

## Gender-based Violence in Morocco: Domestic Violence as a Case in Point

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**Abstract.** Domestic violence is a universal social phenomenon. It plagues all societies worldwide. Undoubtedly, Morocco is no exception. This phenomenon is becoming more and more epidemic; it seriously threatens and dramatically affects the very fabric of Moroccan society. Although a considerable research has been devoted to domestic violence, less attention has been paid to its repercussions and the approaches that would help to eliminate it. In Morocco, violence is overlooked rather than being acknowledged and acted against. This paper focuses on the gender dimension of domestic violence in Morocco. It underlines the blindness of the existing studies to the complex causes and effects of domestic violence in the country. The paper departs from a conviction that domestic violence is a merely criminal act that should be questioned and corrected by promoting and empowering the status of women in Moroccan society. It approaches this phenomenon from its multi-dimensional perspective in order to underline its social, cultural, legal and economic aspects and implications.

**Keywords:** domestic violence, Morocco, gender dimension, women.

### Introduction

*One summer evening last year, as a couple of my friends Siham and Hanane were on their way to a nearby pharmacy not very far from the Meknès Central Market to buy some medicines for their bedridden father, a wildly shrieking man attacked Siham who was wearing what looked like expensive gold bracelets, and started beating her, accusing her of having left the family home without permission, while surreptitiously trying to steal her jewelry. The yelling and beating went on without a single passer-by stepping in to protect the woman, assuming that this was a private quarrel between husband and wife or brother and sister. What they failed to notice was that the man was actually trying to steal the young woman's gold bracelets. It is only when Hanane confronted and neutralized the assailant, using her self-defense skills some men stepped in to lend*

*a helping hand because they had realized that this was real violence and not some “legitimate” wife or sister-beating, most viewed as a private matter! (from my female friend’s story)*

This real-life story clearly indicates that for most Moroccans there exists a category of “legitimate” violence, especially when it is directed to women, wives, daughters or sisters. This violence is often exerted only within the confines of the domestic space but it often spills into the public sphere without being checked by the general public or even by law enforcement officers. If challenged by close relatives or outsiders, it takes the form of intercession and mercy seeking. Many view domestic violence as a strictly private matter if the persons involved are spouses, parents and children. Domestic violence is opposed only when parents become victims of their children.

In the minds of many, domestic violence against women is condoned by Islam and is therefore legitimate. The Quran, however, has repeatedly exhorted men to be fair in their dealings with their spouses, but the average Muslim recalls only the Quranic *surah* that states that

*Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband’s) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all) (Quran 4:34).*

Islam requires men to treat their wives kindly and to protect them; they should be checked only if a husband fears infidelity. When the marital life is no longer possible because of disagreements, Islam requires men to divorce their spouses although divorce is considered as *abghad al halal*. The patriarchal structure of the Moroccan society and the ensuing economic and psychological dependence of women have reinforced the belief among the majority of men that their wives and children are their own “thing” and that they can do with them whatever they please.

If this has been true to a large extent in the Moroccan context, this “right” has been largely challenged in Western countries to which Moroccans have emigrated. The emigrant community is full of stories of distraught husbands and fathers who had to bear the brunt of the law of their country of residence because their spouses had taken the matter of domestic violence

to court, or because social services threatened to take their children away because of continued bad treatment.

Morocco has enacted a very progressive family law in 2004, which, in the words of Fatima Harrak, “constitutes a landmark in the history of Moroccan women’s struggle for equality” and ratified a number of international agreements designed to protect women and children’s rights.

*This new legislation [...] upholds the principle of equality between men and women through the introduction of the joint and equal responsibility within the family, equality in terms of rights and obligations within the household, and suppression of guardianship of a male member of the family. Other provisions for equality between men and women include equal minimum age of marriage for men and women, the principle of divorce by mutual consent under judicial supervision. Furthermore, dissolution of marriage via divorce becomes the prerogative of both husband and wife under the judicial supervision of a judge, thereby ending a husband’s right to unilateral repudiation of his wife* (Harrak 2004, 7).

All of these efforts, notwithstanding, women continue to suffer from widespread domestic violence.

This paper is an attempt to study domestic violence in Morocco, bearing in mind that violence against women is a global phenomenon, a sort of epidemic that touches all societies and cultures with varying degrees of virulence. The scholarly community, NGOs such as Amnesty International and the United Nations have devoted considerable resources to study, denounce and combat this phenomenon. But if Western countries have done a great deal to study and document this tragedy, most developing countries, including Morocco, have no reliable data concerning domestic violence because

*In Arab and Islamic countries, domestic violence is not yet considered a major concern despite its increasing frequency and serious consequences. [...] The indifference to this type of violence stems from attitudes that domestic violence is a private matter and, usually, a justifiable response to misbehavior on the part of the wife. [...] religious justifications, plus the importance of preserving the honor of the family, lead abusers, victims, police and health care professionals to join in a conspiracy of silence rather than disclosing these offences* (Douki, Nacefet et al. 2003, 165–171).

According to a national survey conducted by the High Commission for Planning (HCP) on the pervasiveness of violence against women, in 2009, 3.7 million married females in Morocco (55%) endured domestic abuse by their

husbands. The study also revealed that 13.5% of women aged 18–64 have been victims of violence inflicted by a family member, totaling 1.3 million females. Domestic violence in urban areas reached 56.1% against 53.3% in rural areas. Meanwhile, family violence in urban areas reached 14.3% against 12.3% in rural areas. With regard to the types of domestic violence, the study revealed that in the conjugal environment, the most pervasive form of abuse was psychological violence (38.7%) followed by the infraction of individual freedom (30.3%) and insults/verbal humiliation (22.4%). Threats of aggression and physical abuse ranked 6.6 and 5.7%, respectively. With regard to family violence, the most common form was emotional abuse at 10.3%, and verbal humiliation at 6.1%. In terms of the socio-economic characteristics of the victims of domestic violence, 61.6% are under the age of 40, come mainly from urban areas (60.3%), lack formal education (56.8%) and were married before the age of 25. On the other hand, most women who suffered domestic violence within the family setting were women aged 30 (69.8%) from urban areas (63.1%) (Moroccan Haut Commissaire au Plan 2011).

## Causes of domestic violence against women

There is a variety of factors that contribute to the unequal power relations between men and women. These factors include alcohol and drugs, societal factors, and the socio-economic forces.

### Alcohol and drugs

In Morocco, alcohol and drugs affect badly the marital relationship. Under the influence of these substances men become violent and act aggressively and abusively against their wives. This act of violence is directed not only against wives but also against the vulnerable children, subjecting them to a range of dangers that might profoundly affect their future. This could lead one to believe that there is a strong relationship between violence and the use of alcohol and other drugs. The US Department of Justice reports that according to a 1994 study, 61% of offenders of domestic abusers and over 50% of spouses accused of murdering their spouse were under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the day of the murder. There is a definite statistical correlation between substance abuse and domestic violence indicating that the regular abuse of drugs or alcohol is the highest leading risk factor to violence within a family or intimate relationship. However, even if drugs and alcohol may not be a direct cause of violence, they may be a trigger in creating an argument or conflict. So, it is worthwhile to say that excessive

consumption of alcohol and drugs is deemed one of the causative factors in making Moroccan women undergo and experience a certain number of distinct kinds of violence.

### Societal factors

Morocco, like most of Arab countries, is a patriarchal society in which women are relegated to a secondary position after men. Perceptions of the legitimacy of men's violence to intimate partners are constituted through the agreement with the notion that men should be dominant in households and intimate relationships and they should have the right to enforce their dominance through physical chastisement.

In the family and social institutions, socialization strengthens male's sexual power and disempowers women. The patriarchal belief system presumably contributes to the incidence of wife assault both by creating in males the expectation that their wishes will not be opposed by their wives and by justifying the use of violence to enforce the expectation.

The ideology of patriarchy holds that male supremacy is natural and that control of women and strong reactions to their insubordination is vital.

*Violence against women stems from unequal power relations between men and women. It is most common within societies that give men priority rights over women, and where appropriate gender roles are strictly defined, where punishment of women and children is accepted. The traditional distribution of roles in the society still exists in reality notwithstanding some progress in declarations (UN Report on violence against women 2015).*

While public violence is recognized and publicly condemned, domestic abuse is justified and considered by everyone including the victim, justice, police, families and health professionals as a private and familial matter rather than criminal act requiring interference. They even go beyond that to legitimize it. This perception has a great impact on the victim who becomes reluctant to report the husband's violence and perpetuation. This suggests that women encounter the greatest danger indoors, usually within the confines of their social networks and particularly their own homes, from men who are "familiar and familial" and who are supposed to be their protectors. These men are rarely classified as criminal offenders. The family denies it is happening. They believe that wife belongs to her husband. Additionally, for the family, the marital ties must be preserved at all costs.

This assumption of their inferiority springs from Moroccan cultural beliefs and norms that trivialize women's role in the Moroccan society. Unfortunately, the Moroccan patriarchal structure creates the necessary conditions for a conflict model of gender relations that comes to govern the lives of men and women in Morocco. Moreover, women are divested of their human right because men have inclination to fear their emerging position in the patriarchal society. Even though women have endeavored to revolt and change their status within society and get higher position at the political, economic and educational level, they are still obliged to lag behind. In this vein, Fatima Sadiqi states that

*North African family structure is generally headed by the father and the father's male mileage and is legally founded on blood relations. The patriarchal system is built on the exclusion of women from spaces of public power and by the sanction of all forms of physical and moral violence against them in these spaces. Women's freedom is seen as a challenge to the patriarchal social fabric and men's status quo. It is in the family that women are initiated into their role of guardians of social organization. This initiation is channeled through a rigid system of kinship relations and rituals, and taboo (Sadiqi 2006, 6).*

### Socio-economic factors

Economically speaking, domestic violence in Morocco stems from the fact that women are economically dependent on men as providers for their families. They also have limited access to education and training which leads to the limited access to employment in addition to discriminatory laws regarding maintenance and child custody after divorce. One of UNESCO's reports stated that "Poverty and illiteracy are closely linked which go together everywhere in the world." Both poverty and illiteracy are part of the complex system of deprivation and discrimination. Unemployment is a crucial factor contributing to violence directed against women in Morocco. Wives who do not have a job are more likely to be vulnerable to violence than wives who have a job. Thus, for these economic reasons women have the tendency to respond passively to this victimization shown by their husbands. And the most compelling reason for such behavior is that these women feel unprotected economically and socially. According to Loubna Skalli (2001), "Most women become economically dependent after divorce and widowhood especially if they did not have a paid job prior to this change in their marital status. Nearly four out of ten women return to their parents' home after divorce, more out of financial dependence than personal choice." Women

who are affected by illiteracy are usually weak and do not have the power to defend their benefits and interests, as the illiterates who are often poor live in dependency and subordination associated with an absence of social justice and protection either in their relation with society or state institutions. In view of this, illiterate women represent an oppressed category; they have no effect on the stream of events, they feel inferior since they depend on others in many things of their daily life. Paulo Freire (1974) calls this situation "the silence culture of the oppressed." Thus, illiteracy and dependency stemming from it make illiterate women deprived.

## Effects of domestic violence against women in Morocco

*Violence against women continues to be a global epidemic that has physical, psychological, sexual and economic repercussions. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations denying women self-esteem, equality, dignity and freedom (UNICEF 2000).*

### Physical outcomes of domestic violence

Little attention has been paid to the serious health repercussions of abuse and the health needs of women and girls who experienced violence in Morocco. Domestic violence against women leads to significant physical consequences, some with fatal outcome. Although it represents only one of many forms of violence, physical violence is among the more visible forms. Assaults result in injuries ranging from fractures and bruises to chronic disabilities such as partial or total loss of hearing or vision, and burns may lead to disfigurement (WHO Consultation 1996). Studies in many countries have shown high levels of violence during pregnancy resulting in risk to the health of both the mother and unborn fetus. In the worst cases, domestic violence may result in the death of a woman. Moreover, assaulted women have a high incidence of stress-related illnesses such as depression, eating and sleeping disturbance, addiction, elevated blood pressure, anxiety, fear and panic attacks. In the worst cases when the victim is extremely depressed there is no other way but suicide (WHO Consultation 1996).

Similarly, a great number of girls and women in Morocco suffer from violence and its consequences because of their sex and their unequal status in society. According to a national study conducted by Morocco's High Commission for Planning, the National Institute for Statistical Analysis in 2011 on the prevalence of violence against women, 62.8% of women in

Morocco aged 18-64 had been victims of some form of violence during the year preceding the study and 48% had been subjected to psychological abuse (Moroccan Haut Commissaire au Plan 2011). This same study found that 55% of these acts of violence were committed by the victim's husband, and the violence was reported by the wife in only 3% of such cases. Another 2011 report identified that in cases of violence against women, the perpetrator is the husband in eight out of ten cases. Women who have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence suffer a range of health problems, often in silence. They have poorer physical and mental health, suffer more injuries, and use more medical resources than non-abused women (Human Right Watch 2012).

### Psychological outcomes of domestic violence

Domestic violence constitutes a serious public health problem and is a major contributor to psychiatric symptomatology in women in both the developed and developing world. However, when one compares the literature of violence against women in both places, the difference seems to lie in its public condemnation (Saif El Dawla 2000). And it is critical to ascertain that the psychological effects of violence are more harmful and long-lasting than physical consequences. The result of violence directed against women is their dehumanization, derision and humiliation that engender a sense of insecurity and fear in female victims. It prevents them from leading independent lives and fully participating in the life of a family, community and society at large.

This demonstrates that contrary to the common assumption that it is just a bruise or a fracture, violence is much more profound and detrimental to the mental health and the wellbeing of Moroccan women. In this context, using the term "battered" Lyn Shipway indicates that the impacts of the psychological violence towards women are often hidden and serious:

*...conjures up an image of a woman lying beaten and bleeding... whereas the reality is that injuries may well be hidden and the damage virtually undetectable to the naked eye. Growing evidence confirms that countless women live their lives in constant fear and degradation, suffering severe psychological and emotional abuse perhaps without the accompanying broken bones and bruises. The abuse may be incessant whilst the physical violence is only periodic, but the result remains the same, a woman is being abused and therefore violated (Shipway 2004, 3).*

Through violence, women are denied their existence as human beings. Undoubtedly, this lack of self-esteem, stress, debasement and feeling of humiliation would hinder women's productivity and creativity. These feelings do not affect women only; they influence their families, children and the entire community. Thus, changing the situation begins with a decisive refusal of the Moroccan women's secondary and inferior position granted to them by the patriarchal society. The Moroccan women should have courage to revolt against these stereotypes and unjust treatments which lead to their lack of self-confidence and self-esteem.

### Impact of domestic violence on children

Children are also affected by domestic violence even if they are not direct victims. It was proved that many of these children who have witnessed domestic violence or have themselves been battered often exhibit health and behavior problems, including frustration, instability, confusion and anger. These feelings become barriers to their being close to their parents. It also makes them distant from their partners when they become adults. Some children may take out their frustration in school or in social relationships. They may have difficulty at school and find it hard to develop close and positive friendships. Instead, these children become either withdrawn or aggressive. They may try to run away or even display suicidal tendencies (UNICEF 2000). Thus, it is possible to say that violence is inherited from generation to generation:

*Gender-based violence can have a severe impact on the physical health, growth and developmental health of the child. The psychological impact of abuse (or witnessing abuse) can also have a devastating impact on mental and wellbeing and can affect bonding and attachment between parent and a child (Impact of gender-based violence on children 2013).*

There is a strong evidence that children who either witnessed such violence or are subject to violence themselves are more likely as adults to adhere to violence-supportive attitudes (and to perpetrate violence). Thus, witnessing or experiencing violence while growing up has a direct impact on the perpetration of violence against spouses and it also influences attitudes that in turn affect the perpetration of violence (Markowitz 2001, 207–208). A meta-analysis of 118 studies suggests that children who witness inter-parental violence show more negative psychosocial outcomes than children who witness only other forms of inter-parental conflict or aggression (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, Kenny 2003).

## Approaches to curb domestic violence against women

Stopping violence directed against women is a very challenging task that requires various preventive solutions varying from a legislative, religious and awareness-raising approach.

### Legislative approach

Morocco endorsed the Convention on June 21, 1993. The Convention defines torture in Article 1 as severe mental or physical pain or suffering that is intentionally inflicted either by a State actor or with the consent or acquiescence of a State actor for an unlawful purpose. The Convention also obligates Morocco to protect victims from domestic violence and hold perpetrators accountable in Article 2 (non-derogable requirement of effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture, including acts by private actors; Article 4 (acts of torture must be identified as offenses under criminal law and receive the appropriate penalty); Article 7 (criminalized cases of torture should be submitted to authorities for prosecution); Article 12 (prompt investigation by impartial and competent authorities); Article 13 (victim's right to complain and to have their complaint examined by competent authorities, State's obligation to protect victim and witnesses); and Article 14 (victims' right to redress and compensation, including rehabilitation).

However, despite the fact that the Moroccan government is engaged in a progressive process of ameliorating and empowering women's status at a variety of levels, huge numbers of women still feel as victims of both their perpetrators and of legislative law as well. In this vein, the committee against torture clarifies that when the government fails to prevent such violence from taking place and does not prosecute or punish perpetrators of the violence this contravenes the Convention as stated in General Comment no. 2:

*...where State authorities or others acting in an official capacity or under the color of law, know or have reasonable grounds to believe that acts of torture or ill-treatment are being committed by non-State officials or private actors and they fail to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish such non-State officials or private actors consistently with this Convention, the State bears responsibility and its officials should be considered authors, complicit or otherwise responsible under the Convention for consenting to or acquiescing in such impermissible acts. Since the failure of the State to exercise due diligence to intervene to stop,*

*sanction and provide remedies to victims of torture facilitates and enables non-State actors to commit acts impermissible under the Convention with impunity, the State's indifference or inaction provides a form of encouragement and/or de facto permission. The Committee has applied this principle to the States parties' failure to prevent and protect victims from gender-based violence, such as rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and trafficking (Committee Against Torture 2008).*

Thus, to curb this social phenomenon, the Moroccan government should implement a Violence against Women Law. This law should criminalize wife perpetration and punish the perpetrators. It is worth mentioning that the judicial gap is one of the main reasons in exacerbating the problem as stated by a report prepared for the 26<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council (June 2014) by the Advocates for Human Rights and the Moroccan NGO Mobilizing for Rights Associations:

*Currently, no specific legislation addressing violence against women exists in Morocco... (Moroccan) laws have legal gaps, are insufficient to prevent, investigate, and punish violence against women, are discriminatory, and rarely enforced by the justice system in cases of gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment, rape, and domestic abuse. The law enforcement and justice systems do not respond adequately to complaints of violence against women; few VAW cases reach the courts due to the failures of the system to investigate crimes of violence, protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable (Human Rights Council 2014).*

Thus, narrowing the judicial gap is inevitably a severe measurement that should be taken by Moroccan authorities to effectively curb this epidemic and provide women with the independence and stability they deserve. It is just as vital that the law passed is effective and contains all the necessary elements to fully protect victims of domestic violence and punish the perpetrators. In this context, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women also calls on states to "pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women" and further to "exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the state or by private persons" (General Assembly Resolution 1993).

There should be a real cooperation between government and the civil society. The Moroccan Government should collaborate with a wide range of NGOs and experts in the field to ensure that any law draft contains the

essential elements of an effective domestic violence law, taking care to not cause further harm to victims.

### Religious approach

The Moroccan society is built on the Islamic law that regulates issues related to women such as marriage, divorce and inheritance. However, the religious text is misinterpreted and misused to serve men's interests only. Islam has nothing to do with these behaviors, but it is the fault of the misapplication of Islam and its ideologies. In many "Islamic" countries, women are not treated according to their God-given rights. Many of these rights, however, are based on cultural and traditional customs that have been injected into these societies (Badawi 1971).

So, in order to probe this phenomenon, Moroccan people should work on the modification of social and cultural patterns of conduct that violate women's human rights in the name of Islam. These patterns of conducts are defended by agencies which state that they are essential to the cultural, social and economic integrity of the country. However, it should be understood that these traditions and cultural aspects could be preserved simultaneously with maintaining women's human rights.

A significant step toward the recognition of women's as such is impossible without making reference to Islam and to the way it contributed to the restoration of a woman's dignity and rights. Before Islam, girls were buried alive and husbands had the right to their life and death. But Islam forbade infanticide and also ridiculed the fathers who viewed the birth of girls with contempt: "When news is brought to one of them, of the birth of a female, his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain her on contempt or bury her in the dust? Ah! What an evil choice they decide on" (Quran 16:58–59). In the same way, the prophet added: "Whosoever has a daughter and does not bury her alive, does not insult her, and does not favor his son over her, God will enter him into Paradise."

It is worthwhile to point out that the prophet who is the Muslims' best example had more than one wife and he treated them decently and kindly. He forbids all kinds of violence directed against women, teaching his companions and all Muslims in general that women should be treated in such a way that respects their humanity and preserves their dignity either within family or the Muslim community. The prophet never mistreated any of his wives and tended to protect them all. In this sense, innumerable Hadiths ensure that wife abuse is an act that goes against the principles and teaching of Islam: "The best of you is one who is best towards his family and I am

best towards the family. "This proves how highly women were valued and treated decently at that time: "None but a noble man treats women in an honorable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully."

Through its teachings, Islam tries to explain to Muslims that men and women are equal before God, rejecting the erroneous and deep-rooted idea that men are created as superior to women. Such equality brought by Islam is reinforced by the Quranic verses that prohibit any gender discrimination in stressing the fact that both men and women are equal before God. In this context, the Quran says:

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (one who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (Quran 49:13).*

It should be emphasized that Islam honors women in both the Quran and Sunnah and praises the vital role they play either as mothers or as wives. In this sense, the Quran includes a surah whose title is "Ennisaa" or "women." In this longest surah, Islam indicates that it severely condemns the old customs of the ill-treatment of women warning Muslims to avoid cruelty and the mistreatment of women. His almighty God says:

*O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the Mahr you have given them, unless they commit open illegal sexual intercourse. And live with them honorably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and Allah brings through it a great deal of good "Annissaa" (the women) (19).*

Among the most striking verses in the Quran about spouses are the following: "... He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest, peace of mind in them, and he ordained between you love and mercy. Herein indeed are signs for people who reflect" (Quran 30: 23).

The Quran clearly demonstrates that marriage is an act of sharing between the two halves of society and that its objectives, besides perpetuating human life, are their emotional well-being and spiritual harmony.

### Awareness-raising approach

The Moroccan government has taken positive steps to raise awareness about violence against women and set up cells for receiving women victims of

violence in courts across the country. To this regard, the government has adopted a set of measures, including crisis centers for battered women in all courts, the criminalizing of sexual harassment and the adoption of a new family code on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

The greatest impediment to a more effective criminal justice response to the assault against wives is the victim's failure to report the event to the police. Many victims do not define the event as a crime. Therefore, all mistreatments and violence can be avoided and stopped by information, education, and sensitization. Women need to be empowered via employment opportunities for building a culture of non-violence and an increase of women's control of their lives and a strengthening of their social networks. They also need to be provided with information about domestic violence and their rights and gender equality.

Thus, public awareness campaigns should use mass media to challenge gender norms and attitudes and attempt to raise awareness throughout society of violent behavior towards women and its prevention. Media interventions should use television, radio, newspapers, the internet, magazines and other printed publications to reach a wide range of people and affect change in society by altering social norms and values (e.g. the belief that masculinity is associated with aggression) through public discussion and social interaction. In this context, Archer states that "When gender roles become more flexible, most women enjoy greater power, status and economic independence and the threat of violence against them decreases" (Archer 2006).

## Conclusion

Domestic violence is an aspect of the social construction of masculinity that tends to naturalize male violence by giving it a sense of normality. It continues to be an epidemic that affects women, psychologically, physically and sexually. So, given the magnitude of this phenomenon, its challenges, causes and consequences, all components of society, government, NGOs, criminal justice system (police, judiciary and lawyers), education sector, health care system and women themselves need to work hand in hand to find a strategy that has the potential to eliminate women's abuse. Women need to be educated and taught self-confidence and self-reliance. They should be addressed as human beings who have the right under international law to be free from all kinds of discrimination as women. Therefore, the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of patriarchal behaviors and conceptions are an essential part of violence prevention.

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## Smurtas lyties pagrindu Maroke: smurto artimoje aplinkoje atvejis

### Santrauka

Smurtas artimoje aplinkoje yra dažnai pasitaikantis reiškinys, pastebimas daugumoje pasaulyje visuomenių. Marokas nėra išimtis. Čia smurtas tampa vis didesne problema, kone epidemija, kuri kelia grėsmę pačiai Maroko visuomenės sanglaudai. Nors smurtas artimoje aplinkoje nemažai tyrinėtas, daug menkiau analizuotos jo pasekmės ir būdai, kuriais siekiama spręsti šią problemą. Maroke smurtas dažnai ignoruojamas, užuot jį pripažinus ir siekus įveikti. Telkiantis į su lytimi susijusį smurtą, šiamame straipsnyje kvestionuojami kai kurie Maroke atlikti tyrimai, nes jais nesugebama atskleisti kompleksinių smurto artimoje aplinkoje priežasčių ir pasekmų. Šiamame straipsnyje smurtas artimoje aplinkoje nelaikomas vien tik kriminaliniu veiksmu, už kurį turėtų būti baudžiamas, skatinant suteikti daugiau galų moterims Maroko visuomenėje. Iš smurtą čia žiūrima kaip iš daugialypį reiškinį – pabrėžiami jo socialiniai, kultūriniai, teisiniai bei ekonominiai aspektai ir reikšmės.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** smurtas artimoje aplinkoje, Marokas, lytių dėmuo, moterys.