

My research examines processes of translation occurring at the interfaces between domestic violence (DV) research, policy, and practice, both within the United States and in international development settings. During my doctoral studies, I have focused on two major areas of research: 1) the creation and use of DV research evidence and 2) how DV service providers draw on and negotiate between international policy and knowledge acquired through local practice. My two sole-investigator projects examine these issues in Nepal, a country which has a longstanding relationship with international development policy, funding, and programming. This research has been supported by interdisciplinary training and funding through the health sciences, Feminist Studies, and South Asia Studies. It is informed by my extended family networks and experiences living and working in Nepal. When discussing my research in Nepal, I use the term DV as a translation of the Nepali term *gharelu biñsā*, both because this is the primary term used by service providers in Nepal and because it allows for an understanding of DV in the context of a normative extended, rather than nuclear, family structure in Nepal.

I became concerned about DV while working as a family therapist in the United States and with international workers in Nepal. I was struck by the isolation of those experiencing DV, and the use of isolation (whether in a large middle-class home or in a different country) as a strategy to exercise control. This experience contrasted deeply with my later experiences working with a Nepali non-governmental organization (NGO) that addressed the mental health and human rights of marginalized women and children. In this setting, community groups actively monitored and addressed DV. Additionally, in Nepal, where social work is largely carried out under the auspices of development, often with international funding, I observed a variety of interactions between donors and local organizations and noted the differences in power (based largely on nationality and race) and local embeddedness that characterized these relationships.

### Research Experience

I have been involved in projects focused on the links between DV research, policy, and practice both as a research assistant and as a principal investigator. I was co-investigator on a project that examined how DV service providers in Washington State (including victim's advocates, police, lawyers, and judges) defined, acquired, and evaluated research evidence to support their work. This study revealed large gaps between university researchers and DV practitioners as well as the central role of intermediary organizations and individuals in the translation of research evidence. Drawing on transnational feminist and postcolonial scholarship, I designed and conducted a critical discourse analysis project to examine how culture was constructed in international development research about DV in Nepal. I found that essentializing discourses of culture were predominant across development research documents and that these in turn shaped what could be known about, and therefore done, to address DV in Nepal.

Only after developing a critique of development's Western gaze through the above project could I properly attend to the perspectives of DV service providers in Nepal, including the ways that local perspectives and strategies both complement and differ from those of international organizations. My dissertation examined how DV service providers in Pokhara, Nepal translate between

international policy and local practice. Incorporating two rounds of primary data generated through Nepali language interviews, focus groups, and field observations with DV service providers in Pokhara, Nepal, my three-paper dissertation consisted of 1) a conceptual paper that describes the applications of postcolonial theory to social work research in international development settings; 2) a critical discourse analysis examining how DV is understood and framed by service providers in comparison to major international human rights policy documents; and 3) a qualitative analysis examining how immediate and extended family members address DV. The results of this dissertation not only elucidate contextually and culturally responsive DV practice in Nepal, but also challenge dominant international assumptions (as embedded in policy) about family life and what it means to address DV.

My research touches on larger social work issues about the linkages between research and practice and I have published several papers related to this theme. The first, published in the *European Journal of Social Work*, defined transnational social work research and discussed how to approach it through a social justice lens. I am also part of a long-term collaboration with others seeking to increase the visibility of critical discourse analysis as a research method for social work. This has resulted in several presentations at the Society for Social Work Research Conference (2021, 2020, 2019), as well as publications including a first-authored publication published in *Qualitative Social Work*, which outlined key decisions in CDA research design and described a variety of strategies to present CDA research to social work and health sciences audiences.

### **Future research**

In subsequent studies, I plan to continue to examine community strategies to address gender-based violence (GBV), as an important alternative criminal justice approaches. To this end, I will begin by publishing findings from my dissertation which describe how communities address DV in Nepal. I will also continue collaborations with Nepali organizations and activist networks to explore issues of mutual interest such as the role of community groups and the effective engagement of men to address GBV. Beginning with another analysis using my dissertation data, I will continue to examine the impacts of transnational political economies on family life in Nepal. In my new home community, I will explore community and policy efforts to ensure not only the short-term safety of survivors, but also their long-term well-being, as well as community efforts to hold those who have used violence accountable. Towards my interest in men's engagement in anti-GBV work, I am currently a co-investigator in a quantitative research project examining men's gender equitable attitudes and behaviors.

I have successfully obtained interdisciplinary funding to support my program of research from the National Institute of Health (TL1 TR002318), the US Department of Education (Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship), as well as from the University of Washington's Department of Global Health and Graduate School. In the future, I will apply for funding to pursue community-based participatory research through a K award with the National Institute of Health (NIMH, NICHD), Fogerty International, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, and the William T. Grant Foundation.