

## **Analysis of the Violence in the Relationships of Couples in Women between 25 and 45 Years Old in Highly Marginated Community of Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper is the result of research conducted with women 25-45 years old engagement who live in a highly marginal neighborhood in Cd. Victoria Tamaulipas according to the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy Mexico (CONAPO). A quantitative descriptive study was made with a questionnaire applied to women from that age. The 44 items questionnaire indicated different types of violence: economic, sexual, physical, and psychological. The results showed significant levels in all types of violence. Among the most significant data, 52% of the women reported that after an intense argument in which humiliates and even hits, her couple was loving and caring with promises of change. It is necessary to implement mechanisms to protect and ensure life free of violence as founding national and state legislation.*

**Keywords:** violence, women, gender, marginalization

### **Introduction**

Data on violence against women worldwide are overwhelming. The statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO) (OMS, 2013) indicate that 35% of women throughout the world are victims of physical and/or sexual violence from their partner, or sexual violence by persons other than their partners. In the most of the cases, this concerns cases of violence within the conjugal union.

Worldwide, nearly one-third (30%) of all women who have maintained a relationship in a couple with a partner have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence from their partner. In some regions, that number can rise to 38%. (OMS, 2013)

The total number of female homicides, 38% is due to conjugal violence, a very alarming number; women who have been victims of physical or sexual abuse from their partner are at greater risk for suffering from a series of important health problems. Thus, for example, these women have 16% chance of giving birth to underweight babies, more than double the probabilities of undergoing an abortion, or nearly double the amount of probabilities of suffering a depression and, in some regions, these women are 1.5 times more likely to contract HIV, compared with women who have not been victims of domestic violence. (OMS, 2013)

For Amnesty International (2009), "discrimination and violence against women go hand in hand, denying them their right to health, education, housing and food. Poverty, in turn, exposes women and girls to be subjected to further abuse and violence, closing the vicious circle." (p. 8)

The poverty and marginalization put women in a situation of high vulnerability but especially violence couples, mainly due to economic dependence on their partners, visualization with violence as common occurrence and of course the repetition offender bias.

*"Poverty makes it harder to find a way to escape abusive relationships. While economic independence does not protect them from violence, access to economic resources can enhance their ability to make effective choices.*

*A woman who is economically dependent on her partner cannot see a viable way to support themselves and their children. A girl who becomes pregnant because of a violation may be excluded from school, which will decrease her chances of finding employment and ensure an independent future". (Amnesty International, 2009, p. 3)*

In order to know the vulnerability of women in their relationships with their partner, we have conducted a research in an urban neighborhood marked by the Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Social de Mexico (the National Policy Council of Social Development of Mexico, CONAPO) as a very highly marginalization zone in Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico. This paper presents the results of research conducted in this area in female couple between 25-45 years old.

### ***Marginalization and Poverty***

There is a difference in the concepts of marginalization, poverty and exclusion, often these three terms are used for explaining the same phenomenon, although there is a direct relationship between the three, there are some differences that have to do with the measurement of the causes of poverty and marginalization.

With regard to what refers to the measurement of poverty, there are two methods for calculating this with reference to income: poverty line, and the ones that consider unsatisfied basic needs. The following different degrees of poverty splinter off from these methods: nutritional poverty, poverty of capacities, patrimonial poverty, income poverty, etc. Thus, it has been entered the multidimensional notion of poverty. (CONAPO, 2010)

The poverty-line method defines a "canasta básica" (a market basket of basic goods and services), based on market prices, and compares these with incomes. As a result of this comparison, the poverty is established of those families who do not have sufficient resources to purchase this goods and services.

The methodology used to unsatisfied basic needs measured gaps in the quality and quantity of housing services, the basic heritage and in the educational backwardness. This method emphasizes the richness in terms of accumulation, and the poverty-line method is based on current income.

The particularity of poverty is inequality, which is especially evident at three levels: ideological, economic, and political. Ideologically, the cultural referents of the individual do not fit in its entirety; consequently has a low participation in the dominant culture. With regard to economic participation, subjects enter disadvantageous relations by low technical skills, low productivity and weak contributions. On the political level, their representation is delegated to people always external to communities, creating a dependence on the outside.

The inequality causes poverty cores generate internal dynamics, which are actually coping strategies and create differentiated systems of values and habits. These strategies have been perceived as subcultures, but actually are attenuated expressions of social system in which they are immersed. (CONAPO, 2010)

In this sense, the concepts of poverty and marginalization refer two different structural phenomena within a locality, one pointing to the endogenous characteristics (poverty) and the other characteristics of exogenous or structural nature (marginalization). Among the main differences between the measurements of poverty and marginalization are the units of analysis and information sources. To measure poverty is taken as the family unit, assuming this group in a small, natural social system, which links the individual and society. Measuring marginalization is taken as the unit of analysis geopolitical areas and smaller towns as territorial spaces. (CONAPO, 2010)

These measurements are complementary, since poverty measurements provide information regarding the characteristics of families, while the index of marginalization located geographically.

CONAPO determines the marginality index based on nine socioeconomic indicators to measure forms of social exclusion and which are variable lag or deficit, based on three dimensions of marginalization of communities: education, housing and income.

### ***Education***

This dimension comprises two indicators. The first relates to the ability of people to read and write a message, the second indicator refers to the minimum amount of knowledge provided by the national education system, specifically the completion of primary school. Thus, socioeconomic indicators are:

- a) Percentage of population aged 15 years or more illiterate.
- b) Percentage of population aged 15 years or more without a complete primary school.

### ***Housing***

Housing is the only constant physical space during the stages of life of individuals, from infancy to adulthood in fullness, therefore, is crucial to the development of abilities, skills, emotional maturity, and knowledge of everyone. Consequently, explore housing conditions essential to treat marginalization. The five socioeconomic indicators considered in the housing dimension are:

- c) Percentage of private dwellings without toilet
- d) Percentage of private dwellings without power
- e) Percentage of private dwellings without running water
- f) Average number of occupants per room in private dwellings
- g) Percentage of private dwellings with dirt floors.

### ***Income***

The index of marginalization on the state and municipal levels considered an indicator on labor income; however, this information is not available by locality in Mexican Census 2010. In order to have a proxy indicator, as in the Census 2005, it was decided to include the availability of refrigerators in homes. The availability of refrigerator is conditioned by the income of which is disposed in the housing, either for work or monetary or in-kind transfer; further, not having cooler limits the possibilities of having fresh perishable foods and increases the health risks associated with food intake with some degree of decomposition and poor diet. In view of the above, consider the following socioeconomic indicator:

- h) Percentage of private dwellings that do not have refrigerators.

Based on these indicators, the degree of marginalization is very low, low, medium, high and very high.

Therefore, for selection of this Cd. Victoria urban neighborhood based on CONAPO estimations, it is found to have a very high degree of marginalization.

### ***Poverty and Gender Violence***

As mentioned previously, poverty as a multidimensional factor involves the lack of material, social and cultural resources; factors such as income and consumption are added others like education, health, security, and freedom of people, quality of housing and the environment. All elements cause multidimensional poverty in whom suffer, vulnerability, security, their voice are heard, helplessness and powerlessness against those who injure their human rights. (WHO, 2005)

The Beijing Conference Report notes that in all societies, to greater or lesser extent girls and women are subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse regardless of their class and culture. "The low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of violence being inflicted" (ONU, 1995). In a vicious circle where poverty and violence are intertwined conditioning the situation of women.

Thus, since the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the relationship between poverty, marginalization, exclusion, accumulation of social disadvantage and cultural carries a line of gender, color, national origin and historical discrimination. (Jelin, 2004)

Poverty and violence in women, has its own historical origins, in the patriarchal system that discriminates, conditions and determines the lives of women, hindering their access to education, paid work, and thus limits their possibilities for development economic, social and cultural. Violence against women in subordinate economies can be explained because of the characteristics of the culture in which they make their living traditional patriarchal practices. (Narayan, 1997)

According Uma Narayan (1997), the patriarchal system and the economic system are key elements to explain the problems of Third World women, since control of women is not only a regulatory system inequitable practice of gender discrimination; also the economic system does its part to control and marginalize not only to women but to a large group of men.

While violence against women is not only happens in disadvantaged social classes, but affects women fall extracts of society alike, numerous studies indicate that it is associated with economic marginalization, either within home, or outside it (Sagot, 2000), (Narayan, 1997), (González de la Rocha, 2004).

For the World Health Organization (2005), where poverty and violence are brought together, the burden is greater for women, especially for those with low incomes. The marginalization and lack of money affect and limit every

aspect of life, the way they live, what they do and with whom they interact. The economic situation and gender weakens the empowerment of women as gender violence occurs, they feel unable to leave their abusers who are economically dependent. Low schooling preventing have the skills to enter the labor market and obtain financial resources to enable them sustain themselves and their children.

### ***Couple Violence***

Violence against women is defined as “any act of violence based on belonging to the female or is likely to result in damage or physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”(General Assembly UN, 1993: s/p).

Violence against women is one of the most extreme forms of gender inequality and one of the main barriers to empowerment, deploying their skills and exercise their rights, besides being a clear violation of their human rights.

The studies, approaches, international and national conventions and laws have established a clear typology to distinguish all the different actions involving an act of violence against women. This research addresses these modalities but from partner violence.

Almonacid (1996) states that domestic violence is the use of instrumental means by a spouse or partner to intimidate psychologically or physically, intellectually and morally void your partner in order to discipline according to his will and needs of family life. Women victims of domestic violence suffer intentional physical abuse and is forced to take actions that did not want, is prevented from performing actions you want and the perpetrator is a grown man who has linked legally run married couple.

### ***The Research***

In order to describe, analyze and interpret violence in homes, their effects on the family and women between 25-45 years of age of marginalized urban colony in Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas, a descriptive, quantitative study was raised. One taking items from questionnaire by the National Institute for Social Development (INDESOL), applied in 2006 to “Huasteca micro region of San Luis Potosi” to diagnose the situation of domestic violence, the questionnaire was designed. The inhabitants of the colony Bethel consisting of 287 men and 320 women aged 25-45 years according to the INEGI. From this population a probability sample of (114.64) women between 25 and 45 years old was taken to apply the questionnaire.

$$n' = S^2/V^2$$

$$S^2 = p(1 - p) = 0.95(1 - 0.95) = 0.04$$

$$V^2 = (0.015)^2 = 0.000225$$

$$n' = S^2/V^2 = n' = (0.04)/(0.000225) = 177.77 \quad \text{Unadjusted sample}$$

$$(n=n')/(1 + n'/N) = n = (177.77)/(1 + 177.77/320) = n = (177.77)/(1 + 0.55) = (177.77)/(1.55)$$

$$n = 114.64 \text{ Adjustable sample}$$

The design of the questionnaire was based largely on the instrument used by the National Institute for Social Development (INDESOL), applied in 2006 to “Huasteca micro region of San Luis Potosi” to diagnose the situation of family violence. A questionnaire of 44 closed items, which includes questions to determine the sociodemographic situation and the types of violence, was carried out. Once applied the instrument, the sample was reduced to 82 questionnaires (71%) of total participants (women). They could miss several drawbacks when making field application obviously affected a few on their reduction thereof. Then the following are indicated:

- Negativity by the wives to responding the questionnaire
- The presence of the husband/partner during application of the questionnaire generated nervousness, fear, and insecurity for wives to respond freely
- Opposition of the husband/partner drove him that wife could not go out to respond.
- No ceded to open the door of their home.

After applying the questionnaires, the results data were analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

### ***Results***

#### **Sociodemographic Data**

The predominant age of the women surveyed were women 41–45 years of age (29.3%), 20–25 years of age (20.7%), and (17.1%) third place is occupied ranges 31–35 and 36–40 years, respectively, while the range of 26 to 30 years range had only 13 women, corresponding to 15.9%.

### **Schooling**

According to the data, schooling of the female population is mostly of Primary education, in 46.3% of the women surveyed, followed by Secondary education at 41.5%, while very few women have a degree of Bachelor preparatory (9.8%), and only two women had an undergraduate university degree corresponding to 2.4%. This is significant, because it is a referent marginalization, and thus an essential tool for women to break out the cycle of violence condition, as discussed hereinabove.

### **Occupation**

In this section, we highlight that 68.3% of surveyed women are dedicated to being housewife, this is, they engage unpaid domestic work. Only 22.0% women get a temporary job, 6.1% have a full time job, 2.4% are pensioners and 1.2% are self-employed.

### **Marital Status**

57% of women reported "living in a common-law relationship", 19.5% "married only in a civil ceremony", 14.6% "married in both a civil ceremony and by the church", while 8.5% reported being married "by the church."

### **Number of Children**

25.6% of women surveyed reported having two children with his current partner, while 24.4% respondents have 3 children, 3.4% with only 1, followed by 9.8% with 4 children.

### **Number family members**

52.4% of women reported having between 4-6 people living in the family. Meanwhile, 29.3% of respondents have 2-3 members, 9.8% said count of 6-7 members live in the family.

### **Manifestations of Partner Violence**

As indicated by Higgins (1997), as cited in Rodriguez and Córdoba (2009), the Intimate Partner Violence is displayed indifferent ways: psychological or emotional, economic, heritage, sexual and physical. Based on the result, the "physical violence" is the demonstration that women suffer more frequently from 20-45 years old. Everything indicates that it reaches 40.2% (33) of all women surveyed.

Relevant data show the main actions of this event that women have suffered in colony Bethel in the last 12 months. According NiCarthy (2003), physical violence includes violent actions (serious to minor injuries) that impair bodily integrity, ranging from a slap to injury causing death of the victim. Therefore, 9.8% women/wives said they had been pushing and hair pulling always and 42.7% sometimes. Meanwhile, 11.0% reported being assaulted with objects and materials always and 31.7% sometimes.

The relationship violence and alcohol consumption was also reflected in the results of this study, 9.8% of women reported that alcohol is always the factor that borders the husband to act violently and 34.1% women noted this is occurring sometimes.

Levels of physical violence reported by participants indicate high physical vulnerability and even threatening danger of aggression received by the couple, 4.9% of women reported ever receiving attempted hanging/suffocation and 17.1% women said this happened sometimes, as well as aggressive attempts against them with a knife or razor. 50% of them mentioned that situations of violence in their relationship have always been present, so it is difficult to change and, unfortunately for 11% worsened brutally putting their integrity.

The cycle of violence is presented in emphatic on the results of this research. To express question if after a heated argument, humiliation and even shock, the couple gives things, promises that will never happen again and that everything will change, 52% of respondents indicated that this occurs.

The final phase of honeymoon/repentance, which there is some calm the aggressor apologizes, promises are attentive and such incidents do not happen again and that everything can change, usually woman falls into the game hoping to improve the relationship (Jara and Romero s/ a).

Among the results of this research, psychological violence occurred in second place 35.4% of women surveyed, this being the first step up to the ladder of violence. Psychological violence refers to any act or omission that harms psychological stability, which may consist of: neglect, abandonment, neglect reiterated, jealousy, insults, humiliation, devaluation, marginalization, hate, indifference, infidelity, destructive comparisons, rejection, restriction determination and threats, which lead the victim to depression, isolation, devaluation of self-esteem and even suicide.

In the first phase of the cycle of violence, accumulation of tensions is where the first differences/conflicts are generated in a relationship (Walker, 1978). 56% of women reported that their partners have not talked to them without any motive or reason, 22% said they were victims of discrimination, this having been scorned, ashamed, and in their homes, compared with other women. The explosive reactions from the couple to destroy, shooting, hiding things from home and items belonging to the women had happened in the last 12 months interviewed households (37%).

As noted by Bourdieu (1999 - 2000) in his speech of symbolic violence, refers to social domination and even more in performance. For the couple, the patriarchal power and subordination is clear, 23% of respondents reported having been imprisoned, was prevented from leaving, receiving visitors, friends, neighbors and surprisingly people with a family tie. 37% reported having been threatened to leave, damage, and take the children away or with the woman being ejected from the home.

Economic violence is one that affects the economic survival of the victim. It is manifested by limitations designed to control the income perceived by women and perceptions of lower wages for equal work in the same workplace. The results of this research indicate that economic violence is present in 30.5% of women surveyed.

In the last 12 months, the research participants noted that even if their partner has money has been stingy with household expenses always (14.6%) and 25.6% sometimes. 43% are threatened with not receive money, 38% reported that their partners are spent on intended for home and children in alcoholic beverages money. The most significant finding and perhaps the most common practice is that 50% of them are accountable for everything they spend. In the period established, 14.6% women reported that their husbands "always" spent the money designated for the house. Meanwhile, 36.6% women answered "sometimes" and 48.8% women "never" were in this situation.

The General Law of Women's access to a life free of Violence (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia, LGAMVLV) defines sexual violence as any act that degrades or harms the body and /or sex of the victim and there for violates their freedom, dignity and physical integrity. It is an expression of power abuse involving male supremacy over women, to denigrate it and think of it as object (Art. 6, Section V). This manifestation not only considers penetration, but also the women's consent. There are several factors that influence as: the violent actions to the body to achieve penetration, degrading comments about women, treating women as sex objects, undressing women without consent, forcing sex when they do not want or when they are sick. (Garduño, 2011)

The results of this research show that 25.6% of participants noted different modes of sexual violence. 13.4% are always forced to have sexual intercourse without consent, and 23.2% sometimes. 6.1% are always forced to perform sexual acts that do not wish to pursue, 31.7% said they are assaulted with the goal of being penetrated. In the use of contraceptives (condoms, pills) 26.8% said they are not allowed to use birth control by their partners.

The property violence refers to the transformation, removal, destruction, retention or amusement with objects, personal documents, goods and values with proprietary rights or economic resources destined to satisfy their needs (LGAMVLV). 22% of respondents reported financial abuse in the following actions during the last year.

- 2.4% of the men always, and 11.0% of the men sometimes, achieved ownership of the woman's wealth and took money away from their partner
- 3.7% of the women always, and 8.5% of the women sometimes, were victims of taking some personal documents
- 17.1% of the women always, and 23.2% of the women sometimes, were not permitted to manage or collaborate in the control of resources in the case of the expenses for the sustenance of the family or the partner.

To determine the triggers of violence, the questionnaire asked what are the reasons why partners of women get angry. Moreover, these were the results:

1. The husband was upset because she reminded his obligations inside and outside the home (74.4%)
2. The husband was upset because she does not obey him (65.9%)

3. The husband was upset because she did not want to have sex (63.4%)
4. The husband was upset because she receives visits from friends or relatives at home (47.6%)
5. The husband was upset because she does not work (43.9%)
6. The husband was upset for any or for no reason (42.7%)
7. The husband was upset because he did not like the way the woman dresses, inasmuch as the woman received comments against her physical appearance (41.5%)
8. The husband was upset because he did not like the way the woman educates the children (40.2%)
9. The husband was upset because he believes she did not fulfill her duties as a wife (31.7%)
10. Because she was jealous (28.0%).

It is noteworthy that 13 women (15.9%) always and 21 women (25.6%) sometimes, remained silent after any act of violence by their partner in the past 12 months, the thought of their children and the hope of improving the relationship impeding their requesting outside aid.

### ***Women between 20-45 years of age that Suffer from Violence in Couples***

Based on the data collected, it is difficult to know the specific number of women suffering from intimate partner violence, as it is manifested in different ways, directly or indirectly are directed towards women. To reach this objective, was used to divide the questionnaire into different categories and for clarification, the following data were obtained:

1. Physical violence reached 40.2% in women surveyed
2. Psychological/emotional violence occurred in 35.4%
3. Economic violence in 30.5%
4. Sexual violence in 25.6%
5. Patrimonial violence in 22.0%.

With this result we conclude that all women have experienced some form of violence, although it is clear that the majority have suffered from 1-2 types, frequency and magnitude of these types are disturbing.

### ***Conclusions***

Non-sociodemographic characteristic can define the abused woman, battered women and there are aggressors without explanation by economic, educational, age level, as the abuse of women by their partners occurs in all social and economic spheres. However, these features help identify trends and components of vulnerability of those who are abused. (ENDIREH, 2006)

The diagnosis of violence against women between 25-45 years of age in a very high marginalization colony of Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas Mexico, has provided throughout this work a comprehensive overview on violence against women in this area. It has been previously mentioned, that violence against women by their partners is not exclusive to a particular social group, and occurs in all strata of society, in the same way: in silence.

However, it is important to consider that marginalization, poverty and vulnerability go hand in hand, and the chance to break the cycles of violence are almost nil for women. Likewise, in the repetition of practices culturally learned in men as "normal" way to behave with women, it has been demonstrated throughout this study. The behavior of men towards their partners, answers sexist behavior patterns, based on a deep patriarchal tradition.

A direct question whether women experience violence, in their great majority said they did not suffer, but to break down the different types of violence in specific questions, responses indicated the opposite of what is stated directly. This reflects two issues; women do not refer to themselves as battered women and on the other, their inability to recognize violence. Violence against women is normalized, tolerated and permitted in societies as a fact of daily life, which is reflected in the results of this research.

The right of women to live a life free of violence is far from being a reality. While there are national and state laws to defend them, legal instruments, civil associations, state and municipal institutions; are women, who fail to talk about it, report or request assistance.

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