How do global supply chains exacerbate gender-based violence against women in the global south?

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The majority of commodities sold by large brands and retailers in the world today are not produced in one single location, rather their components parts are sourced or produced across different countries through complex transnational production networks known as 'supply chains'[1]. The development of global supply chains has been part of a wider transformation in global production and trading patterns and is linked to neoliberal trade 'liberali ation' and the increased ease of capital flow, as well as lower transportation costs and better global communication networks. This has

driven industries, specifically garments and fresh!produce, opportunistically reinforce gender hierarchies by demanding cheap!flexible labour from suppliers, which in turn, forces female workers into exploitative employment and increases their risk of being subject to violence in the workplace by male managers and co!workers. 1 will then go onto explore how the feminisation of labour in supply chains has exacerbated gender!based violence in certain cultural and local contexts by examining the link between 'femicides' in Biudad CuDre , 6exico and the introduction of 8xport!;rocessing Eones in the 1@@,s. 'astly, 1 will examine the link between raw material exploitation and sexual violence in the 8astern 5emocratic Fepublic of the Bongo &5FB/ by examining h(e)-2.73599( )-214.18r u( )-214.18r)-2.7

to cope with such pressure and results in them passing it onto their workforce leading to forced labour practices. 4or example, a study examining the supply chains of G, companies discovered that only about . per cent of supply chain workforce was directly employed &'e(aron,)oward, Thibos and *yritsis, +,1-, p.A1/. This indicates that the "successes of retailers and brands in creating low!cost flexible supply chains appears to rely on the availability of a pool of workers who are socially and economically obliged to accept work on such terms% &Faworth and *idder, +,,@, p.1.G/. 6ean

chains, whereas men occupy the majority of managerial roles in factories and farms. Thus, "gender as a category of social and economic differentiation influences the division of labour, and the distribution of work, income, productivity inputs and the economic behaviour of agents &Moung, +,1- p.JG-/.

Gender-Based iolence in !upply "hains# The Garment $ndustry

The integration of women into the demanding supply chains of big brands and retailers "has been on unfavourable terms, with employment characteri ed by low pay and poor working conditions as well as low job insecurity and uncertain sustainability% &Moung, +,1-, p.J.1/. This is because the competitive nature of markets for labour!intensive products, as well as raw material extraction, has in many instances exacerbated gender ine3ualities and aggravated local and cultural gender relations, by creating unregulated environments in which violence against women thrives. 1t is therefore, essential to examine how these socio! economic factors produce or exacerbate violence against women, as well as how "gender constructions of women as inferior or subordinate to men within and across societies have made violence against women both acceptable, in many places at many times, and invisible% &True, +,1+, p.@/.

The garment industry is a key example of this because the rise of 'fast fashion' in the clothing industry has led to retailers delivering e

down their supply chains, hindering them from inves

‘%emicides’ in "iudad &uare'( ) exico#

=iolence against women manifests in various forms with acts ranging from verbal and emotional abuse to physical and sexual assault. 2ne of the most egregious forms is ‘femicide’, a sex!based hate crime, which according to the ?)2 &+,1+/ "is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women%. The town Biudad Cuare is an 8xport ;rocessing Eone located along the 6exican!>merican border that has been described as the ‘femicide capital’ of the world. $ince 1@@A thousands of women have been murdered and significantly many of the vi

towards female workers &ibid/. This resentment intersected with the cultural expressions of machismo and marianismo regarding male and female roles within 'atin >merican society. These terms signify inherently patriarchal values as, "male power is symboli ed by aggression, whereas the domestic and inferior nature of women is symboli ed by marinanismo% &;antaleo, +,1,, p.AG1/. The conse3uence of these patriarchal values is that more often than not, women are defined solely in relation to their role as wives and mothers: as unpaid carers of the family who should not engage in paid labour &ibid/. >s a result, the expansion of women workers into exporting sectors has created a perception among economically alienated men that women are preventing them from performing their role as 'providers', which in some cases, has led to men attempting to reassert their power and social standing through violence against women &True, +,1+/.

) ineral *xploitation and Trade in the *astern +,"

tactically to control communities by creating feelings of stigma and shame at an individual and community!based level &6eger, +,11/. This in turn, perpetuates a break!down of community kinship ties through the "exploitation of social and cultural norms of honour and identity% &6eger, +,11, p.1+G/. >ccordingly, a large body of research on mineral exploitation and sexual violence has emphasised the connection between sexual violence in the 8astern 5FB and the ac3uisition of mineral wealth by armed groups operating in the region &globalwitness.org, enoughproject.org/. 2ne of the main examples often cited, aiming to show a connection between sexual violence and conflict minerals is '?alikale', which is a prominent mining region in the 8astern part of the country where in +,1, over A,, women, men, girls and boys were raped and sexually assaulted by soldiers from the 45'F and 6aP $heka rebel groups &5evoe, +,11, p.J.L/. 1n response to this event, as well as international pressure, then president Coseph *abila introduced a mining ban from

finance acts as the node, connecting the two markets% &6 erger, +,11, p.11,/. There are also many peaceful Bongolese artisanal miners &including women/ whose survival is e3ually as dependent upon the mines for a source of income as armed groups: whose livelihoods would be undermined if stricter regulations or bans were imposed domestically and internationally &*irby, +,1+/. 4urthermore, mainstream discourses tend to marginalise more common forms of $#(= that occur in mining sites in the eastern 5FB specifically, 'transactional sex'.)ere, "women provide sex to gain access to employment, which further

perpetuate "sexual violence as an available means for obtaining the ‘provider’ masculinity subverted by the femini ation of poverty% &6eger, +,1G, p.J+-/. These affective feelings, however, are tied to a neoliberal transformation that has undermined previously established modes of social reproduction, which has explicitly gendered conse3uences at a micro and macro level &4ederici, +,,+/. These changes are inherently violent as they re3uire "the suppression of dissent and any form of economic activity that challenges the logic of accumulation% &6eger, +,1G, p. J++/. ;ost!colonial developing countries, such as the 5FB, with valuable natural resources and weak institutional structures are especially vulnerable to out!breaks of conflict. This is because global demand creates internal and external competition for access to these resources, which has supported the rise of shadow economies and provided non!state actors with material incentives in a country with few formal economic opportunities &1bid/. >s in clientelist states, only a select group of political and financial elites with formal access to institutional power have profited from neoliberal globalisation &1bid/. Bonse3uentially, these processes have exacerbated existing internal tensions and fuelled conflict, while simultaneously financially benefiting certain domestic and international actors. 1t is in this environment that, "sexual and gender!based violence perpetuated in the context of the conflict in eastern 5FB has facilitated the exploitation of natural resources and accumulation for those within the respective industries% &6erger, +,1G, p.J+L/. Therefore, the prevalence of $#(= and mineral exploitation may not be a deliberate and conscious strategy employed to serve the material goals of leading firms or even armed groups. 7e.168(a)8.72585(c)2.6053(87592(e)7.26)nh
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which has been detrimental to local gender relations and has facilitated the rise of increasingly violent environments.

In conclusion, the integration of women workers acr

conjunction with unregulated labour and corporate environments has enabled gender! based violence to thrive.

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