



# MASCULINITIES, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

Nigeria Country Report 2016



FUSION CONSULTING

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# ABOUT NSRP AND V4C

Voices for Change (V4C) seeks to improve the lives and life chances of adolescent girls and women (AGW) in Nigeria by strengthening the enabling environment (positive social norms and institutions that support gender equality) to overcome gender inequality.

Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) aims to reduce violent conflict in Nigeria by supporting Nigerian institutions, organisations and individuals to manage conflict non-violently and, in doing so, reduce its impact on the most vulnerable and marginalised.

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# ACRONYMS

<b>AGW</b>	Adolescent girls and women
<b>CBO</b>	Community based organisation
<b>CJTF</b>	Civilian Joint Task Force
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>JAS</b>	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidaa'awati Wal Jihad
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>MNJTF</b>	Multi-National Joint Task Force
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NSRP</b>	Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against women and girls
<b>V4C</b>	Voices for Change

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Differences in the way Nigerian men and women are socialised and valued – and disparities in their abilities to access power, resources and key roles in society - create an imbalance of power within relationships between the two sexes.

These differences also fuel personal struggles as well as conflict and violence in the home and the wider community and further deepen gender inequality.

This study examines masculinities, conflict and violence in four states in Nigeria: Borno; Kaduna; Lagos; and Rivers. It explores what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman because the two sets of notions are fundamentally linked.

The study was conducted using focus group discussions and key informant interviews and reveals important insights which have relevance across the research states.

## Key findings:

- **Men and boys are raised to see themselves as breadwinners**, heads of the household and providers of security and care. They experience intense pressure to fulfil these roles and this pressure intensifies if they are unable to live up to expectations.
- **In general women are expected to be submissive or supportive**, dress modestly, devote themselves to looking after the family and care for their communities. There is greater variation in norms around women's roles than around those of men.
- **Notions of masculinity and femininity set standards which are difficult to achieve.** This difficulty is exacerbated by contexts of violence, insecurity, economic decline, high unemployment, inequality and changed gender realities. These factors challenge and blur traditional norms, for example, by leaving many men unable or unwilling to provide for their families despite their traditional roles as breadwinners.
- **Norms and roles have changed and continue to shift compared with previous generations.** For example, women have increased freedom of movement and more access to education and opportunities to earn income.
- **Men's inability to meet societal ideals causes conflict** at household and community levels as well as creating personal struggles. These struggles are heightened by inequality, poverty, lack of connections that are needed to succeed, dependence on parents, feelings of helplessness when faced with violence and struggles for income.
- **Inability to live up to the 'breadwinning' role is a key cause of conflict in the home.** Men worry they will lose authority, control and respect if they are unable to provide for their families resulting in their wives needing to assume the more male traditional role of provider. These dynamics can manifest in physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- **Inability to fulfil expectations around gender roles is seen as a cause of infidelity by both men and women.** Men, particularly those in Lagos, spoke of the need to reclaim authority by force and gave examples where they 'tested' obedience of women. Women in all states spoke of their frustration when their husbands limited their freedom.
- **Women's incomes are sometimes seen as having a positive role in reducing men's financial burdens but also a negative impact on the self-esteem of men**, as they were having to rely on their wives to provide financially for the household.

- **Men are viewed as naturally powerful, enjoy violence and as being brought up to fight,** although examples of women getting involved in violence were provided. At the community level, these dynamics were often expressed through violence against women and girls, with victims and survivors blamed for rape and sexual violence because they were considered to have dressed 'indecently'.
- **Although there were good relations between generations in a number of communities, older men were seen by many, particularly younger men as misusing their control over resources and opportunities for their own ends.** Older people also spoke of lack of respect by younger people and changing power dynamics around age were noted due to the role of technology and the involvement of young men in violence.
- **Young men were treated with more respect if they joined groups that 'protected the community' and enabled them to provide for families.** Added to the barriers that young men face in gaining the 'markers' of adulthood, this creates perverse incentives for joining groups.
- **Men have the power to make choices and many are able to resist violence** and work for peace - despite the pressures and societal sanctions they face – and the fact that they have previously been involved in violence. Norms around men being calm, in control and responsible for maintaining peace were strong.
- **Violence and conflict have economic and psychosocial impacts on everyone but the experiences of men and women differ.** While men spoke of being targeted by security forces and how fear undermined their positions, women spoke of restricted movement, sexual harassment and abuse by gangs and security forces and economic vulnerability.
- **Male-dominated institutions drive cultures of violence and conflict by propagating masculinities.** Although schools were not seen to promote violence, participants talked about conflict within and between schools. Although government officials speak positively about the work of their institutions, there is no clear 'government position' on shifting gender roles and norms. There is disenchantment with security agencies which many saw as perpetrating human rights violations and unable to protect communities. Religious and traditional institutions are seen as having most impact on norms, both positively (some leaders calling for peace) and negatively (perpetuating rigid gender norms).

## Recommendations in brief for government, civil society, donors, community leaders, researchers and others:

Comprehensive efforts to tackle issues of violence and gender equality must address men's gender identities. They must consider the way these identities drive conflict and violence and the differential impacts of conflict and violence on men and women. They must be context-specific and target different levels of society to build personal resilience, change attitudes, behaviours and practices within families and communities and transform institutional policies and practices.

The following recommendations are designed to support these changes:

### ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

- Expand gender analysis to include men and boys as well as women and girls, disaggregating research to understand what norms mean for different groups and ensure that this, together with conflict analysis, informs policies and programmes.
- Adopt inclusive research and community engagement practices so this analysis can inform policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## **PROGRAMMING**

- Do not reinforce norms of masculinities that lead to conflict and violence and check this through monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Initiate widespread awareness, education and mobilisation campaigns to challenge stereotypes and attitudes, highlighting the roles of men who champion gender equality and peace.
- Institute programmes to change attitudes around gender equality, shift norms of masculinity and help young people control anger and learn peaceful methods of resolving conflict.
- Address youth exclusion by building genuine intergenerational dialogue.
- Address backlash against women's empowerment programmes through mitigation strategies.
- Ensure all programming which addresses issues of masculinity or engages with men and boys is accountable to the women and girls in those communities.
- Recognise expertise of women's groups at federal, state and community levels.

## **POLICY**

- Build a process of critical consciousness to deconstruct inequitable norms around masculinity and create a moral and ethical consensus that certain behaviour is not acceptable.
- Adapt rhetoric and programming, particularly around youth employment, to address the real drivers of conflict.
- Review laws that undermine gender equity and implement laws and policies that promote equality of opportunity for women and men, acknowledging the connections between gender inequality, masculinities, violence against women and girls, conflict and violence.
- Implement and fund the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to address the impact of harmful notions of masculinities and lead to a more equal and peaceful society.
- Tackle cultures of masculinity that exist where concepts of power and control are linked to ideas of 'being a man' through increasing women's meaningful participation at all levels and shifting notions around what it means to be a man engaged in this work.
- Address harmful notions that women 'cause' rape by training security forces on gender sensitivity, with a focus on violence against women and girls, enforcing a zero tolerance policy amongst security agencies, prosecuting perpetrators and changing attitudes of men.
- Develop and implement training and institutionalise best practice for government and security officials in gender, human rights and conflict so an approach more conducive to gender equality, peace and security can permeate institutions at all levels.
- Act to prevent, investigate and punish human rights violations by security forces, institutionalise a zero tolerance approach and provide support and services for survivors.

# INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is currently experiencing insurgency, urban violence, tensions over environmental degradation and conflict over land and water - and gender inequality drives and is exacerbated by all these conflicts.

A recent study shows the most closely correlated factor to whether a country will experience internal and external conflict is its level of gender inequality.<sup>1</sup> Although causality is unclear, there is significant statistical association between norms and attitudes on gender equality and levels of armed conflict and general peacefulness.<sup>2</sup> Addressing gender inequalities and related masculinities is not only important in itself, but essential for preventing violence and ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace for all.

Efforts are intensifying to ensure policies and programmes are responsive to the different ways in which violence impacts on women and men. However, little attention has been paid to the part that gender itself plays in fuelling conflict and violence, and the role of masculinities in particular.

This study aims to contribute to debate, policy and practice within and outside Nigeria, and help fill the gap in our understanding about the connections between masculinities, conflict and violence.

The study was commissioned by Voices for Change (V4C) and the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP). It is part of a larger study on masculinities conducted by V4C in 2015 and was conducted by Social Development Direct (SDDirect) in collaboration with Fusion Consulting.

It looks at six critical areas, considering gender roles and norms and the impact of masculinities on personal conflict and conflict within the home and the wider community, before examining the impact of conflict on men and women. Finally, it considers the role of institutions in promoting or combating these harmful attitudes and behaviours. Through these six sections, *The Masculinities, Conflict and Violence study* seeks to:

- Explore the ways in which notions of masculinity and femininity create personal struggles - and how those struggles influence, and are influenced by, conflict dynamics.
- Understand the extent to which notions of 'manhood' promote involvement of boys, men, girls and women in violence or conflict and the impact of this on relationships between men and women.
- Examine the impact of living in conflict situations (including those marked by inequality, political power struggles and globalisation) on male identity and ways in which this promotes involvement of men and boys in gender based violence and restricts women's mobility and rights.
- Identify and understand alternative ways in which men and boys deal with conflict (e.g. use of negotiations, peaceful resolution), the factors that encourage them to 'take a different path' and the way they are perceived by the wider community and different generations.
- Find out how formal and informal institutions - religious and traditional institutions, women's groups, educational institutions, peace groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), local government areas (LGAs) and law and justice institutions - reinforce and perpetuate positive and negative notions of masculinity.
- Explore generational changes and trends around ideas of what it means to be a man or woman in relation to conflict dynamics.
- Provide recommendations and ways forward for programmes and policies which promote gender equality, peacebuilding and development.

# METHODOLOGY

The Masculinities, Conflict and Violence study was a qualitative study<sup>3</sup> guided by the key principles of conflict sensitivity, gender sensitivity, ethics and the safety and security of researchers and participants. Research was conducted in four states: Borno in the North East, Kaduna in the Middle Belt, Lagos in the South West and Rivers in the South South. These states were selected because they are focal states for V4C and/or NSRP and provide a range of different conflict dynamics, geopolitical spread and national relevance. For conflict dynamics of research states, please see Annex 2.

Researchers collected data in two LGAs (Local Government Areas) in each state as shown in Table 1. Focal LGAs comprised the heavily urbanised state capital and a less urban/more rural area. Focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIs) and life narrative interviews were conducted in each location.

**Table 1: Sample Local Government Areas**

	Borno	Kaduna	Lagos	Rivers
Less urban/ more rural	Jere	Zaria	Ikorodu	Abua/ Odual
State capital/ heavily urbanised	Maiduguri Metropolitan Council	Kaduna South	Agege	Port Harcourt

**Four types of FGDs were conducted in each state:**

- two FGDs of younger men aged 18 to 25 who were unmarried and without children
- two FGDs of older men aged over 35 who were married
- one FGD of younger women aged 18 to 25
- one FGD of older women aged over 35.

**Key informant interviews were conducted with the following people in each state:**

1. Government representative
2. Traditional or religious leader
3. Youth group representative
4. Women's group representative
5. Person with disability (2 women with disabilities and 2 men with disabilities across the four states)
6. Peacebuilding organisation representative
7. Representative from security agencies
8. Representative from vigilante/ community security groups.

In addition, two life narrative interviews in each state were conducted with a young man and a young woman who had either been involved in or had experienced trauma as a result of violence. This interview focused on their personal struggles, using life narrative methodology. Researchers ensured at least three interviewees were women and three interviewees were young people to ensure inclusion of women and youth in the research and enable findings to reflect as full a picture as possible.

In each state, 48 participants took part in FGDs and ten participants were interviewed. Participants for the FGDs were selected through random sampling of households in the community, followed by investigation to find people in these households who met the criteria needed as to age, gender and marital status. NSRP and V4C staff in the research states recommended key informants for researchers to interview. Overall, 231 people took part in the study.

For more information about methodology, please see Annex 3.

# SECTION ONE

# GENDER ROLES

# AND NORMS

This section discusses research findings around norms and roles for men and women.



## DOMINANT NOTIONS OF MASCULINITY

"Men have roles as husbands, uncles, sons, breadwinners, security, also as rulers and kings in society," (**woman in peace building, aged 50+, Lagos**)

Respondents had very high expectations of men. Men are expected to be the head of the household, the breadwinner and the provider of security. They are supposed to be responsible, hardworking, of good character and in complete control.<sup>4</sup> Men are expected to perform similar roles in the community by providing security, being respectful and generous, solving community disputes and taking care of community members.

## BECOMING A 'MAN'

Marriage, employment, education and fatherhood were highlighted across all states as key markers of a boy's transition into manhood.

However, there was some disagreement over whether it was marriage or work that defined transition into manhood. Some felt that '*it is not until he marries, but until he gets a job,*' (married man, business owner, age 45, Jere in Borno) that determines maturity whereas others thought it depended on marriage and related responsibilities. One man said: "*You can have a wife and the children but still behave like a child... [it is] the responsibilities added to it and your sense of reasoning, the way you think and the way you do things that is what makes people to see that you're a man,*" (single man, student, aged 18, Kaduna city). In some areas, a man can only access resources when married. In Abua-Odual in Rivers, respondents talked of a community nearby where a man needs a wife to own land. The symbolic nature of work is about self-sufficiency and autonomy while that of marriage and having dependants is power and control over others. This suggests having power and control over oneself and others are key core components of 'being a man.'

"You need to be committed to somebody as a man. If you are working and not married, to me, you are still a guy, but when you get married and you are faced with many challenges that is when you become a man." (**married man, aged 35, Agege in Lagos**)

Education was seen as an important part of being able to provide for the family and a necessary foundation for adulthood: "*You don't expect somebody who is still in secondary school to say he wants to get married. He must be a graduate,*" (married man, aged 35, Agege in Lagos). Perhaps as education represents a state of dependency, it was considered important to have moved beyond this stage to assume the financial independence needed to support a family: "*[Young men] think maturely. They sometimes come to me as their elder sister and tell me they need money to go to school and when they are through with school, they will like to learn a trade so they can cater for their wives and children,*" (married woman, trader, aged 50, Ikorodu in Lagos).

"You must be ready to be whipped you know because it is said that you cannot even think of getting married until you can stand a whip and that is based on a typical Fulani way."  
**(married man, aged 46, Kaduna city)**

Some respondents said other key life events were important signs of the transition to manhood. In Lagos and Kaduna, people talked of Hausa and Fulani customs where boys have to prove their manliness by stoically enduring the pain of beatings. Respondents also spoke about the role of hunting in determining manhood in the two areas.

The ability to mask pain, emotions and weakness is clearly seen as a key differentiation between boys and men. This association between manhood and ability to withstand violence has obvious negative impacts. Ensuring all 'men' experience violence in some way may result in them being more likely to withhold empathy or commit violent acts because they have 'learned' that this is acceptable - and even desirable.<sup>5</sup> It also glorifies violence and the ability to 'withstand' it rather than encouraging more peaceful approaches.

## THE IDEAL MAN

"An ideal man is someone who will be able to control his family or house, stand up as a man and take decisions, not someone that leaves his family and go away," (**married man, businessman, age 47, Port Harcourt in Rivers**)

People across all groups and states shared a unanimous belief that men have a legitimate claim to be head of the household, but opinion on other characteristics and behaviours of the 'ideal man' varied according to the age and sex of participants. In Kaduna for example, older women in both urban and rural locations saw ideal men as those who also took good care of children, paid school fees and were kind. In contrast, older men were more likely to think in terms of authority and control and that men's authority was the natural order of things.

Some younger urban men felt authority is shown by earning respect – although this was often expressed in association with a need to ensure their dominance: "*In the community where I come from I understand that men, mostly married men as in the head of the family, they don't act like they are the head of the family. They understand their wife, their children because... both the husband and wife they bring in and they help the family both financially and in other ways,*" (single man, student, aged 22, Kaduna city).

Men and women agreed that men should be the head of the household but had different views on the extent of this authority, and in rural Borno young male participants suggested that an ideal man is someone who does not fail in his responsibilities.

Men in all states took their roles and duties as breadwinners seriously. For example, in Borno, a male representative from a peace building organisation explained: "*It was like an abomination for the man to be sustained by his wife... Any man, particularly Kanuri man, we have a source of pride in that we are supposed to sustain our wives.*" However, there was also a lot of recognition of the vital role women play in providing for their families (and supporting men), particularly given the current economic climate.

Some men, particularly those in Rivers, felt life was easier for women as men were 'cursed' with the responsibility of providing for the family. They believed women found it easier to get jobs and were paid more: "*Because of the environment we find ourselves in, the men (are more likely to) give women job(s) than men,*" (married man, aged 41, electrical engineer, Port Harcourt in Rivers). Younger men in the Port Harcourt focus group discussion felt women could use sex to get opportunities and employment. This perception contrasts starkly with facts that show women's marginalisation in the workplace and sexual harassment and abuse as a barrier to work.<sup>6</sup>

Men are also expected to provide protection as the 'chief security' of the family: "A man is seen as a fence, so when a man is not there, you know, the fence is broken and the family is vulnerable to all kinds of issues," (male government representative in Kaduna).

As well as being responsible, men were expected to be calm and in control. The need to control anger was stressed by many: "An ideal man has to caution himself because if he does not caution himself he will say and do things he is not supposed to do," (married man, engineer, aged 35, Agege in Lagos). There was a strong norm against violence. In all states, and by all types of respondents, men were seen as 'useless,' 'not ideal,' and 'not responsible' if they became involved in violence at community levels. However, some participants spoke of factors leading men to violence (see later discussion on community level conflict and violence).

"Discipline starts from the home. If every man in this home can take care of his family, he will have a peaceful and quiet family. So if he extend his relationship with his family...to the larger community which he comes from, it is expected that every ward head controls his family, bring them to the best expected behaviour. So if this is obtained in every community then every community will be peaceful," (**male representative from the CJTF, aged 52, Maiduguri in Borno**)

The ideal man was seen, particularly by women, as one who cared for his family. In Lagos, both older and younger women felt strongly that men should not commit violence against women, and that beating a wife was a sign of irresponsibility. They felt the ideal man must be caring and good to his wife. He should help with her business, not be harsh, assist if she is at an important meeting, and love her. In Borno, not unsurprisingly given the level of violence in the state, a male representative of a peace building organisation saw the role of a man as providing comfort to children: "Particularly in this state where we have insurgency bombs here and there, and the children get scared and definitely need someone who will hold, comfort them."

Men were seen as being responsible for peace and security in the community. This role was a reflection of men's ability to manage their households and their contributions to security. Men were expected to be involved in community activities: "They shouldn't just sleep at night," (male religious leader in Kaduna).

Men were expected to be respectful and generous within their communities. Examples from FGDs include providing free water, gifts to widows, scholarships for children and other kinds of help for those in need. There was an acknowledgement that: "The children of every family are children of the community," (male representative of a peace building organisation in Borno).

Men were also respected if they were generous within communities. Examples given included providing free water, gifts to widows and scholarships for children. Being respectful to others and giving time to provide advice and correction was also important. Younger men in particular appreciated the respect of older men: "Even if he is your elder he sees you and he greets you first," (single man, dry cleaner, aged 25, Maiduguri in Borno). In turn, both older and younger men saw their ability to earn respect from the community as very important. Men with power, money and influence were idealised by younger men, such as those in Kaduna who all cited examples of important men using their money to exert influence. Seen as a positive way to solve problems, this attitude might indicate how young men in particular could be influenced by political leaders.

## DOMINANT NOTIONS OF FEMININITY

"An ideal woman is a woman who respects herself, take(s) good care of the husband and the children, a patient woman who can be independent, sticks to her faith and respects her parents and elders of the community and she is always at home," (**single woman, unemployed, aged 24, Maiduguri in Borno**)

There was less consensus around the characteristics and behaviour of an ideal woman. However, she was described as someone who is largely submissive, seen but not heard, a homemaker, caring and supportive to her husband. A 21-year-old man in Kaduna said: "Women are the weaker sex. They have myopic thinking... A woman is like a child," but this 'traditional' role is changing. Women and men pointed out deviations which, in many cases, were strong enough to constitute a new norm of valuing women who provided for the household. There were mixed thoughts about 'correct' roles of women in the community. Older men sometimes had more progressive attitudes than younger men and were more likely to value women's economic contributions and opinions in decision making.

## BECOMING A 'WOMAN'

Respondents talked about age or physical changes, such as puberty, as marking the transition between girls to women. Where other factors are seen as defining manhood, biological change is central to perceptions of womanhood - possibly because reproduction is so central to women's perceived roles and is linked to their marriageability. The older men in Maiduguri were the only participant group to suggest that girls and boys became adults at the same age – and they were in the minority.

Indeed, the dominant perception was that girls became women when they got married. Whilst older men in Maiduguri believe children of both sexes reach adulthood at the age of 18 or 20, younger men think girls as young as 12 become women when married. This difference may be a sign of generational shifts - with worrying implications. Reasons are unclear but may be linked to younger men feeling less secure in their masculinity. They have fewer means to demonstrate 'manhood.' It may also be symptomatic of a backlash against the freedoms women have gained.

In rural Borno, attitudes were more attuned to those of the younger men in Maiduguri. One older woman insisted that an unmarried woman does not command any respect. There was a difference of opinion as to whether motherhood conferred respect. Older men in rural Borno too felt marriage was the only way to determine maturity of a girl, whereas a boy's maturity was determined by getting a job. Rural young men linked maturity to taking power: "*If a lady is up to 16-years-old, then she is old enough to be called a matured girl and at that time you take proper control over her,*" (single man, electrician aged 20, Jere in Borno).

There was no such clear division based on age and gender elsewhere. In Kaduna, respondents talked of age, maturity and physical changes. In Lagos, older women spoke about the importance of behavioural changes, stressing that a woman does not need an instructor. In Rivers, respondents also gave a sense of women having to reach a certain level of maturity and behave well.

The discussions mirrored recent national debates. The Senate Constitutional Review Committee had recommended the constitutional section that defines 'full age' or adulthood as meaning anyone 18 years or above or 'any woman who is married' be amended. However, last minute arguments stating that removal of the final clause was against Islam meant the amendment was

not passed by the Senate. This sparked national debate about child marriage in Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> A young man in Lagos seemed influenced by these conversations: “*If you look at the Hausas, they don’t look at the age when they want to get married; they can get married to a 13-year-old girl... I think they are trying to include it in a part of our constitution that as long as a lady is married regardless of her age she has a responsibility as a woman,*” (single man, student, aged 21, Agege in Lagos).

Respondents noted how women were socialised: “*From childhood a girl is being brought up to know that she is not supposed to be at the forefront, she is supposed to be voiceless and unseen,*” (woman with disability, involved in peace building work in Kaduna city). They spoke of boys being given pounded yam to eat and girls given pap, reflecting the ways in which food is used to differentiate the ‘strong’ from the ‘weak’. Differential treatment was backed up by repercussions for not behaving ‘properly.’ A young man felt it was not difficult to get an ideal woman: “*Because we have rejected girls and women in our community,*” (single man, petty trader, aged 25, Jere in Borno).

“A typical woman wakes up around 3 or 4am and works continuously till midnight, whether in the village or in the semi urban towns. Women are expected to perform almost 70 to 80 per cent of the domestic work. Upon all these, they are also expected to perform their role of child bearing. They also play roles in social activities like naming ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, etc..” (**representative of Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development in Borno**)

## THE IDEAL WOMAN

The words ‘submissive’ and ‘supportive’ regularly feature in responses from participants. Women are expected to assist husbands and substitute for them when necessary while submitting to their authority. They must be patient, calm, gentle, persevere, endure with a positive attitude and sacrifice for family. Women were perceived as having authority if they knew how to manage their men, or in times of economic strife or male absence.

Older women in Port Harcourt felt women must dress modestly whilst young men in Maiduguri believed they should cover their bodies completely. This was a source of tension, particularly between older and younger women, with women’s ‘indecent’ dressing used by many to justify rape (see later section on community level violence).

Some respondents saw education as important for rebalancing gender inequalities. One respondent said that given women inherit movable items such as jewellery that are less important than immovable ones like land, he: “*Will tell my girl child to face her studies well because that will be her inheritance,*” (male member of a vigilante group, Lagos). Younger women in Ikorodu in Lagos felt that uneducated women had no authority in the household. Some respondents felt educating a woman was of benefit to all: “*A woman will be educated and it is very useful... She will help your brothers, your children; she will take care of your children very well,*” (male police officer, aged 36, Kaduna).

There were mixed feelings on the issue of whether women should have jobs or stay at home. This difference of opinion highlights the shift in gender dynamics and shows the danger of making simplistic generalisations. However, it was difficult to draw clear regional distinctions here.

There was a strong expectation in Lagos that women should earn money to help support their husbands in their roles as breadwinner. A male peace builder talked positively about the financial contributions his wife made to the home. However, a man in Lagos also said: “*Men will say complete housewives are [more] useful than working class women,*” (male member of vigilante group, aged

45, Agege in Lagos). This view was echoed by some male participants across all states. Older men in rural Borno, for example, talked about a complete woman being one who is always at home.<sup>8</sup>

There were some who thought women should restrict their movements outside their home, partially or altogether, and devote themselves to their home. This ideal often put significant restrictions on women. Many in Borno spoke of women's movements being limited to the home. Partial restrictions were viewed as beneficial in other states. One man said it was not good for women, whether young or old, to be seen mingling with the public: "*Because religiously a woman is not allowed to go out in the public, it is forbidden even going to the market,*" (man with disability, Borno).

There were differences of opinion about the amount of involvement women should have in decision making and earning money. In Lagos, women gained respect if they were constantly looking for new opportunities for earning money. Young women themselves had aspirations of economic independence. Younger men in Rivers said women gained authority by respecting their husbands and fulfilling responsibilities of cooking and cleaning. Older women and men spoke more about women earning money for the home and making decisions. Younger men, all of whom were unmarried, may have been reflecting the ideal while older people may have been speaking from personal experiences. Here, older men are again more progressive than younger counterparts.

*"I can remember when my mother died. In my place in Igbo land, the first daughter is always recognised. There is nothing they will do that they would not include her. But my brothers were having a meeting and they excluded me. They ganged up against me because they are born again, i.e. pastors. They took decisions without letting me know, and it caused a lot of conflict because I was just floating. It was as if I was nobody in the family,"* (**married woman, teacher, aged 35, Port Harcourt in Rivers**)

However, a number of respondents said important decision-making forums often disregarded women. One older woman in Rivers felt that women's opinions did not count and cited the influence of more restrictive religious doctrines. In Rivers, older women talked of how, when they were younger, their lack of power was greatest during menstruation: "*During your period, you are to sit in one place until your period is over. You can't cook or come near to your husband. If your husband is discussing with people, even if it is your mother, you won't come and contribute,*" (married woman, businesswoman, aged 48, Port Harcourt in Rivers).

Women were also seen as key to making sure children are brought up the right way: "*She should also show the children right from the left and she should enlighten them about life,*" a religious leader in Lagos said. Although men were seen as responsible for disciplining children, the women's role in caring for children on a daily basis was seen as important. A 20-year-old woman in Agege in Lagos spoke of how her mother took responsibility for changing her behaviour when she got into trouble as a teenager. She attributed her problems to her mother's death and father's lack of care.

Participants believed that women have a key role in caring for communities but many felt women could not be leaders in the community as: "*Our tradition does not permit most of the women to participate in community development work,*" (youth leader, Borno). Others felt women should be activists who speak out for their society, encouraging peace and community improvements. This could be through supporting husbands, for example in 'gaya' amongst Hausa communities: "*The men will go contribute towards a community development or farm collectively with community members in a community farm... women's role there is to bring water for the men who are the active participants, they cook food,*" (male representative of a peace building organisation, Borno). It could be through supporting other women, for example, by helping new neighbours

settle in or giving money to support businesses. It could also be through using networks to push for community development and peace. A member of a Lagos youth organisation said: "At the end of the day, women foster peace in our society... they are the ones that create inter-community relationship."

Respondents spontaneously agreed that women held certain (limited) rights and this suggests that important discussions on the issue have penetrated society. Although it is positive that most people talked of women having some rights, many caveated this by saying the rights were not the same as those enjoyed by men.

A number of respondents recognised that certain practices depended on community. For example, a male member of a vigilante group in Lagos pointed out that: "The Aworis believe that girl and boy children have equal rights." He himself believed that it was better to make 'all women complete housewives... when you empower a woman, you are dragging the state backwards.'

However, many men expressed progressive ideas.

A male representative of a youth organisation in Lagos said that: "It should not be that because I am a man and stronger, then a woman should have lower rights. [M]y wife has the right to tell me not to go out at a particular time." Speaking about inheritance rights, a man involved in peace building work in Borno said: "A man or a husband may die here, and the woman has a specific share of his property which no man can take from her. It cannot be willed out. You cannot exclude your wife or a child."<sup>9</sup>

Some respondents believed women had more rights. A police officer in Lagos said: "If a man annoys me in the public, I can slap him and deal with him by myself, but if a woman annoys me I have no right to touch her. The only thing I can do is to call a female police officer to prosecute her. Another thing is that as a policeman, I have no right to touch my wife at home because we have that in our constitution." He felt the issue was that most women did not know their rights. This attitude is promising on certain levels. However, it also indicates further need for police training so violence against anyone in the community, male or female, is seen as unacceptable.

Religion had a strong role to play in shaping ideas. Respondents said Islam allowed equal rights for women and quoted guidance from scripture about loving and caring for one's wife. However, women are seen as weaker and unable to be imams. This attitude reflected views about women's roles in leadership. For example, a Lagos clergyman said women could be leaders but needed a male superior: "We have women been the director of financial institutions, schools and some other parastatals but she must have somebody as a man that she reports to at the end of the day."



## DOMINANT NOTIONS VS REALITIES OF MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES

Many men are unable or unwilling to provide for their families. In Abua-Odual, younger men spoke of poverty making it difficult to be the breadwinner. Older men in Port Harcourt talked of how economic decline has made it harder to take care of families. It was challenging to find work – especially work that provided ‘clean money’ – and this put greater pressure on them. Insecurity had a key role to play: “*Because of insurgency, because of changing economic landscape in the country, things have become very hard. The Kanuris used to be farmers and traders but now there is no money, the economy has gone down, the region has been neglected, we have been left to our devices, so it's no longer easy for the man alone to maintain the house,*” (male representative of a peacebuilding organisation in Borno).

Men were more likely to speak only about the economic factors which stopped them providing for their families but women suggested that some men were simply not willing to live up to their responsibilities. An older woman in Kaduna said: “*They don't care, they are heartless, they just go out and come back only when it is time for them to sleep,*” (married woman, aged 35, Kaduna city). Young women in Lagos felt men are often irresponsible in reality so women need to take on their traditional roles. A young woman in Kaduna felt many men are not mature when they get married and/ or become fathers. A father's failure to give children guidance was seen as causing children to become troublemakers. This attitude may adversely impact on the way in which children of single mothers are viewed.

There were also examples of men who were unable to fulfil another key element of their traditional role by keeping their families safe. Not surprisingly, this was most evident in Borno, the recent location of intense fighting and violence.

In the absence of men fulfilling these roles, women take on these responsibilities. Both men and women talked about women bringing money into the household in practice despite the norm that men should be the breadwinner. A male peace builder in Borno said: “*Things are changing now for men... Nowadays because of the hardship that has changed situation, women are contributing economically, socially to the well-being of the family.*” He appreciated the contributions his own wife made to their household.

Most men had few issues with their wives earning as long as they continued to be the primary breadwinner. There were some circumstances under which it was acceptable for the woman to be the primary breadwinner, such as when the man is sick. However, men mostly lost respect for appearing to fail in their responsibilities, becoming a ‘houseboy’ or ‘main haji.’ Women who become the breadwinner are called ‘iron ladies’ in Kaduna.

**Q: Who is the head of your household?**

**A: It's my father**

**Q: Who made the most important decision in your household?**

**A: It was my mother**

**Q: Who did the house chores and took care of you and your siblings?**

**A: It was my elder sister and my mother.**

**(Woman, 20-years-old, not married, Agege in Lagos)**



Respondents had different views on the impact of situations where the woman, rather than the man, was the main provider for the family. Women were expected to 'cover up' for men so others would not know about their failure to provide for their families.

Some respondents believed men could still be the head of the house even if they did not work while others saw men's inability to provide as a sign of weakness. It was men themselves, in urban and rural locations and across age groups, who were most likely to express this position: "To gain authority in the house you have to gain respect. And to gain respect you have to adopt some approach. You can't just meet your wife and

*start telling her to do something without providing for her,*" (single man, aged 24, rural Kaduna). On the whole, there was widespread concern amongst all men that the 'natural order' would be disrupted if women started to think that they were equal to men and were able to change roles: "If the woman earns more than the husband this will make her to take the role of a man in the family," (married man, aged 43, Ikorodu in Lagos).

Women (and men) gave examples of husbands helping with household chores. Women, in particular, largely saw this as a good thing: "If I go to work and come back late, he helps me to cook and wash the clothes in the laundry room. And if I ask him to stop, he will say I should go and rest because I am very tired," (married woman, caterer, aged 38, Port Harcourt in Rivers). In Borno too, a young man said: "Me and my brothers and sisters do the work, my sisters sweep, wash the dishes and do the cooking, while we fetch water and wash clothes." Some men were happy to help wives, as long as this was not expected. A 23-year-old Lagos man seemed to be happy to share cooking with his girlfriend but stated it would be a problem if she started to expect this.

## GENERATIONAL CHANGES

There was agreement that gender roles and norms have changed. Respondents mostly spoke of changes in women's roles - the extent to which men's roles had or hadn't changed was seldom mentioned. Key changes noted are as follows:

- Girls are more valued and able to go to school
- Women work outside the home in a greater range of jobs and are able to earn money
- Women have increased freedom of movement
- Women are more involved in politics and decision making but also less respected and with less control
- Young people have more choice in marriage
- Men are expected to earn more money, with this having more importance than before
- Some men are sharing household chores
- Relationships are more equal.

There was a sense that money and wealth are more important for men than before. A male government representative in Ikorodu said men were respected for their fighting prowess when kingdoms went to war but today economic power is more recognised. Older men in Kaduna viewed men nowadays as pre-occupied by money. One man said: "An ideal man is supposed to be a man that has a wisdom and knowledge, a man that can speak things that will happen ten generation to come, but today people are being carried away by influence of money riches and wealth," (married man, civil servant, aged 50, Kaduna). Increasing respect for wealth can also lead to intensifying pressure to obtain it – by any means.

"[We had] before something we call 'kulle' meaning a married woman will never go out under normal circumstance. If they must go out for example, they would only go to marriage ceremonies and then they will go out very early in the morning, that time nobody is out to see them and will come back at night where nobody will see them... Now you can see the governor's wife outside, the commissioner's wife outside, president's wife and so on," (**man with disability, aged 53, Maiduguri in Borno**)

Women are seen as now being able to go to school, access employment and have increased freedom of movement. A female government representative from Rivers said: "In those days, they want the women remain in the kitchen, they want the women to remain without talking, now the women are talking." Girls are more valued than before because they are no longer seen as 'liabilities.' Respondents cited examples of women in positions of power to highlight the importance of the education and capabilities of women.

"According to the way people misinterpret religion, they believe a woman should be silent, her voice shouldn't be heard but now Muslim women are coming out and despite the religious and cultural challenges they are facing at least they are trying to cross the bridge." (**Kaduna woman working for a disability rights organisation**)

Women were seen as having an increased voice. In Lagos, a male religious leader said women were now more involved in politics. A Kaduna male government representative spoke of women having increased awareness of their own rights. A male peace builder in Kaduna explained how he had changed his relationships with his wives and said he now involves them in decision-making. He referred to Prophet Mohammed asking his wife which soup she wanted. A male peace builder in Rivers reflected on organising town hall meetings and said that women today were talking without encouragement, whereas 10 years ago women attending the meetings did not talk.

"The cab I boarded to this place, it was a woman that drove it. When I stopped her and she stopped, I was kind of surprised but she said 'oga enter now let's go.'... Women now do what men do, I have seen a woman doing welding, women are making furniture, doing conductors' work and also driving buses," (**married man, engineer, aged 37, Port Harcourt in Rivers**)



Women earn money for themselves and the family. Many saw this as a sign of hardship as well as of economic empowerment. Although the range of jobs in which women are engaged is widening, ideas persist around limits to the work that is considered appropriate. In Rivers, men were expected to open shops while women had access to petty trade which men saw as 'easier' work. Women are seen as engaging in 'less stressful' jobs, such as teaching and working in banks.

Young people now have more choice over their marriage partner. This was seen as a good thing, particularly by young people, and older women and men pointed out the high rates of divorce which resulted from arranged and forced marriages.

"It has actually affected relationships because when you look at before this conflict, it was like a kind of dictatorship. The husband will just wake up and do something out of law but now it has now shaped the thing in the sense that when a husband wants to talk to his wife or when a guy wants to talk to his girl, you will feel the sound as in there's love, you'll feel the vibe that "honey, can you do these few things for me," (**single man, student, aged 24, Kaduna city**)

Respondents had a lot to say about globalisation, technology and what was perceived as 'civilisation' and 'Westernisation.' There was no clear consensus about whether the changes these brought were positive. Young men in Kaduna felt relationships between the sexes were now more equal. They saw women increasingly working and making decisions and, as a result, changing household dynamics. Some felt these changes were against culture, linking this to immorality. One young man in Kaduna accused young women of challenging their mothers as 'they want to dress the way Rihanna dresses.' Older men in Agege spoke of how technology had changed roles, making women lazier. Some older women said changes had negative impacts on women. In Port Harcourt they said women are now less respected and have less control. In Kaduna too, older women said things had become worse because men were not living up to their responsibilities. One said: "*It has spoilt to the extent that it is women that go out to look for food now, the men do not bother to go and earn a livelihood and cater for their families and some even if they work and earn they don't care about the family but themselves,*" (married business woman, aged 35, Kaduna city). Some young men who recognised things had changed expressed frustration and lack of hope. They said the changes had encouraged women to be less obedient to their husbands and had a general sense that things had got worse. However, there were many who welcomed change. A Lagos woman peace builder spoke of the importance of technology in connecting women in a way which had never been seen before.

Younger people did not necessarily hold more progressive views. Young urban men tended to have

"The women of these days are in charge of their homes. In the past, men will sit down and cross legs while they instruct the women to make their food, but these days, the modern equipment has made our women lazy, equipment like washing machine, for instance I dry clean my clothes, I can't tell my wife to do that, for this reason I can't say she is doing my wish," (**married man, artisan, aged 47, Agege in Lagos**)

less traditional views than older counterparts in Kaduna. In Rivers, however, young men's restrictive view of women's role related to cooking, cleaning and childcare whilst older men also spoke of women's involvement in making decisions and financial contributions. In Maiduguri too, older men held more progressive views. These findings may seem counter-intuitive given perceptions that women now have greater freedoms and rights. However, they may demonstrate a backlash against these shifting dynamics. They may also suggest that younger men are struggling to demonstrate their masculinity because they are less secure. Therefore, control and power in relationships with women is one of the few ways available to them to do so. Older men are more likely to fulfil

descriptors of 'manhood' with age, social status and increased likelihood of economic security on their side. They can 'afford' to take a more liberal attitude without risking their status 'as a man.' This shift may also indicate the layers of contradiction inherent in the findings.

Some men contradicted themselves when discussing women's rights. In Rivers FGDs, more positive views were given at the start of the discussion and more restrictive views expressed later. 'Men's urges' and particular incidents against women who did not conform to a norm were justified but violence against women and girls (VAWG) in general was largely not supported. These contradictions could represent a mix of what respondents actually believe and what they think the researcher wants to hear. If so, this contradiction in itself shows how social norms around women's roles and rights are changing.

A change in restrictive, or inequitable social norms is positive and there has been quite a move in norms around women. However, it is clear that work in challenging these norms is far from complete and that these shifting dynamics have added to women's burden and not actually redistributed roles or responsibilities.

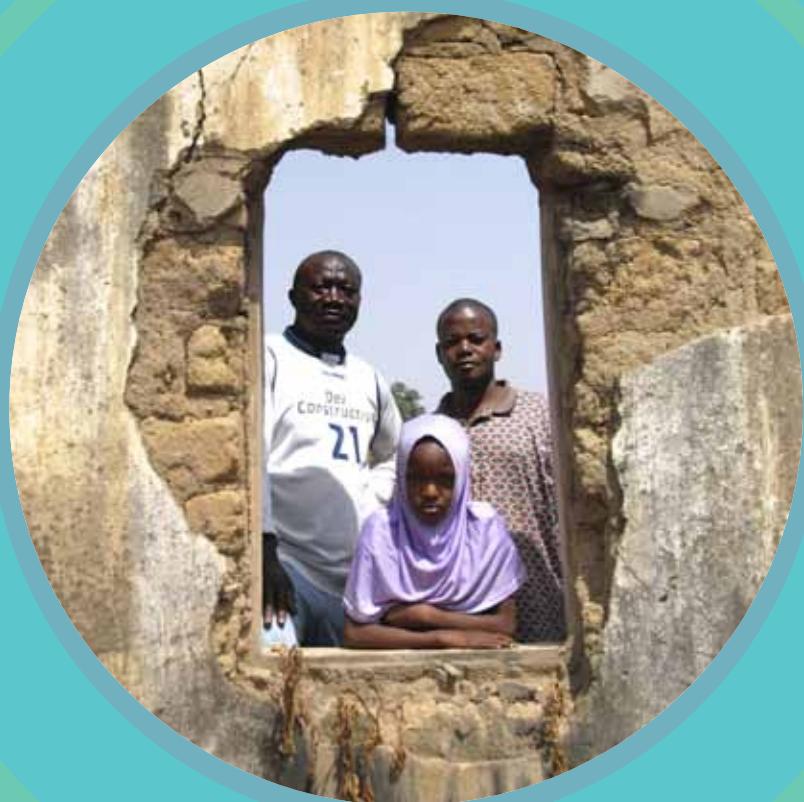
Despite this shift, participants saw norms around masculinities as more fixed and definite. The seemingly static nature of norms around masculinities may suggest people are less likely to reflect on norms around men and not see changes in their lives through a gender lens. The perceived rigidity of norms around masculinity shows work needs to be done, particularly to defuse the backlash against women's expanding roles and authority. As a woman peace builder in Lagos stated, gender roles are changing but men can find this hard to accept. She added: "*There is this agitation and hope that if things are changing, our men will also change with it.*"

This report will now examine the impact of these gender norms on conflict at three levels: personal, household and community.



# **SECTION TWO**

## **MASCULINITIES AND PERSONAL CONFLICT**



Boys are brought up and socialised from a very early age to act and think in a different way to girls. Part of this is a conscious process to mould them into becoming 'men'. Male respondents were very aware of the ideals to which they should aspire. Women had been socialised into both their own roles and in their expectations of the men in their lives.

Participants were also clear about the gap between the ideal and the realities and the way in which this was affected by poverty, inequality, unemployment, insecurity, modernisation, the role of technology and increasing freedoms for women. These factors had varying importance depending on state dynamics. In Borno, insecurity played a key role. However, men in Rivers and Kaduna spoke of the difficulty of finding work. Education and wealth were stressed in Lagos.

There was a dichotomy between those who believed it is difficult for men to achieve the ideal (and saw structural factors as a barrier) and those who believed it can simply be achieved through hard work. Those in FGDs in Jere in Borno said success required education but only the rich could afford to send their children to university or a polytechnic. In Rivers, young men in Port Harcourt said that, even with education, it was hard to be successful without help. There were differences in approach between younger and older men. Although a number of older men were sympathetic to problems faced by younger men, they were more likely to say success can come with hard work and determination. Some young men had internalised this viewpoint and were struggling to balance their own frustrations with suggestions that they 'just needed to try harder' if they wanted to succeed.

"A driver ran into one small child with an Okada man. The man came out of the car and was claiming to be right. Meanwhile the child that he ran over was still lying down on the floor. I could not withstand the pressure. I had to pounce on that man for him to know that the child is a human being. But after slapping the man, I felt so bad and I asked the man to carry the child to the hospital. Now my mind is coming back. Formerly I would not feel the way I did. I would have dealt with that man seriously. Even if I killed someone, I didn't feel bad," (**young man in Rivers who used to be involved in gangs and is resisting the pressure to return**)

The need for men to be married and to be the breadwinner loomed large in discussions. Being able to afford to get married was linked to a sense of self. For unmarried men, finding a wife can prove difficult. One man said: "*Girls are not interested if you don't have money,*" (married man, business man, aged 45, Port Harcourt in Rivers). This is not surprising. Women think of men as providers and there are structural barriers to their employment.<sup>10</sup> They can often only earn money with their husbands' permission – and such permission is often not forthcoming, even if the husband is unable to provide himself. A young man in Lagos said successful men could 'steal' girlfriends. Another man talked about this leading to a sense of injustice. He said: "*I and another guy who is richer than me could be dating the same girl and at the long run, because I am not too wealthy, the other guy won her heart, I begin to nurture a kind of rift because of that and if care is not taken it could lead to conflict of different groups,*" (married man, aged 35, Agege in Lagos).

Personal conflicts arise from the pressure to be the primary breadwinner. In Borno, it was considered an 'abomination' for the man to be sustained by his wife: "*It hurts the man's pride that he is not able to cater for the family,*" (male representative of a peacebuilding organisation). The need to provide was seen as leading young men into violence. When told a story where a young man becomes involved in violence, the younger men in Port Harcourt took a more sympathetic approach than older men.<sup>11</sup> They recognised his frustration, limited opportunities and desire to provide at any cost. If a man's refusal to engage in violence meant he couldn't provide then,

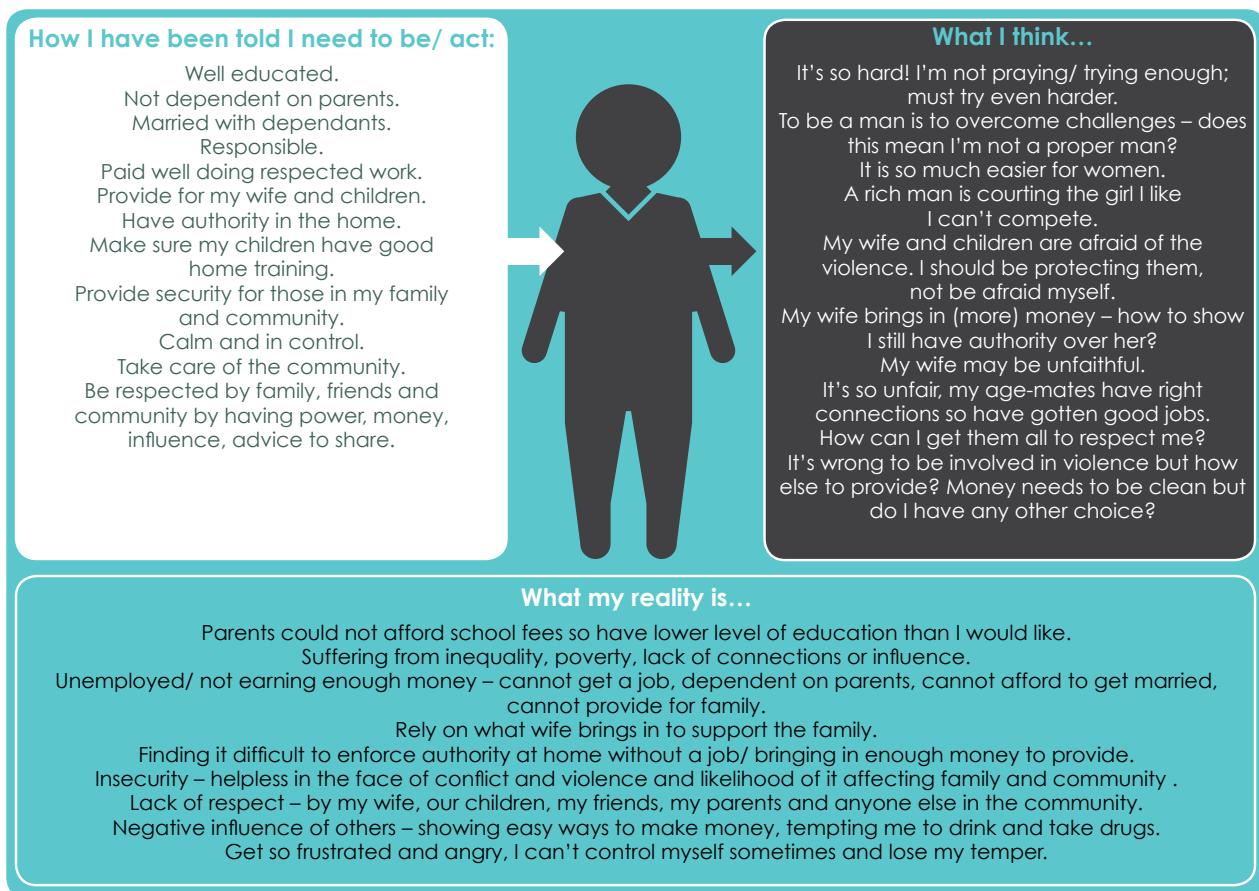
according to many, he was not 'being a real man.' People also talked about the risk of wives being unfaithful. One woman said: "He must satisfy the family financially. Some women tend to be promiscuous because their husbands fail to satisfy them financially," (married woman, trader, aged 48, Ikorodu in Lagos).

According to the social norm, men are expected to protect their families but this is hard when the men are left fearing real violence. The psychosocial impact of violence men had experienced or witnessed was clear. A male representative of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Borno said: "Everything is disorganised. Nobody has rest. Even in the office or at home, nobody have peace." Although men need to provide security, there are limits to their ability to protect their families.

Men also talked of difficulties of controlling anger in line with norms which promote men's self-discipline and control. In Lagos, people talked of frustrations and incitement by others. One man said: "It is not easy because it is a constant struggle and that is why it is not possible, if you are the most patient person in the world, some people will still want to bring out the worst in you," (married man, engineer aged 38, Agege in Lagos).

The diagram below highlights some of the forces at work within the mind of a man. The findings on which these conflicts are based were stated fairly uniformly across men and women from different ethnic, regional and class demographics. Emphasis varied across age: courtship and marriage were of more concern for younger men whereas the focus for older men was on family and household dynamics:

**Figure 1: Personal Conflict Caused by Norms vs Realities**



The impact of these attitudes on conflict and violence in households is discussed in the next section.

# **SECTION THREE**

# **MASCULINITIES AND**

# **HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS**



## HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS AND CONFLICT

"In the case of men, a man may know this thing is not good, but because he is the head and the woman has been submissive, the man will insist and it will bring conflict to the family,"  
**(married woman, business woman, aged 35, Port Harcourt in Rivers)**

The gendered ideals described above provide rigid views of the roles of men and women. The challenges in fulfilling the role of provider and 'captain of the ship' can create personal struggles for men and are key factors contributing to conflict in the home – but they are not the only sources of conflict.

"To exercise your authority, you must know who you are marrying. If you are marrying a Hajiya because of her money, you know definitely the Hajiya is going to control you... The roles will change and the responsibility of the man will turn to that of the woman and vice-versa,"  
**(single man, lawyer, aged 25, Zaria in Kaduna)**

Men both living up to and not living up to roles and responsibilities caused household conflict. Men talked about women demanding money and complaining about lack of amenities. Even when women take on the role of breadwinner, they are required to remain submissive, supportive and respectful. A representative of a women's group in Rivers remarked: "A woman is meant to assist a man, she does not have any major role other than to assist her husband to acquire whatsoever he needs to achieve his goals. If a woman is exercising authority and the man is also exercising power, there will be conflicts in the house."

It is difficult to generalise and give one definitive view of what is true for an entire continent. 'Culture' and 'tradition' are constantly changing, not static. Patriarchal gender norms are not limited to the African continent alone. In every society and culture, men have tried to claim dominance over women. Further, the continent has a rich history of women leaders, including as queens and warriors, and the presence of a number of matriarchal societies. Unfortunately, much of this history has been lost or purposefully erased. Queen Amina of Zazzau, Queen Hangbe of Dahomey and the role of Yaa Asantewa of the Ashanti Kingdom in fighting colonisers provide good counter arguments to this way of thinking about 'African' tradition.

Men seemed worried about losing authority and control if they ceased to be the main breadwinner. Women are in a difficult position. They have to work to provide for their families, fulfil all household tasks and take care to be particularly submissive. Referring to cases he had heard of, a man in Lagos said: "A woman said her husband started forcing more responsibilities on her right from the day he got to know she earns more. A man also said he lost his job and his wife left all her asset to him to control," (married man, accountant aged 39, Lagos). Indeed women spoke of needing to be increasingly submissive as men's struggles increased to avoid conflict. Respondents saw the 'African way of things' as justification for men's ultimate authority and women's subservience: "So in the African society, with religious beliefs and values, you will see that the man has authority rights from his upbringing to the time he gets married and the time he has kids," (single man, lawyer, aged 25, Zaria in Kaduna).

"I want to use my dad for example. There was a time he lost his job and he was jobless for more than a year. He was able to maintain his authority in the family as a man, not by his strength but with ideas. He was able to maintain that authority through showing his love and giving advice to my mum," (**single man, student, aged 21, Agege in Lagos**)

There was a strong alternative view within groups towards 'a new way of thinking'. Women in particular felt that men needed to show love and care. Involvement of men in bringing up children, supporting their wives in their endeavours and comforting children when scared were seen as positive. For example, one Rivers man said men should listen to their wives' advice. Older men in Lagos discussed the need for patience, calm and talking sweetly to wives to solve or prevent conflict. A few respondents felt that having a family can be positive and discourage men from getting into trouble.

'Research in Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano found nearly all women and girls are involved in economic activities in the informal sector. Seclusion does not prevent women engaging in commercial activity. The most frequently cited barrier was lack of capital and credit. Men's attitudes to women earning income were overall positive, although there was some negativity around women working outside the home. Men were concerned about women's economic empowerment changing power dynamics in the household. Women bringing in a small amount of income, but not being the breadwinner, could reduce conflict over household expenses and VAWG.' (**G. Taylor, E. Fraser, J. Jacobson and R. Phillipson, Economic Opportunities and Obstacles for Women and Girls in Northern Nigeria, Social Development Direct, 2014**)

Polygamy and infidelity were sources of conflict in all states. It was men themselves who raised this issue. According to older men in Borno, 'marrying plenty women can bring problems between husband and wife. Going around with many women too can cause conflicts.' Respondents in Rivers spoke of problems caused by women discovering their husbands' infidelity.

Failure to fulfil gender roles was seen as a cause of infidelity in women and men: "If she plays her role as a good wife to her husband, there will never be need for him to have extra marital affairs," (married woman, trader, aged 48, Ikorodu in Lagos). This same woman believed husbands should satisfy the family financially as 'some women tend to be promiscuous because their husbands fail to satisfy them.' It was believed that women could tempt men away but wives were responsible for bringing their husbands back. Women who worked, particularly in certain jobs, could be seen as

being promiscuous: 'One woman was passing and my colleague said: 'You see that woman; she fries akara and does other businesses to keep the family going; that the husband is not doing anything. People are even saying that she sleeps with men outside'.<sup>12</sup>

Unequal treatment was a cause of conflict in polygamous households. Showing fairness and equal treatment to all wives – and their children - was considered important: "He should show justice between them, no disparity among them," (married man, teacher, aged 62, Maiduguri in Borno). However, it was agreed that, in reality, many men did not follow this principle.

## THE LINK WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Many of these dynamics play into VAWG. Older men in Lagos discussed the need for men to reclaim authority by force if wives took over 'their' roles as breadwinners: "As a man in the house, you should sometimes give punishment which stands as a sign of authority," (married man,

clergyman, aged 45, Agege in Lagos). The fact that this comment came from someone living in Lagos could be linked to the increase in women assuming economic roles in the city. Many of this group may be struggling to assert their authority themselves. Although physical violence was not directly referred to in discussions, it was clear that this was one of the options implied by the word 'force'. A young man in Kaduna said men beat or maltreat their wives and children as 'sometimes they want to show that they are the head of the family'.

"He should look for the weak point of that woman and penetrate her through that, he should now exercise his authority through the weakness of the woman," (**married man, aged 43, Agege in Lagos**)

Men talked of engaging in controlling behaviour (part of the VAWG spectrum). Men consciously exerted authority to 'prove' they were still the ones in charge. One man talked about using his authority to test his wife's submissiveness. He said: "My father-in-law was to be given a chieftaincy post ... [T]hey called me and told me my wife must be present if I can't make it and I told my wife that, if she goes, she should not think of coming back home," (married man, artisan, aged 47, Agege in Lagos). Another man in the same FGD spoke about consciously seeking his wife's opinion without letting her know its importance: "Whenever I want to do anything I discuss first with my wife... I don't make her know it is relevant, I stylishly make use of it," (married man, aged 37, Lagos).

"There was a case we had about a boy beating and physically man-handling his sister... I discovered that he picked that from his dad because the dad beats the mum, telling the mum that doesn't she know he is the head of the house? So also when he is beating his sister he will be telling her that "don't you know I am in charge since mum and dad is not around?" (**32-year-old man working for a youth organisation in Lagos**)

Women doing new things was also seen as a cause of conflict in the home: "Before a woman respects her husband... but now with the coming of politics a woman will go out without the permission of her husband. If the husband meets her absence this will provoke him and there will be conflict," (single man, unemployed, aged 22, Jere in Borno).

Men said they sometimes restricted wives to protect them from sexual harassment as well as to control them. One man in Port Harcourt talked of working in an office where women had to sleep with someone to get a job. He said: "Tell me, if the husband got to know that, did you think the man will allow the wife to go to work again?" (married man, civil servant, aged 48). For unmarried girls, it could be elder brothers, rather than husbands, who restricted what they were able to do.

Forced marriage was seen as a further source of conflict: "The girls are forced into it and therefore she does not love him, there will be problem in the family," (single woman, unemployed, aged 22, Maiduguri in Borno).

"My mother does everything and you will never get to know, but sometimes because she is human, pride will set in, but one way or the other, she controls herself. Sometimes because of the way men are created too, [my father] raises his hand to beat my mum and yet she still submits herself... thank God I married a woman just like my mum. My wife covered up for me financially before I got a job," (**married man, age 35, Agege in Lagos**)

Women spoke of frustration at being held back by their husbands. As one of the older women in Kaduna said: "No matter what you want to do, if your husband does not agree you are just denied and cheated," (married woman, housewife, aged 42, Kaduna city). Another woman in the same FGD said this situation was perpetuated by religion: "We Muslim women, we don't have authority since we are under a man... because we don't have any power of our own. He can turn us the way he likes since he is the one that owns us and our children," (married woman, petty trader, aged 42, Kaduna city). Older women in Jere agreed that conflict also arose when husbands stopped their wives from working but were unable to meet their needs.

Some respondents criticised women for discussing family matters outside the home, something that has obvious implications for promoting the culture of silence around VAWG, particularly when this happens in the home.

Respondents spoke of a link between violence and infidelity. Young women in Maiduguri felt VAWG was a sign of infidelity because men only tended to beat their wives because they had other women elsewhere. However, men in Rivers believed that a woman who does not want sex with her husband is herself likely to be having an affair. This belief may lead to women feeling unable to refuse sex at home for fear of suspicion of infidelity and the threat of physical violence.

Although men were seen as within their rights to control their wives, there were limits to the violence considered acceptable. A young man in Lagos talked of how his mother's family came to take her away because they believed his father 'cannot prove he is a mature man to control any disagreement' and they would 'not wait until he beats her to death.' Older men in Agege in Lagos felt men lost respect if they beat their wives.

Younger men in Agege felt men should assert their authority peacefully, by taking responsibility and showing love. The limits seem to lie in the severity and frequency of violence. Many justified violence under certain circumstances, usually when women behaved against the norms of expected 'decent' behaviour. They also saw sexual violence as men expressing their sexual urges. The line between what was considered acceptable, and what was not, was not clear. A young woman in Rivers felt a husband can beat his wife if she offends him but should never force her to have sex. Young men in Borno and Kaduna also felt it was not right for men to force wives to have sex. However, others felt it was a woman's duty to submit to sex.

The diagram below is drawn from analysis from all states.

**Figure 2: Household Dynamics and Conflict**



# **SECTION FOUR**

## MASCULINITIES, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN COMMUNITIES



Lagos respondents of different ages and genders have very different perceptions about what constitutes peace in their communities. Older men in rural settings, and to a lesser extent urban areas, did not see their areas as conflict zones but women and young men did. Women in Ikorodu claimed hardly a day passed without killing and did not feel safe outside after dark. These differences of perception were present but not as stark in other states where the violence is of a different nature and more discernible to older men. This difference has important implications for research and programming because those in power tend to be older men who become key informants or interlocutors but do not reflect the realities of all in society.

## PERCEPTIONS ON CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Many respondents spoke of injustice, inequality and unfair treatment: “*You see a case where rich man’s son driving expensive cars while the poor is mocked,*” (single woman, self-employed, aged 23, Maiduguri in Borno). Indeed, it is inequality, particularly across culturally defined groups within society, rather than poverty that is more likely to lead to conflict and violence.<sup>13</sup>

A study of southern Niger and northern Nigeria found similar cultural, religious and economic factors and increased poverty in Niger. Higher inequality in Nigeria compared to Niger was a key reason for increased violent radicalisation, including the phenomenon of Jama’atu Ahlis Sunnah Lida’awati wal Jihad (JAS), commonly known as Boko Haram.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, a study in Afghanistan, Colombia and Somalia found no relationship between youth unemployment and willingness to engage in violence.<sup>15</sup> The principal factors that drove young women and men to violence were rooted in injustice. This more nuanced reality is in contrast with the simplistic links presented in media and political discourse.

Participants perceived changes in the extent of violence, with many suggesting that rape, sexual violence and other forms of VAWG were increasingly common. In Rivers, people said they were afraid to leave their homes at night because armed robbery and cultism<sup>16</sup> were rife. Cultural practices that brought people together no longer took place due to ‘politics.’ Kaduna participants said increased tensions, particularly between Christians and Muslims, were an issue. In Borno, Nigeria’s ‘home of peace’, people spoke of increasing violence and insecurity. One young man said: “*Before we experience total peace but now this violence or conflict has destabilised everything,*” (single man, dry cleaner, aged 25, Maiduguri in Borno).

There were some who felt communities were seeing decreasing violence. This perception may have been influenced by the timing of the research in the immediate aftermath of elections which did not trigger the mass violence that many had expected. The lack of violence during the elections was remarked upon in all states. However, wide availability of arms was cited as a real problem, with the police too afraid to respond in a timely way.

“In most cases, if I have free access to police in the community and I know that you are a miscreant in the community, I will want to show my power over you by calling on the police to arrest you. Also if I have access to area boys in the community and you offend me, all I have to do is to buy them marijuana or alcoholic drink with a token amount of money and they will deal with you,” (**married man, aged 39, Agege, Lagos**)

Participants also spoke of different methods of resolving conflict. The shift was seen as movement from arbitration by elders or traditional leaders to use of the police or vigilante groups. Although many traditional systems exclude women from positions of leadership, police and vigilante groups are not necessarily any more receptive to women’s security concerns. Types of masculinity and

intervention embodied by police and vigilante groups, although open to younger men, are more violent than those of elders using arbitration. Indeed, the current system seemed more susceptible to violence, impunity and use of connections. One young man said: "The difference is before conflicts were resolved through dialogue, but now it is the authority that settles the dispute by force," (single man, unemployed, aged 22, Jere in Borno). In many cases, police were seen as ineffective and too scared to intervene - or too linked with groups causing violence.

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS

Many participants felt there were good relationships between younger and older generations. They spoke of mutual respect, of older people giving useful advice and of resolution of intergenerational disagreements. In Kaduna, a reduced sense of family hierarchy was seen as positive as it meant people got along better, with parents now asking children for advice.

Younger people complained about poor parenting, lack of care and love and girls' wishes being ignored when they were forced into marriage. In Kaduna, young women perceived parenting to be very poor, with parents not caring for their children or spending as much time with them as they did before.

Older men were seen as having control over resources and opportunities which they then misused for their own ends. In Abua-Odual, younger men said disagreements with older men arose because the latter did not want to share money. Conversely, older men in the same area spoke of conflicts arising when money meant for younger men was embezzled, citing the example of employment slots sold or given to brothers.<sup>17</sup> Young and older men in Port Harcourt felt those involved in trouble were likely to corrupt young men and boys, for example, through initiation into cults and gangs. In Lagos too, older men were seen as blocking or not supporting younger ones. Age hierarchies added to the frustration experienced by young people who felt they could not complain about the situations.

Adding to this sense of frustration, some young people perceived a lack of wisdom and knowledge among elders because improvement in education and new technologies had given young people opportunities their elders did not have. This led to younger people knowing more about what was happening in Nigeria and the world at large. They also were more likely to know how to use technology, leading to older people often asking them for advice rather than the other way around.

Older people understood young people's frustrations but were more likely to complain about lack of respect from younger generations. Older men in Kaduna city talked about changes caused by technology while older women complained that younger women were 'throwing away' the morals of the community, particularly with the way in which they dressed. Participants also spoke of examples where younger men ignored what they were told to do.

Changing power dynamics between generations due to conflict and violence was also noted, particularly in Borno and Rivers. Here, young men's involvement in violence led to fear. A man in Maiduguri said: "There is a case where an Islamic teacher reported a ward to the parents about their behaviour. These children put two bullets in an envelope and went to the teacher and told him that if it is a mistake we will kill you. This man had to leave the area for about eight months," (married man, trader, aged 52, Maiduguri in Borno).

"Everybody in the community is scared... Politics has suddenly turned a young man into an elderly position, and he can even tell the elders to sit down there," (**married man, farmer, aged 60, Abua-Odual in Rivers**)

Young men were treated with more respect if they were members of groups. This was particularly true for Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and vigilante members in Borno and Rivers respectively. This respect was often underpinned by fear. Young men, who felt frustrated by older generations blocking their progression, could see involvement in these groups as appealing – despite the groups' reputations violence. These dynamics create perverse incentives for joining such groups.

## GENDER NORMS, COMMUNITIES AND CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

"The only reason why a man will want to be involved in violence is because men were created with authority and power." (**Male youth leader, aged 35, Rivers**)

Participants saw a direct link between gender norms and involvement in violence. Young men unable to provide for their families were seen as trying to rectify their failure – even if it involved violence. This is not just about family need but the belief that it is men who should provide, as women providing adds further pressure. There was recognition bordering on respect amongst young men in Port Harcourt for other men who provide through violence: "People who are hard are respected, irrespective of where they get their money from," (single man, student, aged 23, Port Harcourt in Rivers). Views ranged from seeing involvement in violence as wrong but necessary to valorisation. However, this respect was tempered. There was a sense of respect being based on fear or not knowing where money was coming from.

"I respect him because he went the extra mile to provide for his family... he put himself at risk, exposing himself to violence. Some people will say it is okay, while some people will say no. But, I also do not respect him because of how he gets his money," (**single man, student, aged 22, Port Harcourt in Rivers**)

**Dan daudu** (plural *yan daudu*) is a Hausa term for those assigned male gender who express themselves in 'feminine' ways. They are often described as 'men who act like women.' Many marry and have families. Historically, *yan daudu* have played important roles in Hausa life but are now increasingly seen as immoral and persecuted. Widespread confusion about differences between gender identity, and sexual orientation has led many to view them as 'gay.' The threat of being labelled as 'gay' across contexts is often used to ensure boys and men conform to 'traditional' or socially accepted forms of masculinity.

Sexism, homophobia and transphobia can lead to violence because men feel under pressure to prove they are 'not women' or 'gay' – and entering a world of violence is seen as a means of demonstrating their masculinity. Participants discussed the hypothetical case of a young man who was applauded for not being violent but criticised for staying at home. One older man in Maiduguri said: "He is a coward. He can join the group without smoking or taking drugs. But he should not stay at home. Only women stay at home," (married man, farmer, aged 36, Maiduguri in Borno). It was felt that his family and men in the community would not respect him because they 'will see him as 'dan daudu'' (single man, unemployed, age 22, Jere in Borno). This shows not only the lack of respect with which women are seen, but also the repercussions for men if they start 'acting like women'.

It was also felt that men became involved in violence to live up to their perceived role as protectors. As a man engaged in peace building work in Kaduna said: "Males get involved because they see themselves as suitable to face things that have to do with muscles, energy, power and strength so they protect females and children." Men felt that women like being protected but do not like witnessing 'their man' being violent. Young men in Rivers felt men become aggressive to impress their girlfriends.

In spite of the strong attitudes expressed against violence, respondents felt men were expected to stand up and fight when necessary. A male peace builder in Lagos talked of boys being told to seek revenge when they were beaten up. Men were seen as being violent when provoked as they could not manage anger and frustration. One of the young women in Rivers even said she thought violence did not impact men as they initiated and enjoyed it.

"A guy was standing with his girlfriend and a security man came to correct him. Because this guy wanted to create an impression to his girlfriend.. he started fighting with the security man. From there they arrested the guy and took him to police station," (**single man, student, aged 25, Agege in Lagos**)

The influence of peer pressure and group solidarity was seen as important. Young men in Agege said it was important to get involved when friends were caught in violent situations because if you did not intervene it could be seen as a sign of betrayal. A youth leader in Lagos said we need to start talking to boys about self-esteem. He said: "Most of the people that go around to beat female gender do it... because if their friends see that they have been able to catch up with a lady they think their friends will respect them for that."

Alcohol and drugs were seen as promoting household and community violence. A young woman in Lagos who sells a gin and herbs concoction claimed area boys drank 'to step up, for them to get high and be able to do whatever they want to do.' A male religious leader from Kaduna made a similar point.

Participants saw those with power profiting from, and causing, these dynamics. It is unsurprising that this came out strongly in Rivers, given the violent nature of the political situation there. An older man in Abua-Odual said: "All they need do is find some boys that feel humiliated and stranded," (married man, service provider, aged 35). In Borno, JAS was accused of recruiting local young men. A 52-year-old man said: "These youths, none of them have ever held N10,000 of his own, these youths move on donkeys but were given new motorcycle, what do you think will happen?"

**Although no research on the abuse experienced by women and girl hawkers in research states has been published, a study in Anambra of girl hawkers, average age 13, found 93.1% had experienced verbal abuse, 69.9% had experienced sexual abuse and almost 20% had been raped penetratively.** (J.I. Ikechebelu et al, 'Sexual Abuse Among Juvenile Female Street Hawkers in Anambra State Nigeria,' African Journal of Reproductive Health, 2008 12 (2) 111 - 119; Girl Hub Nigeria, Girl Hub Nigeria Communications Insight Report, (2011)

Many participants believed it was impossible for women to engage in violence because they were naturally placid. Others talked of women's roles in facilitating and participating in violence. In Agege in Lagos, young women were divided on whether women were peace builders or played a big role in 'spreading rumours' which could lead to violence. In Borno, there was more discussion

about women's direct participation in violence, probably due to high visibility of women taking part in JAS attacks, smuggling weapons and acting as suicide bombers. Women were seen as becoming involved due to lack of economic empowerment, lack of justice and the influence of their husbands.<sup>18</sup> Older men in Kaduna spoke of how women could be involved in conflict. One of them said: "*If it is stoning or shooting they will be supplying the men with the stone and they are right behind the men,*" (married man, businessman, aged 40, Kaduna city).

There was widespread blame for both the victims and survivors of VAWG. The idea that 'good women' stay at home fuels the culture of rape.<sup>19</sup> Those who work outside the home were viewed by some people as being promiscuous. Older men in Maiduguri talked of men who gave hawkers money to 'have their sexual desire met' and beating those who did not 'agree'.

Women themselves – and not the male perpetrators - were frequently blamed for the sexual abuse they suffered. Mostly men and older women spoke of the importance of a woman dressing 'properly.'

### Rape excused by 'indecent' dressing

"She is trying to tell you this is what I want... If a woman is half naked, that means she is calling attention," (**married man, civil servant, aged 48, Port Harcourt in Rivers**).

"There was a scenario where some thugs that had taken a hard substance saw a university girl coming back from school... and they found her dressing tantalising. She has been passing there for a while but that day they all agreed that they will take her. They took her to the mountain and raped her," (**single man, youth corps member, aged 25, Zaria in Kaduna**)

## GENDER NORMS, COMMUNITIES AND PEACE

"They are real men who love peace," (**representative from women's organisation, aged 38, Kaduna**)

One of the markers of a 'real man' was seen as his ability to control himself and not engage in violence. In other words, men's involvement in violence is seen as a conscious choice. A member of a Rivers youth group said: "*I might be offended and I will go to any length to show my anger, but the truth is that there is a consciousness in me that will tell me not to be violent,*" (youth leader, aged 35, Rivers).

A man's community role is to maintain peace and security. This was seen as being particularly true for older men. In Kaduna, a man involved in peacebuilding work talked of several young men who had joined his organisation because they wanted peace. Men who resisted the urge for violence and helped to solve conflict were admired. Women's roles in conflict prevention and resolution were also noted.

Men gave examples of resisting the urge towards violence, despite societal ramifications. This resistance was often strengthened by previous experiences of violence and knowledge of its ill effects. Many men spoke about trying to build a new future away from their history of violence. A man involved in peace building work in Kaduna talked of how he used to incite violence towards non-Muslims. He now works on inter-faith mediation and dialogue. A 32-year-old man in Lagos who

had previously been involved in violence spoke about not reacting to violence even though it made people think he was weak. He said: “If you are the type of person that acts on what people will think, you may never avoid violence.”

The belief that men are the sole providers is changing and this was seen as promoting peace. Women entering employment were seen as reducing the burden on men - as long as they did not threaten men's roles as breadwinners. According to a woman peace builder in Lagos (aged 50+): “If we can change the role of men and women by empowering some women so that they can support their husbands, violence will be a little bit reduced.” Some participants quoted the example of former president Goodluck Jonathan who, they said, had helped change attitudes following his election loss by showing that it was okay for a man to concede defeat. This was seen as crucial in preventing violence at the time.

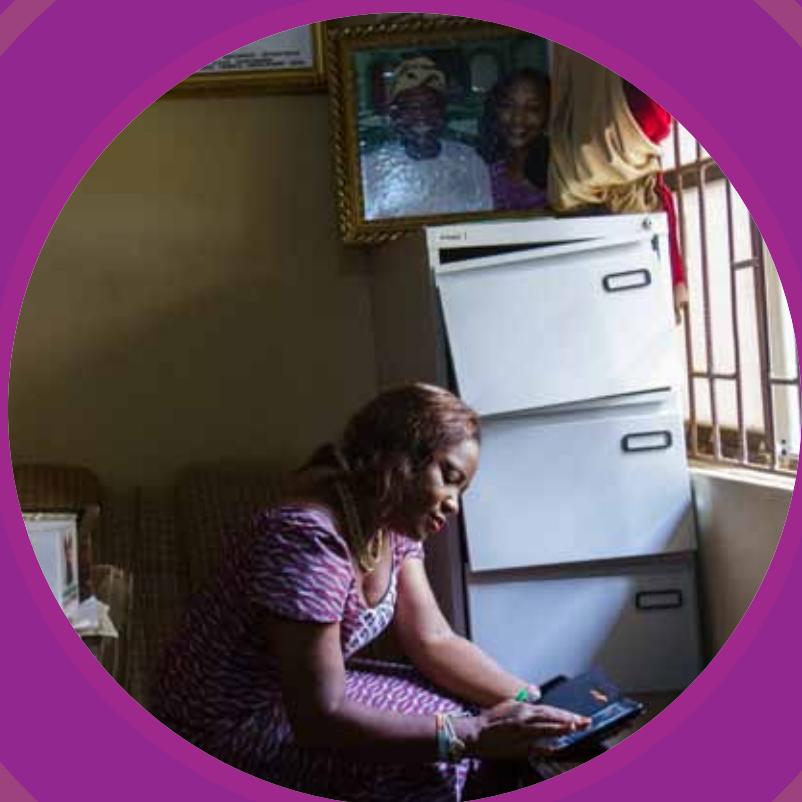
The diagram below represents drivers towards being violent and being peaceful.

**Figure 3: How Masculinities Can Drive Violence and Peace**



# **SECTION FIVE**

# **IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ON MEN AND WOMEN**



According to participants, conflict and violence has little or no impact on the idealised roles of men and women. In other words, expectations and ideals have stayed constant despite changing realities.

Both women and men were seen as being economically affected by conflict and violence. Men in Borno spoke of not being able to conduct daily tasks like shopping at the market as it was closed due to fighting. They spoke of no longer being able to provide for families because violence had destroyed their livelihoods. A representative of a women's organisation in Borno said women were becoming breadwinners to take care of families. She saw this as positive as the government was not taking care of them and said this challenged the traditional way of life. She added: "Women need to be empowered due to this crisis." Men's reduced income also meant people were unable to get married as men could not afford bride price or work to provide for their families. Whether this has reduced incidences of child and early marriage in Borno would be an interesting avenue for exploration.

"There was a time this insurgents attacked our working place. Most of the people ran away. Some jumped through the window. Some climbed the fence and ran away but me as a disabled person I could not run. I hid somewhere in the front. They killed my fellow colleague at the working place. They were standing there for more than 10 minutes," (**man with disability in Borno**).

Respondents spoke of the psychological impact of violence, particularly in Borno. Conflict was also seen as having a particular impact on people with disabilities who spoke about their inability to escape from threatening situations. Those living in rural areas were also seen as being more vulnerable to violence. This was particularly felt in Borno after JAS left the capital, Maiduguri. In Lagos FGDs, participants - particularly women – spoke of how violence in their areas made them depressed and afraid to go to work and left the men frightened to let children go to school.

Participants talked of how conflict and violence had changed community relationships. Men in Borno spoke of stronger relationships: "Before nobody cares for his neighbour or friend but now the reverse is the case," (single man, dry cleaner, aged 25, Maiduguri in Borno). However, lack of trust was an issue in Rivers. Women in Borno and Kaduna said local violence had made them much more suspicious of other people (men did not talk about this to the same extent). Young women in Zaria in Kaduna talked of lack of trust between Muslims and Christians: "These days we sleep with one eye open, unlike before when you will lie down and have a peaceful night rest," (single woman, student, Zaria in Kaduna).

## IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ON MEN

Men spoke about their fear of being targeted by security forces for acting 'suspiciously' – with little effort by those forces to determine their innocence. A young man in Ikorodu in Lagos (single, student, aged 25) said: "The OPC, Police and Onyabo has been harassing innocent people. Once they see you as a guy they believe that you are capable of carrying weapons." In Borno, men talked about the authorities coming and gathering all men. One of the men told how he had run away to escape the police after hearing gunshots. Before he left, he saw them come and shoot a few people, not allowing anyone to leave. This targeting and suspicion of men, followed by long-term detention without trial,<sup>20</sup> has been found to add to men's frustration and be a key factor in them joining JAS.<sup>21</sup>

Men spoke about the fear induced by conflict and the way in which this undermined their positions. An older man in Abua-Odual in Rivers (married, farmer, aged 60) said: “As he is the head of the family, the only thing that can demoralise a man is fear. When conflict happens, majority of the men become fearful.” Men said their experiences of violence had made them more cautious. Women in Borno said there were noticeable changes in men who were felt constantly at risk.

Participants were divided over whether involvement in vigilante groups or exposure to violence made men more prone to violence. Many believed exposure to violence would encourage men to see violence as the only way out of their situation. They spoke about those who became involved in violence becoming more violent in their personal lives. Others felt violence at home encouraged children to join gangs because violence had already been normalised in their lives.

## IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

Respondents felt women, and their children, were disproportionately affected by violence, partly ‘because the men usually run away and leave them,’ (married man, aged 45, business owner, Jere in Borno). Women were seen as less able to escape and fight back. They spoke about gangs coming to the house and breaking things and affecting their sense of safety - even if the gangs were not physically violent. Women were often targeted because of relationships with men. A young man in Rivers spoke about how a woman experienced violence because her brother was involved in a rival gang.

Many women had seen their husbands killed, sometimes in front of them. This left them vulnerable, both in terms of their grief and their financial security. Having lost their primary breadwinner, they were alone, often with children who they now struggled to care for.

Conflict was seen as inspiring fear in women. Women spoke of being afraid to leave the house, unable to sleep, scared to attend school due to possibility of violence and frightened of those from other communities. Women in Borno also said that they had suffered a backlash as a result of women’s involvement in JAS, with men and others in their own communities now suspicious of them.

“There was a time this insurgents attacked our working place. Most of the people ran away. Some jumped through the window. Some climbed the fence and ran away but me as a disabled person I could not run. I hid somewhere in the front. They killed my fellow colleague at the working place. They were standing there for more than 10 minutes,” (**man with disability in Borno**).

This fear has restricted the movement of women. Women in Rivers talked of not going on peaceful demonstrations against violence for fear of retaliation. Older women and men in Port Harcourt spoke about fear of the young men involved in cultism. Young women in Lagos were very aware of gangs in the area and ‘bad guys’ hanging around, smoking and getting into fights. Mothers restricted the movements of their daughters because they feared they might be raped. In Zaria in Kaduna, one of the young women (single, student) said: “Yes, the females live in fear, for almost two weeks no woman was seen outside, everybody remained indoors because of fear.”

Many spoke of VAWG increasing as a result of conflict. Those in rural Borno all felt rape did not happen in ‘their’ communities but gave many examples of it occurring elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Respondents’ refusal to accept that VAWG takes place in their own communities is indicative of a culture of silence around the subject and the stigma and shame attached to particular forms of VAWG, such

as sexual violence (which made up all their examples). Those in Borno spoke of increased VAWG – including marital rape - in the community. This shows potential links between violent conflict and intimate partner violence which needs to be explored. Participants also talked of men being taken away and wives being told that they would be killed if they did not follow their husbands.

*"In my own case, I live in the Army barrack. There too a lot of sexual violence is being practiced by some soldiers who feel they are above others. They use to take advantage of both young ladies and even married women sometimes fall victim of these heartless men."*

**(young woman, Ikorodu in Kaduna)**

A man in Maiduguri (married, trader, aged 40) said: *"Most of the people that came in order to tackle the insurgency have ended up abusing girl."* In Kaduna too, a young woman in Zaria spoke of sexual violence committed by soldiers. The extent of sexual abuse and exploitations by security forces, and responses to it, are also worthy of further investigation.

In Kaduna, young women in Zaria spoke about gangs sexually harassing girls and young women and touching their private parts. One of them spoke of an incident during the elections: *"It happened one time in my area during the election period. One day some hooligans came into our streets and were shouting that they were going to rape and molest people. But the youths of our area now stood up against them and saved the situation,"* (single woman, Ikorodu in Kaduna).

A young man in Agege in Lagos spoke of the high incidence of rape affecting the mind-set of women who disassociated themselves from boys in the community. In Rivers, when a man wanted to date a girl and was known to be violent, the girl was often frightened to say no because she feared he would hurt her. The rise in cultism has also left women feeling more vulnerable – and some women dated cult members to gain protection. There are similarities between Rivers and Borno here. In one recounted incident, a JAS member sent men to the home of a girl he liked with directives that she should stop going to school and start wearing the hijab. She failed to follow his instructions and, when she went to school the next day, they killed her father in front of her.



# **SECTION SIX**

## **THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS**



"When I looked at our present day life without school, life has no meaning, that was why I told my parents that I want to go to school. Since I started school to date I did not encounter a single problem," (**male student, aged 26, Borno**)

Education was seen as key to getting ahead and a solution to a wide spectrum of problems. For boys, it was seen as necessary for employment, marriage and success in life. Attitudes towards girls' education were mixed but largely positive. An educated woman was seen as a help to husband and family. Others, however, thought education caused women to disrespect their husbands and could cause men to feel inferior if their wives were equally or more educated than them.

Education was seen as more important now than in the past. School was believed to be key to giving young people the discipline needed to become mature. Young people felt frustrated when they were not able to continue in education. One young man in Rivers credited education with helping him move beyond his wayward ways. Others said violence had affected educational institutions, with children frightened to go to school because they feared what might happen on the way, or once they were there. The history of targeting education institutions by JAS gives context to these fears. In Borno, one man felt two generations had lost out on their education for this reason.

**A 25-year-old male student in Kaduna talked of the common practice of beating up juniors.**  
He said: "*In my school... they just call you out after devotion and beat you up.*" He talked about how he faced peer pressure to get into trouble when he was younger. He used to fight as a teenager and felt like a champion 'on top of the world' as he feels powerful when violent. However, he now no longer wants to be involved in violence but says this is difficult and, if people push him too far, he is bound to hit back. In the future, he wants to be a big businessman or entrepreneur in agriculture, create employment for young people, get married and have children.

Although schools were not accused of teaching violence, participants talked about conflict within and between schools. The presence of gangs affiliated to schools and use of violence to intimidate school authorities seemed common. There were many cases of young people involved in violence in schools which the institutions themselves seemed powerless to prevent. A 21-year-old man from Lagos said: "Conflicts now occur frequently in schools, to the extent that students go as far as throwing bottles to injure teachers." A 20-year-old woman in Agege in Lagos spoke of how her group would regularly go to fight other people and groups. She said girls were gang raped if they refused to 'date' a boy but added that those who turned down date proposals were seen as coming from 'good' families.

Statements by government officials, mostly men, showed a wide range of views on gender. A woman official from the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Borno spoke of the need for equality when it came to education and ownership of land and other resources usually owned by men. However, other (male) government representatives had more rigid notions. A Kaduna government official felt women could not be leaders as this was men's natural role.

Government officials spoke of the work they were doing to promote gender equality and peace but their optimism was not matched by the communities. In Rivers, all LGA chairmen were shown as being committed to peace and making sure women and girls are properly cared for. The Borno official talked of the challenges women faced in meeting the requirements of empowerment

programmes. She spoke of working with women's rights organisations and networks, security agencies and UN agencies to push for change. However, there was a distinct lack of action to improve lives at community level.



Many respondents said security agencies were not able to protect communities sufficiently, sometimes asking for money before taking action. An older woman in Ikorodu in Lagos said: "Police don't come out when there is violence until hoodlums have finished - could be fear or they partner with them," (married woman, fashion designer, aged 45, Ikorodu in Lagos). Respondents spoke of instances where they engaged in violence, arbitrary arrest and sexual violence. Some security officials, such as those in Rivers and Lagos, spoke about the need to take action against VAWG but other interviewees said police often treated rape as a joke.

Vigilante/community security groups were seen as key in stopping violence but could also be problematic. Respondents believed they were more responsive than state security agencies and were closer to communities. The CJTF representative who was interviewed had quite regressive views of women. He believed any progressive changes in gender roles were bad for the community but he also appreciated the contributions of women involved in the CJTF. His views of women seem to have changed after seeing the positive contribution they were making to security.

Involvement in vigilante groups was regarded as making men more prone to violence. People also talked of harassment, particularly of women. Young men in Port Harcourt spoke of vigilante groups getting involved in cultism while older women there spoke of suspected involvement in robbery. With the exception of Borno,

where women's participation in the CJTF was acknowledged and praised, women were not thought eligible to join vigilante groups because the groups were viewed largely as all male affairs.

Not surprisingly, those who worked for non-governmental organisations were the most progressive, particularly those who were part of women's organisations. Even here though, contradictions were clear. The male peace builder in Borno talked about gender roles and the way in which religion was cast in stone and could not be changed. However, he added: "There is nothing a man can do, that a woman will not be able to do." Those who worked for NGOs talked of how they were trying to create change by helping improve women's health through family planning advice and educating boys and girls to champion peace and speak out against VAWG.

Religious and traditional institutions were cited by respondents as having most impact on attitudes and people's lives. Traditional institutions were praised by young men in Kaduna who spoke about how every Dakaci can summon the Mai Angwan to dispatch information. This was seen as working very well in 2006 when there was unrest. The men of the community were mobilised to meet and collect Muslim students so nothing would happen to them.

The role of traditional institutions and practices in perpetuating violence however was particularly highlighted in Lagos. Behaviour of men around the Oro Festival was seen as sparking violence and starting conflict between couples, with women and 'outsiders' forced to stay indoors during the festival. People talked of violence as 'young boys start fighting even before curfew time, beating passers-by because Oro in town, even if not time for curfew,' (married woman, fashion designer, aged 35, Ikorodu in Lagos). Women experience the impact of this. In Rivers, men talked of repercussions for women if they failed to observe certain traditional practices. One said: "*In my place, there is a traditional play called Oboni. A pregnant woman cannot see it. If she does, she will pay a fine,*" (single man, student, aged 20, Port Harcourt in Rivers).

"Sometimes you wake up in the morning and you hear that they want to do "oro". This is a situation where women cannot move around in the community. You can imagine a woman who is the head of the household or the bread winner of the family, wak[ing] up in the morning and [being told] she cannot move out of her house. In that case the woman has lost her right of free movement," (**man, representative of youth group, aged 32**)

Religious institutions were seen as playing both positive and negative roles. People spoke of how some pastors taught men to love their wives and families and women to take care of their husbands and families. A young woman in Rivers spoke about a pastor who would try to reach out and engage with 'hoodlums' who caused conflict in the community, preaching love to them.

Many participants credited religion with helping them resist the urge to be violent. Some religious leaders were trying to do more to promote community awareness of gender equality and human rights, using holy texts to do this. They also tried to engage in interfaith work to build peace in communities where tensions existed.

Regardless of these attempts, religion was still viewed by many as responsible for shaping many of the inequitable gendered norms internalised by respondents. It is also seen as having a great deal of influence in perpetuating very rigid gender norms, sometimes against cultural practices. A clergyman in Lagos spoke about the need for men to assert authority in the household and show control over their wives yet many religious leaders themselves talked about women having rights – though these rights were limited. As a 28-year-old woman in Kaduna said: "*Our religious leaders tell us to be very obedient as a woman. That we should respect a man not minding the age. They also tell us to be very submissive to a man that is when we get married.*" She said the church taught women to not respond to violence and instead 'turn the other cheek'. This could be interpreted positively, or negatively if it impacts on women's responses to VAWG. Some respondents also spoke of ways in which religion has been used to justify violence. These interpretations were often seen, particularly with regards to the use of religion by JAS, as being against religion itself.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Idealised notions of how men and women in Nigeria should be are root causes of conflict and integral factors in drawing men towards violence.

Society believes that men should be breadwinners and provide security for family and community. It expects them to have their authority, power, money and influence – but these expectations heap great pressure on men, and the realities of inequality, corruption, unemployment, poverty and injustice only add to the pressure.

Some institutions reinforce these notions, either by actively promoting the traditional norm, or, more passively, by failing to challenge it. For example, educational institutions were seen as powerless to act against the presence of gangs and use of violence for intimidation. In contrast, male dominated security forces and vigilante groups were seen as engaging in different forms of violence and human rights violations in addition to protecting communities.

Attitudes towards these masculinities vary according to generation and location. So too does the link between masculinities and conflict and violence. Respondents expressed many common themes across contexts but the relationship between masculinities, conflict and violence was clearest in Borno and Rivers.

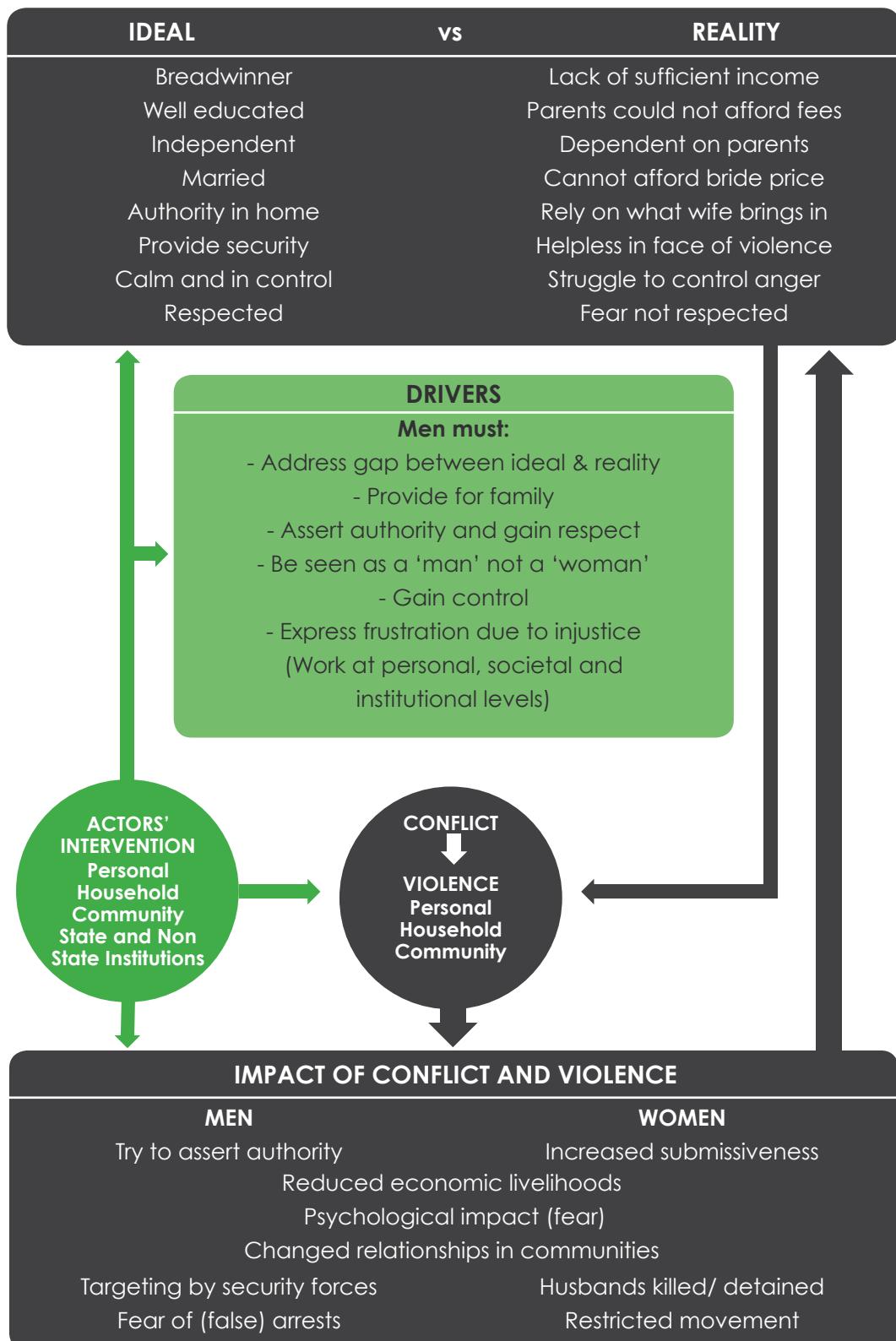
Men feel frustrated when injustice, inequality and corruption stop them fulfilling their roles as providers and this frustration can manifest itself in violence and conflict as men seek alternative ways to provide for the family, assert authority, particularly in the household, and gain respect. In this way, they avoid being seen 'as women' but achieve the respect and status afforded to 'men.'

These conflicts manifest themselves at personal, household and community levels and impact on men and women in different ways. They are fuelled by harmful notions of masculinity that are perpetuated by the socialisation of individuals, the enduring impact of families and communities and policies and practices implemented by state and non-state institutions.

Stakeholders and all those with an interest in challenging these damaging norms should heed the evidence presented here by designing interventions targeting different areas as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Masculinities, Conflict and Violence: Drivers, Impacts and Interventions**



Research findings offer compelling evidence for policies and programmes which are adapted around development, gender equality, peace and security. The study found many significant ways in which perceived ideas around masculinities drive conflict and violence and, conversely, highlighted the impact that deviation from these norms and behaviour can have on peace. This opens up opportunities for positive change where interventions avoid reinforcing inequitable masculinities or adding to the pressure that men experience in trying to live up to often impossible ideals.

### **Recommendations for government, civil society, donors, community leaders, researchers and others:**

#### **Analysis and research**

- Expand gender analysis to include men and boys as well as women and girls, disaggregating research to discover what norms mean for different groups and ensuring this, together with conflict analysis, informs policies and programmes.
- Adopt inclusive research and community engagement practices so this analysis can inform policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Programming**

- Do not reinforce norms of masculinities that lead to conflict and violence and check this through monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Initiate widespread awareness, education and mobilisation campaigns to challenge stereotypes and attitudes, highlighting individual men who champion gender equality and peace. Promote these campaigns through media - radio, social media, town criers, community theatre, films and TV – which reach a diverse range of audiences so the messages and lifestyles they promote become ‘the new norm’. Key focuses should be on challenging the notion of the sole male breadwinner and promoting the value of women’s contributions.
- Institute programmes, including in peace education, to change attitudes around gender equality, shift norms of masculinity and help young people control anger and learn peaceful methods of resolving conflict.
- Address youth exclusion by building genuine intergenerational dialogue. Efforts must be sensitive to hierarchies of gender, age and power and be institutionalised as part of a long term process which enables the voices of young women and men to be heard on a regular basis.
- Address backlash against women’s empowerment programmes by building in mitigation strategies to ensure men’s marginalisation and material realities are addressed by other work.
- Ensure all programming which addresses issues of masculinity or engages with men and boys is accountable to the women and girls in the communities.
- Value the expertise of women’s groups at federal, state and community levels and support them to engage effectively with men and boys.

#### **Policy**

- Avoid reinforcing any norms around masculinity but build a process of critical consciousness to deconstruct norms and a moral and ethical consensus that certain behavior is not acceptable.
- Adapt rhetoric (public statements and media narratives) and programming, particularly around youth employment, to address the real drivers of conflict, not scapegoat and make unemployed young people, particularly men, feared by communities.
- Review laws that undermine gender equity and implement laws and policies that promote equality of opportunity for women and men, acknowledging the connections between gender inequality, masculinities, violence against women and girls, conflict and violence.
- Implement and fund the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to address the impact of harmful notions of masculinities and lead to a more equal and peaceful society.

- Tackle cultures of masculinity that exist where men, power and control are linked by increasing women's meaningful participation at all levels (including positions of leadership), and shifting notions around what it means to be a man engaged in this work.
- Address harmful notions of women 'causing' rape by training security forces on gender sensitivity, with a focus on violence against women and girls, enforcing a zero tolerance policy amongst security agencies, prosecuting perpetrators and changing attitudes of men.
- Develop and implement training and institutionalise best practice for government and security officials in gender, human rights and conflict so an approach more conducive to gender equality, peace and security can permeate institutions at all levels.
- Take action to prevent, investigate and punish human rights violations by security forces (including violence against women and girls), institutionalise a zero tolerance approach and provide support and services for survivors.

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# ANNEX 1: CONTEXT

## GENDER, MASCULINITIES AND CONFLICT

Gender inequality is a cause, consequence and form of violence in and of itself. Women and men are raised to see different roles, behaviour and attributes as appropriate and this results in unequal power relations. The concepts of masculinity and femininity refer to everything associated with men and boys/women and girls. These concepts affect the way in which women and men think, are valued and relate to each other and their access to power and resources and societal roles.<sup>23</sup> Experiences of conflict and violence vary according to gender and other identities and social markers. These factors include, but are not limited to, age, sex, class, disability, ethnicity, location and religion.<sup>24</sup>

Gender roles and norms play central roles in creating the conditions that lead to conflict, and cause conflicts to turn violent.<sup>25</sup> This process is propagated by households, communities and male-dominated institutions such as security forces or legislatures, which drive cultures of violence in very gendered ways. The particular impact of masculinities in driving conflict has been noted in a number of other studies.<sup>26</sup> Men and boys can experience pressure to join armed forces or groups to prove that they are 'men'. The ability to pay bride price and be the breadwinner are required to 'become a man'. Young men who are not able to fulfil these expectations get frustrated and sometimes resort to violence because they see it as the only alternative means of 'proving' their manhood<sup>27</sup> and achieving power and status.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, men are targeted by security forces and subject to detention. This in itself can create a sense of injustice which leads to frustration and, ironically, can lead to young men joining these same groups.<sup>29</sup>

Evidence from around the world shows the link between violence linked to armed groups and violence in the home. When men in Colombia feel unable to live up to societal expectations, they become susceptible to recruitment into armed groups and are likely to be violent in the home. In Uganda, violence has been used to attain symbols of manhood such as wealth or 'access to' women. In Kosovo, politicians and the military valorised violent masculinities to recruit and build support for war, showing the part institutions and elite men play.

These dynamics are linked to social control of women and girls. Male gang members may be expected to demonstrate they are 'real men' through their behaviour towards girls and women. Men may demonstrate this power by controlling 'their' women and girls. In the aftermath of fighting, men can feel disempowered which, coupled with trauma and fears of 'emasculation,' can result in high levels of household violence.<sup>30</sup> In many countries, women and girls report increased violence once peace deals have been signed because men return home to face power that women have assumed in their absence.<sup>31</sup>

These dynamics are also seen in Nigeria. The ideology of JAS casts men in hyper-masculine combat roles with a duty to violently oppose the West.<sup>32</sup> Women's groups in Jos talk of how young men form vigilante groups to protect 'their' land, community and women, leading to violence with other groups, sexual harassment and other VAWG.<sup>33</sup> In Kaduna, religion and gender are deployed by men reacting to changes in the social order caused by economic instability as they try to preserve their masculine power position in the family.<sup>34</sup>

However, it is important not to stereotype. Men can be agents of peace and women can take part directly in fighting, or creating environments where violence is seen as desirable.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE?

The terms conflict and violence are not synonymous but are often treated as interchangeable.

Conflict is a natural part of existence. It does not always lead to violence and can inspire positive change if managed constructively. It can take place at different levels.<sup>35</sup> It can be intra-personal: the personal struggles individuals face. It can be inter-personal: between two people or in small groups. It can occur in communities: within or between large groups.

**The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 defines 'violence' in section 46 as  
'any act or attempted act, which causes or may cause any person physical, sexual,  
psychological, verbal, emotional or economic harm whether this occurs in private or public  
life, in peace time and in conflict situations.'**

Violence, on the other hand, takes direct, structural and cultural forms.<sup>36</sup> Structural violence refers to the injustice, inequality and exploitation that lead to different opportunities and outcomes. It manifests itself in institutionalised classism, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. Examples include laws that prevent women from claiming inheritance and lack of quality, free healthcare (which disproportionately affects those who are poor).

Cultural violence describes attitudes and beliefs that justify structural violence as natural and legitimate. This manifests itself in schools which promote superiority of one ethnicity, women getting blamed for rape or preaching hatred towards another religion by religious leaders.

Direct violence includes physical force, such as killing, torture and rape or verbal abuse (threats or humiliation). It is the direct manifestation of conditions and realities created by structural and cultural violence. As structural, cultural and physical violence interact in reinforcing ways, the path towards peace must address violence on all three levels. Genuine and sustainable peace is not simply the absence of direct physical violence. It is an absence of the structural inequalities and cultural beliefs that allow physical violence to thrive.

## ANNEX 2: CONFLICT DYNAMICS OF RESEARCH STATES<sup>37</sup>

**Borno** is in the North-East and bordered by Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Within Nigeria it is bordered by Gombe and Adamawa states. In 2005, JAS emerged under Mohammed Yusuf. His ‘extra judicial murder’ and ‘official bungling, negligence, complacency or collusion’ has been acknowledged as causal factors in its rise.<sup>38</sup> Low levels of trust between security agencies and communities are rooted in suspicion, perceptions of slow response and commission of human rights violations.<sup>39</sup> In this context, self-help groups known as the CJTF formed. However, there are reports that these groups commit human rights violations, including sexual harassment.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, violations have been committed by all parties. The media started reporting JAS abductions of women and girls in 2012 but communities report earlier incidents. This issue gained prominence after the Chibok abduction. This added to international pressure for action. In January 2015, a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was formed.

With increasing numbers of people fleeing violence and a lack of systematic support, there is heightening emergency, with concerns around food security. The impacts of the insurgency overlay frustration with marginalisation, inequality and the impact on socio-economic activities on the shrinking of Lake Chad. Added to this is conflict, subsumed by the insurgency, between groups who farm, herd and fish. In the period before data collection, there were worries JAS would make good its threat to mount attacks to disrupt elections. However, although there was an attack early on presidential Election Day, the widespread violence feared did not manifest.

**Kaduna** lies in the Middle Belt, bordered by the Federal Capital Territories (FCTs) and Kano, Bauchi, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Zamfara and Katsina states. Kaduna has been described as a ‘mini-Nigeria’, containing many communities and ethnic groups. This diversity increases volatility, with conflict driving and influenced by dynamics elsewhere. Ethno-religious divides have fed different cycles of violence and widespread killing in the 1980s and 1990s over land disputes in Zango-Kataf; protests over introduction of sharia into state law in 2000; and violence sparked by reactions to the Miss World pageant in 2002.<sup>41</sup> Added to this is conflict over land and water resource use which can take inter-communal (ethnic, religious, occupational) dimensions.

It was the worst affected state for electoral violence in 2011.<sup>42</sup> Women and girls were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence.<sup>43</sup> Despite government interventions, the root causes of conflict remain insufficiently addressed. Since 2011 there has been increasing violence, especially in southern Kaduna. Cattle rustling and rural banditry are common. There have been suspected human rights abuses by the military, such as the alleged shooting of Shiite members in Zaria in July 2014. There were grave concerns in the period before data collection about electoral violence. However, this did not come to pass as Buhari, the candidate with wide following in the state, won and was recognised as the winner by the incumbent.

**Lagos**, once Nigeria’s capital, and still its economic and cultural heart, lies in the South West, bordered by the country of Benin and by Ogun state. Although it mostly consists of the Lagos mega-city, there are some areas that are more rural. It is characterised by economic growth and urban achievements contrasted with growing social challenges, poverty and gangs. Increasing population and decreasing availability of land have added to marked inequality. Around 70 percent of Lagosians live in poor, often illegal, settlements<sup>44</sup> with dynamics exacerbated by recent floods. The Lagos State Government has considered removing people from dangerous, flood-prone lands, but eviction and relocation are controversial. Given this backdrop, it is not surprising that ‘area boys’ or ‘agberos’, gangs of mostly street children and teenagers, are present on the streets. They often extort money, sell drugs, destroy property, are involved in armed robbery and take part in clashes with rival gangs. However, violence and crime have dropped significantly in recent times.

In August 2013, the government transported 17 'destitute' Igbos<sup>45</sup> from Anambra state to the state border and 'deported' them. This move sparked debate about the rights and responsibilities of indigenes and migrants and obligations of states to provide. In the period immediately before data collection, during the weekend between presidential and state elections, the Oba of Lagos was reported making inflammatory remarks. He noted to Igbo chiefs that '*whoever works against the throne and interest and peaceful co-existence of Lagos would end up in the lagoon as per tradition.*'<sup>46</sup> This incident, interpreted as a threat against the Igbo population, added to tensions.<sup>47</sup>

**Rivers** is in the South South, bordered by Bayelsa, Delta, Anambra, Imo, Abia and Akwa Ibom states. Environmental degradation due to oil spills and gas flares, rising inequality and the legacy of the militancy have left lasting impact. Made up of a number of ethnic groups, Rivers has been the site of agitation through non-violent and violent means since the 1990s. At the height of the militancy that led to attacks, kidnapping and negative impact on revenue, the government offered amnesty to former militants. This attempt at demobilisation, started in 2007, took the form of transfers of money and enrolment on skills training courses and is set to expire at the end of 2015.

Although the amnesty has led to relative calm and enabled oil extraction to continue, levels of communal violence remain high. The root causes of discontent which enabled the emergence of militancy remain unaddressed. Environmental degradation due to oil spills continues and incidence of oil theft and illegal 'bunkering' has risen. Young people continue to be disaffected. Oil spills have had disproportionate impact on women whose livelihoods have been severely affected because, unlike men, they fish in creeks which are now polluted rather than the cleaner waters of the sea.<sup>48</sup> Political crisis has added to these pre-existing dynamics. Tensions between the then Governor and President led to conflict persisting in the state for over two years. This manifested in political violence in the run-up to the 2015 elections in the period just before this research took place, with violence seemingly used as a 'tool of campaigning.' This led to party offices being destroyed, voting disrupted and several people killed in the period before elections and on the Election Day.

## ANNEX 3: METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative study which used a symbolic interactionist methodology and grounded theory analytical model.<sup>49</sup> A desk review of existing literature and resources on masculinities, conflict and violence informed development of the methodology, research tools and the segmentation and sampling strategy. A methodology and training workshop brought together all researchers to discuss gender norms in the states studied, develop strategies to ensure context and conflict sensitivity of data collection and input into and familiarise themselves with research tools. The tools were pre-tested during a focus group discussion with young men in Abuja and changes made accordingly to ensure they were framed so responses by participants were more likely to answer research questions. Data collection took place in the four research states of Borno, Kaduna, Lagos and Rivers, with data gathered coded and analysed to inform this report.

### Overarching Principles

A **robust ethical approach** was followed, with systems in place to ensure adherence to standards. These systems ensured respondents were clear about research aims and what involvement meant for them in terms of risks and benefits and researchers obtaining informed consent. It also meant they received adequate support during the process to participate fully. Information was treated sensitively and confidentially, with anonymity preserved. Referral pathways were established, particularly for women who disclosed experiences of violence. Issues around sexual violence against men and boys were purposefully not covered due to potential for trauma and lack of medical, legal and psychosocial services available.

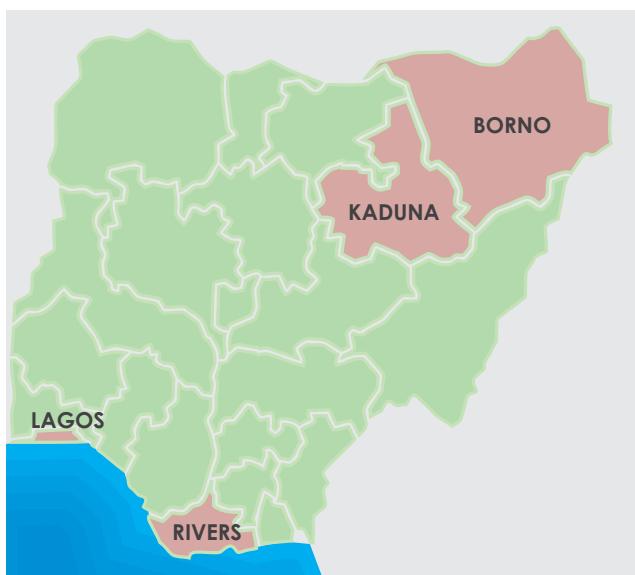
**Conflict sensitivity and gender sensitivity** were guiding principles.<sup>50</sup> These concepts are linked: conflict sensitivity has to integrate awareness of gender dynamics and gender sensitivity has to be sensitive to conflict dynamics. A research checklist was developed to track gender and conflict sensitivity among other factors, and researchers developed strategies accordingly during the methodology workshop. Given research was carried out just after the 2015 elections with tensions persisting, the team took particular care to ensure conflict sensitivity hence the use of an appreciative inquiry method.<sup>51</sup> Strategies developed including reflecting on conflict dynamics in each of the states when reviewing research tools, role-playing potential conflict that may arise between supporters of different political parties and ensuring equal representation of stakeholders on different 'sides' of the conflict. Research tools were designed and delivered in conflict sensitive ways to not only 'do no harm' but actually 'do more good'. Gender sensitivity may seem obvious given the topic, but research on this subject can be done in ways not sensitive to gender power relations. Gendered norms inherent in notions of masculinities are relational i.e. by nature contrasted with those of femininity. As a result, understanding masculinities involves examining their impact on women and girls and knowing femininities. Tools and their delivery were sensitive to gender dynamics in research communities. For example, participants were not asked to share experiences of intimate partner or domestic violence in FGDs. This was to avoid stigma, trauma and 'men only' groups sharing experiences as perpetrators thereby confirming norms. FGDs with women were conducted by women while those with men were conducted by men.

Particular attention was given to monitoring the security situation to reflect risks posed by the sensitivities of issues studied, violent conflict in key areas and implications of conducting research in the aftermath of elections. This was to **safeguard safety and security of researchers and participants** and to ensure continued conflict sensitivity. This led to some delays as explored in the limitations section below.

## Research Methods

Research was conducted in four states as shown in Figure 7. Researchers conducted six FGDs of eight participants in each state. Participants were selected to ensure diversity in spread of income levels, occupations, areas in which they live and levels of education. As younger women and men often feel hesitant to speak in front of older people,<sup>52</sup> FGDs were segmented by age so they would be more able to contribute.

**Figure 5: Map Showing Research States**



In order to discover attitudes around gender and violence but not ask respondents to reflect on their own experiences, researchers read out a series of stories, eliciting thoughts from respondents after each one.

**This first story was used in all states and gives the example of a young man who became involved in violence:** He is 21 years old. He did not finish school and started working early on in life, being the last child of a large family with a single mother (his father passed when he was a baby). He worked many years in menial jobs with low wages which did not give him enough money to provide for his family. After many years of this, he got an offer to join a group which claimed to defend the community's interest and fight against inequalities in the country.

This group however usually gets involved in violent activities. Although he has never done it, he knows some of his colleagues sexually abuse girls in town, especially when they are high on drugs/drunk. By joining this group he puts himself in danger but at the same time earns more money than he does by doing menial jobs. Additionally, being 21 he controls the younger boys joining the group and has respect within the group which makes him feel good. With the income he earns he is able to support his wife and children and even give some money to his aged mother. Since joining though, he is very tense and when he gets back home he sometimes beats up his wife if she does not control the children or disturbs him for money.

**The second story was also used in all states and talks of a young man who refused to become involved in violence:** He is 16 years old. He does not like violence and refuses to fight or get involved in any kind of violence. Some months ago he was invited by one of his friends to take part in a militant group saying that he would be able to earn good money. After thinking a lot about it, he decided not to join because he knew that these groups usually get involved in violent activities and he did not want to take part in this. He does not like fighting and thinks there are other ways to resolve disagreements than violence. After this, other young men from his neighbourhood started bullying him and became really aggressive towards him whenever he went out. After he was beaten up a few times, he decided it was better to stay inside his house helping his mother and sisters with the preparation of food they make to sell in the market.

**The final story was of a young woman who became involved in violence. It was modified by state researchers to be context specific. The Kaduna version read as follows:** Her parents married her off to an older wealthy man who she did not know when she was 14 years old. However, living with the man has been very difficult. The man beats her often and has stopped her from seeing her friends. Out of frustration, she ran away to one of her friend's houses because her parents did not accept

her back to their house. Her friend introduced her to a man who has been very kind to her and has invited her to live with him, but he is an armed robber and goes out raiding at different times. She knows about his activities but because of his kindness to her, she now lives with him and helps him protect his loot after he returns from raiding activities. She now smokes and uses kwaya<sup>53</sup> with him and his friends because she feels loved when she is with them. She enjoys having a lot of money and encourages them to continue their raiding.

**There were four types of FGDs:**

- two FGDs of younger men aged 18 to 25 who were unmarried and without children
- two FGDs of older men aged over 35 who were married
- one FGD of younger women aged 18 to 25
- one FGD of older women aged over 35.

**Key informant interviews were conducted with the following people in each state:**

1. Government representative
2. Traditional or religious leader
3. Youth group representative
4. Women's group representative
5. Person with disability (2 women with disabilities and 2 men with disabilities across the four states)
6. Peacebuilding organisation representative
7. Representative from security agencies
8. Representative from vigilante/ community security groups.

In addition, two life narrative interviews in each state were conducted with a young man and a young woman who had either been involved in or had experienced trauma as a result of violence. This interview focused on their personal struggles, using life narrative methodology.<sup>54</sup> Researchers ensured at least three interviewees were women and three interviewees were young people to ensure inclusion of women and youth in the research and enable findings to reflect as full a picture as possible.

Research methodology took an intersectional approach, examining how masculinities, violence and conflict interrelate and intersect with other identities. For analysis of the data, a grounded theory approach developed codes based on transcripts and conducted analysis on the basis of this. The process was undertaken so conclusions were able to be drawn about issues pertaining to different groups.

**Limitations**

The study does not aim to be, and cannot be, representative of the whole of Nigeria. It is qualitative in nature and, although its results are not statistically significant, it provides rich contextual data on experiences and thoughts of those who took part. Constraints of time and budget limited its scope, including of those who participated. For example, including others such as representatives of educational institutions would have been advantageous but only ten interviews per state were possible. The research team sought a balance between ensuring a range of perspectives and keeping within these constraints.

The security situation in Rivers and Borno caused some delays to recruitment of participants, due to high tensions following federal and state elections, and data collection, due to insecurity and imposition of a curfew following a surprise attack by JAS respectively. Indeed, data collection in Borno proved challenging overall as insecurity caused difficulties with setting up interviews, with an interview with a traditional or religious leader proving not possible as he was unable to be reached despite numerous attempts to do so.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This study was based on a decade of empirical research and using Women Stats, the largest database on the status of women in the world in existence: V. Hudson et al, *Sex and World Peace*, (Columbia University Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup>A.Ekvall, 'Gender Equality, Attitudes to Gender Equality,' *Advances in Gender Research*, 2013 18A 273-295.

<sup>3</sup>Please note that as this is a qualitative not quantitative study, the findings should not be taken as representative.

<sup>4</sup>It was recognised women also had authority in the home, as long as this did not undermine that of her husband. This will be discussed in more detail below.

<sup>5</sup>A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, (General Learning Press, 1977) and J. Vézina and M. Hébert, 'Risk Factors for Victimisation in Romantic Relationships of Young Women: A Review of Empirical Studies and Implications for Prevention,' 2007 8(1) *Trauma, Violence and Abuse* 33-66.

<sup>6</sup>Research shows that of the 6 million young people who enter the labour market each year, only 10 percent are able to find jobs in the formal sector, of which only one third are women. Women in Nigeria earn just 62.7% of the wages men earn in spite of nearly all being involved in some form of economic activities. It also identifies sexual harassment and violence as key barriers to employment. British Council, *Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria* (British Council, 2012) and G. Taylor, E. Fraser, J. Jacobson and R. Phillipson, *Economic Opportunities and Obstacles for Women and Girls in Northern Nigeria*, (Social Development Direct, 2014).

<sup>7</sup>F. Falana, 'Child Marriage and the Constitution,' *Vanguard Nigeria*, 25th July 2013, available here: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/07/child-marriage-and-the-constitution/>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>8</sup>Please note that women whose movements are restricted to the home are still able to make a valuable economic contribution to the household through home-based activities. G. Taylor, E. Fraser, J. Jacobson and R. Phillipson, *Economic Opportunities and Obstacles for Women and Girls in Northern Nigeria*, (Social Development Direct, 2014).

<sup>9</sup>Although the study did not look at inheritance or land rights, women own only 10 percent of the land in the country with this figure falling to 4 percent in the North East so this may not be a majority view. British Council, *Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria* (British Council, 2012).

<sup>10</sup>These include lack of human and financial capital, reluctance to hire women, patriarchal land ownership, sexual harassment and abuse at work, early marriage, gender disparities in education, labour market discrimination, limited access to information channels and job search mechanisms, lack of women's toilets and prayer rooms, being asked for sex during the recruitment process and norms around women continuing work after marriage and having children: J. Banfield, O. Olaide and C. Nagarajan, *Winners or Losers? Assessing the Contribution of Youth Employment and Empowerment Programmes to Reducing Conflict Risk in Nigeria*, (NSRP, 2014).

<sup>11</sup>Those in FGDs were told three stories: of a young man who becomes involved in violence, a young man who avoids violence and a young woman who becomes involved in violence. Please see Annex 3 for the stories.

<sup>12</sup>The description of the man in Borno who made this statement is not provided here in case this would identify the woman to whom he is referring.

<sup>13</sup>H-J. Brinkman, L. Attree and S. Hezir, *Addressing Horizontal Inequalities as Drivers of Conflict in the Post 2015 Development Agenda*, (UNPBSO and Saferworld, 2013).

<sup>14</sup>A.R. Mustapha, 'Violent Radicalisation: Northern Nigeria in the Light of the Experience of Southern Niger Republic,' publication forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup>Mercy Corps, *Youth and Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence*, (Mercy Corps, 2015).

<sup>16</sup>A cult is a secret group with members pulled in voluntarily or by force with the goal of attaining power, influence and money through violence. They are not in the mainstream of society but conduct their actions in secret. Their existence is known but it is considered forbidden for members to speak about their cult publicly although some cults are more open than others. Initiation rituals are seen to give the cult 'ownership rights' over the person joining so it is near impossible to leave, with violence threatened if people try to do so. Threats to family members are used to keep cult members in line. Although some women only cults do exist, cults are predominantly all male organisations.

<sup>17</sup>These findings are corroborated by research conducted by NSRP in Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Rivers and Yobe states. When young people were asked about youth empowerment and employment programmes, 79 percent of them agreed those close to politicians are the ones selected, 64 percent agreed female youth are discriminated against and only 26 percent of them agreed programmes had contributed to reducing the overall rate of youth employment. J. Banfield, C. Nagarajan and O. Olaide, *Winners or Losers: Assessing the Contribution of Youth Employment and Empowerment Programmes to Reducing Conflict Risk in Nigeria*, (NSRP, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>This corroborates existing research on gender norms and female participation in radicalisation. Z. Usman, S. El-Taraboulsi and K. Gambo-Hawaja, 'Gender Norms and Female Participation in Radical Movements in Northern Nigeria,' (publication forthcoming) also talks about women getting involved in JAS for reasons of personal motivation and belief in addition to those of the influence of their husbands and as an economic survival strategy.

<sup>19</sup>'Rape culture' describes a phenomenon where societal attitudes towards gender and sexuality normalise and justify rape and ensure it is pervasive. Some of the behaviour that constitutes rape culture includes blaming victim, denial that rape happens, minimizing the impact of rape and making jokes about rape.

<sup>20</sup>D. Williams and E. Guttschuss, *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Forces Abuses in Nigeria*, (HRW, 2012).

<sup>21</sup>M.S. Umar and D. Ehrhardt, 'Pathways to Radicalization: Life Histories of JAS Members,' publication forthcoming.

<sup>22</sup>Amnesty International, 'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill': Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North East Nigeria, (Amnesty International, 2015).

<sup>23</sup>In Nigeria, women are 80 percent of those who farm but men are five times more likely to own land. One in three women and girls aged 15 to 24 have been subject to violence with suggestions violence is endemic in public institutions such as the police and educational establishments. Women's National Assembly representation has been steadily declining, from 9 percent in 2007 to 7 percent in 2011 to 5.11 percent in the current legislature. A major challenge is paucity of data to be able to track progress. British Council, *Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria* (British Council, 2012); Nigeria Women's Trust Fund, 'Drop in National Assembly Gender Representation,' Press Release, 22nd April 2015.

<sup>24</sup>For example, women with disabilities face discrimination due to gender and disability and are more likely to experience violence, find it difficult to escape and be marginalised from decision making. G. Jerry, P. Pam, C. Nnanna and C. Nagarajan, 'What Violence Means to Us': Women with Disabilities Speak, (Inclusive Friends/ NSRP, 2015).

<sup>25</sup>S. Herbert, 'Links between Women's Empowerment (or Lack Of) and Outbreaks of Violent Conflict,' 2014 GSDRC Helpdesk Report, available at <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ1170.pdf>, last visited 06.07.2014.

<sup>26</sup>H. Wright, *Masculinities, Conflict and Peacebuilding: Perspectives on Men through a Gender Lens*, (Saferworld, 2014). The country specific examples that follow are taken from this report.

<sup>27</sup>P. Francis, *Some Thoughts on Youth Livelihoods in Post Conflict Situations: Marginality, Trauma and Employment*, (World Bank, 2008).

<sup>28</sup>G. Barker and C. Ricardo, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in sub Saharan Africa*, (World Bank, 2005).

<sup>29</sup>M.S. Umar and D. Ehrhardt, 'Pathways to Radicalization: Life Histories of JAS Members,' publication forthcoming.

<sup>30</sup>N. Sudhakar and K. Kuehnast, *The Other Side of Gender: Including Masculinity Concerns in Conflict and Peacebuilding*, (USIP, 2011).

<sup>31</sup>Analysis of the World Bank's qualitative dataset found conflict affected women registered being more empowered to shape their lives while men reported losing control and authority. Conflict opened up economic opportunities for women but also increased risks to women's safety and reputation.P. Petesch, 'The Clash of Violent Conflict, Good Jobs, and Gender Norms in Four Economies,' *Background paper for the World Development Report*, (World Bank, 2013) and P. Petesch, *Women's Empowerment Arising from Violent Conflict and Recovery*,(USAID, 2011).

<sup>32</sup>J. Zenn and E. Pearson, 'Women, Gender and the Evolving Tactics of Boko Haram,' 2014 5(1) *Journal of Terrorism Research*. Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno has also spoken of how JAS 'arranged inexpensive marriages between sect members, which enabled many of them to marry and gave them personal dignity and self-worth.' J. Banfield, C. Nagarajan and O. Olaide, *Winners or Losers: Assessing the Contribution of Youth Employment and Empowerment Programmes to Reducing Conflict Risk in Nigeria*, (NSRP, 2014), p. 16.

<sup>33</sup>Conversation between the author and women doing peacebuilding work in Jos, September 2013.

<sup>34</sup>C. Harris, 'Masculinities and Religion in Kaduna, Nigeria,' 2012 2 (2) *Religion and Gender* 207-230.

<sup>35</sup>B. Evans, 'Types of Conflict – Four Classifications,' 16th August 2013, available at <http://www.typeofconflict.org/>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>36</sup>J. Galtung, 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research,' *Journal of Peace Research*, 1969 6(3) 167-191.

<sup>37</sup>The information in this section is taken from a number of NSRP documents and conflict analysis conducted by the Peace and Security Working Group in the run-up to the 2015 elections, all available at the NSRP website: <http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org/research/publications/>, last visited 06.07.2015,

<sup>38</sup>Inaugural speech by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari following his swearing-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 29th May 2015, available at <http://mbuhari.ng/full-text-of-the-inaugural-speech-of-president-muhammadu-buhari/>, last visited 01.06.2015, Amnesty International, 'Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill': *Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North East Nigeria*, (Amnesty International, 2015) and International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, (International Crisis Group, 2014).

<sup>39</sup>Amnesty International, *Stars on Their Shoulders. Blood on Their Hands. War Crimes Committed by the Nigerian Military*, (Amnesty International, 2015).

<sup>40</sup>I. Umara, A. Muazu, A. Fari, Y. Imam and Y. Bukar, 'Study of the Activities of Civilian Joint Task Force in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Jere Local Government Areas, Borno State, Nigeria,' publication forthcoming.

<sup>41</sup>Human Rights Watch, *The Miss World Riots: Continued Impunity for Killings in Kaduna*, Vol 15-13 (A), 6th July 2003, available here: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/nigeria0703/nigeria0703.pdf>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>42</sup>N. Orji and N. Uzodi, *Post Election Violence in Nigeria: Experiences with the 2011 Elections*, (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, 2012).

<sup>43</sup>Peace and Security Working Group, *Nigeria 2015 Election Scenarios and Recommendations: Kaduna State*, 15th January 2015, available here: <http://library.fundforpeace.org/electionsenario-kaduna-1501>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>44</sup>USAID, 'Climate Change and Conflict in West African Cities: A Policy Brief on Findings from Lagos, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana,' (USAID, 2013).

<sup>45</sup>The Igbo are an ethnic group who, although they live all over the country, have their 'home' in Southeastern Nigeria and speak the Igbo language.

<sup>46</sup>B. Ezeamalu, 'Audio: What the Oba of Lagos, Rilwan Akiolu, Told Igbo Leaders,' Premium Times, 6th April 2015, available here: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/180676-audio-what-oba-of-lagos-rilwan-akiolu-told-igbo-leaders.html>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>47</sup>O. Ajasa, 'Lagos Poll: Backlash Over Akiolu's Meeting with Igbo's,' Vanguard Nigeria, 6th April 2015, available here: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/lagos-poll-backlash-over-akiolus-meeting-with-igbos/>, last visited 01.06.2015.

<sup>48</sup>*Daughters of the Niger Delta*, a peer film-making project, directed by Ilse van Lamoen and produced by Media Information and Narrative Development and FLL. For more information, please see the film website, available at <http://www.daughtersofthenigerdelta.org/>, last visited 06.07.2015.

<sup>49</sup>Symbolic interactionism is an approach which centres the viewpoint of those who participate in the research while grounded theory is a process whereby data gathered is used as the basis for theoretical concepts discovered.

<sup>50</sup>Being gender and conflict sensitive involves conducting analysis of the gender and conflict dynamics of the context, examining the interaction between dynamics and intervention and developing and implementing strategies to mitigate negative and maximise positive impacts on gender and conflict dynamics. In this way, research contributes positively rather than negatively to conflict dynamics and gender equality.

<sup>51</sup>This approach focuses on the positive, valuing what currently exists and envisioning what might be. One way research ensured this was to start and end focus groups discussions and interviews by asking respondent to reflect on different positive aspects of their lives and communities.

<sup>52</sup>S. Huxley et al, *Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers*, (Student Partnerships Worldwide/ DFID, 2010) and G. Taylor, E. Fraser, J. Jacobson and R. Phillipson, *Economic Opportunities and Obstacles for Women and Girls in Northern Nigeria*, (Social Development Direct, 2014).

<sup>53</sup>Kwaya is the Hausa term for hard drugs.

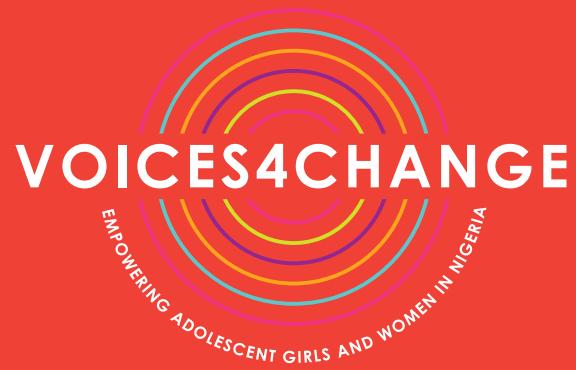
<sup>54</sup>For more on this type of methodology please see M. Andrews, C. Squire and M. Tamboukou (eds), *Doing Narrative Research*, 2nd edition, (Sage, 2013).

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## MASCULINITIES, CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

March 2016