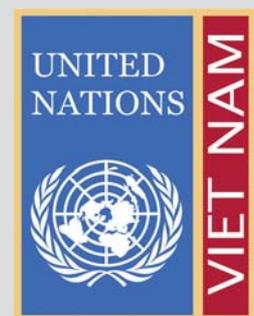# 'Teach the wife when she first arrives'

Trajectories and pathways into violent and non-violent masculinities in Hue city and Phu Xuyen district, Viet Nam

partners
for prevention

UNITED NATIONS
VIET NAM

Hanoi, December 2012

'Teach the wife when she first arrives'
Trajectories and pathways into violent and non-violent masculinities
in Hue City and Phu Xuyen district, Viet Nam

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Partners for Prevention is a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women & UNV Asia-Pacific Regional Joint Programme for Gender-based Violence Prevention. Partners for Prevention gratefully acknowledges AusAID, DFID, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA for their generous support of this programme.

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PREFACE

Across the world, gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of the most pervasive, yet least recognized, human rights violations. GBV occurs across cultural, geographic, religious, social and economic boundaries, exists in both private and public spheres and occurs in times of peace and in times of conflict. Gender-based violence not only impacts the individual, but it impairs families, communities and societies as a whole.

This report, *'Teach the wife when she first arrives': Trajectories and pathways into violent and non-violent masculinities in the research areas in Viet Nam* [1] , is part of **The Change Project**, an innovative, action-oriented research project with a long-term goal to prevent GBV and promote more peaceful societies. It is a large multi-country study that interviews men and women to explore the connections between masculinities, gender and power in order to enhance violence prevention policies and programmes. Coordinated by Partners for Prevention (P4P), a UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV Asia-Pacific regional joint programme for GBV prevention, the project is a collaboration between the United Nations, civil society groups, governments and researchers from around the region and the world.

Throughout past decades, many countries in the Asia-Pacific region have made significant advances in terms of public awareness, laws and policies to end violence and promote gender equality. Yet there has been little or no measured decrease in violence in the region. To date, much of the work to address GBV in the region has centred on responding to violence. While service provision is a critical step toward ensuring the human rights and dignity of those who experience violence, to effectively end GBV, more attention must be dually focused on violence prevention, to stop violence before it occurs. Further, global research shows that men are the primary perpetrators of violence. Consequently, understanding prevailing social norms, men's attitudes and behaviours, and how GBV is related to dominant notions of 'what it means to be a man' are vital for effective prevention and promoting more gender-equitable masculinities.

Significantly, the research in this report shows that violence is preventable. This research demonstrates that violence is not necessarily socially acceptable in Viet Nam, although men's control and authority over their wives is widely legitimized. Multiple masculinities are evident from these interviews, and for some men, masculinity is in fact associated with calmness and education, rather than violence and dominance. Masculinities are also clearly not static. This report offers many examples of how men's ideas of manhood evolve over time. This in-depth information on pathways to violent and non-violent practices offers spaces for transformation and more effective violence prevention interventions.

For more information on The Change Project, contact Partners for Prevention, partners4prevention@one.un.org.

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[1] The title of this report uses a direct quote from one of the research participants. It is meant to convey the widespread nature of beliefs around men's authority and dominance within the household sphere. However, it should be noted that the research findings also point toward the complex array of norms, attitudes and practices associated with masculinities in Viet Nam.

FOREWORD

Gender-based violence results from gender-based discrimination and inequality. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993 stated that "Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women; and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men."

In Viet Nam, the first National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam (GSO, 2010) shows that one in three (34 percent) of ever-married women experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their husbands once in their lifetimes. The data also indicates that almost half of abused women (49.6 percent) did not report violent episodes (GSO, 2010), which suggests that conservative societal perceptions on violence greatly contribute to acceptance of violence by women and men.

There is a growing consensus that boys and men, together with girls and women, have an essential role to play in ending violence, both within their own relationships as well as in their larger communities. Therefore, in working against gender-based violence (GBV), men must be seen not only as part of the problem but also as part of the solution.

In 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, a landmark commitment from the highest level of the UN, recognizing that "For many years, women around the world have led efforts to prevent and end violence, and today more and more men are adding their support to the women's movement. Men have a crucial role to play as fathers, friends, decision makers, and community and opinion leaders, in speaking out against violence against women and ensuring that priority attention is given to the issue." Importantly, men can provide positive role models for boys and young men, based on examples of shared mutual responsibility with respect to parenthood, sexual and reproductive health and family life, as mentioned in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (referred to as the Cairo Consensus)and its 1999 review, as well as in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).

Given that men's violent behavior is deeply rooted in rigid gender norms and the manner in which boys and men are socialized, it is essential to understand prevailing social norms and men's attitudes and behaviours – and how these perpetuate gender inequalities and gender-based violence. As such, this research study aims at understanding how we can stop violence before it happens by examining its root causes, and what influences across men's lives drive certain equitable or inequitable attitudes and behaviours.

In Viet Nam, efforts to address the problem of GBV exist and a policy and legal framework is in place. The Government is committed to strengthen coordination among stakeholders and pilot a minimum package of interventions on gender-based violence prevention. This includes promoting male engagement to address and prevent domestic violence, and recognizes the important role of boys and men, as well as girls and women, in violence prevention approaches.

This paper reflects the research findings of qualitative life history research with men in two selected areas in Viet Nam that explore trajectories and pathways into certain attitudes and behaviours related to gender (in) equality and violence. The same cutting-edge research methodology has been applied to understand the root causes of gender-based violence and their relation to

masculinities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka. We hope that this report will influence policy-makers and relevant stakeholders working on GBV to drive strategic planning, visioning and priority setting on GBV prevention and response programmes and programming in Viet Nam that involves boys and men, together with girls and women.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, *'Teach the wife when she first arrives': Trajectories and pathways into violent and non-violent masculinities in Viet Nam*, is based on life history qualitative research conducted in two sites in Viet Nam: Hue and Phu Xuyen. (The research was commissioned by UNFPA Viet Nam and UN Women Viet Nam, with technical support from Partners for Prevention, an Asia-Pacific regional joint UN programme for GBV prevention).The research aims to look in-depth at individual men's life histories to understand what factors push men toward more violent notions of what it means to be a man, and what factors cause men to associate being a man with more gender-equitable, non-violent practices. These research findings have particular significance for prevention work on GBV in Viet Nam. Ultimately, this research shows that violence is not inevitable and that change is possible.

Summary of key findings

Violence is commonly seen as a disciplinary tool to establish and maintain men's authority, most often within the family setting.

In the life histories, this is primarily reflected through the impact of childhood experiences of corporal punishment in the home by father figures. However, experiences of violence by authority figures in school reinforce this association between violence as a policing mechanism to establish and maintain authority.

In addition, violence is associated with masculinities across the life history trajectories through the demonstration of dominance and strength of an individual in contrast to other men, thus constructing hierarchies of men according to socially desirable masculine attributes. Two periods of the life history seem to correspond to these constructions of masculinities in relation to violence: perpetration of violence among peers during childhood and initiation experiences during military service.

While physical violence is generally condemned in society, violence against wives and children is still considered legitimate, so long as this violence occurs within private settings and does not move into the public sphere.

The life history interviews showed different levels of acceptability and perceived legitimacy of different types of violence. Many respondents noted a significant level of community intervention and disapproval of physical violence, yet across the life history interviews, it is clear that these perceptions differ for public and private violence. Public violence was widely condemned. Yet in the private sphere, both corporal punishment against children and use of violence against wives were considered to be sometimes 'necessary'. However, regardless of whether in public or private, men's use of violence was frequently referenced in the context of challenges to masculinities, such as the inability to provide financially for one's family or having one's opinion challenged by one's wife.

There are many interpretations of what it means to be a man in Viet Nam, and this diversity of attitudes and practices around masculinities points toward opportunities to develop more gender equitable, non-violent norms among men.

The life history interviews that inform this report reflect the diversity of masculinities in the research areas. In some cases, characteristics, attitudes and behaviours associated with masculinity in Viet Nam vary by socio-economic class and geography: in Hue, idealized masculinities are linked with intellectualism, whereas in Phu Xuyen, characteristics of an ideal man are linked more closely with men's physical strength. Other masculinities are more universal and move across social and cultural divides, such as notions around men's authority and dominance within the family sphere.

However, the various interpretations of what

it means to be a man in Viet Nam also point toward alternative, or counter-hegemonic, masculinities. Notably, a few respondents discussed power-sharing practices within intimate partner relations that run counter to hegemonic masculine ideals of dominance and strength. Other respondents emphasized women's capabilities within the workplace. Interestingly, these alternative beliefs and practices are widely rationalized by and associated with financial stability and success, widely perceived as markers of masculinities in Viet Nam. This suggests that while alternative masculinities may not always reflect more gender equitable beliefs around manhood, they do reveal areas of contradiction in men's lives – for example, where practice does not match to wide-spread norms. Such areas are important as they expose spaces for change toward more gender equitable notions of what it means to be a man.

Childhood is a critical part of men's pathways into violent or non-violent practices.

The study shows four dominant areas across the life histories of respondents where men are strongly influenced into certain attitudes, beliefs and practices of masculinities in Viet Nam. These are:

- gendered relations during childhood within the family, including parenting approaches and family expectations that differ between daughters and sons;
- gender norms within school settings and exposure to normative expectations from peers and authority figures (e.g. teachers) with regards to gendered beliefs and practices;
- the workplace and hierarchies of masculinities according to financial status; and
- community perceptions of an individual's masculine identity.

Social and economic shifts in Vietnamese society have impacted expectations of what it means to be a man in Viet Nam, and men are challenged to redefine their masculinity according to these changing expectations.

Across most of the interviews, there was an underlying recognition that Vietnamese society is in a period of transition – economically, politically, and socially – all of which influence masculinities and gendered relationships. The respondents mostly reacted favourably to these shifts in society, in terms of better educational and economic opportunities for women. Yet, when they discussed the impact of these changes on the prevailing gender order of Viet Nam, their responses were less than enthusiastic. The respondents often presented expected behaviours and practices associated with femininity in the past and viewed women in present-day Viet Nam within the framework of these standards, suggesting tension around what women and men should do and who they should be in a rapidly changing Vietnamese society.

Summary of recommendations

The findings of this study have numerous implications for efforts to prevent gender-based violence in Viet Nam. Life history research provides a valuable foundation for more nuanced programmes and policies to prevent gender-based violence. The recommendations section of this study offers key policy and programme suggestions for more effective violence prevention efforts across various levels of society – from family-based work, to community mobilization activities and broader society-wide policies on gender equality. Based on the findings of this study, key recommendations include:

Family relationships and settings can be instrumental in developing non-violent methods of conflict resolution, and equal opportunities and rights for girls and boys - Promote programmes that nurture healthy parenting practices, particularly with fathers, and that promote the equal treatment of sons and daughters.

Schools are an institutional setting where notions of gender, education and opportunities for girls' and boys' futures are built - Develop school curricula that teach girls and boys about non-violence, healthy relationships and gender

equality, and work with teachers, particularly male teachers, to serve as positive, non-violent role models for students.

Men's notions of what it means to be a man are shaped by broader community and societal norms around masculinity - Engage with community leaders and local institutions as partners in gender equality and violence prevention.

Complement programme work (as described above) with national and subnational policies that promote gender equality and non-violence, and create an enabling environment in which women and men have equal opportunity to fulfil their potential - Raise awareness of the Law On Domestic Violence Prevention and Control; integrate gender equality into national education policy initiatives, labour policies and institutional policies for men's equal participation in work and home life.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
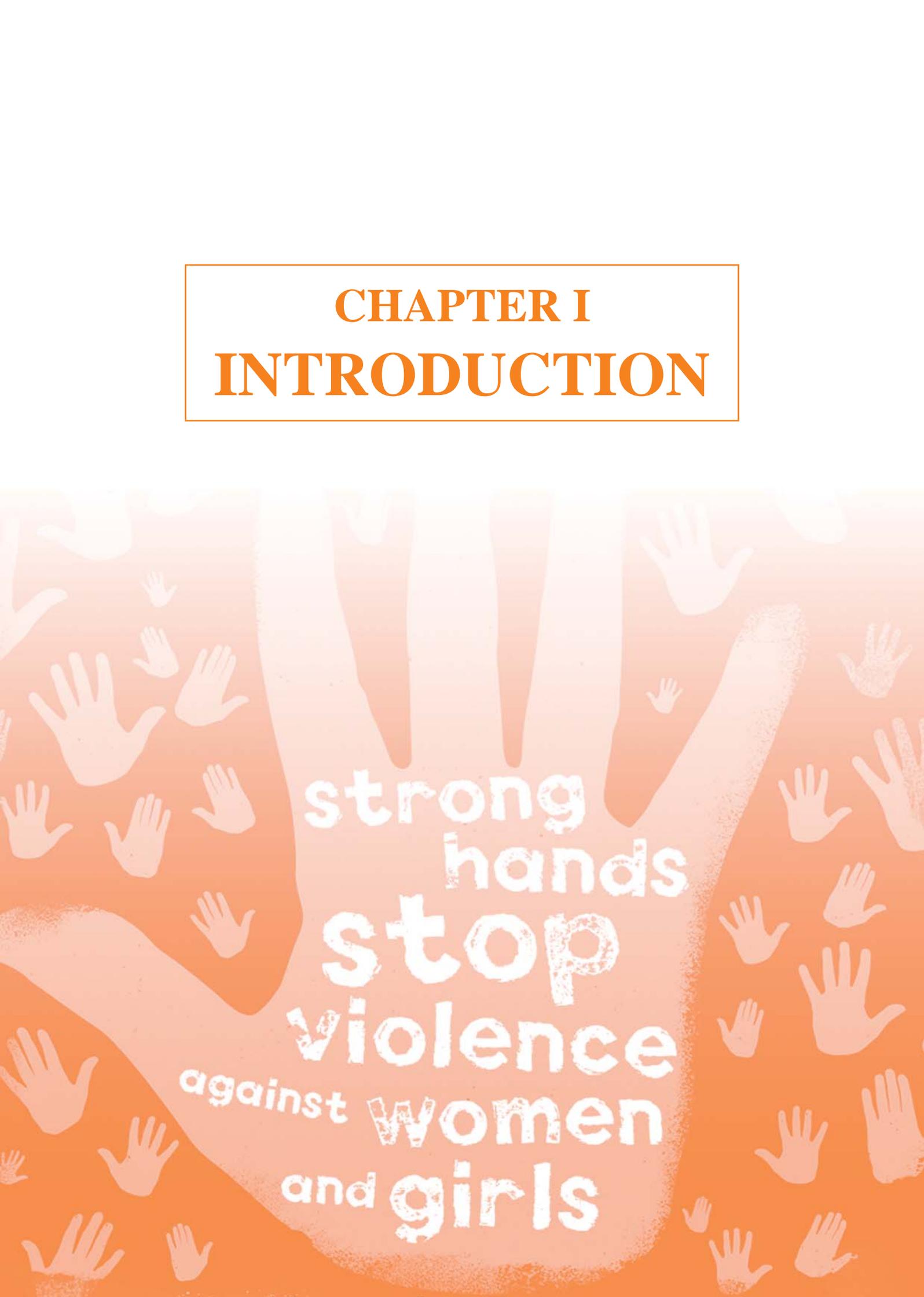
Despite decades of work, gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be a major problem across the world, impacting men and women, as well as national economic and social development. In Viet Nam, although the country has made progress on developing legal frameworks to end GBV and promote gender equality, gender-based violence remains a serious challenge and takes on many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, and trafficking of women (United Nations Viet Nam, 2010). Recognizing the severity of GBV, the Government of Viet Nam has made commitments to eliminating all forms of GBV, through development and passage of national legislation as well as through ratification of international human rights treaties. Notably, in 2007, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control was passed. Viet Nam has been a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1982 and has committed to international platforms for action developed during the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women.

However, in Viet Nam, as in other countries, GBV interventions are primarily response-based, focusing on developing legal frameworks and supporting victims of violence. While these responses are critical, they must be integrated with approaches that prevent violence, or strengthen primary intervention to stop violence before it occurs. In order for prevention and response interventions to be more effective, there is a strong need to understand the root causes and drivers of GBV in Viet Nam. One area of study that remains largely unexamined in the Vietnamese context is the relationship between masculinities and gender-based violence, and, in particular, what social factors are related to men's use of violence and why some men perpetrate violence while others promote more gender-equitable notions of masculinities in their lives and relationships.

This qualitative study in Viet Nam aims to look in-depth at individual men's life histories to understand what factors push men toward more violent notions of what it means to be a man, and what factors cause men to associate being a man with more gender-equitable, non-violent practices. These research findings have particular significance for prevention work on GBV in Viet Nam. Ultimately this research shows that violence in not inevitable and that change is possible. By better understanding how men accept or reject violence as a formative part of what it means to be a man, stakeholders can find more creative ways to engage men and help create a society where the dominant notions of masculinity are associated with peace, respect and equality.

CHAPTER II
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
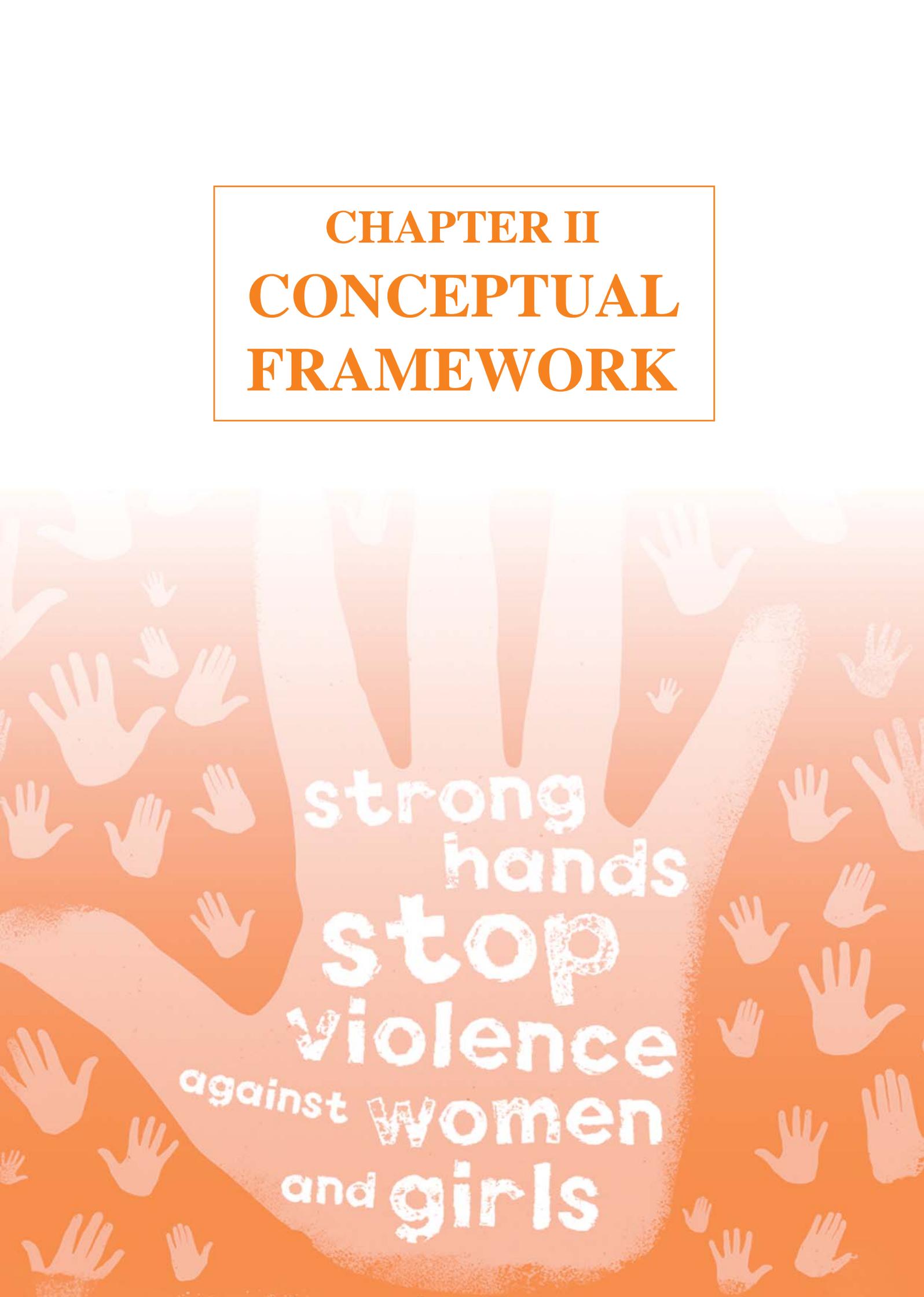
Gender-based violence

For the purposes of this report, gender-based violence is conceptualized as a cross-cutting human rights violation that refers to any act of violence experienced by women, men, girls and boys against their wills, based on socially prescribed differences between males and females, whether in public or in private (UN General Assembly, 1993; ECOSOC, 2006). Gender-based violence is a life-threatening issue that is rooted in the power relations between men and women, and it can take different forms, including physical, mental verbal and sexual violence. Evidence suggests that women primarily experience violence at the hands of men (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2005). GBV also negatively impacts families, communities and the wider society, and has social, economic and human rights costs for entire countries.

Furthermore, the different types of gender-based violence used to establish, enforce or perpetuate gender inequalities, and keep in place gender inequitable relations, are related to other forms of oppression and inequality beyond gender. The systems and structures of oppression that enable perpetration of gender-based violence also enable multiple other forms of violence that individuals experience.

While we use the concept of gender-based violence to inform this research, the report focuses on men's use of violence against intimate partners and men's own experiences of violence particularly during childhood and among peers. Intimate partner violence is in fact the most common form of violence against women in the Vietnamese context as it is globally (GSO, 2010; Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2005) and is also one of the most common types of violence that men spoke about in this research.

Masculinities and violence prevention

While research on gender and violence often focuses on women and femininity, it is increasingly recognized that masculinities – and the ways in which men enact and embody them – is an important site for research (Hearn,

1992; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Bourdieu, 2001; Connell, 1995). Evidence shows that GBV is primarily perpetrated by men, and consequently, understanding why men use violence against their intimate partners and how GBV is linked to notions of what it means to be a man is critical in order to better prevent and respond to violence. In 1992, Hearn presented a pioneering study on masculinities entitled Men in the Public Eye, yet it was not until Connell (1995) wrote Masculinities that the concept of masculinities was thoroughly examined in academic and practitioner circles. Connell argues that there are multiple masculinities due to the interplay between gender, race and class, and she introduces the notion of hegemonic masculinity, which was developed as a tool through which to examine the gendered power relations among men (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity is defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinities take on different forms in different settings, but are often associated with characteristics such as decisiveness, control, confidence, aggressiveness, ambition, competitiveness and strong personality (Cheng, 1996). Other scholars have called for a more context-specific approach to understanding masculinities, to explore men's agency to negotiate hegemonic masculinities and resist dominant patterns of masculine beliefs, attitudes and practices (Demetriou, 2001; Wetherell and Edley, 1999; Whitehead, 1999; Lusher and Robins, 2009), particularly in the context of globalization and globalized discourses of hegemonic masculinities (Beasley, 2008). Indeed, Seidler (2007) notes that the "hegemonic model has itself become hegemonic since its very universalism has appealed to international agencies wanting a model that can be translated across cultural differences. Rather than thinking that minor

adjustments can be made for each cultural context and appreciating violent practices that resonate across patriarchal cultures, we need to open up explorations of diverse cultures of masculinity". This underscores the significance of undertaking context-specific research on masculinities in Viet Nam.

This research study recognizes that hegemonic masculinities and inequitable gender relations can be changed. Masculinities based on patriarchal hierarchies that subordinate women and some types of men are harmful to the broader society, and there is a need to prevent violence through broader social change that promotes gender-equitable masculinities. Consequently, interventions on GBV must strengthen collaboration across sectors to engage with women and men (Jonzon, et al., 2007, p.640).

Ecological model

Current understandings of violence against women (VAW) suggest that women's experiences of violence are associated with a complex array of individual, household, community and social level factors (O'Toole, et al., 2007; UN General Assembly, 2006; Gage, 2005; Heise, 1998, 2011). This report draws upon the ecological model (see Figure 1) to explore the multifaceted nature of violence that occurs at different levels and involves power relationships between individuals and contextual factors. The ecological model is usually used to present risk factors (characteristics, events or experiences that are shown to increase the likelihood of

use or experiences of GBV) and protective factors (characteristics, events or experiences that reduce the likelihood of GBV). Risk and protective factors are usually determined by population-based surveys; however, qualitative research of this kind can help to explain in more depth the pathways leading to violence across a lifetime.

Broad cultural values and beliefs that may contribute to gender-based violence include factors such as masculinity linked to dominance or toughness, male entitlement and ownership of women and approval of the physical chastisement of women (WHO, 2004). Societal and cultural values that contribute to gender-based violence are also often reflected in gender-biased policies, laws and media representations. Factors within the immediate social context include community characteristics, such as the low social status of women, societal tolerance of domestic violence, a lack of supportive services and high levels of unemployment, crime and male-on-male violence. Within the family and relationships context, marital conflict, dowry and bride-price practices, male control of wealth and isolation of the women in the family may also contribute to violence. Possible individual male personal history risk factors include witnessing parental violence as a child, the ownership of weapons, the abuse of alcohol or other substances, loss of status and delinquent peer associations (WHO, 2004).More recent versions of the ecological model incorporate risk and protective factors from low- and middle-income settings (Heise, 2011).

Figure 1

Social ecological model used to explore gender-based violence at multiple levels of society (Heise, 2011)
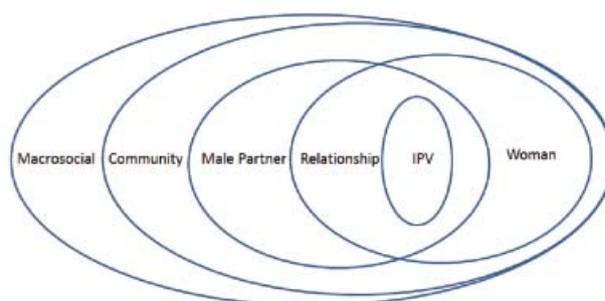
CHAPTER III
SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

Research on GBV in Viet Nam has developed and proliferated since the 1990s and draws particular attention to how violence, as a widespread problem in Viet Nam, cuts across socio-economic levels, ethnic groups, religion, occupation and education levels (Rydstrøm, 2006, p.329). The literature also underscores how underlying inequitable social norms are related to prevalence rates of GBV in the country.

In 2009, a nationally study, using the World Health Organization's (WHO) multi-country study methodology, was conducted by the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (GSO), with technical assistance from WHO and supported by United Nation under Joint Programme on Gender Equality (2009-2011). The result of this study, disseminated in 2010, indicates that 34 percent of ever-married women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence over their lifetimes, and 27 percent have experienced the same within the past 12 months (GSO, 2010, p. 51). Of the women who had ever been physically or sexually abused by a partner, 26 percent reported having been injured because of the violence. Women who experienced physical or sexual partner violence were also more likely to report health concerns, and define their overall health as 'poor' or 'very poor' (GSO, 2010, p. 79). Research with medical practitioners in Ba Vi district, Ha Tay province (now the Ha Noi area), suggests that physical and mental violence are more common than sexual violence (Krantz, et al., 2005). However, it is widely recognized that sexual violence is often under-reported (Randall, 1999; Phan Thi Thu Hien, 2008; United Nations, 2000). According to Vu Song Ha (2002), due to limited communication about sex and sexuality between spouses, women tend to remain silent about their sex lives. This silence is also a strategy that women often employ to keep the harmony in their families and decrease violence at home. Sexual violence caused by intimate partners is thus considered to be a private matter, and only in very serious cases do women tend to seek health care (Krantz, et al., 2005).

Partners for Prevention and Paz y Desarrollo (PyD) Viet Nam recently conducted an analysis of risk and protective factors associated with women's experiences of intimate partner violence using data from the GSO national survey on violence against women. Key risk factors include women's acceptance of partner violence, witnessing violence as a child, frequent quarrelling, partner's alcohol abuse, partner's economic control and other controlling behaviour, and partner having been in fights with other men. This qualitative research complements such analysis by providing much more in-depth understanding of the pathways to violence, unpacking the role of such risk and protective factors in men's lives.

The link between social norms, local practices and gender regimes has been further explored through qualitative studies across Viet Nam, particularly those focused on gender inequalities as drivers of GBV (Randall, 1999; Phan Thi Thu Hien, 2008). This existing literature demonstrates how the construction of binary oppositions between men and women create power dynamics and hierarchies within relationships that put women at risk of experiencing violence within the home (Jonzon, et al., 2007; Rydstrøm, 2003, 2004, 2006). It is generally suggested that social standards often expect women to be passive and submissive, to control their sexual needs, to obey their husbands and to maintain harmony within the family (Phan Thi Thu Hien, 2008, p.180). In contrast, men are often defined by their ability to drink, to earn money, to demonstrate physical power and to 'tame' their wives and discipline their children. Corporal punishment is often rationalized by a well-known idiom that 'to love is to discipline with a cane' (Tran Dinh Hung, 2004) and domestic violence is often understood as the result of men trying to exercise their power over their wives to prove their masculinity (Phan Thi Thu Hien, 2008, p.181).

In addition, Vietnamese cultural discourse posits that a man's body is hot while a woman's body is cold, consequently constructing opposing binary expectations for men to be hot-tempered and women to be calm and cool-tempered, using their 'cold forces' to calm the men and defuse tensions at home (Rydstrøm, 2004). Jonzon, et al. (2007, p.643) suggest that if women try to

challenge these views, they will often be blamed for men's violent acts. Confucian teachings are frequently cited as strongly influential on Vietnamese society, and in particular, the inequitable relations between women and men. For instance, one of the teachings, 'three obediences and four virtues,' can be interpreted in a way that suppresses women and binds them to their husbands' families. As such, survivors of domestic violence tend not to file legal complaints, especially for divorce, because it is socially unacceptable for women to act against their husbands (Hoang Thi Ai Hoa, 2009). According to Hoang Tu Anh, et al. (2002, p.132), these religious interpretations that are entrenched in society remain a challenge to achieving gender equality.

Other studies in Viet Nam have explored patterns of violence related to the family. For example, more men than women have been found to engage in violent acts, and men tend to beat their wives more than their daughters. Boys often get into violent fights with each other. Mothers tend to use corporal punishment on their daughters, while fathers and grandparents tend to be responsible for disciplining their sons and grandsons (Nguyen Huu Minh and Tran Thi Van Anh, 2009; Hoang Ba Thinh, 2005; Le Thi Quy and Dang Vu Canh Linh, 2007; Vu Manh Loi, et al., 1999; United Nations, 2000; Rydstrøm, 2006).

Finally, changes within political, social and economic institutions in Viet Nam since the second half of the 20th century have also affected gender relations between women and men in Viet Nam (Rydstrøm, 2003, 2006; Hoang Tu Anh, et al., 2002; Mai Huy Bich, 1993; Tran Dinh Huou, 1991; Ngo Thi Ngan Binh, 2004). The application of a new legal system that addresses issues related to 'women's liberation' has been somewhat effective in empowering women's roles in society, and women are increasingly taking on leadership positions within various sectors of society. In addition, women's educational and economic opportunities, particularly in urban areas, have also increased significantly since the feudal-colonial period. Notably, the difficult economic context after 1975 has made fundamental changes in the division of labour between women and men, particularly in middle-class society. Single incomes can no longer cover the costs of the whole family, and consequently, women have become more involved in the wage economy to support their families. This shared financial responsibility has shifted notions of men as the financial providers within the family, particularly among youth.

This brief review covers the dominant trends of literature on gender norms in Viet Nam. However, we recognize that it does not capture regional differences, or conflicting norms, that may exist in the Vietnamese context. Stereotypes and beliefs on differences between regions do exist in Viet Nam, particularly given the historical divisions between the north and south. To some extent, these stereotypes are reflected within the literature itself, but more comparative research is needed to explore different gender orders across the country.

The following life history analysis of GBV and masculinities in Viet Nam will add to the existing literature, by providing an in-depth exploration of how men view certain practices and attitudes associated with what it means to be a man in Viet Nam, and how these beliefs develop over the course of a man's life.

CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

Life history methods

This study uses life history methodology to collect and analyse data on masculinities and GBV. The value of life history methodology is the ability to look beyond thematic areas and trace the patterns and trends related to constructions of masculinities and practices of violence across the course of an individual life (Connell, 2010). Furthermore, the life history method of data analysis sees the interview as a unified whole and allows for exploration of how social structures and dynamics influence an individual's lived experiences (Plummer, 2001).

Life history research is particularly valuable when conducting research on violence for social change and violence prevention. Life history research brings the analysis to the level of the individual, to explore in-depth how beliefs, attitudes and behaviours are shaped – and changed – over time. This immediate focus on personal experience allows for a better understanding of the dynamics of social actions, such as interpersonal violence, to more directly identify spaces for more positive, nonviolent social behaviours. Life history research also allows the researcher to locate the individual within a history of social processes. Particularly for violence research with individuals who lived through conflict and extreme economic and political change, this gives a perspective on social history and how individuals were impacted by macro-level trends. Life history analysis is not intended at giving a representative definition of masculinities in Vietnam but rather to give a good perspective of how key social norms shape masculinities.

Research questions

This study on GBV and masculinities in Viet Nam looks in-depth at the individual life histories of a small sample of men in order to understand how experiences across the course of their lives have impacted their gendered beliefs and practices today. In particular, the research focuses on why some men use violence against their intimate partners, and why others practice more gender-equitable behaviours. By looking at this spectrum,

we hope to develop deeper insight into how to prevent GBV and encourage men to engage in more gender-equitable practices in Viet Nam.

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What influences across the life course operate to shape hegemonic masculinities? What are the relationships between how these hegemonic masculinities are constructed and lived, and the use of violence against intimate partners, as well as other gendered attitudes and behaviours in other areas of these men's lives?

2. What influences across the life course operate to shape alternative masculinities, in particular, gender-equitable masculinities? What are the relationships between alternative masculinities and attitudes and practices of gender equality in other areas of these men's lives?

3. Are there particular differences in the life histories of these two different groups of men, and what does this tell us about how to encourage men to be more gender-equitable and non-violent?

Sampling process and data analysis

The study conducted interviews with 30 men, aged 24 and above, from two sites in Viet Nam: Hue City (urban) and the Phu Xuyen district (peri-urban, a suburb of Ha Noi). The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese from May to July 2011. The study used purposive sampling to conduct two-part truncated life history interviews with:

• fifteen men who were known to have perpetrated violence against a female partner on more than one occasion, and

• fifteen men who were known to be 'gender equitable' [2] or display 'alternative' masculinities in the Vietnamese context.

[2] The term 'gender equitable' can be understood in many ways. For the purposes of this research, the gender equitable men were understood to display non-dominant/non-traditional notions of masculinity. This could mean that they were involved in gender-related activist work (paid or unpaid) or non-hegemonic practices, such as care-taking, stay-at-home husbands, etc. For more on the sampling strategy, please contact partner4prevention@one.un.org for The Change Project qualitative research protocol.

The two categories were established as a sampling strategy based on pre-interview knowledge about the participants and does not imply that the selected men were 'gender equitable' or 'violent' in all areas of their lives, as the analysis demonstrates. In Hue, the respondents were selected through personal relationships and professional networks[3], which helped the research team to identify participants who were either known to use violence or who displayed more equitable attitudes and behaviours. In Phu Xuyen, the research team was formally introduced to potential respondents through the local women's union. Unlike the respondents from Hue, who mostly worked in offices, the respondents from Phu Xuyen were predominantly farmers, and were more restricted time-wise due to farming or other work-related responsibilities, which made it more difficult to schedule interviews. Prior to formal interviews, the research team met with each participant, to build rapport, explain the research objectives and obtain informed consent. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Ten transcriptions were translated into English for the second analysis. For a list of the respondents, see Annex I.

An initial round of analysis was conducted on all 30 transcripts in Vietnamese, to develop a general overview of the associations between masculinities and violence in the Vietnamese context, and to capture the nuances of the cultural context. A second round of analysis was conducted in English, with a sub-sample of 10 men, to explore more in-depth their life histories and trajectories into certain practices and beliefs associated with masculinity (violent and non-violent). This report is based on both the initial and second rounds of analysis.

The life history data analysis techniques used for this study included conducting a review of all transcripts (in Vietnamese and English) and developing individual life history case studies for each respondent (only 10 case studies were developed in English). These case studies looked at (1) the timeline narrative of the individual's life, (2) the types and influences of gender in relationships in the respondent's life course, (3) how masculinities were constructed in the individual's life, (4) experiences of violence and (5) experiences with peace and peacekeeping. The case studies were then analysed as a group, to explore collective stories and common pathways into certain attitudes and practices associated with masculinities.

Background on research sites

Hue City is the capital of the last dynasty in Viet Nam. Even though cultural and social practices in Hue have changed, especially due to tourism development, Hue is widely perceived to maintain stronger reinforcement of Confucian values in gender, family, kinship and communal relations than other areas. Yet, the city is undergoing rapid social change. On the one hand, families in Hue tend to stay close to each other and continue to practice values and beliefs that are passed down from older generations. On the other hand, the city has witnessed rapid socio-economic transformations in the last 10 years due to the tourism industry. This transformation makes Hue City an important site to explore how masculinities are constructed – and challenged - in the context of larger social trends.

Phu Xuyen District is a rural area that used to be a district of Ha Tay Province before it was merged into Ha Noi in 2008. As a rural town being transformed into an urban area, Phu Xuyen is an ideal geographical area to study a wide spectrum of masculinities as well as look at the changes in men's behaviours and practices during rapid urbanization. In Phu Xuyen, most of the socio-economic activities of traditional and contemporary Viet Nam can be observed, such as farming, handicraft making, trading, and impermanent labour migration. In a way, these activities mirror the dynamics of Viet Nam's

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[3] The research team acknowledges that there are some disadvantages to selecting interviewees through personal relationships and existing networks. The interviewees in Hue tended to discuss social standards rather than their individual experiences, and to talk about other people's stories rather than their own. In some cases, they refused to talk about their personal lives. The interviewees in Phu Xuyen were more willing to speak openly about their experiences. This was taken into account during the analysis of the transcripts. Often, the stories that they told were reflective of the construction and situation of various types of masculinities within the social context more broadly, and consequently were still relevant and valuable to the study objectives.

economic development overall, which makes this study all the more relevant to understanding masculinities in the face of social change.

Limitations

One general challenge that is relevant for interviewees from both sites is social desirability bias, inherent in any interview-based research study, in which interviewees attempt to cast themselves in a more positive light for the research team. The respondents knew the focus of the research prior to interviews. This may have influenced respondents to understate or even conceal incidents in which they have used violence against their partners or have otherwise acted in a manner that they perceive to be, or might be considered by others as, gender inequitable. Similarly, this may have also influenced respondents to embellish or even invent incidents in which they practice gender equitable behaviour. Both possibilities have been considered during analysis and provide important information on perceptions of gender equitable behaviour among the respondents. Moreover, in two cases[4] it appears that the interviewees' wives were present during part of the interviews; in one case, an interviewee's wife was even asked questions by the interviewers. This most likely influenced at least some of the interviewees' responses, prompting them to downplay, conceal or modify certain details. This has been taken into account in the analysis.

Another limitation is that, although offering key information on socialization of men, conclusions on how masculinities are formed in Phu Xuyen and Hue cannot be extrapolated to the entire country.

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[4] Chien and Dung. All names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. The full list of pseudonyms, sample type, date and location of the interviews is given in Annex I.

CHAPTER V
FINDINGS

1. Factors associated with hegemonic masculinities

The life history interviews reflect the diversity of masculinities in Viet Nam. In some cases, characteristics, attitudes and behaviours associated with masculinity in Viet Nam vary by socio-economic class and geography. Other masculinities are more universal, and move across social and cultural divides. The interviews reveal what masculinities are considered hegemonic, that is, gender practices that are 'culturally exalted' over others (Connell, 2005). But the various interpretations of what it means to be a man in Viet Nam also point toward alternative, or counter-hegemonic, masculinities (explored in section 2, below). The interviews uncover how men live and practice hegemonic and alternative masculinities in different ways. These differences signal opportunities to promote more peaceful and equitable ideas of how to be a man in Viet Nam.

The most widespread characteristic of masculinity in Viet Nam is the notion that men (often the husband or father) should be the authority and main decision maker of the family. Most of the respondents believe that a husband should dominate over his wife and be in charge of the family. Dich [5] explains that "the decision-making right is always the man's, has been, will be, still is."Chuong admires the way his father exercised power and discipline in his family. However, the ways men practise this authority, and the extent to which men believe that this authority is indisputable, varies. Hung suggests, along with Dung and Sy, that husbands should 'teach' their wives to obey them. This includes teaching wives to never talk back or to question their authority, which they perceive to be "the right of a man." Sy alludes to physical violence as a method of 'teaching' or 'deterring' his wife from arguing or talking back to her husband. On the other hand, Khai believes that although men have the right to 'teach' their wives, he suggests that a more verbal, dictatorial approach is

preferable to physical violence. Still, however, he suggests that wives and daughters "do as the men say." Kim and Chien both practise more equitable relationship behaviours, yet there is an underlying sense of men's subtle, yet undisputed, authority within the family throughout their interviews. Only Nam appears to believe that men should not have authority or superiority over their wives. He states that relationships should include mutual respect and equal rights.

Another trait commonly associated with masculinity, and related to notions around men's authority, is fathers as the primary educators of their children, and particularly of sons (Vu Manh Loi, et al, 1999). This characteristic was practised in two ways: Fathers were expected to manage their children's formal education, and they were also expected to share life lessons and 'teachings' with their children (see also Santillan, 2004, p. 541 and Schuler, 2006, pp.388-389). Hung believes that while both fathers and mothers should teach their children, the father should make the major decisions on children's education. Most of the respondents discuss how their fathers taught and educated them outside of school. This included help with schoolwork, but also – and critical for this analysis – social lessons, such as how to be a man[6]. There is a link between authority as a defining characteristic of manhood in Viet Nam, and the ways men practise this authority through teaching and education of both wives and children. As will be discussed below, challenge to authority was often perceived as a legitimate excuse for violence.

Men as educators, disciplinarians and authority figures – defining characteristics of what it means to be a man – were prevalent and widely accepted among all the respondents, despite social and geographic differences. This underscores the extent to which these traits– and related practices – are widely held to be hegemonic across Vietnamese society. However, other characteristics associated with masculinity appear to be more susceptible to

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[5] See Annex I for information on the sample type, date and location of interview.

[6] The relationship between respondents and their parents will be further discussed below.

social, economic and geographic factors. The masculine ideal described by respondents from urban Hue, most of whom received substantial formal schooling and grew up in middle- to upper-class families, contrasts quite significantly with that described by respondents from more rural Phu Xuyen, most of whom received less formal education and grew up in families that were quite poor.

In Hue, respondents view ideal men as 'well-mannered,' 'intellectual,' and 'accomplished.' Physical strength was not commonly seen as an important trait associated with what it means to be a man. Hue-native Thu says that compared to men from other regions of Viet Nam, Hue men tend to be timid, calm and quiet, and it is common for men to write poetry, perceived to be an attractive quality to Hue women. He adds that "muscle-bound guys were considered to be rough and rude" and it was better to be "calm, quiet and slim". He adds that since "Hue[is] a city of education," people are more interested in education (so, he says, they can find a good job) than in activities like sports. Khai, also from Hue, says that in the old days, women would prefer men who were good students or good farmers (presumably to guarantee financial stability), adding that it is not very common for girls to like the "strong, violent" type. Chien, another Hue native, suggests that men should be knowledgeable and skilled in various academic, cultural and practical/social fields. In contrast, Dich appears to be the only respondent from Hue who believes that a "real man" should look strong, adding that he should also be his woman's "mainstay, financially, mentally and physically". He also says that although in the past women preferred men who were "poetic" and gentlemanly, young men nowadays are "rebellious" and have adopted the "heroic model" of fighting with each other "to prove that they are men," which is encouraged by other young men as well as by young women.

In Phu Xuyen, in contrast to Hue, physical strength and power are viewed as ideal traits for a man. Many respondents describe men as violent and hot-tempered, whereas qualities like being well-mannered and accomplished are

not often mentioned as desirable. Chuong, from Phu Xuyen, explains that to be a big and strong man is desirable, as it is associated with being able to fight well and being feared. Women, he says, prefer men who are strong (including men who served in the army), since they associate these men with protection. Reflecting back to his youth, Chuong says some women also preferred men who were "humorous" and who could sing or play music, though these traits are not considered as important as strength. Descriptions of men as hot-tempered or hot-blooded were frequently mentioned by respondents in Phy Xuyen. Su, another respondent from Phu Xuyen, believes that men in general are very hot-tempered and that if one's wife is "insolent", it is expected or even acceptable for her husband to hit her, unless he is being held back. Chuong says that women should avoid their husbands' "hot temper" and should also "endure" if their husbands are angry. These references to men as hot-blooded corroborate with existing literature on the cultural discourse of character differences between women (cold) and men (hot) in Viet Nam (Rydstrøm, 2004).

The cross-sectional differences between Hue and Phu Xuyen demonstrate how influential social, economic and geographic factors are in establishing certain (though not all) dominant masculinities. It also shows how men's understanding of what it means to be a man is predominantly built on assumptions of men's power over women. However, some men reject this power dynamic in certain areas of the relationship, and within the broader society, signalling certain spaces where more equitable, less dominant notions of masculinity exist.

2. Factors associated with alternative masculinities

The diversity of masculinities across the life history interviews reveal how some men adapt, resist or reject hegemonic characteristics and practices associated with being a man in Viet Nam, in favour of alternative characteristics and practices. These alternative masculinities may not always reflect more gender equitable beliefs around manhood. However, they do reveal areas

of contradiction in men's lives – for example, where practice does not match to wide-spread norms. These contradictions are important as they show spaces for change toward more gender-equitable notions of what it means to be a man.

In particular, the intimate partner relationship is a site where many men described practices that run counter to hegemonic masculine ideals of dominance and power. Many men who were sampled as gender equitable described cooperative power-sharing arrangements within their families. Husbands and wives had equal (or close to equal) decision-making power about financial or other family decisions. The respondents described both husband and wife sharing household responsibilities, such as childcare, laundry, cooking and cleaning. These arrangements contrast against what men express as the ideal image of dominant masculinity, yet they reflect the contradiction between what men envision as hegemonic, and how these characteristics are practiced (or not) in daily life.

Many men who described alternative power dynamics within their marriages also view success in terms of the relationship, and not the individual. Respondents tended to frame more gender equitable practices simply as good economics. In the case of Khai, he supports his wife's pursuit of higher education. He frames his support in the context of women who have higher education levels than their husbands. Khai says that he has friends whose wives are law professors, yet his friends are "just workers." But "people have more freedom of mind now," he explains, "they accept each other." Equality and partnership drive the financial success of the family.

Similarly, a few respondents comment on women's abilities in the workplace. Khai suggests that women are capable of holding leadership positions in their jobs, despite wide-spread beliefs in men's dominance over women. He proposes that being good at work depends more on professional ability and not gender. However, he does caution that the high-pressure nature of leadership positions requires one to be tough, and suggests that this may be difficult for women. Another respondent, Nam, works at a development NGO and supports projects on gender equality. He reports that prior to his current position, he still had "gender stereotypes against women" and felt "threatened if female friends studied better" because "men always do better than women." He says that he now recognizes that women can do "far better than their male counterparts in many areas if they are empowered and provided with proper knowledge and skills" and that his previous (inequitable) views on gender roles can "impede development." Commenting on patriarchy, Nam said, "In this area we have a saying, 'to hold rice straw against your body will make it itch.' It means that [the men] try to do all the work and make all the decisions, but they end up being ineffective and hurting themselves." Instead, he suggests, more equitable divisions of responsibility and work should be the norm among couples in Viet Nam.

These alternative beliefs and practices are largely associated with financial stability and success. They contrast to hegemonic notions of men as dominant and financial providers and signal the changing nature of gender practices in Viet Nam. The rapid economic development in Viet Nam after 1975 resulted in wide-spread changes in work patterns, including a shift from agro-business to urbanized industry, and an increase in women's formal work. These alternative beliefs and practices signal how social shifts have resulted in different gender norms, and alternative acceptable practices and behaviours. Many of the respondents made reference to these macro-level social changes, contrasting beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of men then and now.

3. Societal changes and their impacts on the gender order

Across the interviews, there was an underlying recognition that Vietnamese society was in a period of transition – economic and political, as well as social – that all influence masculinities and gendered relationships. In terms of

economic changes, a few respondents bring up the shift in the 1980s and 1990s toward more capitalist methods of work and production. Chuong describes the implementation of policies to pay workers and families according to their production, rather than according to a set salary. Chuong also mentions a general shift away from farming, agricultural and manual work in his village, with more prestige associated with education and office jobs. Similarly, Kim says that many young people in his village choose to attend college (encouraged by their parents) rather than learn the traditional handicraft trade that makes his village famous. The trade is seen as hard work whereas going to college, he says, leads to a better career. Kim estimates that the number of young people choosing to work on handicrafts has dropped by 90 percent. This shift away from manual labour and toward higher levels of education has implications for the gendered divisions of labour and women's participation in the Vietnamese economy, as discussed below.

The political, economic and social upheaval associated with military conflict across Viet Nam in the second half of the century provides the background for many of the respondents' life histories. Several respondents mention the conflict in the North from the 1950s until as late as the 1980s. Many respondents from Phu Xuyen served in the army during this period. Thu comments that "a great number of men" went to the North (from Hue) to fight. The mass movement of men for conscription purposes had major impacts on the gender order of Vietnamese society, and particularly brought about changes for women's expected roles.

Aside from these more general observations regarding Vietnamese society, many respondents specifically refer to changes within the gender order of Vietnamese society. Khai, for example, says that in the past, Hue women were valued for making "concessions" to their husbands, but that more women today do not feel obliged to make "concessions" but instead tend to speak up for themselves. Khai sees this as an "achievement"

and suggests that "many people" in Hue today believe that men and women should be equal. He adds that although some people still believe in women's subordination, they try to hide these beliefs and attitudes, suggesting that these beliefs and attitudes are not as accepted as they were in the past. Likewise, Chien notes women's improved educational opportunities, which lead to financial independence and a better position in society and in the family. He appears to see this as a positive change. Kim says that in the handicraft trade, women are now performing tasks that used to be performed only by men, which he seems to welcome.

Yet not all respondents see changes in the gender order as positive. Dich says that Hue women of today's generation are not as good at "containing themselves" as in the past and Chuong believes that women in Phu Xuyen are bolder and less afraid of their husbands than women before. Both men appear to disapprove of these changes. Another Hue resident, Thu, sees these changes of women's status and role in society as destructive. He distinguishes between women's responsibilities in the household – to ensure "harmony in the family" – and men's social and communal duties. He gives more importance to men's practices when he says that "to live a man's life is to leave behind enormous prestige." He blames certain social ideologies – which he considers to be "western ideas" – for giving women more freedom and "liberation from domestic work." These changes, he warns, erode the fabric of Vietnamese society, since a "harmonious family is a strong foundation for a prosperous society" (for more on this viewpoint in Vietnamese society, see Schuler, et al., 2006). His views contrast with the opinions of other respondents who see women's increased rights and equality as a way to strengthen the financial success of families. These contradictions reflect broader tensions in Vietnamese society. The economic and social shifts change expectations, and alter wide-spread beliefs, about what women and men should do and who they should be in Vietnamese society.

Case study: Dung – Societal changes and their impact on men's lives

The case of Dung shows how tensions and contradictions of an individual reflect broader changes in Vietnamese society. Dung observes that today men tend to be gentler and less violent, traits that are no longer considered unmanly or otherwise inferior. He attributes these changes to several factors, including the village's recent integration into Ha Noi city, which encourages people, especially men, to act more "Hanoian", which is associated with being well mannered and sophisticated. He mentions the 'cultural families' [7] titles as particularly impacting people's behaviour within their families, since they would be mocked in the community if they have family conflicts despite being named a Cultural Family. Dung also suggests that male groups in his village such as an elder group, which gathered people around 50 years old and over, established recently and recognized as having high reputation in the community, should be encouraged to speak more carefully and use more 'appropriate' language.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement stemming from these societal initiatives and civic changes is their impact on Dung himself. He credits them with drastically impacting his own behaviour, which until recently could be reasonably described as extremely violent and hyper-masculine. While he used to be quite violent with his wife and ready to fight anybody who accused him of being 'henpecked,' he now says that he no longer uses violence against his wife, that he is active in intervening in domestic violence incidents and that he laughs off accusations that he is 'henpecked.' It seems likely that negotiating his village's expectations of more gentle, respectful and non-violent masculinities among men of older age brackets with his past behaviour is an area of tension in his life. Nevertheless, his example demonstrates the influence that image and reputation can have on men and their changing notions of what it means to be a man. This example also demonstrates how men associate their sense of being a man with their age, and how expectations of what it means to be a man of a certain age (and appropriate practices to reaffirm their masculinity) change over time, a change that is closely linked to a man's status and relative power within the community as an elder.

One final change in the gender order, frequently mentioned by respondents, is the common criteria used to ensure successful matches, and the increasing freedom to choose one's spouse. The respondents who address this subject tend to believe that freedom of choice has increased. Kim, born in 1954, notes that "the age of arranged marriage is over," having ended during his generation. He explains that parents today might give suggestions or advice to their children regarding who to date and marry, but the final decision is generally left to their children. It appears that Dung shares this view that men and women are free to marry whomever they want, in theory. However, he contradicts this view fairly quickly, when he mentions "banning" his daughter from marrying one of her boyfriends, whom he considered disrespectful and hot-tempered.

Further, Kim, who is from a Catholic village, notes that in the past, only people of the same religion tended to marry each other. Today, he explains, there are more marriages between Catholics and Buddhists, even though religious conversions still appear to be common and expected, particularly for women. Several respondents also mention a shift toward individuals marrying those with similar educational and/or professional backgrounds. Thu states that in the past, the families of spouses were generally of similar social status or background. Now, however, the main criterion tends to be similarities between the spouses themselves, such as in terms of education, profession or wealth, even if the families are of very different backgrounds. Changing practices around spouse selection (i.e. decision-making moving from parent to child and a shift toward

[7] It is interesting that the idea of 'cultural families' was mentioned as a deterrent to violent practices. Among GBV experts in Viet Nam, the 'cultural families' campaigns are seen as possible barriers to more effective service provision, as families are less likely to report violence, due to social stigmatization.

partners who are on similar economic footing) signal how economic and social changes in Viet Nam impact expectations and beliefs around the nature of partner relationships (on changing attitudes toward divorce, see also Hoang Thi Ai Hoa, 2009). Yet, as the respondents' narratives suggest, this relative autonomy seems to be less accessible to women, who are still expected to conform to older practices around selecting an appropriate partner. This limited autonomy compared to men accounts for parental involvement in the decision-making process and women adapting to the dominant practices and beliefs (religious or otherwise) of their future husband.

4. How masculinities are formed

The above sections outline the nature of hegemonic and alternative masculinities in Viet Nam, and how these notions of what it means to be a man in Viet Nam fit within a context of social, political and economic changes over time. The next section will explore how these notions of hegemonic and alternative masculinities develop across the course of men's lives, by examining trajectories and pathways that led the respondents toward certain behaviours and beliefs associated with masculinities. In other words, how do the dynamics of these men's lives-events, actions and experiences at both the personal level and the social level-influence their beliefs, attitudes and practices of masculinity and violence?

4.1 'Doing gender' during childhood: parenting and the family

The global literature on GBV shows how relationships between children and their parents are among the most important and most formative associations across the life course (see, for example, Silverman and Williamson, 1997). Values, beliefs, and general knowledge are most often learned from and shaped by parents (Knodel, et al., 2004, pp.12-13). Across the life histories, two themes emerge with respect to the parent-child relations of the respondents: First, fathers were largely associated with 'teaching' their sons lessons around what it

means to be a man in Vietnamese society, and second, respondents note a marked difference between the treatment of sons compared to daughters within the gender regime of the family. These differences were most prominent in terms of religious traditions, division of labour and educational opportunities. Further, these themes around parent-child relations emerge in the context of historical and geopolitical circumstances in which the respondents' fathers would have often been absent, for military service or economic purposes, and the prevailing gender order in family, would have been adapting and shifting accordingly.

Predominant parenting patterns

The respondents recollected significant input from their fathers on masculine practices and behaviours, and notions of fathers as educators and disciplinarians seem to have influenced certain beliefs around what it meant to be a man and a father. Chien, who was sampled as a gender-equitable man, emphasizes the role of his father in learning the importance of education, discipline, respect and cultural and religious practices. He recollects that his father strongly discouraged rudeness or disrespect, particularly to elders, as well as physical violence and insulting or inconveniencing others. Although his father gave him significant advice and direction on his life decisions, he also emphasized the need for Chien to think for himself, underscoring how notions of authority and decision-making power are associated with ideal manhood.

In contrast to Chien's childhood, Hung (sampled as a man who was known to use violence against his intimate partner) had little connection with his father during his youth, as he was deployed in the military. During his father's absence, his mother took care of the children, yet Hung still associates his father with a formative role in teaching and giving advice to his children. His father would ensure that the children studied in the evening, helping them with their schoolwork. Hung recollects that his father would "talk and share with me how to do business, how to grow up to be a good man, how to not get

myself into trouble". When Hung was older, his father taught him that he should "live as a man," meaning that he should not be mean, he should be "at the helm in every major deed," and he should represent the family as the eldest son. He also taught him to "live a productive life" and to avoid being "swept away" by "self-indulgence or other bad habits."

Respondents remembered parents teaching sons and daughters differently with respect to conduct and behaviour. Chien says that while he and his brother were taught to be knowledgeable, accomplished, and well rounded, their sisters were taught to be hardworking, virtuous, attractive in appearance, appropriate in speech and on the whole well-behaved, particularly with their husbands and in-laws. Similarly, Hung's sisters were taught to "maintain a proper lifestyle" and to avoid staying out late at night. These messages were communicated within a family environment characterised by gender and age hierarchies of children.

Family gender regimes during childhood

Gender dynamics of the family during childhood were found to have impacted the respondents' notions of masculinities as well as their trajectories into beliefs and practices regarding violence and equality. There was great diversity in the nature of family gender dynamics among all the respondents. The most notable theme across the interviews was the preference and focus on boys and men within families, and particularly the importance of being the eldest son.

Eight out of the ten respondents mention being the eldest (or only) son of their families. Several describe the responsibilities and privileges that are associated with being the eldest son, and which do not exist for daughters, even if they are the eldest child of the family. Respondents spoke of the main responsibilities and privileges of the eldest son within the context of religion and family obligations. Others spoke more generally about the eldest son's role among his siblings or the extra attention and/or affection that the eldest son receives from his parents,

particularly from the father. Some respondents, like Chien, suggested that while he felt pressure to meet social expectations as the eldest son, he also appreciated his family's focus on his livelihood and career. In contrast, Dung appeared to resent the greater responsibilities and stricter treatment, particularly the harsher corporal punishment, which he attributed to being the family's eldest son. These differences in treatment, in addition to more general disparities among sons and daughters as well as between fathers and mothers, seem to have strongly influenced the respondents' own notions and practices regarding equality and gender. Overall, the life history narratives show three mechanisms through which prioritization of opportunities and responsibilities of the eldest son were reinforced within the gender dynamics of the family: religious activities, gendered division of labour and approach to education.

The most commonly cited responsibilities that are bestowed upon eldest sons, and upon sons in general, relate to participating in (Buddhist) religious rituals and activities. Respondents from both Hue and Phu Xuyen emphasize the gendered dimension of these activities as almost exclusively the domain of boys and men, with fathers teaching sons about preparing for death anniversaries and worshipping ancestors at the altar. Women and girls, on the other hand, are primarily tasked with preparing and serving food and other behind-the-scenes work during these ceremonies. As performing the worshipping rituals at the altar is considered to be extremely important for families, only giving men these tasks reinforces their superior positions in families and in the kinship.

The division of labour within childhood further reinforced notions of what is commonly referred to as son preference, contrasting women's household responsibilities with men's role in the public domain (Adams and Coltrane, 2005). In Hue, the gendered division of labour tended to be more heavily based on gender, with girls/women assuming domestic work and boys/men taking on work in the public domain. Contrastingly, in Phu Xuyen, where there is a

larger concentration of farmers, families tend to divide household labour on the basis of age rather than gender. Younger children were usually tasked with cooking, cleaning and dishwashing, while the older children were often sent to work in the fields or given other heavier work (for the changing nature of gendered division of labour, see Knodel, et al., 2004 and Barry, 1996).

Relationships between gendered division of labour and masculinity

A revealing trend across the life histories was the extent to which respondents' household responsibilities during childhood transferred to the management of their adult homes and the division of labour with their wives. Chien, for example, says that as the eldest son, his parents "loved him so much" that he was exempt from having to cook, a practice which he has held onto into adulthood and in his relationship with his wife. Both Khai and Nam, both from Hue, describe sharing housework duties with their siblings, which may have influenced their contribution to housework in their own homes. However, across the respondents, there remained a prevailing belief that despite men's varied levels of support, housework remains 'feminine', and women are often judged and valued by their ability to perform these tasks. Notably, this is contrasted against the perception of men's role as the family provider and the validation of masculinity through men's career and work.

Literature on gender practices within Vietnamese families suggests that men are more likely to assist in domestic activities in the privacy of the intimate partner relationship, but are reluctant to let others (for example, male friends and other peers) know the extent to which they assist in household chores. This reveals how men internalize widespread beliefs on the gendered nature of domestic labour and the disassociation between domestic activities and masculine identity. The daily (and private) participation in household labour suggests a tension between men's external portrayal of masculine identity and their actual (more equitable) labour-sharing practices. As we will see, this tension shows how men negotiate masculinity within the context of Viet Nam's changing gender norms around women's role in society, particularly the formal economy.

Finally, the priority placed on sons was supported by the gendered approach to educational opportunities within the respondents' family homes. Several respondents suggested equal schooling opportunities between siblings, yet the respondents' descriptions of events and approaches to teaching of sons and daughters suggest otherwise. Dich, for example, says that his father encouraged all of the children to continue their education as long as they could, to the extent that he forced Dich to return to school after he dropped out. Yet, Dich recollects later in the interview that when his sisters failed to attend college, his father called it "fate" and did not intervene. Chien states that although his sister was the most intelligent in the family, she only made it to grade 10, whereas he was able to complete medical school and become a doctor. Similarly, Khai says that his family's spending on sons' and daughters' education was equal, with his father wishing for all to have a good education, but he also reveals that his father had higher hopes for the sons, and that all five of the sons, but none of the daughters, went on to college. He also mentions several other reasons why girls in his native village tended to drop out of school early, such as financial constraints preventing them (though not boys) from going to school, as well as the girls' "lack of awareness or certainty about how education could benefit them in the future."

Tellingly, the respondents themselves do not seem to recognize the discrepancy between their declaration of equal educational opportunities of siblings during childhood and the different trajectories of education that took place. This suggests an internalized prioritization of men's education over women's, which is consistent with notions of masculinity associated with education, learning and knowledge. In the present, respondents similarly respond that

their own sons and daughters are offered the same opportunities. However, given that their perceptions of their parents' own approach to educational opportunities is seen to be generally even, there is little to suggest that similar patterns of prioritizing boys education over girls' has not continued through this generation.

4.2 Gender-related relationships and experiences outside the home during childhood

While the childhood family seems to be the primary site of gendered knowledge transfer, based on the extent to which the respondents spent talking about their families in response to the questionnaire, a few respondents seem to be influenced by gender differentials in schools settings. Hung and Dung both suggest that boys and girls were taught the same subjects in school, with no differences according to gender. This compares sharply with informal social teaching that occurs at home, where boys and girls were given highly divergent messages. School settings are generally described to be co-educational with little difference made between how boys and girls were taught. However, notions around boys as troublemakers, talkative and energetic, versus girls as well behaved and quiet, seem to be prevalent. Indeed, boys were more likely to experience corporal punishment in the school system, according to most of the respondents. Hung notes that boys and girls were often placed in "boy-girl pairs" in order to reduce chatting, saying that boys were disruptive when placed together.

However, the widespread association between masculinity and intelligence – a frequently discussed marker of masculinity, particularly in Hue – seems to be less relevant, even being inverted to a certain extent with references to girls' academic abilities in school settings, at early stages of educational development, and within educational institutions. Nam recalls a district-level math competition in grade 5, in which one of the strongest competitors was a girl. This experience, he explains, showed him that girls are just as able and willing to compete and win as boys. He says that before this incident, he was

biased against women, believing that they could not do things as well as men.

4.3 Work and its relation to masculinities

The respondents' perceptions of work, both professional and domestic, appear to be closely related to their construction of masculinities and (in)equality. Most of the respondents perceive their masculinities in close relation to their work. Three factors of work seem to be associated with masculinities – and hierarchies of masculinities across the life histories: work constructing and being constructed by hegemonic masculinities, notions of prestige associated with men's work and monetary and social value of men's labour over women's. Despite these themes, a number of respondents see women's participation in the formal economy as necessary for financial purposes. These beliefs show how economic change in Viet Nam affects the dynamics of the gender order as well as what it means to be a successful man in study areas.

Hegemonic masculinities and men's professions

It is notable that in both Hue and Phu Xuyen, labour that is labelled as men's work corresponds to notions of masculinity in that setting, suggesting that men's work both defines hegemonic masculinities and, vice versa, that hegemonic masculinities in specific settings define men's work. In Phu Xuyen, where physical strength is a highly valued masculine trait, men tend to be involved in more laborious manual work. Dung, for example, says that in his village, "men look for men's work while women do lighter physical work," implying that professions requiring physical strength are for men only. In Hue, however, knowledge and intellectual abilities are more important male attributes, leading men to prefer jobs that emphasize these qualities. All of the respondents from Hue work in professional fields that are based on intellectual skills, knowledge and education, such as journalism, research and medicine. Whether they emphasize physical strength or intellectual ability, respondents from both research sites tend to associate "men's work" with prestige and/or importance. An exception

to this general trend on men's work and prestige is explained by Kim, from Phu Xuyen, who says that his wife is mostly in charge of the couple's handicraft business, and that he does not mind her leadership role. This may be due to the informal business setting and the partnership nature of the couple's business, which requires mutual reliance to ensure profits, perhaps acting as an equalizer for the couple.

Case study: Chien– Insights into how masculinities are constructed in different settings and change over time

The dynamics of Chien's life history show us how masculinities are challenged and reinforced across the life cycle, and the ways in which work – and financial success – is used to establish masculinities among peers. Chien was sampled as a 'gender-equitable' man.

Chien is the eldest son in his family and had a very close relationship with his father. Although his family was poor, he recalls being given "the good food" because his parents "loved him so much." Chien describes himself as a small, weak boy. At school, Chien experienced bullying and harassment from other schoolboys. In some cases, his father intervened with the parents of the bullies. He would also occasionally play games of 'war' with other children.

As Chien grew up, he continued to attend school, and, encouraged by his father, he went on to study medicine, eventually becoming an obstetric doctor. He originally thought obstetrics was a field for women, but later realized that the "well-known" obstetric doctors were men. He suggests that this is the case because men are strong enough to work nights and perform the high-pressure, long-hour operations required of the job. Occasionally his friends tease him about his job, but he brushes off this mocking because he says he is successful.

Chien's life history reveals a number of interesting connections. During childhood, his masculinity – based on rank and importance – was reinforced by his parents' preferential treatment of him compared to his siblings. However, at school Chien had to negotiate his ranking among peers. His experiences of bullying demonstrate how, in this space, Chien's notions of masculine identity were subordinate to his peers. As Chien grew, his ideas of what it means to be a man became more closely linked with higher education and a successful career. At this stage in his life, he reacts casually to those who attempt to mock his choice of profession and consequently undermine his masculinity. He views his financial success as a marker of hegemonic masculinity that ranks him highly among his peers. This trajectory shows how masculinities are constructed in relation to others in an individual's immediate setting, and how this construction – and subsequent ranking of masculinities – changes over time.

Finally, within the context of work, masculinities are defined by monetary and social value attributed to men's labour over women's labour. The underlying gender stereotypes linking men's jobs with prestige and contesting women's abilities to perform labour-intensive or complicated tasks also result in a gendered division of labour that links higher paid work with skills attributed to men, and demonstrates the undervaluing of women's work in Viet Nam. Prevalent social norms and related masculinities which dictate that men should be the main breadwinner within the family contribute to the expectation that men's salaries should be higher than women's salaries.

Perceptions of women's work

The life history interviews reveal an interesting trend among respondents with regards to women's participation in the formal economy during social and economic shifts in the post-war era (Barry, 1996). They recognize the value of women's additional income for the financial

success of the family, yet are challenged by women's involvement in what is considered a male domain. For example, Kim mentions that in the handicraft trade, women are now performing tasks that used to be performed only by men, which Kim seems to welcome. Chien views the increase in women participating in the workforce and earning money as positive changes toward gender equality. For his part, Nam, who works for a non-governmental organization on women's participation and empowerment projects, partially attributes his belief in gender equality to the success of these projects.

Yet women's work outside of the house is often still seen as secondary to her role within the domestic space. Chien states that the family is more likely to break down if the wife focuses on her career and neglects her duties to care for her family. Similarly, Thu believes that women should only be able to leave the home to work once they have finished all their domestic obligations. And although women are expected to ensure the successful running of the household, their contribution to the financial success of the family is generally welcomed, as long as it does not challenge their husband's position as primary breadwinner. Dich notes that if a woman makes more than her husband, this could lead to the woman trying to be in control and the man feeling "inferior," which would cause trouble for the family (for example, leading to the use of violence). Similarly, Chien says that a woman who earns more than her husband would usually get in "trouble."These tensions show that men negotiate their masculinity based on their work, but also in the context of the financial standing of the family. As we will see, this seems to be a precarious balance, given the economic climate and perceived challenges to masculine identity as primary financial provider.

4.4 Community perceptions of masculinities

The respondents' relationships in the community in adulthood play another important role in the construction and reinforcement of certain attitudes, beliefs and practices associated with masculinities. Respondents tend to be heavily influenced by their interactions with other community members and the perceptions that others have of them. The intimate partner relationship is the most visible setting t demonstrates how masculinities are shaped by community-level factors.

Establishing masculinities among peers

Peers play a large role in how respondents understand themselves to be perceived in their communities, particularly based on their supposed control over their wives. Men tend to discuss, with other men in their communities, the negative connotations linked to a wife's perceived dominance over her husband. The idea of men being "henpecked", generally described as being afraid of and/or dominated by one's wife, is widely cited. Respondents gave examples of being "henpecked," including leaving a drinking party early or allowing one's wife to be disrespectful or disobedient in front of one's friends. This is often met with derision or mockery from other men. Even respondents who appear to be more gender-equitable, such as Nam and Chien, mention friends teasing each other about being "henpecked," demonstrating the extent to which this male-on-male reinforcement of men's dominance over their wives is prevalent in peer relations. The act of labelling a man as "henpecked" provides further validation of other men's superiority over the individual, positing some men above others, based on the gender inequitable nature of their relationships with their wives. Both Dich and Dung say that these incidents can result in arguments or fights between the husband and wife, sometimes as ways for men to "prove" that they are not "henpecked."

Respondents reported that among their peers, they generally do not talk about the intimate details of their relationship. Dich, for example, says that he and his friends generally do not talk about "private family issues," such as their relationships with their wives. This seems to perpetuate the view that whatever happens between spouses, including violence, should be kept private (GSO, 2010; Vu Manh Loi, et al., 1999). Consequently, the mocking language used in peer circles to describe men's loss

of dominance within an intimate partner relationship demonstrate the extent to which peer-to-peer interactions forge certain practices and beliefs about men's roles in relationships.

Defining men's value through his family

Another notion concerning masculinity that was mentioned by respondents from Hue is that men are often judged by others through their wives and, to a lesser extent, their children (Schuler, 2006, p.391). Well-behaved, successful wives are particularly seen as important in order to positively enhance the husband's (and the entire family's) image and reputation, as seen by outsiders. As Dich says, "sometimes in a family, people don't really look at both the man and woman, but more at the woman to judge how the family works." He relates this more to the man's image when he says that violence against one's wife should be kept private because it reveals a man's "undoing"; in other words, his wife must have done something wrong to warrant the violence, which is "not something that a man would want to show the world." Similarly, Chien notes that one of the reasons that he encourages his wife to study and work is because it improves his own image: "In Hue, people don't ask whether you are rich or not rich; they ask about children's study and wife's job." Thu also mentions men being judged through their children's accomplishments when he says that good, successful offspring can "make [a man] valuable, despite how bad he is."

These narratives suggest that men attempt to (over)compensate for what they (and others) see as shortcomings, negotiating a tension between their intimate partner relationships, prevailing notions of masculinities and the importance of public image and reputation (see also Vu Manh Loi, et al., 1999). This also highlights the subordinate status of women and children in society, where they tend to be valued for their ability to enhance a man's power and status rather than being inherently valued in their own right. This will be discussed further in relation to men's use of violence.

5. Masculinities and their relationship to violence

The section above details how beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns associated with masculinity are formed over the course of the respondent's lives. This following section builds on this in-depth exploration of masculinities in the research areas to assess how the masculinities defined above are associated with violence, and in some cases non-violence, across men's lives. This section examines different types of violence and how men's experiences have contributed to a confirmation or rejection of links between what it means to be a man and the use of violence.

The relationship between masculinities and violence is morewidespread than the respondents' comments on hegemonic masculinities might suggest. While most of the Hue respondents do not explicitly connect masculinity with physical strength (in contrast to nearly all of the Phu Xuyen respondents who associate manhood with either physical strength or violence, or both), the interviews reveal that even in Hue, as well as in Phu Xuyen, masculinities are commonly associated with notions of dominance, authority and strength. Violence plays a role in maintaining this association. However, the use of violence by men is tempered by social expectations around non-violent masculinities in Viet Nam.

5.1 Violence as a disciplinary tool to establish and maintain authority

The use of violence as a disciplinary tool to establish and maintain authority is closely associated with masculinities in Viet Nam (Rydstrøm, 2006). In the life histories, this is primarily reflected through the impact of childhood experiences of corporal punishment in the home by father figures. However, experiences of violence by authority figures in school reinforce this association between violence as a policing mechanism to establish and maintain authority.

Fatherhood, teaching and violence

The respondents' childhood relations with their parents demonstrate the prevalence and acceptability of parents' use of corporal punishment to discipline children. All respondents but one reported experiencing physical punishment during childhood, most frequently linked to fathers, and related to their role as educator and disciplinarian. Three respondents mention that their mothers punished them with violence, usually in cases where the father was away often; in general, mothers tended to be perceived as more loving than strict. The links between fatherhood, the father's roles as educator and disciplinarian and the use of corporal punishment show how violence is commonly associated with child-rearing responsibilities of fathers in Viet Nam. Chien recalls that although his father usually talked to him and the other children about the mistakes they made or scolded them for misbehaving, he sometimes resorted to corporal punishment in order to teach them lessons (particularly, and ironically, against fighting). Underscoring the normalization of corporal punishment among children in Viet Nam is the observation that most of the respondents do not react negatively or criticize their fathers (or mothers) for using violence. Tung suggests that his father "was sometimes so upset [about having to punish me] that he could not sleep. When I grew up, what I remembered most about him was his corporal punishment and his lessons." Overall, the respondents tended to either admit deserving the punishment or view the punishment as necessary in order to raise them [8]. Although the respondents de-emphasize the severity of these experiences, this projected normalization and excuses made for their fathers suggests that these experiences were formative to how men view violence as a legitimate disciplinary tool to enforce authority and as a tool to educate.

Some respondents reported moderate to severe experiences of physical violence during childhood. During his childhood, Dung was frequently beaten by his father (well into adulthood), and to some extent his mother. He says that his father was tough, known throughout the village as a violent man with his wife and children. In addition to Dung, Chuong and Sy also experienced severe corporal punishment during childhood. Although Sy rarely rarely saw his father during childhood (his father worked in Ha Noi), he remembers his father as strict and recalls that he beat him often, and became "so scared" when his father "glowered" at him. All three were more likely to perceive this violence as unjust, and it negatively impacted their relationships with their parents, particularly their fathers. In these cases, the association made between masculinity and use of physical violence to discipline tends to be even stronger, largely impacting these men's trajectories into more violent practices, particularly with their wives.

Corporal punishment in school

Respondent's experiences of corporal punishment as students by teachers, which appears to be particularly common in Phu Xuyen, also appears to contribute to more violent (or non-violent) practices associated with masculinities. Phu Xuyen residents Hung, Chuong and Dung all mention teachers hitting students on the hands with rulers for misbehaving or neglecting to study, with Chuong and Dung describing particularly harsh punishment. Dung recalls one female teacher who was particularly tough and who would hit students (including him) so hard with the ruler that their hands would become swollen. He says that some students were so afraid of her that they quit school. This example further underscores how violence used to establish discipline – even embodied in a female figure – was associated with power, control and fear. Similarly, Chuong remembers getting "a thrashing" from one of his teachers, and also says that he and many of the other students were afraid of their teachers, who would often give students bad marks if they were not afraid. He also mentions bribing teachers so that they

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[8] For example, Hung's comment regarding his mother's use of physical violence on the children: "How do you think she raised the six of us?"

would give him good marks, and he appears to have been particularly troublesome, often pulling pranks on his teachers.

It is relevant to note that Dung mentions one "very gentle" female teacher, with whom he appears to have had one of the few healthy and non-violent relationships in his youth, though he does not describe the relationship further. However, overall, the exposure to violence as part of the learning process, and as a mechanism to establish authority, appears to further contribute to stronger associations between masculinities and violence among the respondents.

Violence is taught as a means of maintaining authority and control (by parents and teachers), and given the perceived importance of men demonstrating their authority over their wives, violence becomes seen as a legitimate way to maintain power over one's wife.

5.2 Violence used to demonstrate dominance and strength

Violence is also associated with masculinities across the life histories trajectories through the demonstration of dominance and strength of an individual in contrast to other men, thus constructing hierarchies of men according to socially desirable masculine attributes (Umberson, et al., 2003). Men fighting men is also a risk factor for women's experiences of violence (GSO, 2010). Two periods of the life history seem to correspond to these constructions of masculinities in relation to violence: perpetration of violence among peers during childhood and hazing experiences during military service. Also notable is the continued use of violence, underscoring how early exposure and use of violence contributes to further lifetime use of violence. However, although violence seems to be associated with masculinities, the broader social unacceptability of violence and the frequent intervention of communities and parents suggest that this association is complicated, and men experience tension between proving masculinity through strength, and adhering to socially acceptable behaviours.

Respondents most often recall fighting with schoolmates and other neighbourhood or village boys, sometimes on school premises but mostly outside of school, and particularly with boys from neighbouring villages. Fighting appears to have been somewhat less common in Hue than in Phu Xuyen. Respondents from Hue generally mention that fighting existed but was rare, as opposed to respondents from Phu Xuyen, who tend to describe fighting as much more common. The view of physical strength as an ideal masculine trait in Phu Xuyen likely contributes to more experiences of childhood fighting among boys in that area, as fighting allowed them to easily demonstrate their strength over other boys. Notably, Dich is the only respondent from Hue who engaged in frequent and often organized fighting as a boy, which lasted throughout his adolescence and even into early adulthood and he is also the only respondent from Hue who mentions physical strength as an ideal masculinity, signalling how use of violence against peers affirms notions of masculinities associated with strength, and how masculinities are measured in comparison to male peers. Kim is another outlier, as the only respondent from Phu Xuyen to describe his engagement in fighting as rare. He mentions Catholic scriptures that forbid violence as influencing his non-violent tendencies.

Fighting was often strongly discouraged by parents, who sometimes used corporal punishment on their children for fighting among peers. Almost all respondents mention being involved in fighting with other boys when they were younger, albeit to varying extents. Chien remarks that fighting among children was rare because parents, especially fathers, would often intervene and scold the children, even children who were not their own. The use of corporal punishment to discipline boys for using violence with their peers shows the differing social acceptability of different types of violence, discussed further below.

Spending time as a soldier in the army appears to be another factor contributing to the perceived association between masculinity and violent behaviour for several of the respondents. Five

of the respondents, mostly from Phu Xuyen, mention having joined the army for significant periods of time as young adults[9]. And itreveals interesting connections to the establishment of masculinities and violent practices. Dung, for example, speaks of fighting between groups of soldiers, similar to gangs, who fought against one another to achieve dominance. Hung mentions practices such as bullying and/or beating up newer soldiers, often by their senior officers. He appears to be conflicted about these practices, however, noting that he did not bully newer recruits during his years as an "old soldier," as "they were just like me." Hung's comment is interesting because it shows how he is able to envision the negative impact of violence on his male peers. He relates to other men; can put himself in their shoes so to speak, and this stops him from using violence against them. However, it is notable that of the seven respondents who served in the military, all except one was sampled as a man known to use violence against his intimate partner and the final respondent, Chuong, accepts that intimate partner violence is necessary in certain circumstances. The empathetic response that prevents Hung from inflicting violence on his military charges does not extend to intimate partner relations with women. Empathy is not apparent in these men's relations with women, as overall they appear to not recognize the potential impact of violence on a woman's mental and physical well-being.

5.3 Violence – and non-violence – as part of relationship gender dynamics

Violence – and non-violence – is also associated with men's perceptions of their role in the intimate partner relationship. Two life history case studies of men who witnessed violence between parents reveal an interesting dynamic of intimate partner violencenotably, how men rationalize the use of violence against female partners in the context of masculine ideals of financial success and respect, despite widespread

social stigma, and community intervention, against the use of violence. Further, there is a serious tension between men's use of violence and social stereotypes of why violence occurs and what types of violence are legitimate, as will be discussed in the next section.

Use and motivations for partner violence

The risk and protective factor analysis on the GSO data from Viet Nam shows that women whose mothers were beaten by a male partner are more likely to have experienced physical or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months (GSO, 2010). Similarly, if women's male partners had also witnessed violence against their own mother they were more likely to experience violence. There is global literature on the impact of witnessing violence between parents during childhood on future perpetration or victimization of violence (Kwong, et al., 2003). Among the respondents, two men who witnessed severe violence perpetrated by their fathers against their mothers seem to have strongly internalized notions that masculinities are closely associated with violence against an intimate partner. However, other respondents (some of whom were sampled as violent men), have more complicated associations with violence and masculinities, partially due to a social unacceptability of violence associated with what it means to be the male partner in an intimate partner relationship.

Dung, from Phu Xuyen, recalls that his father beat his mother "very often" and was "very tough," which he thinks happened because there were too many children and not enough food to feed everyone. He says that he and the other children did not try to stop him for fear of getting beaten too, preferring to run away. Even as an adult, Dung "did not dare" try to stop him. He also describes his father as being known in the village to be violent, not only with his wife and children, but with other men as well.

Chuong, also from Phu Xuyen, recounts that his mother was afraid of his father, who beat her frequently and severely, apparently because the family was poor and there were many mouths

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[9] These respondents are Chuong, Dung, Sy, Hung (all from Phu Xuyen), and Thu (from Hue). All men were sampled as known to have used violence against their intimate partners, except Chương. Chương does, however, believe that it is alright to use violence against one's wife in certain circumstances

to feed. He mentions verbally standing up for his mother once as a child, telling his father that "he was so cruel," which resulted in him getting beaten.

The economic rationale for violence manifests in current intimate partner relations as well. Dũng recalls an incident where he hit and kicked his wife when she talked back to him. He explains that he was worried about his children and their economic welfare. Similarly, Chuong believes that a husband has the right to hit his wife if she refuses to back off when he is angry and stressed. Chuong estimates that among his childhood neighbours, eight couples out of ten "beat each other" because they were poor, which is also the reason that Chuong gives for why his father beat his mother.

These two narratives reveal both how masculinities are associated with economic security and assumptions of men's position of breadwinner, and the links between violence and challenges to these masculinities, for example, if a man cannot provide for his family (see also Vu Manh Loi, et al., 1999; Thich Nhat Tu, 2008; Phuc Anh, 2011). The explanatory nature of these two narratives suggests how respondents perceive men's use of violence in response to economic stress as – to an extent – legitimate. It is important to note, however, that in these simplistic interpretations of violence causality, men fail to take responsibility for their violence and fail to acknowledge broader underlying causes or the gendered nature of their violence.

The second rationale for men's use of violence against their wives was violence linked to men's perceived loss of face. As Dich explains, "there are two occasions where violence is necessary: first, when a wife opposes her husband and second when she disrespects him in front of his friends." The idea that women act to bolster their husband's public persona of hegemonic masculinity was earlier addressed in the context of women's contribution to a successful household. In this case, when women act counter to this expectation, and challenge their husbands in public spaces, this seems to legitimize the use of violence against

the intimate partner. The association between hegemonic ideals of respect and success, and the public-private divide are both integral to this dynamic.

These two examples show how multiple constructions of masculinities exist across different spaces of men's lives. It has been established that financial success and men's authority (and implicitly, the accordance of respect) are markers of hegemonic masculinity in Viet Nam. When these masculine norms are challenged – such as loss of economic opportunities or disrespect by figures who are expected to respect men's dominant position (children, wives) – men often frame their use of physical violence as legitimate. As we see from the life histories of Dung and Chuong, this behaviour can be learned from childhood experiences. In addition, economic instability and widespread shifts in patterns of labour and production in Viet Nam during the course of the respondent's lives likely impact how men attribute masculinity to different types of financial success, how men claim authority through new channels and how they negotiate masculinity in general, as economic development impacts gendered expectations in society. Yet, men's use of violence seems to be constrained by widespread attitudes and perceptions of different types of violence.

5.4 Acceptability of different types of violence

Across the life histories, a predominant theme related to the association between masculinity and violence was the different levels of acceptability and perceived legitimacy of different types of violence. Many respondents noted a significant level of community intervention and disapproval of violence, yet across the life history interviews, these perceptions differ for public and private violence.

Public violence, such as violence between peers – as children and as adults – was widely condemned. In the public sphere, respondent's predominantly suggested that peer violence was frowned upon, and these social expectations of

non-violence may – to an extent – limit men's aggression in order to prove their masculinity. Chien notes that adults intervened in fights among young adults and acted as mediators. He adds that this mediation caused men to feel ashamed of their aggression, and encouraged them to stop using violence. Similarly, Dung says that village leaders often speak directly with people whose behaviour is particularly inappropriate and/or violent, and people who are known to have 'conflicts' with others are called out at village meetings. Dung suggests that practices of denouncing violence within communities have encouraged him to avoid physical violence.

In the private sphere, corporal punishment against children was considered generally acceptable as we see in many of the life history stories so far, and was associated with education and discipline. On the other hand, violence against wives was publicly considered unacceptable, but it was tacitly understood by the respondents that this type of violence did occur and was legitimate under certain circumstances. Kim explains that parents do fight, but that children should never witness disagreements or marital discord, as it does not demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Trai works in a government office in his town and believes that men who work in offices do not beat their wives for two reasons: first, they need to set a good example and second, they are afraid of demotion if anyone discovered their use of violence. Trai's explanation fits into a larger pattern of beliefs and stereotypes around different types of masculinities and men's use of violence mentioned by many respondents, which underscores the link between class identity and masculinities in Viet Nam (Thai, 2012). It appears that when violence moves into the public sphere either due to public fighting or people knowing about intimate partner violence, then it is unacceptable. When violence remains within the confines of the private sphere, it is more legitimized. Further, while the notion of an ideal man is not someone who is violent, a man must be able to maintain authority over his wife (and children) and violent discipline is sometimes seen as a necessary tool to do so. In

this way, men's violence is often placed squarely on the women's shoulders for not living up to their gender-prescribed roles. The use of violence is then closely associated with power and control within relationships, and power and control is closely associated with men's position in the family and society.

Class identity and violence

Among the respondents, prevailing beliefs and stereotypes about class identity were used to explain why some men use violence, and what causes men's use of violence. Several respondents believe that more educated men, or 'intellectuals,' do not commit violence against their wives as often as less-educated men, despite the fact that partner violence occurs regardless of social, economic and cultural divides (GSO, 2010). Thu, for example, believes that intellectuals do not beat their wives but only scold or rebuke them, but that manual workers might beat their wives (when they are drunk, for example) since they are not properly educated. He adds that this "can be tolerated." Khai, however, acknowledges that domestic violence does happen among "intellectuals," but says that they cover it up more than the less-educated classes because other intellectuals would condemn such violence[10].

These stereotypes and biases reveal two factors related to men's perceptions of partner violence in Viet Nam. First, these beliefs reflect larger class and geographical stereotypes across Viet Nam, and underscore how men understand their masculinity as relational to other demographic markers. Second, in the context of socio-economic changes in Vietnamese society, they emphasize the importance men place on external perceptions of image and reputation, suggesting tension in how men negotiate between social expectations of male authority and norms around non-violence.

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[10] Further analysis of GSO-WHO data on women's experiences of violence in Viet Nam, conducted by Dr. Emma Fulu (Partners for Prevention, 2012), shows that education of men and women is not protective against women's experiences of violence.

CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION

This life history study on gender-based violence and masculinities in Viet Nam reveals a number of trajectories into certain violent or gender-equitable practices and beliefs. The following discussion highlights some overarching trends in the findings.

Differences between men who use violence and gender-equitable men

As described above, there are many influences throughout the respondents' lives that combine to shape masculinities in Viet Nam. Some of these masculinities are hegemonic, conforming more or less to established notions of men as dominant over women. Yet, some respondents adopt alternative masculine practices that do not conform (or conform to a lesser degree) to more established notions of male dominance. Overall, the analysis finds three critical differences between respondents who engage in more gender-equitable practices and those who engage in more violent practices: (1) patterns of masculinity associated with (non-) violence during childhood; (2) power-sharing arrangements with wives; and (3) how respondents define their masculinities in relation to other men.

The respondents had diverse experiences of violence throughout childhood. However, in general, men who were sampled as gender-equitable were more exposed to notions of masculinities associated with characteristics other than dominance and authority, and in some cases explicit teaching around non-violence. Khai's father served in the military during the Viet Nam war, and he recalls his father telling him the importance of a "peaceful, conflict-free life" and how fighting should be avoided "since it is a big deal in this country." Kim grew up in a fairly gender-equitable environment, where women and men were mutually involved in the handicraft business. He associates masculinity with stability and skills in the workplace. He remembers his parents as "good-natured" and while he sees verbal conflict as an inevitable part of the relationship, he is anxious that it does not affect the family dynamics and emphasizes the responsibility of

both women and men to reduce conflict in the partnership, and in the larger society. On the other hand, Dich's remembers that his father often told him the importance of non-violence, however, frequently used corporal punishment against Dich and his siblings. Dich closely associates authority and dominance with his masculine identity and practices. He is known to have used violence against his wife, however, he describes himself as non-violent and attributes this to his father's teachings around peace and tranquillity. These contradictions in Dich's life history underscore the different associations men make between their masculinity and the use of violence in their immediate lives.

Second, intimate partner relationships are important spaces in which masculinities and gendered power dynamics are enacted and expressed (Adams and Coltrane, 2005; Bui and Morash, 2008; Jonzon, et al., 2007). An underlying theme throughout the interviews was the widespread acceptance of men's power over their wives. However, the operations used to ensure this power dynamic varied, and men who were sampled as gender equitable were generally more open about the mutual power-sharing arrangements within their intimate partner relations. Kim describes a very gender-equitable relationship with his wife. They discuss everything together, from work to bringing up the children, and reach compromises when necessary. Chien also appears to have a more gender-equitable relationship with his wife regarding decision-making. He says that he and his wife discuss major decisions together, although he is the one who makes the suggestions and initiates the discussions, with his wife responsible for allocating the money appropriately.

Finally, the life history interviews show various ways in which men come to understand what it means to be a man in their context. This dynamic appears to be very much associated with social change in Viet Nam. Many respondents place a high premium on education. Among the gender equitable respondents, their notions of work success served as a buffer to challenges to their masculinity. In addition, they widely recognize

the significance of women's participation both in education and in the workforce. They tend to associate equal education and work opportunities as necessary for economic development, financial stability and notions of success associated with masculinities.

These spaces demonstrate how men's trajectories into attitudes and practices associated with masculinity vary according to a number of factors. However, it is also relevant to note that these spaces are impacted by other social dynamics and processes, not explored in this section. In particular, further research on the impact of macro-social processes and trends on the Vietnamese gender order could reveal how men in Viet Nam position themselves in relation to a constantly shifting environment. Further research could also explore this dynamic from women's perspectives.

Gender equality in theory and practice

A consistent theme throughout the interviews and the analysis is the disparity between recognizing and supporting gender equality in theory and internalizing gender-equitable notions into practice. As we have seen, all of the respondents who were considered by the researchers as exhibiting more gender-equitable behaviours, even those who expressly state that they support equality between men and women, possess at least some degree of gender-inequitable beliefs and practices. This ranges from the 'most gender-equitable' respondent, Nam, who works to promote women's empowerment but believes that women should enjoy performing housework, to the likely violent Chuong, who participates in domestic work but believes that wives should always back down during arguments, at the risk of experiencing violence. This is generally consistent with global research on men's beliefs and attitudes on gender equality (Barker, et al., 2011). On the other hand, men who were sampled according to their violent practices sometimes held more gender equitable beliefs than might be expected. This suggests that the association between beliefs and practices is not as rigorous as one might expect, and that

other influences across the life course (such as peaceful childhood experiences and non-violent, supportive parenting practices) have more traction to move men toward less violent practices.

Challenges to masculinities: public image and reputation

Related to this disparity between gender-equitable beliefs and practices is the impact of public image and reputation on how men identify with and demonstrate their masculinity, whether in relation to other men or in relation to women. In particular, this seems to have influenced many respondents' decisions to use or to not use physical violence, both within and outside of the home. In a way, the belief by many men that the use of violence (with other men or with women) is negatively associated with one's position in society may help to control their own use of violence. In terms of intimate partner violence, those men who consider themselves to be from the wealthier or more educated classes suggest that they do not use violence out of a desire to preserve their respectable image and reputation, whether or not they believe in gender equality or non-violence, or whether or not they actually use violence in practice.

The many justifications and excuses given by respondents who admit to using violence against their wives suggest that they (to varying extents) see such violence in a negative light, or are at least aware that others condemn such violence. Again, this demonstrates the importance of image and reputation, but also the potential impact that shaming can have on men's behaviour. This notion is raised by Dung in his discussion of "Cultural Families," as well as by Chien when he talks about adults intervening in fights among young people. The importance that men place on public image and reputation is therefore a key area contributing to their changing notions of masculinity, and which can have positive impacts on their behaviour toward women. It is important, however, to recognize that the association between public image and reputation with violence can have the negative outcome of prompting men to hide their use of

violence, making it difficult for women to seek support.

Multiple masculinities

Finally, men's discussions around where, when and how violence occurs and how it is justified shows how men construct masculinities in various spaces – in partnerships, relations within the community and at work. "In relation to violence, when masculinity is threatened or challenged in one space, men seem to be more likely to seek other spaces to reaffirm their masculinity, and vice-versa. For example, men who were able to establish masculinities such as dominance and authority in certain domains (such as the military, or within their jobs) may have had less need to reaffirm hegemonic masculinities in other spaces. Yet in the broader context of massive job loss due to economic restructuring in Viet Nam, and increased urbanization, notions typically associated with men's perceptions of their own masculinity are more likely to break down or change". This is particularly evident in men's tension and contradictory beliefs and attitudes toward women's participation in the formal workplace. Subsequently, as a consequence of this deconstruction of expectations and roles in society, violence may be used as a means to reclaim former levels of authority across different spaces.

CHAPTER VII
IMPLICATIONS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

strong
hands
stop
violence
against women
and girls

Life history research provides a valuable foundation for more nuanced programmes and policies to prevent gender-based violence. Research on the dynamics of social action – such as violent interpersonal relationships – requires an intimate knowledge of people's lived experiences. Life history inquiry goes straight to the level of personal experience, to explore how the pathways of individual lives lead toward certain patterns of behaviour and practice. This action-oriented research is an indispensable approach to understanding violence. It allows for locating key turning points, or critical relationships and experiences, where positive change toward non-violence is possible. The following recommendations focus on implications for violence prevention programmes and policies. While response is an integral component of a comprehensive approach to addressing GBV, efforts must also be made to stop violence before it starts. The findings of this study show that working with boys and men – together with girls and women – is necessary to address masculine norms that run counter to gender equality and non-violence, such as beliefs around men's control over women. As the life history narratives show, men are taught 'how to be a man' from an early age, and from various sources, including fathers, family members, friends and other role models. This points toward the need to educate boys – and girls – at younger ages, that violence is not appropriate, and disassociate notions of masculinities – or what it means to be a man – with use of violence, particularly against women.

Although this study focuses on men's notions of masculinity and GBV, effective violence prevention efforts must work not only with boys and men, but together with girls and women, for a comprehensive approach to ending violence. Below are a series of recommendations for more effective violence prevention efforts across various levels of society in Viet Nam, based on the findings of this study. Programmes and interventions should promote non-violence and equal relationships, through transformative approaches that build commitment to gender equality and gender equitable relationships, and challenge male gender norms that oppress women.

There are a number of programmes around the world that have been proven effective to prevent gender-based violence and promote more equitable gender norms. These have been compiled in a brief list in Annex II.

In the family

Findings	Programme recommendations
The family setting is a key place where girls and boys are socialized according to the gender regimes in their broader community. The life history narratives show how family relationships and setting can be instrumental in developing non-violent methods of conflict resolution, and equal opportunities and rights for girls and boys.	• Include non-violence and equal treatment of girls and boys within families as one of the criteria for on-going 'cultural family' programmes. • Promote programmes and awareness on the impact of corporal punishment on child development and nurture healthy parenting practices, particularly with fathers. • Develop behavior change communication programmes that address equitable parenting practices, to promote the equal treatment of sons and daughters, particularly with regard to education. This might include advocacy for women and men to have equal decision-making responsibilities within the household.

In schools

Findings	Programme recommendations
The life history narratives show that schools are an institutional setting where notions of gender, education and opportunities for girls' and boys' futures (education, career, etc.) are built and disseminated. Schools offer a stable institutional setting that are geared toward learning and leave a lasting impact, where children can be exposed to more gender equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours.	• Develop school curricula that teach girls and boys, and young women and men about non-violence, healthy relationships and gender equality. In particular, challenge the notion that to be a man one must maintain authority over one's wife, daughter or sister. • Work to end corporal punishment and bullying in schools and other educational settings. • Work with teachers, particularly male teachers, to serve as positive, non-violent role models for students. • Engage with extra-curricular groups for girls and boys in the public and private sector to promote gender equality, healthy peer relationships and non-violent masculinities (e.g. sports groups and academic clubs).

In the community/workplace

Findings	Programme recommendations
The life history narratives show how men's notions of what it means to be a man are shaped by broader community and societal norms around masculinity, and many different actors across their lives. Changing social norms at this broader level is a long-term process, and must happen together with on-going work with individual boys and men.	• Promote programmes that make men aware of the detrimental impact of violence on women's health, their children and society at large. • Work with women and men, as well as community leaders, to raise awareness on GBV as a complex, multi-dimensional issue rather than an issue caused by poverty and unemployment stress. • Engage with local institutions (e.g. religious organizations, local businesses, media/radio) as partners in gender equality and violence prevention. • Support community mobilization projects that address notions of masculinity associated with dominance, authority and being the breadwinner, and work with role models for alternative masculinities. • Build communication campaigns that promote gender equitable behaviour and practices related to masculinities through media campaigns, as well as on-the-ground participatory activities.

Policies

Findings	Policy recommendations
On-going programme work at the grassroots level (as described above at the family, school and community levels) must be complemented with national and subnational policies that promote gender equality and non-violence, and create an enabling environment in which women and men have equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.	• Raise awareness of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control and support more comprehensive implementation to ensure that violence against women is understood as illegal and totally unacceptable. • Develop and promote labour policies for equal valuation of women's work. • Work with education policymakers to integrate gender equality into national education policy initiatives. • Conduct reviews of education policies and curricula at primary and secondary levels to explore different avenues to promote gender equality and non-violent masculinities through education. • Promote institutional policies for men's equal participation in work and home life, such as paternityl leave policies.

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ANNEXES

1. List of respondents

Men who are known to use violence against their intimate partners				Men who are engaged in more gender-equitable practices			
Name	Birth	Location	Interview Date	Name	Birth	Location	Interview Date
Sy	1968	Phu Xuyen	29.6.2011	Tu	1937	Hue	19.5.2011
Vuong	1963	Phu Xuyen	28.6.2011	Chinh	1954	Phu Xuyen	28.7.2011
Thu	1937	Hue	20.5.2011	Trai	1960	Phu Xuyen	29.6.2011
Phuc	1948	Phu Xuyen	8.7.2011	Khai	1976	Hue	20.5.2011
Tung	1951	Hue	23.5.2011	Cau	1937	Hue	18.5.2011
Dich	1975	Hue	22.5.2011	Lan	1970	Hue	2.8.2011
Dung	1962	Phu Xuyen	28.6.2011	Ba	1957	Phu Xuyen	26.7.2011
Kien	1957	Phu Xuyen	28.6.2011	Kim	1954	Phu Xuyen	27.7.2011
Bac	1932	Phu Xuyen	28.7.2011	Binh	1940	Hue	20.5.2011
Hoa	1980	Hue	21.5.2011	Giang	1958	Hue	23.5.2011
Long	1946	Hue	18.5.2011	Chien	1976	Hue	21.5.2011
Hung	1971	Phu Xuyen	3.8.2011	Nam	1973	Hue	23.5.2011
Truong	1966	Phu Xuyen	26.7.2011	Dan	1965	Hue	19.5.2011
Chep	1958	Phu Xuyen	29.6.2011	Chuong	1961	Phu Xuyen	29.7.2011
Hung	1963	Phu Xuyen	8.7.2011	Khoe	1953	Phu Xuyen	27.7.2011

2. Examples of global GBV prevention programmes

There is an existing body of programme work that has been developed around the world to prevent gender-based violence and promote more gender equitable ways of being a man. Many prevention programmes that have been evaluated and shown to work have been developed and implemented in high-income countries. However, these programmes can be adapted and localized for the Viet Nam context. Below is a short list of programmes that could be adapted for Viet Nam.

Early childhood and healthy parenting

Findings from this Viet Nam qualitative study, and additional findings from the Partners for Prevention (The Change Project) research in Asia and the Pacific and from around the world, show that early childhood is a key area for programmes working to foster more equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviours. This includes working with parents to develop a caring, healthy environment for children, and working specifically with fathers to foster models of fatherhood that are involved in childcare and raising children.

For more information on policy and programme options for work on early childhood and healthy parenting, visit www.arnec.net.

School-based interventions

There are a wide-range of school-based interventions to promote gender equality and non-violence among enrolled female and male students. One intervention which has been evaluated and replicated is the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) intervention, a school-based curriculum to promote gender equality, healthy relationships and non-violence

among students (11-14). The intervention aims to engage young adolescents to foster gender equality and promote alternative, equitable and non-violent gender norms, influencing socialization processes early and systematically. The intervention also builds ownership among multiple stakeholders, including teachers and parents, and broader educational institutions and systems. The GEMS model is currently being replicated in Da Nang, Viet Nam, by the NGO Paz y Desarrollo (PyD). For more information on the GEMS model, visit http://www.icrw.org/where-we-work/gender-equity-movement-schools-gems.

Community-based work to prevent violence

There are some global programmes that have been shown to be effective in supporting local efforts to transform norms and practices related to gender equality, sexual health, masculinities and/or social and legal impunity within and through communities, working with women, men, couples and broader community members. For example:

Stepping Stones, a training package (13 sessions) on HIV prevention, relationship-based communications and gender equality: http://www.acordinternational.org/silo/files/implementing-stepping-stones.pdf

SASA!, an HIV and VAW prevention toolkit for community mobilization around more equitable gender norms: http://www.raisingvoices.org/

Practitioners in Vietnam are also implementing community-based work with women and men, and men in couples. For more information on community-based work to address GBV in Vietnam, visit the Center for Studies and Applied Sciences on Gender (http://www.csaga.org.vn) and Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (http://www.ccihp.org/).