A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF WHAT SURVIVORS IN BARBADOS PERCEIVE TO BE CONTRIBUTORS TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

By

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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF WHAT SURVIVORS IN BARBADOS PERCEIVE TO BE CONTRIBUTORS TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global issue with deleterious outcomes for young girls and women (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 2002), as well as communities and societies as a whole (Buvinic & Morrison, 1999). The Caribbean is no exception to these trends; however, little research exists in the region on the etiology of GBV (DeShong, 2011, 2015). Even fewer studies have considered the contributors to GBV from survivors' perspectives. This study utilized interview methods with survivors of violence against women in Barbados, to better understand perceived contributors to GBV; specifically, contributors across ecological levels as defined by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development and the Center for Disease Control's (2018) model for violence prevention. A total of 33 participants identified contributors to GBV across all levels of the ecological model, including individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors, such as witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child, economic dissonance or manipulation, traditional gender roles in intimate relationships, the raising of young boys versus young girls, the family system protection of men, the acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems, the normalization of violence across communities and community settings, and traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society. Survivors' perceptions around, and experiences with, GBV should be incorporated into prevention and intervention efforts to ensure programs are aligned with their lived realities. Integrating survivor perceptions around predictors of GBV may contribute to the success of implemented programs in the future.

Keywords: gender-based violence, ecological model, Barbados

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Finally, Kes should have won Road March 2019.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is defined by the United Nations General Assembly (1993) as violence experienced by an individual because of power inequalities related to gender or gender roles (Article 1 & 2). It includes but is not limited to intimate partner violence, incest, sexual violence including rape and sexual assault, human trafficking, and harassment, and is a violation of human-rights (Black et al., 2011; Devries et al., 2013; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Heise et al., 2002; NIJ, 2017). GBV encompasses violence within, and in reaction to, a heteronormative society, and knows no boundaries in regards to race, ethnicity, sex, gender identification, or sexual orientation (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Furthermore, GBV should be considered within an intersectionality framework such that gender alone cannot fully explain GBV; individuals exist within multiple, intersecting systems which shape the experience of GBV (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005).

GBV has destructive impacts on health and well-being, and wreaks havoc on families, communities, and entire countries throughout the world (Heise, 1998; Heise et al., 1999; Heise et al., 2002; Heise, Raikes, Watts, & Zwi, 1994). The cost of GBV includes massive deficits in terms of educational attainment and economic advancement, and significantly hinders national development (Buvinic & Morrison, 1999; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). It is estimated that "35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence" alone (García-Moreno et al., 2013, p. 2).

The Caribbean region is no stranger to the existence and impact of GBV (DeShong, 2011, 2015; DeShong & Haynes, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Heise et al., 1999; Le Franc, Samms-Vaughan, Hambleton, Fox, & Brown, 2008). Three of the top 10 highest rates of rape globally were found in countries in the Caribbean region. In fact, participating Caribbean

countries in one global study were found to possess a higher rape rate than the global average [15 rapes per 100,000] (UNODC, 2007). Although these figures are not inclusive of every country across the world, the results are concerning. The World Health Organization estimated a 27.09% and 10.32% prevalence rate for intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, respectively, in the Caribbean (García-Moreno et al., 2013).

Consistent with what has been found globally (García-Moreno, Guedes, & Knerr, 2012a, 2012b; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2002), research suggests education, employment, and economic independence function as protective factors for GBV against women in the Caribbean region (CADRES, 2009; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Nagassar et al., 2010). However, efforts to understand the causes of GBV against women *from the survivor's perspective* would provide significant insight for intervention development in Barbados and address a gap the Bureau of Gender Affairs has been wanting to fill (P. Boyce, personal communication, January 18, 2018). In short, developing programs that resonate with survivors is a crucial component of successful intervention development (Trickett, 2011).

This study utilized in-depth interviewing to better understand the perceived predictors of GBV *from the survivor perspective*. It is critical to understand survivors' thinking about this issue to ensure that intervention efforts align with their belief systems as well as their practical realities. The interview protocol explored the spectrum of perceived predictors across multiple layers of an ecological framework, extending beyond individual factors to include interpersonal, community, and societal factors as well (CDC, 2018). This inquiry may help lay the groundwork for the development of regional intervention and prevention efforts, specifically for programs that are contextually informed by the lived realities of Caribbean women. Expanding the regional literature may also provide an opportunity for leveraging additional items on national census

protocols (e.g., items related to GBV against women) or the implementation of the Demographic and Health Surveys program (DHS, 2017a) in Barbados and other Caribbean island nations. Overall, exploring *survivors' beliefs* about what contributes to GBV aims to create programs and interventions that resonate with them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An outline of the definitional features of GBV and an introduction to the research setting, a contextual overview of the gender dynamic history in the Caribbean, and a summary of ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kelly, 1966, 1968, 1971) follows. A breakdown of the ecological levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1995; CDC, 2018; Heise, 1998) including individual, interpersonal, community, and societal (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; CDC, 2018), will guide the subsequent review of the literature, focusing on risk and protective factors of GBV. Of potentially greater importance for the current study, however, will be a summary on the importance of contextual fit which will then transition to the justification of the study.

Definitional Features of GBV

Different terms and definitions exist within the GBV field, all of which land on a spectrum from broad definitions (e.g., GBV) to narrow definitions of particular forms of GBV (e.g., intimate partner sexual violence) (Heise et al., 2002; Kilpatrick, 2004; Saltzman, 2004). GBV includes trafficking, forced prostitution, intimate partner violence, non-intimate partner violence, sexual assault, sexual violence, rape, domestic violence, spousal abuse, and many other forms of abuse based on gender (Black et al., 2011; Devries et al., 2013; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Heise et al., 1999; Heise et al., 2002; NIJ, 2017). While these terms are all considered to be captured by the term "GBV," they each carry slightly different boundaries regarding their legality or their definitional features (Kilpatrick, 2004; Saltzman, 2004). Regardless, "GBV" was selected for this study for several reasons.

Some scholars argue that a broad definition is an ethical choice as it reiterates that there is no one, unified experience of GBV, nor are the different experiences of GBV on a spectrum in

terms of their validity. There is a global trend of barriers to disclosure, and narrow definitions of GBV may perpetuate these trends as they may reflect to survivors that only certain experiences "count" (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Ellsberg, Heise, Pena, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001; Flury, Nyberg, & Riecher-Rössler, 2010; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This study selected the broad term of GBV for the literature review, as well as for sampling, as it signifies the importance of honoring all survivors and creates a space for as many women to participate in the study as possible. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the plethora of experiences this term includes, and that each of those experiences is uniquely traumatic in terms of both the occurrence as well as the impact. A broad definition does not intend to group these experiences together in an invalidating way.

Although a broad definition was used, this qualitative study had a relatively narrow focus on violence against women in *one* geographic area. Differences in perceived predictors across rural versus urban communities were considered early on as themes were emerging; however, the overall intention was to provide a first-ever exploration of GBV survivors' perceptions around the contributors to this issue. To do so, this study was guided by ecological theory as described later in this literature review.

Research Setting

Barbados, the eastern most island in the Caribbean, is situated among the Windward Islands of the Lesser Antilles in the West Indies. The island is just over 166 square miles, and the landscape is relatively flat except for the more rugged eastern coast of the island. The island was previously colonized by the British and has a scarring history of slavery and indentured servitude. Slavery ended in 1834, and Barbados gained independence in 1966. Barbados is known to be the most densely populated country in the Eastern Caribbean, with a 2017

population estimate of 292,336. Racially and ethnically speaking, the island is 92.4% black, 2.7% white, 3.1% mixed, and 1.3% East Indian (based on the 2010 census estimate). Bajans (colloquial term for Barbadians) are a religious people, with the majority identifying as Protestant (based on the 2010 census estimate). While sugarcane fields spread far and wide across the island, the economy is no longer reliant on sugarcane production as it was historically. Today, tourism is one of the leading industries.

Mason and Satchell (2016) have examined the etiology of violence in the Caribbean, suggesting a connection to the region's history, highlighting its colonial past, enslavement of Africans, indentured servitude of East Indians, and poor economic settings. Violence was perpetrated by colonizers, against men and women, and has had a profound impact on individuals and communities (Barrow, 1996; Hutton, 1996; Mason & Satchell, 2016; Ward & Hickling, 2004). Mason and Satchell (2016) further explain that:

> Violence was used to perpetuate complete control over the enslaved Africans and…enslaved females were sexually assaulted by colonizers…These experiences of physical and sexual domination by enslavers are believed to have created significant trauma affecting individuals, the nature of the Africans' intimate relationships and their family structures… (p. 207)

Some scholars have commented on the reaction to violence in the region such that men are often given a "cultural pass" (Gibbons, 2015, p. 4) when it comes to violence against any woman with whom he has an intimate or familial relationship. Gender dynamics have been described as illustrating a continuous imbalance of power between men and women (DeShong, 2011, 2015; Kempadoo, 2009), and are indicative of the prioritization of men's sexual agency (Kempadoo, 2009).

Continuing with gender dynamics, power differentials between men and women is at times reflected in "playing mas" (participating in Carnival festivals), as well as calypso, soca, reggae, and dancehall music (Dikobe, 2008; Frank, 2007; P. Mohammed, 1991). Lyrics therein suggest mechanisms of power and control enforced by a male-dominated society. As witnessed by some scholars, women's sexual agency is controlled by the patriarchy, yet at times the falsely professed autonomy of women in Carnival music can be found. This may cloud the dialogue and deter individuals from easily identifying the oppression of women (Dikobe, 2008; Frank, 2007; P. Mohammed, 1991).

Intersectionality and History in the Caribbean

Further delving into the history introduced earlier, the diversity of the region and the history of its colonial past emerge as significant factors by which to contextualize current research. Without frontloading such historical context, the study runs the risk of further perpetuating a pathologizing illustration of the Caribbean that does not acknowledge the colonial narrative, the violence suffered by those in the region, or the forced hegemonic masculinities that defined imperialistic patriarchy throughout history (Beckles, 2004; Downes, 2004; Lewis, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004).

Colonial rule embedded patriarchal imperatives within cultures and contexts as the guiding policy by which to give power and govern (P. Mohammed, 2004). Arguing that men rule society, patriarchy establishes power structures, inequalities, norms, and roles based on gender. However, gender itself is socially constructed, having been shaped by culture, context, and history (Nurse, 2004). The literature surrounding Caribbean masculinities provides great insight into the historical development of patriarchal power systems in the Caribbean as a result of

enslavement, racial injustice, and mass inequality. Highlighting work by regional scholars, Reddock (2004) explains that:

> …Beckles locates the early construction of black or Afro-Caribbean masculinity in the competitive and exploitative relationship between European and African males during the slave period. Noting that, for most of the slave period, males formed the majority of the Caribbean slave population, Beckles argues that the masculinity of enslaved blacks was constructed through its interaction with hegemonic structures of white masculinity, the principal site of interaction being the property relation. Here white male power was based on the monopolistic control, ownership and possession of all power and property, including black women and men. (p. xxv)

The concept of hegemonic masculinity needs dissecting at this juncture. To begin this dissection, it is important to acknowledge the use of the phrase *Caribbean masculinities*, and the importance of honoring the intersectionality embedded within the concept. Nurse (2004) highlights:

> Masculinity is thus multidimensional, since gender relations are intertwined with class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality and nationality. Hence, it is more appropriate to speak of multiple masculinit*ies* rather than "one" masculinity. In addition, it is also recognized that there is a power differential within masculinities. Some masculinities are hegemonic and dominant while others are subordinated and marginalized. Historically, subordinate masculinities have been constructed and represented as *effeminate and infantile* to distinguish them from the hegemonic forms. They have also been *racialized* and *sexualized* as a means to justify their oppression. (p. 7)

Hegemonic masculinity is posited as a natural, ideal male who is "white, heterosexual, married, middle-aged, university educated and upper middle-class" (Nurse, 2004, p. 6). Adhering to the concept of hegemonic masculinity supports the argument of gender differences being naturally determined. This is problematic as it minimizes, if not entirely erases, the structural and systemic injustices against women. Concepts begin to solidify around sex and gender being one in the same, therefore setting norms that, for men, may reject the embodiment of anything other than hegemonic masculinity (Nurse, 2004). This rejection is what defines many of the arguments made about Caribbean masculinities, in terms of relationships with women, as well as reactions to and beliefs about individuals engaging in same sex relationships. Hegemonic masculinity regulates and monitors societal norms and gender roles. As stated by Nurse (2004):

> In this way, homophobia is one of the building blocks in the construction of masculinity. It is argued that this tendency suggests that masculinity has been historically defined as the "flight from women," the repudiation of the feminine and the rejection of male-male intimacy. (p. 8)

Continuing, Nurse (2004) highlights the "fear of being viewed as wimps" (p. 8), as a feature of hegemonic masculinity, defined significantly by receiving the approval of and recognition from other men. Given the deeply engrained element of power within hegemonic masculinity, and how this power often translates to aggression or violence, the enactment of hegemonic masculinity within *Caribbean masculinities,* may in fact be considered a tool of self-preservation or protection.

Mohammed (2004) asks, "What is it about slavery and colonialism which brought on a legacy of antagonistic relations between men and women of African descent in Caribbean society?" (p. 61). Mohammed (2004) points to the forced disruption of intact relationships and

families. Continuing, Beckles (2004) explains “In social relations, the enslaved back male and his offspring were fed, clothed and sheltered by white men whose hegemonic masculinities determined that being “kept” and “kept down” were symbolic of submissive inferiority, and gendered as feminine” (p. 229). Furthermore, the sexual assault and rape of enslaved women by white men was rampant and destructive to the victims, their partners, and their families (Beckles, 2004).

This forced disruption of families is important to consider in the history and study of the Afro-Caribbean family structure. It is crucial to acknowledge that “The Afro-Caribbean family, the product of its West African origins and its transformations during slavery, was never understood in its own right but always as a deviant form of Western or European norm” (Reddock, 2004, p. xvii). Such family structures had a matriarchal focus where women were often the head of the household and held great power and presence within the domestic setting. However, early documentation and research of the Afro-Caribbean family structure has been unjustly described with pathologizing language that illustrated a chaotic or disjointed system (Reddock, 2004). As noted by Reddock (2004), “These concerns were not transferred to the more overtly patriarchal Indo-Caribbean family, whose structure fitted more closely that of the hegemonic norm” (p. xvii).

The racial and ethnic diversity in the Caribbean, layered by factors such as gender, religion, and class, all need to be considered within multiple historical contexts. These multiple contexts refer to those which occurred simultaneously (e.g., black enslavement versus white supremacy and imperialism), as well as how history and contexts shift and transition over time. Regarding how this translates to GBV against women, the following statements are still relevant today. Reddock (2004) explains:

> So far the discourse has highlighted the conflict with other men, which often takes place through the bodies of women. The female, often depersonalized, may be the ground, the territory over or upon which fierce battles are fought, but increasingly as women challenge accepted notions of masculinity and enter spaces perceived as male preserves, the battle also becomes one directly against them. (p. xxx)

Much has shifted over the course of Caribbean history in terms of education, employment, and the economy. These shifts are by no means isolated from gender dynamics. Many scholars urge the need to understand Caribbean masculinities from multiple historical perspectives, including slavery and colonial rule, the decline of the sugarcane industry, and the more current educational and employment mobility of women. With women surpassing men in the education system in some areas of the Caribbean, the continuously shifting gender landscape around household headship, gender norms, and familial structure, needs to be considered (Downes, 2004; Figueroa, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Parry, 2004). Caribbean masculinities are not static; they are an ever-evolving component of the conversation around GBV against women. Furthermore, they are a crucial component of the ecological systems within which Caribbean women exist.

Ecological Theory

To explore perceived risk factors of GBV in Barbados, ecological theory was selected as the primary framework. Ecological theory has long been applied to the field of GBV regarding impact (R. Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009; R. Campbell, Sefl, & Ahrens, 2004), risk factors (R. Campbell et al., 2004; Heise, 1998), and intervention development (R. Campbell, Greeson, Bybee, & Fehler-Cabral, 2012; R. Campbell, Patterson, & Fehler-Cabral, 2010). More specifically, Kelly's ecological theory (Kelly, 1966, 1968, 1971) and Bronfenbrenner's theory of

human development (1979, 1986, 1995) have argued that individual experiences are heavily influenced by their ecological settings and *the interaction of* ecological settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1995; Heise, 1998; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework consists of social ecologies within which the individual is nested, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological model is an ideal framework for understanding the complexity of GBV as it relates to the personal, familial, community, and societal manifestations of violence against women (Heise, 1998; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005).

The individual level refers to the "bio-psycho-social characteristics" (R. Campbell et al., 2009, p. 227), or the ontogenic factors (Heise, 1998) of the person in context. Continuing through the ecological levels, the microsystem consists of the family, friend, school, and workplace environments; these are the interpersonal connections between an individual and their immediate settings. The mesosystem refers to the intersection of microsystems, for instance, the interaction of family and work settings. The exosystem consists of settings that do not necessarily involve the individual, but would impact their outcomes, such as legal or medical resource availability. The macrosystem includes social and gender norms, and finally the chronosystem involves transitional phases throughout one's life, and how those may be impacted by the historical climate (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1995; R. Campbell et al., 2009; Heise, 1998). A representation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model is provided in Figure 1.

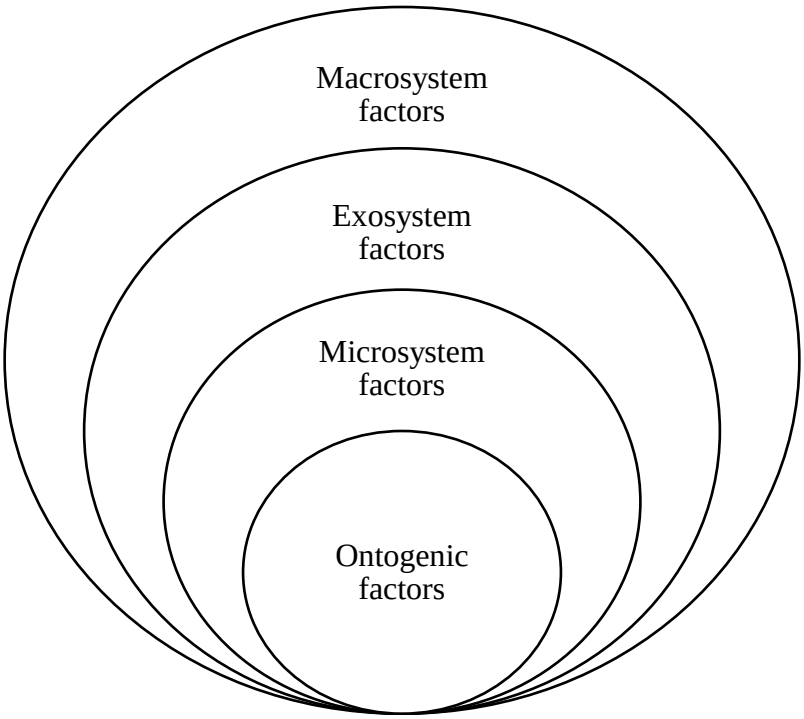

Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model.

Bronfenbrenner's framework provides a lens through which to understand GBV against women, globally (R. Campbell et al., 2009; Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Heise, 1998; Kelmendi, 2013), but has not been *fully* integrated into the GBV literature (Heise, 1998), or the Caribbean literature (Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Mason & Satchell, 2016).

Heise (1998) proposed an ecological framework *specifically* for GBV research that conceptualized "violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors" (p. 263). Such a framework is well-suited for the Caribbean and would decipher the incongruous findings across nations by honoring nationally-informed risk factors and racial and ethnic diversity (CADRES, 2009; Danns & Parsad, 1989; Gopaul, Morgan, & Reddock, 1994; Mason & Satchell, 2016; Parsad, 1988). An integration of Heise's (1998) ecological model for GBV and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) social-ecological model better capture the context of the current study. The CDC's (2018)

model focuses on relationship, community, and societal levels beyond the individual. A representation of the CDC (2018) model can be found in Figure 2.

At the individual level, witnessing abuse as a child, experiencing childhood abuse, and other factors such as age, education, unemployment, substance abuse, and mental health have been documented as risk factors. In terms of the relationship level (which will be referred to as the interpersonal level throughout this dissertation), risk factors include dominance and control,

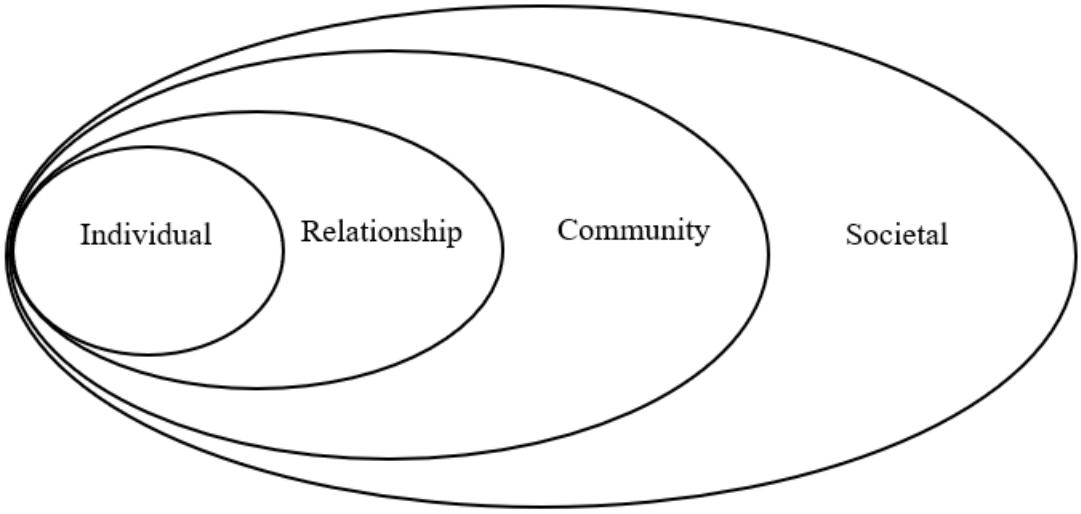

Figure 2. CDC social-ecological model.

partnership discord, alcohol and/or substance abuse by a partner, intergenerational violence, parental conflict, low familial socioeconomic status, and conflict over gender equality/women's empowerment within intimate relationships, peer, and familial structures. The community level is focused on settings in which relationships occur, such as neighborhoods. Risk factors include high neighborhood unemployment rates, adequate and safe housing, social isolation of women, and lacking services to address GBV. Finally, the societal level refers to factors such as rigid gender roles, male entitlement, and perpetuation of social inequity and inequality (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999; CDC, 2018; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002).

The CDC social-ecological model for violence prevention hinges on a key factor of multilevel action as such an approach is more likely to *sustain* prevention and intervention efforts more so than targeting one single level in isolation (CDC, 2018). The interview protocol for the current study was built with this framework in mind. The next section introduces research to date that has investigated risk factors by ecological level in the Caribbean.

Gender-Based Violence Risk and Protective Factors by Ecological Level

The individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels are expanded on, pulling from the existing studies in the Caribbean that have addressed GBV. This set of literature is relatively limited; some studies focus on GBV alone, whereas other studies look at GBV as tangentially related to a broader, or disparate focus (e.g., adolescent pregnancy) (Baumgartner, Geary, Tucker, & Wedderburn, 2009; Geary, Wedderburn, McCarraher, Cuthbertson, & Pottinger, 2006; Gómez, Speizer, & Beauvais, 2009; Rose, Rajasingam, Derkenne, Mitchell, & Ramlall, 2016). Furthermore, existing research is not equally distributed across Caribbean nations. For instance, there is a great deal of research from Haiti (D. W. Campbell et al., 2016; Cayemittes et al., 2013; Couture, Soto, Akom, Joseph, & Zunzunegui, 2010; Fawzi et al., 2005; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gómez et al., 2009; Small et al., 2008) and Trinidad (Gopaul et al., 1994; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006, 2007; Maharaj et al., 2010; Nagassar et al., 2010; Rawlins, 2000; Sukhu, 2012), but not nearly as many studies from Barbados (CADRES, 2009). This is likely to do with funding streams, research consortiums, as well as the presence of large scale data collection initiatives, such as the Demographic and Health Survey in Haiti (DHS, 2017a, 2017b). This is where the literature review begins.

One of the most comprehensive studies on GBV in the Caribbean emerged from this very program. Like several other studies, Gage (2005) analyzed data from the 2000 Haiti

Demographic and Health Survey (DHS, 2017a, 2017b), exploring individual, relationship, and neighborhood risk factors for intimate partner violence among ever-married women. Prior to summarizing their findings, it should be noted that while Demographic and Health Survey data will be discussed multiple times throughout the literature review, it comes with some scrutiny. The Demographic and Health Survey module that explores violence against women utilizes a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale, which is a measurement tool used to identify and quantify the experience of *domestic violence* (DHS, 2017b; Straus, 1979; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). While this scale is widely used throughout the GBV literature, it has also been widely criticized. In addition to a narrow definition of *domestic violence* (as opposed to GBV), the Conflict Tactics Scale includes conceptual and measurement flaws. The Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979), as well as the revised version (Straus et al., 1996) have undergone great scrutiny for their narrow, atheoretical and acontextual approach to conceptualizing and measuring GBV against women. These scales have been known to under-report violence against women and have been critiqued for earlier versions that failed to capture the difference between self-defense and perpetration of violence (Archer, 1999; DeKeseredy, 2000; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; B. J. Morse, 1995; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1993; Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004; Straus, 1979; Straus et al., 1996). For an in-depth critique of the Conflict Tactics Scale as well as other standardized measures of violence against women, see the work of DeKeseredy (2000), DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998), Dobash et al. (1992), Dobash and Dobash (2004), and Melton and Belknap (2003), among many others who have critically analyzed the validity and reliability of such scales. As the literature review continues, attention should be paid to such study parameters, including the definitions and sampling boundaries

employed across studies. Narrow definitions or sampling methods restricted to criminal or legal terms will yield different results when compared to broad definitions or sampling and data collection methods that are more inclusive, feminist-informed, or are not bound to specifications of partner versus non-partner violence (DeKeseredy, 2000; Saltzman, 2004).

With that in mind, Gage's (2005) work on intimate partner violence remains a leader in this literature, albeit with some caveats. According to the 2000 Haiti Demographic and Health survey data, Gage (2005) found that:

> Of every 100 women in a current/recent marital or cohabiting relationship, 29 reported at least one act of violence during the year preceding the survey. Forced sex was the most common aggressive behavior perpetrated by male partners (reported by 15 percent of women in the sample), followed by humiliation (10 percent) and acts of physical aggression such as pushing/shaking/throwing something at the woman (9 percent) and slapping her or twisting her arm (8 percent). Two percent of women reported serious assaults such as being threatened with a knife, gun, or other weapon and 1 percent reported being actually attacked with such weapons. Physical and sexual violence were the most prevalent forms of violence (reported by 17 percent of women), followed by emotional violence (13 percent). (p. 352)

Across these forms of intimate partner violence, Gage (2005) explored individual, relationship, community, and societal level variables as predictors of emotional, physical, and sexual violence experienced in the 12 months preceding DHS data collection. The risk factors presented next were found to be significant across ecological levels. At the individual level, "The experience of witnessing violence between parents in childhood was a strong predictor that a woman was in an intimate relationship in which she had been a victim of intimate partner

violence in the past 12 months" (Gage, 2005, p. 355). Continuing at the individual level, lacking completion of primary school education and female-dominated financial decision making, demonstrated positive relationships with all forms of intimate partner violence. At the relationship level, male partners' need for control, as well as jealousy, and history of alcohol abuse, were found to be positively associated with all forms of intimate partner violence. Continuing at the relationship level, the number of children living at home as well as male-dominated financial decision making was found to be predictive of sexual violence specifically. Men's physical abuse of children was measured at the community level, with scholars classifying different neighborhoods by high and low levels of abuse. Men's physical abuse of children measured at the community level was predictive of emotional and physical violence against women in the prior 12 months. Continuing at this level, male unemployment was found to be predictive of sexual violence. Finally, and arguably both an individual and societal factor, women's acceptance of spousal abuse was predictive of sexual violence (Gage, 2005).

These risk factors align with Heise's (1998) ecological model for GBV, demonstrating similarities globally in terms of what may protect women from GBV. The continued review of empirical and theoretical literature from the Caribbean follows, exploring risk factors to inform the findings from the current study.

Individual level. Individual level risk factors have been well researched across the global literature (Jewkes, 2002), and are some of the most explored ecological factors within the regional literature as well. Building on similar variables as introduced by Gage (2005), regional scholars have explored education (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012), economic vulnerability (Fawzi et al., 2005; Kishor & Johnson, 2006), employment (van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012), and experience of domestic violence during childhood (Jeremiah, Quinn, &

Alexis, 2017; Peake, 2009; Rawlins, 2000; Serbanescu, Ruiz, & Suchdev, 2010; van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012) as risk and protective factors for GBV in the region.

Research in Jamaica has demonstrated similar relationships as found in Haiti (Gage, 2005), such that the witnessing of abuse within the family system as a child was associated with also experiencing abuse from a parent by the time they reached adolescence (before age 15) (Serbanescu et al., 2010). More specifically, Serbanescu and colleagues (2010) found that:

> …respondents who reported having witnessed physical violence between parents were significantly more likely than those who did not witness parental abuse to report having experienced physical abuse by a parent when they were growing up. (p. 374)

While the study referenced here did not determine the extent to which witnessing abuse in the family or experiencing abuse by a parent was associated with the experience of GBV, the findings should be considered in conjunction with the work presented by Gage (2005) that demonstrated that very connection. While these variables are related to the family system, they are presented here as individual level variables as they are methodologically located at the individual level.

Beyond the individual level risk factors introduced by Gage (2005), regional literature has also explored factors such as age (Cayemittes et al., 2013; van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012), reproductive health and pregnancy (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Fawzi et al., 2005; Geary et al., 2006; Gómez et al., 2009; Rose et al., 2016; Small et al., 2008), and mental health (Maharaj et al., 2010).

In their Jamaican study exploring early sexual debut, sexual violence, and adolescent pregnancy, currently pregnant and never-pregnant women were interviewed to determine any associations across the variables. Baumgartner and colleagues (2009) found that:

> One-third of all participants stated that they had been persuaded or forced to participate in their first sexual experience; fewer (10%) had been unwilling at last sex. Among the sexual coercion or violence variables, only two differed significantly between groups. A greater proportion of never-pregnant youth than of pregnant youth reported ever having been touched in an uncomfortable way (63% vs. 51%) and having ever experienced sexual violence (29% vs. 22%). About half of all participants had ever experienced sexual coercion or violence (49%), and more than a quarter (27%) had ever experienced some form of sexual violence, including forced or degrading sex. (p. 24)

While this study found that pregnancy did not have a significant impact on the experience of GBV, specifically sexual violence, pregnant youth compared to never-pregnant youth were more likely to have an earlier sexual debut, a first sexual partner with whom there was a significant age gap, as well as multiple partners (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Some Jamaican studies have dug into these reproductive health variables further, specifically looking at sexual agency during first sexual experiences among young women (Geary, Baumgartner, Wedderburn, Montoya, & Catone, 2013), as well as sexual violence and reproductive health behaviors (e.g., condom use, sexual debut, and number of partners) and reproductive health outcomes (e.g., genital discharge and pregnancy) (Geary et al., 2006). When young girls were asked to describe their first sexual encounter, many described it as something that they did not necessarily have control or agency over. While young women did not describe these experiences as coercive, they did describe feelings of ambivalence and confusion (Geary et al., 2013). Further exploring connections between sexual violence and reproductive health outcomes in Haiti, Gómez and colleagues (2009) found that:

> For all individuals, those who experienced sexual violence were significantly more likely to have ever been pregnant or gotten a partner pregnant, and to have experienced recent STI symptoms compared with youth who had not experienced sexual violence. Although those who experienced sexual violence compared with those who have not experienced violence had lower levels of condom use at last sex and higher levels of transactional sex, these differences did not attain statistical significance. (p. 509)

Given the, at times converging and at times contradicting, results of similar studies (see also Small, Gupta, Frederic, Joseph, Theodore, and Kershaw's 2008 research on GBV against women in rural Haiti and pregnancy distress), additional research needs to occur around individual level risk factors, namely sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Further, this research needs to be contextualized by understanding the diversity of the region, and how this diversity interacts with the data collected across different countries (Gopaul & Cain, 1996; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005).

In another study examining forced sex among women in Haiti, Fawzi and colleagues (2005) found multiple individual level factors that need to be considered for prevention efforts moving forward. Notably, younger age, length of time in relationship, symptoms of sexually transmitted infections, economic vulnerability, and partner occupation placed women at a greater risk of experiencing forced sex. While a few of these variables are at the relationship level (e.g., partner's occupation and length of time in relationship) they are mentioned here for their significant interaction with individual variables mentioned. For instance, "younger age (30 years of age or less) and length of time in a relationship were the strongest risk factors for forced sex" (Fawzi et al., 2005, p. 684). Furthermore, findings such as "economic vulnerability, as reflected by having problems with transportation, also increased the risk of forced sex by 50%" (Fawzi et

al., 2005, p. 686), led Fawzi and colleagues (2005) to focus some of their recommendations on targeted economic interventions for women in Haiti.

The current study somewhat mirrors the work of Rawlins (2000) in Trinidad, who explored community members' (both male and female) thoughts on the causes of *domestic violence* specifically. While Rawlins' (2000) research also examines the societal level (e.g., examining attitudes towards domestic violence) of the ecological model, a few individual level predictors should be discussed. Some individuals who reported having experienced domestic violence highlighted "alcohol use before the attack…and…marijuana use by the perpetrator" (Rawlins, 2000, p. 172). Participants discussed witnessing violence in their homes during childhood, as well as differences across race and ethnicity; however, within the race and ethnicity discussion there was no statistically significant differences found. This mirrors some of the arguments made by Gopaul and Cain (1996), who assert the need to dispel data myths in the region about race, ethnicity, and context. When asking participants what they felt were the main causes of domestic violence in Trinidad, participants indicated drug and alcohol abuse, financial issues, and lack of communication (a relationship level variable) (Rawlins, 2000). Although "differences given in the reasons for this violence by ethnicity were not statistically significant except for the reason drug/alcohol abuse…" (Rawlins, 2000, p. 174), a more in-depth approach to understanding perceived risk factors embedded within the varied Caribbean context is necessary.

Interpersonal level. Building on what was initially presented by Gage (2005), studies in the Caribbean have focused research at the interpersonal, or relationship, level on decision making power (Danns & Parsad, 1989; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), control/power within intimate relationships (DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gabrie et al., 2016; Gage, 2005; Gage &

Hutchinson, 2006; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2007; Sukhu, 2012), partner's number of partners (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Fawzi et al., 2005; Gibbison, 2007), partner's sexual health (Fawzi et al., 2005), length of relationship (Fawzi et al., 2005), perpetrator's alcohol use (Danns & Parsad, 1989; DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Jeremiah et al., 2017; Nagassar et al., 2010; Rawlins, 2000), relationship quality (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), age of partner (Gibbison, 2007; Wood, 2010), partner's education or occupation (Fawzi et al., 2005; Gabrie et al., 2016; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Jeremiah, Gamache, & Hegamin-Younger, 2013), social support (Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006), and financial autonomy/economic independence (Fawzi et al., 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), which at times related to transactional sex as a means to provide for children (Fawzi et al., 2005). Although observing and/or witnessing abuse within the family as a child is discussed as an individual level factor (as it is experienced by the individual), it is worth mentioning at the interpersonal level as it is a familial dynamic that has been found to have a significant impact on GBV outcomes in the Caribbean (Jeremiah et al., 2017). This has been documented as observing violence within the family, experiencing violence by a parent, or witnessing partner abuse between parents (Danns & Parsad, 1989; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Jeremiah et al., 2013; Peake, 2009; Rawlins, 2000; Serbanescu et al., 2010; van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012). A few of these risk and protective factors will be underscored next.

In a study with Haitian men exploring their perceptions of the causes of violence against women, participants discussed learned elements of violence within one's family or community, as well as "substance/alcohol abuse, changing roles of women, culture, education, family characteristics, poverty, and interpersonal/intrapersonal perspectives" (Gabrie et al., 2016, p. 6). Participants spoke about the changing dynamics within the home setting, specifically earning

potential across man and woman, and how such roles could lead to tumultuous dynamics and potentially GBV against women. Similar themes were found by Sukhu (2012) and DeShong (2011, 2015) that illustrate GBV against women as a man's reaction to threatened masculinity, a mechanism of control, and a means to reclaim false power within the family system.

Comparable concepts are explored at the relationship level by Gage and Hutchinson (2006), returning again to the 2000 Haiti Demographic and Health Survey data, this time looking at intimate partner sexual violence specifically. Focusing on currently married or cohabiting women within the sample, associations were found with intimate partner sexual violence and "Internalized beliefs justifying a husband's use of physical violence under specific circumstances…" (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006, p. 21). Additional significance was found with partner jealousy, partner controlling behavior, partner's history of alcohol abuse, as well as the number of children living at home (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Several other Caribbean studies need to be mentioned at the interpersonal level. Divorce and single parenthood in Curaçao increased the risk for domestic violence among women (van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012), length of time in relationship/relationship quality and status were found to be strongly related to GBV against women (Cayemittes et al., 2013; Danns & Parsad, 1989; DeShong, 2011, 2015; Fawzi et al., 2005; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2007; Parsad, 1988; Serbanescu et al., 2010), as were men's perceptions about intimate partner violence (Gabrie et al., 2016; Jeremiah et al., 2013; Jeremiah et al., 2017; Sukhu, 2012), and sexual health practices of partners (Couture et al., 2010; Eldemire-Shearer & Bailey, 2008).

Danns and Parsad (1989) have contributed greatly to examining this ecological level in the Caribbean, exploring data related to domestic violence, spousal abuse, and race/ethnicity in Guyana. Looking at both East Indian and black communities in rural Guyana, conjugal violence

was high, regardless of the type of relationship (married, cohabiting, visiting). Although some differences were found across communities and across type of relationship, the fact remained that all situations exhibited high rates of violence.

Finally, it is important to showcase the work of Fawzi and colleagues (2005) and their contribution to the family level. Fawzi and colleagues (2005) found that among their sample "…if the woman ever had to have sex in order to provide for her children economically she was at a 3.5-fold increase in risk of having a history of forced sex" (p. 683). Continuing, this study found several associations with forced sex and socioeconomic status. Study investigators utilized several proxies for economic status, such as housing quality, access to health services, and income; while these would be measured at the individual level, they are mentioned here as they would contribute to family settings and were associated with a higher risk of forced sex (Fawzi et al., 2005).

However, the extent to which these risk factors translate to Barbados is unclear, and their relevancy to survivors is unexplored. It is important again to highlight the diversity of the Caribbean, and how this translates into the family system. There is no, one Caribbean family experience or narrative. "Family life exists within a milieu of cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic differences which cut across the geographical proximities and shape the household and family structures…Issues in both Guyana and Trinidad, for example, are dealt with differently than in other member states because of identifiable differences between the two dominant races, Indo-Caribbean vs. Afro-Caribbean" (Gibbons, 2014, p. 407). Gopaul and colleagues (1994) reiterate this varied family system as being informed by the vicious colonialization and the:

> …decimation of indigenous tribes, successive waves of human migration, geographical displacement of both colonizer and slave populations, the institutionalized violence of

> slavery and the only minimally less disruptive and brutal indentureship of the nineteenth century have, in the main, produced the contemporary population of the Caribbean. The early plantation economy was driven first and foremost by economic determinants with the primary concern being the most effective means of exploiting the labour of the enslaved Africans and later the indentured East Indians and other ethnic groups. (p. 1)

Community level. Building on the community level variables initially presented by Gage (2005), research in the Caribbean has focused on community intervention (D. W. Campbell et al., 2016), communities with higher female household headship rates (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), socioeconomic status (Fawzi et al., 2005; Kishor & Johnson, 2006; Nagassar et al., 2010), urban and rural settings (Fawzi et al., 2005; Gabrie et al., 2016; Gibbison, 2007; Small et al., 2008), and availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of community resources (Fawzi et al., 2005; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006; Rawlins, 2000; Small et al., 2008). Gage (2005), as introduced earlier in the literature review, has offered some of the greatest insight at this level around the associations with male endorsement of physical punishment of children at the community level, and male unemployment rates. Community level risk and protective factors of GBV against women in the Caribbean are considerably less explored, but a few are important to highlight.

Given the shifting gender norms in relation to Caribbean masculinities as explored throughout this literature review (Beckles, 2004; Lewis, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004), it is crucial to explore Gage and Hutchinson's (2006) findings around female household headship rates. Gage and Hutchinson (2006) explain "Neighborhoods where a high proportion of households were headed by women may contribute to increased financial, physical, and emotional stress for individuals as well as communities in general, particularly if these households have dependent children" (p. 16). However, it is possible that this can be

thought of in the same way Gage and Hutchinson (2006) consider the implications of female education. Gage and Hutchinson (2006) explain:

> The effects of female education will be two-fold. Higher levels of female education will increase economic opportunities and earnings potential, reduce dependency on husbands, and make women more economically viable in the household, thereby reducing the likelihood of sexual violence. On the other hand, women's completion of more years of schooling than their husbands will have the opposite effect, threatening traditional power relationships within the household, and increasing the likelihood of sexual violence. (p. 14)

A female headed household may demonstrate a financially autonomous woman with an education level and employment status that protect her from GBV. On the other hand, it could also validate the data already collected around this variable such as economic vulnerability (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Nonetheless, their study demonstrated higher levels of sexual violence specifically in communities with greater proportions of female headed households (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Gopaul and Cain (1996) dissect this further, suggesting that existing data around household headship shows similar trends to decision making such that when there is shared power, there may be less violence. Continuing, "…the negotiation of a practical equality, transcending the question "who's in charge" seems to be what makes the difference" (Gopaul & Cain, 1996, p. 37).

Societal level. Leaning significantly on the work of Sokoloff and Dupont (2005), the societal level refers to higher forces that are socially or culturally embedded in relation to GBV. Gender inequality alone does not explain GBV (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Intersectionality theory extends beyond traditional feminist thought, acknowledging that there is no one, universal

experience of GBV against women (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), just as there is not one Caribbean masculinty (Nurse, 2004).

Multiple and interacting systems of oppression have a significant impact on the experience of GBV (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), such that "We exist in social contexts created by the intersections of systems of power (e.g., race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) and oppression (e.g., prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality, and heterosexist bias)" (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005, p. 43). While discussed at the individual level as it is usually measured as such, the societal level requires revisiting research around attitudes towards violence against women held by both men and women, or the justification of violence as a man's right to use against his partner (DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Serbanescu et al., 2010; Sukhu, 2012). These have been examined in relation to sexual practices among men (Gibbison, 2007), gender identity among men (Sukhu, 2012), and shifting gender dynamics (Gabrie et al., 2016; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Women in the Caribbean have historically surpassed men in educational attainment; however, they are only recently becoming more gainfully employed than men. This access to job opportunities impacts women differently across subgroups (CCS, 2003; Gibbons, 2014; P. Mohammed, 1991). The shift in gendered earning potential, capacity to provide for a family, and implications of economic independence, may be interpreted as a threat to patriarchal authority, highlighting a reaction to the reversal of gender norms (Gibbons, 2014; Lewis, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004). Or, as scholar Patricia Mohammed (1991) explains:

> The growing economic independence and affirmative actions of women in Trinidad bred internal contradictions. If the pre-independence years allowed men at least the medium of

> verbal and some physical assault to keep woman subordinated (especially where she was not in an economic position to question this, and without public support for her challenge), then the 1970s, with the oil boom and subsequent opportunities, undermined the male ego further. (p. 40)

While there are no empirical studies testing societal level variables such as policies or laws, it is important to speak briefly here about legislation. According to UN Women (n.d.) all of the English speaking Caribbean nations have enacted domestic violence legislation. However, in most places this does not extend to same sex couples. More recently, legislation was amended ("Sexual Offences Act," 2016) regarding marital rape, as up until 1991, it was generally not considered rape if the violence occurred between a husband and wife. Between the years of 1991 and 2016, this was complicated by the requirements that a woman had to have made previous reports about her husband and also needed evidence that she and her husband were, in some way, separated, even if just by sleeping in separate rooms (Station Sergeant C. Husbands, personal communication, September 17, 2019). These requirements were removed in 2016. However, while legislation around GBV exists, many scholars and activists have pointed out that these protections and regulations are not carried out effectively (Lazarus-Black, 2001, 2003; Lazarus-Black & McCall, 2006).

Before wrapping up this brief review of risk and protective factors, it is important to reference the work of Gopaul and Cain (1996) and their list of myths surrounding GBV against women in the Caribbean. As they validate and debunk some of the trends that are generally accepted in the regional data, the first myth they tackle seems most significant: “Domestic violence is primarily a problem for East Indian families OR domestic violence is primarily a problem in families of African descent” (Gopaul & Cain, 1996, p. 32). They highlight the fact

that no empirical evidence exists that demonstrates one subgroup as having higher rates than the other. However, what is notable is context, and the varying ways in which violence happens in and impacts these subgroups, and all subgroups, in the region (Gopaul & Cain, 1996). Highlighting again the foundational elements of intersectionality and ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; CDC, 2018; Heise, 1998; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), Gopaul and Cain (1996) dissect a snapshot of the existing regional data to underscore the subgroup nuances embedded within well-established findings, such as education and marital status as protective and risk factors. For instance, education levels of both the woman and man have an impact on rates of domestic violence within both East Indian and Afro-Caribbean couples in Guyana; however, the woman's education was slightly more significant in preventing domestic violence within East Indian partnerships (Gopaul & Cain, 1996).

Subjectively speaking, the following risk factors stand out across ecological levels, including reproductive health (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Fawzi et al., 2005; Geary et al., 2006; Gómez et al., 2009; Rose et al., 2016; Small et al., 2008), education and employment or economic opportunities had by both partners (Fawzi et al., 2005; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), alcohol use (Danns & Parsad, 1989; DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Jeremiah et al., 2017; Nagassar et al., 2010; Rawlins, 2000), the witnessing or experience of abuse within the family system as a young person (Danns & Parsad, 1989; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Jeremiah et al., 2017; Peake, 2009; Rawlins, 2000; Serbanescu et al., 2010; van Wijk & de Bruijn, 2012), relationship factors including power within relationships (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), household headship (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), and contextualized gender identities regarding Caribbean masculinities and how they relate to attitudes regarding GBV against women (Beckles, 2004; Gage, 2005; Gage &

Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Lewis, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004; Serbanescu et al., 2010).

Interventions for GBV Survivors in Barbados

As this dissertation focuses on perceived contributors to both initial onset as well as continuation of GBV, it is important to note the extent of community resources available in Barbados regarding GBV. Currently, the Business and Professional Women's Club of Barbados (BPW) offers a crisis hotline as well as a women's shelter for survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, and trafficking. In the shelter there are various programs including legal advocacy, educational classes, childcare support, and various counseling options for residents (BPW, n.d.). Additionally, the Family Conflict Unit (FCU) within the Barbados Police Force works specifically with survivors of relationship and domestic violence to provide legal and protection services in the form of restraining orders, prosecution, court processes, and connection to additional support services (Rawlins-Bentham, 2014). The FCU also trains police officers with survivor focused initiatives and programs to better inform the court process and to shift the approach of the responding officers. However, the FCU has to work within certain parameters; for instance, sexually violent crimes are handled by a different division, and because of the country's laws on same-sex marriage they are not always able to offer as much support due to legal boundaries (Station Sergeant C. Husbands, personal communication, September 28, 2018).

To date, these are the major players providing active support to survivors of GBV. While other movements, advocacy, and research exist in Barbados and in the region to document and promote activism around the issue (for example, the Walking into Walls social media movement by RoAnn Mohammed, 2018), few other direct service interventions currently exist.

The Importance of Contextual Fit

This study is a crucial step in understanding women's perceptions of GBV to create contextually relevant prevention and intervention efforts. Contextual fit has long been a central tenet of community psychology (Kingry-Westergaard & Kelly, 1990; Trickett, 2009, 2011; Trickett, Kelly, & Vincent, 1985) and is arguably one of the field's most distinct contributions. In one of his most notable publications in community psychology, Trickett (2011) outlined the importance of intervention-contextual fit and lessons learned across community-based work in Peru. Trickett (2011) explained "Understanding local community culture thus involves a working knowledge of broad historical contexts and a local appreciation of individual and subgroup differences in the expression of culture, whether they are framed in terms of oppressive histories or community traditions" (p. 59); both of which are pertinent in the current study. However, the culture of scientific and community intervention also must become "a topic for interrogation as well" (Trickett, 2011, p. 60).

In this influential paper, Trickett (2011) explained the complicated and failed efforts of two community interventions that did not take into consideration the intricate contextual influence on intervention efforts. One of these efforts focused on a public health program that intended to increase the frequency with which households were boiling their water prior to consumption. While the primary researcher considered the local ecologies and the motives and barriers to boiling water, they failed to understand the deep-seated cultural meanings ascribed to water. Trickett (2011) explained:

> Cultural beliefs about water combined with social stratification to frame how the intervention was perceived and received. For example, one woman who decided to boil water (a success from the intervention perspective) was ostracized for doing so because

her decision violated the local meaning of hot and cold water and thus made her a cultural outlaw. (p. 61)

Trickett (2011) continued to explain that, despite public health information about the benefits of boiling water, the cultural meaning and engrained understanding of water carried more weight in decision making among women. Further complicating these efforts were the "gendered ecology of the town's leadership and its lack of interest in the intervention" (Trickett, 2011, p. 61). Like this Peruvian intervention, should interventions be developed and implemented in Barbados without considering the local beliefs, perceptions, and lived realities of GBV, there is great chance of failure in the form of little consequence or potential harm to individuals and communities.

Miller and Shinn (2005) further elaborated on these issues, highlighting the mismatch of community prevention and intervention efforts and prevention science as promoted by the Institute of Medicine. Together, Miller and Shinn (2005) and Wandersman (2003) advocate for local control over prevention and intervention development and implementation, as opposed to "large-scale trials of interventions that demonstrate their efficacy under controlled conditions" (Miller & Shinn, 2005, p. 169). Furthermore, Miller and Shinn (2005) explained:

> Rather it is to suggest that ecological validity, especially the acceptability and apparent success of the program in the contexts in which it is to be applied, might be as important as internal validity, or careful evidence that the manipulation indeed has the desired effect, and should sometimes be established first. (p. 176)

CURRENT STUDY

The current study fills a gap in the Caribbean literature regarding women's perceptions around the contributors to GBV. More importantly, the study lends itself to the possible contextually relevant development of prevention and intervention efforts to confront GBV in Barbados. The study involved in-depth, qualitative interviews with survivors of GBV to better understand their understanding of what predicts GBV. As stated by McMahon and Baker (2011):

> Attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to sexual violence are heavily influenced by community norms and therefore, interventions must be tailored to meet these specific contexts, including those shaped by particular ethnicities, religions, socioeconomic status, disability and many other salient factors… (p. 10)

This study mirrors the work of Edwards, Banyard, Moschella, and Seavey (2016), as well as the work of O'Neil and Morgan (2010), both of which sought to understand perceived predictors of violence against women. However, what this study contributes beyond the two aforementioned scholarly works, is the focus on *survivors'* perspectives. Such a position is relatively absent in the current literature. As explained by Edwards and colleagues (2016), "…qualitative methodologies to study lay theories allow for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the various factors believed to be the causes of IPV" (p. 436). Furthermore, Edwards and colleagues (2016) clarified :

> …if a group of individuals believes that the cause of IPV is women's low self-esteem and that IPV can be prevented by boosting girls and women's self-esteem, these same individuals may be less willing to participate in a bystander training." (p. 436)

Both statements further justify the current study. Perceived predictors need to be elucidated in order to better understand not only those "lay theories" and "detailed understanding

of the various factors" (Edwards et al., 2016, p. 436), but also to ensure that prevention and intervention strategies reflect such lived realities and perceived risk factors to ensure meaningful engagement and program success.

Finally, it is important to locate this study within both the current regional and global context. This year, Barbados elected its first female Prime Minister, Mia Mottley, and the country hosted its first ever Pride Parade over the summer of 2018. For Carnival 2018, the Trinidad police force came out with statements around consent and what that means for the Carnival festivals and parties (Augustine, 2018), and while the reactions to these statements took on a mocking tone at times, it is undeniable that big shifts are happening. In reality, the Caribbean is no stranger to the larger #metoo movement happening globally, and the news stories demonstrate as much (Hinds, 2019; Smith, 2017, 2018).

Research Questions

This study intended to understand the intricacies of GBV against women in Barbados through an exploration of survivors' perceptions of what is happening in their families, communities, and society, that is contributing to violence against women. The current study explored the following research questions:

1. According to a sample of women survivors in Barbados, what are the contributors to GBV?
    a. What are the perceived contributors at the individual level?
    b. What are the perceived contributors at the interpersonal level?
    c. What are the perceived contributors at the community level?
    d. What are the perceived contributors at the societal level?

METHODS

Community Collaborative

To explore these research questions, the study primary investigator partnered with BPW, the organization that runs the women's shelter and the crises hotline on the island, as well as the Bureau of Gender Affairs, and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill. Dr. Halimah DeShong, the head of the IGDS, served as a major source of support throughout the project. This informal local steering committee is illustrated in Figure 3.

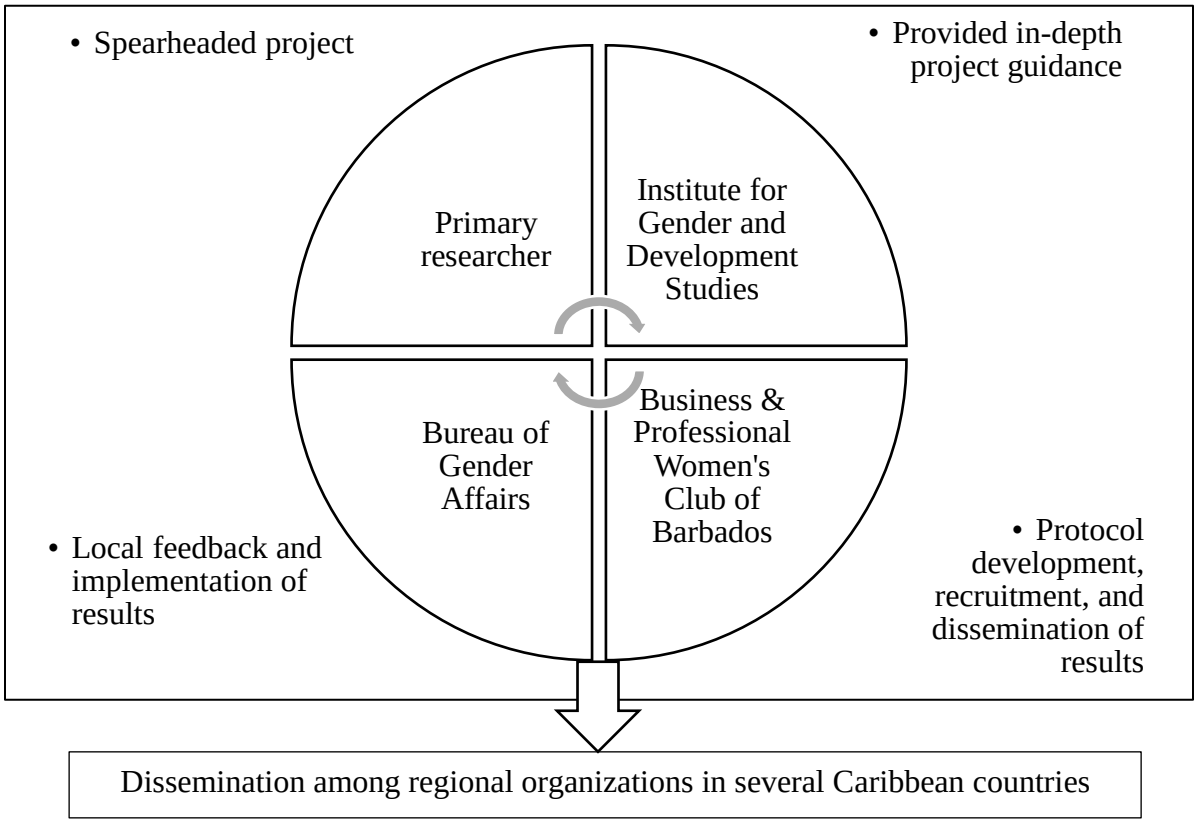

Figure 3. Community collaborative for current study.

The parties in the central box represent the core team for the project, and include the primary graduate student researcher, IGDS, BPW, and the Bureau of Gender Affairs. Primary roles are listed next to the names for each of these four core contributors. The regional

organizations mentioned at the bottom of the figure represent an opportunity to gain feedback from local organizations in neighboring island nations. This feedback loop will allow for the opportunity to see whether the data collected are relevant in other Caribbean nations. Tentative nations include Jamaica, Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Antigua, Trinidad, and Haiti. Collaborative meetings, conferences, planning initiatives, community events, and many other opportunities to facilitate critical feedback, course correction, and planning for future use of the data will continue to be carried out. These activities will take place after the dissertation is complete.

Reflexivity

In advance of the data collection and official project start date, the graduate student was encouraged to engage in a reflexivity process to understand and reflect on the significance and meaning around being a white, American woman conducting research in the Caribbean. Her local mentor, Dr. DeShong, urged her to explore elements such as insider/outsider positionality, the different elements that led the student to her current dissertation study and research questions, as well as how her positionality would alter the data collection and data analysis. Given Dr. DeShong's leadership in the literature around Caribbean feminist methods and reflexivity (DeShong, 2013), her work was of great focus. Next, in italics, is a reflexive memo written by the graduate student and primary researcher, Katherine Cloutier, *prior to the start of data collection.* To understand this chronologically as a stage of the project development, this memo has been left as was written, in the future tense. A post-project reflexive statement was also written, and is included in Appendix I. After unpacking this positionality, the study methodology will be introduced.

I initially arrived in Barbados in September 2012. I had never lived in a different country before, but I had just received a Fulbright scholarship to conduct an action research project with dance4life Barbados (a sexual health and youth empowerment organization). During my initial 10 months in Barbados I partnered with dance4life and assisted with the implementation of their programming while completing a Photovoice project in which their students explored youth issues, peer pressure, and their meaningful participation in the dance4life program. I was on the heels of completing my master's thesis project at Michigan State University, which used Photovoice as well, but focused specifically on sexual violence within the campus-community setting. The Barbados Photovoice project was very energizing for me as a young scholar. We gained the attention of other local partners who showcased the project at the US Embassy on World AIDS Day that year, and the participating youth were able to present their work to a large audience. This was televised and really seemed to mobilize those involved. I eventually implemented the Photovoice project at an additional secondary school, and I began to learn a great deal about context and settings.

I learned that youth in different schools only a couple of miles apart were experiencing very different pressures. I learned that even in a country that is "small," there is such rich diversity and a multitude of life experiences across individuals and communities. I learned that there is no one, single Bajan narrative, even among school children whose lives are often assumed to be defined by the similar factors of homework, friends, and family. And most importantly, I learned that the history and the diversity of the region is so plentiful that even a fraction of it wouldn't be captured in a tiny little Photovoice project implemented by a white, American woman like myself. I learned that my project didn't really matter all that much. What mattered most were my intentions and my integrity. These things I would not have been so

privileged to learn if it weren't for the two women who run dance4life Barbados. To this day I am incredibly moved by their work and have been lucky to watch it grow over the past six years. Their work extends beyond the core of the dance4life program and includes meaningful celebrations of the youth in the children's homes, critical education and outreach in the government industrial schools, and crucial youth advocacy across many settings. I am so grateful to still have this community partner today, six years later.

When my initial project with dance4life came to an end, I began conversing with BPW as they are one of the leading community agencies looking at GBV in Barbados. While I have a background and interest in sexual health, youth issues, and international public health in general, the specificity of GBV was calling me yet again. For a couple of summers, I assisted with a few of BPW's initiatives, attended their trainings, and slowly began exploring what it was I wanted to do for my dissertation. Every so often I would assist dance4life with their sexual health classes in the secondary schools, and was reminded that many young women, even as young as secondary school age, have experienced sexual violence here in Barbados. Those reminders would come when students would ask questions when filling out the dance4life baseline surveys such as "Excuse me, how do I answer the question about sexual experience if it was something I was forced to do?"

I committed to focusing explicitly on GBV for my dissertation. My background in community psychology led me to the use of an ecological framework as all my work is guided by the central tenet that our settings, circumstances, experiences, and intersectionality shape who we are, our outcomes, our capacities, and our experiences.

Over the past six years I have come to love Crop Over, Carnival, and soca. It taught me a great deal about myself when I first moved to the Caribbean and helped me further learn what it

means to be a woman. However, I would be remiss if I didn't share some of my discomforts around Crop Over. I have struggled with some of the lyrics of popular songs that at times feel as though they are encouraging the oppression of women or violence against the LGBTQ community. I myself have been in a party singing along to lyrics until it hit me that I didn't support what was being said. This has always left me wondering how other women, specifically women from Barbados, experienced these same things.

A colleague here once said to me "Barbados can be a contradiction." She did not make this comment as a pathologizing assessment; by this she was referencing multiple things, such as the strong religious presence, coupled with the sexualized dancing and costumes for Crop Over. Or, embedded within some of the more popular soca songs, the focus on the beauty and power of women, which throughout the song is dictated, controlled, or commanded by men. While soca is not a genre of music that condones violence against women, there are elements that do cloud the dialogue around patriarchy that may be informed by a post-colonial history. Again, however, I would be remiss if I didn't once more acknowledge the plethora of soca songs that pay homage to the autonomy, strength, and liberation of women. Feminist informed, conscious soca, I would argue, is some of the most moving music I have experienced.

Throughout the last six years in Barbados I have now landed on the research questions explored in this dissertation, teasing apart the perceived predictors of GBV against women. I am eager to learn from survivors what they believe is contributing to violence against women to better inform strategies for the future. I believe in simple interventions that resonate with individuals. Had such an intervention been presented to me during various phases of my younger life, I believe my outcomes would have looked a lot different. Through open conversations about

our own intersectionality, we can begin to unpack these experiences and better understand how to prevent GBV at a larger level.

Dr. DeShong's critical, scholarly dissection of reflexivity within Caribbean feminist discourse (DeShong, 2013) has greatly shaped my approach to the interviews I will conduct. DeShong (2013) explains:

> *Caribbean feminism exists at the intersections of struggles against colonialist, neo-colonial, racist, sexist, hetero-patriarchal, classist, and other discriminatory institutions and practices. Caribbean feminists are particularly concerned about how these systems overdetermine the experiences of women, and more broadly speaking, how they can be contested in order to create more just societies. It is a feminism birthed out of the socio-historical, political and cultural realities of the Caribbean, and while it has always been influenced by several global feminist movements and perspectives, it cannot be reduced to that which is an offshoot of Northern feminisms. (p. 2)*

Among feminist discourse, and Caribbean feminist discourse more specifically, there is not one, single unified experience had by women (DeShong, 2013; Kempadoo & DeShong, 2013; Oakley, 1988; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This perspective had me return to the interview protocol several times to ensure I wasn't reducing the experience of GBV down to one, nicely packaged and easily explained phenomenon, and that I was also not engaging in any activity that would contribute to the pathologizing of the region or Caribbean people.

DeShong (2013) explains:

> *Feminist researchers have long been concerned with generating reflexive knowledge; making visible the power dynamics and reducing the power differentials between researchers and research participants; the insider/outsider relationship; and the*

> *significance of gendered relations of power as a feature of social life. In other words, it is essential to consider our own biographies and biases even as we seek to make claims about the lives of those we study. (p. 10)*

Throughout her paper on Caribbean feminist reflexive interviewing, DeShong (2013) shares about her insider/outsider status as a Vincentian woman who has never experienced intimate partner violence but is interviewing Vincentian men and women about abusive relationships. She shares the moments in which participants crafted narratives and identities for her to further justify their own positionality, or to further convey details about their own experiences. Often this was occurring differently across her interviews with men and women. Reflecting on my own insider/outsider status, I will share the element of gender as discussed by Dr. DeShong. All interviewees will be women, and we will share that commonality. However, what will also be seen and heard is my Chicago accent and white complexion. Will my status as a survivor of GBV be erased? Will it come up in the conversation? What assumptions might be made about my socioeconomic status? What elements of my identity will shift the interview context, the data to be collected, and how? In what ways might my own positionality or perceived positionality cause discomfort among the participants to the point where they may omit elements of their story? My biggest concern is how my presence at the interview may perpetuate the oppression of Caribbean women or prevent meaningful disclosure of GBV, and what impact that will have on those who participate. While the study intends to be empowering and participatory, my appearance and positionality may reflect similarities of those who have perpetrated violence against women, particularly women of color, in the past. Acknowledging and continuously reflecting on that will be one of my top priorities throughout the study to ensure that no further harm is presented to research participants.

DeShong's (2013) work has encouraged me to be acutely aware of, address, and attempt to minimize the power differentials inherent in the researcher/participant relationship while communicating my view of the participant as the true expert. More importantly, how is this researcher/participant power dynamic further complicated by my outsider, white, American status that will be present and visible within the interview process? But as DeShong (2013) reflects on her positionality, she explains:

> *…it is not enough to focus on those aspects of my biography and experiences which connect me to or separate me from participants. Positionality, the power dynamics informing the research process, and the ways in which the emerging data are collected, analysed and represented are relevant points of reflexion. (p. 11)*

It is my goal to continuously revisit my own social location and intersecting positionality throughout the various methodological touchpoints for the proposed study to reflect on the knowledge and information that is being co-produced.

Methodology

The current study is qualitative in design (Bernard, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011), blending phenomenological, ethnographic, and participatory approaches (Case, Todd, & Kral, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Kral & Allen, 2015). A phenomenological approach acknowledges the lived experiences around a specific phenomenon, in this case, GBV against women, while an ethnographic approach acknowledges the shared culture and context among a group of people (Creswell, 2013). The integration of the participatory tradition primarily focused on the design of the data collection tool and the interpretation of the data.

Phenomenological studies provide an opportunity to learn about the shared experience of a group of individuals. This in-depth, rich, contextual approach is inherently participatory in a sense considering that "phenomenologists work much more from the participants' specific statements and experiences rather than abstracting from their statements to construct a model from the researcher's interpretations" (Creswell et al., 2007, p. 252). Phenomenologists seek to disseminate lived experiences through the rigorous collection of words, stories, narratives, and text, and the method is grounded in the philosophical underpinning that the traditional scientific method is not suited to understand contextual experiences (Bernard, 2006).

Ethnographic studies have a much stronger focus on the intact nature of a shared culture or community. In an ethnographic study, a single phenomenon is not necessarily the focus of the research questions or methods. Rather, the group nature and the empirically observed characteristics and context of the group is of focus (Creswell, 2003, 2013). Given that the focus of this study is around Bajan women's experiences of GBV, there is an inherent cultural or contextual element that will be present in the data. While the focus is the phenomenon of GBV against women in Barbados, the group of women are bound not only by their shared experience, but also by their contextual and cultural similarity.

Finally, elements of participatory design were introduced, primarily in the drafting of the protocol, as well as the data interpretation and dissemination stages. Community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) is a more recent combination of two participatory approaches: community-based participatory research (CBPR) and participatory action research (PAR) (Kral & Allen, 2015). In borrowing facets from both movements, CBPAR is a unique and powerful approach to research in that "participatory approaches adopt a methodological pluralism, driven by pragmatism to advance both coresearcher involvement…and structural

policy change" (Kral & Allen, 2015, p. 254). CBPAR aligns with social justice research such that the inherent elements of power tend to be deconstructed, the research objectives are led by the community members, and the intention of the research process is to create critical, positive change as a result (Israel et al., 2003; Kral & Allen, 2015; Themba & Minkler, 2003; N. Wallerstein & Duran, 2010; N. Wallerstein & Duran, 2018; N. Wallerstein, Duran, Oetzel, & Minkler, 2018). Phenomenological, ethnographic, and participatory approaches all align around a participant- and community-centered focus, acknowledging and honoring community members' expertise (Bernard, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Creswell et al., 2007; Kral & Allen, 2015; Themba & Minkler, 2003; N. Wallerstein & Duran, 2018; N. Wallerstein et al., 2018). However, it should be noted that this is a community-*engaged* project, not a CBPAR project. Community-engaged research is defined by the collaborative dynamic between the researcher, the community partners, and the research participants/community members. Community-engaged scholarship "focuses on the generation of knowledge conducted in collaboration with community" (Doberneck, Glass, & Schweitzer, 2010, p. 18). Engagement with stakeholders, community partners, and research participants guided a great deal of the study design, but this dissertation is by no means a gold standard for CBPAR work that dismantles power differentials and leads to measurable community change.

This ethnographically informed phenomenological study utilizing engagement processes (Bernard, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Israel et al., 2003; Kral & Allen, 2015; Themba & Minkler, 2003; N. Wallerstein & Duran, 2010; N. Wallerstein & Duran, 2018; N. Wallerstein et al., 2018) used semi-structured qualitative interview methods. This approach was selected for several reasons. To begin, semi-structured interviewing provides the same open-ended flexibility as an unstructured interview, but it is directed by an interview guide to ensure a set of topics are

covered (Bernard, 2006). Given the unexplored nature of ecological contributors to GBV against women in Barbados, a semi-structured interview was also an ethical choice. It gives control to the researcher to ensure that specific elements are explored, but also has the built-in flexibility for the participant to significantly shape the interview and data to truly reflect the lived reality of survivors in Barbados. Because the research questions intended to explore contributors *across* ecological levels, participants spent varying time focusing on certain ecological levels over others. The semi-structured interview approach allowed for this to happen (Bernard, 2006).

Development of the Interview Protocol

The interview protocol can be found in Appendix A. The development of the protocol took place over several months with multiple drafts to ensure the questions allowed for participant control of the conversation. Early drafts of the protocol were developed based on extensive research around the risk factors for GBV globally and in the Caribbean; after several iterations, much of the academic language was removed and the protocol was transformed into a more conversational guide. Because not all participants were going to discuss the same ecological levels, the final draft of the protocol reflected flexibility and participant control by relying on probes and interviewer expertise to follow the participant's lead.

More specifically, the protocol aimed to use empowering language while inquiring around existing research both globally and regionally. Efforts were focused on making sure the interview guide was not reductionist or pathologizing, and a great deal of language and content was informed by existing family studies in the Caribbean. Familial structures, neighborhood characteristics, and societal norms were among some of the factors explored in the protocol and were presented if the affiliated ecological level was approached by the participant. One example includes: *Again, all countries, cultures, and communities have both protective and risk factors.*

In other words, in all cultures there are things that happen that protect girls and women from GBV, and things that happen that may lead to GBV. What does this look like here in Barbados?

More specifically, the interview guide ensured that the researcher did not lead the participant into talking about specific ecological levels; rather, the researcher approached ecological levels and affiliated topics once the participant indicated their focus on a specific level (e.g., the community level was not discussed unless approached by the participant). To that end, the interview guide contained several reminders to follow the participant's lead, and to follow the guide based on topic, not order. The questions on individual level perceived risk factors were listed first, followed by the interpersonal, community, and societal levels. However, the first main question of the interview intended to serve as a roadmap based on participants' initial responses. If the participant began by speaking about the community level, their lead was followed, and the researcher started with that ecological level.

Furthermore, most of the questions were crafted so as not to lead the participant into agreeing with risk factors established in the literature; rather, the participant organically discussed what they perceived to be GBV risk factors. Nonetheless, risk factors that have been established in the literature at times guided the interview questions, including items such as family life, dynamics within intimate partnerships, and neighborhood characteristics. Finally, this study relied heavily on the historical context of the Caribbean, honoring and acknowledging the damaging record of colonialization which has shaped the cultural and societal systems as they are today. In crafting the interview guide, it was extremely important that empowering, rather than pathologizing, language was used. The intention of the study was not to place blame on any culture; therefore, questions like the following were drafted: *Before we go any further, I want to take a minute to say that the remainder of the interview questions do not intend to place blame*

on Barbadian culture in any way. Countries, cultures, and communities across the globe have varying rates of GBV against women. All cultures have both protective factors, as well as factors that put women and girls at greater risk of violence. Throughout this interview you will hear me use the terms "protective factors" and "risk factors." Protective factors are things that reduce the risk of GBV occurring against women and girls. Risk factors are things that may lead to, predict, or make it more likely for women or girls to experience GBV. Referring back to the stat of 30%, what do you think about that figure? As mentioned, this rate has been documented as much higher in some countries, and lower in others. Why do you think it is as high as 30% here in Barbados?

Overall, though the study is narrow in the sense that it is tightly focused on survivors' perspectives about risk and protective factors, the approach to the interview guide was broad and conversational to allow participants to freely explore overarching ideas about what they believe may be contributing to GBV against women in Barbados. The items in the protocol were simply a guide and were not exhaustive. Extensive interviewing and qualitative data collection skills allowed the researcher to appropriately follow the participant's lead and facilitate additional questions as they naturally emerged from the conversation.

Ethical Considerations and Participant Incentives

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was secured by the primary researcher through both Michigan State University (MSU) and UWI. The development of the study procedures was informed by various materials specific to ethical considerations for studies on GBV against women (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002, 2005; Ellsberg et al., 2001). These included minimizing harm, ensuring participant safety, protecting confidentiality, minimizing distress, providing referrals for services, and minimizing harm to researchers (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002).

While these do not necessarily read differently from studies in other fields, each element holds different weight within the context of research on GBV against women. For instance, confidentiality is crucial not only for the protection of personal information, but also to ensure personal physical safety as perpetrator reactions needed to be considered (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Ellsberg et al., 2001). As Ellsberg and Heise (2005) explain:

> …there are aspects of gender-based violence research that transcend those in other areas because of the potentially threatening and traumatic nature of the subject matter. In the case of violence, the safety and even the lives of women respondents and interviewers may be at risk. (p. 35)

A full informed consent process took place for this study, and participants were notified that questions about violence would come up during the interview. Furthermore, participants were told that they may be asked to make inferences based on their own experiences, and that this may be triggering of the trauma they have endured. A safe phrase was determined at the beginning of the interview if the participant wanted, and they could use this phrase at any point during the interview if they needed to cease their participation as a result of someone coming home or entering the interview space (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Most participants opted out of establishing a safe phrase as they didn't feel it was necessary for their participation. One example of a safe phrase selected by one participant included "Excuse me while I grab a drink of water" and another participant indicated that she would take out and play with the pen she had in her pocket. For all of the women who opted in for establishing a safe phrase at the beginning of the interview, none of them employed their safe phrase/gesture during the interview.

An overall emphasis on honoring participants' lived experiences and shared narrative, what Ellsberg and Heise (2005) refer to as acknowledging "the interview as an intervention"

(p.43), also held great significance throughout the study. The interview guide was informed by a non-judgmental, feminist approach to discussing experiences of GBV against women (DeShong, 2013; Ellsberg & Heise, 2002, 2005; Ellsberg et al., 2001; Oakley, 1988; Reinharz, 1992) with the hope that a supportive, unprejudiced conversation would be transformative for the participant. Each interview ended on a positive note by discussing participants' ideas around facilitating change around GBV in Barbados. Recognizing and addressing participant distress was prepared for ahead of time, and all participants were welcome to take breaks throughout the interview (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005).

A strong social justice component was incorporated throughout the project, an ethical cornerstone for research on GBV against women (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). This involved developing plans for intervention and policy development to ensure that, when the time comes, the data will be used for social change. This will be done in collaboration with several community partners and government ministries.

Finally, participants were provided information about referrals or services, and a discussion around any safety implications of leaving these materials behind took place (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Counselors at the women's shelter were contacted ahead of interviews to ensure they were able to connect with participants after each interview, should the participant be interested. Along with a packet of information on local services for survivors, participants received $50BD ($25US) for their participation in the research study, and to offset any time and/or travel cost. This amount is aligned with best practices in the field, published by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (2018) and was set at such a rate to honor participants' time and willingness to enroll without presenting undue influence (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). This amount was also arrived at with community partners and was justified as

being locally appropriate and not coercive (M. Burnham, personal communication, April 30, 2018).

Determining Sample Size

Though Barbados is the most densely populated island in the Eastern Caribbean (CIA, 2018), many of the 11 parishes that make up the island are quite rural (Trotman & Scantlebury-Mounsey, 2017). One question this dissertation was interested in exploring was whether women's views about the predictors of GBV against women in Barbados were substantially different in the urban parishes compared to the rural parishes. Empirically speaking, GBV against women has looked different across rural and urban communities (WHO, 2005). However, local conversations with community partners suggested that it may not be so in Barbados (M. Burnham, personal communication, January 18, 2018). To assess this possibility, relatively equal representation across urban and rural parishes was sought after. This study included enough data from both community contexts to *begin* exploring this consideration. However, given the small sample size and other contextual details, this study cannot, and will not, generalize about urban versus rural communities.

The 11 parishes were divided into a rural cluster and an urban cluster (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sampling clusters.	
Sampling Cluster 1 [urban]	Sampling Cluster 2 [rural]
Christ Church Saint Michael	Saint Philip Saint George Saint James Saint Lucy Saint Joseph Saint Peter Saint Andrew Saint John Saint Thomas

In looking at the most recent census data (collected in 2010), two parishes emerged given their high population (see Table 2) (Trotman & Scantlebury-Mounsey, 2017).

Table 2. *Sampling Clusters and Population Breakdown from Barbados Statistical Service (2017) for the Estimated Resident Population by Parish and Sex*

Sampling Cluster	Parish	Population (Both Sexes)	Population (Male)	Population (Female)
1	Saint Michael	88,529	42,694	45,835
	Christ Church	54,336	25,624	28,712
	TOTAL	142,865	68,318	74,547
2	Saint George	19,767	9,603	10,164
	Saint Philip	30,662	14,951	15,711
	Saint James	28,498	13,272	15,226
	Saint John	8,963	4,099	4,864
	Saint Thomas	14,249	6,728	7,521
	Saint Joseph	6,620	3,279	3,341
	Saint Andrew	5,139	2,646	2,493
	Saint Peter	11,300	5,404	5,896
	Saint Lucy	9,758	4,718	5,040
	TOTAL	134,956	64,700	70,256

Determining sample size for qualitative, interview-based studies is not as straight forward as quantitative studies. According to Creswell (2013), five to 25 participants is the recommended sample size range for phenomenological studies. This range was adjusted to suit the context of this study. In short, a sample size closer to Creswell's (2013) 25 estimate was pursued, albeit with several check points and assessments throughout the study. These check points are described next.

Many qualitative studies refer to the concept of saturation; however, this concept was initially developed for grounded theory studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Nonetheless, saturation was considered throughout to ensure data was collected until no new information was emerging from the data collection process (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; J. M. Morse, 1995). More recently, the concept of *information power* was introduced, which refers, quite literally to the power of a dataset and its potential to contribute something new to the literature, meaningfully validate what is already known in the literature, or challenge existing thought, data, or theories established in the literature (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The concepts of information power (Malterud et al., 2016), along with data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; J. M. Morse, 1995) were the guiding forces determining the sample size for the current study.

Information power and sample size depend on study aim, specificity, theory, dialogue, and analysis (Malterud et al., 2016). When these five factors are strong, informed, and tightly bound, the sample size can be smaller; when these factors are poorly defined within the study, or are uninformed by strong theories, a larger sample size is needed (Malterud et al., 2016). The current study's aim was tightly focused given the specificity around perceived predictors of GBV against women from a small island nation, and was guided by a well-established theoretical framework (ecological theory) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These two factors pushed the sample size to the lower end of Creswell's (2013) recommendation of five to 25 participants. The anticipated quality of the dialogue was strong given the investigator's experience conducting research with survivors, as well as her expertise on the topic. However, there were more nebulous items in the interview guide that intended to give control to the participant to shape the structure of the interview. This anticipation pushed the sample size towards the higher end of Creswell's (2013) recommendation of five to 25 participants. The analytical process was guided

by both cross- and within-case analyses, which also moved the intended sample size towards a larger estimate (Creswell, 2013; Malterud et al., 2016). The fifth factor, study specificity, is elaborated next.

The element of sample specificity (Malterud et al., 2016) presented moderate complexity for the study and encouraged a sample size towards the higher end of Creswell's (2013) recommendation. According to Malterud and colleagues (2016), sample specificity in determining sample size argues that:

> Information power is also related to the specificity of experiences, knowledge, or properties among the participants included in the sample. To offer sufficient information power, a less extensive sample is needed with participants holding characteristics that are highly specific for the study aim compared with a sample containing participants of sparse specificity. (p. 1755)

With the added empirical layer of urban versus rural perspectives and data, sample size needed to remain flexible throughout the study to ensure information power (Malterud et al., 2016) or data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) for the end results. Preliminary data analysis (after 20 participants completed the interview process) took place to assess whether differences were arising from the two clusters. At times there seemed to be differences across the two clusters; however, these assumptions were followed by interviews that later debunked those perceived differences. This preliminary analysis utilized an inductive content analysis approach (Patton, 1990, 2002), and searched for "sensitizing concepts" (Patton, 1990, p. 391) and associated preliminary themes. This inductive content analysis remained at surface level by taking only one pass through the entire data set (up to 20 participants) through audio review and early utilization of NVivo 11.0 Plus qualitative data analysis software (2015). Data obtained

through the urban cluster was reviewed first, then the rural cluster. Results were compared for substantive differences, and the final sample size was determined throughout the iterative process previously described (for a total of 33 participants). At this same time, a meeting with Dr. DeShong took place to further contextualize data across urban and rural parishes. Being such a small island with little separation between parishes and urban and rural communities, coupled with the fluid movement of people from parish to parish (H. DeShong, personal communication, August 12, 2019), further examination of urban versus rural ceased at this point, as no significant differences were found.

Additionally, the data were examined for information power (Malterud et al., 2016) by one more element of sample specificity. Because the Caribbean region is incredibly diverse (Allahar, 1993; Briceño-Ruiz, 2013), it was important to remember that there may be individuals from neighboring nations who participated in the study. For instance, there were some participants whose nationality resided with a neighboring island. Given the diversity of positionalities of women in Barbados, and the intention of responding appropriately to the diversity of experiences of GBV against women here, it made sense to consider this diversity in the study sample. A similar assessment of the data was going to take place as described for the rural versus urban empirical question, albeit less systematic; however, this was not needed in the end as only one participant mentioned a sole nationality that was not Barbadian.

Overall, this fluid, yet informed sample size design was developed in accordance with Malterud and colleagues' (2016) statement that "We shared the preconception that an approximation of sample size is necessary for planning, while the adequacy of the final sample size must be continuously evaluated during the research process" (p. 1754).

Recruitment

The inclusion criteria for this purposive sample included women who are survivors of GBV in Barbados who are 18 years of age or older. The parameters of GBV were kept intentionally broad, and were defined as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, spousal abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, forced sex, incest, molestation, sexual harassment, childhood sexual assault, or any other form of gender-based violence that involves physical, emotional, psychological, economic, or sexual violence as a result of a person's sex or gender.

Participants from both sampling clusters were recruited using the same strategies, which included a flyer (see Appendix B), word of mouth, and a recruitment questionnaire screening tool (see Appendix C). This happened through community partnerships, primarily the women's shelter, and their organizational partners who frequently connect with survivors (e.g., agencies that offer support groups). Additionally, a partnership with the Ministry of Health aided in the recruitment process. After meeting with the Chief Medical Officer of Barbados, two urban and two rural polyclinics were approved for recruitment. In the end, over half of the sample was recruited within the polyclinics. Interviews took place in a variety of settings including at the polyclinics, at participants' homes, in parks, in cafeterias, and in the researcher's office. The time and place of each interview was mostly dictated by the participant's assessment of safety and comfort.

The recruitment flyer directed prospective participants to the recruitment questionnaire screening tool and to the researcher's phone number (in case that was more convenient for them) to determine if the woman was eligible to participate. This screening took place online through Qualtrics services (2018).

Once the recruitment process was complete, eligible participants and the primary researcher scheduled a time to meet to complete the consent and interview process. At times, especially when recruiting in the polyclinics, the participant was recruited, completed the questionnaire, and completed the interview all at the same time and place. The consent process was completed and signed digitally with Qualtrics (2018) on a tablet. See Appendix D for a copy of the consent form. The exact language in this form was transferred to the online platform.

The two most successful recruitment pathways were through the shelter and at the four selected polyclinics. This can be seen in Figure 4.

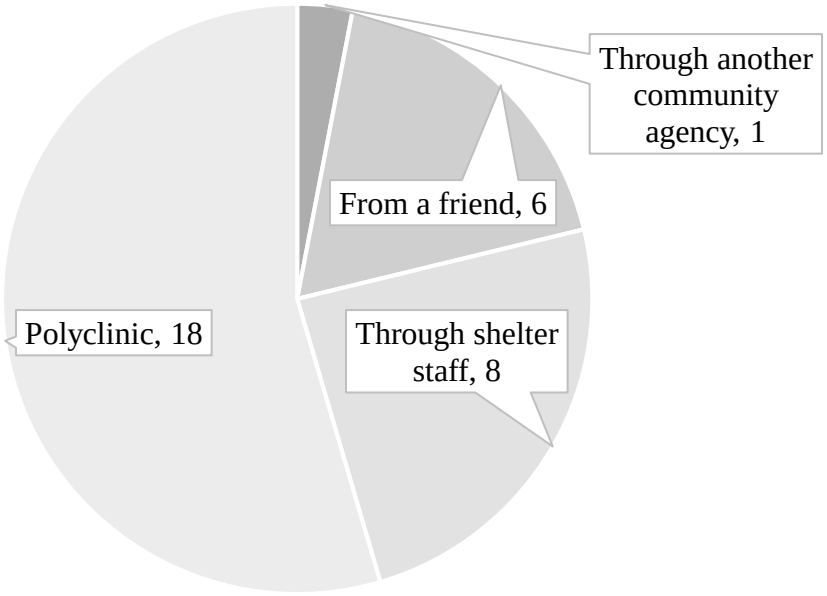

Figure 4. Sample by recruitment pathway. Final sample = 33.

To ensure not all participants were recruited from one single area on the island, their parish of residence was asked about in the recruitment screening (see Figure 5). This also allowed for the exploration regarding urban versus rural perspectives described earlier.

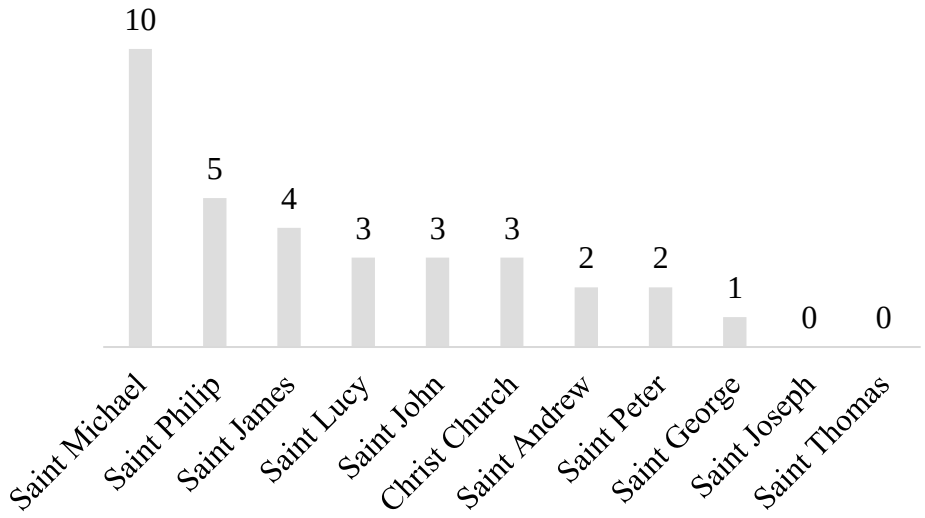

Figure 5. Number of participants recruited across parishes.

And finally, to further demonstrate a *relatively* equal representation of urban (1) versus rural (2) parish recruitment (as defined in earlier section based on the most recently available census data), see Figure 6.

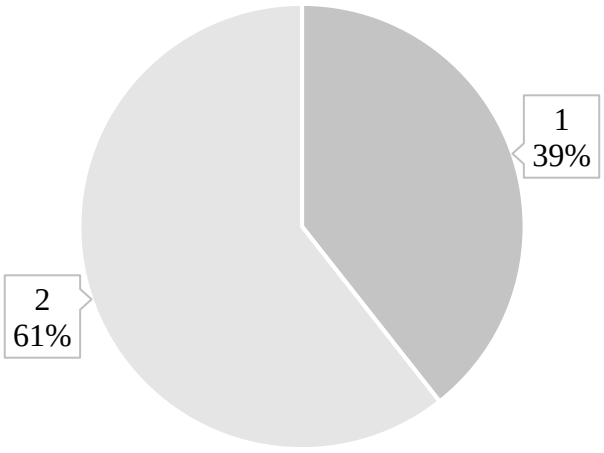

Figure 6. Sample by sampling cluster.

As can be seen, a little more than half of the sample was recruited across the polyclinics, followed by through the shelter, from a friend, and finally through another community agency. Recruitment was successful across all but two of the 11 parishes, with 10 participants residing in the parish of Saint Michael (the most populated parish). In keeping with the urban and rural distinction per the Barbados census data, there was a relatively even representation across Saint Michael and Christ Church (the two most populated parishes), and the more rural parishes.

Data Monitoring and Storage

Each interview was audio recorded per participants' consent. After each interview, the audio file was uploaded to a personal, password protected computer, and transferred to a protected server through MSU. A transcript was created for each interview recording through Professional Development Consultancy (PDC), a Guyana-based company that has assisted in many regional GBV research projects. Their services came highly recommended by Dr. DeShong. Transcripts were saved on the same password protected computer and were also transferred to the same protected server. Notes taken during each interview were saved and drafted into memos. Once each transcript was complete and quality checked, the audio files were deleted. All data points mentioned for each participant were compiled into a *case* using Microsoft Word and NVivo Qualitative Software 11.0 Plus (2010).

Participants were assigned a participant identification number upon completing the consent process. These participant identification numbers are used throughout the results and assisted in the analytical procedures described. Additional identifying information was removed from all written accounts of the study, and the identification numbers were digitally saved in a separate folder that had an additional password protected feature. This same folder contained a master list of participant names and participant identification numbers. Participants were given

the opportunity to provide feedback and participate in the data interpretation stage of the research process but were not required to do so. Contact information (inclusive of participant names) was destroyed immediately after each interview for participants who were not interested in this stage.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was guided by the framework proposed by Marshall and Rossman (2011), starting with (1) organizing and immersion in the data, (2) coding the data and writing analytical memos, and (3) generating themes and interpretations. These three stages are detailed next.

Organizing and immersion in the data. All interview data were already organized by participant. This stage started with an in-depth review of the data, and the drafting of an analytical framework. After all interview audio files were saved according to the data storage procedures outlined in both IRB agreements, they were sent to PDC for transcription. This company was approved for use by Dr. Campbell on the IRB committee at UWI. While the transcriptions were being generated, all audio files were reviewed to achieve immersion in the data. During the audio review stage, participant memos were created and refined. Each memo was approximately one paragraph long and captured the *spirit and tone* of the interview. Memos included any notes taken during the interview, and most importantly, allowed for the identification of sensitizing concepts (Patton, 1990, 2002) and early ideas for the analytical framework while listening to the audio recordings.

Sensitizing concepts serve as data flags for pieces of information that may be central to the main research questions (Patton, 1990, 2002). The sensitizing concepts and early framework ideas were grouped into first- and second-order themes. Given the structure of the interviews, the data were already relatively organized with respect to addressing contributors across ecological

levels. Additionally, analytical concepts were drafted ahead of time during the literature review and interview guide creation stages. Examples of sensitizing concepts for perceived risk factors at the individual level included references to childhood experiences, substance use, or factors related to mental health; sensitizing concepts for perceived risk factors at the interpersonal level included familial structure, relationship history, length of intimate relationship, and nature of intimate relationship; sensitizing concepts for perceived risk factors at the community level included community violence, community resources, community structures, and unemployment levels; and finally, sensitizing concepts for perceived risk factors at the societal level included gender norms, dynamics between men and women, economic issues or disparities, and cultural influences.

Once the transcripts were received from PDC, they were quality checked for accuracy and removal of identifying information. All transcripts were uploaded to NVivo (2015). Using NVivo (2015) software, two visualization maps were created. An *Initial Coding Framework* map (see Appendix E) was created based on participant memos and a refresher on the literature, as well as an *Initial Ecological Model* map (see Appendix F) to add context to the drafted coding framework. After both maps were further refined, the coding framework was built as parent and child nodes (codes) in NVivo (2015). Next, a *case* node was created for each participant to store all data for each participant as one *case* in NVivo (2015). Each case included the participant transcript, as well as their data during the recruitment screening (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, highest level of education completed, parish of residency).

Coding the data and writing analytical memos. All interviews were coded with the coding framework created in NVivo (2015). This process was guided by an inductive content analysis approach, which involves thematic discovery across data, rather than applying an

existing analytical framework to the data (deductive analysis) (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002). Once all interviews were coded, a causal flow case summary was created for each participant. Although the causal flow analysis methodology was not adopted in its entirety, this stage of the data analysis was guided by this approach as outlined by Ellsberg and Heise (2005). Causal flow analysis is described by Ellsberg and Heise (2005) as beneficial in showing:

> …the relationship between causes and effects of a selected issue, problem, or desired state. This tool can be extremely useful in gaining an understanding of the underlying causes of sensitive issues. It is especially good for involving community members in setting priorities and in planning interventions. (p. 142)

For the current study, each causal flow case summary was prepared to better understand the within-case assessment of themes across participants and included a hierarchical coding chart (illustrating the use of codes across the interview) for each participant transcript and a high-level summary of the top parent and child codes referenced. Additionally, isolated quotes from transcripts that demonstrated causal flow as described by Ellsberg and Heise (2005) were also included, but only when applicable. Two examples of such isolated quotes from participant causal flow case summaries are:

> *Okay like [boys are considered] superior. I don't know how to explain like starting from primary school, nursery school, the boys would probably get to do more activities than the girls so they would feel more entitled to stuff. So, when that elevates and goes into manhood, it gets bigger with age.* - Participant 33
>
> *Well that's…most of the times…the young ladies turn into the same housewife because that's how they…were raised to be. So, you find them, they staying home and probably*

being loyal to one partner and then you have the guys believing that they could, you know, do whatever they want. They are the man of the house, so they go in and come out as they please and go wherever they feel like. So then, it's…not equal, in terms of being in a relationship and believing you have equal say or equal rights. – Participant 24

See Appendix G for an example of a participant causal flow case summary. All causal flow case summaries were uploaded to NVivo as *additional* sources for each participant case node. While case summaries were created for all 33 participants, two of the 33 causal flow case summaries played a more pivotal role in the analysis and results of the dissertation. These two causal flow case summaries were instrumental in generating the within-case assessment which is described next.

Generating themes and interpretations. The final stage of the data analysis involved the building of thick descriptions for all themes and sub-themes that emerged throughout the coding process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002) To begin this process, the coding framework was revisited one final time, across a two-step system. The first step required a revisit of the literature, as well as an exploration of the preliminary results. Changes were made to the coding framework, and the analysis shifted slightly to capture these changes (e.g., codes were combined or collapsed in cases of redundancy, codes were further teased apart into additional sub-themes to capture additional nuances in the data, and some codes were shifted around to better illustrate first- and second-order themes). See Appendix H for the final analytical framework.

The second step of creating the final analytical framework involved the member checking process. This created opportunity to further contextualize the data by gathering feedback from both the research participants, as well as the instrumental community partners from the earlier

stages of the project. In staying true to the principles of community-engaged research (Doberneck, Bargerstock, McNall, Van Egeren, & Zientek, 2017; Doberneck et al., 2010), it was important to gain feedback and further insight from participants and leaders in this work. These processes allowed for in-depth, critical, repetitive analysis, in conjunction with the participant experts to ensure their own words and lived realities were not usurped by the research process.

Both the stakeholder engagement meeting with two community partners (three representatives from BPW and one representative from the Bureau of Gender Affairs), as well as the participant feedback meetings (5 participants completed the member checking process) involved the sharing of the results and created space for all attendees to provide their feedback. Additional analytical notes and memos were written and were incorporated into the final refinement of the explanations and interpretations in the results. Overall, there was agreement among the stakeholders and five participants who engaged in the member checking process with the interpretations and themes. Two of the five participants made minimal requests that are reflected in the descriptions of the themes to follow: one was related to alcohol use by male partners, and one was related to police intervention.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Thirty-three women participated in the study. All women met the eligibility criteria of age and experience of GBV. Two women ended their interviews early due to the scheduling at the polyclinic on the day of their interviews. Because their data was still rich and reflective of the themes that had emerged up to that point in the research, they were included in the analyses. However, because they ended their interviews early, they did not provide responses to the demographic questions at the end of the interview. Beyond the demographic questions, it is possible that additional data would have emerged from these two interviews if time had not been an issue. Because the interview guide was built for participant choice for which ecological level to focus on, it is difficult to indicate how much of the interview protocol was completed with both of these participants. However, the themes they did focus on reflected the data that had been collected in all other interviews up to that point.

The sample more heavily represents the under 40 age group. Although age was initially asked about to ensure eligibility, this data point may help to further contextualize some of the data described later in the results section. While there is no way of knowing the point in time during which participants experienced GBV, it is important to consider how police intervention (highlighted in the ecological data to follow) can be further contextualized by age. The Family Conflict Unit (FCU) began their work in 2013 (Station Sergeant C. Husbands, personal communication, September 17, 2019), and their efforts have greatly focused on increased police training around GBV. When participants speak about their interactions with the police, the year of that interaction should be considered. While that data was not collected, age *could* be

considered as a proxy, or more accurately, a way to contextualize any feedback on police interactions.

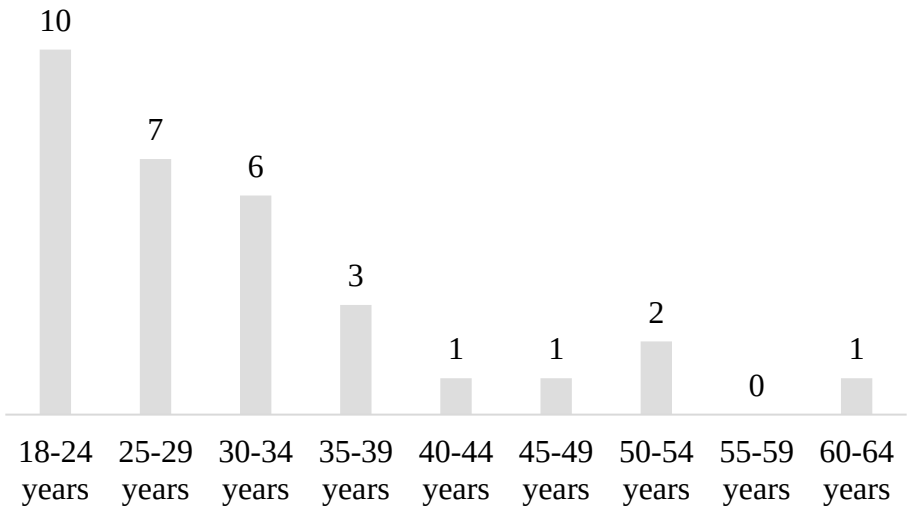

Figure 7. Sample breakdown by age group.

Highest level of education completed was also collected at the end of each interview. Participant responses for the 31 women who provided this data point are presented in Figure 8.

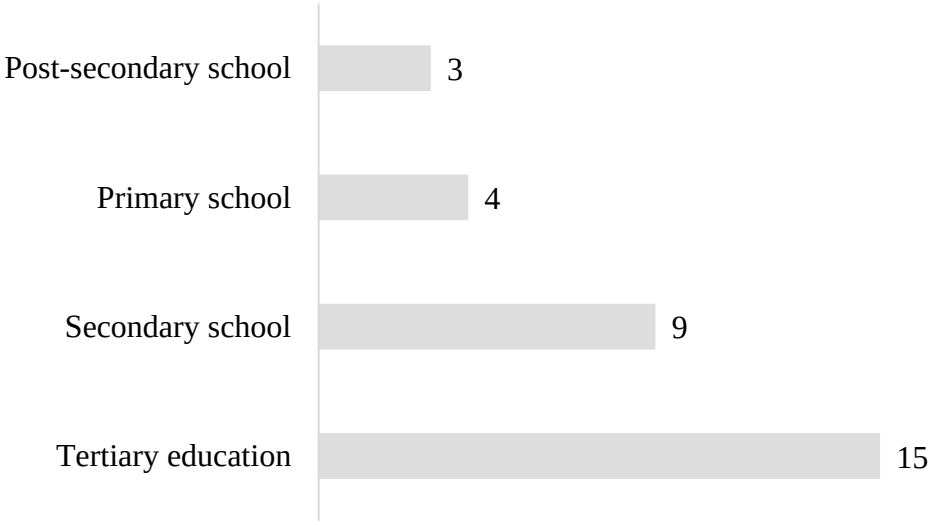

Figure 8. Sample by highest level of education completed.

Of the 31 participants who provided demographic information, the majority identified as black or Afro-Caribbean. One woman preferred not to identify with a specific race or ethnicity, another woman identified as mixed-race, and a third woman identified as "bronze." In terms of nationality, the majority identified as Barbadian. Four participants noted either a second nationality or identified as being born in another country (but still having Barbadian nationality), one participant chose not to respond, and another participant identified as Saint Lucian. Most of the sample identified as heterosexual, with one participant identifying as bisexual, and another identifying as fluid. Two participants felt that none of the response options fit their identity around sexual orientation. Regarding marital status, 26 women identified as single, never married, two were legally separated, two were married, and one woman identified as divorced.

Major Findings

This study used an ecological framework to better understand the community of survivors' perspectives around the contributors to GBV against women in Barbados. The following research questions were explored:

1. According to a sample of women survivors in Barbados, what are the contributors to GBV?
    a. What are the perceived contributors at the individual level?
    b. What are the perceived contributors at the interpersonal level?
    c. What are the perceived contributors at the community level?
    d. What are the perceived contributors at the societal level?

The results are organized by ecological level, and therefore also by research question. At the outset of the study, the goal was to select one established ecological model through which to mirror the findings. Models referenced included Bronfenbrenner's (1979) traditional ecological

model of human development, as well as the CDC (2018) social-ecological model for violence prevention and Heise's (1998) integrated ecological framework on violence against women. However, as the findings began to emerge it became clear that the data were more fluid and did not perfectly fit any of the three models referenced. As such, elements from all three models were incorporated into the final presentation of the results. The individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels will be of focus and provide structure for the remainder of the results section.

The chart in Figure 9 illustrates the hierarchical coding of the emergent themes. While the research questions focused on the *identification* of contributors at each of the four ecological levels, it is also important to consider the weight carried by these themes, across participants.

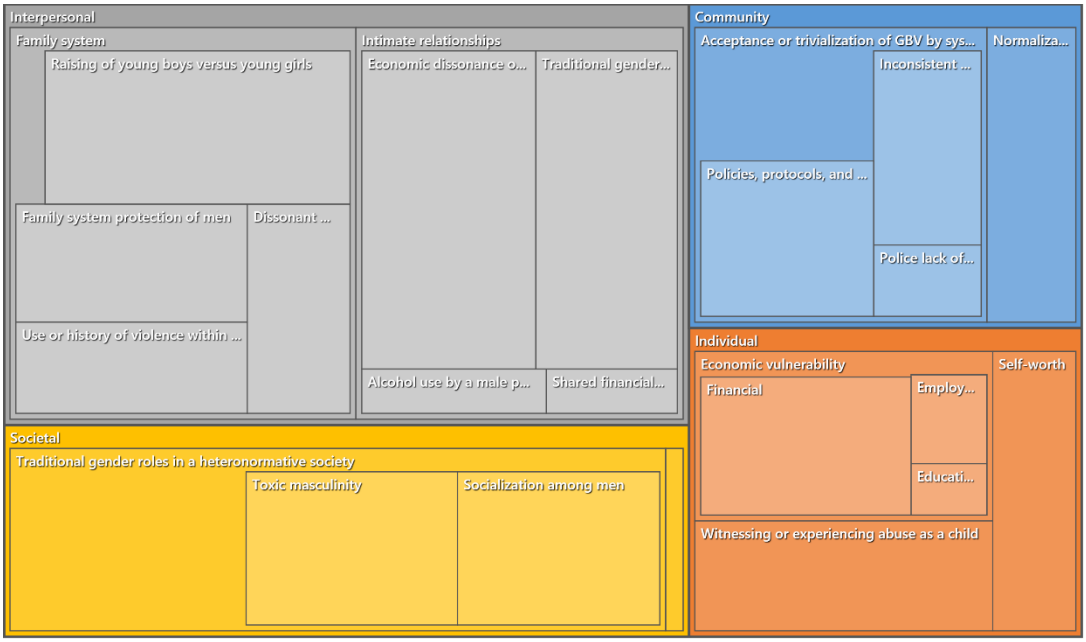

Figure 9. Hierarchical coding chart exported from NVivo (2015).

The hierarchical coding chart in Figure 9 was exported from NVivo (2015) and visualizes the number of coding references across codes, across all interviews. Larger shaded areas indicate greater number of references. As can be seen in the figure, participants focused most on the interpersonal level of the ecological model (in grey), followed by the community level (in blue),

and the societal (in yellow). The individual level (in orange) received the least attention across participants. Presented next is the cross- and within-case analysis and thick descriptions of the identified contributors to GBV against women in Barbados nested within these four ecological levels.

An Ecological Exploration of GBV in Barbados: Cross-Case Analysis

Each level of the ecological model is presented with a standard practice in qualitative research known as thick description (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 1990, 2002). This practice required a close look at the sub-themes identified as contributors by participants, while paying attention to any emergent commonalities or differences across participants. Additionally, the scholarly work presented in the literature review was revisited after the data were coded to assess the extent to which the current study reflected what has been found in other Caribbean countries. The work conducted in Haiti, albeit quantitative and collected within a different cultural context, provides a good lens through which to understand the data presented. Given the Haiti researchers' use of an ecological framework, their work helped to define and reflect on what is shared next (Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Individual level. Across the literature this level refers to factors that an individual brings to relationships and settings, such as age, history of witnessing or experiencing abuse, education, and many other individual level variables (CDC, 2018; Heise, 1998). While all 33 women mentioned factors at the individual level, this level was the least commonly referenced *across* interviews; less time was spent speaking about this level of the ecological model, compared to others. Individual level factors mentioned by participants included self-worth, witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child, and economic vulnerability. Economic vulnerability was discussed as including educational, employment, and financial vulnerability.

Self-worth. Participants spoke about concepts of self-worth as a perceived individual level risk factor for both experiencing GBV for women, as well as perpetrating GBV against women, for men. In terms of a risk factor for perpetrating GBV against women, most participants described feelings of jealous or insecurity among men. One participant explained:

> *…they [abusive men] use that against you. Men tend to tell women, 'Who you think you are, you think you better than me?'…because the woman might have a higher self-esteem than the man…[who] doesn't know where he is going. So, that's why the violence come in place too*. – Participant 11

> *…he would think 'She's going to run off with him because he would be able to give her more than what I can give her.' So, he had low self-esteem.* – Participant 4

This participant discussed the abuse within her relationship as directly connected to her partner's feelings of jealousy and constant concern that she would leave him for another man. In relating these feelings to his self-esteem, she articulated this as a contributor to the violence he committed against her. This was a shared sentiment across many participants. This concept of competition among men is discussed further at the societal level.

As a risk factor for women initially experiencing, and continuing to experience GBV, participants explained:

> *Once you got that…self-confidence and stuff like that, you know…certain things you won't stand for and certain things you won't stay for…So like domestic abuse won't even be a topic because you not entertaining that. So, I guess…you should learn self-worth and stuff like that.* – Participant 12

Because when you know who you are, it's hard for a man to mentally abuse you because they have to mentally bring you down and try to bring down your self-esteem before they put their hands on you and hit you. – Participant 11

Like when he realize that the woman like soft, or she got a low self-esteem…he would just keep on doing it [abuse]…because if he hit a woman today and she come back to you, like you'll want to do it the next, next, next, next, next day. – Participant 5

Participants spoke about feelings of self-worth as related to a lack of feeling loved during earlier stages in life. One woman explained that when a woman does not feel loved during her childhood years, the first partner who expresses these feelings for her may have a strong hold over her, regardless of any abusive treatment to come. Overall, participants felt as though a lowered sense of self-worth was a clear entry point for GBV to occur in women's lives. Furthermore, a lowered sense of self-worth created a cycle in that its continued presence allowed for repeated occurrences of GBV within an intimate relationship, as well as a survivor's life.

Witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child. Participants also discussed witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child as an individual level contributor to GBV against women. Like self-worth, this was a contributor that was discussed as both a risk factor for experiencing abuse as an adult for women, as well as perpetrating abuse as an adult for men. However, participants pointed out at various times that this was not necessarily linear. If a young girl witnessed or experienced abuse as a child, she is not *necessarily* going to become a victim as an adult; if a young boy witnessed or experienced abuse as a child, he will not necessarily become a perpetrator (or victim) as an adult. However, participants noted that this was a *significant* contributor to the potential of that outcome.

Many of these instances were also coded and will be discussed at the interpersonal, familial level because they illustrate dynamics *and outcomes* as a result of the family system. This individual level theme, however, emerged when participants singled out the element of witnessing or experiencing abuse separate from family dynamics that support abuse. While this sub-theme presents overlap between the individual and interpersonal (specifically within the family system) levels, it is important to acknowledge it as a unique, individual level contributor as participants put a great deal of stock in the significance of having witnessed or experienced abuse at a young age:

> *Their…children are obviously going to be a part…of encountering, experiencing, and seeing all that's going on and…will probably end up becoming or experiencing domestic abuse whether it's becoming a victim or becoming a perpetrator.* – Participant 1

Participants perceived witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child as particularly harmful for *young boys* in that they are at risk for repeating the behavior:

> *…my brother, I think that he, he thinks that he could just walk over women…probably because a' how he saw my stepfather treat my mother.* – Participant 14

> *…so, it creates a cycle because they [young boys] may continue the same behavior. So, they learn it as a child, that's how you…deal with situations that are challenging…they're angry and they're frustrated already because they…did not learn how to deal with their emotions, how to deal with their conflict. So, it's…a continuation.* – Participant 2

Participants also spoke about the impact on women after witnessing abuse at a young age, in particular, against their mother:

In my story, my mom was abused by my dad and I never thought that I would ever find myself in that kind of situation. But, I did, and it kind of shocked me when it happened to me because I thought I was smart enough never to go down that road. But you know the psychology say…there is a term that they call 'going home' and I totally understand that now when I found myself in a situation. – Participant 10

I would say that once you've been around some sort of violence in the home…it tells the brain that when something bad happens…and it's really horrible, then somebody's going to get hit eventually. – Participant 9

There was strong agreement among participants that the witnessing of abuse at a young age between parents or caregivers contributed greatly to this cycle repeating in adulthood, be that women experiencing victimization from a male partner, or male partners victimizing female partners. Beyond witnessing abuse, participants also spoke about the impact of *experiencing* abuse at a young age, and how these experiences created space for GBV to occur in adulthood. This again was discussed as a contributor to both adult victimization as well as perpetration of abuse and involved severe physical punishment or violence as a child, as well as sexual abuse.

Participants also explained that the experience of sexual abuse at a young age seemed to have an impact on the transition into a successful, healthy, adulthood. This impact was perceived to put women at risk for experiencing GBV. One woman explained:

…my abuse started from 13, when my mom…had a boyfriend…I ain't even say it to my mom, I wrote a letter to my mother…I said, 'Mommy, at night when you leave us [for work]…[your boyfriend] is troubling me.'…My mother grab me. She was [like], 'Troubling you how?'…I said, 'Well he putting his hand under my clothes, he pushing he

fingers in me, he holding my breast. He want me to put his penis in my mouth.'…And my mother said, 'You are a fucking liar.' – Participant 15

This participant described the abuse she experienced as an adult and related it back to the lacking support and belief from her mother when she was assaulted as a child. At the time, she even denied the abuse when questioned by the police because of the response she received from her mother upon disclosure. She explained:

I sat down and cried. I cried until a day I just let he do whatever he felt like. – Participant 15

In this quote, the participant is referring to her mother's boyfriend, and how she eventually could not defend herself any longer against his abuse. In relating this to the abuse she experienced as an adult, she explained:

I didn't have a mother to call and say well, 'He beating me or he doing this to me.' You know, so I didn't have a mother to call while he doing this or that to me. – Participant 15

This participant's experience of sexual abuse at a young age, coupled with her mother's rejection of the abuse, created space for her to experience GBV as an adult. The experiences described by this participant were supported by other women in the study:

You got some family that does abuse women too…Young, young girls in the family…I may come and tell you well, 'Mommy, my uncle is interfering [with] me' and mommy might not bother. So, therefore, the mother is contributing to the violence. – Participant 16

The mother boyfriend, it might be…the mother friend, it might just [be] a random man. I have seen it. Personally, I hear a lot of stories about it, that the mother is selling the girl child because dem ain't got no money and whatever. So…the man want the daughter…so

she gon' push her although the girl child might not want that. But, 'You got bring in money because we ain't got no money. The bills got pay, the rent got pay.' – Participant 14

These quotes present additional, confounding elements, beyond the experience of abuse as a young girl. The issues of finances, as well as the family system dynamics, are introduced. However, it should be noted that participants still related the *experience* of abuse alone, at such a young age, as it contributed to GBV against women as adults. The additional variables mentioned will be presented at other levels of the ecological model.

One additional participant narrative will be referenced before moving on to the next theme. The sexual abuse of young boys was described as a contributor to the perpetration of GBV against women. One participant spoke about her abusive ex-husband, and the sexual abuse he experienced as a child. Like the previous narrative, she discusses his mother's disbelief and lack of support and the way in which that led to his treatment of women throughout the rest of his life. She explained:

Sexual abuse …seemed to have been…throughout his childhood…and the fact this is mother denied that he was sexually abused was something that he had mentioned that he took really, really hard to the point that he said he's smashed up furniture and things like that in her presence…she asked him for proof cus' he was abused by his stepfather…he mentioned it was a large inconvenience because his stepfather was homosexual…he felt very betrayed by his mother. – Participant 1

This participant connected her partner's mother's reaction to his abuse as a motivator for retaliation against other women in his adulthood. Additionally, the participant's mention of the abuser's sexuality is important to consider. In her retelling of this abusive history, she deemed

this a detail that was significant to the victim, her ex-husband, the same individual who kidnapped her, raped her, and put her through years of abuse. She retold the story of the abuse he suffered at a young age and noted that the complications of a young boy being sexually abused by a *man* was a "large inconvenience" for her ex-partner. While she did not elaborate too much on this, she did connect it to his violent nature as an adult. This reflects the concept of hegemonic masculinities as discussed earlier in this dissertation.

These themes are validated by Heise (1998) and many other scholars who have demonstrated childhood abuse (and witnessing of abuse) as a major individual level risk factor for both victimization and perpetration. Heise (1998) notes the well-documented findings around men having witnessed the abuse of their mother and their increased likelihood of abusing an intimate partner, as well as the impact of childhood sexual victimization and its translation to sexual violence towards women.

Economic vulnerability. Economic vulnerability is the final individual level contributor to GBV perceived by participants. Like the previously discussed theme, economic vulnerability is discussed at both the individual level as well as the interpersonal level, albeit in different ways. At the individual level, participants shared that women, separate from any partner or relationship, were protected from GBV when they possessed abilities to access economic opportunities. At the interpersonal level, economic vulnerability will be discussed *within* intimate relationships, as manipulated by male partners. At both the individual and interpersonal level, economic vulnerability will be discussed across educational, employment, and general financial opportunities.

Overall, participants discussed restricted opportunities for women to succeed across these three domains. One participant explained:

I do believe women are at risk mostly because of finances. – Participant 10

Education level was mentioned as a protective factor, especially for preventing initial experiences of GBV. Many participants felt that women with a strong educational foundation were protected from ever being exposed to the cycle of GBV. One woman explained:

Education. Lack of education [among women] and not being able to provide for themselves [causes GBV] … Go and get educated and you will be able to provide for yourself…Education is the way out of poverty. Go to school and get an education. Boys will always be there. Get an education…Go and mek better fuh yourself. You got to go [to] school and you got to get an education. – Participant 14

Beyond education, women identified being unemployed or lacking income as contributing to economic vulnerability that leads to GBV:

Women should learn to be independent, have an independent mindset, because if she's in this type of relationship she can get up and get out, like have a career, have a purpose in life. If she wants to become a dancer, make sure she become a dancer, a lawyer, singer, whatever. So, that if she in a relationship, she...can be able to free herself. – Participant 11

Continuing, this woman explained that in achieving a career:

Yes, and she might be able to attract a man that is more serious or real and not a male [who] will feel intimidated by a woman who is a lawyer, doctor…an accomplished woman. You won't be able to touch her self-esteem. And even if the relationship goes astray [becomes abusive], she can just walk away. – Participant 11

This participant quote is important because she makes the connection between economic vulnerability at the individual level and economic dissonance (discussed later) at the

interpersonal level. This participant mentions a woman's career as a protective factor from GBV in that she "might be able to attract a man who is more serious…" and unintimidated by her success. As discussed next at the interpersonal level (as well as at the societal level), these concepts of traditional gender roles within intimate partnerships, as they relate to providing financially for the family, are noted as one of *the most* significant causes of GBV against women in Barbados. As noted by this participant, achieving economic stability and independence through employment and career opportunities may prevent women from ever being exposed to the cycle of GBV to begin with.

Economic vulnerability was discussed as a risk factor for initial abuse, as well as *continued* abuse. Participants agreed that economic stability prevented women from *ever* experiencing GBV, as well as prevented women from feeling trapped or *forced to remain* in abusive relationships. Most participants described that women in abusive relationships would indeed leave the relationship if they had the financial resources (shelter, enough income, food) to do so, for her and her children. Individual finances as a contributor to *continued* GBV within intimate relationships was brought up many times across interviews:

> *I didn't have anywhere to go so, you know, I kept on trying to make it work because of that economic situation that I was in.* – Participant 2
>
> *But I was trapped because I had kids from him and not working. [I] still have to depend on him to make sure that my children won't starve. So, I couldn't go anywhere.* – Participant 6
>
> *Not having no money, when you is the woman not having finances and you have to depend on a man. So, she depends on you for money, so I can treat her the way I feel like.* – Participant 7

I just decided to stay [in the abusive relationship] you know, because it's always the money. – Participant 9

Interpersonal level. The interpersonal level was the most regularly referenced level of the ecological model. All 33 women referenced this level when identifying contributors to GBV. The interpersonal level in this study is reflective of the microsystem as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and the relationship level as defined by the CDC (2018) social-ecological model. Across the literature, the interpersonal level is defined by personal relationships or settings within which the individual is directly involved or engaged. Often times this refers to family, intimate, or peer relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; CDC, 2018; Heise, 1998). For this study, the interpersonal level was broken down into two themes including intimate relationships and family systems: two settings in which interpersonal relationships occur. Intimate relationships were referenced more often than family systems as contributors to GBV, and therefore are discussed first. Both categories were broken down further into sub-themes, all of which are presented next. Like the individual level, many of the perceived contributors were discussed by participants as risk factors for both initial experiences of GBV, as well as continued experiences of GBV. Themes noted by participants at the interpersonal level as they relate to both intimate relationships as well as family systems, are aligned with empirical work from Haiti (Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Intimate relationships. When asked about contributors to GBV against women in Barbados, survivors described elements of intimate relationships that they felt placed women at risk of experiencing GBV. Participants described contributors that were responsible for the *introduction or continued existence* of GBV within a partnership (e.g., alcohol use by a male partner), which were *sustained* by the overall need for men to have power or control over their

female partners. Given the overlapping nature of contributors to GBV *across* ecological levels, this will also be discussed at the societal level.

Perceived contributors for the *introduction or existence of GBV within intimate relationships* include alcohol use by a male partner, shared financial vulnerability within a relationship, economic dissonance or manipulation, and traditional gender roles in intimate relationships. Before describing these themes, it should be noted that while some participants identified with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, all the intimate relationship themes were derived from participants' thoughts on and abusive experiences within heterosexual relationships. To initiate the descriptions of these themes, the following quote will help contextualize the overall tone of the intimate relationship sub-themes at the interpersonal level:

> *…somebody had said he seemed to have hang-ups with women…it's kind of interesting how over that period of time…he would say things and do things but I never really…it never really registered with me as…how he was relating to me as a woman or as his wife.*
>
> – Participant 1

Alcohol use by a male partner. Alcohol use by a male partner is a well-documented finding in the literature both globally, and specific to the Caribbean (Danns & Parsad, 1989; DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Gibbison, 2007; Heise, 1998; Jeremiah et al., 2017; Nagassar et al., 2010; Rawlins, 2000). Of the 33 women interviewed in the study, 18 mentioned alcohol use among men as a contributor to the introduction or existence of GBV within intimate relationships:

> *I have a friend that her boyfriend drinks and he beats her because when he comes in drunk, that's the only time he could find to beat her. For me, it was my children father*

just like the same. He would just hit me for no reason till I had to get away. I feel I woulda been dead. – Participant 19

Well Barbados, is the Caribbean [birthplace] of rum, so the men here love rum. Have a lot of rum shops, they drink a lotta rum. They go out…they drink alcohol, then they come home, and they get upset for foolish things and they usually take out their anger on her. – Participant 28

One participant described her husband's use of alcohol and how it became an issue for him at work as a police officer. He was later dismissed from his job and continued to brutally attack his wife. Throughout her relationship with him, seeking support from the police became less and less of an option given her partner's connection with the force. Overall, participants felt that drinking alcohol, as well as the rum shop culture, contributes to GBV against women in Barbados. One woman who participated in the member checking process indicated, however, that alcohol itself was not a *cause* of GBV against women, so much as it was an ever present constant across violent situations. This distinction was important to her narrative as she felt, if presented otherwise, gave men an excuse or an easy way out.

Shared financial vulnerability within a relationship. Shared financial vulnerability within an intimate relationship was also noted by participants as a contributor to the introduction or existence of GBV against women within intimate relationships. This is different from the economic dissonance described later in this section as it focuses on the shared element of financial instability as a unit. One woman explained:

…sometimes it'll be a case where you decide you gon' probably buy something [for dinner] on the way home but then I'm buying…for everybody, which could be costly. So then it comes a case where you are quarrelling about the budget, you quarrelling about

the money and they will say to you 'you could have go home and cook something'…but you bought something on the road that the family could have eat…by the time you get home you realize well you only got $20 left…you would hear 'you does waste money.' So, then we go into the case of making the woman feel it's all her fault… – Participant 23

Economic dissonance or manipulation. While economic vulnerability is discussed as an individual level factor, economic *dissonance* is mentioned at the interpersonal level due to the common reference of financial stability *in comparison to, or as a result of the manipulation by,* a male partner. Economic dissonance or manipulation was one of the top three themes cited within the intimate relationship category. Economic dissonance or manipulation was seen in three different arenas, including educational, employment, and financial, and refers to a significant economic difference between the couple, or manipulation by a male partner to achieve or maintain this difference. This dissonance or manipulation was a major contributor to the introduction or existence of GBV within intimate relationships.

Education, employment, and financial dissonance were discussed as operating in complicated and reinforcing ways within relationships such that an *initial* economic dissonance between the two partners was used as a justification for abuse perpetrated by male partners. Even more complicated was the fact that abusive male partners reacted to this dissonance with violence regardless of which side of that dissonance they were on. If the woman was making less money that the man, he would use violence to remind her that she was contributing less to the family and the household:

…so they would like drop it in your face like 'don't forget you ain't working' or 'don't forget that you ain't got nothing'…So, you would just pull back, fall back, fall back and just down to zero but you feel you at 10 but really and truly you at zero. And, because you

ain't getting money, you ain't getting food and a lot of things so you ain't happy. – Participant 5

It would [be] more in the situation that women not making enough money and having to stand for violence because the man is making more money, he feel he could be abusive towards her. – Participant 12

This participant described situations wherein her abusive partner would use violence to remind her of this dissonance often, while also using it as a mechanism to maintain this dissonance. In a situation where the woman was making *more money* than the man, he would use violence to show her that she was not in charge despite her income. In such a situation, abusive men use violence to reset that dissonance in their favor. One woman explained:

…so, when he was in prison, I had a job, so when…he came home now, I was still working. So, he was like, 'Since I back home now, you can't go to work' and he was going to do everything. But I was telling he that I still want to work, and he was shouting at me, like cursing me, he even hit me, so I had to call [work]…and say I wasn't coming back no more. – Participant 5

Another woman explained:

…then sometimes you find like if they feel the female is like more dominating as in like providing more financially...I find like they turn to abuse as a way to control basically. – Participant 12

I don't know if men feel belittled when they are not making more money than their spouses, so I find like they get aggravated by that and it turns to violence as a means to control and be in control. – Participant 12

Participant 12 continued to explain her perceptions around the abusive male partner's thinking in situations where the female partner is making more money than the male partner:

> *… 'she's making more money but I'm going to show that I'm the man cause I'm going to do this thing [abuse]. I don't owe you anything because you can't fight me on that level so you would see that I'm dominating.'* – Participant 12

These narratives describe partner reactions to employment and income leading to cursing, hitting, and general violence, which potentially leads to job termination. For Participant 5, this violence in reaction to her job and income forced her to quit her job. Her partner's use of violence intended to reset that dissonance in his favor, so that she was no longer financial free or independent. This initiates a dangerous cycle wherein women are not protected by job security or income. Unemployed or women with lower incomes than their partners are subjected to abuse for being dependent on the man, and employed women with higher incomes than their partners are subjected to abuse because the man wants her to depend on him financially, not only so he can be viewed as the head of the household, but also because he becomes justified in his abuse once she is making less money.

Other participants noted moments when the male partner would recognize a potential tip in the scales of economic dissonance, during which he would turn to violence. One participant explained:

> *I started doing nursing before and he was like, 'Why you doing nursing? You too stupid. You can't do that.' Or 'You too this, you can't do that' …And he used to have to provide the bus fare and stuff for me. He never used to want to give it to me to go to class. At all.* – Participant 15

This participant's continued progression through schooling or other opportunities subjected her to further violence from her partner. This participant clarified:

> *…he figured that if I did the classes, I would leave him. He had that power over me because I had nowhere to go…I had nowhere to go and I…had no income. I was at home taking care of his son. So, he thinks that soon as I did the classes he said, 'You want go and do what? Try to elevate yourself for what? You…too stupid for this thing girl.'* – Participant 15

These potential educational or employment opportunities were viewed as a direct threat to the man's position in the household and were also perceived as jeopardizing the benefits he was getting from having his partner stay home:

> *…it [Barbados] is got a set of men that don't want women to like go out and work [these men feel] that once they are working, they feel they have the upper hand because them is the providers. Yea, so they could control things.* – Participant 5

Participants noted that abusive partners benefitted from this dependency in that someone was there to take care of the house and children, so they did not have to. The additional benefit, as previously mentioned, was that he could continue to abuse his partner with the assumption that she had nowhere to go:

> *I remembered my daughter father he was saying to me…'there is no way you should be working for more money that me'…this man seem to got [an] issue because obviously he does not want you to be doing better than him because he believes you should be at home, just child-rearing and taking care of the household and the meals and the laundry…* - Participant 23

Yeah and because he know that if I working, I wouldn't have to take nothing from him…But I was trapped because I had kids from him and not working. [I] still have to depend on him to make sure that my children won't starve so I couldn't go anywhere. – Participant 5

As articulated by Participant 19, however, this does not align with women's lived realities. She explained:

…women in Barbados tend to strive more than men, I find. Women want to do more, want to accomplish more than men. A man would be laid back with doing a normal job giving him minimum wage, and a woman wants more. So, if she's getting more money than him, he feels intimidated and he becomes angered and takes it out on her. – Participant 19

While this educational and employment restriction does not align with Bajan women's goals, participants explained that they had to live this new normal in order to prevent abuse and make sure their children had housing and food. A lack of compliance also meant their children could potentially be abused.

One final element of economic dissonance mentioned by participants was age discordance within an intimate relationship:

…let's say you are about 18, 19, and this gentleman comes along, he's about 40. And he come and he would help you. He would give you anything. He would help you through school. If you have to study, he would help you through your degree and whatever. So, you are…looking at him as a father-figure, then he may…become intimate…So because you didn't have that male person in your home, you see him as…the person who is there for you, your protector, your daddy. It becomes violent then, when she realizes that, she is 26 and he is 50, and there is this young man out there that, she like him, but this man,

who would have helped her throughout her career. She might feel that she is obligated [to this] man…he says to her, 'You can't leave me. I help you through school…I pick you up off the gutter when you had nothing.' This is where the abuse starts. – Participant 31

Age discordance within intimate relationships was discussed by several participants and was noted as a factor that contributed to this economic dissonance leading to abuse, especially in circumstances when older men are preying on younger girls or women who are in need. Another woman explained:

Well, you know you would meet a guy and he would be a little older than you and…you would explain certain situations to him about your life and stuff, things that you don't have and stuff, and then he would…be sweet [to] you and make you talk with him and he would give you everything in the beginning, and then he would try to like put in your head 'Well you have to get up and be independent.' But, his way of being independent is he has a friend that wants to see you and he would carry you by the friend and you not knowing that his idea of you being independent and trying to…get stuff on your own is to have sex with his friend…and then you don't want to have sex with his friend… – Participant 6

This participant went on to explain situations wherein the younger, female partner is subjected to extreme abuse if she does not comply to the forced prostitution by her older, male partner. This may mean physical violence, as well as being held hostage in the house until she complies.

Traditional gender roles in intimate relationships. The final contributor to GBV at the intimate partnership level is traditional gender roles, specifically household duties such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. This theme encompassed characteristics and preconceived

notions of what it means to be a husband or wife in Barbados as well. Across the study, 31 women mentioned traditional gender roles as contributors:

> *…some men believe women supposed to be…we supposed to know our place. That some, some men actually think our place is being at home or in the kitchen or, you know, or being a child-bearer for them, nothing else.* – Participant 15

This participant described how this played out in her relationship, and how any departure from her traditional gender roles placed her at risk for abusive treatment from her partner:

> *…I was home and I had the baby in my hand, and I was tired…he came in, he kissed us, he asked, 'How is my two favorite girls?' I was like 'I am okay.' Then I smile until…he went in the kitchen and he come back and he start [to] curse me, 'Where the fuck is my [dinner]?'* – Participant 15

This participant went on to describe the abuse she suffered for not having her partner's dinner ready:

> *I say, '…I literally just walked through the door.' He drag me up, he fling me in a position on the wall. I still had, in my hand, the baby. His mom was in the other room. When he fling me and I hit the partition, my head hit the partition and [the baby] slide out my hand. His mom opened her bedroom door, took up [the baby], and went back in…He bit me. He bite me there and then he hit me with the frying pan in my face…I was just seeing just nothing but blood.* – Participant 15

Another woman explained:

> *Deh got certain men that believe, alright, I go work and I come home, you supposed to got food on the table, you know? If I come home and I want to have sex, we supposed to have sex because I working the hardest and bringing in the money.* – Participant 18

Similarly, Participant 23 explained that even when both partners are contributing financially to the household, the woman may "get a chuck*"* if she is not prioritizing the cooking:

> *…when I put money here the money is spent to buy the food, the money spent to pay bills, but at the same time there are two of y'all doing the same thing so it is not [financially] more than anyone else…And then he want…you alone to be responsible of taking care of the family…It is not a case where daddy can't go into the kitchen and prepare the evening meal. So what I find is that a lot of…the men are still within the mind frame thinking that the mother's role is only to take care of the children and take care of the home, prepare everything for everyone, meals, clothes, laundry, everything is at the role of the mother.* – Participant 23

Participant 26 explained that the abuse she experienced seemed to worsen when she and her partner moved in together. Specifically, the gender roles in the relationship carried more weight:

> *…we move in together and to me, it [the abuse] got more worse. It's like, okay, I don't mind cooking fuh you. I don't mind washing fuh you. I don't mind cleaning fuh you. But I is work just like you. You can't expect me to do thing in your time…If a weekend I ain't get up and start cooking, he real angry.* – Participant 26

This participant continued to explain the brutal violence she experienced from her partner, even during times of illness. A great deal of the abuse, she explained, was prompted by her partner's need to control and maintain the gender norms in their relationship and in the household. An additional gender norm mentioned by participants referred to men having multiple partners. This was unacceptable for the woman, but okay for the man:

They [men] would feel…that they got more, they got more right to, 'Me woman got to stay at home with children and clean and just leh me provide...that is why they got these terms now, girlfriend and wifey. So wifey home and girlfriend out there. – Participant 21

This concept was discussed frequently across participants and tied into what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior for men and women within intimate relationships. A man having what was referred to as an outside woman, was not only discussed as tolerated socially (this is the man's right), but was also discussed as solidifying his position in his other relationship such that his partner's position became less about intimacy, and more about performing household functions for his benefit.

The four themes discussed, including alcohol use by a male partner, shared financial vulnerability within a relationship, economic dissonance or manipulation, and traditional gender roles in intimate relationships, were noted as being *sustained* by one additional factor: the general need for power or control over a female partner. This need to exercise control over a woman was noted frequently as feeding contributors such as economic dissonance and traditional gender roles, and saturated nearly all other themes discussed within intimate relationships:

I guess it's because men believe the masculine power supposed to be strong and in control, powerful so if someone tells them they're soft [weak] that's the total opposite of that, so that's where that comes from. But beating a woman does not make you powerful. – Participant 28

I find that most relationships I was in, guys does usually be controlling…They does like to know that you are scared of them, that they have you regardless. Cus' they know once you're scared you wouldn't want to leave. Well you would want to leave but you would be scared to leave. They does like to know that you ain't going nowhere. – Participant 28

…they then think their woman have to be controlled, that's the first thing…they feel that women are supposed to be controlled…and men…they know how to control a woman is through the violence because that is how they would have been controlled when they were small. – Participant 2

And they men…they think they are the head of the house. So, if a woman says "no" or whatever…they does just feel to knock around women fuh anything. – Participant 31

Family system. The family system was the second of the two major themes at the interpersonal level. Participants described four main contributors within family systems that are related to GBV against women, including the raising of young boys versus young girls, dissonant expectations or experiences of young boys versus young girls, family system protection of men, and use or history of violence within the family.

Raising of young boys versus young girls. The most frequently referenced contributor to GBV against women within the family system was the raising of young boys versus young girls. One woman explained that young boys, who then grow up to be men, are given special accommodations and privileges:

It's like…they're never wrong, they are never wrong. A mother 'Oh, this is my boy child, he would never do anything' ... – Participant 10

This concept of young boys being special or treated with privilege was brought up very often across the interviews. Participants explained that this privileged treatment bordered on an almost worshipping of young boys and the young men they grow into. Furthermore, there was a bit of reciprocity mentioned in that young men grew very dependent on their mothers as a result of this specialized treatment. At times this was exhibited as great respect for their mother, and at other times this was disrespect for their mothers because they knew they would continue to be

worshipped and treated as special within the family unit, no matter their actions or behaviors. Furthermore, these dynamics complicated issues when these young men began to engage in intimate relationships, and the role the mother would play in intervening during violent episodes and telling her son that he should not treat a woman with such disrespect. This very rarely happened. Many women who participated in the study spoke about how their partner's mother knew of the abuse, at times even witnessed the abuse, but still never intervened or spoke with her son about his horrid behaviors:

> *So now he brings a girlfriend and now the mom is jealous of the girlfriend and is never going to take her side on anything.* – Participant 10

One woman described a violent encounter with her partner and mentioned how his mother witnessed the abuse. She explains that:

> *…most mothers in Barbados is like…I got my son back.* – Participant 16

Participants explained that many young men are continuously supported by their mothers, from childhood through adulthood, no matter their treatment of others, their financial status/financial drain on her own well-being, or their overall character. No matter the degree of the abuse, most participants agreed that most mothers would support their sons.

The raising of young boys was discussed with a foundation of *entitlement*. Participants spoke about how boys are taught that they are entitled to whatever they want, and this was solidified by their treatment within the family system. This then carries over into intimate relationships in adulthood and creates a setting in which abuse becomes regular when their entitlement is not supported by their female partner. As was quoted in the methods section, Participant 33 explained:

Okay [boys are] like superior. I don't know how to explain, like starting from primary school, nursery school, the boys would probably get to do more activities than the girls so they would feel more entitled to stuff. So, when that elevates and goes into manhood, it gets bigger with age. – Participant 33

So, they grow up from 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, into adulthood believing that every single woman they can just pass, touch. If the woman shuts them down, they curse them because that is what they grow up to. – Participant 29

Many participants also spoke about the things that young boys witness in the house, and how that impacts their perceptions and actions as they grow older. For instance, they may be observing that the father has control of the house, and when it starts to slip, he becomes violent. Or he may observe the ways in which his mother or sisters are treated by others and believe that it is acceptable treatment. When this is coupled with the specialized treatment he is also receiving, a message about gendered power dynamics is solidified.

One of the most compelling and nuanced observations made by a participant involved the ways in which young boys and girls are socialized by the family unit as part of their upbringing:

So, it happens that from [the] time a young man is growing up, they [his family] always teach them that…you could go out and find a girl. Or they will say, 'You will have plenty girls when you grow up' and thing. But then, when it comes to a female, they raise them so isolated. Be at home, be the cooks, the cleaners, always be at home. – Participant 24

This isolation to the house seems to be contributing to the expectation of gender role performance within intimate relationships later in life, which was clarified previously as a key contributor to GBV against women. Participants continued to explain:

Then the young ladies turn into the same housewife because that's how they…were raised to be. So, you find them, they staying home and probably being loyal to one partner, and then you have the guys believing that they could, you know, do whatever they want. They are the man of the house, so they go in and come out as they please and go wherever they feel like. So then, it's not equal, in terms of being in a relationship and believing you have equal say or equal rights. – Participant 24

I understand that a woman must know how to cook and do other stuff, but not every girl wants to be a housewife. Yes, there are certain skill she gon' need to learn, but not every girl wanna be a housewife. And…not every boy is gonna go out to go out whenever he feel like and come home whenever he feel like…but to me, the parents give the boys more leeway than the girls. – Participant 25

Because girls are supposed to be soft, they supposed to be in the house, cooking, washing, whatever. The boys are supposed to be out there climbing trees, falling down, breaking deh feet…that is basically how they were raised, because men are not supposed to be in the house cooking. Boys are not supposed to be in the house cooking or washing. It's supposed to be a lady's thing. – Participant 31

Participants painted a clear picture of how the raising of young boys promotes male entitlement and introduces, as well as reinforces, expectations of men and women within intimate relationships later in life. This further perpetuated traditional gender norms within intimate relationships as a risk factor. Participants discussed that many young men were raised to believe that there should not be equal power within intimate, heterosexual relationships. Young boys were also discussed as having the freedom to go out, explore sexual relationships, and were

simply given a bit more room to grow. Young girls on the other hand experienced a great deal of control and were restricted to the home and completion of schoolwork.

One final commonality that emerged in relation to the raising of young boys, was the lacking acknowledgement of trauma during childhood. Many women spoke about young boys *and young girls* as witnessing and experiencing abuse, but that this trauma was never dealt with. For young boys, this meant this unaddressed trauma translated into violent behaviors as adults:

> *…alright, my child father now for instance, he said his mother left his father for another man. So, he had seen that. So, that is the key where now he grow up as a man, he retaliated on me.* – Participant 3

Dissonant expectations or experiences of young boys versus young girls. Related to the raising of young boys versus young girls, participants also spoke about differences in expectations and experiences of young boys versus young girls. Sexual abuse was mentioned for both young boys and young girls, although it was discussed as being much more common for young girls. The commonality of young girls being assaulted by visiting partners, family members, or men in the community who held some sort of power or status, was discussed. This was coded at the individual level as well when it was talked about as trauma leading to future experiences of GBV. However, it is also discussed here as participants spoke about it being more common and normalized for young girls than it was for young boys. At times, participants shared that mothers would know that this abuse was happening within the home, but the perpetrator may have been providing some sort of support to the family or household, so it was ignored, if not encouraged at times:

> *…mothers put their girl children in a lot of sexual positions because they can't afford…they want the money, the man want the girl child instead of the mother. The*

mother gon' give the man the girl child because he bringing in the money. So, she putting her daughter in a sexual position because [of] lack of finances. – Participant 14

These experiences were also coded at the individual level, since many women then believed that this was normal, or even required in order to make ends meet, financially. Overall, a great deal of harassment, sexual coercion, sexual assault, and rape were discussed as things that many young women experience in Barbados. Some women described in detail assault by a stepfather or visiting boyfriend of another family member. This was often met with disbelief from the mother, or others in the family, leaving the young girl isolated and without resources. These experiences were not as normalized for young men, according to the participants. Again, this exists as an individual level contributor, but is also pulled out at the family level because the occurrence depends on the family system support of this experience and is characterized and therefore set as a precedence for young women.

Family system protection of men. The family's protection of men was another theme that emerged from the data. Many women spoke about how they never learned of their partner's abusive history, until after it started happening within their relationship. Participants spoke about how numerous family members, friends, or people within their shared network had ample time to share this information with her, but in their pursuit of protecting the perpetrator, they never did. Furthermore, it was not solely that the perpetrator received protection from their family; there was an added layer that he held some sort of power position in the familial network, making it challenging for family members to speak out about his abusive behaviors. Siblings were mentioned as providing rides for victims to the emergency room, but never truly speaking out against their brother's actions, for instance. Very often family members witnessed the abuse taking place, but no intervention followed. At a minimum, some family members *heard* there

was abuse within the relationship, but never inquired further. Perpetrators maintained their positions of power within their family or extended family networks to further isolate victims and take advantage of the protection they were receiving:

> *I could never go back to the family, you know, it's too much support for the perpetrator, too much support, and none for the victim.* – Participant 10

Participants explained that this power within the family system allowed for the continued violence to happen within their intimate relationship. One woman explained that she knew her partner from when they were young. Their families were very close, and his family actively hid his abusive behaviors towards past partners. Therefore, when she entered a relationship with him, she did not know she had reason to be worried. She explained that she entered the relationship in a vulnerable state because his family manipulated her and her own family to believe he was a good person:

> *…my guard was already down, so you know by the time he started to manifest these things [his abusive behavior], and I found out some of the things he did, it was like 'Well, you know maybe I can change him.'* – Participant 10

One woman spoke about her abusive ex-husband and how he was sexually abused as a child. She related his behavior as an adult to this experience, specifically in that his mother never believed him when he disclosed this information to her. She explained that he retaliated later in life by abusing women, and she felt that, while his mother knew of this behavior, she never said anything about it because it was her way of offering him the protection later in life that she should have granted him as a child.

Another woman spoke about a man who was assaulting young girls at the beach. When she found out about his behavior, she confronted his family members and friends, and all had

admitted to not doing anything about it. They had ascribed to a similar code of protection for the perpetrator and allowed him to continue his abusive behavior towards other young girls. Overall, this persistent protection of men by their family networks was identified by participants as directly contributing to GBV against women.

Use or history of violence within the family. The final contributor within the family system is the use or history of abuse within the family. This has been discussed across the preceding themes but will be briefly mentioned here as well, albeit in more general terms. Participants endorsed the individual contributor of witnessing or experiencing violence as a child, but also spoke about the general use of violence within the family system as a separate contributor. Women posited that if violence was a constant presence in someone's life, especially as a child, they will likely grow up thinking it is okay to be violent towards others, or to be treated violently by others. This was discussed as family members being violent towards one another, towards strangers, towards animals, as well as a history of this behavior being a norm within one's family system:

> *Majority of the time it is widespread, and it is the norm of most households to have some form of it [abuse] going on…no one talks about it. You know [it's going on] …you know uncles troubling their nieces or whatever…so that is really what is causing the problem.* – Participant 10

> *…even in my own family…my brother and my sister used to fight a lot…Sometimes I would be the cause of it, like if my sister does something that my brother doesn't like to me, like he would just get up and beat her. Then of course, like as I got older and more defiant, he thought he could try it with me…The police knew our address from the time they heard our names. So yeah, it was pretty toxic growing up there…I think everyone [in*

the neighborhood] was so accustomed to it. Like I can't think of any functional family in that neighborhood. – Participant 13

This normalization of violence is discussed at later levels of the ecological model, but its existence in the family system is noted here given the strong influence the system has on family members' outcomes, especially in the Caribbean where people tend to live with their families well into adulthood (M. Burnham, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

Community level. Moving beyond the interpersonal level, the community level was referenced with a frequency similar to the societal level of the ecological model. The community level in this study is reflective of the exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) and the community level as defined by the CDC social ecological model (2018). Across the literature, this level is often defined by health and social services available, community resources, neighborhoods, law enforcement and the judicial system, and many other entities that have an impact on individuals, but that those individuals may not be regularly connected to. This level can also refer to settings in which relationships or interactions occur, and discusses the dynamics or norms within those settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; CDC, 2018). This theme will be structured like the way in which the intimate relationship themes were nested in the interpersonal level such that the contributors to the introduction of existence of GBV will be presented first, followed by the factors that serve as sustainability mechanisms. For the current study, the community level themes included the normalization of violence across communities and community settings and the acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems (inconsistent enforcement of laws across police officers, police lack of understanding about abuse, and policies, protocols, and the court system). These contributors were noted as sustained by the

small community dynamic that can be found across the island and the need for (or current lack of) services.

Normalization of violence across communities and community settings. The normalization of violence was noted by participants as directly contributing to GBV against women in Barbados. This normalization went beyond the family system and functioned as an acceptable practice across a diversity of settings. The normalization of violence against women was described by participants as a veil that was laid over all community settings, such as neighborhoods and schools:

> *You know it is something that we accustomed to see in the neighborhood and my mom would tell me in her time, like for entertainment sometimes, there was this one man and his family… [that would] go crazy on the weekend. He would come home drunk and he would, you know, um hit his girlfriend…All the neighbors would come out laughing so it's like 'Oh we know it is normal, we don't see anything wrong with it.'* – Participant 10

Multiple women talked about how the harassment of young girls at school was widely accepted, and how there was not enough going on in school settings to teach children about healthy relationships. Another woman described a situation where a schoolgirl was being assaulted regularly by a van (public transit) driver, but neither the school nor the other van patrons acted on it. Many participants also described the widespread occurrence of coerced and forced sex and agreed that most women would likely describe their first sexual experiences as such. Despite the well-established nature of that trend, participants explained that it was not viewed as cause for alarm among most people; in fact, they felt it did the opposite and even encouraged this trend to continue to grow. Participants referred to men "troubling" or "interfering with" young girls as a regular occurrence, referring primarily to sexual abuse, and

mentioned that the identity and behaviors of perpetrators within neighborhoods are many times known by the surrounding community members.

Acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems. There was an overwhelming perception that judicial bodies, such as the police, accepted or trivialized GBV against women, in that there was a significant lack of efforts by police officers to appropriately handle sexual and domestic violence cases, there were perpetrators on the force, and increased training was desperately needed. As a reminder, the FCU (Family Conflict Unit within the Royal Barbados Police Force) was started in 2013 and is responsible for overhauling the police force response to GBV, specifically domestic violence. The FCU, headed by Sergeant Husbands, works to provide training and support for police officers responding to domestic violence calls. They work closely with the judicial system and aim to transform the landscape of justice as it relates to women and girls who are victims of GBV (Station Sergeant C. Husbands, personal communication, September 17, 2019). Because some of the participants' experiences with the police force would have happened before the FCU was established, it is important to contextualize their reactions to the police force as not *necessarily* related to the FCU. This sub-theme was one of the most pivotal, widely referenced codes throughout the study. Participants were adamant that the acceptance and trivialization of GBV within the police system directly contributed to initial as well as continued experiences of GBV, if not domestic violence homicide as well.

Overall, police officers were noted as endorsing many of the pre-conceived notions and beliefs discussed in preceding ecological levels. There was a great deal of blaming the victim mentality exhibited by the police, and participants noted that their lack of empathy, their disinterest in assessing the severity of situations, and their general lack of concern and respect for women translated directly into lives lost due to domestic violence homicide. Two major concerns

were expressed regarding the police. Participants described police as inconsistently enforcing the law, which sends a message to many men that GBV will be tolerated. They also felt that police were lacking a deep understanding of abuse and were more often guided by their frustration towards women who return to violent partners. In such situations, police officers often ignore calls for help and again send a message of accepting GBV.

Inconsistent enforcement of laws across police officers. Participants noted mass inconsistencies across police officers in how GBV cases were handled. Many women explained that police officers were outright disrespectful while making it clear that they knew the perpetrator and therefore were unlikely to pursue any criminal action against him. One woman explained:

> *The inspector, when he come in…it was like he trying to mek it clear that he know them [the perpetrator and his family]…So I was like, 'Oh, so you trying to let me know that yeah you know them from young?'* – Participant 16

This woman continued to say that, after the Sergeant left the room, the inspector started to communicate these things, trying to manipulate her into changing her story. She then realized:

> *Uh-huh, 'This ain't ever going in you favor [talking to herself]. This ain't ever working fuh you.'* – Participant 16

Participants also spoke about delays in police response once a call was made. One woman described calling the police six times in a row, with no answer. She explained:

> *I was actually in a situation where I was calling the police number and it rang and rang and rang and no one answered. I called about six times. If it was a more…if it was a worse situation probably I would not be alive or something because nobody answer.* – Participant 33

Women also spoke about the critical moment when a report or a call is made, and the police judgment that takes place regarding the importance of that report. In cases where sex workers or women who have a history of domestic violence call the police, many officers deem their situation as not important or not worthy of a visit. Participants also mentioned the reality of perpetrators being within the police force, making the "not worthy" call much easier for some. Participants spoke about these factors as a direct pathway to domestic violence homicide.

Another woman described that police often lead with the question about whether the situation involved a boyfriend or husband. From her perspective, if the woman told the police that the issue *was* with a boyfriend or husband, police officers tended to trivialize the situation:

> *Yes, that's the first question they always ask. If it's your boyfriend or if you and the person are involved. And then if you say 'yeah' they'll say y'all are going to resolve it or get over it. Sometimes they may come, sometimes they may not come...* – Participant 33

Police lack of understanding about abuse. Participants mentioned a deep need for police officers to better understand the complexities of abuse so that they did not blame the victims. Their incapacity to grasp patterns and behaviors exhibited by victims translated into lives lost and contributed to a system of disregard for women:

> *I heard women may call, call the police and they are like 'Uh, just make up and get done with it…because you know that you are going to go back.'* – Participant 10

> *The training of the police. The police. Zero. Like zero. You think when they come to respond to the call…They have the same attitude [of] 'But we don't have to go because she's probably going to go back to the guy.' I've seen that attitude more than once from police. I do not understand the dynamics of it, but I definitely would say training of the police would make a big difference... – Participant 13*

And then when they go back again and call the police…you call the police 3 or 4 times for the same person. Some of the police don't pay you no mind. – Participant 17

One woman spoke about the police informal policy of:

'If you got back with him, don't come back to us.' – Participant 29

Another woman shared her experience with the police and how their lack of concern almost cost her, her life. This woman had made various reports to the police station, but most were dismissed and not taken seriously. The abusive partner was a former police officer, and was later dismissed from the force, yet continued to impersonate a police officer by wearing his uniform. Her attempts to involve the police were trivialized given the police officer's friendly relationship with her partner, and eventually he broke into the house, beat her with a weapon, tied her up, and lit her and her house on fire. She played dead for as long as she could, and then was able to escape. She barely survived his attack:

…when the incident happened, and I was taken to the police station, one of the officers who mainly came to take the [previous] reports, when he saw my face, he could not sit at the desk anymore. He just got up and left. He just got up and left. I, I don't know if he felt bad because he obviously knew of the reports that I have put in against this person, and every time they come it was a like brush off because obviously, he [my partner] was part of the force. It was just a brush off in all of the reports, or most of the reports. So, I feel that he felt bad after he saw my face and everything that happened. He just got up and left...I guess he couldn't face me…a lot of the officers did not take it serious. They don't take it serious because the most they would say is um 'Don't worry, she would be back with him tomorrow, think about it.' – Participant 4

The disregard for GBV, the sexist, and at times assaultive behavior by police officers, and their trivialization of, and lack of training around, domestic violence cases were all noted as perceived direct contributors to GBV against women in Barbados; both for initial experiences of GBV, as well as continued experiences of GBV. One woman who participated in the member checking process noted, however, that not all experiences with police officers are negative. She was adamant that many police officers are trying their best when it comes to GBV, but that the officers need more resources if they are to effectively handle GBV calls.

Policies, protocols, and the court system. Participants described major contributors to GBV existing within the court system and were described as related to, but more of an extension of the police force. While the court was not viewed as a contributor to the initiation of GBV, it was seen as contributing to re-occurrence. This theme was namely defined by the court system's significant delays, which created space for continued GBV against women to occur. Protective orders were discussed as meaningless, and rarely were they respected. Like the police response, the court system was viewed as more so protecting the perpetrator, and not the victim. Furthermore, participants spoke about the court's incapacity to enlist strict sentencing, making domestic violence homicide a real possibility once the perpetrator is set free. Overall, policies and practices in the court system were described more so as contributing to continued GBV, but certainly made initial experiences of GBV easier for perpetrators and more challenging for survivors.

Court delays were an issue for women, requiring they take significant time off work and having to relive the abuse regularly. One woman indicated her case was in the court system going on several years. Furthermore, this woman explained that women can be charged a fee from the court if they later decide to drop the charges, regardless if her dropping the charges is

due to the court taking years to process their case, improper treatment of the survivor within the court system, or the survivor's inability to take further time off work to attend court dates. Participants also spoke about how perpetrators will threaten victims, forcing them to drop the case, potentially leading to the fine described, while also making the victim more vulnerable to continued abuse. Partner retaliation was thought to happen once the victim dropped the court case, at which point the victim was usually met with disinterest from the court system moving forward. Her dropping of the case and return to her abusive partner allowed the court to label her as a lost cause.

Another woman mentioned that bail was granted and met too easily, even in the case of murder or severe injury to another person. She mentioned that there have been a few cases where men will get out on bail after being arrested for murder, and then they commit another murder while they are out of custody.

In describing being brutally attacked in her own home, tied up, and set on fire, one woman explained:

> *So, every time I go to court it's a lot of butterflies going through my belly, a lot of things going through my head, because we don't know at what point in time that the judge would give bail. And the way how he reacted I tell them to me he's not finished, not the way how he reacting, he is not finished (sic)…When it reach the court system…it was questioned by a particular judge like 'What is this charge?" Because obviously the police have to charge and they gave the incident a burglary charge…Yeah, they put it [as] burglary, but when it went to the High Court, the judge was like 'What charge is this? This is not seen in the documents, the medical reports from the doctors and everything. This is not burglary.'* – Participant 4

While this judge recognized the shortcoming of the police and fought to ensure this was not prosecuted as a burglary, the court case was still up against timelines for how long they could hold the perpetrator; he was likely to be granted bail. Because the investigation had to be repeated with the *appropriate* charge, there was a significant lag in the court case.

Other participants also noted positive experiences with judges, but not all participants. Additionally, positive experiences with judges did not override the lengthy, convoluted, and patriarchal court system they were up against. Laws and policies in Barbados still serve to disadvantage women, especially regarding domestic violence and spousal rape. Many women found that once their case was understood by the court as existing within a romantic relationship, the remnants of the outdated policies around spousal rape and assault began to creep their way into the proceedings.

Two different women explained that they were later charged for the self-defense they used during violent encounters, demonstrating the court's elevation of male voices and protection of men's lives over women. Another woman told a story during which she felt the magistrate essentially gave her partner permission to kill her during his next assault. As the woman was in the court presenting her case, in front of the perpetrator, the magistrate trivialized the situation and made a comment about how she is lucky she is not in Trinidad because she likely would have been *killed* by her partner, rather than just injured. Making a mockery of her partner's attempts to hurt her and framing his violence against her as a pitiful effort, she felt, sent him the message that he could go on and try again, but harder next time.

At the community level, participants focused on the normalization of violence, within and beyond systems, as contributors to GBV that allowed for the persistent and continued presence of violence. Beyond these contributors, participants also described a few mechanisms by which

these contributors were sustained. These mechanisms included the small community dynamic across Barbados, as well as the lacking visibility and services available to survivors. Both sustainability mechanisms are described next.

Small community dynamic. Barbados was frequently described as a small island; so small in fact that one participant described it as a place where everyone basically knows everyone. This small community dynamic allows for and sustains the normalization of violence against girls and women as well as the acceptance of it across the judicial systems. Participants described this small community dynamic as characterized by a culture of silence, the labeling of domestic violence as a private matter between a husband and wife, and a lack of community member intervention in the presence of GBV against women.

Culture of silence. A culture of silence, like many other emergent themes, is not unique to Barbados. Nonetheless, participants identified this as a mechanism that sustained the lacking and inappropriate police intervention. This culture of silence was described by participants as making it hard for women to disclose abuse to the police and set a tone or a norm that GBV is not something that *should be* disclosed or reported. Participants spoke about perpetrators being aware of this culture of silence and using this to their advantage, allowing for the continued abuse of women.

Private matter. GBV was also discussed as being viewed culturally as a private matter that occurred between a husband and wife. Constructing GBV as a private matter contributed to GBV in three ways: First, many police officers endorsed this belief, sending a message that GBV would not be prosecuted. Second, religious leaders endorsed this belief and encouraged women to stay in abusive relationships as their wife duty. Third, community members endorsed this as a

way to justify their non-action or lack of intervention when they knew of or witnessed GBV happening. Regarding police endorsement of this belief, one woman explained:

> *…the police were called, and you know I said I didn't want to press charges. I just want him to know it's not okay for him to put his hand on me. They were like 'Oh, you know you should make up. Just give him a kiss.' And I'm like 'I have the prints of his fingers around my throat…'* – Participant 10

Multiple women also described religious leaders as contributing to GBV against women, both as perpetrators themselves, as well as through their support for perpetrators and their disregard for survivors. One woman described the incredible support she received from one pastor, but this was after her previous pastor had cast her out of their church community once she called the police on her abusive husband. Her pastor at the time, and he was supported by the church, rejected her and said she was no longer welcome in their community once she involved the police:

> *…because I called police, right, that was the non-Christian thing to do…A Christian shouldn't…we shouldn't…our situation should never get to the point where it involved the law…it was the wrong thing for a [married] Christian woman to do.* – Participant 8

Patriarchal religion as a sustainability mechanism for GBV against women, specifically regarding support for the perpetrator and rejection of the woman, most significantly if she involves police, was mentioned by at least four participants.

Finally, the endorsement of GBV as a private matter by community members was used to justify their inaction while witnessing GBV. Participants reiterated that community member endorsement of GBV as a private matter made it easy for people to ignore, explaining it away as a small issue between a husband and wife. This was reflected in the police approach such that

male friends, like male officers, rarely take a stand against violence perpetrated by another man, but instead would engage in the following behavior:

> *It is not a case where he is telling him not to treat the lady like…most of the times [they may] say 'man, cool you head, don't get yourself in trouble for she.' So, it's not a case where they say 'Man you wrong, you had no right putting your hand…'* – Participant 23

Last, Barbados' small community dynamic was also discussed as challenging in that the 'everyone knows everyone' mentality makes it so perpetrators are usually protected by *someone; w*hether they have a family member in the police force or are friends with a judge. This too helped sustain the community level factors previously mentioned.

Finally, the lacking visibility and accessibility of services was identified as a sustainability mechanism at the community level as well. Participants agreed that more services were needed to better address GBV happening across communities and noted this lack of services as something that allowed GBV to continue. Without appropriate services for women experiencing GBV, participants noted it was nearly impossible for victims to exit abusive situations. Furthermore, many participants spoke about a lack of confidentiality on the island and how this made service seeking a challenge, if not a complete deterrent to accessing support; be that from police, social services, or health services. Participants discussed that their situation was not going to be kept confidential and therefore tended to disengage from most help seeking opportunities. The lack of services, coupled with the lack of confidentiality across existing services was noted as a contributor to continued GBV against women, sustaining the community level factors that were identified by participants.

Societal level. It should first be noted that the preceding ecological levels were all impacted by the societal level. In referencing back to the ecological model, the nesting of levels

becomes particularly important. The individual, interpersonal, and community levels are all influenced by subsequent levels in the ecological model. As such, many of the previous themes are deeply influenced by factors at the societal level. For instance, male partner power or control over a female partner would be societally informed, even though it was discussed as a sustaining mechanism at the interpersonal, intimate partnership level.

Two major themes at the societal level emerged as contributing to GBV against women in Barbados, including the impact of the historical enslavement of individuals and families and traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society. The latter theme will be discussed primarily through the socialization of men, toxic masculinity, and societal disregard or lacking support for women.

Impact of the historical enslavement of individuals and families. Four participants mentioned the impact of the enslavement of individuals and families as a contributor to current day GBV against women. One woman related this back to the forced complacency of enslaved individuals and how that impacted the family unit:

> *Okay, bus fares are going up, they [Bajans] would rather call in [to the radio]…and murmur and complain, but they are not actually going to say 'Alright, you know we are going to do something about it…' not proactive, we are not, and they said that actually comes from the fact that we were, our ancestors were …slaves, and how slaves learn to blend in and not make any noise…So that also, um, permeated the family unit and gave birth or allowed abuse to happen.* – Participant 10

Other women explained:

> *I know it doesn't justify what he did, but it certainly was in him. So, I think it stems from…a cultural mindset…which could even date back from slavery as well within the*

Caribbean. So, slaves were…beaten. That was another form of discipline and control. So, then it's kind of like in your DNA almost, it's passed from generation to generation. – Participant 2

Because when there was slavery…they would separate the families…They would just break families apart. Yes, during slavery…black people were slaves, but part of it interfered with the…family structure in the Caribbean. – Participant 11

This woman mentioned this forced destruction of the Caribbean family unit as connected to the regional trend of single female headed households; single women as head of their household, she felt, were vulnerable to GBV given the nature of visiting intimate partnerships with men.

Another woman described GBV against women in the Afro-Caribbean Bajan community as being contextually different from GBV in the white Bajan community. This woman described this contextual difference as related to the historical oppression of Afro-Caribbean people and communities on the island, and how that has translated to economic disadvantage across races. She continued to explain that the current state of the economy and the government in Barbados served to perpetuate this disparity. This, she felt, was going to contribute to more crime, more abuse, and feed the economic vulnerability indicators discussed at earlier levels of the ecological model while specifically disenfranchising the Afro-Caribbean Bajan community.

Traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society. The socialization among men within a heteronormative society was identified by participants as a contributor to initial experiences of GBV as well as continued experiences of GBV. This theme was discussed in two, seemingly opposing ways. Participants spoke about the strong influence of men on their peers, as well as the power structure within groups of men, such that there tends to be a dominant man,

and the other men are expected to follow suit in terms of his behaviors and beliefs; making sure not to cause disruptions in this power structure. However, participants also spoke about a consistent sense of competition among men, which seems to go against the constant order previously described. This competition among men, according to some participants, was even said to lead to domestic violence homicide in some cases. One woman explained:

> *Like he would go out and have sex with women, come home, and he would tell me that he just went out. I was like, 'Where you was?' 'I went fucking, where else?'…Then I wouldn't want to have sex with him and then he would force me to. He would force me. He would force it. And if I don't want to, he would cuff me right here in my stomach…or he would beat me. The last beating I got from him, it was over somebody messaging me on Facebook and he was on my laptop, on my Facebook account…Somebody messaged me and said, 'Hey pretty face'…that beating was…honestly I cannot remember…I know when I wake up I was…in emergency because he beat me to the core.* – Participant 15

This participant's narrative articulates so well not only the double standard where men are permitted to have multiple sexual partners, while women are expected to remain monogamous, but also the confrontation of this double standard as an immediate precursor to an abusive episode within an intimate relationship. Furthermore, this quote illustrates the severe competition among, and the sense of ownership of women by, men as a clear contributor to her partner's reactions and his violent behavior. Another woman explained:

> *…a woman would come home from work and say she tired, she ain't want [to] have sex. The man would [be] thinking now, she went [and have sex] with somebody and he…does get real angry and beat you and thing.* – Participant 9

Other women spoke about the general encouragement among, as well as pressure from, men to engage in abusive behaviors within intimate relationships. One participant explained:

> *Well, like say you in public, and you talk to he in a certain way and he friends would be like, 'That is how you got your girl talking to you fuh true?' So he now, he gon' want to react cause he gon' want mek it look…like, 'Well she can't talk to me so all the time, how come she want talk to me so now?' He guh want show off with he friends…He will want slap she in the face because he friends seh, 'That's how you got she talking to you? You soft.' So, he ain't want feel that he soft, so he will want slap she in she face or whatever.* – Participant 18

Another woman explained:

> *It also has something to do with who you like…if you on the block with you fellas and they hear how you treating you girl good. They gon' holler, 'Oh, she got you whipped' or something so, and they gon' think, 'Well, if my boys telling me I treating she real good, and they don't really approve, well I should probably treat she lil rough or something so.' So, I kinda think those are some of the factors [contributing to violence against women].* – Participant 25

One participant explained further about the power structure within male friend groups, and how it directly translates to violence against women. She explained:

> *I don't know where it come up from cus' they usually don't even fight with [other] guys. I actually been in some situation like that where the fellas actually being soft, where other fellas gon come, start lil foolish thing, he ain't gon react. But let me do something now, I get a whole reaction. Like, where this come from?* – Participant 28

This woman noted the violence perpetrated by her partner was seeming to be in reaction to the forced submissive role he had to play among his group of male friends. He did not have the alpha position in that setting, so he made sure to forcefully and violently demand it in his shared setting with his girlfriend. Continuing, another woman explained:

> *He's do jail nuff so it's kind of like when he goes to jail, that's when he friends would [say] that is foolishness, but, but they wouldn't say it in front of him…Because he like, he like the upper person to them too, he like the ruler.*

Many participants spoke about rum shop culture, and the encouragement among men to "give she a slap" when their partners were not acting under their control. Participants also spoke about the fact that most men would not intervene or tell another man that what he is doing is wrong, when it comes to violence against women. At most, a man may say something to suggest to his friend that the woman is not worth getting in trouble for, but that would be the furthest they would extend their protest. One woman explained:

> *So, he was a very dominant alpha male so his, his friends wouldn't probably ever dare to [tell him to stop abusing me].* – Participant 2

Another woman echoed this peer support among men for GBV, as well as the maintenance of power structures among men:

> *The male friend does not want to say to his friends that he is wrong to lose the friendship between the two of them. Because, obviously you telling another man that he is wrong [is] going to put something between there, even although he is wrong. The reality is people don't like to be told they are wrong by their own friends so you'd find that he would prefer to condone his behavior than to tell him that 'Well, you know this was something that was extremely wrong.'* – Participant 23

This was later explained as setting a tone within social networks that violence against women is not only accepted among men, but it is also *expected*:

> *I don't know if it's to prove to their friends that you know, that is power or that's being something cool to do...* – Participant 7

This encouragement or maintenance of the power structure among men was even observed within the police force. Women often discussed how male police officers rarely told the perpetrator what he was doing was wrong, rather they would approach it by determining the woman as not being worth it, or not worthy of getting in trouble over. Similarly, the competition among men was also replicated within the police force, such that:

> *...sometimes you go to the police station and the police themselves try to get a bit too personal with you. So, you're coming to report a situation and then it's like, 'Man, you can get rid of that man you deh with. I is a good man here.' So, it switch from what I originally come for...you now in your personal ego and obviously if one woman has encountered it, she would tell her friends and then obviously women will say, 'I ain't going to the police station because when you go to them it's like they want you number, they want to get involved with you.'* – Participant 23

This participant related this type of situation *directly* to domestic violence homicide in that the socialization among men and male officers is a complete turn off for women wanting to report abuse to the police. This was a direct contributor to continued abuse and the loss of life among women.

There was a great deal of conversation about how women were not permitted to have friendships with men, endorsing the concept in a heteronormative culture that male and female relationships are for male servitude. Many of the women explained that, regardless of the

friendship she had with a man, a platonic male/female relationship did not exist within her abusive partner's reality. In one situation a participant spoke about a case she had heard of where one man killed another man because his female partner had been friendly with him. One participant went as far to say:

> *Toxic masculinity, you know, it's very rife here…So the boys think it's okay, you know, to be kind of that way. They think it's cool…so we need to kind of deal with that as well. –* Participant 2

To conclude this theme, it is important to end with the following participant narrative. This woman explained a situation wherein she sees a friend/acquaintance regularly at the bus stop. One morning he walked up to her and pulled her hair:

> *And I am like…'You don't pay for my hairstyle so why are you grabbing it?' And…he got really offensive and angry. He said he would not make sport [joke around with] with me again. I was like, 'Okay, but in the end all I was saying is that when you pull my hair, you don't pay for it, one. And then, when you pull it and you go along, I have a headache. So, I am the one suffering, because if you pull it, I have to go and pay to get it over. Which you are not gonna give me the money. And then when I have a headache, I gotta go and buy tablets or Panadols, or whatever…' So, he was really, really angry. And…he said, 'When you see me, just don't speak to me again.' I was like, 'Huh' So, I was supposed to just let him pull my hair? And…then he walk along and leave me with a headache? –* Participant 29

This participant continued to explain the general mentality of men that, if they know you casually, they feel entitled to your body and space:

Even if they ain't know you sometimes, but most of the times [they think] they can come and do all sorts of things to you. Sometimes they ask you for a hug, next thing you know their hand all over your bottom, rubbing it…And if you push them away, it's a problem. – Participant 29

Continuing, this participant explained her thoughts behind this male entitlement she was describing in her narrative:

He may like you or may just wanna have sex with you and you are not allowing him…So, because of that he kind of get aggressive because he tells himself he been waiting too long [and that you] must say 'Yes' because you know them and according to them, they been waiting long…They never tell themself that maybe the reason they didn't get through [with having sex with you] is because you can't deal with the harassment that they are giving…So instead of that, most of them get aggressive, they curse, they carry on. Sometimes they even chuck you, they hit you. – Participant 29

This severe level of male entitlement permeated across all ecological levels explored throughout this study and is symptomatic of the power dynamics inherent in a heteronormative society. Other symptoms of a heteronormative society that were discussed by participants as contributors to GBV against women included the declining economy as being more dangerous for women, the gender pay gap, and the fact that men were offered employment opportunities more often than women because employers "…they think, like, you know a woman does get she menstrual period. Right, so they're saying that could get used as an excuse every month…" (Participant 16). One woman explained:

They're [women] trapped because of the economic deprivation that goes on within the social system. The social system in Barbados fails women. There's not enough done to

help vulnerable people, so every situation they're in, they're stuck. They're absolutely stuck. So, a woman would put up with the blows because she got nowhere else to go. – Participant 2

The themes mentioned at the societal level are important to understand through their position within an ecologically reinforcing system of abuse that includes early or first experiences of GBV, as well as *continued* experiences of GBV. An initial model of this reinforcing system is provided in Figure 10 but requires additional research to better identify which mechanisms provide the greatest potential for effective prevention and intervention programs for Barbados. Figure 10 illustrates the relationships among themes that emerged across participant narratives, while providing context around the relationships across ecological levels.

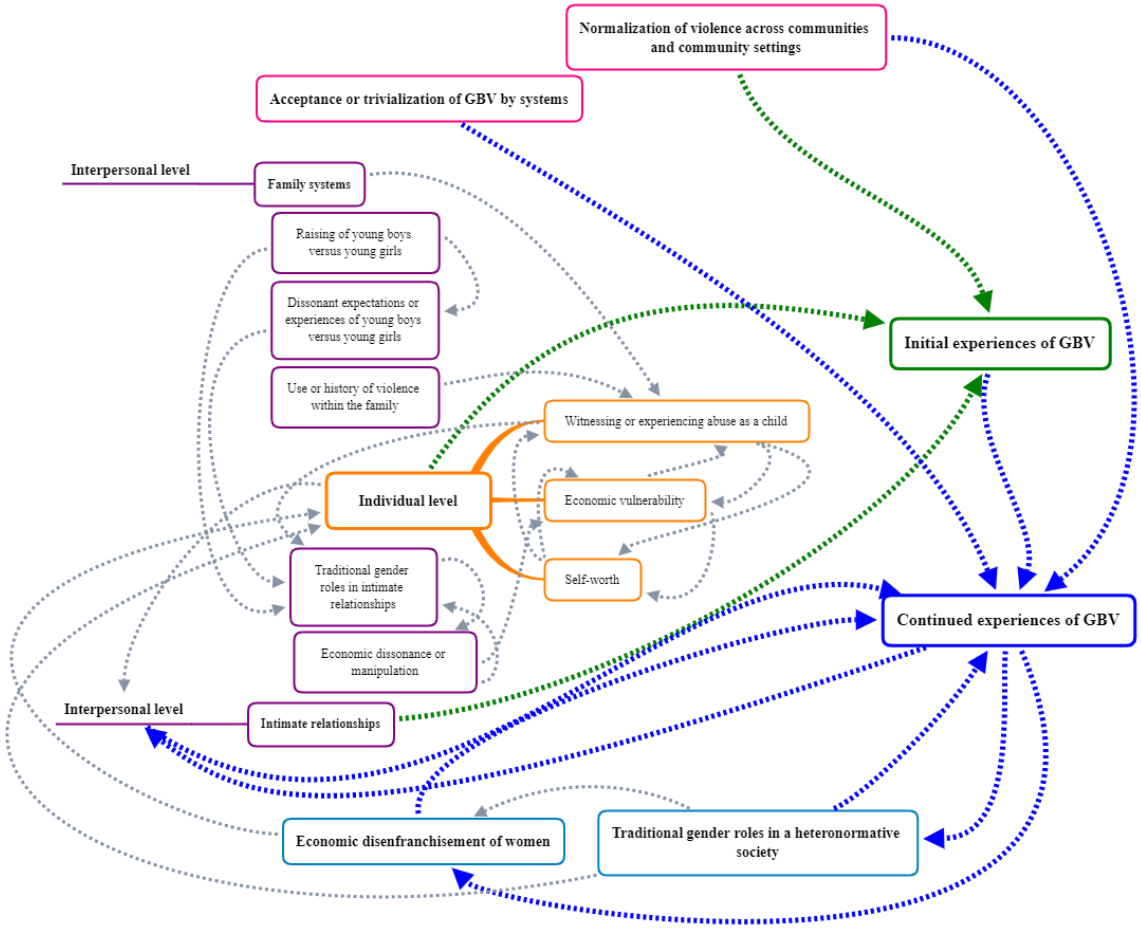

Figure 10. Ecologically reinforcing model of GBV against women in Barbados.

While the model is complicated, it intends to provide a look at the comprehensive set of relationships discussed across participants. To begin, it is important to recognize that participants mentioned contributors to initial experiences of GBV, as well as continued experiences of GBV. All major themes that contributed to initial experiences of GBV are marked by a dark green, dashed line. This includes all the individual level factors (in orange) included in the model, as well as the intimate relationship factors at the interpersonal level (in purple), and the normalization of violence across communities and community settings at the community level (in pink). Contributors to continued experiences of GBV are marked by blue, dashed lines, and include initial experiences of GBV, acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems and the normalization of violence across communities and community settings at the community level, as well as the economic disenfranchisement of women and traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society at the societal level (in teal). The economic disenfranchisement of women was not a direct code or theme that emerged from the cross-case results, rather it was added to this model, post-analysis, as it was a common thread throughout the study. Furthermore, continued experiences of GBV experiences were noted as further perpetuated by many of these same factors. For instance, traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society were noted as contributors to continued experiences of GBV, creating a reciprocal or cyclical relationship such that continued experiences of GBV also reinforce the traditional gender roles in a heteronormative culture.

As can be seen in the model, there are a great deal of relationships across ecological levels as well as themes embedded across levels. For example, individual level contributors (in orange) such as witnessing abuse as a child resulted from the family system factors (at the interpersonal level in purple), creating space for GBV experiences within a woman's life,

specifically within her intimate relationships (also at the interpersonal level, in purple). These outcomes were influenced and further exacerbated by the community level factors (in pink), as well as the societal level factors (in teal). The interactions of these factors and ecological levels should be further scrutinized to better understand which settings and variables require further research and manipulation for intervention development.

Within-Case Analysis

The cross-case themes and sub-themes illustrate commonalities across participants' experiences. The within-case analysis looks at the rich narratives of two survivors, while considering all the data collected and coded at their case node in NVivo (2015). This within-case analysis provides a look at the data from a different perspective, further highlighting the ecological levels and connections across levels within individual accounts. The same themes presented in the cross-case analysis will be utilized to elucidate the intersectionality within participant cases. Within-case analysis provides a deeper immersion in data from single narratives within the study. "Within-case analysis can also occur after cross-case comparison, as a means of identifying typographic linkages or theoretical propositions that have been suggested in the comparative analysis" (Wiebe, Durepos, & Mills, 2010, p. 971). The within-case analyses intend to reveal more information about the relationships across themes as presented in Figure 10.

These two participant cases were selected for various reasons, including overall reflection of the cross-case themes presented, and deep reflection of the interpersonal level themes presented given the weight carried by that ecological level compared to all others. Finally, the interview guide did not require participants speak about their personal experiences of GBV directly; however, some participants opted to do so. Such a tone also facilitated the selection for

within-case analysis, as a personal account indicated a more direct connection with the emergent interview themes.

Within-case analysis: Participant 4. The hierarchical coding chart of the emergent themes across Participant 4's interview is provided in Figure 11. Participant 4 was recruited from the shelter, her home parish was in the rural cluster, she is in the 30-34-year age group, and identifies as Barbadian, Afro-Caribbean, and heterosexual. Participant 4 indicated that she had completed secondary school and had never been married. An in-depth look at her narrative is provided.

Figure 11. Participant 4 hierarchical coding chart.

At the individual level, Participant 4 focused on concepts of financial vulnerability. She described a great deal of family issues that she determined as the sole factor for not turning to her family as a safety net while she was experiencing abuse. Participant 4 had been in a relationship with her partner for an extended number of years, and it was throughout those years that her

partner learned that regardless of his treatment of her, she had nowhere to go because she could not return home, nor did she have the financial freedom to move her and the children elsewhere. These individual level factors created an opportunity for GBV to initially emerge within the relationship. Furthermore, Participant 4 explained that, due to her family experiences growing up, she had a deep commitment to keeping her own family together; her pledge to keep her family intact was something her partner used against her. He knew she was deeply dedicated to providing that setting for her children, more so than she was to exiting their relationship, no matter how brutal his treatment. Furthermore, Participant 4 noted that, growing up, her partner witnessed his father's abusive treatment towards his mother.

Participant 4 described initial experiences of GBV resulting from her partner's severe need to exercise power and control within the household. Upon realizing she had nowhere to turn, her partner also recognized that he had created a setting where he could continue with his abusive treatment. Participant 4 characterized initial experiences of GBV by partner alcohol use as well, all of which became further complicated and perpetuated by his affiliation with the police force. Participant 4's previous calls and reports to the police were not taken seriously because of officer familiarity with her partner, and even after he was dismissed from the force, which was at least partially due to his alcohol use and aggression, her reports were still dismissed because there remained a closeness between her partner and his fellow officers. This informal officer agreement became even more destructive when her partner eventually started making false cases against her in order to get ahead of any court cases to come.

After successfully separating from her partner, Participant 4 described the night he broke into their house and brutally attacked her, with an accomplice, to the point of near death. Participant 4 described his breaking and entering into the family home on a night when the

children were staying with another family member. He proceeded to attack her, tie her up with the help of a friend, and beat her so severely with a weapon that she felt she was able to get away with playing dead. Immobile, terrified, and near death, she began smelling a familiar scent of aerosol insecticide. Both attackers filled her bedroom with this insecticide and started a fire. Immediately after they fled the scene, Participant 4 escaped. Upon reporting to the police office after this near fatal attack, the officer with whom she had made previous reports stood up and exited the station immediately after he recognized the severity of her injuries. Participant 4 was eventually assigned other officers who were instrumental in her case once it was introduced to the court system but indicated that the police force protection of the perpetrator was responsible for the extreme, severe, and brutal attempt on her life. This case was initially charged by the police as an aggravated burglary. However, once at the High Court, all the evidence was reviewed and re-evaluated. Participant 4, however, noted that the trivialization of GBV within systems in Barbados have left her feeling continuously worried while the court proceedings take place. She has little hope that she will be completely protected from the perpetrator in the future. As highlighted in the cross-case analysis, Participant 4 explained:

> *So, every time I go to court it's a lot of butterflies going through my belly, a lot of things going through my head, because we don't know at what point in time that the judge would give bail. And the way how he reacted I tell them to me he's not finished, not the way how he reacting, he is not finished (sic).* – Participant 4

Overall, Participant 4 focused mostly on the interpersonal and community levels. Alcohol use, family history of partner abuse, lacking financial freedom to leave an abusive relationship, and the police system failing survivors were the main system elements that contributed to her experiences of GBV.

Within-case analysis: Participant 6. The hierarchical coding chart of the emergent themes across Participant 6's interview is provided in Figure 12. Participant 6 was recruited from the shelter, her home parish was in the urban cluster, she is in the 18-24-year age group, and identifies as Barbadian, Afro-Caribbean, and heterosexual. Participant 6 indicated that she had completed primary school and had never been married.

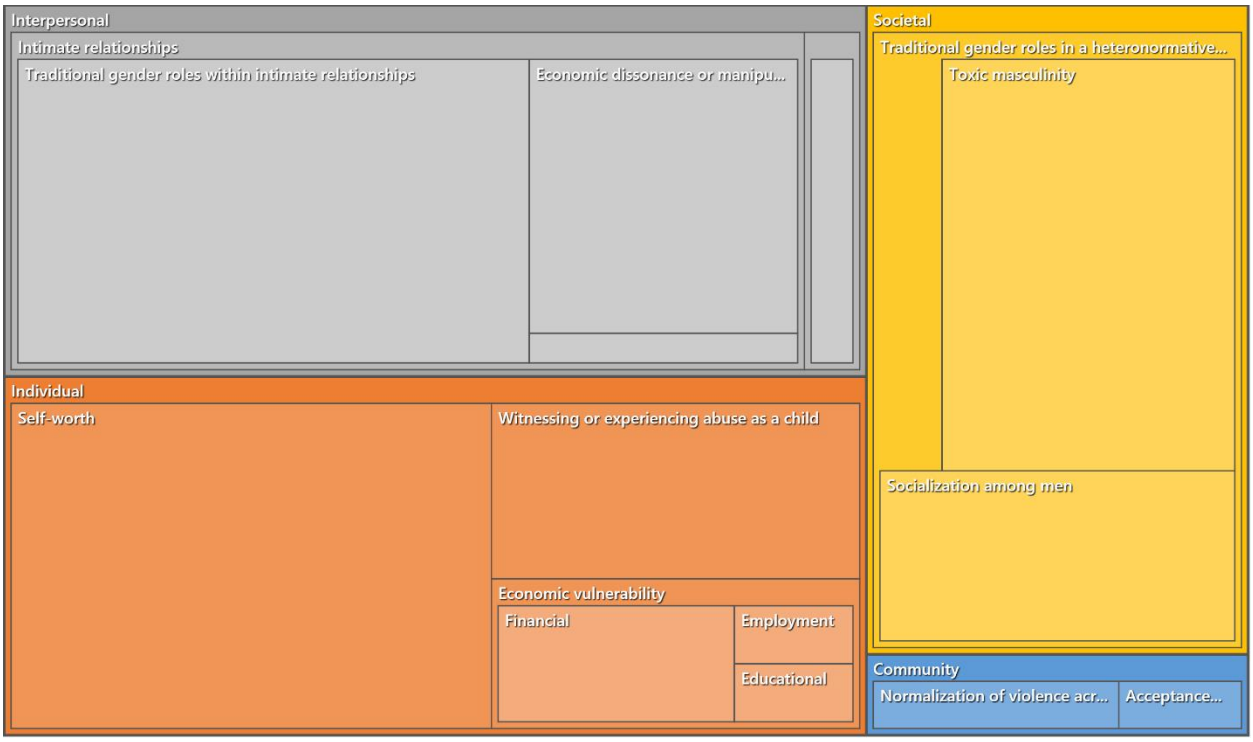

Figure 12. Participant 6 hierarchical coding chart.

At the individual level, Participant 6 focused a great deal on economic vulnerability, specifically noting the tangible barriers that trapped her in an abusive relationship. Participant 6 also noted, like Participant 4, that her abusive partner exerted severe control over her, taking advantage of her commitment to keep her family unit together, ensuring her children had both a mother and a father within the household. Initial experiences of GBV were noted as being connected to her partner's control over all elements of her life. Violent episodes were often characterized by, for instance, her partner giving her permission to leave the house, then

changing his mind. Participant 6 also noted that whenever her phone received a call or a notification, violence would ensue as her partner assumed she was talking to other men. Nonetheless, she explained she had to stay because she had children with him and was not working at the time.

Within the relationship, Participant 6 also noted that her partner took control of their finances, even of her own money. There was also a significant age gap between her and her partner, which she noted as a major contributor to the abuse. This was often characterized as patronizing language and treatment with the intent of making her feel like a child with diminished capacities. Participant 6 related all these experiences back to the fact that her own mother was abused by her father. She explained that the weight of intergenerational abuse, constant head injuries, and the exhaustion of having children involved in the abusive relationship left her even more vulnerable to continued abuse. This weight of intergenerational abuse was noted not only from her family and her witnessing the abuse suffered by her mother, but also the childhood issues experienced by her partner, and his lack of prioritization of dealing with those issues.

Participant 6 went on to describe a hypothetical situation wherein a man may sell his girlfriend to his friends under the guise of her making money and becoming independent. In this hypothetical situation, Participant 6 explained that the money the woman made from this forced prostitution would be stolen by the man who forced her into such situations. She described this hypothetical situation with phrases that could only be categorized as repeated sexual assault and rape. This abusive treatment continued and intensified (kidnapping, physical abuse) when the woman who was being forced into prostitution refused to participate. It is unclear if Participant 6

was the victim of this forced prostitution by her partner; however, she did make strong connections across this hypothetical situation and experiences she had with her partner.

Overall, Participant 6 noted financial insecurity at the individual level combined with a family history of violence and a significant age discordance with her partner as the main contributors to GBV. She also described severe forced prostitution, sexual assault, and rape as a tactic used by abusive partners to gain further control and to manipulate the woman's financial freedoms, preventing her from exiting the relationship, and sustaining the cycle further.

Additional Context

Throughout the analyses, two other considerations emerged which yielded additional visualization opportunities. Figure 13 provides thematic coding by age group, and Table 3 illustrates thematic learnings across parishes. Because the study was overly represented by women under the age of 40, it was important to consider if different themes were emerging from these two groups (18-39 years old and 40 years and older) within the sample. A quick look at the top used codes in NVivo (2015) across these two groups shows a fair amount of similarity, with just a couple of differences.

Both age groups felt that interpersonal factors at the family system level such as the raising of young boys versus young girls, as well as economic dissonance or manipulation within the intimate relationship level, were contributing to GBV against women in Barbados. Furthermore, there was agreement that traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society at the societal level were also contributing to GBV against women. However, within the 18-39 years group, traditional gender roles within intimate relationships at the interpersonal level were referenced a great deal, while for the 40 years and older group, the family protection of men was most frequently referenced.

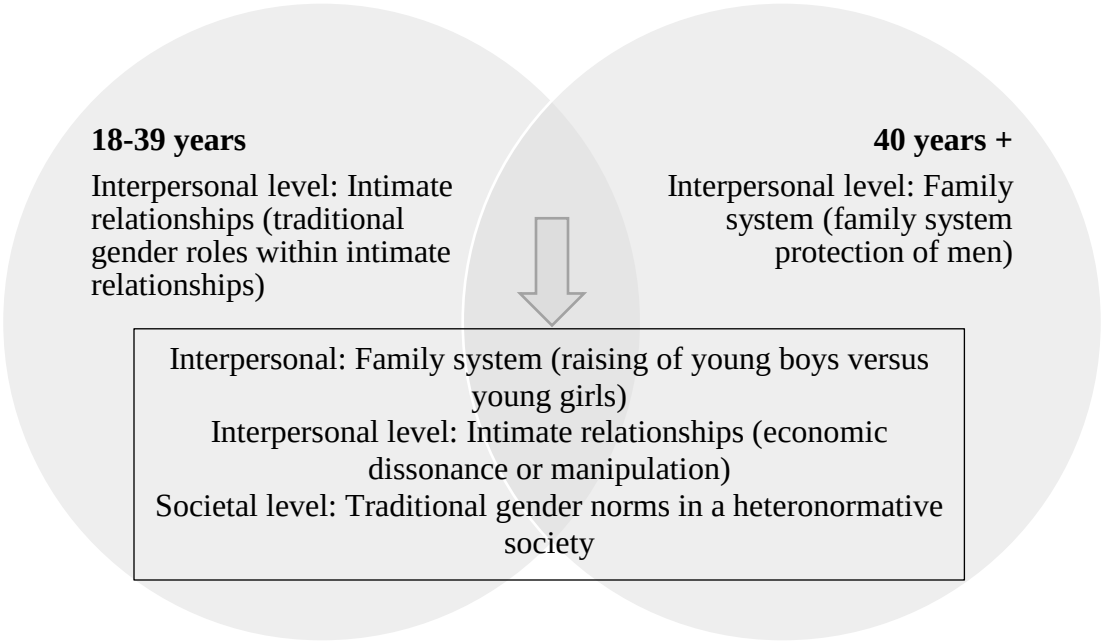

Figure 13. Visualization of unique findings by age group.

Across the 11 parishes of Barbados there was also a great deal of agreement around the contributors to GBV against women. Figure 14 shows a map of Barbados, with a circle over each parish, the size of which represents the parish presence in the final sample. The table that follows (Table 3) shows the exact number of participants from each. The parishes of Saint Thomas and Saint Joseph are not represented on the map or the table as no participants identified either of these two parishes as their parish of residence. It should also be noted that this map does not intend to provide any generalizations about parish data, especially considering some parishes only had one or two participants in the sample.

While the size of the circle over each parish represents the number of participants in the study, the color of the circle represents the ecological level most commonly endorsed. Table 3 demonstrates the specific code within that ecological level that played the most significant role in each parish's data. As can be seen, the interpersonal level (grey circles) was most commonly endorsed across parishes, followed by the community (in blue), and the societal level (in yellow).

As mentioned previously, the qualitative foundation and small sample size of this study cannot generalize to any level. Furthermore, the small size of the island, the close proximity of communities across parishes, and the fluid movement of people across the island makes parish specific generalizations even more impossible. However, Figure 14 was included to simply begin the conversation about trends across the island. Anecdotally speaking, Bajans *do* look at parishes as being different from one another. While these differences were not present in the data from survivors around their perceptions of GBV, many Bajans do consider the parish of Saint James, for instance, as being substantively different from, say, Saint Lucy (M. Burnham, personal communication, February 4, 2019).

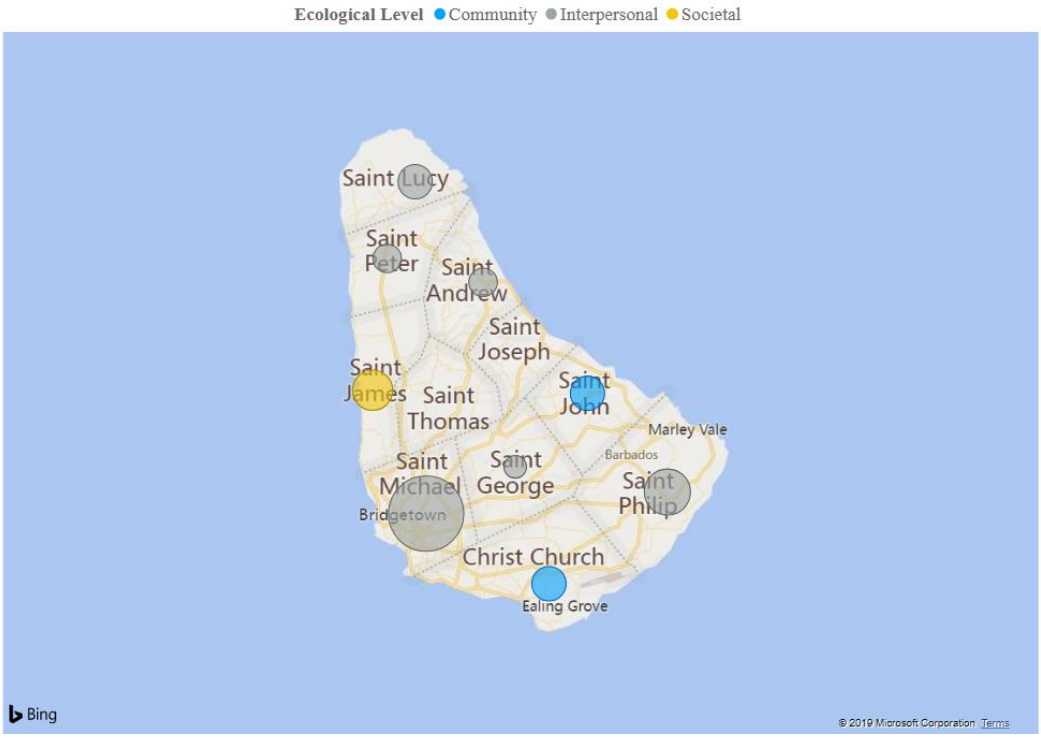

Figure 14. Map of Barbados and sample contribution.

Table 3. Parish by Participants in Sample and Top Code Endorsed		
Parish	Participants	Top Code
Christ Church	3	Nodes\\Community\Normalization of violence across communities and community settings
Saint Philip	5	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Family system\Raising of young boys versus young girls
Saint Michael	10	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Intimate relationships\Traditional gender roles within intimate relationships
Saint George	1	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Intimate relationships\Economic dissonance or manipulation\Financial
Saint John	3	Nodes\\Community\Acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems\Policies, protocols, and the court system
Saint James	4	Nodes\\Societal\Traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society\Toxic masculinity
Saint Thomas	0	N/A
Saint Joseph	0	N/A
Saint Peter	2	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Family system\Raising of young boys versus young girls
Saint Andrew	2	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Intimate relationships\Traditional gender roles within intimate relationships
Saint Lucy	3	Nodes\\Interpersonal\Intimate relationships\Traditional gender roles within intimate relationships

DISCUSSION

This study was pursued to better understand how survivors in Barbados perceive risk factors for GBV so as to align or tailor intervention efforts with survivor perceptions in mind. Overall, participants' perceptions aligned with empirical evidence both globally (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002) and regionally (DeShong, 2011, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Across interviews it was agreed that women were not deserving of abuse. Rather, violence against women was noted as a cultural issue that emerged across various levels of the ecological model and women's lived realities in Barbados. Participants spent a great deal of time talking about traditional gender roles, traversing levels of the ecological model. In fact, traditional gender roles materialized at all four of the ecological levels discussed, whether in relation to the witnessing of abuse against one's mother (individual level), as a result of shifting household duties (interpersonal level), as endorsed by police officers (community level), or as supported by court protocols (societal level). Given the presence of traditional gender roles in the data, it is important to return to the concept of hegemonic masculinity discussed in the literature review.

Hegemonic masculinities are an important concept to contextualize the results of the current study. At this point it is important to refer to a previously referenced scholarly quote. As reflected in the data, as well as the work by Reddock and colleagues (2004), the socialization among men is a crucial component of hegemonic masculinities. Reddock (2004) explains:

> So far the discourse has highlighted the conflict with other men, which often takes place through the bodies of women. The female, often depersonalized, may be the ground, the territory over or upon which fierce battles are fought, but increasingly as women challenge accepted notions of masculinity and enter spaces perceived as male preserves, the battle also becomes one directly against them. (p. xxx)

No other quote in the scholarly literature better captures the results of this study. The concept of "fierce battles" territorially being fought "over or upon" women reflects a great deal of relevancy for the current study. From one participant describing an incident of one man murdering another because he was friendly with his female partner, to this participant quote referenced earlier:

> *I don't know where it come up from cus' they usually don't even fight with [other] guys. I actually been in some situation like that where the fella's actually being soft, where other fella's gon come, start lil foolish thing, he ain't gon react. But let me do something now, I get a whole reaction. Like, where this come from?* – Participant 28

Women, and their bodies, were frequently discussed as a setting over which violent battles were fought, not only from a territorial or ownership positionality, but also as a disposable setting. For this reason, the concept of hegemonic masculinities will be a major focus of this discussion. *Caribbean* hegemonic masculinities, discussed earlier, are characterized by entitlement and hyper, if not aggressive, heterosexuality, having emerged as a reflection of *and reaction* to dominant and inhumane masculinities that drove the enslavement of Afro-Caribbean people (Beckles, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004). The diversity of Caribbean masculinities, informed by hegemonic masculinities (Beckles, 2004; P. Mohammed, 2004; Nurse, 2004; Reddock, 2004) needs to be considered explicitly in its relation to Caribbean hegemonic femininity. Furthermore, research needs to be examined through the lens of historically informed, Caribbean hegemonic masculinities as problematizing and further complicating variables, such as economic and financial stability, rather than presenting an argument of unaligned research and confounding variables.

It is also important to consider how survivors' perceived contributors align with the current empirical evidence around risk and protective factors for GBV against women. Jewkes (2002) notes "Poverty and associated stress are key contributors to intimate partner violence. Although violence occurs in all socioeconomic groups…" (Jewkes, 2002, p. 1424). Continuing, Jewkes (2002) explains:

> Violence against women becomes a social norm in which men are violent towards women they can no longer control or economically support. Violence against women is thus seen not just as an expression of male powerfulness and dominance over women, but also as being rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unattainable because of factors such as poverty experienced by men. Male identity is associated with experiences of power. Challenges to the exercise of power by men can be perceived by them as threats to their masculine identity. An inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood can trigger a crisis of male identity. Violence against women is a means of resolving this crisis because it allows expression of power that is otherwise denied. Associations between intimate partner violence and situations in which husbands have lower status or fewer resources than their wives may also be substantially meditated through ideas of successful manhood and crises of male identity (p. 1424)

Across ecological levels, a great deal of research has documented variables and risk factors that align with the perceived contributors identified by study participants. This includes witnessing and experiencing violence during childhood, alcohol use by a male partner, educational attainment among women, economic power/empowerment among women, economic opportunities for women, lacking familial and legal support for survivors, as well as male

entitlement and traditional gender norms within relationships and heteronormative societies (Jewkes, 2002). Overall, participants' perceptions of contributors to GBV align with the global, as well as regional, data regarding risk factors for women (DeShong, 2011; DeShong & Haynes, 2015; Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002).

It should be noted that the witnessing or experiencing of violence as a child was noted as a contributor to violence against women, both in terms of experiencing GBV as an adult, as well as perpetrating GBV as an adult (for young men). While this risk factor has been identified at the individual level across the literature (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002), participants did not endorse the biological or prenatal concepts of violence as inherent among young men (Golding & Fitzgerald, 2018) so much as they endorsed the learned, intergenerational nature of violence, specifically within family systems. Only one participant noted that she felt her ex-partner had violence in his "DNA," but she quickly related this back to the history of enslavement in the Caribbean, as well as her partner's witnessing of abuse against his mother.

Specific to this study, it is important to untangle some of the regional data on economic vulnerability and GBV against women. Gage (2005) found a positive association for *all forms of intimate partner violence* and female-dominated financial decision making. However, male-dominated decision making, as well as neighborhood poverty and male unemployment, were found as *risk* factors for sexual violence specifically; women's economic independence functioned as a protective factor against emotional and physical violence (Gage, 2005). These findings are further complicated by female headship rates and risk of sexual violence (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006).

Further studies are necessary to adequately understand the complex relationship between women's economic empowerment and GBV. This has been articulated well by Schuler and

Nazneen (2019) throughout their research with Bangladeshi women. Schuler and Nazneen (2019) explain:

> Although the role of gender inequality in fostering intimate partner violence (IPV) is well documented, studies examining the relationship between women's empowerment and IPV provide mixed evidence as to whether IPV decreases as gender norms become more equitable; many recent studies have documented a positive relationship rather than the negative relationship that one might expect. (p. 2)

More research is needed given that economic and financial stability present as both risk and protective factors for GBV across the literature (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002) as well as this study. This is a finding that has been replicated across research endeavors, as can be seen in the aforementioned quote (Schuler & Nazneen, 2019), and remains relevant within the Caribbean (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Gage and Hutchinson (2006) explain:

> The effects of female education will be two-fold. Higher levels of female education will increase economic opportunities and earnings potential, reduce dependency on husbands, and make women more economically viable in the household, thereby reducing the likelihood of sexual violence. On the other hand, women's completion of more years of schooling than their husbands will have the opposite effect, threatening traditional power relationships within the household, and increasing the likelihood of sexual violence. (p. 14)

Multiple participants articulated this contradiction, noting that, while finances are at the foundation of violence against women, economic stability alone does not protect a woman from GBV. In fact, many women commented on how financial stability jeopardized their safety.

Study Limitations

Methodological limitations need to be considered alongside the data and interpretations. Given the nature of qualitative research, the results are not generalizable. Recruitment strategies could have been more diversified, potentially utilizing household interview methods. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing the year in which participants experienced GBV; therefore, participant perceptions of and experiences with the police force (and the FCU) need further contextualization. This same limitation applies to other elements of the data collected. Finally, this study would have benefitted from a mixed-methods design, potentially utilizing census data, to supplement participant narratives. Nonetheless, given the dearth of GBV field research in the region, specifically in Barbados, this explorative, qualitative research was an important starting point in determining how survivors perceive risk factors for GBV.

Recruitment occurred primarily through the women's shelter and four polyclinics. The women's shelter assisted in recruiting past and current clients, all of whom would likely have participated in the organization's classes, support groups, or events. One limitation is that shelter participants' perceived contributors may have been heavily influenced by the programming they received while a resident at the shelter. The polyclinics (across two urban and two rural parishes) provided opportunity for diversity beyond the shelter community and helped to maintain a balance of participants across parishes. However, considering household interview methods in the future may provide an even better approach to recruitment and sample diversity. Additionally, the sample was relatively homogenous in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, highest level of education completed, and age. Most of the women fell within an under 40-years age group, identified as black or Afro-Caribbean and heterosexual, and had completed education levels beyond secondary school. While these characteristics are reflected in

the total population as documented by the census data (2017), a greater representation of non-majority communities is important in future studies.

Another limitation is that year or time of GBV was not a collected data point for this study. Such information may be important to consider, however, given that the time of assault may impact a survivor's perception of contributors to GBV. As mentioned in earlier sections, the FCU began their work in 2013. Therefore, participant narratives that focused on police intervention are influenced by their interaction with officers either before or after the start of this specialized unit. Along these same lines, 2016 marks two significant legislative changes related to domestic violence. Future research incorporating life history methods or quantitative methods focused on police or court interaction may help clarify relationships and perceived risk factors further.

Finally, qualitative methods alone provide only a limited understanding of participants' perceptions around contributors to GBV. A narrow lens for a topic as complex as ecological contributors to violence against women provides an equally narrow understanding of the subject. Multiple meetings with each participant could be considered to broaden the level of understanding of GBV from survivors' perspectives. Many participants expressed gratitude at the end of the interview, identifying it as one of the only times they have been able to speak about their experiences in a nonjudgmental setting. Some women described the interview as their *first* opportunity to speak about it at all. Providing survivors with multiple, staged interviews to continue to articulate their thoughts around the contributors to GBV, as opposed to facilitating that within one, single (potentially participants' first) opportunity to do so, may alleviate pressure and create space for further data to emerge. Coupling this approach with quantitative data at both

the individual and community level would provide an even more comprehensive understanding of GBV against women in Barbados.

Future Research Directions

The results of this study have contributed to the mobilization of GBV research and outreach efforts on the island. However, a great deal more research is needed in order to effectively identify mechanisms that contribute to, and sustain, GBV against women. Expanding this research locally, as well as regionally, is critical.

First, data on GBV in the Caribbean has been labeled as contradictory across studies (Gopaul & Cain, 1996), when in actuality studies may simply be lacking the contextual framework for a better understanding of the rich diversity in the region. Regarding *interpersonal* violence, Mason and Satchell (2016) explained "An ecological approach seems more productive in view of the contradictory findings observed when any singular class or theory…is used to explain violence" (p. 216). Moving forward, a mixed-methods approach is required to contribute to a future comprehensive understanding of GBV against women as it is situated within the diversity *and history* of the Caribbean. Research should continue in the direction of unearthing the complex data on GBV against women in the Caribbean through ecological frameworks.

Many women also suggested expanding this research to better understand contributors to violence against women from a male (or perpetrator) perspective. A closer look at data convergence or divergence across these two data sets would be valuable. Two potential considerations include research with men in the prison system or focus groups with men at rum shops.

Similar research opportunities exist within the police force, specifically connected to the goals of the FCU. A mixed-methods approach using interview methods to better understand

police perceptions around the contributors to GBV and methods for effectively handling domestic and sexual violence cases, coupled with evaluation on the FCU and the incorporation of survivor outcome measures (crime statistics, household survey data) would be an ideal research design to move this work to the next stage.

Finally, economic dissonance within intimate relationships needs further research. This argument has been posited elsewhere in GBV research (Gage, 2005; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Schuler & Nazneen, 2019), given the complexity of economic empowerment and financial stability as both a risk and protective factor for violence against women. This finding was replicated across participant narratives in the current study and requires further attention. Participants described financial instability as a window through which GBV could enter, and remain in, one's lived reality. Research around closing this window and promoting economic empowerment among girls and women may contribute significantly to intervention development and lowering GBV rates.

Practice Implications

Beyond contribution to the regional research, there are significant implications for practice that need to be considered. Endorsed by participants, the establishment of what is being referred to as a GBV Response Team needs to be explored. Additionally, increased attention to police training and intervention development is crucial.

GBV response team. Sexual assault response teams (SARTs) are coordinated efforts aimed at connecting and improving victim support across healthcare/medical, legal, law enforcement, and social service entities. SARTs are a model used internationally and have demonstrated significant promise in system coordination and survivor outcomes (Greeson & Campbell, 2012). The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011) has published a

development guide for communities interested in establishing SARTs, outlining the crucial system components as well as the resources needed to establish this response method. Victim advocacy and support, in addition to service coordination, is a cornerstone of this community model (Greeson & Campbell, 2012), and while this is happening informally on the island, *targeted* coordination among the organizations and systems currently responding to GBV in Barbados would be a major benefit, and may also provide some relief to certain agencies that are currently overburdened, such as the FCU.

Participants identified this lack of coordination and spoke about the need for a "one stop shop" for survivors. Many women spoke indirectly about the need for advocacy and support, specifically in navigating the systems that are traditionally involved in the creation of SARTs as mentioned earlier. Early discussions for this response team began during the stakeholder engagement feedback meeting.

While a *GBV* response team may not be as specialized as a *sexual assault* response team, this would be a significant first step with the potential of creating more specialized response teams (e.g., one for domestic violence, one for sexual assault, etc.) in the future. This level of coordination was recently called on by the President of the National Organization of Women in Barbados, Marsha Hinds. In the past year, a domestic violence case that had surfaced amidst a child custody battle led to the untimely and horrific death of two children when their father locked them and himself in the house and ignited the home. This initiated a national conversation about the level of information that the public should have access to (reports had been made against the perpetrator in his place of employment in addition to his partner's account), as well as the lack of coordination across social service entities such as the Child Care Board and the Welfare Department (Hinds, 2019). Finally, the concept of confidentiality across services, which

emerged across multiple interviews, would be a center focus. The significant lack of confidentiality across medical, law/legal, and social services within this small island community was noted as having negative outcomes for survivor well-being.

The Family Conflict Unit. Participants also described the need for increased police training. The FCU has been referenced frequently throughout this dissertation. Their work has been never ending since they opened their doors in 2013. Station Sergeant Husbands has dedicated her career to addressing GBV ethically, effectively, and intensely within the Barbados Police Force. Her mission, and that of the FCU, is colossal. Strategy meetings with the FCU will be planned for the new year, and data will be shared, not only as it relates to police force intervention discussed across interviews, but also more generally to support the unit's overall efforts to effectively respond to GBV. This study was not an evaluation of the FCU and does not intend to pose as one. However, future collaborations with the FCU provide a great opportunity to address one of the ecological levels frequently endorsed by participants as a mechanism for GBV against women in Barbados. While, it is important to consider the fact that the Barbados police force is understaffed and faced with the handling of violent crimes in addition to GBV, it is also crucial to share data that reflects the need for *continued* training around the identification, manifestation, and alleviation of abuse. In actuality, the data may serve as justification for the FCU's presence in Barbados.

Local and regional dissemination for intervention development. As discussed earlier, various regional organizations have been selected for dissemination of the study findings. The goals of this dissertation were to, again, contribute to the regional body of work focusing on GBV against women, to potentially contribute to prevention and intervention design, to inquire about the relevancy of the results across the eastern Caribbean islands, and to align the regional

efforts moving forward. Connections to UN Women are being pursued given their presence in the Caribbean and their head office location in Barbados.

Ecologically informed, cross-level prevention and intervention efforts are needed. Programs should provide the multilevel, simultaneous, and overlapping program dosage and reach as suggested by the CDC (2018). Furthermore, prevention and intervention efforts should work directly with survivors to develop, implement, and measure outcomes for GBV initiatives. Finally, family level prevention and intervention efforts should be critically screened for the potential to pathologize contextually relevant family structures. Given the enslavement and forced displacement of families in the Caribbean, as well as the scholarly history of pathologizing the Afro-Caribbean family unit (Beckles, 2004), this screening process should be heavily weighted.

Earlier in the dissertation the recent changes in government leadership were mentioned. The Honorable Mia Mottley, the newly elected Prime Minister in 2018, as well as the Governor General and the Chief Justice of Barbados, the Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, the Minister of Youth and Community Empowerment, and the Minister of Health and Wellness, have been contacted regarding a dissemination meeting for the results of this study. While ambitious, sharing the data with the current leadership in power is crucial, especially considering their financial support of services such as the women's shelter. Discussions around intervention development, specifically tailored to the interpersonal level, will be of focus when sharing the data with government officials. Government financial support and endorsement of interventions focused on intimate relationships and the family system may make a significant contribution to the issue of violence against women in Barbados. Furthermore, their support for the establishment of a GBVRT is absolutely essential.

Conclusion

GBV against women in Barbados and the Caribbean is a significant concern that has been the focus of very few empirical studies (CADRES, 2009; DeShong, 2011, 2015; DeShong & Haynes, 2015). This dissertation intended to contribute to the early empirical exploration of violence against women in Barbados, specifically looking at perceived contributors as experienced by survivors. Data focused on individual, interpersonal, community, and societal level risk factors that are viewed as contributing to the initiation of GBV, as well as the continued narrative of violence that women may experience thereafter. Witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child, economic dissonance and manipulation within intimate relationships, differences in the raising of young boys versus young girls, trivialization of GBV by systems, the normalization of violence, and gender norms within a heteronormative society were among the most commonly endorsed contributing factors perceived by survivors. Participants focused significantly on the interpersonal level, namely contributors within intimate partnerships and the family unit. It is hoped that this study's findings can impact policies and practices that align with survivors' lived realities in Barbados, and that such responses play at least a small part in reducing GBV in the Caribbean.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Materials needed for interview:

- Locked box
  - Tablet (charged)
  - Tablet charger
    - Qualtrics (interview administration questions, consent signature, and recruitment screening questions/responses)
  - Wi-Fi hotspot (charger/with data)
  - Audio recorder (charged)
  - Back-up batteries
  - Paper copies of consent form (IRB approved)
  - Paper copies of interview protocol (IRB approved)
  - Pen
- Laptop (charged)
  - Case notes document ready for each participant
- Laptop charger

SECTION ONE: ADMINISTRATION
Interview Administration
Open Qualtrics to begin. Will use tablet and Qualtrics for the consent process. Can enter the immediate information below before the interview starts (on tablet/laptop or paper).
Date/Time: Participant ID: Parish: Sampling cluster:
Consent Process
Thank you for agreeing to help me with this study on violence against women in Barbados. Before we begin, I want to go through the consent process. Offer participant a hard copy of the consent form and go through the consent form together. To avoid any literacy concerns, be sure to read through the consent process fully.
Return to tablet/Qualtrics to complete the consent process.
When complete, ask participant to complete signature questions on tablet. Determine if participant would like to keep their copy. Encourage them to keep their form but discuss any safety concerns.

Interview Introduction
Switch back to paper or digital copy of interview protocol. Begin audio recording now.
*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As you've heard from the consent process, this project is exploring what YOU believe to be the causes of violence against women here in Barbados. I want to start off by expressing my thanks for your time and openness about this sensitive topic. Would it help for us to establish an "end" phrase? For instance, if someone walks in and you want to end the interview without that person ever knowing what we were talking about, you can say something like "thank you for telling me about your research on nutrition," and that will tell me that we need to end the interview. Would that be helpful?** ☐ YES ☐ NO *For many people this will be unnecessary so don't push it, just move on.
Do you have any concerns about your safety either during the interview or after we finish? Should we talk about how we can ensure your safety after you leave? ☐ YES ☐ NO
And just a reminder, when we talk about GBV, I am referring to things such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, spousal abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, forced sex, incest, molestation, sexual harassment, childhood sexual assault, and similar experiences that occur in reaction to one's sex or gender. Some of these experiences may be grouped as ***physical*** *violence,* ***emotional*** *or psychological abuse such as name calling, or isolation from family and friends,* ***economic*** *abuse such as controlling money, or* ***sexual*** *violence including forcing someone to engage in sexual activities against that person's will, interest, or consent. Do you have any questions about what I am referring to with the term GBV?*
SECTION TWO: ECOLOGICAL PREDICTORS OF GBV AGAINST WOMEN
Interview Guide Reminder

The order of the interview questions that follow should not be chronological. Though there are four domains of the ecological theory that *could* be explored, the initial questions and questions that emerge as a result of the context of the conversation must be guided by the participant and not prescripted by the interview guide. The four columns below simply serve as a reminder of the levels at which participants may focus.

Individual factors	Relationship factors	Community factors	Societal factors
• Age • Marital status	• Family relationships • Intimate relationships • Peer relationships	• Neighborhood resources • Peer or social network acceptance of GBV	• Economic climate

Interview Questions

To get us started, I want to acknowledge you as a Bajan woman, and as a survivor of and expert on violence against women. It is crucial that researchers and policy makers work with survivors to prevent violence against women and girls. So, to start our conversation I'd like to begin with asking how YOU would describe GBV? What are the key factors in how YOU would define GBV?

- Probes:
    - Can you give me a concrete example of GBV against women in Barbados?
    - Where does your experience, or experiences you have witnessed or heard about, land in that definition?
    - What about situations where a partner is controlling all the finances? Is that something that you would consider to be a form of GBV?
        - Note: Can probe on other elements provided in definition from interview introduction to better understand their definitional boundaries.

And do you think that violence against women and girls is a common problem here in Barbados?

If yes, follow-up statements/questions:	If no, follow-up statements/questions:
Yes, definitely. In fact, some of the statistics would suggest that the rate of intimate partner GBV alone in the Caribbean is upwards of almost 30%.	*And sometimes it's hard to know or see. In fact, in the Caribbean some data has suggested that upwards of nearly 30% of women have experienced intimate partner GBV.*

Before we go any further, I want to take a minute to say that the remainder of the interview questions do not intend to place blame on Barbadian culture in any way. Countries, cultures, and communities across the globe have varying rates of GBV against women. All cultures have both protective factors, as well as factors that put women and girls at greater risk of violence. Throughout this interview you will hear me use the terms "protective factors" and "risk factors." Protective factors are things that reduce the risk of GBV occurring against women and girls. Risk factors are things that may lead to, predict, or make it more likely for women or girls to experience GBV.

Referring back to the stat of 30%, what do you think about that figure? As mentioned, this rate has been documented as much higher in some countries, and lower in others. Why do you think it is as high as 30% here in Barbados?

- Probes:
    - Can you tell me more about that?
    - What does that look like here in Barbados?
    - Do you think it's more or less common here than in other parts of the world?
    - How do you think it compares to other countries?
        - Why do you say that?

Again, all countries, cultures, and communities have both protective and risk factors. In other words, in all cultures there are things that happen that protect girls and women from GBV, and things that happen that may lead to GBV. What does this look like here in Barbados?

- Probes:
    - What would you say may lead to GBV against women across the globe?
        - What about here in Barbados? What do YOU believe causes GBV?
    - What do women in Barbados do, if anything, to prevent or protect themselves from GBV?
    - Family life can be both protective and not. What elements of family life or structure in Barbados, if any, do you think may protect women and girls from violence?
    - And what factors of family life or structures in Barbados, if any, do you think may put women and girls at risk of violence?
    - What happens in intimate relationships that may protect against or lead to GBV against women?
    - What do, or could, communities in Barbados do to prevent GBV against women and girls?
        - What happens across communities in Barbados that may protect against or lead to GBV against women?
        - Are there neighborhoods where this may occur more frequently?
        - Is GBV something that happens more in rural areas? More in town?
        - Is this something that is happening from Oistens to Black Rock to Sandy Lane and every neighborhood in between?
    - In thinking about Barbadian society, what protects women from GBV?
        - Are there societal things that make it more likely for women to experience GBV?
        - Do men and women have the same opportunities in Barbados?

At this point the participant may likely begin directing the conversation towards one of the four ecological levels. This text is a marker to indicate a likely departure from the chronological order of the remainder of the interview items that follow. Navigate through the items below as they fit with the conversation.

Just to reiterate, all families across cultures and communities have varying characteristics that may protect women and girls from violence. Would you be comfortable telling me about your family?

- Probes:
    - Can you describe your family to me?
    - What was your family like growing up? Can you tell me about your parents or siblings?
    - Have you ever gotten a sense of their thoughts on GBV?
    - Was GBV something you were aware of growing up?
    - What about in terms of the family you have started?
        - Do you have children? How old are they? What are they like?
        - Tell me about being a mother. How do you support your children? Is there anyone who assists you if you need additional help?
    - Are you comfortable sharing about your relationship with any past or current partners and any family roles they take on?

Relationship norms vary across cultures and countries, again presenting both risk and protective factors. Let's talk more about intimate relationships here in Barbados; whether in regard to intimate relationships you've been in, or more broadly speaking about intimate relationships here. What are the norms and how might these relationship norms ***protect*** *women from GBV?*

- Probes:
    - Are you currently in an intimate relationship? What is expected of individuals in intimate relationships here?
    - How would you describe any past or current intimate relationships?
    - What roles did you play in the relationship? What about your partner?
    - Do you feel like there were any overarching factors that influenced this relationship/the relationship dynamic?
        - Do you feel like your age or your partner's age influence(d) the dynamic of the relationship?

Following up on relationship norms, do you believe there are any here that put women at greater risk of GBV?

- Probes:
    - Can you tell me more about that?

And now thinking about your friends, colleagues, social group:

- Probes:
    - Are you aware of their thoughts and/or experiences regarding GBV?
        - Are they aware of your thoughts and/or experiences regarding GBV?
    - Again, broadly speaking, and acknowledging that all cultures and communities have protective and risk factors, what have you seen in Barbados across social groups that protect women and girls from GBV?
        - What have you seen that may put women and girls at greater risk for GBV?

Barbados and the entire Caribbean is so diverse. Knowing that everyone has different life experiences, and that people's lives are shaped by many different factors, I am wondering if you see that as related to GBV. Do you feel as though certain individuals, groups, or communities experience higher rates of GBV? When thinking about differences in people's experiences across race, ethnicity, religion, age, economic status, things like that, do you think GBV is more or less prevalent across any of these groups?

- Probes:
    - What does this look like? Are there differences within these groups?
    - What makes you say that?
    - Is GBV something that happens within vulnerable groups?
        - Does it feel isolated to certain communities? Are different levels of support available to different communities?
        - Do you think women who have moved here from other countries experience this too?
        - What about in terms of people here who share similar cultural experiences? What might GBV look like for them?

To what extent does GBV against women in Barbados feel like a private situation versus something you can see or talk about socially?

- Probes:
    - Is this something that only happens privately behind closed doors?
    - Or is this something that you can see in public or social spaces?
    - Are individuals quick to intervene? Are individuals quick to support any of the parties involved?
    - Or, on the opposite end of the spectrum, have you ever witnessed a normalization or social acceptance of GBV?

In general, how do you find people in Barbados react or respond to GBV against women?

- Probes:
    - What are other people's perceptions of GBV against women?
    - What role does social support play here?
    - What sort of reactions have you personally witnessed?
    - How do you feel about the way these situations are reported in the newspapers? Why do you think they are reported in such a way?
    - What about across social media? TV?

Depending on the context of the conversation, it may be possible to follow up on levels the participant didn't bring up. This can only be approached by acknowledging they didn't mention the level prior. For instance, "You didn't mention anything about family or friends. I want to clarify that you didn't see those elements as protective or risk factors for GBV here in Barbados?"

What do you think are, or would be, the best services for women and girls who have experienced violence and abuse?

- Probes:
    - Have you used any of the services? What about anyone you know?
    - Why or why not?
    - What was your (or their) experience using these services?
    - Are there a lot of resources here for survivors? What services are still missing?

Now let's talk about what you think should be done to prevent GBV from happening.

- Probes:
    - How can boys and men be engaged in prevention?
    - What can Barbados do better to make these changes happen?

I would like to end by asking for any final thoughts on how we can work to end violence against women in Barbados. As someone who has experienced this firsthand, do you have any other thoughts on how we can end this problem?

- Probes:
    - What do you see as immediate changes necessary? What are the top priorities?
    - What would you say are the long-term actions needed?

SECTION THREE: FINAL THOUGHTS

And finally, I want to acknowledge again your expertise on this topic, and I want to make sure we have the time and space for you to share with me anything else you'd like to about why violence against women and girls is so common and what we can do about it. Is there anything else you would like to share?

SECTION FOUR: COMPLETION OF THE INTERVIEW

Lastly, I want to thank you for your time, energy, and openness. I want to use what I'm learning in this project to help Bajan women and girls, and your input is truly invaluable. I know I have asked you to share with me very difficult experiences, and I want to be respectful and mindful of that. Do you have any questions for me?

After I have done all the interviews I will go through and try to look for common issues as well as differences in people's perspectives, so I can then share the findings with people in Barbados who could make a positive difference. Would you be interested in looking over my understanding of the data and then meeting again to tell me where you think I got it right and where you disagree with anything? This is completely optional – I know some people will have time for this and many won't so please don't feel any pressure.

☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, what is the best way to get a hold of you? ☐ WhatsApp message ☐ WhatsApp call ☐ Regular text message ☐ Phone call ☐ Email
Thank you again, have a great day and please reach out with any questions or concerns.
Leave behind (1) resource information if requested/desired; (2) incentive /travel reimbursement; (3) contact information.
End audio recording, ensure all data has been saved/stored (Qualtrics, recording, notes, etc.), and pack up all materials into locked box.

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

What Causes Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Barbados?

Are you a woman 18 years of age or older who has experienced gender-based violence? This may include domestic violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, spousal abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, forced sex, incest, molestation, sexual harassment, childhood sexual assault, or any other form of gender-based violence that involved physical, emotional, psychological, economic, or sexual violence because of your sex or gender? If so, keep reading to learn more about the project.

We are women researchers who want to hear your thoughts on the causes of violence against women in Barbados. We want to use what we learn to make a difference in Barbados!

What is involved?

- Complete a brief screening questionnaire.
- Share your thoughts about gender-based violence with a student researcher. The entire interview may take up to 1-2 hours, and you can change your mind or stop participating at any time.
- At the end of the interview, you will receive $50Bds to thank you for your time and invaluable perspective.

Who should I contact about participating?

If you are a woman who is 18 years of age or older who has experienced gender-based violence as a child or adult, please contact Katherine Cloutier by calling +1 246-285-2513, or email her at one of the email addresses below:
clouti25@msu.edu
kcloutier28@gmail.com

You can also send her your information to contact you by clicking on the following link:
https://qtrial2018q2az1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4OvTkCXNct5Guq1

Appendix C: Screening Tool

What Causes Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Barbados?

This is a research project that you are being invited to participate in. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about the causes, contributors, and predictors of gender-based violence against women in Barbados to better develop interventions, programs, and services to support women and girls. Given your experience as a survivor of gender-based violence, your participation would be invaluable.

If you are interested in participating, please complete the brief questionnaire below and be sure to provide your contact information if you would like to participate.

If you have any questions regarding the project, please feel free to reach out to Katherine Cloutier, the primary investigator, either by phone (+1 246-285-2513) or email (kcloutier28@gmail.com OR clouti25@msu.edu).

Have you ever experienced any form of gender-based violence, such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, spousal abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, forced sex, incest, molestation, sexual harassment, childhood sexual assault, or any other form of gender-based violence that involved physical, emotional, psychological, economic, or sexual violence as a result of your sex or gender?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Are you a woman?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If you are interested in participating, please leave your contact information below as this will be the only way to reach out and arrange for your participation in the interview process.

Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Parish of Residence_____

Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent Form

Project Title: What Causes Gender-Based Violence Against Women in Barbados?

What is this research project about?

The purpose of this research project is to learn more about the causes of violence against women in Barbados, with the goal of using this information to support survivors of violence and prevent gender-based violence.

What is involved if you participate in this project?

If you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, you will complete an interview which will last about 1-2 hours. This interview will explore your beliefs about the causes of gender-based violence in Barbados and can take place at a time and place of your choosing. If you decide you want to participate, you can decide to skip any questions or end your involvement in the project at any time. Should you decide to skip parts of the interview or terminate your involvement, there will be no negative consequences. At the end of your interview, you will receive $50Bds as a thank you for your time. If you skip certain questions on the interview protocol, you will still receive $50Bds. There is no penalty if you decide not to participate in this research study, nor will there be any penalty if you decide to end your participation at any time during the research study.

What are the potential risks and benefits of participating?

The potential risks for participating in this study include experiencing discomfort from discussing this sensitive topic. While you do not have to share your own experiences of gender-based violence, you may choose to and that can be emotionally hard. The potential benefit of sharing your experiences and perspectives on this issue is that you will hopefully enjoy sharing

your valuable information and help us learn more so we can develop programs for victims and hopefully prevent gender-based violence.

How will your confidentiality be protected?

The investigators, a supervisor at the University of the West Indies, and the institutional research review boards at both Michigan State University and the University of the West Indies are the only parties who will have access to the information from your interview. Your interview will be audio recorded to ensure I capture your thoughts correctly. When the interview is complete, the audio recorder and tablet used throughout the interview will be secured in a locked box until uploaded to a password protected computer. After interviews are transcribed, the audio recordings will be deleted. All information will be password protected. Consent forms and any data will be stored separately to maintain the protection of your identity. Your identity will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The information from your interview will be combined with the other participants' and you will not be personally identified in any reports or presentations.

How will the research be used?

We want to better understand what causes gender-based violence in Barbados so that we can eventually use the information to develop local programs and responses. We also hope to share what we learn through reports, publications and presentations.

Who can be contacted with questions?

This project is being supervised by Michigan State University, as well as the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. In the event of a research-related injury, or if you have any questions regarding your participation in the study, questions or concerns about your rights as a study

participant, or if you are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact (anonymously if you prefer) Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Programs at +1 517-355-2180, or email irb@msu.edu. If you have any pertinent questions about the research study, please contact the study investigator Katherine Cloutier (contact information below).

Email: clouti25@msu.edu or kcloutier28@gmail.com
Phone: +1 630-674-9221 or +1 246-285 2513

Voluntary Agreement to Participate:

1. I have read the consent form, been offered a copy of the consent form, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

   _____
   Participant signature

   _____
   Printed name

   _____
   Date

2. I voluntarily agree for my interview to be audio recorded.

   _____
   Participant signature

Appendix E: Initial Coding Framework

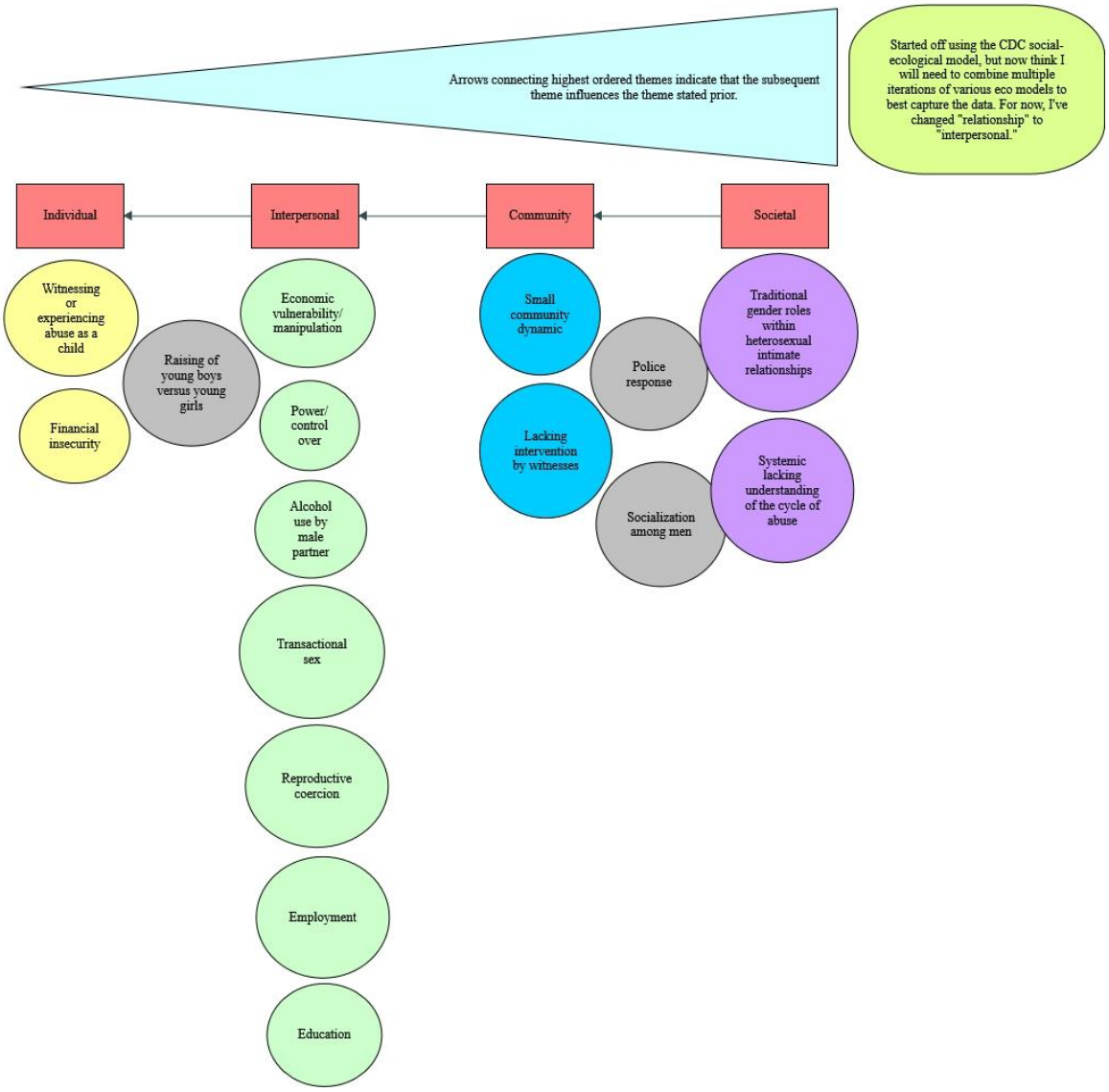

Figure 15. Initial analytical framework.

Appendix F: Initial Ecological Model

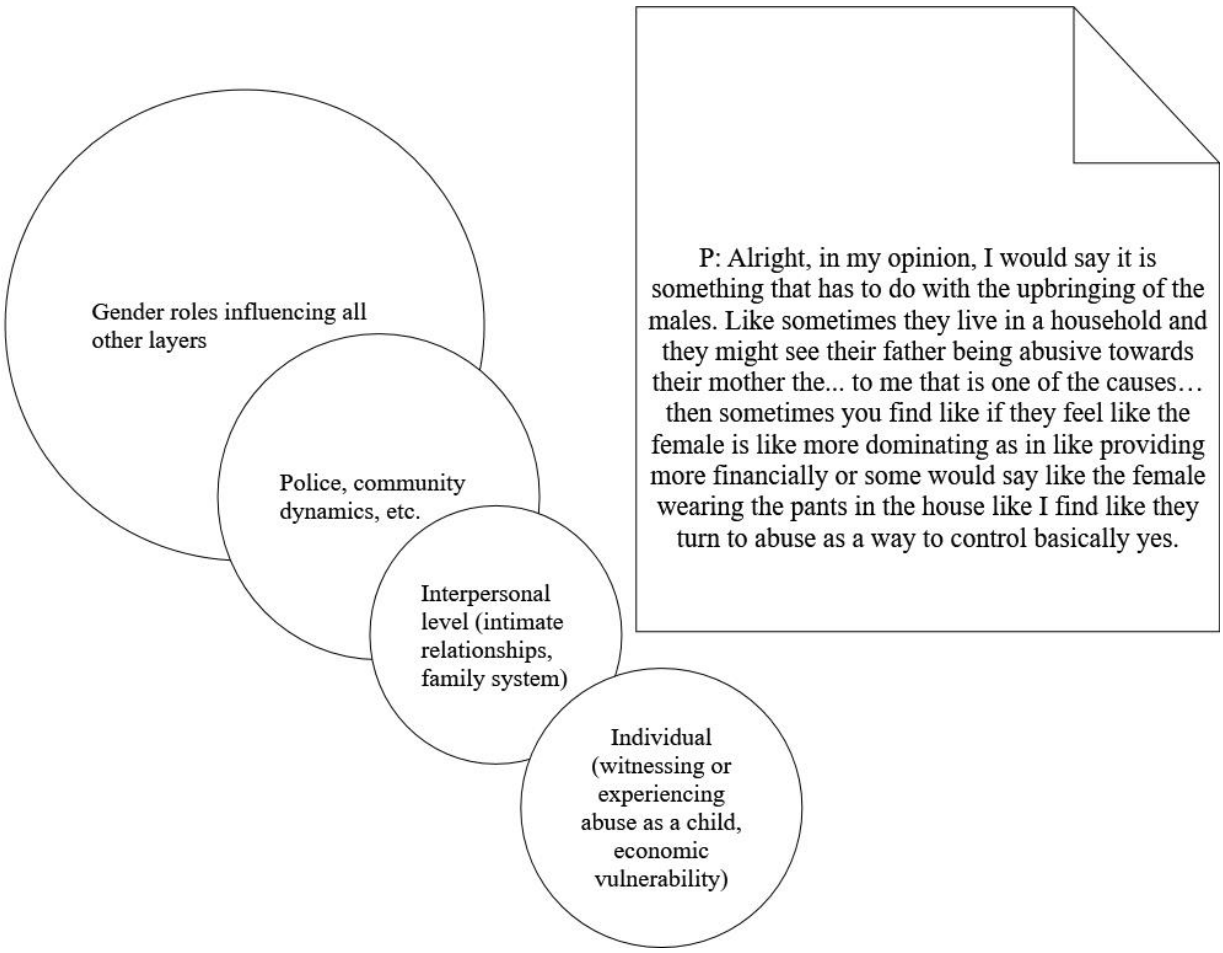

Figure 16. Initial ecological model.

Appendix G: Example Participant Causal Flow Case Summary

Figure 18. Hierarchical Coding Case Flow Example.

Individual: 18

- Self-worth
- Witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child
- Economic vulnerability: Financial

Interpersonal: 81

- Intimate relationships: Alcohol use by a male partner
- Intimate relationships: Toxic masculinity
- Intimate relationships: Power or control over female partner

Community: 86

- Small community dynamic: Culture of silence
- Police training and response: Inconsistent enforcement of laws across police officers
- Policies, protocols, and law enforcement

Societal: 1

- Traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society

Isolated causal flow quotes:

- *So, every time I go to court it's a lot of butterflies going through my belly, a lot of things going through my head, because we don't know at what point in time that the judge would give bail. And the way how he reacted I tell them to me he's not finished, not the way how he reacting, he is not finished (sic).*
- *...me being not raised with a mother and father together I always tried to picture having this family for my kids.*
- *Um, jealousy is another thing too, jealously is another thing. Um, I met a brother from my father's side, he didn't know my background and one day we was walking and my brother saw me so my brother come and hugged me and I saw his face expression just changed. And then afterwards I was like "meet my brother" and I gave them, exchanged the names. And, it is like certain things, schoolmates if they come around, being a male, female is okay, but being a male and you'll see his body language change or his voice, you know how he will speak and I was like he was very jealous, jealousy is another thing.*
- *So, it was like he wasn't being loved from either parents, they were probably there for his rescue in growing up but the love and attention that he wanted as a child he didn't get, he didn't get. So, growing up now to be a man this is what he craving for, this is what he wants so he probably met me and this is what I gave him.*

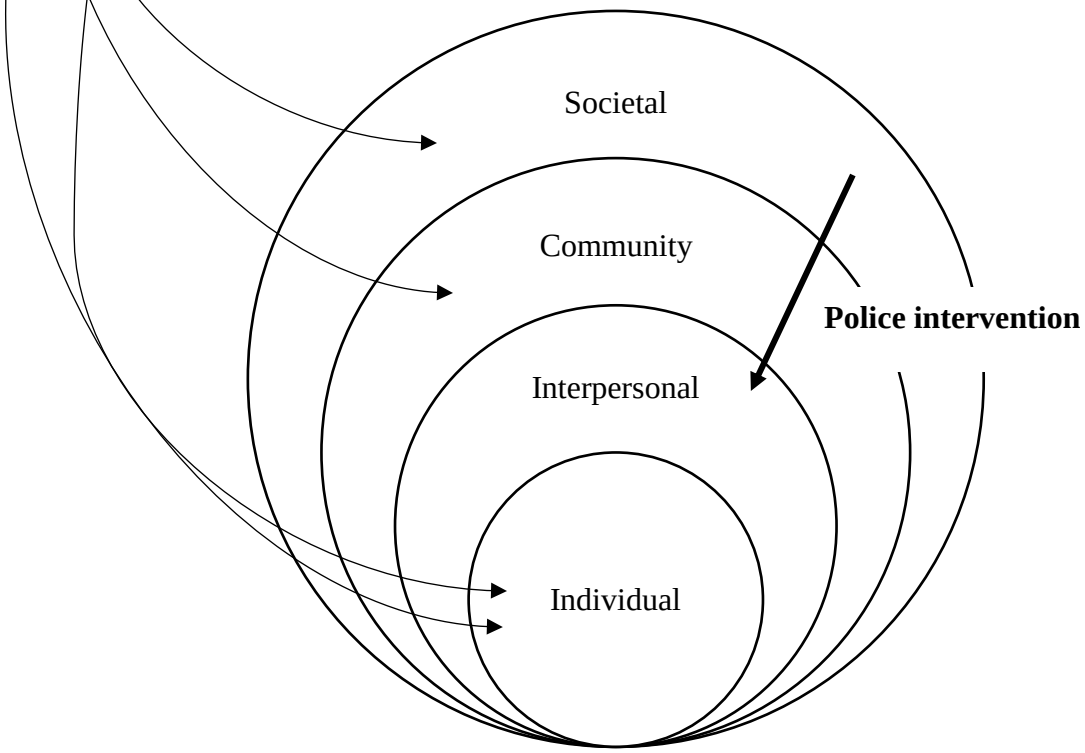

Figure 19. Isolated Causal Flow Quotes.

Appendix H: Refined Analytical Framework

Table 4. Refined Analytical Framework

Name	Description
Individual	Individual ecological level.
Self-worth	This individual level code was used whenever a woman referred directly to the concept of self-worth as risk factor contributing to GBV against women. This code was also used in reference to perpetrator sense of self-worth. Additionally, whenever participants referred to concepts of self-esteem, jealousy, or other related traits, this code was used.
Witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child	This individual level code was used whenever participants referred to witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child as a contributor to GBV against women. This code was also applied whenever participants mentioned their children witnessing or experiencing abuse. This was another individual level code that applied as a risk factor for both victimization as well as perpetration.
Economic vulnerability	Economic vulnerability referred to instances when participants mentioned disadvantage when it comes to education, employment, or finances. This was often double coded with the economic dissonance or manipulation codes; however, when participants mentioned economic vulnerability without relating to their partner, the individual codes were used. Sometimes these child codes overlapped with one another as well.
Educational	Economic vulnerability factors related to formal or informal education, training, or continued skill development.
Employment	Economic vulnerability factors related to employment.
Financial	Economic vulnerability factors related to income.

Table 4. (cont'd).

Interpersonal	Interpersonal ecological level. This level had two main categories, including the family system and intimate relationships.
Intimate relationships	Intimate relationships were one of two settings identified within the interpersonal ecological level. This code was used alone at times, but often a sub-code was used.
Alcohol use by a male partner	This code was used whenever alcohol was referenced as a contributor to GBV. This code was also used when drugs were mentioned. A separate code for drugs was not created as they weren't mentioned often. When drugs were mentioned, they were also linked to alcohol use.
Shared financial vulnerability within a relationship	Shared financial vulnerability within the relationship was cited as a contributor to GBV. This code was used when participants spoke generally about the partnership or family struggling to make ends meet. This was sometimes used with the economic dissonance codes, but not always.
Economic dissonance or manipulation	Economic dissonance or manipulation was used to indicate when a participant mentioned either an economic dissonance between two partners or directed manipulation by the male partner to ensure that the female partner was economically disadvantaged. This became one of the more interesting themes throughout the study as it illustrated economic stability and empowerment as both a risk and protective factor for women. This referred to education, employment, and finances, all of which were pulled out as sub-themes. This code was used alone at times when it was discussed at a more general level.
Educational	This sub-code was used when the participant spoke about educational or training dissonance or manipulation to achieve or maintain economic dissonance by a male partner.
Employment	This sub-code was used when the participant spoke about employment dissonance or manipulation to achieve or maintain economic dissonance by a male partner.

Table 4. (cont'd).

Financial	This sub-code was used when the participant spoke about financial dissonance or manipulation to achieve or maintain economic dissonance by a male partner.
Traditional gender roles within intimate relationships	Traditional gender roles within a relationship were referenced frequently in the context of GBV contributors. This usually included references to cooking, cleaning, and raising children, but also reached into general balance in the household in terms of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman (employment, income; this was double coded at times with the economic dissonance or manipulation codes). This code was also used when women as the head of the household were discussed and when women as single parents were discussed (both an opposition to traditional gender roles). Finally, this code was also used when men were discussed as having multiple partners. In those instances, the content was also double coded with the societal codes.
Family system	The family system was one of two main categories at the interpersonal level. At times this code was used alone if nothing specific was being said about the family setting, but GBV was being referenced as *coming from the family*.
Raising of young boys versus young girls	This code was used to document when the raising of young boys versus young girls was mentioned as a contributor to GBV. The raising of young boys and young girls was usually described as *different* from one another. The raising of young boys (e.g., given more freedom) was discussed as a contributor to potential abusive behavior as adult men, and the raising of young girls (e.g., expected to help with the household chores) was discussed as being a potential risk factor for experiencing GBV as adult women. Furthermore, if it was discussed that a young (or older) man received special treatment from his mother, this code was also used as it was frequently related back to the way in which boys/men are raised in Barbados.

Table 4. (cont'd).

Dissonant expectations or experiences of young boys versus young girls	This sub-code was used when describing different expectations or experiences between young girls and young boys. At times this was discussed within intimate or sexual relationships/encounters, and at other times this was discussed by the way young girls are expected to act and how that later translates into potential risk factors for GBV.
Family system protection of men	This code was used when perpetrator behavior was hidden or protected by their family. Participants described behaviors exhibited by their abusive partners and the lack of familial action or intervention that followed. Whenever compliance, tolerance, or acceptance by the perpetrator's family was described, this code was used to demonstrate that the perpetrator had some sort of control over his family members.
Use or history of violence within the family	This code was used when the participant mentioned a general use of violence in the family. If they didn't speak directly about witnessing or experiencing the abuse, but more so referred to it as something that was going on (regardless of who was involved), this code was used. This code was also used when sexual violence was mentioned within the family system. During those situations, the content was also double coded with witnessing or experiencing abuse at the individual level.
Community	Community ecological level.
Normalization of violence across communities and community settings	This code was used when participants spoke about the normalization of violence across neighborhoods or community settings such as schools, and how this normalization allowed for the continuation of GBV against women.

Table 4. (cont'd).

Acceptance or trivialization of GBV by systems	This code was used to indicate when a woman spoke about a general system such as law enforcement or the court system. Participants spoke about these two systems as having a general acceptance of GBV against women. This code was used alone in some instances, but often was coded at one of the sub-themes related to inconsistency and lack of knowledge of abuse among police officers, or in reference to policies in the court system.
Inconsistent enforcement of laws across police officers	This code was used when participants spoke about the inconsistencies around police response, and how that not only sent a confused message on the police force stance on GBV against women, but also established an impossible position for victims as the support and response when calling the police is unpredictable.
Police lack of understanding about abuse	Participants spoke a great deal about the police force lacking an understanding of abuse, and their overwhelming disinterest in responding to repeat calls for domestic violence. This was noted as a significant contributor to the continuation of GBV against women in Barbados, and even homicide at times.
Policies, protocols, and the court system	This code was used separate from the police training codes as it referred more specifically to policies, protocols, processes, and laws, and how they served to put women at risk for GBV. This code was also use when participants spoke about the ways in which the court system was failing women.
Societal	Societal ecological level.
Impact of the historical enslavement of individuals and families	The impact of the transatlantic forced deportation and enslavement of African people was cited by some participants as being a contributor to GBV against women in Barbados. Some women directly connected this to the forced and inhumane breaking apart of families.

Table 4. (cont'd).

Traditional gender roles in a heteronormative society	This code was used when masculinities were discussed. For example, the socialization among men as competitive, yet submissive when necessary (establishing and maintaining a power hierarchy among communities of men) was discussed as a contributor to GBV against women.
Socialization among men	This code was moved from the community level during analysis as it better fit the societal level in terms of how men relate to one another (and how that relation impacts women and their place in society). This code was used when participants spoke about relationships between men, and how those relationship norms make gender roles more rigid, societally.
Toxic masculinity	This code was moved from the interpersonal level as it is closely related to gender norms within relationships; however, it was moved during analysis as it was more illustrative of the parameters around what it means to be a Barbadian man (e.g., heterosexual, multiple partners, alpha).

Appendix I: Post-Project Reflexive Statement

There is a lot to reflect on as this stage of the project comes to a close. First and foremost is my responsibility as a social justice scholar to ensure the ethical and intended use of the data. It was my goal from the start to use this data to facilitate social change. Incredible work is happening in Barbados and has been for some time. I am committed to using this data to assist with the work already going on, in the hope that it will facilitate the forward movement of those efforts to the next level of systems coordination in the name of social justice. In collaboration with one of my community partners, we are very committed to establishing a gender-based violence response team in Barbados. This is a very ambitious goal that would require significant grant funding, but we are up for the challenge and are invested in the fact that this could save lives.

While it is easy to state (and carry out) my own commitment to the ethical (and change-focused) use of this data, it is more challenging to consider how this data could be used inappropriately by others. When I publish on this work, I will need to pay particular attention to this. I referred to the pathologizing language that has been used across research in the past when exploring Caribbean family structures. It is possible that modeling non-pathologizing language in my publications may not be enough to prevent the reframing of this data in a negative way. Extreme sensitivity will be practiced in all future writing and dissemination of this work, and I hope to include in all publications a direct statement about ethical, and historically informed use of the data, the results, and the research in general.

It also feels important to revisit my identity at this stage. There were some unanticipated experiences throughout the data collection stage that need to be unpacked. As a survivor of GBV myself, the more challenging moments were the harassment I received in some of the polyclinics.

At each of the four polyclinics there was at least one man who followed me back to my interview room to let me know how they felt about my research. I had practiced my response to this over and over, but each time this still summoned feelings in me that I wasn't interested in exploring during such a professionally crucial stage in my dissertation. However, I think there is more here than a man responding to a woman whose research is focused on violence against women. More accurately this was a situation where a white, American woman may have been perceived by Caribbean men as chastising their community. Revisiting some of the literature on intergenerational trauma feels important here in order for me to continue to unpack these experiences, and I thank Dr. NiCole Buchanan for bringing up that literature in the defense meeting.

Further reflecting on my insider/outsider positionality is also weighing heavily on me. While I've been in Barbados *for seven years, I am still an outsider and that is not lost on most Bajans. During the interviews, this outsider status was very obvious from my race to my accent, and many other things I am sure. I do believe that my outsider status provided a sense of security during the interviews. Barbados is a small community and many participants indicated that this small community dynamic has restricted their access to resources and opportunities to simply discuss their experiences. Each interview was a walk to a very vulnerable place with each woman who participated, but I could only refer them to the informational envelope I provided during each meeting. Interviews of this nature are always vulnerable, but I felt a different layer of vulnerability given the safety my outsider status seemed to provide. At times it felt more than a deeper level of sharing; there was a freeing, raw element as well. Anecdotally speaking, cursing is not common in Barbados. This was not apparent in some of the interviews. There was a raw energy to our discussions that indicated to me a very visceral investment from the participants. I*

feel deeply committed to matching the depth, vulnerability, and raw energy I witnessed during the interviews in my efforts to use the data for social justice.

Lastly, I want to reflect briefly on how this feels like the end of a very long and intense journey. As a first-generation college student who navigated many barriers during grad school, I am working on coming to terms with the length of time I took to complete this program. Nearly a decade has passed that has been full of transition, growth, learning, and reflection, and its feels incredible to enter the next decade on the heels of this defense. A series of unanticipated moments has brought me to this point. This journey looked absolutely nothing like my initial plan when I started grad school at MSU. I can now say that I am forever grateful for that.

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