
   Probe: target population, content, background of educators, timeline, avenues of education

8. What programs or services that you provide have been successful?
   Probe: define 'successful'

9. Which programs or services have not been successful?

*Closing Questions*

We have talked about a number of issues regarding SGBV and services today.

10. Of all the services we have talked about, what do you think is the most effective in preventing SGBV?

11. What lessons has your organization learned when it comes to preventing SGBV?

12. Is there anything we have not talked about that you would like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Do you have any final questions for me?

Thank you.

## *APPENDIX D: ENUMERATION MAPS*

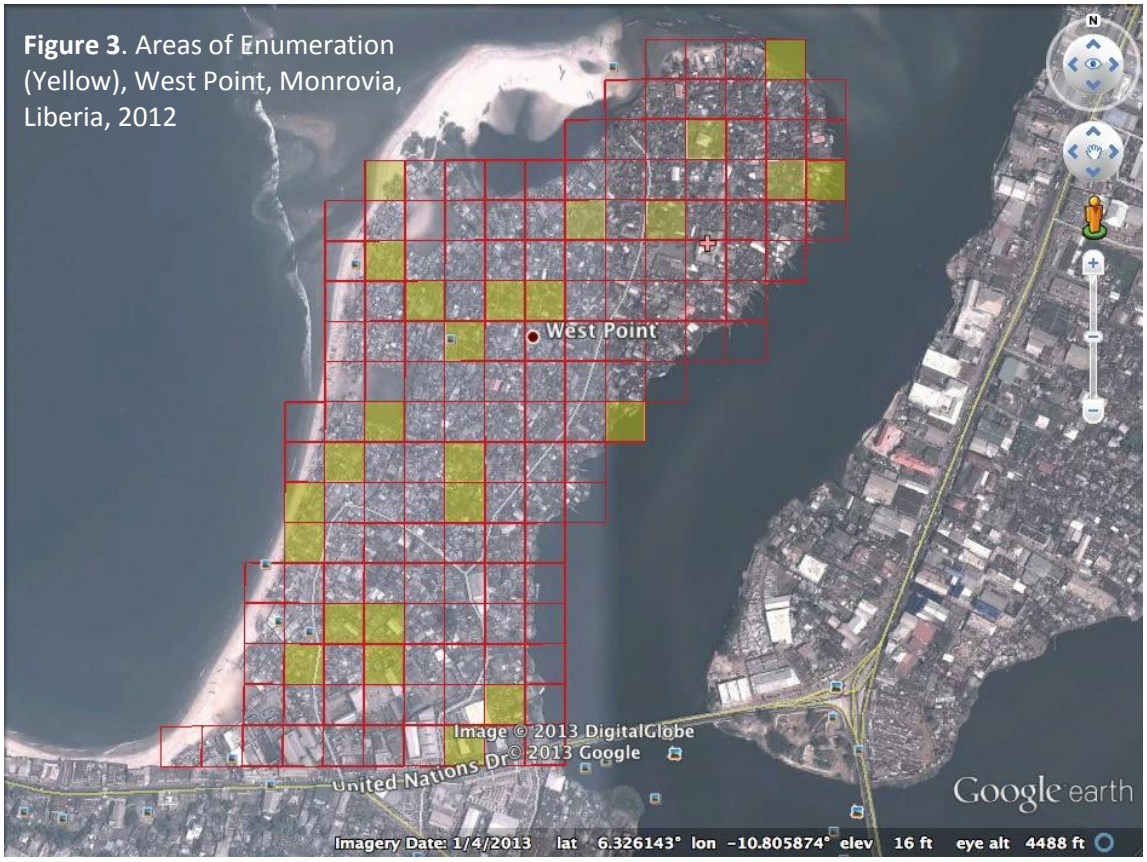


**Figure 3**. Areas of Enumeration (Yellow), West Point, Monrovia, Liberia, 2012

*Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2013*

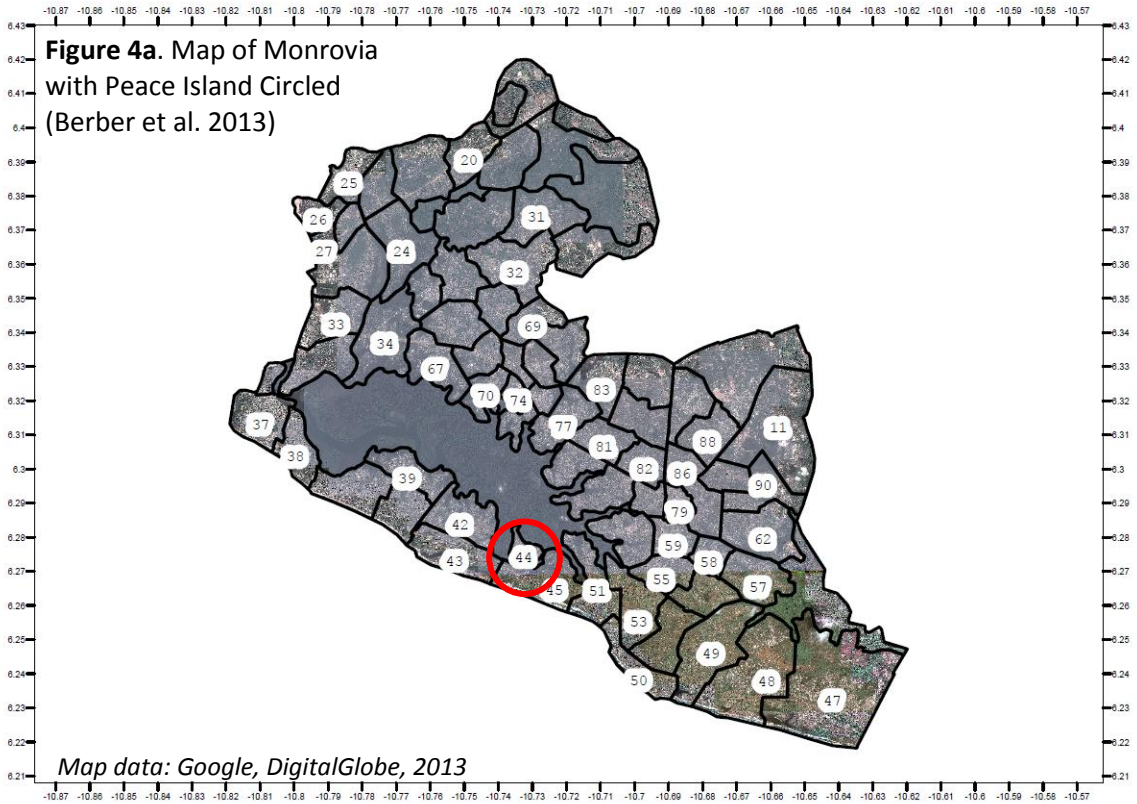


**Figure 4a**. Map of Monrovia with Peace Island Circled (Berber et al. 2013)

*Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2013*

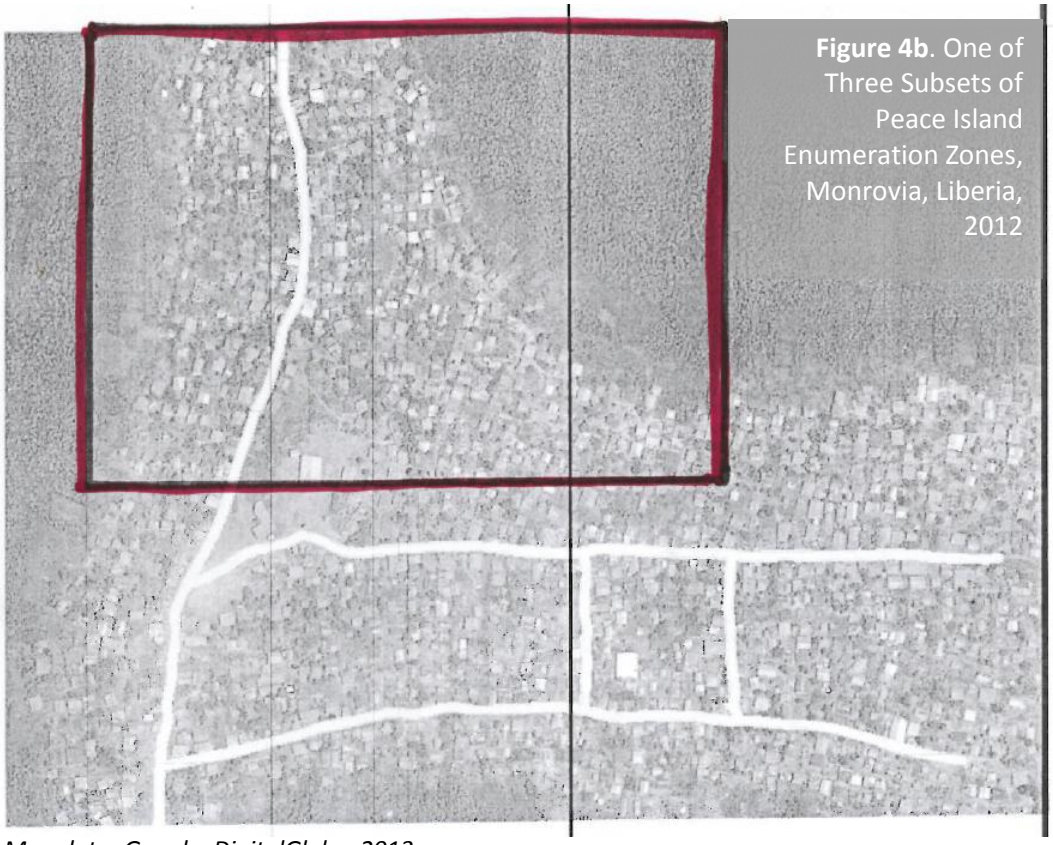

**Figure 4b**. One of Three Subsets of Peace Island Enumeration Zones, Monrovia, Liberia, 2012

*Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2013*

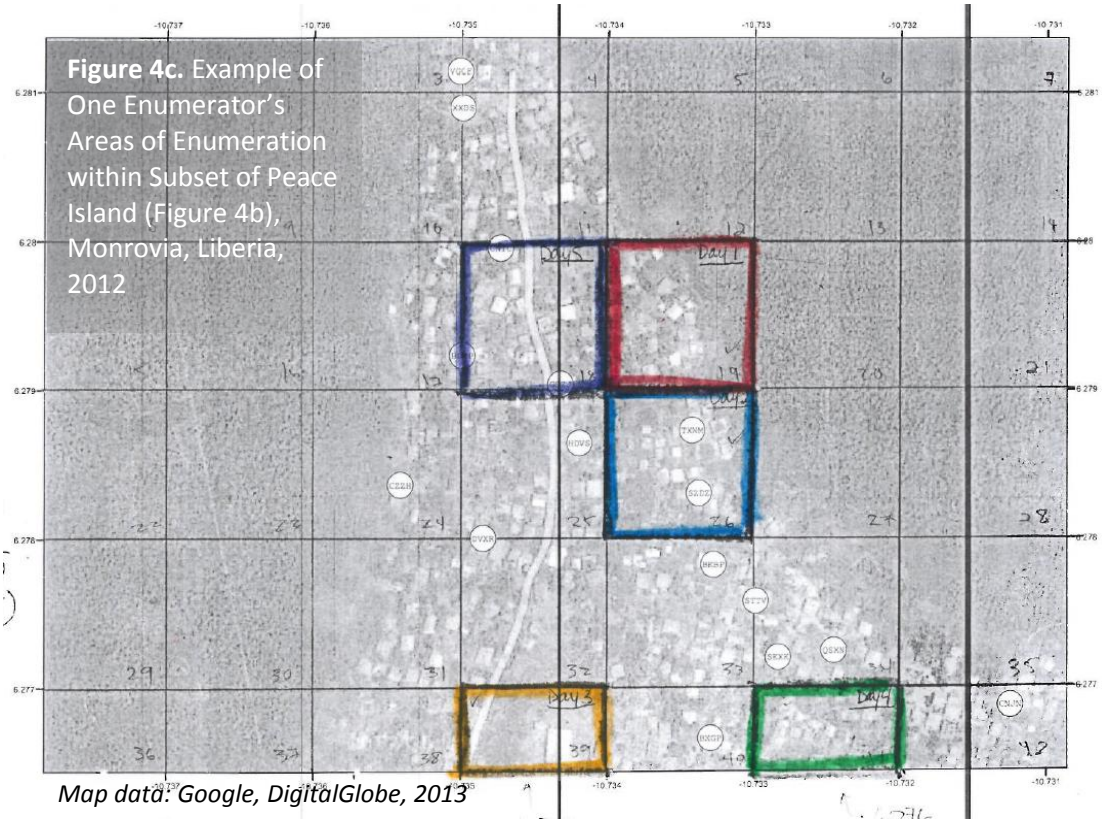

**Figure 4c.** Example of One Enumerator's Areas of Enumeration within Subset of Peace Island (Figure 4b), Monrovia, Liberia, 2012

*Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2013*