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Familial power and women's contradictory responses to attitudinal questions about Intimate Partner Violence in rural Bangladesh

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Familial power and women's contradictory responses to attitudinal questions about Intimate Partner Violence in rural Bangladesh

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An abstract of
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Abstract

Familial power and women's contradictory responses to attitudinal questions about Intimate Partner Violence in rural Bangladesh

By Kimi Sato

Background: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women is a global public health problem that can have severe adverse health outcomes for women. Although the experience of IPV has been linked to power distribution within a marriage, there is limited research on how power processes can influence women's reporting of their attitudes about IPV against women.

Objective: The objectives of this study are to determine to what extent Komter's theories on power dynamics affect women's reporting of their personal attitudes about IPV against women, and to examine women's willingness to report attitudes that they perceive to contradict the community norm.

Methods: This analysis is based on cognitive interviews and focus group discussions from women collected from a study conducted in 2009 in rural Bangladesh. Komter's theories on power dynamics were used to identify elements of latent power in the data. Latent power surfaces when the subordinate holds a view that contradicts the dominant norm, but conflict is not apparent because there is no attempt at change. Structural elements such as contradictory responses were integral themes of latent power.

Results: Overall, the majority of the women provided a contradictory response during the interview which suggests that women's reporting of attitudes and preferences towards IPV against women and their willingness to contradict what they perceive to be the community norm is greatly influenced by the type of power under which they are influenced. Reasons for women's contradictory responses, which illuminated the influence of latent power, included perceptions of the inevitability of IPV, a lack of alternatives to IPV, and patriarchal norms and a lack of familial support.

Discussion: The majority of these women do not appear to be reporting their personal attitudes about IPV against women due to the influence of latent power. Given the underlying nature of latent power processes, researchers need to be cognizant of how such processes can affect women's reporting of personal attitudes about IPV against women. New methodological tools that incorporate these factors must be developed to better understand women's true personal attitudes about IPV which will greatly inform intervention programs targeted at reducing violence against women.

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Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women is a global health problem that can greatly affect a woman's quality of life (Abramsky, 2011; Diop-Sidibe, Campbell & Becker, 2006). In a review of 36 population-based surveys, 10%-69% of women in various locations were physically harmed in their lifetime by an intimate male partner (Heise & Ellsberg, 1999; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Although the frequency and severity of IPV has been linked to the distribution of power, there is limited research on how different forms of power may influence women's reporting of IPV or their attitudes about it (Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 1995). The conceptualization of power within a marital relationship has evolved from a material perspective based on the number of resources acquired (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983) to a more subjective view of power as an intangible concept that may even be imperceptible to the people involved (Mcdonald, 1980). Although the definition of marital power may be evolving, it is clear that the effects on IPV are significant (Sassler & Miller, 2011).

Power distribution and IPV

Research has shown that systematic factors that influence the power imbalance within a marital relationship can greatly influence the experience of IPV and attitudes about it (Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003). Theories on power dynamics have examined the influence of decision-making, social institutions, cultural norms, and negotiation on power dynamics

within an intimate relationship (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998; Martin, 2004; Swan & O'Connell, 2011). In 1989, Aafke Komter identified how power processes can be better understood through the three dimensions of Invisible, Latent, and Manifest power. These three dimensions manifest through the subordinate partner's reaction to dealing with change or conflicts (Komter, 1989). These power processes may play an important role into understanding women's reporting of their attitudes towards IPV against women.

There are numerous structural and cultural factors that create an unequal power distribution between men and women. This inequality, often linked to certain factors including, but not limited to, income, employment status, and access to education, gives men unequal power over women (Baca-Zinn, Hondagneu-Soleto, & Messner, 2005; Pandey, Dutt, & Banerjee, 2009). For example, women living in low socioeconomic conditions may depend on a man for economic support, which can greatly reduce their amount of power and control that women have in their relationship (Nakano-Glenn, 2004). Furthermore, due to societal pressure placed on men to provide for their family, lower socioeconomic status can encourage feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy among men. One way for men to reclaim relational power when they are feeling insecure or when their partner is less dependent on them is to assert control through abusive behaviors such as violence, which are exerted to reclaim or reinforce their authority (Amaro, 1995; Pandey, Dutt, & Banerjee; 2009).

In addition to these structural factors, there are also cultural factors that may perpetuate an unequal power balance of men over women. Women who subscribe

to traditional patriarchal marital relations, giving men authority in decision-making and power within the relationship, are less likely to feel empowered and men who subscribe to traditional patriarchal marital relations are more likely to engage in violence against women (Beadnell, Baker, Morrison, & Knox, 2000; Teitelman, Ratcliffe, Morales-Aleman, & Sullivan, 2008).

Control and power are associated with violence between intimate partners (Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 1995). Control in an intimate relationship is often defined as one partner, most often the man, using all forms of abuse to maintain control over their partner (Stark, 2007; Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, men who display this controlling behavior are at a greater risk for being the perpetrator of physical (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Johnson, 2001) and sexual violence (Gage, 2006; Jenkin, 2000). Studies conducted in the United States have shown how differential power dynamics within relationships are associated with sexual decision-making and condom negotiation (Pulerwitz et al., 2002). However, these findings may not be indicative in international settings where varying cultural contexts determine power dynamics within intimate partnerships and greatly influence how this power is related to the occurrence of IPV (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003). Although the data is limited, research has also indicated that men who justify violence against women to assert control and discipline their wives are more likely to engage in physical abuse (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996).

A woman's lack of power within an intimate relationship can lead to an increase in violence and a variety of adverse health outcomes directly associated

with the abuse. Research conducted in the United States suggests that a woman's lack of power has a significant impact upon her ability to negotiate condom use within a sexual relationship. The experience of IPV among women significantly decreases her confidence to negotiate for condom use with a partner. This lack of confidence puts these women at a much greater risk for HIV infection in comparison to women who report no experience of IPV (Swan & O'Connell, 2011). Research has demonstrated how theories on gender and power identify numerous factors that give men the power over the decision-making process within intimate relationships in relation to condom use as well as other behaviors (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000).

Prevalence, risk factors, and adverse health outcomes associated with IPV

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines IPV as "physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse" (CDC, 2010). IPV does not require sexual intimacy between partners and varies considerably in frequency and severity. Studies have demonstrated three main types of IPV that occur between partners including physical, sexual and psychological or emotional violence. Physical violence refers to the intentional use of physical force to cause harm and includes such actions as throwing, pushing, biting, choking and burning. Sexual violence often refers to three main categories including the use of force to convince a person to have sex, an attempted or completed sexual act involving a person who is not capable of providing consent, and sexual contact that is abusive (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 2002). Psychological or emotional abuse occurs when the victim experiences trauma due to an act or threat of an act that may involve humiliating or controlling the victim or

denying the victim access to friends and family. Repeated harassment or threatening behaviors by an individual, known as stalking, is also considered a form of IPV (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

Adverse health outcomes associated with the experience of IPV against women can include injuries directly related to the abuse such as bruises, broken bones (Brokaw et al., 2002) and death (Ganatra, Coyaji, & Rao, 1998) as well as more chronic physical conditions including disability, malnutrition (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008), persistent stress, frequent headaches, migraines, stomach ulcers and spastic ulcers (Campbell, 2002; Coker, Sanderson, & Dong, 2004). Women exposed to IPV experience psychosocial issues including depression (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999), smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use (Yoshihama, Horrocks, & Bybee, 2010; Hankin, Smith, Daugherty, & Houry, 2010). Previous research has also demonstrated that women who experience IPV are at an increased risk of unwanted pregnancy, STIs including HIV, pregnancy complications, and negative birth outcomes (Sarker, 2008; Silverman et al., 2008). Perceptions and attitudes towards health are also greatly influenced by IPV with female victims viewing themselves as being generally less healthy and having more emotional distress and physical pain than women who have not been victimized (Brokaw et al., 2002). The adverse health outcomes of IPV against women may extend to children of female victims who depend upon their mothers as their primary caretakers (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Although research on children's exposure to domestic violence (CEDV) is lacking, studies have suggested that children under five years are disproportionately exposed (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). Exposure to CEDV has been

linked to poorer health outcomes and early childhood development (Bair-Merritt, Blackstone, & Feudtner, 2006; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003; Wolfe, Crooks, McIntyre-Smith, & Jaffe, 2003).

Research has demonstrated that the highest rates of IPV reported were among divorced or separated women and the lowest rates were among women who are widowed or currently married to their first husband. Women who are in their second marriage or are in a marriage with multiple wives are 50 percent more likely to report violence perpetrated by their husbands than all other groups (Naved & Persson, 2005). Another risk factor associated with experiencing IPV is the current age of the woman. Studies suggest that as a woman ages, she is able to raise her social status becoming a more influential member of her community. Therefore, older women often have more respect within their communities and are less likely to report current violence in comparison to their younger counterparts (Fernandez, 1997; McClusky, 2001). It is expected that ever-experience of violence increases with age as the exposure period to risk of violence increases; however, a study conducted across several countries indicated that current experience of violence is highest for women in the two youngest age groups of 15-19 and 20-24 years (Fernandez, 1997).

Age at first marriage for women has been linked to ever experiencing IPV for two reasons (Naved & Persson, 2005). Age of first marriage is a reflection of social status within a community as early marriage is associated with low status of women which is related to IPV against women. Early marriage also prevents women from developing and gaining life skills such as negotiation to secure her position in a

marriage. Without this development women are more likely to have low self worth and power within the relationship and are at a greater risk for experiencing IPV. Research has demonstrated that women who marry at the youngest age groups report the highest percentage of ever experiencing violence as well as violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Women who marry after the age of 25 report the least amount of violence across all locations (Hindin, Kishor, & Ansara, 2008). Furthermore, studies from India have demonstrated that women who marry before 18 years are more likely to be abused than young women who marry at a later time (Raj et al., 2010; Speizer & Pearson, 2011). Younger wives are also increasingly likely to have limited access to resources, often living with their in-laws who pose an additional source of abuse (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Santhya & Jejeebhoy, 2007) and they may influence their son.

Research has also demonstrated a positive association between number of children and risk of ever experiencing IPV (Ellsberg, 2000). Although the causal pathway remains unclear, it is suggested that the experience of IPV may impede the use of contraceptives. Data indicates that women with no children consistently report the lowest rates of violence in their lifetimes and women with five or more children report the highest rates of violence in their lifetimes. Education, as a source of empowerment for women, has been found to influence the reporting of IPV against women. Findings from a multi-country study suggests that as a woman's education level increases, the less likely she is to report ever experiencing violence during her lifetime. Researchers hypothesize that this relationship can be explained by the increase in resources available to educated women who are able to

use those resources when involved in a violent situation (Hindin, Kishor, & Ansara, 2008).

Other research suggests that lower rates of ever experiencing IPV are linked to husbands' characteristics such as education. As the husband's education level increases women's reporting of IPV decreases. This relationship is also evident when considering a woman's experience of violence in the past year. Alcohol consumption by the husband is one of the most influential and consistent factors on a woman's experience of violence (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Johnson, 2003). According to a study using the results of the DHS surveys, the frequency of alcohol consumption by the husband and the experience of violence by wives are highly significant in all countries where alcohol consumption data was collected. Women who report that their husbands are often drunk are at an increased risk to ever experience IPV (Stith et al., 2004).

The experience of IPV against women has also been linked to household characteristics. Although the causal relationship between relative wealth status and the experience of IPV is unclear, it is generally found that women who have low socioeconomic status are more likely to experience violence by their husbands than women who have higher socioeconomic status (Jewkes, 2002; Heise, 1998). However, this causal pathway is often considered to be multidirectional, where the continuing presence of violence may exacerbate or enable the continuation of household poverty (Byrne et al., 1999). Furthermore, population level research has found mixed results for the support of a clear causal pathway between poverty and violence (Ellsberg et al., 1999; Johnson, 2003; Kishor & Johnson, 2003). With the

development of wealth indexes from DHS household data, researchers have identified only three out of nine countries from a multi-country study that display a consistent negative relationship between ever-experiencing violence and household wealth status. However in the majority of the countries where the relationship between wealth status and ever experience of violence is significant, the association generally takes the shape of an inverted U where women from the third quintile of the wealth status report the highest level of ever experience of violence. Furthermore, women with the highest wealth status were the least likely to report ever experiencing IPV (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). The relationship between wealth and violence remains unclear.

IPV in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is known for high reported levels of IPV against women, with a range from 32 percent to 72 percent of married women reported experiencing lifetime IPV in rural areas (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., Islam, M., 2004; Khan, Rob, & Hossain, 2001; Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003; Schuler et al., 1996; Steele, Amin, & Naved, 1998). In a study using self-report from the 2006 Urban Health Survey of married men in Bangladesh findings indicated that men who justified IPV against women were more likely to be perpetrators of IPV (Sambisa et al., 2010). There is limited data available on emotional or psychological abuse towards women in Bangladesh, however a study that used cross-sectional household surveys found that 79 percent of married women surveyed reported verbal abuse and 41 percent reported physical abuse by their husbands. In addition, a small proportion of the women reported that their husbands withheld food from

them, which is an extremely harmful form of emotional abuse (Dalad, Rahman, & Jansson, 2009).

However, data collected from a 2002 survey found that when women who had reported violence by their husbands were asked what they did in response to the violence, 56 percent reported doing nothing, 29 percent shouted or cried, and only 1 percent reported actively seeking help at that time. Of these women, 6 percent reported that they had ever asked anyone for help and of this 6 percent, only a very small percent reported asking their family members. In comparison to other countries with available DHS data, the 94 percent of women who had never sought help was much higher than the range of 41 percent in Nicaragua to 78 percent in Cambodia (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

Early marriage in Bangladesh is regarded as a turning point in a woman's life when childbearing becomes socially acceptable, especially in the rural areas where marriage is generally universal (Caldwell, 2005). Although the legal age of marriage in Bangladesh is 18 years for women, it is widely accepted to get married before the legal age. Among women 20-49 years, 78 percent are married by age 18 and 88 percent are married by age 20. Findings from the Bangladesh Health Survey (BDHS) 2007 indicate that 25 percent of women reported IPV in the past 12 months in comparison to 53 percent of married women reporting ever experiencing physical and/or sexual IPV in their lifetimes (BDHS, 2009). Although studies on marriage and IPV against women in Bangladesh are limited, research has indicated that younger women are at a greater risk to be victims of IPV than older women (Naved & Persson, 2005; Rahman, Hogue, & Makinoda, 2011).

Study Setting

With a population of approximately 150 million and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of $610.1 (US), Bangladesh ranks 146th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index. Bangladesh is a poor nation with a life expectancy at birth of 69.0 for females and 66.5 for males. The majority of the people are socially conservative and religiously and ethnically homogenous. The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which reflects the inequality between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and employment, ranks Bangladesh in the bottom third (112th) out of 146 countries with rankings (0.550) (UNDP, 2011).

Four villages in the Faridpur, Magura, and Rangpur districts were selected for the qualitative component of the study. One of the PIs of the larger study had been working in these villages since 1991. The four villages selected for the research were not randomly chosen; however, they are not atypical compared to others in rural Bangladesh. Additionally, the sites were selected because of the extensive existing data and the well-trained Bangladeshi researchers and international team that have been in the area since 1991. In 2009, women held various

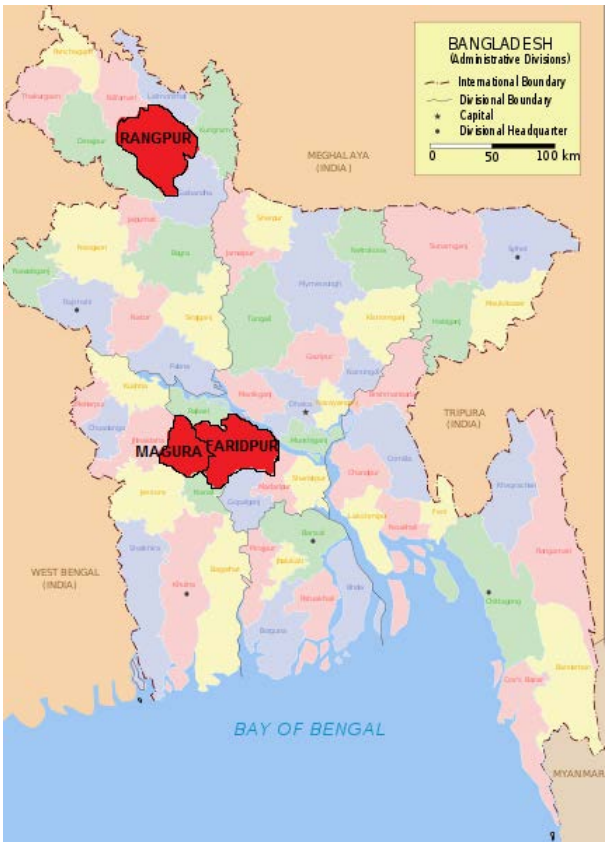

Figure 1: Map of Bangladesh with Faridpur, Magura, and Rangpur districts highlighted

occupations including working on a farm, as vendors, at small factories or at rice processing centers. Prior research from these four villages has shown that 67 percent of currently married women under the age of 50 years reported experiencing physical violence perpetrated by their husbands (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011).

Due to the reported high levels of IPV against women within marital relationships and the persistent gender imbalance rooted in Bangladeshi culture and society, the effects of power dynamics on women's willingness to report their attitudes on IPV that they perceive to contradict the local norm must be furthered examined. The purpose of this study is to determine how power influences women's reporting of violence in order to better understand IPV against women in the context of these women's lives and to guide new methods of measuring violence within similar contexts where power dynamics greatly influence the reporting of IPV against women and personal attitudes about it.

Chapter 2: Comprehensive Review of the Literature

Prevalence of Different Types of IPV

IPV against women is a global public health issue that extends across national borders, ethnic groups, religions, class, and education levels (UNICEF, 2000). According to the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence among ever-partnered women ranges from 15 percent to 71 percent across the fifteen sites surveyed (Abramsky et al., 2011). Other studies have found that 11%-71% of women in North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East have reported previous physical domestic violence (ICF Macro, 2010; Johnson, Ollus, & Nevala, 2008; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998), often accompanied by sexual and psychological or emotional abuse (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

Health Consequences of Violence

IPV against women is associated with a range of adverse health outcomes for female victims. These adverse consequences extend far beyond the direct injuries that may result directly from the abuse and include a variety of physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health outcomes, among others (Dunkle et al., 2004; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2000; Mayhew & Watts, 2002). In addition to the individual adverse health outcomes a woman may experience, IPV against women can also have a significant impact through decreased work productivity (Lloyd, 1997), medical costs (Rivara, Anderson, & Fishman, 2007), and

an increased burden on society and the health system (Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999).

Initiation and Frequency of IPV

Research has demonstrated that marital duration can greatly influence the initiation and frequency of IPV against women. Although the data is limited by the presence of recall bias, findings from a multi-country study indicate that violence is most likely to occur within the first two years of marriage and 70 percent of women at most marital durations report experiencing violence within the first five years of marriage. According to the same study, among ever-married women who report any form of IPV perpetrated by their husbands, 4.3%- 42% report experiencing multiple violent events in the year preceding the survey across seven countries (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

Determinants of Women's Exposure to IPV

Several factors including marital status, age, age at first marriage, number of children, and education level are associated with women ever experiencing and currently experiencing IPV (Koenig et al., 2006; Naved & Persson, 2005). Women's experience of IPV is associated with characteristics including, but not limited to education level and alcohol abuse of their husband or partner (Johnson, 2003; Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000). Place of residence, family structure and wealth of the household unit are household characteristics strongly associated with a women's experience of IPV. Research has indicated that women living in urban areas are significantly more likely to report ever experiencing IPV by their husbands

in comparison to rural women. However, the same study found that current experience of violence reported by women was more likely in rural areas than in urban areas. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted on the effect of residence on current versus lifetime IPV against women (Parish et al., 2004).

Certain factors such as the family structure can have a strong influence on a woman's level of empowerment and experience of violence. One major aspect of the family structure that has shown to put women at a greater risk for ever experiencing IPV is the presence of her in-laws. Research suggests that women are more likely to be devalued by her husband, and most of all her mother-in-law. Although most research indicates that women living with their in-laws have less autonomy and empowerment, it is also suggested that living within an extended household can have a protective effect and reduce the likelihood of violence against wives (Stith et al., 2004). Data suggests that women who were aware that their own mothers were victims of IPV are more likely to experience IPV both currently and in the future than women who report not knowing if their father abused their mother as a child (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

IPV in Bangladesh

Prevalence of IPV

Although the reported prevalence of IPV against women in Bangladesh varies greatly, survey data collected from rural areas suggest that 32%-72% of married women have experienced IPV in their lifetime and 16%-54% have experienced violence in the past year (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam, K., 2004; BIDS, 2004;

Khan, Rob, & Hossain, 2001; Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed, Alam Mozumder, 2003). According to the 2007 Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (DHS), 36 percent of married women of reproductive age reported that a man would be justified in using violence in at least one of the five reasons provided (Bangladesh DHS, 2007; Kishor & Subaiya, 2008). Other studies have demonstrated that IPV is a result of gender inequality and a lack of women's empowerment (Khan, Hudson-Rodd, & Saggers, 2004; Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam, K., 2004). Although both physical and sexual violence have been studied (Silverman et al., 2007; Naved, Azim, Bhuiya, & Persson, 2006), physical violence perpetrated by a husband against his wife is the most common form of IPV in Bangladesh (Bhuiya, Sharmin, & Hanifi, 2003; WHO, 2005).

Determinants of Women's Exposure to IPV

Factors that put women in Bangladesh at an increased risk for experiencing IPV are similar to the patterns found throughout other countries. Women who are young (Islam et al., 2004; Naved & Persson, 2005), less educated (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam, K., 2004; BIDS, 2004), have a partner with limited education (Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003) or a history of family violence (Naved & Persson, 2005), are from poor households (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam K., 2004; BIDS, 2004), and women who are employed (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam K., 2004; Naved & Persson, 2005) are more likely to experience violence. Furthermore, studies on Bangladesh have demonstrated that women with dowry agreements from their husband's family are more likely to experience

violence perpetrated by their husbands (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam K., 2004; Naved & Persson, 2005). Although several risk factors for IPV have been identified, there is limited research on individual and community level perceptions and responses towards IPV against women in Bangladesh. However, a study conducted in Bangladesh found that 66 percent of women who had experienced violence reported never speaking about the violence to anyone and 51 percent of women from rural areas reported that no help was ever offered to them (Naved & Persson, 2005).

IPV and Women's Empowerment

IPV and decision-making

A woman's participation in decision-making has been found to be highly correlated with her experience of IPV. Studies have shown that the occurrence of violence can lower a woman's self worth and negatively affect her mental health which lowers her ability and desire to participate in the decision-making process (Astbury, 1999). It is also likely that a woman's experience of violence may result from her attempt to assert control of decisions that are typically viewed as decisions made predominantly by men. Although women whose husbands made decisions alone reported the highest rates of violence in the past year, married women who reported making decisions alone were more likely to experience violence in comparison to women who made decisions jointly with their husbands (Ellsberg et al., 1999).

Attitudes about IPV against women

A multi-country study using the standard DHS questions found that women in Cambodia are more likely to report physical violence alone, in comparison to emotional and physical violence combined and emotional violence alone. Similarly, in Colombia, women were less likely to report emotional or sexual violence in combination or alone. Above all, women are most likely to report physical violence alone, followed by combinations of other forms of violence (Kishor & Johnson, 2004).

Although recent studies have demonstrated a link between controlling behavior and the experience of violence, they have used standardized survey questions such as the DHS or the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Strauss, 1979) that may fail to capture the actual of experience of violence (Antai, 2011; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Furthermore, although research has demonstrated that attitudes towards IPV against women are one of the most effective predictors of actual violent behavior when compared to other social factors, there is limited research on this topic (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Most of the studies conducted in developing countries have been in Sub-Saharan Africa and have focused on the prevalence of IPV and the specific determinants (Choi & Ting, 2008; Ellsberg et al., 2008), rather than on specific attitudes towards IPV (Uthman, Moradi, & Lawoko, 2009).

Additionally, there are few methodological tools to effectively assess attitudes towards IPV against women in developing countries (Moracco & Cole, 2009). A previous study conducted in Bangladesh demonstrated that when women

respond to questions on their individual attitudes towards IPV, they may have been expressions of community norms rather than their own attitudes (Schuler & Islam, 2008). Other studies conducted in different settings have found similar results (Ellsberg, Pena, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001; Kishor & Johnson, 2004). These findings suggest that in certain contexts, these responses may overrepresent the extent to which women justify violence towards women (Schuler & Islam, 2008). Therefore, it is important to first address how women comprehend attitudinal questions on IPV and then assess the underlying reasons behind their misunderstanding.

Data collected from 23 countries demonstrated that high percentages of women agree with at least one of five reasons used to justify violence. Research has shown that across a wide range of countries, 11%- 94% of ever-abused women and 9%-86% of never-abused women agree that IPV against women is justified in at least one of the pre-specified situations (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Furthermore, although the causal direction is unclear (Koenig et al., 2003), a study using DHS data from nine countries revealed that women who justify IPV against women are at an increased risk of being victims of IPV (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). Understanding the individual and community attitudes towards IPV are important factors for reducing the occurrence of violence against women. However, standardized survey questions may fail to capture the true belief of women's own attitudes about IPV against women as well as their perceptions of community norms surrounding IPV (Schuler & Islam, 2008). Developing better methodological tools is important in order to better understand the meanings and values that women attach to their responses to attitudinal IPV questions.

Power Dynamics within Intimate Relationships

Theories on power dynamics within married relationships began to emerge after the study published by Blood and Wolfe titled, "Husbands and Wives" set the foundation for research on the topic. In the study, conflicts in decision-making were defined as observable outcomes of power dynamics, which overlooked the processes and distribution of power resources (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). In another study that looked at negotiation of control and the influence of power dynamics among married or cohabitating gay and lesbian couples, decision-making was used as the primary outcome. Despite the limitations of using decision-making as the primary indicator of power dynamics, it is still viewed as an influential indicator of marital power (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).

In these earlier studies, power was defined as the ability to get in one's way and focused more on the final decisions over major purchases such as houses, cars or vacations. Generally, these studies found that men with greater resources had more power within an intimate relationship, meaning that power dynamics are a result of unequal resource allocation between partners (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Szinovacz, 1987). However, this earlier view on power dynamics has been challenged by many researchers who have examined women's employment (Winkler, McBride, & Andrews, 2005). Although women's participation in the workforce has increased their monetary contributions and control over certain domains within an intimate relationship, the unequal power distribution relative to men has remained a constant. Therefore, researchers have suggested that there are

other factors beyond decision-making that influence power dynamics (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Pyke, 1994).

The gender perspective, developed by feminist scholars, is another approach to explaining power dynamics between men and women that addresses the relationship between power and decision-making (Ferree, 1990). Unlike the earlier views on power resources, the gender perspective illustrates how social norms and systems reinforce gendered behavior and discourage any atypical behavior. These existing social structures suggest that men hold more authority than women and that their authority is more justifiable by society. Therefore, the results of these gendered power differences are observable in both public and private domains (Martin, 2004; Risman, 2004). However, research on gender differences in power among marital relationships is limited.

Researchers have suggested that in order to better understand how marital power operates within a relationship, the process of negotiation and conflict management must be addressed (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998). Several studies have explored the influence of power dynamics on how intimate partners negotiate decisions and other conflict situations that involve gender norms (Tichenor, 1999; Tichenor, 2005; Zvonkovic, Greaves, Schmiege, & Hall, 1996).

In a seminal paper published in 1989, Aafke Komter proposed a new way of understanding the quality of power within married relationships by examining the processes and mechanisms of power. For the purpose of the study, Komter defines the occurrence of power processes as any time when married men and women seek change that is either prevented or forced somehow. The power processes can be

defined by five unique characteristics including, “desires for, or attempts at, change; structural or psychological impediments; the partner’s reaction to change; conflicts that might arise in the process of change; and strategies to realize or prevent change” (Komter, 1989). Komter’s conceptualization of the underlying structures of power processes was developed from previous research conducted by Lukes (1971) and Gramsci (1974).

Lukes’ three dimensional perspective on power asserts that power should be conceptualized in three distinct forms. The first dimension identifies who has the authority and control to make decisions within the relationship. Power that is exerted in this way is observable in conflict. In the second dimension, power is used to prevent issues that may create conflict from arising. Studies that utilize this approach to power address overt decisions as well as the absence of decisions, identified by Lukes as nondecisions. A nondecision can be made to anticipate the needs of the more powerful partner, and is not necessarily based on an observable conflict. Therefore the second dimensional view of power brings awareness to potential conflicts that may arise but remain invisible because of nondecisions made by the less powerful partner (Lukes, 1974).

The third dimension of Lukes view on power was created in response to the first two dimensions being too behavioral. In the third dimension, Lukes identifies Latent conflict, which is described as a hidden power that would be present if the subordinate partner expressed their desires. It is these unexpressed desires or attitudes and the mechanisms that enable this power dynamic that are the focus of Lukes research (Lukes, 1974). However, there was much criticism on Lukes’

research that focused on identifying the real interests of people (Bloch et al., 1979). Komter addressed this concern by examining power mechanisms that underlie subjective preferences in order to identify what the subordinate partner would have done if power was not exerted, or what they did not do because power was exerted. However, Komter recognized that measuring power when the subordinate partner does not desire change or view any alternatives would be difficult and decided to use Gramsci's research on ideological hegemony to address this concern (Komter, 1989).

Gramsci defines ideological hegemony as a consequence of consensus created over time between dominant and subordinate groups through a process of socialization. Consensus is attained by gaining the approval of the dominant group's values and beliefs. Approval is achieved by the influence of social structures that are already in place such as education systems, religious organizations, and the media (Gramsci, 1971). Thus, although behaviors or actions produced by the subordinate group appear to be a result of their personal values and beliefs, they are a reflection of the influence of the dominant group's influence on existing social institutions. Gramsci also makes note of the concept of common sense and how important it is in understanding ideological hegemony. It is apparent that complete hegemonic control, reflected in a unitary commonsense thought, is not practical in the real world due to inconsistencies in values and beliefs. However, by examining the contradictions and differences of commonsense thoughts, one can better understand the differences between the values and beliefs of the dominant and subordinate groups (Gramsci, 1971).

The power processes that women and men display have a great influence on the quality of power present in their relationship. Using Lukes' and Gramsci's research, Komter conceptualized three distinct forms of power including manifest power, latent power and invisible power that surfaced when looking at power processes within married couples. *Manifest power* evokes the highest level of conflict within a marital relationship and is present when attempts or desire for change are visible. Manifest power can operate when the subordinate partner desires change and actively seeks this change despite conflicting views from the societal norm (Komter, 1989).

Latent power surfaces when there is no account or recognition of attempts to change or when conflict is present. The anticipation of the more powerful partner's desires and needs or the avoidance of conflict due to fear of a negative reaction or of putting their marriage at risk is an example of latent power. This may be a reflection of the subordinate partner deciding that it is bad timing to address a conflict, or may even be a result in no longer raising issues due to the acknowledgment of multiple failed attempts (Komter, 1989).

However, power is not always measurable (McDonald, 1980). As Komter revealed, *invisible power* can arise when social or psychological processes surface because of traditional patriarchal marital relations and perceptions of gender differences that are present in daily life. It is a reflection of systematic and community beliefs surrounding patriarchal marital relations and therefore the people involved are often unaware of its effects (Komter, 1989). Conflict is not present because the subordinate group follows the socially normative behaviors of

what is appropriate. Researchers would argue that when women rely on men to initiate romantic relationships because they are following traditional norms, even when they may desire change, invisible power is present. These unique forms of power can manifest through actions and behaviors of both partners in a marital relationship and can have a significant impact on the experience of violence within an intimate relationship (Komter, 1989).

The majority of the research has focused on measures of manifest power and how it influences the experience of, or attitudes towards IPV against women (Antai, 2011; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006). Although manifest power is much easier to measure through reported attitudes towards IPV against women, these measurements are unreliable and often misleading. Research has demonstrated that attitudinal survey questions about IPV, such as the ones used on the DHS, may encourage women to alter their personal attitudes about IPV to fit their perceptions of attitudes towards IPV against women from community norms (Schuler & Islam, 2008). When given additional context to the standard DHS questions, research revealed that the proportion of participants who stated that it is justified for a husband to beat his wife increased.

These findings suggest that other underlying power processes are at play. Exclusively using measurements of manifest power to determine attitudes towards IPV might be misleading. Therefore measurements of latent power must be assessed in order to better understand how less visible, underlying power dynamics influence the reporting of attitudes towards IPV against women.

Chapter 3: Manuscript

Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women is a global public health problem that can have severe adverse health outcomes for women. Although the experience of IPV has been linked to the distribution of power within a marriage, research is lacking on how power processes can influence women's reporting of IPV against women. The data used for this study included cognitive interviews and focus group discussions collected from women in 2009 in three villages in Bangladesh. Structural elements of the textual data, such as contradictory responses to attitudinal questions about IPV against women, were investigated as potential evidence of latent power. Latent power surfaces when the subordinate holds a view that contradicts the dominant norm, but conflict is not apparent because there is no attempt at change. Overall, the majority of the women provided a contradictory response at least once throughout the interview, and the context of these contradictory responses provide evidence that women's reporting of attitudes about IPV against women should be understood as arising in part from latent power processes. Given the challenges of detecting latent power in structured interviews, women's reporting of personal attitudes about IPV in standard surveys should be interpreted with these processes in mind. New methodological tools are needed to better understand women's personal attitudes about IPV against women in patriarchal contexts in which not justifying IPV against women may contradict perceived norms. Such research would greatly inform intervention programs targeted at reducing the prevalence of IPV against women.

Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against women is a global public health problem that can greatly affect a woman's quality of life (Abramsky et al., 2011; Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, & Becker, 2006). Although the frequency and severity of IPV has been linked to the distribution of power in marriage and the family (Yount, 2005; Yount & Carrera, 2006; Yount & Li, 2010), research is lacking on how these different forms of power may influence women's reporting of exposure to IPV as well as their attitudes about it (Jewkes, 2002; Johnson, 1995; Yount, Halim, Head, & Schuler, forthcoming). The conceptualization of power within marriage has evolved from one in which influence over others derives from a material base (for example,

based on the number of resources that a partner acquires) (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Duvvury, Grown, & Redner, 2004) to one in which influence over others is a process that derives from more and less observable sources. For example, this would include the threat among subordinates of adverse consequences arising from contradicting dominant ideas about marital relations. Although the definition of marital power is certainly evolving, it is clear that the effects of power dynamics on IPV against women are significant (Sassler & Miller, 2011).

In a seminal paper published in 1989, Aafke Komter set the foundation for examining power dynamics within marital relationships. Adapting concepts of power and hegemony from the work of Lukes' (1974) and Gramsci (1971), Komter conceptualized three distinct forms of power processes that arguably surface in the context of marital relations. *Manifest power* refers to observable forms of marital conflict that arise when the subordinate partner in a relationship holds a view that contradicts the dominant norm about marital relations and expresses that contradictory view and actively seeks change (Komter, 1989).

In contrast, *latent power* surfaces when the subordinate holds a view that contradicts the dominant norm, but conflict is not apparent because there is no attempt at change. Rather, the subordinate does not act because (s)he anticipates the more powerful partner's desires and needs and wishes to avoid conflict because of fear of negative reactions or a risk to the marital relationship. For example, the subordinate partner may decide that it is bad timing to address a conflict which may follow multiple failed attempts (Komter, 1989).

However, power is not always measurable (Mcdonald, 1980). As Komter posited, *invisible power* can arise when social or psychological processes surface because of traditional patriarchal marital relations and perceptions of gender differences that are present in daily life. It is a reflection of systematic and community beliefs surrounding patriarchal marital relations and therefore the people involved are often unaware of its effects (Komter, 1989).

The purpose of this study is to explore the applicability of Komter's formulation of power processes in marital relationships to understand women's reporting of their attitudes about IPV against women. We are particularly interested in understanding the extent to which latent power may be one explanation for women's contradictory responses to these attitudinal questions. This work provides an important basis for interpreting women's responses to attitudinal questions about IPV against women that have been administered widely through the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) (Yount, Halim, Hynes & Hillman, 2011) and provides insights about the potential need to develop new instruments for measuring such attitudes in highly patriarchal contexts.

Methods

Study Setting

With a population of approximately 150 million and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of $610.1 (US), Bangladesh ranks 146th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index. In addition to being poor, Bangladeshis face a life expectancy at birth of 69.0 for women and 66.5 for men. The majority of the people

are socially conservative and religiously and ethnically homogenous. The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which reflects the inequality between women and men in reproductive health, empowerment and employment, ranks Bangladesh in the bottom third (112th) out of 146 countries with rankings (0.550) (United Nations Development Program, 2011).

Bangladesh is known for high reported levels of IPV, with a range from 32 percent to 72 percent of married women in rural areas reporting some exposure to IPV in their lifetime (Bates, Schuler, Islam, F., & Islam, M, 2004; Khan, Rob, & Hossain, 2001; Koenig, Ahmen, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003; Schuler, Syed, Riley, & Akhter, 1996; Steele, Sajeda, & Ruchira, 1998). Four villages in the Faridpur, Magura, and Rangpur districts were selected for the qualitative component of the study. Prior research from these four villages has shown that 67 percent of currently married women under the age of 50 years have reported experiencing physical violence perpetrated by their husbands (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011).

Given these high reported levels of IPV and persistent gender imbalances rooted in Bangladeshi culture and society, the effects of familial power dynamics on women's willingness to report their attitudes about IPV against women, especially when these attitudes are perceived to contradict the local norm, warrant further study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for research involving human subjects were approved through all participating partners, including, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Emory University, and the Bangladesh Medical Research Council's Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). Given the sensitive nature of the subject, the qualitative data were collected following the recommendations for the ethical conduct of research on IPV from the World Health Organization (WHO) (WHO, 2001) and the suggested standards from the International Guidelines for Ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies (CIOMS, 1991). Informed consent was obtained before initiating the interviews, and only one woman from each household was interviewed to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the study participants. Most often, the interviews were held in the participant's home, but occasionally were conducted outside the home to ensure privacy. Interviewers were instructed to terminate an interview when privacy could not be assured.

Study Participants

The sample for this analysis includes 48 women who participated in Cognitive Interviews (CIs) and 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that included 12 women participants. Women participants in the CIs and FGDs were chosen from sites where men CI and FGD participants were not selected to ensure anonymity and safety of the participants (see Ethical Considerations, above). Participants selected for the CIs and FGDs were recruited from the women remaining after a random sample was chosen for the subsequent companion survey. To maximize the diversity of the qualitative sample, one village for each sex was selected from the

Northern district of Rangpur and one from the Western district of Magura. To be eligible for the overall study, participants were required to be married and between the ages of 18 and 49. This analysis focused on the women participants in the CIs and FGDs, as the objective of the analysis was to examine how marital and familial power dynamics influence women's reporting of their attitudes about IPV against women.

The characteristics of the sample included in the CIs is summarized in Table 1. Women respondents had a median age of 33.1 years (SD=8.8) and a median education level of 6.0 grades (SD=3.61). The median age of their spouses was 40.1 years (SD=10.2). Most women were currently married (93.8%), stated their occupation as a housewife (81.3%), and currently used no method (65.6%) as their preferred method of contraception.

Table 1: Distribution of demographic characteristics from the CI participants across the two study villages in rural Bangladesh, among women 18-48, 2009

	Overall **(n=48)**		Village 1 **(n=28)**		Village 2 **(n=20)**	
	n	Mean (SD)	**n**	Mean (SD)	**n**	Mean (SD)
Age	47	33.11 (8.78)	27	31.96 (9.71)	20	31.70 (7.34)
Age of spouse	35	40.09 (10.19)	24	37.53 (10.41)	11	43.13 (10.25)
Marital status (% married)	48	45 (93.75%)	28	25 (89.29%)	20	20 (100%)
Education level	47	5.98 (3.61)	28	5.71 (3.56)	19	6.37 (3.74)
Occupation (% housewife)	48	39 (81.25%)	28	23 (82.14%)	20	16 (80.00%)
Method of contraception (total)	32		22		10	
No method (%)	21	65.63%	17	77.27%	4	40.00%
Pill (%)	5	22.73%	5	22.73%	0	0%
Ligation (%)	4	40.00%	0	0%	4	40.00%
Injection (%)	2	20.00%	0	0%	2	20.00%

Cognitive interviews

In general, the CIs were developed to explore the thought processes underlying participants' responses during the administration of standard attitudinal questions about IPV against women taken from the 2004 and 2007 Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS, 2004; BDHS, 2007). The process often encourages participants to verbalize their thought process as they formulate a response and to explain the context of their responses (Ericcson & Simon, 1980). The participants were encouraged to state their understanding of each question and to explain the reasoning behind their response. Although not the primary objective of the CIs, the theme of power dynamics in marriage and the extended family emerged spontaneously throughout the interviews, suggesting that a more detailed analysis was warranted of their potential influence on women's reported attitudes about IPV against women. Cognitive interviewing has been used as a methodological tool in past studies to better understand how cognitive processes influence survey report errors, also known as the "verbal report" (Ericsson, Anders, & Herbert, 1980). By using these techniques, the CIs provided rich data on the participants' perspectives on power dynamics within a marriage.

In total, three rounds of CIs were conducted with a highly trained gender-matched interviewer. The first set of CIs was conducted with 27 women using the questions on attitudes towards IPV against women from the 2004 Bangladesh DHS. After preliminary analysis of the data collected from the first set, researchers added contextual details to examine how the participants' responses might change by adding new information in the second set of CIs. In addition, two scenarios used in

the 2007 Bangladesh DHS were added and participants were asked whether they believed anything should be done to stop husbands' violence against their wives and, if so, what should be done. Twenty women completed the second set of CIs. In the third set of CIs conducted with 12 women, interviewers used the revised guide from the second set and included an additional question clarifying to whom the participants were referring to when they discussed community attitudes surrounding IPV against women and who in their community is responsible for gossiping about the actions of others. Across the three rounds of cognitive interviewing, the researchers conducted a total of 108 CIs, of which 59 were from women participants. For this analysis, 48 of these interviews were analyzed.

Focus Group Discussions

For the FGDs, men and women who were not selected for the CIs were separated by gender into 8 different groups. Two FGDs consisting of women 16 to 45 years and ranging in size from 5 to 7 people were used for this analysis. The interview guide used for the individuals in the second set of CIs was used for the FGDs. The main purpose of the FGDs was to determine whether people were more likely to oppose IPV when in a group setting. For this analysis, two FGDs were used to triangulate the findings of the CIs.

Data Analysis

The interviews of consenting women were tape recorded, transcribed and translated into English for analysis. There were 28 CIs from village 1, 20 CIs, 1 FGD from village 2, and 1 FGD from village 3 that were used for analysis. Although first

author reached saturation around 30 CIs, all 48 CIs were analyzed. The transcriptions were analyzed and coded using MAXqda software to facilitate the coding and retrieval of textual data through advanced search and retrieval functions.

A preliminary codebook summarizing the primary domains reflective of familial power dynamics was created after the analysis of three CIs in November of 2011. Several codes used in the analysis were identified through the literature review process, while the remaining codes were developed from the content of the CIs. This first codebook consisted of 17 codes organized under three general themes: personal views, community norms, and family. A second round of coding began in December of 2011 and a second codebook was created after the analysis of twenty-three CIs. The second codebook consisted of 67 codes organized under four themes: structural elements, types of violence, latent power, and manifest power. These preliminary codes were restructured and redefined throughout subsequent rounds of coding, however, the general themes from the second round of coding remained consistent. The final codebook consisted of 92 codes and the original four general themes. The first author used the lumping method of text segmenting and memo-ing to code the data (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010).

Once the data were analyzed through three rounds of coding, MAXmaps was used to further analyze the codes and themes identified. Visual representations of the linkages between codes and the frequency counts of each code assisted in the development of the key themes that emerged from the data. The first author also used the text retrieval function, available through MAXqda, to identify the text

segments linked to specific codes. These text segments were read and re-read by the primary researcher to create analytical memos that were then used to develop themes based on Komter's recommendations for textual analysis to uncover latent power processes.

Measures of Power Dynamics

As described by Komter, latent power was measured by recognizing desires for change, attempts at change, structural or emotional barriers to change, the more powerful partner's reaction to change, anticipating conflicts that might arise from the process of change, and strategies to realize or prevent change (Komter, 1989). In the analysis, these elements were categorized into themes relating to patriarchal marital relations, the husband's role, the wife's fault, family structure, societal expectations, and the inevitability of IPV. Contradictory responses and misunderstanding or avoidance of the questions were coded as potential evidence of latent power. Manifest power was identified when the participant described a desire for change that they felt was in opposition to either their family members or the community norm. This form of power was evident through themes regarding recognition of opposing patriarchal marital relations and the belief that times are changing in the reported personal attitudes about IPV.

With this analysis focused on elements of latent power, the first author identified and analyzed contradictory responses within each interview. The frequency of contradictory responses within each interview was documented to further analyze the influence of latent power on women's reporting of personal views towards IPV against women.

Some limitations of the analysis are notable. The CI data analyzed from two locations in rural Bangladesh used different interview guides, which could have influenced the content of the CIs and the subsequent analysis. The participants from village 1 were asked only about personal and community views on IPV against women, whereas the participants from village 2 were additionally probed on their household views of IPV against women. Furthermore, the order of these three sections of the interview guide used on participants from village 2 was often different which may have had an effect on the reliability of the data. This is especially true when community views and household views were asked before personal views on IPV against women, however the nature of this influence is difficult to determine.

Results

Overview

Two overarching conclusions of the analysis are that (1) women often provided contradictory reports of their attitudes about IPV against women, and (2) these contradictory reports appear, at least in part, to be influenced by power processes in marriage and the extended family. Specifically, when provided additional context and asked whether beating was justified in that particular situation, the majority of the women contradicted their original statement. In addition, the results suggest another type of contradiction that is the focus of this paper. This type of contradiction was evident when women contradicted themselves in the same thought or response, providing an immediate contradiction.

Potential reasons for women's contradictory responses are identified through key themes including the inevitability of IPV, a lack of alternatives to IPV, and perceptions of patriarchal social norms and a lack of familial support. Although not directly related to the immediate contradictory responses, other themes such as patriarchal marital relations and fear of their husbands were identified as potentially influential factors that may shape deeply rooted power dynamics that provide an important context for the emergence of contradictory reports of attitudes about IPV against women. Key themes including opposing patriarchal marital relations and the belief that times are changing were identified from the small group of women who did not provide contradictory responses.

Frequencies of Women's Contradictory Responses to Attitudinal Questions about IPV

Overall across all interviews, when asked, "Is it right for a husband to beat his wife?", the majority of women responded with a definite "no" (79.2%), followed by 16.7% who answered "no" but then provided an immediate clarification, 2.1% who responded with a definite "yes", and 2.1% who responded "yes" then switched to "no" within the same response [Table 2]. Of those women living in village 1, 47.8% reported that it would be justified to beat the wife if she left the house without permission, 12.0% reported that it would be justified if the wife neglected the children or argued with the husband, and 11.1% reported it would be justified if the wife failed to prepare food in a timely manner [Table 3].

Table 2: Distribution of women's responses to "Is it right for a husband to beat his wife?" answered by women, 18-48 years, rural Bangladesh, 2009					
	Definite "No"	**"No" with clarification**	**Definite "Yes"**	**"Yes" then switched to "No" in same response**	**Total**
Village 1	22 (78.57%)	4 (14.29%)	1 (3.57%)	1 (3.57%)	28
Village 2	16 (80.00%)	4 (20.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	20
Total	38 (79.17%)	8 (16.67%)	1 (2.08%)	1 (2.08%)	48

Table 3: Distribution of women's responses to the justification of IPV against women across four situations, answered by women 18-48 years, Village 1, rural Bangladesh, 2009					
	Neglecting the children (*Indicates 3 missing values)	**Arguing with husband** (*Indicates 3 missing values)	**Failing to prepare food in time** (*Indicates 1 missing value)	**Leaving the house without permission** (*Indicates 5 missing values)	**Total Responses**
Responded "justified" (%)	3* (12.00%)	3* (12.00%)	3* (11.11%)	11* (47.83%)	28

*Missing values indicate responses that did not provide a clear "yes" or "no" answer to the question.

The responses from women in village 2 were not included in Table 3 because when they were asked whether they would justify violence under the four situations asked of women in village 1, they were probed three different times. Each time they were given a slightly different version of the original situation and asked again whether they would justify IPV against women. The need for additional context was identified by previous research showing that participants often misunderstood or misinterpreted common survey questions on women's attitudes about IPV against women (Schuler & Islam, 2008). The content of the contextual questions was based on previous research conducted in a similar setting that found that the proportion of participants who justified IPV increased when the wife's behavior was characterized as intentionally gender transgressive. Therefore, to obtain more meaningful

responses on the topic of justification of IPV against women, these contextual questions were used (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011).

In village 2, the majority of women provided a contradictory response within each situation including neglecting the children (70.00%), arguing with the husband (85.00%), failing to prepare food in time (75.00%), and leaving the house without permission (85.00%) [Table 4]. All women from village 2 were also asked whether they would justify IPV against women under two additional circumstances including refusing sex to their husbands (15.00%) and disobeying the elders (30.00%) [Table 4].

All participants were probed with four unique situations that provided them the opportunity to contradict their original response to "Is it right for a husband to beat his wife?" and participants from village 2 were given six opportunities. Within each village, the majority of participants (60.42%) contradicted their original statement at the fourth probe when asked whether it would be justified for a husband to beat his wife if she left the house without permission [Table 5]. The majority of women contradicted their original statement in the direction of not justified to justified (75.00%), 22.92% did not contradict their original response of not justified, and one woman contradicted her original statement in the direction of justified to not justified (2.08%) when probed with the first situational question [Table 6].

Table 4: Distribution of women's contradictory responses to their original response on the justification of IPV against women when probed within each situation, and the justification of violence when refusing sex and disobeying elders, among women 18-48 years, Village 2, rural Bangladesh, 2009

	Neglecting the children (*Probed 3 times)	**Arguing with husband** (*Probed 3 times)	**Failing to prepare food in time** (*Probed 3 times)	**Leaving the house without permission** (*Probed 3 times)	**Refusing sex** (*Asked once)	**Disobeying the elders** (*Asked once)	**Total**
Contradictory response (%)	14* (70.00%)	17* (85.00%)	15* (75.00%)	17* (85.00%)	3* (15.00%)	6* (30.00%)	20

*Participants were probed on three different variations of each of the first four situations, and asked once in the final two situations.

Table 5: Timing of contradictory responses from the participant's original response across six situations, among women 18-48 years, rural Bangladesh, 2009

	1st probe: Neglecting children	**2nd probe: Arguing with husband**	**3rd probe: Failing to prepare food in time**	**4th probe: Leaving the house without permission**	**5th probe: Refusing sex**	**6th probe: Disobeying the elders**	**Total**
Village 1	6 (21.43%)	5 (17.86%)	5 (17.86%)	15 (53.57%)	--	--	28
Village 2	4 (20.00%)	8 (40.00%)	7 (35.00%)	14 (70.00%)	1 (5.00%)	16 (80.00%)	20
Total	10 (20.83%)	13 (27.08%)	12 (25.00%)	29 (60.42%)	1 (5.00%)	16 (80.00%)	48

*Participants from village 1 were not asked the situational questions on refusing sex or disobeying elders therefore were not given the opportunity to contradict their original response.

Table 6: Direction of responses from the original question (Is it right for a husband to beat his wife?) to the first situational question, answered by women 18-48 years, rural Bangladesh, 2009

	From "no" to "yes"	**From "yes" to "no"**	**From "no" to "no"**	**From "yes" to "yes"**	**Total**
Responses	36 (75.00%)	1 (2.08%)	11* (22.92%)	--	48

*One participant responded with a definite "no" in all four situations, but it was later clear that she did not fully comprehend the meaning of the questions that were asked. Intensive probing revealed that she did justify beating in certain circumstances.
**When participants responded with an answer of "depends" or stated "yes", then when probed with the same question responded "no", their responses were recorded as a "no".

The Marital Context in which Women Express Contradictory Attitudes about IPV against Women

Themes including the inevitability of IPV, a lack of alternatives to IPV, and patriarchal social norms and a lack of familial support were identified as major themes that influenced women's immediately contradictory responses to attitudinal questions about IPV against women. Although it is difficult to link directly through quotes from women these contexts as reasons why women gave immediately contradictory responses, the proximity of women's contradictory reports with these themes suggests that they play an influential role in the way women discuss their attitudes about IPV against women in Bangladesh. Otherwise, themes including patriarchal marital relations and fear of the husband emerged as potentially important contexts in which women gave contradictory responses to the more detailed attitudinal questions about IPV against women that were administered in Village 2.

The Inevitability of IPV

The majority of the participants who provided contradictory responses throughout the interview described the inevitability of wife beating within marital relationships and how it is viewed within their community. The majority of the women contradicted themselves by stating that beating is not a justifiable action, but it happens anyway. Many women make a distinction between what a husband can and will do in comparison to what women consider a justifiable action.

> *Beating is never justified. However, husbands beat their wives.* (Age 38, Education level 10)

> *No, it is not right. They have the license [duty] to beat their wives that is why they do it.* (Age 42, Education level 3)

The women often referred to the Islamic law or, *Hadis,* as an explanation for the occurrence of wife beating. Several women described the role of the wife as a servant to the husband according to the law of society and stated that the law allows men to beat their wives if they do not fulfill the role of the wife. This role of the wife also includes following rules such as where they can go, what they can wear and how they should speak. In more extreme situations, some women described the ultimate control of the husband according to the law, "It's not illegal for a husband to beat up his wife. It is in the law" (Age 25, Education level 9). Beyond what was described as the law of society, there were also several references to the community's views on the inevitability of wife beating using the phrase, "it is the way" (Age 40, Education level 4). One woman stated that there is no way to avoid it, regardless if a woman is at fault, she must "digest" the beatings because of the way their society is set up (Age 29, Education level 5). It was also made clear that this is the way their society has always been and the way it is now. Regardless of what women or other community members think, beating wives is the way their society operates.

> *It is not right to beat someone. But sometimes they say that it is right and sometimes they say it is not right. Yes, that is the way it is in our village. Our society has set it up like this. Doesn't matter it's right or wrong but a husband can beat his wife – that is the way it is here.* (Age 25, Education level 2)

> *Beating is never justified. However, husbands beat their wives. It is by law that a husband can beat his wife if the wife does something wrong.* (Age 38, Education level 10)

> *Actually, beating no matter with what you beat a person – is not a good thing. But husbands beat their wives when she makes mistakes – that is the way it is (Ain). In our society, everyone think it is right.* (Age 40, Education level 4)

The participants also described the inevitability of wife beating as a result of beating without reason. Although the majority of women described how beating was inevitable if the wife was at fault, several women described how beating can occur without a clear reason. These women described how these husbands that beat without reason do not make an effort to understand the situation and beat before they know who should be at fault. Although this does occur, the women all agree that beating without reason is wrong.

> *Woman: What else can a man do to make things right except beating his wife? So, I agree with it. On the other hand, a woman does not have the ability to beat her husband, does she?*
> *Interviewer: Is it right for a husband to beat his wife?*
> *Woman: There is nothing to do if a man raises his hand to his wife.*
> *Interviewer: But what do you think? Is that right for him to do?*
> *Woman: No.* (Age 42, Education level 0)

> *A husband would beat his wife if she fails to serve him meal timely for being busy doing other works, nevertheless, he would beat her if this delay was made as she was gossiping with her friend. He would not let her go without beating in any case. That is the fact here. However, a man does not need any reason to beat his wife. And the wife cannot tell him about what is right and what is wrong. I say, beating is completely wrong action!* (Age 43, Education level 12)

The lack of a husband's education, a factor that could not be changed, also had an effect on the contradictory responses that women provided. Women described the inevitability of beating as a result of a lack of their husband's education. If a husband had the ability to communicate with the wife, using words not physical force, women stated that beating would not occur. Although women agreed that beating is wrong, they often stated that uneducated men do not understand how to solve marital problems without using beating, and therefore it happens anyway.

> *If they had the light of education in their soul then they would have realized a husband or a wife's dignity (morjada), a child's dignity. But men do not understand. They only know to beat*

> *their wives as soon as they reply. This is not right. This is wrong. But they do not have the eyes to see it.* (Age 42, Education level 3)
>
> *They beat their wives because they lack knowledge and education. Educated people do not even mind small matters at all. But illiterate people mind those small matters and beat their wives.* (Age 37, Education level not stated)

Coping with the husband's anger was described by women as a tool to avoid beatings. Some participants stated that often times a wife behaves poorly and the husband cannot control the situation and may hit her, but that beating in this situation is normal. Women described the inevitability of beating in some situations and the fear that is associated with their husbands anger, "And then danger comes for the woman" (Age 40, Education level 4). Women also explained how beating can result from a wife's uncontrollable temper. The husbands use their temper and anger when trying to make their wives understand the mistake she has made or when the wife is at fault. The women originally stated that beating is not justified, yet if the husband is angry as a result of something the wife has done, then it is expected that she would get beaten, implying that this action would be justified.

> *If I do some wrong with him and if my husband beats me for that then I would not complain about it. But I should not do any wrong with him in the first place. Suppose I know that doing a particular thing would make my husband beat me, yet I keep doing that – in such case, my husband would obviously beat me, no?* (Age 23, Education level 9)
>
> *You cannot beat your wife for a slight mistake. You need to give her chances once, twice and thrice. If she makes the same mistake again for the fourth time then you could beat her but not before that.* (Age 25, Education level 5)

Lack of Alternatives to IPV

Another factor that contributed to the participants' tendency to contradict their perspectives on IPV against women was the lack of feasible alternatives they viewed in their lives. As a result of the anticipated lack of alternative options for women, the idea of keeping silent in order to potentially decrease the severity or

frequency of beating was mentioned. Women described the importance of keeping silent, regardless if the wife is right, as a means to avoid potential beatings. Similarly, women described the advantage of forfeiting or giving up the fight when arguing with the husband in order to avoid being beaten. Furthermore, the community expects the wife to fulfill her role as the subordinate partner by staying quiet despite the situation, "a wife who would endure everything silently is a good wife and who would use the mouth is too bad- she is a Satan" (Age 24, Education level 9). Some of the women described keeping silent as a result of beating, believing they are at fault and deserved the beating. Many participants described how wives who do not keep silent or know when to give up the fight deserve the punishment they receive. They have made a mistake and see no other alternative ending to the situation.

> *I made the mistake. And I can't say anything even if he beats me*. (Age 47, Education level 0)
>
> *It is better to forfeit than continuing to fight. As I would forfeit to my husband then he would eventually calm down.* (Age 25, Education level 2)

The combination of the dominance of men and the hopelessness of the situation appears to have created this view of a lack of alternative options. Beating is a habit of men that is ingrained in their lives that is difficult to escape. The participants also described beating as a normal and fair punishment when the wife is at fault. Several women stated that an occasional slap when the wife has made a mistake is normal behavior for the husband. However, there was a clear distinction made between the types of weapons used during beating that is considered normal.

Women stated that if the husband is using a stick or baton to beat the wife for a small mistake, then it is no longer considered to be normal.

> *It has become a habit of husbands to beat their wives with or without a reason. Men have been beating their wives ever since the very beginning- from the time of our Nani-Dadi (grandmothers), to the time of our mothers and Chachi (aunties) till now. Women are the victims of this old habit of men* (Age 26, Education level 14)

> *Actually it is a habit of a man to beat up his wife. He would beat her up even if she is guilty or not*. (Age 48, Education level 5)

> *But they are the husbands. I haven't got beaten up by my husband till today. Everyone is not the same as my husband.* (Age 48, Education level 5)

Patriarchal Social Norms and Lack of Familial Support

The role of the family was another influential factor in the tendency for women to provide contradictory responses when reporting their views on IPV against women. Several participants discussed the concept of "handing over the responsibility" from the wives parents to the husband after marriage. The women described how the exchange of responsibilities also meant an exchange of ownership and power which contributed to the hopelessness of the situation, "Now I've to stay here, what else can I do?" (Age 22, Education level 8). For some women, this transfer of responsibilities also translated to a transfer of dependence on their husbands. The participants described the process of losing all their possessions and support system when they are married and are forced to move to an unfamiliar household and sometimes an unfamiliar community.

> *No, it is not right. But what can you do when they beat you without realizing what they are doing. Nobody, even my parents cannot do anything if my husband beats me*. (Age 29, Education level 5)

> *I do not belong to my parents anymore. I belong to my husband and his family now. So, if I go somewhere without my husband's permission, he has the right to beat me. It would be justified for him to beat me.* (Age 30, Education level 10)

Although there was some disagreement on how beating influences the stability of the family unit, many participants discussed the association between the two concepts. The majority of the participants agreed that beating brings unrest and creates chaos for the family. Some women stated that their husbands do not like beating and instead believe that wives should be disciplined through words, not physical harm. Others admitted that they are concerned about the status and dignity of the family and that beating would harm their reputation. Several women made the distinction between good men who desire peace in their families and do not beat their wives, and bad men who consider wife beating a good, masculine act. One woman contradicted herself by explaining how her village is a peaceful place where nobody approves of beating and generally nobody beats their wives unless she talks "indiscreetly" in which case the villagers would consider beating justified (Age 40, Education level 3). Participants also recognized that quarrels between the husband and wife are a common function of family life but that beating is not the solution to these arguments.

Women described respect for the family as an influential factor in the experience of IPV. Most women described the importance of serving and caring for their husband's parents. When a wife has disrespected her husband's parents, beating is not only expected, but also justified by the community and the majority of the participants.

Influence of the mother in law

Participants described the role of the mother in law, or *Sasuri,* as both a proponent and opponent of IPV against women. As a proponent of beating, the participants described how the mother in law would support the husband and therefore justify wife beating regardless of the situation because he is her son. Some women expressed how family members, and especially the mother in law, never take the side of the wife and always think beating the wife is a justified action. This notion can extend to her every action where she is found at fault despite her good intentions. The participants also described situations where the mother in law gave the wife a warning, explaining that she must listen to her husband and pay attention to his needs. When the wife does not follow the advice or warnings of her mother in law, it is expected that the mother in law supports the beating. A few participants explained how the husband may beat his wife to make his mother happy if his mother believes that the wife is at fault for her actions. Some women stated that it is difficult to know what their mother in law thinks about wife beating because she may have different opinions at different times.

> *Here everyone should say that beating would be an unjustified action here; but Sasuri (said about mother in-laws in general) would say that their son did it right by beating her*. (Age 23, Education level 9)

> *But if the wife keeps replying the husband and he beats her for that, then my Sasuri would say, 'I warned you not to talk too much with him. Now he beat you. He did it right!'* (Age 22, Education level 5)

> *They tend to support the daughter in-law whom they find loveable at a particular time. And they tend to be indifferent if their other son buries his wife alive (beats heavily). They would rather take that as a justified action. That is the way they are – the Sasuri (mother in-laws).* (Age 30, Education level 10)

In contrast, several women described how their mother in law is an opponent of wife beating. In some cases, the participants described their mother in laws being an advocate for their role as a woman and as a wife. Women explained how their mother in laws never viewed beating as a justified action and even displayed their dominance over their sons by scolding them when they beat their wives. As a woman, the mother in law understands how busy the wife may be with all her household chores and can therefore empathize with the situation. Despite the fact the majority of the participants were living in nuclear households at the time, it is clear that the role of the mother in law still held power over how women spoke about IPV against women.

> *My Sasuri would rather get angry. Because, she can see that I work every day, I take care of things properly every day. Maybe, I could not do things properly on some particular day but should my husband beat me for that?* (Age 21, Education level 5)

Patriarchal Marital Relations

Across the two villages and age groups, women consistently spoke of the husband as the dominant partner in the relationship. The participants clarified that, because of their husbands' greater earnings and capacity to do more work, men have greater power than the wife in a marriage. Power was identified as a force that the husband possesses and the wife lacks, as well as something that increases for men when they are married. The participants expressed how the power men hold in the marital relationship is used as an explanation for beating, simply stating, "that is why he can beat [his] wife"(Age 42, Education level 3). Whereas the lack of power wives possess prevents them from doing anything on their own. Power is fluid and

can increase over time as the husband asserts control over his wife and becomes the sole provider of her life.

> *I do not have the power to go a single step out from this house without his permission.* (Age 42, Education level 2)

> *Woman: As the man marries a woman, he becomes her husband and his power increases. A husband is valued more than his wife.*
> *Interviewer: Doesn't the wife have any right?*
> *Woman: Yes, a wife has her rights too; but nobody says anything about that and nobody even acknowledge that.* (Age 48, Education level 8)

The women spoke of the husband's power as being a function of the higher level in which he is placed according to *Hadis,* or Islamic "law", and the prescribed patriarchal marital relations of their society. A man must always be superior, and a woman must always act inferior because of the *Ain*, or law of society. A frequently heard saying was, "A woman's heaven [paradise] lies under the feet of her husband" (Age 40, Education level 3), to further demonstrate the inferiority of women in their society. The higher status of men also was used to explain the greater value of men in society and the subsequent beating of women who have less worth. Beating is used as a means of control and a way to maintain power over the wife. Women discussed how the power and superiority of men were reason enough for a husband to have the right to beat his wife.

> *But, a husband needs to beat his wife from time to time to keep her under control. Otherwise, she would go beyond any control.* (Age 23, Education level 5)

> *It means that the wife has to act inferior to the husband and husband has to be superior in all cases. The law (ain) is that they are our guardians (husbands are guardians of wives).* (Age 25, Education level 5)

As a reflection of the husband as the dominant partner in the relationship, the participants reported different ways in which wives are dependent on their

husbands. Women identified the husband as the protector or guardian of wives. Some women spoke of how a husband becomes everything for a woman after they are married which gives him the authority to beat his wife without consequences. However, the husband's role as the guardian or protector was also discussed by some women as a somewhat supportive role. In the context of asking a husband's permission prior to leaving the house, some women discussed the risks of going somewhere alone, especially with the husband unaware of their whereabouts. As the minor, the wife should notify her guardian husband before she would leave the house.

Wives' dependence on their husbands was also expressed through the husband's act of maintaining her life with money, food, clothing, and other resources. In addition to her maintenance, the participants expressed the importance of maintaining their children's and extended family's lives. According to some women, without his earnings, the husband would not be able to provide the necessary resources to live, and the family would not survive. Therefore, the husband has the right to beat his wife because he maintains her living. Women expressed their agreement adamantly by stating that the husband's right to beat is "obvious" because he carries the responsibility to maintain his wife's living and is the only one who holds this position. The participants also expressed dependence on the husband because of his role as the caretaker. He is responsible for caring for his wife and children which women identified as a justifiable reason for violence against women. The husband was described as a caretaker of the house and his family, as well as the person who looks after the wife when she is ill.

In relation to the idea that the husband maintains the living of the wife and the household, participants described the husband as the sole provider of the family unit. As the provider, the husband is responsible for providing material goods such as food, clothing, and shelter in order for the family to survive. Due to the responsibility placed upon the husband to provide, maintain, and protect the family, the role of the husband as the "owner" of the wife was often reported. Several participants referred to the exchange of ownership of women from their parents to the husband and his family after marriage. This exchange is described as a reflection of the ways of the community that are predetermined and cannot be changed. A few participants further explained that the husband becomes the owner of the wife and everything she possesses in all aspects of her life.

> *I depend on him for my living. So, it is right for him to beat me. He is the owner of everything of me, and he can do anything he wants.*
>
> *My husband married me and brought me to his family here. This was not my home, but then he gave me this house for living and he has given me a family. He has all the rights over my body. And he can beat me. But sometimes a husband beats his wife without any reason – that is wrong.* (Age 40, Education level 4)

Fear of the husband

Women reported how wives live with an overwhelming fear of the actions of their husbands and the consequences of not living up to their husbands' expectations. One of the factors discussed by the women that contribute to this fear of the husband is his temper. Temper was described as a trait that increased with the amount of power a man possessed. Although not all men exhibited a high temper, the participants noted that those who did used their temper to justify beating against their wives even for so-called "minor mistakes." One woman

implied that men's temper may be innate and that the reason why men beat their wives is because "men have hot blood (high temper)" (Age 29, Education level 5). In comparison, women's blood is cold, therefore, "a man has the right to beat, but a woman doesn't have it" (Age 29, Education level 5). The release of tension through beating was identified by women as a means of addressing a husband's temper.

> *It is not right (thik na). But if he finds a fault and becomes angry, it is not unlikely that he may do something. Since I have done some mistakes and since this has triggered his anger, he may hit once or twice. Beat must. He might warn for one, two or three times. What if she does not listen even after all those verbal advices and warnings? What if she continues neglecting? Then he has to beat her.* (Age 19, Education level 7)
>
> *But there's a problem here. If he does not beat his wife then how would he get rid of his tension? (*Age 21, Education level 9)
>
> *Beating is not a justified action, but when a husband gets angry he cannot control his anger and hits his wife.* (Age 34, Education level 2)

Consequently, beating is one way men's temper is translated. Women described how men's temper constantly runs high even when there is no reason to get angry, and that beating is a result of that temper. High temper was also used to describe men who are considered bad members of the community, someone who creates problems for both the community and the family unit. The level of temper can also vary across individuals whereas some men exhibit a "quick" temper; other men are calm when speaking with their wives.

Reasons why women did not give contradictory responses

They oppose prescribed patriarchal marital relations

There were only a few participants that did not express contradictory views about IPV against women. These women consistently opposed typical patriarchal

marital relations. Participants described how it is the husband's responsibility to make the wife understand by using words and speaking patiently and politely. They described how speaking with the wife can modify her behavior without beating and explained that a wife does not make mistakes on purpose and the husband should be aware of this and keep his patience with her. The women also described the importance of the husband listening to the wives when they are arguing or discussing important issues. If the husbands do not listen they may start beating their wives and will become ashamed of what they have done. Few participants described equal rights among the husbands and wives as it applies to caring for their children and in the relationship. Participants clearly stated that husbands also make mistakes and should be held accountable for their actions as well. Husbands and wives should be treated equally as humans, "A man is a human being and a woman too, is a human being" (Age 37, Education level 9).

They believe that things are changing

The women who did not contradict their views on IPV against women also expressed a belief that times were changing for the good.

> *Nowadays, husbands rather listen to their wives. In the past, women had more difficulties to face; their life were filled with miseries.* (Age 37, Education level 9)

One woman expressed how nowadays arguments between the husband and wife will settle down over time therefore making beating unnecessary. Other participants explained how there is no use or purpose to wife beating anymore and how beating would not be beneficial in any situation and therefore is not justified. These women consistently spoke of wife beating as a bad thing that people in the

community dislike for reasons including it being wrong, bringing unrest to the family, and not solving anything. Women suggested that there should be love and a "sweet" relationship between the husband and wife.

> *Arguments and quarrels happen in family life, but that does not mean a husband has to raise his hand to his wife. It is not right. Everything cools down automatically after a little time. (Sighs)* (Age 37, Education level 10)

> *Husband would love the wife and wife would love the husband. It is not right for the husband to beat his wife. It breaks the heart of the wife when she is beaten by her husband.* (Age 42, Education level 2)

Women also described how times are changing and modern people do not appreciate it when a husband beats his wife. Not only have people's views on wife beating changed, but so have men and how they behave. Although elders may justify wife beating, the younger generation do not support it under any circumstances.

> *In my family, I have my son and daughters, and they do not like it either. They say, 'Why does a man have to beat his wife. It would be enough if he just says a few words to discipline his wife.' Times have changed and so are men.* (Age 40, Education level 4)

> *Modern boys and girls would not take it as a justified action if the woman is beaten for this reason; however, aged people, like my Sasuri, Khala-Sasuri, chachi Sasuri, they would take beating as a justified action.* (Age 26, Education level 14)

> *People with old thoughts and beliefs think, 'Why should a woman not obey her husband? She should do everything according to her husband's command.' On the other hand, modern people would say, "Why would the husband beat her for such small matters?* (Age 37, Education level 9)

> *In the past, elderly ones used to think that a husband should keep his wife under control. Nowadays, these notions have changed.* (Age 40, Education level 4)

Discussion

The results highlight three primary concepts that may help explain why women provided contradictory responses when asked if it is right for a husband to

beat his wife: the inevitability of IPV, a lack of alternatives to IPV, and patriarchal social norms and a lack of familial support. Overall, the data suggests that due to latent power processes, women are not reporting their true personal attitudes about IPV against women.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how Komter's theory of latent power may help explain the reasons behind these contradictory responses. In comparison to their original statements, the majority of the contradictory responses emerged when the women were provided with additional contextual information to specific scenarios. It is important to recognize that these contradictory responses are different than when women contradicted themselves in one response. However, the minor themes of patriarchal marital relations and fear of the husband suggest possible explanations for the contradictory responses given when additional context was provided. Therefore reporting of attitudes towards IPV against women must be understood within the context of latent power.

Although the majority of women (75.0%) provided contradictory responses to their original statement of whether it is right for a husband to beat his wife in the direction of "no" to "yes" in at least one of the four situational questions, there was a small percent of the women who did not contradict their original response of "not justified" (22.9%) that exhibited characteristics of manifest power. Only one participant contradicted her original response in the direction of "yes" to "no", suggesting that the participant may have envisioned a different situation when asked the original question and then changed her mind once given additional context. Overall, the majority of women (79.2%) from both villages responded with

a definite “no” when asked if wife beating is right, suggesting that the majority of women do not instinctively support wife beating. A small proportion of women (16.7%) responded “no” with a follow up explanation such as “no, but if a woman is defiant” (Age 40, Education level 4), or “it is not right, but if she does not do what [the] husband says, it is justified” (Age 18, Education level 8). These findings suggest that the majority of women may be influenced by some form of underlying thought processes that may cause them to give contradictory responses.

The inevitability of IPV against women was a concept that emerged as a reason why women provided immediate contradictory responses. Women who did not justify beating simply stated that it happens anyway. The participants often referred to the “way it is” as an explanation for the occurrence of beating, and further explained that this is the way their society has always been. These findings suggest their acceptance of the current situation and a hopelessness of change to come. Participants also spoke of beating without reason and the inevitability of it. One woman who provided a contradictory response stated that a man does not need a reason to beat his wife, yet immediately exclaimed that beating is a completely wrong action. This finding suggests that although women may state that reality of the situation, “men do not need a reason to beat”, this may be more a reflection of community norms as opposed to their true personal feelings about IPV.

Similar to the concept of inevitability, the participants also touched upon the concept of a lack of alternatives to IPV against women. One interesting theme that emerged was the idea of keeping silent in order to reduce the frequency and decrease the severity of beating that was viewed by the women as the only option in

certain situations. Women described the importance of keeping silent when disagreeing with the husband and as a trait of a "good" wife. This theme is extremely important to the central research question because it is a direct reflection of latent power processes at play. Women are actively aware that keeping silent is a trait of a "good" wife and a way to avoid punishment from their husbands.

A lack of household support and more specifically, the role of the mother in law was another reason why women provided immediate contradictory responses. Women stated that IPV against women is not right, yet it is inevitable and there is nothing that the wife's family can do about it. As participants described the role of their mother in law as exclusively a proponent or opponent of IPV and often both, it is apparent that their contradictory responses could be a reflection of the desire to support the indistinct attitudes towards beating that the mother in laws provide. Although the majority of the participants did not live with their mother in laws at the time of the interviews, they still held an influential role in their lives. Therefore these findings can be extrapolated to previous research that has demonstrated that women who live with their in-laws can have both a detrimental effect and a protective effect on beating against women (Stith et al., 2000).

Among the small proportion of women who did not provide a contradictory response when asked if it is right for a husband to beat his wife, the theme of opposing traditional patriarchal roles emerged. These women emphasized the importance of the husband listening and keeping patience with the wife when she is at fault. Participants also explained how husbands too make mistakes and should be held accountable for these actions. These findings reveal that these women believe

that women and men should have equal rights even though their society may not support this view. Another theme that helped explain why women did not provide contradictory responses was the concept that times were changing for the good. The women described how the older generation would justify beating under certain circumstances, whereas nowadays people do not accept wife beating.

According to Komter, the high proportion of women who provided contradictory responses, whether it occurred when additional context was provided or an immediate response, suggests that latent power is an influential factor when measuring women's reporting of IPV against women. These findings suggest that latent power processes affect women's reporting and supports research that has shown that standardized survey questions may fail to capture women's true personal attitudes on IPV against women (Schuler & Islam, 2008).

Strengths and Limitations

As a secondary data analysis, the strengths of the study include the economics of using previously collected data and the potential for less researcher bias when analyzing the data. Other strengths of the study are the depth and breadth of the IDIs and FGDs. Given the sensitivity of the topic and the difficulties in collecting qualitative data in a society where gender inequalities are pervasive, the qualitative data is "thick" (Geertz, 1973). The interviewers probed the participants when they provided contradictory responses in order to understand the context behind their response which also added to the depth of the data. These strengths allowed the researchers to use the context provided to explore reasons why

participants reported contradictory responses across different demographic variables.

The two major limitations of this study include the focus of the CIs being on question comprehension and not on power dynamics and the general limitations of a secondary data analysis. However, the data used for this analysis was "thick" in content and the interview guide was structured in such a way that participants were encouraged to reveal the reasons why they were providing contradictory responses. In addition, although there are limitations associated with performing a secondary data analysis including but not limited to data coding errors, the limited research bias is a significant advantage to be considered.

Conclusion

Given the deeply rooted nature of latent power processes, researchers need to be cognizant of how latent power can affect women's reporting of personal attitudes about IPV against women. The results from this study reveal that latent power processes can lead to contradictory responses when discussing a sensitive topic such as IPV that is so heavily embedded within patriarchal marital relations and community norms.

Furthermore, these findings have implications for interventions and program development in addressing IPV against women. If women are not reporting their true attitudes, it is difficult to enact change and engage policymakers when the justification of IPV is overrepresented (Schuler & Islam, 2008). In addition, these findings could inform primary health care providers during IPV screenings. Given

that latent power processes are an influential factor, medical professionals should be aware of these findings in order to assess women's true attitudes about IPV against women which would greatly inform their actual experience of IPV (Gage & Hutchinson, 2008).

New methodological tools that explore these factors must be developed in order to fully understand women's true attitudes about IPV against women which will greatly inform contextually appropriate intervention programs targeted at reducing the prevalence and adverse health outcomes related to IPV. However, designing culturally appropriate, effective interventions differs greatly depending on the context and the way IPV against women is viewed within that society.

If the ultimate goal of IPV intervention programs focused on women is to reduce the prevalence and adverse health outcomes associated with it, then researchers and policymakers must consider the implications of women's attitudes about IPV against women. Future research should further explore the ways in which power processes affect women's reporting of attitudes towards IPV against women.

Ultimately, the objectives of the primary study was to create new methodological tools that could be used in DHS type surveys in order to more effectively capture women's true attitudes towards IPV against women. It is anticipated that data collected from these tools will provide a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between community norms about IPV against women and the likelihood of women experiencing it. It is apparent that power dynamics, and in particular, latent power processes, is an important factor to consider when

designing these new methodological tools. With these improved methodological tools, increased awareness and improved knowledge on the topic will lead to effective intervention programs within Bangladesh and will ultimately reduce the prevalence of IPV against women.

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Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

After exploring potential differences within age groups and villages, findings indicated no significant differences, suggesting that these variables did not greatly influence women's reporting of their personal attitudes towards IPV against women. The results from the small proportion of women who did not provide contradictory responses suggest that when women feel supported by their husbands and other community members and have a marital relationship where both partners hold equal power, they are more likely to exhibit characteristics of manifest power. When women do not feel supported and are in relationships with an unequal power distribution they are more likely to contradict their views about IPV against women.

The overall findings from this study suggest the development of new methodological tools to measure and assess factors such as latent power processes that affect women's reporting of personal attitudes towards IPV against women. Creating more effective tools is essential to inform culturally appropriate intervention programs targeted at reducing the prevalence and adverse health outcomes associated with IPV against women.

The results of the current study compliment the results of the main study published by the PIs which sought to address how women understand questions regarding personal attitudes towards IPV against women. The researchers found that when additional context was provided, the proportion of participants that condoned IPV against women increased, suggesting that the data collected by the standardized questions of the DHS may underestimate the actual proportion of women who justify violence against women. However, the researchers also found

evidence that when women were provided with additional context, the proportion of women who condoned IPV against women decreased (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011). The study suggests that when women respond to standardized questions on IPV they envision a situation in which the wife is at fault or does not carry any blame, meaning that they are forming a response based on information not included in the actual question. Based on the situation they envision, the responses vary significantly (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011). This previous research indicates that women were changing their responses when context was provided; however the influence of latent power dynamics on the contradictory responses using Komter's theory on measurement was not further examined. Therefore, the results of the current study inform the previous research by further exploring the underlying reasons behind why women may misreport their true attitudes towards IPV against women.

Designing culturally appropriate, effective interventions differs greatly depending on the context and the way IPV against women is viewed within that society. For example, creating an intervention in settings where the use of violence against women is condoned and is used as an expression of masculinity would differ greatly from a setting where IPV against women is highly stigmatized (Barker, 2000; Barker & Ricardo, 2005). Intervention programs in settings where IPV against women is condoned may focus more on reevaluating the definition of masculinity (Verma, et al., 2006) or encouraging people to speak out in order to denounce IPV against women within their society (Faramarzi, Esmailzadeh, & Mosavi, 2005; Magar, 2003). In contrast, other intervention programs designed for settings where

IPV against women is highly stigmatized may focus more on awareness of the issue in order to encourage women to report experiences of violence and to ultimately seek out help (Nabi & Horner, 2001; Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, & Japhet, 2005).

Although standardized surveys, such as the DHS, have increasingly included attitudinal questions about IPV against women, the validity of those questions and their ability to elicit true attitudes from participants are debatable. Previous research on these data have demonstrated that the contradictory responses could be a reflection of a general misunderstanding of the question in which the women answered what men would do in a given situation, as opposed to whether it was justified. These findings also suggested that although some of the women may have answered the questions with their personal opinions justifying IPV against women, at a deeper, more systemic level, they in fact did not condone it. The women provided socially desirable responses to the situational questions which led to contradictory responses (Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011).

To date, the DHS have collected data on IPV from over 25 countries and on attitudes towards IPV against women from more than 50 countries. Previous research has demonstrated that when provided a list of predetermined situations, 11 percent to 94 percent of ever-abused women of reproductive age (WRA, 15-49 years) justified IPV against women in at least one of those situations, compared to 9 percent to 86 percent of never-abused WRA (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). According to the 2007 Bangladesh report, 36 percent of married WRA reported that a man would be justified for beating his wife for at least one of the five predetermined situations provided (Kishor & Subaiya, 2008).

Capturing an accurate account of women's attitudes about IPV against women is important because of the previous research that has demonstrated that women's justification of IPV against women is linked to an increased risk of actual violent behavior; however the causal direction is still unknown (Kishor & Johnson, 2004; Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003). If the ultimate goal of IPV intervention programs focused on women is to reduce the prevalence and adverse health outcomes associated with it, then researchers and policymakers must consider the implications of women's attitudes about IPV against women. The findings from this study have demonstrated that determining women's true attitudes on wife beating is a complex issue when taking into account the influence of latent power processes. Future research should further explore the ways in which these power dynamics affect women's reporting of attitudes towards IPV against women.

Although the proportion of women who did not report contradictory responses was small, reflecting the influence of Manifest power, it would also be interesting to further examine the factors that affect the defiant reporting of IPV against women as a negative act despite opposing community norms. Findings from future research could inform intervention programs by promoting behaviors and themes that may emerge from the data. For example, in the current study, themes of opposing patriarchal marital relations and the idea that times are changing emerged as influential factors that are associated with Manifest power processes. These themes could be used to engage policymakers or public health providers to change women's attitudes about IPV against women by focusing on redefining current

patriarchal marital relations or addressing cultural norms of society in a modern world.

Ultimately, the objectives of the primary study was to create new methodological tools that could be used in DHS type surveys in order to more effectively capture women's true attitudes about IPV against women. It is anticipated that data collected from these tools will provide a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between community norms about IPV against women and the likelihood of women experiencing it. It is apparent that power dynamics, and in particular, latent power processes, has emerged as an important factor to consider when designing these new methodological tools. With these improved methodological tools, increased awareness and improved knowledge on the topic will ultimately lead to effective intervention programs within Bangladesh.

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