

A Study on Women's Perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence in Egypt

Yasmin Khodary*¹, Nour Kamel¹

¹The British University in Egypt, Egypt

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate women's perceptions of the main reasons behind their exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) in Egypt. An online survey was conducted with a random sample of 277 respondents from Cairo and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 women who have been subjected to IPV in addition to observation to their living conditions. According to the conversations with the interviewees, the prevalence of IPV can be explained as a means of discharge from their structural conditions and stress factors. Around 79% of the respondents relate IPV with poverty, 65% relate it with lack of economic resources, and 90% believe that education is a triggering factor for it. Only 14% are decisive in associating IPV with a certain social class. The research finds that adverse structural conditions in poor communities such as poor housing, lack of water delivery, lack of education, lack of stable income and the lack of any social or economic opportunities explains the high rate of IPV among poor people. Men's image of themselves and their manhood is severely threatened. Such a psychological status translates into feelings of depression, anxiety, frustration, anger, and fury leading to IPV. While IPV may be pervasive, is not inevitable. Both government and civil society have a key role in reducing the risk factors and addressing the reasons behind violence against women.

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a destructive social phenomenon that influences all countries, cultures and races. One form of domestic violence is 'intimate partner violence', which is perpetuated against women by their intimate partners. According to the World Health Organization (2010), intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as any "behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviours". Despite being criminalized by various international human rights conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against and the platform of action of the fourth World Conference on women, one in every three women around the world remains subjected to physical or sexual violence by their intimate partners (World Health Organization, 2016). According to the 2014 Egyptian Demographic Health survey, 36% of married women in Egypt aged between 15 and 49 years experienced physical violence perpetrated by their partners. In patriarchal and conservative cultures, IPV poses a particularly serious challenge given women's reluctance or inability to expose their partners or call for professional help from social workers, psychologists,

*CONTACT: yasmin.khodary@bue.edu.eg

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physicians, or police forces. Therefore, more than other societies, statistical measurements of IPV in such societies are most likely to underestimate the magnitude of the phenomenon. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Egyptian women from different socio-economic backgrounds about the main reasons and risk factors associated with their exposure to IPV. The study is supported with a survey carried out with 277 respondents in Cairo in addition to in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 women who have been subjected to IPV in Al-Salam and Al-Marg slums in Cairo and field observation. The study found that 79% of the respondents perceived poverty as one of reasons and risk factors for IPV, 65% identified lack of economic resources as a major reason, and 90% perceived lack of education to be the triggering factor for it. Only 14% perceived IPV to be associated with a certain social class. For such relationship to exist, the survey respondents identified the existence of a pro-violence mindset as an important individual risk factor. According to the in-depth conversations with the interviewees, the prevalence of IPV was perceived as a means of discharge from their structural conditions and stress factors.

Considerable literature invested in investigating the risk factors associated with women's increased likelihood of experiencing IPV. Scholars identified three groups of risk factors, including community/societal/, individual/personal and relationship/relational factors. Individual factors, such as exposure to previous abuse and normalization of violence, are found to increase the risk of women experiencing violence (Abramsky et al., 2011; Heise and Gracia-Moreno, 2002). In a met-analytical review for 85 studies to identify risk factors related to physical IPV, Stith, et al. (2004) identify many risk factors for perpetration of physical IPV, which are mostly individual and relational factors. They find a large effect sizes between perpetration of physical IPV and five risk factors, including illicit drug use, attitudes condoning marital violence and marital satisfaction. They also find moderate effect sizes between perpetration of physical IPV and six risk factors, including traditional sex-role ideology, anger, depression, alcohol use, history of partner abuse and career/life stress. Research identifies further individual factors such as specific age groups to have a higher risk of domestic victimization. For example, Greenfeld and Craven (1998) find females in the USA in the age group from 16 to 24 are at high risk for domestic violence.

Community and societal factors include living in lower socio-economic contexts that endorse inequitable gender roles and patriarchal notions, which Heise and Gracia-Moreno (2002) to increase the likelihood of women's exposure to IPV. According to Jewkes (2002), there is insufficient evidence that age is associated with increased likelihood of IPV, unlike poverty, which she believes is the most important social and demographic risk factors. Women lacking access to regular sources of income or having financial problems witness the increasing likelihood of being trapped in abusive relationships (Jewkes, 2002). According to Jewkes, "An influential theory explaining the relation between poverty and intimate partner violence is that it is mediated through stress" since poverty is stressful and poor communities lack the required resources to reduce stress. Despite being a controversial and contested issue, other scholars also emphasized the impact of poverty on IPV; yet, for different justifications. Gelles, for example, referred to the threat poverty constitutes to the masculine identity through challenging their ideas of "successful" manhood and, consequently, generating a climate of stress, which ultimately provoke violence. In addition, Hotelling and

Sugarman (1986) found that three out of four studies conducted on family violence establish that unemployment have a positive relation to domestic violence. Curtona, Wallace & Wesner (2008) argue that in poor communities, such as slums, there are very few role models for healthy competent marriage relations. Because of the daily stressors and life frustrations, couples in poor communities tend to blame each other on their low-quality conditions, which on the long term cause them to have less warmth and less toleration for each other. Stark (1987), Sampson and Groves (1989) and Krivo and Peterson, (1996) assert that social structural conditions such as poor housing, distressed neighbourhoods, and disrupted families have a positive relation to domestic violence. The Australian Bureau of statistics (2013) similarly states that low socioeconomic status is an influential aspect to the occurrence of family violence. Since violence has already become the means that individuals in poor communities use in their interactions, IPV sounds the logical reflection of this already built behaviour. On the other hand, Ozer et al. (2003) and Ullman (2005) found that social reasons, such as lack of social support, are correlated with potential victimization. Women who feel isolated from friends and family are at higher risk of witnessing IPV and remaining in violent relationships. These feelings occur most readily for immigrant women as many have left behind families and friends (Menjivar and Salicido, 2002).

Studies increasingly refer to the 'ecological' framework or approach to understand the relationship among the three groups of risk factors, which combine to increase the likelihood of experiencing IPV. For example, a review of national surveys in nine countries found a consistent association of an increased risk of intimate partner/spousal abuse for women who have low educational attainment, who are under 25 years old, who have witnessed her father's violence against her mother, who live in an urban area, and who have low socioeconomic status. Another multi-country study found significant associations between physical IPV and several characteristics including regular alcohol consumption by the partner, witnessing the mother's exposure to IPV in the past, poor female mental health, and a weak family employment status (Jeyaseelan et al., 2004).

Similarly, a series of studies on IPV in Egypt were carried out throughout the past decades referring to a combination of risk factors. In 1979, a study was conducted by Malek Zaghloul on intimate partner abuse in Egypt and its key motives. This study used 50 cases of women who had been physical abused by their husbands in the area of Abdin, Egypt. The study found that women's physical abuse can be attributed to financial reasons and the persistent psychological stress because of economic burdens and low quality of life (Al-Magdoub, 2003). Polygamy, which resulted in additional burdens on men and their inability to provide for their households, was also another major reason for men to use of violence against their wives. In 1989, another study was carried out investigating the factors related to married couples' homicides (Al-Magdoub, 2003). The study revealed that relationships that ended with an act of homicide were built on years of abusive and aggressive behaviour from the men's side. Women who killed their husbands tolerated years of physical and sexual violence. Women who killed their husbands tolerated years of physical and sexual violence. In addition, the study identified two more relational risk factors, which are jealousy and suspicion. The study also found that these homicides took place among middle and lower classes and that social and economic frustrations played an essential role in stimulating

violence among couples leading ultimately to murder. In 1994, a third study was conducted by Abdel-Wahab on family violence in Egypt in order to identify the most significant reasons for IPV and its increase in the Egyptian society. The study tried to answer the following questions: What are the most prominent forms of violence used against women, what are the most important motives behind domestic violence, does the execution of violence differs according to the social and economic standards of the family or not. In order to answer these questions, Abdel-Wahab's study used a sample of 224 cases from different parts of Egypt. The study finding revealed that violence against women took different forms from verbal abuse to physical abuse, expulsion from the house, murder by means of guns or other sharp tools, intentional burning, to electric shocks. Moreover, this study concluded that economic conditions came at the top of the reasons that stimulated the use of violence against women in the family, followed by low educational and social status of both the husband and the wife. The study also highlighted that IPV was evidently high among couples in poor communities than those in affluent communities. Similarly, Habib (2009) revealed in the summary report of violence against women in Egypt that IPV mostly prevailed among couples that had low educational status, who belonged to low social economic standard and resided in rural areas more than in urban areas.

The ecological framework in that sense expands the gender-essential feminist argument, which refers to patriarchy as the direct cause of IPV, distrusting psychological causes of male violence and excluding possible interacting causes (Dutton, 2004). The ecological framework overcomes the essentialist and one-dimensional nature of gender-essential feminism into what Jayashree George and Sandra Stith (2014) labels as 'intersectional, feminist perspective', which embraces variety of explanations for IPV and, subsequently, options of treating and addressing. However, overall, despite the considerable literature investigating the reasons and risk factors of women's exposure to IPV, little attention has been paid to women's perceptions and personal accounts of the reasons and risk factors, which they believe expose them to violence or abuse (Spruin, Alleyne and Papadaki, 2015). Investigating these personal views and perceptions may provide further understanding of the phenomenon of IPV from the perspective of women, which can ultimately lead to better-informed decisions by the government or societal actors.

METHOD

The study used a mixed-method approach combining quantitative methods of data collection and analysis (i.e. a survey using a standardized questionnaire) with qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (i.e. in-depth semi-structured interviews and observation). The following sections explain the objectives, data collection and sampling technique for the quantitative and qualitative methods.

1. An online survey was carried out with a random sample (n=277) from Cairo. The survey aimed to inquire about the prevalence of intimate partner abuse, the types of abuse and its causes according to the perceptions the respondents. It primarily included closed-ended questions, except for one open-ended question deriving qualitative data while inquiring about the reason respondents agreed or disagreed

intimate partner abuse is more associated with a certain social class over the others. The survey explored various types of IPV, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence by intimate partners. Physical violence questions referred to a wife being slapped, pushed, kicked, dragged, beaten, burned or strangled. Psychological violence questions referred to a wife being insulted, humiliated, treated indifferently, threatened (of harm, divorce, abusing children, etc...), forbidden from visiting her family, going out or participating in social activities. Sexual violence questions referred to a wife being forced to have sex against her will. Finally, economic violence questions referred to forcing the wife to work against her will or to give her husband her money against her will or the husband's refusal to support his family financially.

2. The study also built on primary qualitative data from in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 women¹ who have been subjected to intimate partner abuse in Al-Salam and Al-Marg slums in order to explore the experiences of low-income abused women with IPV and the degree poverty and harsh living conditions increased the risk of exposing them to violence. Purposive sampling was used to find the first two participants whom we knew in person and were aware of their lived experiences of IPV. Snowball sampling was used to find the rest of the participants with the help of the first two participants who volunteered to introduce us to the rest of the women over such a sensitive and domestic matter as intimate partner abuse. There were certain criteria for inclusion. Participants had to be females, married and resident of Al-Salam or Al-Marg. They had also to have been subjected to IPV.

The study complements the in-depth semi-structured interviews with participant's observation to the structural conditions in Al-Marg and Al-Salam, which as will be illustrated later have high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, etc... Participant's observation gives insight into the factors surrounding the low-income abused women (i.e. poverty and low structural conditions). Together, the interviews and the participant's observation enforce a phenomenological approach involving analysis of the lived experiences of the interviewees with IPV, which is the phenomenon in question.

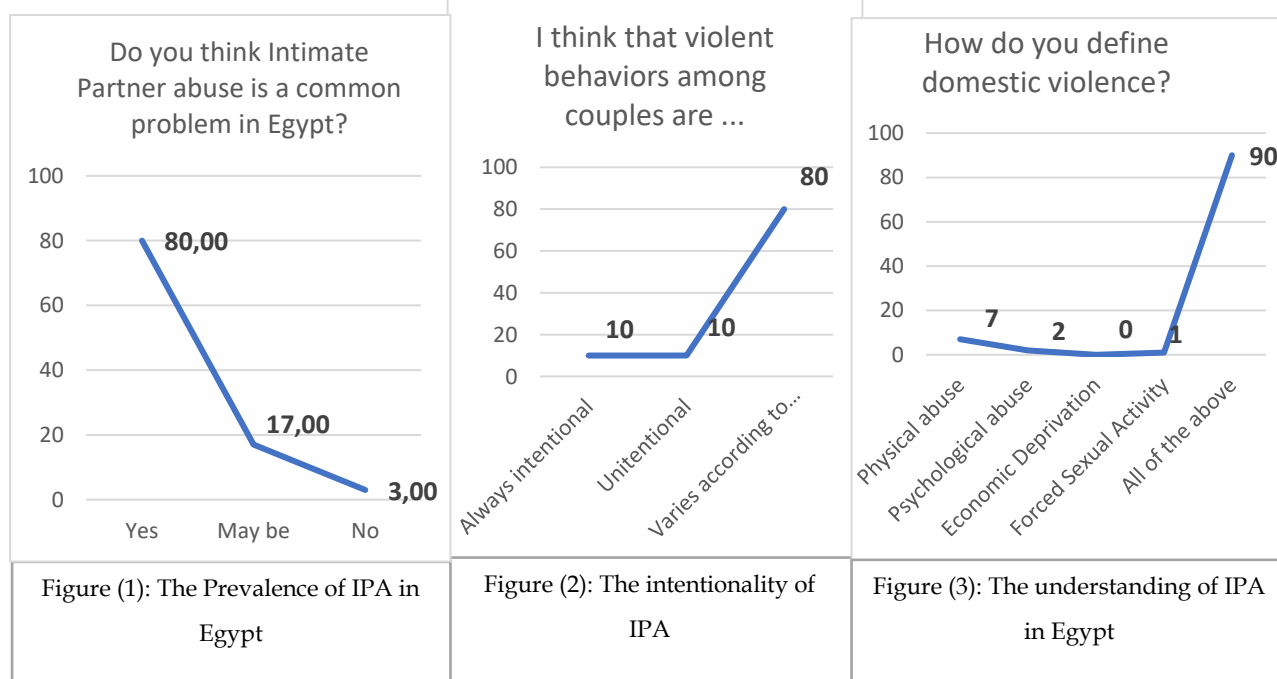
FINDINGS

Perceptions of IPV among the Well-educated in Cairo

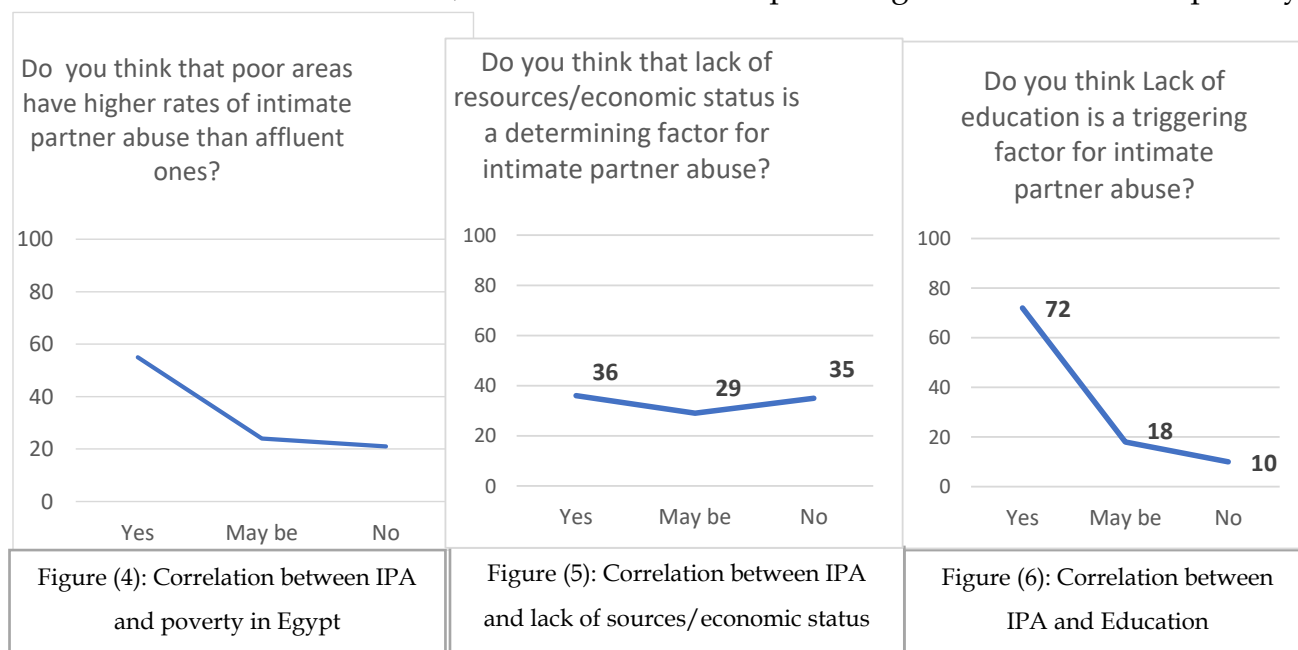
In the survey conducted by the authors with 277 respondents, 80% of the respondents expressed their belief that IPV is a common problem in Egypt and 17% mentioned that it might be common (see Figure 1). Only 3% believed that it is not a common problem. The majority of the sample (80%) agreed that IPV is practiced sometimes intentionally and in other instances unintentionally depending on the circumstances (see Figure 2). As shown in figure (3), the vast majority of the sample (90%) had a broad understanding of IPV. They believed that the act of violence or abuse by one partner includes physical, psychological, sexual and even economic violence against the other. Only 10% of the respondents

emphasized one form of IPV over the rest as only 7% believed that it is mainly physical, 2% believed it is psychological and 1% believed it is forced sexual activity.

Regarding poverty and structural factors, as shown in Figures 4-6, a strong correlation was



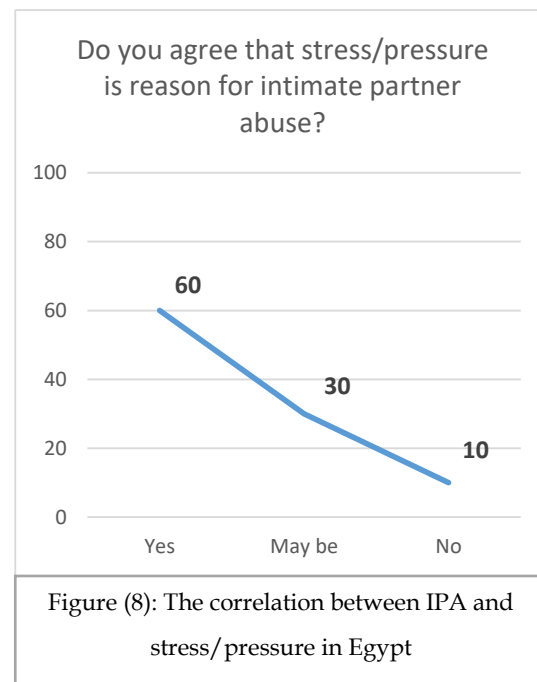
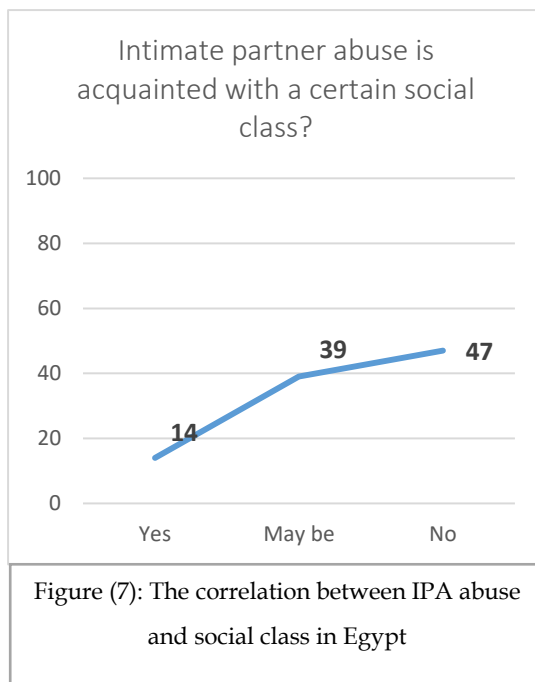
found between IPV from the one side and poverty and low structural socio-economic conditions on the other side. When asked about whether IPV was more prevalent in poor communities than affluent ones, 79% related IPV one way or the other with poverty while 21% believed that they are unrelated. A lower percentage of the respondents related IPV, however, to lack of resources and economic status as 65% related IPV one way or the other with lack of economic resources, which is less than the percentage that related IPV to poverty.



Concerning the question of education, around 90% of the respondents believed that education is a triggering factor for IPV while only 10% believed education unrelated to IPV.

The respondents' understanding of poverty sounds broader than the limited definition of poverty which confines poverty to economic poverty. Poverty is shaped by factors beyond structural economic conditions including social structural factors, like health, education, etc... As a result, the percentage of respondents who agreed IPV was more prevalent in poor communities than affluent ones (79%) are almost the average of those who related IPV to lack of economic resources or education.

Despite the big weight which respondents gave to the influence of poverty and poor social structural conditions in explaining IPV, only 14% of the respondents were decisive in making such relation, 39% of the respondents were indecisive about it and 47% refused to associate IPV with a certain social class (see Figure 7). In explaining why, they could not correlate IPV with a certain social class, most of them emphasized that IPV is associated also with the educational and economic levels in addition to the culture and mindsets of certain social classes. One respondent mentioned, "Because it is not related to the economic circumstances; there are other factors that make it prevail". Others went on to explain such factors saying, "Because it really is associated with the educational level as with a proper educational level, one knows the basic human rights due to openness to different sources of knowledge" or stated, "Certain social strata are generally less educated, and women are less empowered in them".



It is true that domestic violence cannot be confined within certain structural conditions; however, there is a higher possibility of violence in families that suffer from poverty and low socioeconomic structural conditions. As shown in Figure (8), most of the respondents (90%) agreed that stress/pressure is a significant reason for IPV while only 10% believed it is not.) point out that in families that suffer from financial pressures, men experience psychological stress and feelings of hypo-masculinity for their inability to provide for their family (Benson, Fox, DeMaris and Wyk, 2003). Thus, financial distress increases the likelihood for men to turn

violent against their intimate partners. In response to daily pressures and frustrations, couples in poor communities tend to blame each other on their low-quality conditions which on the long term cause them to have less warmth and less toleration for each other.

In addition to education and low economic or financial resources, the respondents referred to the mindsets and the culture saying, "it could be associated to the way a person was raised regardless of his standard". Some respondents explained, "In poor areas, people have a belief that women are second or third grade citizens created to serve men and kids". Others mentioned, "Some insecure partners practice domestic violence in order to force and induce domination into the relationship ... and poor people practice violence in relationships because they think they were born superiors to their fellow partners." As shown in Figure (9), 80% of the respondents agreed that IPV can be a method for men to dominate and control women while 20% disagreed. In their answer to the open-ended questions, some respondents continued to establish the link between mindsets and structural conditions by stating that "social values shape the personality" and that "the mindsets of all classes are derived from the society they live in. Some kinds of IPV may be peculiar to a certain social class (e.g. economic deprivation and poor classes), but generally it is a cultural issue)." In that sense, structural conditions do not only generate and create poverty, but also create the conditions for domestic violence and IPV (including stress and mindsets), which becomes entrenched and internalized into the culture of poor communities, hence, engendering a subculture of violence. As some respondents also noted, "it is a cultural issue related to the culture of a certain social class" and "culture is the main reason". As a result, when allowed to choose multiple answers, almost equal percentages of the respondents agreed IPV is a social,

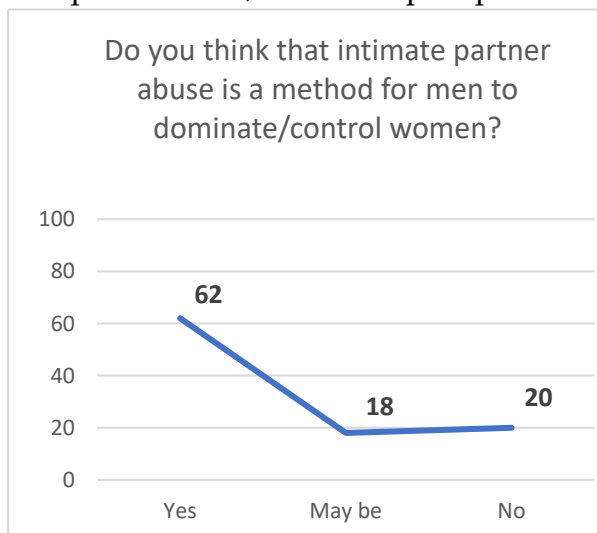


Figure (9): The correlation between Intimate partner abuse and manhood in Egypt

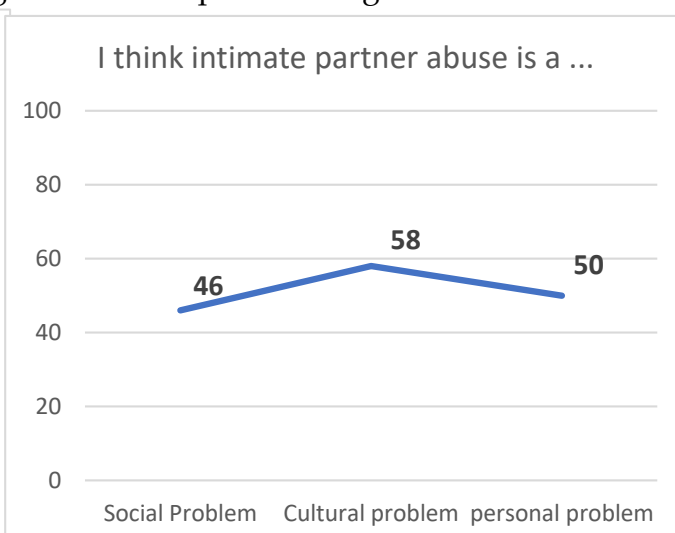


Figure (10): Main factors shaping the problem of intimate partner abuse

cultural, and personal problem (46%, 58%, 50% respectively), as shown in Figure (10).

Perceptions of IPV among the Less-educated in Cairo

Al-Marg and Al-Salam are classified among Al-Ashwaiyyat or the slums in Cairo. Since the policy of infitah (economic liberalization) by the Egyptian President El-Sadat, the rapid increase of squatter communities with around six million residents illustrated the starkest

mounting socioeconomic inequality in Cairo. From the 1980's until the end of the 1990's, rural poverty has more than doubled and urban poverty intensified by more than 1.7 times (Bayat, 1996). According to Bayat & Denis (2000), ashwaiyyat started to spread in Cairo because of Fallahin or peasants' influx in the urban city of Cairo. Since then, the slums were seen as the responsibility of the dwellers who were left to suffer low social conditions, including lack of services, infrastructures, education, healthcare, safe housing, along with the social isolation and marginalization. (Abdlehalim, 2012)

In order to get a better insight and a full picture on the daily life of slum dwellers in Egypt, specifically in Al-Salam & Al-Marg areas, participant observation was used to conclude the same findings. The aim of this observation is to reflect on the daily struggles of the people living in slums, observe its characteristics and examine the applicability of the concept of structural violence on these communities. This observation reflects real incidents, situations, personal communication by the author, to provide qualitative data on the quality of life and the structural conditions. It was noted that the slum was surrounded by dirty paths, dead and dying animals and few elderly people sleeping in the street. However, tons of residents were walking in these streets with no sign of abhorrence to the smell and the sight of sided sewage or the flooding wastewater and with complete neglect to the beggars.

Streets, or more accurately alleys, were incredibly crowded with very small shops on the sides, small coffee shops occupied only by men and women selling fruits and vegetables for the passengers. The residents' livelihoods were based on the economies surrounding the slum- such as drivers of rickshaws, taxis, and motorcycles called Toktok. With the daily struggles and hardships that the people living in the slums have to endure as part of their everyday routine, residents of Al-Marag and Al-Salam biggest achievement is being able to afford or get food on the table for the day. According to the interviewees, all of their husbands were addicted to different kinds of drugs. Even those of them, who got academic degrees, most of them still worked as drivers, laborers, construction workers, etc. According to one of the interviewees,

Here marriage is not built on love or even acceptance, yet it is a way for us to remove the financial burden of living with our families who are no longer able to socially and economically support us.

IPV rooted back to the hardships and inequalities that these marginalized communities involuntary had to go through and were later on transmitted to the next generations. The interviews conducted by the author with 20 women, 10 of them living in Al-Marg area and the other 10 in Al-Salam, revealed that structural factors and the marginalization of these poor communities were major motives for violence against women. All of the women interviewed were uneducated and worked in different parts of Egypt's urban high-class communities. This coincides with the data from the latest report of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). The CAPMAS statistics on education reveals that 27.98 % of the male residents in Al-Salam are illiterate, 22.4% only have primary education degree, 29% have degrees from agricultural and manufacturing academies, 4.53% have high school degree, 15.49 have college degree and 0.6% pursued post-graduate studies. On the part of female residents in Al-Salam, statistics revealed 30.73% are illiterate, 34% only received primary education, 19.09% have degrees from agricultural and manufacturing

academies, 7% attained high school education, 9% have college degree and 0.18% had post-graduate studies. Statistics on the education status for male residents in Al-Marg area were as follows: 29.72 are illiterate, 23.6 received primary education, 30% have academies' degree, 4% received high school degree, 11% have college degree and 1.6% pursued post-graduate studies. Female statistics revealed that 37.62 were illiterate, 21.5% had primary degrees, 28% received academies' degree, 3% have high school degrees, 8% received college degrees and 1% received post-graduate studies.

The interviews conducted by the authors revealed that the structural factors and the marginalization of these poor communities were major motives for violence against women. All of the women interviewed were uneducated and worked in different parts of Egypt's urban high-class communities. The interviews also revealed that their average family income ranged between 500-1200 Egyptian Pounds per month. These women, even the youngest among them (23 years old) were mothers to 3 or 4 children. These interviews indicated that 18 out of these 20 women were almost weekly subjected to physical, verbal and sexual violence. IPV became normalized and expected or even, acceptable. According to one of the interviewees,

Physical or sexual violence for us is something very normal, we don't usually care if we got abused or not, all we care about is feeding our own children.

Surprisingly, this coincides with the results of another study that interviewed 82 young women in England (aged between 13 and 18) but also from disadvantaged areas. Most of the interviewees who reported their exposure of IPV (more than the half) added that violence became a normal aspect of their relationships with their intimate partners (Wood et al., 2011).

In addition to these entrenched factors, social reasons such as lack of unemployment, underemployment, lack of education and lack of support were perceived by the interviewees to be associated with their increased likelihood to experience IPV. At the same time, according to CAPMAS statistics, 66% of the male residents in Al-Salam have jobs but are not necessarily employees, while 34% do not work. Working women in Al-Salam constituted around 33%, while the percentage of the housewives was 83%. In Al-Marg area, working men accounted for 67% while 33% are unwaged. Working women in Al-Marg constituted 15%, whereas 85% do not have a job. The last CAPMAS report on the distribution of families and its individuals according to the type of housing in Al-Salam revealed that 40% of the families constituted of minimum 5 persons live in one apartment, 20% of the families live in only one room altogether, 15% live in tenets or nests, 10% live in cemeteries and 15% others. In Al-Marg, 31.8% of the families live in one apartment, 25% lived in one room, and 16% lived in tenets or nests, 11% live in cemeteries and 16.2% others. With all these economic pressures, men are unable to support their families financially. According to Pearlin (1999), men in poor communities are themselves challenged by the patriarchal society in terms of taking full responsibility of providing a decent living for their families. When men are unable to achieve their role as breadwinners and heads of households assuming full financial responsibility, they feel emasculated or with 'thwarted masculinity' and tend to re-establish their masculinity through violence and abuse. Feelings of disgrace, anger, disappointment, and hypo-masculinity, urge men to establish their control through verbal, sexual and physical violence and sometimes through murder. According to one of the interviewees,

We hate our men for not being able to give us the bare minimum to live, however when we come to think of it our men are helpless and hopeless as much as we are.

Residents in Al-Salam and Al-Marg's biggest achievement is being able to afford or get food on the table for the day. Even those of them, who got academic degrees, most of them still work as drivers, labourers, construction workers, etc. Residents in Al-Marg stated that access to healthcare was not an easy job. Most of the clinics they had were poorly equipped and the doctors who worked there were medically unskilled. Seeking medical assistance in the big hospitals required a large amount of money that most of them were not able to afford. Public transportation was the only means for people in the slum to go to work. When individuals feel lack of social support, marginalization, and continuous oppression by the social, economic and political institutions of the society in the form of structural violence, they either isolate themselves from the society or they turn to be violent themselves. According to one of the interviewees,

Here in El- Marag men and women lived with no souls, our main objective was to find a way to bring food on the table for the family.

On the other hand, most of the buildings were poorly constructed; they were only built by red blocks. The buildings were too close to each other that people can hand in things to each other through the windows. Part of the deep connections between the people in the slum was the fact that their buildings were too close to each other; therefore, privacy had no room between the people in the slum. The visit to the other area called Al- Salam was not very much different from the area of Al-Marag. In fact, the two communities were 10 kilometres away from each other. The buildings, the people, the dirty alleys were the same as if they were cloned. The only difference spotted was that the streets in Al-Salam were relatively larger than those of El-Marg. According to the words of a female resident, most people in El-Marg knew everything about each other; it was as if this community was composed of big, connected family. The devotions and loyalties between people ran deep in this community, that even crimes whether large or petty were solved and discussed without any police interference. Everything was settled between the people inside the slum walls. According to a male resident, Police officers were perceived as oppressive officials whose only aim was to humiliate the people through their power. According to a 27-year-old male,

The police were never concerned with the safety of the people living there or even with implementing the law as it should be. Even when a crime or a fight takes place, the police often come to present a 'show' of power. At the end, the people who are involved in the fight are released and the issue is settled through already built connections or money.

Regarding children, they were all set free in the streets without any parents' supervision. Moreover, it was a little strange that many children were in the streets, while their academic year was still not over. According to the interviewees, children either skipped school with their parents' acknowledgment or they were never assigned to school. Some families within this community lived in acceptable apartments with strong built walls, roofs, fans, TVs, accessible water taps, and all day-channelled electricity. These people were mostly the

owners of shops specifically food shops and were considered by other people in the slum as the heads and leaders of this community whom the people go to when they want to settle issues or fights. According to one of the interviewees,

As much as it hurt us how life has treated us with such unfairness, but all we must focus on is how to survive and how to create a better future for our children.

DISCUSSION

Forming deviant behaviours, such as intimate partner abuse in the subculture of violence rooted back to the hardships and inequalities that these marginalized communities involuntary had to go through and were later transmitted to the next generations. According to interviewee Dr. Zeinab Seif Allah, a social and a family counsellor, violence against women comes in different forms such as sexual, physical, emotional, visual, and economic. There are major stimulants for the execution of violence against women by their husbands, these include psychological motives, cultural orientation, and the lack of effective policies. Seif Allah further explains that the social and economic standards have significant influence on disturbing the psychological status of men. In a patriarchal society, men are mostly defined by their work and their income. Therefore, when men find themselves in the situation of not being able to provide for their families, their behaviours which are influenced by their psychology eventually deviate. In poor communities, the continuous pressure of the wives on their husbands on providing a decent living for the family, generate feelings of unworthiness and shame for men. Challenged by the surrounding structural conditions, men practice abusive conducts in order to hide their lack of competency with regards to manhood. Women most of the time react to their abuse submissively, as they are encountered by a harsh environment that necessitate them to tolerate such offenses in silence. When children witness violence between their parents, they grow up to acquire the same behaviours and attitudes. Violence then becomes a normal practice in these areas, maintained established values and beliefs. Apart from the psychological motives, Seif Allah stated that these values and beliefs are reinforced from the beginning. From childhood, men are taught that they are always better, more experienced, wiser, and much more dominant. Gender differences are initially reinforced by parent's encouragement for masculine behaviours for boys and feminine attitudes for girls.

While each person is born with certain inclinations, it is the society with all its established institutions that amplifies or tones down these inclinations. Cultural messages transmitted through TV's, education, social learning, communication between parents, siblings, teachers are all significant in re-establishing gender parity. Moreover, the lack of effective policies that criminalize women's abuse whether physically, emotional, economically in family context or even public context emphasize women's subjugation and oppression. The phenomenon of intimate partner abuse in poor communities reflected something more than a process of intentional domination or control, yet it reflected a larger system of oppression on individuals that psychologically detach them from and normalized behaviours. The interviews conducted by the author with the women from Al-Marg area and Al-Salam revealed that structural factors and the marginalization of these poor communities were major motives for violence against women. In the interview with Seif Allah, she explained the correlation between the socioeconomic status and violence against women. She

mentioned that the roots of violence in poor areas goes back to the reason that men's personality are considerably weak based on their structural conditions. When men find themselves incompetent in their expected role, they search for other means establish control once again. Since men usually face depressive and furious stages because of their structural conditions, ultimately it affects their sexual capability. Once men's sexual capability is distorted, as Seif Allah said "they turn to be monsters." This where one witnesses hysterical physical and sexual abuse. Seif Allah also believed in what is called "social class trauma". The recent economic and political conditions in the country, negatively influenced men. The constant search for ways to adapt to the negative economic and political conditions, generated general feelings of disappointment, depression, stress, and anger. Men's image of themselves and their views regarding their sexual balance have been severely threatened. Scientifically, when men are encountered by feelings of stress and anger, their sexual capability falls. Therefore, it is more likely to find an increase in the prevalence of intimate partner abuse in the Egyptian society at the time being. However, violence also happens in affluent social classes; yet the percentage and prevalence of intimate partner abuse is much higher in poor areas.

Conclusion

The adverse structural conditions in poor communities such as poor housing, lack of water delivery, lack of education, lack of stable income and the lack of any social or economic opportunities explains the high rate of IPV among poor people. IPV is only a reflection of the harsh conditions that gradually destroyed humanity in each one of them. As appears from the conversation with the women from Al-Marg and Al-Salam, the continuous pursuit for ways to adapt to the negative economic and political conditions creates general feelings of disappointment, depression, stress, and anger. Men's image of themselves and their manhood is severely threatened. Such a psychological status translates into feelings of depression, anxiety, frustration, anger, and fury leading to IPV. While IPV may be pervasive, is not inevitable. Both government and civil society have a key role in reducing the risk factors and addressing the reasons behind violence against women. Creating an enabling environment for men and women in terms of ensuring, for example, women's financial independence can be protective in some settings and can contribute in reducing violence.

Author Information

Yasmin Khodary works as a Professor of Political Science in the Political Science Department at the British University in Egypt. Her research interests vary between gender, peacebuilding, governance, and social accountability.

Nour Kamel is a Political Science graduate from the British University in Egypt. Her research interests vary between women's rights, gender studies, and development.

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