Global Governance and Gender-Based Violence Online

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Introduction
Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become ubiquitous in modern life, and with them, social, political, and professional networks have shifted into the online space. Digital networks have developed rapidly, and in recent years, have helped facilitate many forms of gender-based violence (GBV). These include intimate partner violence, online harassment on the basis of gender, and surveillance. This research project aims to address the proliferation of violence in these areas as well as the approach of independent states, the international community, and private corporations, to regulate against these developments.

Categorizing GBV Online

Intimate Partner Violence
- Digital platforms and ICTs have enabled a ‘spaceless violence’ to take place as “an extension of violence that is already being perpetrated in a relationship.”
- The ability for domestic violence perpetrators to maintain direct contact with their victims transcends physical distance
- Bad actors can use their platforms to create ‘perpetrator networks,’ where proxies are employed to facilitate abuse from within a community

Online Harassment
- The emergence of “toxic technocultures,” on platforms such as Reddit, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube actively increase abusive behaviours
- They act as a “force multiplier,” allowing the negative impact of an action to reach multiple victims, whereas non-cybercrime would not.
- The prevalence of this type of harassment has specific repercussions on non-male participants in politics, journalism, and academia.

Surveillance
- Cyberstalking can be defined as the “repeated pursuit of an individual using electronic or Internet-capable devices.”
- This behaviour is often secondary to online harassment or intimate partner violence, both coming from perpetrators known and unknown to a victim

Case Studies

Violence in the Real World
- Spaceless violence has facilitated the targeting of non-male users of ICTs, regardless of relationship or public profile.
- In a study, college students indicated that their interactions with ex-partners on Facebook have frequently included “cyber obessional pursuit.”
- According to Statistics Canada, 18% of women have experienced anonymous harassment online, compared to 14% of men.
- High-profile women, such as Maria Ressa, the acclaimed editor and CEO of Rappler in the Philippines, have experienced campaigns of harassment and surveillance conducted on ICT platforms, including credible threats to life on the basis of gender.

Recommendations
1. Domestically, government agencies, police, service providers, and locally based ICTs should collaborate to create and enforce legislation that equates online GBV to its more concrete physical counterpart.
2. Private ICT’s corporations should adopt a normative approach from no-tolerance policies, with the intention to dismantle “toxic” environments.
3. International organizations should prioritise accountability on the part of ICTs, through active investigation and an expectation of transparency.
4. All three groups should encourage technological development of encryption, anti-stalkerware, and anonymity protecting tools.

References
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