

Title

The Coloniality of Protection: Gender-Based Violence, Disaster Governance, and Climate (In)justice in Barbados

Abstract

Barbados's vulnerability to intensifying Atlantic hurricanes intersects with an entrenched gendered architecture of care that renders domestic-violence survivors acutely exposed during and after disasters. This study interrogates the climate resilience of the island's Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Act by focusing on the organisational preparedness of state-supported shelters. Deploying a decolonial feminist framework informed by Foucauldian analytics of power, sexuality and governmentality, this research combines policy analysis and semi-structured interviews with disaster risk management stakeholders such as Police Family Conflict Units and the Department of Emergency Management. Preliminary findings reveal no gender-responsive policies that incorporate the intersections of gender and climate; furthermore, very limited provisions are in place to ensure the safety of survivors during emergency crises. Governmental protocols privilege crime-control logics over trauma-informed evacuation planning, while donor-driven resilience upgrades rarely consult survivor expertise. These gaps perpetuate a coloniality of protection in which Black women's safety is contingent on technocratic gatekeeping rather than collective self-determination. The article concludes by proposing a survivor-centred resilience index and legislative amendments targeting disaster-readiness policies. By situating gender-based violence within climate adaptation strategies, the research advances Sustainable Development Goals 5, 13 and 16, foregrounding justice as a prerequisite for genuine resilience for Barbados and the wider Caribbean.