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Gabriela Granados   Date

Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence in the Resettled Community of Villa Guadalupe in Managua, Nicaragua: A Qualitative Study

By

Gabriela Granados
MPH

Behavioral Sciences and Health Education

_____
Carla Berg, Ph.D.
Committee Co-Chair

_____
Karen Andes, Ph.D.
Committee Co-Chair

_____
Colleen McBride, Ph.D.
Department Chair

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Gabriela Granados

B.A. in Psychology and International Studies
The University of Michigan
2013

Thesis Committee Co-Chairs:
Carla Berg, Ph.D.
Karen Andes, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Health
in Behavioral Sciences and Health Education
2016

Abstract

Women's Perceptions & Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence in the Resettled Community of Villa Guadalupe in Managua, Nicaragua: A Qualitative Study

By Gabriela Granados

Background: 35% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2014). Intimate partner violence is especially prevalent in Latin America, with prevalence rates ranging from 17% to 53% (Bott, Guedes, Goodwin, & Mendoza, 2012). Little qualitative research has been done in Managua, Nicaragua exploring women's perceptions and experiences of violence, and even less so in informal, resettled communities such as Villa Guadalupe.

Methods: This qualitative study was conducted in Villa Guadalupe, a resettled community on the outskirts of Managua, Nicaragua to explore women's perceptions and experiences of intimate partner violence, in order to provide recommendations to address these issues in the Villa Guadalupe. In depth interviews were conducted with 20 women from this community. Data were analyzed to understand how women understand, experience, and respond to intimate partner violence within their communities.

Results: Qualitative interviews revealed several themes pertaining to how women perceive and experience violence. Factors at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, and societal level influenced how women understand, experience, and respond to violence. Emergent themes included control over one's life, for the children, *masoquismo*, *el marido no es padre*, social support, victim-blaming, and legal matters. Participants also provided recommendations for future programming including having *charlas*, educational seminars, and counseling sessions with psychologists.

Discussion: In conjunction with the Socio-Ecological Model and the Social Cognitive Theory, findings reveal that there is an interaction across various levels that shape women's understanding, experience, and response to violence. Particular factors appear to have stronger implications for women experiencing intimate partner violence in Villa Guadalupe, highlighting the importance of understanding violence in a context-specific way. Cultural factors such as *machismo and masoquismo*, which portray social norms, along with themes of lack of social support and negative community attitudes, provide insight into how women understand and respond to violence. A critical next step for the Villa Guadalupe community, and particularly for health and development organizations within the community such as Manna Project International, is to move toward establishing education and intervention programs aimed at youth and adolescents, fostering community support and women empowerment, engaging boys and men in the dialogue of intimate partner violence, and targeting social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and intimate partner violence.

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Acknowledgements

Over the course of this project, I have come to realize how fortunate and grateful I am for the support system I have in my life.

I would first like to thank my thesis advisors, Dr. Karen Andes and Dr. Carla Berg. Your skilled guidance and wealth of knowledge have been absolutely invaluable every step of the way, and I am sincerely grateful for all of the information, resources, and opportunities you have equipped me with throughout the year. Thank you for pushing me and guiding me throughout this entire process.

Thank you to Manna Project International, our partner organization, and in particular Christina and Julio who were instrumental in carrying out this project and who supported me throughout the data collection process. I also want to thank the Global Health Institute for funding this project, and to my Team Awesome members José and Lauren—you made my time in Nicaragua unforgettable.

I sincerely thank my family and friends who have supported me and contributed to my sanity throughout the entire graduate school process. Thank you for listening to me talk endlessly about this project, for the distressed texts and phone calls, for help in transcribing, for reviewing drafts, and most importantly for believing in me and reassuring me that everything will be okay.

Finally, to the women of Villa Guadalupe: I express my sincerest gratitude to you for sharing your personal, touching stories with me. This project would not have been possible without your participation and willingness to talk with me, and I hope that it bring justice to your stories. Please know your voices are being heard.

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Chapter I. Introduction

Introduction and Rationale

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 35% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2014). The WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women found that between 15% and 71% of all women globally have experienced physical or sexual abuse by a partner (García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006), with the highest prevalence being reported in Peru (69%) and Ethiopia (71%).

Violence against women is a profound health problem, compromising women's physical and mental health. Not only does violence cause extensive physical injury, violence significantly increases women's long-term risk of a multitude of health problems including chronic pain, physical disability, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health problems, and chronic conditions such as heart disease and gastrointestinal disorders (Heise et al., 2002; Safe Horizons, 2015). Violence against women also takes a huge toll on women's mental health, with victims of intimate partner violence facing high rates of depression, suicide, anxiety, sleep disturbances, flashbacks, and other emotional distress (Safe Horizons, 2015; Ellsberg et al., 2001).

Violence against Women in Nicaragua

According to a comparative analysis report compiled by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), intimate partner violence against women is widespread in Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Nicaragua (Bott, Guedes, Goodwin, & Mendoza, 2012). They found that large percentages of women reported having ever experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, ranging from 17.0% in the Dominican Republic 2007 to 53% in Bolivia 2003.

Further, it was found that emotional abuse was also widespread, with the proportion of women ever in a relationship having reported emotional abuse by an intimate partner ever in their lives ranging from 17% in Haiti 2005/06 to 49% in Nicaragua 2006/07. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that non-governmental organizations estimate that up to 60% of women in Nicaragua have been physically abused by a partner at least once (Refworld, UNHCR, 2009), and almost 50% of women report having been verbally abused by their husbands or boyfriends (La Prensa, Refworld, 2009). The findings of the Nicaraguan Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in 2006/2007 indicated that 50% of women surveyed had experienced either verbal/psychological, physical, or sexual violence during their lifetime (Luffy, Evans, & Rochat, 2015; National Institute for Development Information, Ministry of Health, 2008). Furthermore, in the 2010/2011 Nicaraguan DHS, 22.5% of women reported having experienced either physical or sexual violence at least once (National Institute for Development Information, Ministry of Health, 2013). Further, femicide, the act of a man killing a woman and the most extreme form of gender violence, is common in Nicaragua, with almost 50 cases during the first six months of 2013 and 30 cases during the first quarter of 2014 (Moloney, 2013; Women's Rights and the Media, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Ecological models have frequently been used to understand the various levels of influence regarding intimate partner violence, including political, economic, and social structures. After all, intimate partner violence has long been known as a socio-cultural phenomenon, reflecting gender dynamics, patriarchy, and women's lack of power in society (Satthoff & Stoffel, 1999). Lori Heise, researcher and expert in women's health and HIV/AIDS, presents a widely used ecological model of intimate partner violence, in which she illustrates the

dimensions and causes of intimate partner violence. In her article (1998), Heise encourages the widespread adoption of an ecological framework for conceptualizing and understanding the etiology of gender-based violence. She reasons that gender violence is a multifaceted phenomenon that is "grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors" (Heise, 1998). Indeed, intimate partner violence is a multifaceted issue with psychological, social, and environmental roots, therefore an ecological model such as the Socio-Ecological Model (SEM) should be used in studies of violence, as it is a framework for examining the interplay between various factors and behaviors.

In addition to helping explain the occurrence of intimate partner violence, the SEM is useful for "understanding the meaning women themselves ascribe to violent relationships and the way in which the immediate and cultural context abuse shapes women's strategic responses to violence" (Ellsberg, 2000). How women find meaning in their relationships and make sense of existing abuse within their relationship is influenced by the norms in their community in terms of the roles they are expected to fill, the responses they are expected to give, and the actions (or inactions) they are expected to take. Further, how individuals and communities think and communicate about violence differs widely, and the ways incidences of violence are handled reflect the cultural beliefs and norms in which they are embedded.

Villa Guadalupe and MPI

Villa Guadalupe is a planned community in Managua, Nicaragua that is now home to roughly 1000 families. It was established as part of a collaborative plan between the Nicaraguan and Spanish governments to close La Chureca (Managua's municipal waste site), establish a recycling plant and waste treatment facility, and provide housing with essential services to the 258 resettled families from La Chureca. The project was started in 2007, and in early 2013, the

last residents of La Chureca were moved into permanent homes in Villa Guadalupe. After the Managua floods of 2010 and 2011, the project was expanded to resettle an additional 700-800 families into the community who were victims of these two large floods.

Although moving into permanent homes has improved the housing stock and standard of living for the families of La Chureca, not all are benefiting equally from the project. According to a survey conducted in 2013 by Manna Project International (MPI), a U.S. NGO, less than half of the households who used to work in La Chureca actually received their promised job in the recycling plant. Those who did not receive a job are largely unemployed, and they no longer have access to the dump for their livelihood. Previously, families from the La Chureca would work in the dump, picking over the garbage and collecting, classifying, and selling recyclables (Hartmann, 2013). For many, trash picking in the La Chureca was the only stable economic opportunity available, and thus was their primary source of income. The situation is even more difficult for those families who relocated to Villa Guadalupe from communities outside of La Chureca, as these individuals did not receive priority for employment. The alterations in the economic and social landscape have been suspected to impact the increase in multiple public health and medical issues found in Villa Guadalupe, from simple malnutrition to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections. Additionally, based on observation and informal interviews with community members, tensions have arisen in the community between families from La Chureca and those from outside La Chureca, with the latter group experiencing feelings of inequality and inferiority.

MPI began working with the families living in La Chureca in 2004 and has since followed their clients to their new location in Villa Guadalupe. Committed to helping their clientele create and promulgate a culture of self-directed prosperity, MPI has established a

number of programs directed at meeting the basic needs of the community – chief among them professional medical care and food security.

In October 2014, MPI conducted a community survey of Villa Guadalupe. After carefully reviewing the results, a short list of public health priorities were identified including domestic violence, adolescent pregnancy, sexual and reproductive health, and food and water security. In identifying domestic violence as one of the primary areas for future work, MPI hopes to establish more resources for community members. This project was designed with the goal of providing MPI with exploratory data that could inform future programming and interventions targeting intimate partner violence in the Villa Guadalupe community.

Formal Statement of Problem

There is limited qualitative research exploring the community perceptions and attitudes of intimate partner violence in Latin America, particularly in Managua, Nicaragua. There is significantly less research evaluating the rates and community perceptions of intimate partner violence among poor, resettled communities like Villa Guadalupe that face a number of life stressors on a daily basis. Further, to the researcher's knowledge, no project has explored intimate partner violence in Villa Guadalupe, a former trash-picking community on the outskirts of Managua. In order to develop interventions targeting these high rates of abuse and the impact on numerous adverse physical and mental health outcomes, it is necessary to first explore community beliefs and attitudes to gain a better understand of what violence looks like in a community and how it is understood. The high rates of intimate partner violence in Nicaragua along with the unique character of Villa Guadalupe as a newly resettled community make it a priority in terms of research and intervention development.

The purpose of this project is to explore women's perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of intimate partner violence within their communities in order to provide recommendations to address issues of intimate partner violence in the Villa Guadalupe community. As intimate partner violence is a multi-faceted, socio-cultural phenomenon that is comprised of various layers, this project utilizes the SEM as a conceptual framework to gain a better understanding of the various contextual factors shaping women's experiences, beliefs, and responses to violence. Specific research questions include:

1) How do multiple forms and expressions of violence (emotional, physical, sexual, economic) affect women's everyday lives?

2) How do women understand their experiences of intimate partner violence within the context of their relationships and those of others?

3) How are women's coping strategies and responses to intimate partner violence shaped by their perceptions of social norms regarding relationships and intimate partner violence in their society?

Chapter II. Review of the Literature
Global Statistics

Intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women. More than 30% of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence from their partner (WHO, 2014; WHO, 2013; UN Women, 2016; Devries, K. M., Mak, J. Y. T., García-Moreno, C., Petzold, M., Child, J. C., Falder, G., Lim, S., Bacchus, L. J., Engell, R. E., Rosenfeld, L., Pallitto, C., Vos, T., Abrahams, N., & Watts, C. H., 2013). Some national violence studies show that up to 70% of women in some countries have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner (WHO, 2013). Indeed, intimate partner violence prevalence varies by region

and cultural setting. The WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence found drastic variations in lifetime physical or sexual intimate partner violence prevalence, ranging from 15% in a Japanese urban setting to 71% in an Ethiopian rural setting (García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Salazar, Högberg, Valladares, & Öhman, 2012; Salazar & San Sebastian, 2014).

The statistics for intimate partner violence are especially jarring in Latin America. One study done on intimate partner violence in Peru found that nearly 50% of women experienced severe physical violence in their lifetime, while another study done in Colombia showed that 38% of women reported being physically or sexually abused by a recent partner (García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Pallitto & O'Campo, 2004; Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). Further, a national survey administered in Paraguay in 2010 showed that nearly 20% of women who were ever in a relationship experienced psychological violence, 7% physical violence, and 3% sexual violence from an intimate partner (Ishida, Stupp, Melian, Serbanescu, & Goodwin, 2010; Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). In Bolivia, one study's findings showed that 52% of women experienced physical violence and 14% experienced sexual violence (Hindin, Kishor, & Ansara, 2008; Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-governmental organizations estimate that up to 60% of women in Nicaragua have been physically abused by a partner at least once (Refworld, UNHCR, 2009), and almost 50% of women report having been verbally abused by their husbands or boyfriends (La Prensa, Refworld, 2009).

Intimate Partner Violence as a Public Health Problem

Violence against women is a profound health problem, compromising both women's physical and mental health. Not only does violence cause extensive physical injury, violence

significantly increases women's long-term risk of a multitude of health problems including chronic pain, physical disability, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health problems, and chronic conditions such as heart disease and gastrointestinal disorders (Heise et al., 2002; Safe Horizons, 2015). In terms of sexual and reproductive health, the controlling behavior found in intimate partner violence limits women's autonomy and agency, and thus affects their sexual and reproductive lives. Various studies, for example, have found associations between unintended pregnancies and intimate partner violence (Salazar & San Sebastian, 2014; Miller et al., 2010; Cripe, Sanchez, Perales, Lam, Garcia, & Williams, 2008; Silverman, Gupta, Decker, Kapur, & Raj, 2007). Other studies have found associations between intimate partner violence and gastrointestinal diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome (Becker-Dreps, Morgan, Peña, Cortes, Martin, & Valladares, 2010; Talley, Fett, & Zinmeister, 1995).

Violence against women also takes a toll on women's mental health, with victims of intimate partner violence facing high rates of depression, suicide, anxiety, sleep disturbances, flashbacks, and other emotional distress (Safe Horizons, 2015; Ellsberg et al., 2001). A WHO study conducted in 2005 found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience depression and drinking problems (WHO, 2014). Further, a study conducted on intimate partner violence and mental health in Bolivia found that women who experienced physical, sexual, and/or psychological abuse in the last year were much more likely to experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, psychogenic seizures, and, for physical abuse only, psychotic disorders (Meekers, Pallin, & Hutchinson, 2013). Discordance and violence in the household including marital and child abuse leads to a higher risk for the development of mental disorders, especially among children and young adults (Vikram, 2007). Interestingly, although violence against women comes with a high cost, societies around the

world continue to condone and legitimize abuse through social institutions and societal norms. Intimate partner violence often goes unchallenged and is instead tolerated and seen as the "norm" in many societies. The added cultural components of "machismo" and male domination in Latino cultures perpetuate the cycle of intimate partner violence, making women's experiences with aggression and abuse normative and common (Adames & Campbell, 2005).

Theories of Intimate Partner Violence

Over the decades, scholars have presented multiple theoretical accounts of the etiology and conceptualization of intimate partner violence. Such theories span from the sociological to the interpersonal to the intrapersonal, ranging in scope, focus, and complexity, and offering different perspectives on the phenomenon of intimate partner violence (Woodin & O'Leary, 2009). Sociocultural theories, for example, are based on feminist and sociological theory and focus primarily on gender roles, male power and control, and patriarchal social institutions. In feminist-informed theory, for example, abuse of partners is understood by examining the social context in which the violent relationship develops. In patriarchal societies, where men have more political, economic, and social power than women and where men can use violence as a means to subordinate women, the use of violence is encouraged and perpetuated to maintain unequal power relationships, or power imbalances, between men and women (Basile et al., 2013). Socially-defined gender roles are taught to individuals early on in their lives, placing men in positions of power over women, and leading to the victimization and perpetration of violence against women by men (Walker, 1984; Bell & Naugle, 2008). Male dominance along with societal and cultural ideals of masculinity and gender-related beliefs are thought to play a role in violence perpetration (Kelly, 2011; Woodin & O'Leary, 2009; Bell & Naugle, 2008).

Social cultural models such as those developed by Murray Straus and his colleagues focus on family structure and social learning in addition to social and cultural structures. Power theorists, for example, argue that the origins of violence stem from within the family structure itself and not solely from within culture (Straus, 1976; Bell & Naugle, 2008). The integration of high family conflict, power imbalances between partners, and increased levels of tension and stress has been shown to increase risk of intimate partner violence (Straus, 1977; Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1999; Cascardi & Vivian, 1995; Coleman & Straus, 1986; Gelles, 1980; Leonard & Senchak, 1996; Mihalic & Elliot, 1977; Bell & Naugle, 2008). Family conflict, social acceptance of violence, gender inequality, and societal beliefs about intimate partner violence are thought to result in the perpetuation of family violence (Bell & Naugle, 2008). Placing family violence in the broader social context of a highly violent and male dominated culture and of one comprised of norms legitimizing violence within families, social cultural models posit that family interactions lead to violent behaviors "due to the manifestations of these societal influences at the level of family structure, norms of parental behavior and childbearing, and individual interactions" (Kelly, 2011; Straus & Hotaling, 1980).

Interpersonal theoretical accounts encompass such theories as social learning theory and background-situational model in an effort to explain interpersonal influences, such as familial transmission of violence, on the likelihood to engage in violent behavior. Originally developed by Bandura (1977), social learning theory posits that individuals learn to engage in violent behaviors from other individuals through observation, imitation, and modeling during their childhood (Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2015; Bell & Naugle, 2008). Children may learn methods for resolving family conflicts through violence by observing parental and peer relationships and may thus grow to accept violence in intimate relationships during adulthood

(Bandura, 1969, 1973; Bucheli & Rossi, 2015). Tolerance or acceptance of abuse within the family may be a result of witnessing or experiencing abuse as children and coming to view these acts as appropriate ways to resolve conflicts.

To expand on this intergenerational transmission of violence theory, Riggs and O'Leary developed the background-situational model in an effort to determine whether or not violence will occur in an intimate partner relationship (Riggs & O'Leary, 1989, 1996; Bell & Naugle, 2008; Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2015). In this model, the background component consists of contextual factors such as historical, societal, and individual characteristics that determine who will become aggressive and establish individual aggressive patterns of behavior (Bell & Naugle, 2008). The situational component refers to factors that are thought to be related to the onset of a violent episode and that "set the stage" for violence to occur, increasing conflict levels within the relationship (Bell & Naugle, 2008; Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2015). Together, the background and situational components may impact the intensity of conflict within a relationship, and thus increase the risk of violence in that relationship (Riggs & O'Leary, 1989; Bell & Naugle, 2008).

Intrapersonal theories focus on individual characteristics and strive to explain how certain factors such as alcohol and drug use, personality disorders, and personality characteristics influence the likelihood of violence. Personality and typology theories tend to emphasize the role of attachment, early childhood experiences, and impulsivity in intimate partner violence perpetration. Based on the attachment theory, Dutton's Borderline Personality Organization (BPO) and Assaultiveness theory argues that some individuals may engage in violent or controlling behaviors against their partner due to insecure attachment and fear of rejection or abandonment (Dutton, 1995; Woodin & O'Leary, 2009; Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik,

2015). These individuals may have a desire for intimate relationships but their fear of rejection and distrust of others inhibits them from having a satisfying relationship. "This fearful attachment style, taken in conjunction with these individuals' proclivity towards experiencing intense bouts of anger, is thought to lead to instances of IPV perpetration when the individual feels threatened by the partner or believes that the relationship has failed in some way" (Dutton, 1995; Bell & Naugle, 2008).

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart proposed the Developmental Model of Batterer Subtypes to predict the development of three batterer subtypes (Family-Only, Dysphoric/Borderline, and Generally Violent and Antisocial) identifying various combinations of particular distal (e.g. genetic/prenatal factors, early childhood family experiences, peer experiences) and proximal variables (e.g. attachment to others, impulsivity, social skills, attitudes toward women and violence) that are thought to be related to the perpetration of intimate partner violence (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Bell & Naugle, 2008). Other scholars have argued that personality disorders such as antisocial personality disorder, conduct disorder, and bipolar disorder may increase the risk of partner violence in adulthood (Dutton, 1999; Capaldi & Clark, 1998; Woodin & O'Leary, 2009).

Utilizing an Ecological Framework for Understanding Intimate Partner Violence

Each of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives suggest a vast number of factors contributing to our understanding of intimate partner violence. Organizing these factors within a multidimensional, multi-level model is necessary to fully capture the complexities of intimate partner violence. WHO utilizes an ecological framework to describe violence as a global public health problem (WHO, 2016; Kelly, 2011), which integrates theories from multiple disciplines to understand intimate partner violence as a multi-faceted phenomenon resulting from the "dynamic

interplay among individual, relationship, community, and societal factors" (Kelly, 2011). Ecological models have frequently been used to research and understand the various levels influencing intimate partner violence, including the political, economic, and social structures present in a society. After all, intimate partner violence has long been known as a socio-cultural phenomenon, reflecting gender dynamics, patriarchy, and women's lack of power society (Satthoff & Stoffel, 1999). Lori Heise, researcher and expert in women's health and HIV/AIDS, encourages the widespread adoption of an ecological framework for conceptualizing and understanding the etiology of gender-based violence.

In addition to helping explain the occurrence of intimate partner violence, the SEM is useful for "understanding the meaning women themselves ascribe to violent relationships and the way in which the immediate and cultural context shapes women's strategic responses to violence" (Ellsberg, 2000). How women find meaning in their relationships and make sense of existing abuse within their relationship is influenced by the norms in their community in terms of the roles they are expected to fill, the responses they are expected to give, and the actions (or inactions) they are expected to take. Further, how individuals and communities think and communicate about violence differs widely, and the ways incidents of violence are handled reflect the cultural beliefs and norms in which they are embedded. Thus, a multi-level model of intimate partner violence is needed not only to conceptualize and explain the etiology of violence, but also to understand how experiences and responses to intimate partner violence are shaped by one's social context.

Due to its multi-layered complexity, the study of intimate partner violence, particularly in international settings, is not a simple task. In order to gain a complete understanding of and be able to effectively address the issue, one must look at the various factors underlying and contributing to

the problem. Utilizing an ecological perspective on the issue of violence, and intimate partner

violence in particular, highlights its intricacies and complexities and allows for a more thorough

understanding of the pervasiveness of the problem and levels needing to be addressed. The

application of an ecological model may also elucidate variations in the expression of violence in

a particular context, as well as explain how different factors may influence different forms and

expressions of violence.

A multitude of factors associated with both perpetrators and victims of intimate partner

violence exist. A brief overview of common contextual factors that influence one's risk to

perpetrate or become a victim of violence is given below.
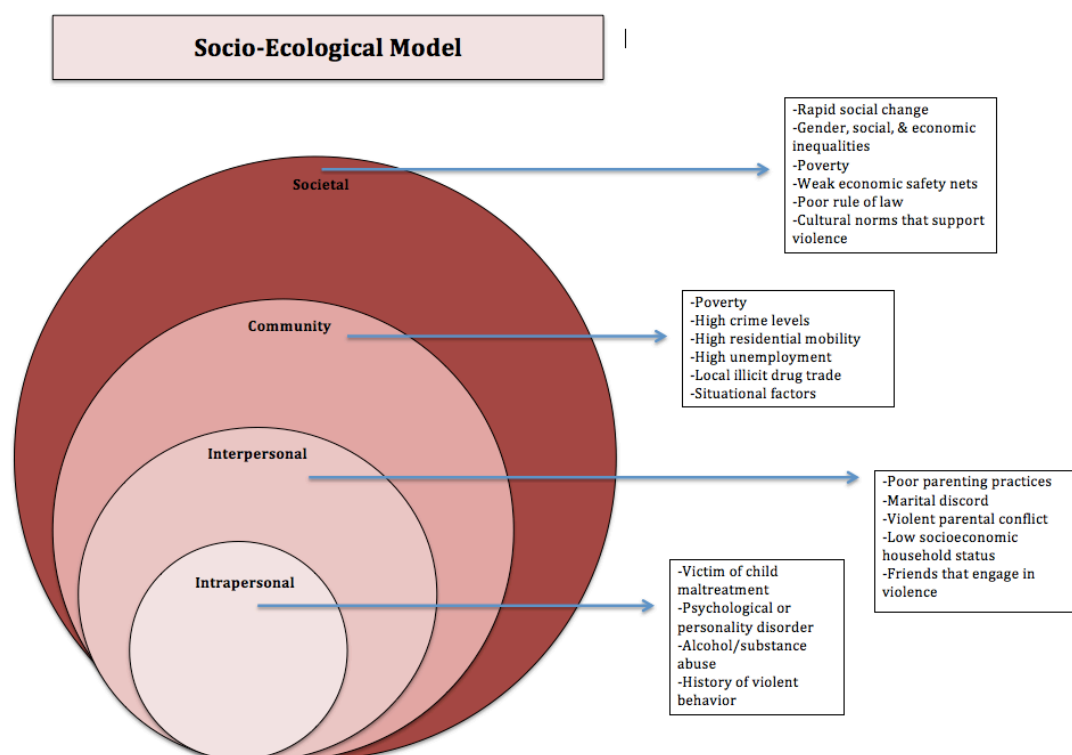
Figure 1. The Ecological Framework
Based on: WHO: Violence Prevention Alliance: The Ecological Framework.
http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Levels

At the intrapersonal level, childhood abuse, witnessing abuse in the family, mental health conditions, alcohol and/or drug use, lack of interest or comfort with sex, and demographics such as age, education, and employment status are common factors associated with both the perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence (Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2015; Vung & Krantz, 2009). "The use of violence to address family conflicts is believed to be learned in childhood by either witnessing or experiencing physical abuse." (Straus, 1977; Bell & Naugle, 2008). A study done on attitudes toward partner violence in Uruguay found that the experience of violence in childhood, among other factors, increased tolerance towards intimate partner violence (Bucheli & Rossi, 2015). Indeed, as social learning theory posits, individuals who witness or experience abuse during childhood may learn to accept violence as a way of resolving conflict and may thus hold more tolerant and accepting attitudes of intimate partner violence in adulthood.

At the interpersonal level, factors that may influence or shape experiences of violence include marital conflict, women's employment status, financial stress, familial relationships, association with delinquent peers, inability to sustain intimate relationships, financial and family stressors, partners' substance abuse, and male control and male dominance in a relationship (Kelly, 2011; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevins, 2014; Terrazas-Carrillo & McWhirter, 2015). Women's exposure to intimate partner violence may lead to abuse or other expressions of violence (e.g. corporal punishment) towards other family members, suggesting that expressions of violence towards others may be seen as a coping mechanism for victims (Salazar, Dahlblom, Solórzano, & Herrera, 2014).

Community Level and Societal Levels

In addition to intrapersonal and interpersonal level factors, community and societal level factors such as social and cultural norms significantly impact intimate partner violence. On the community level, community attitudes around gender roles, masculinity, and acceptance of interpersonal violence, along with stigma, poverty, social isolation and lack of support from neighbors, poor social organization, hostile relations with neighbors, and lack of employment opportunities are common factors associated with higher levels of violence (Kelly, 2011; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevins, 2014). Further, lack of trust in community programs and services and poor relationships with local police and other legal providers may influence how a woman responds to her partner's abuse in terms of reporting the abuse and seeking help, and may in turn perpetuate violence in her relationship. At the societal level, factors include rigid gender roles, gender inequality, male-dominated society, policies that criminalize abuse, resources and assistance for victims, economic and social policies that perpetuate inequalities, and societal or cultural norms that accept or condone violence or inequality (Abeya et al., 2012; Nicolaidis et al., 2011; Heise, 1998; Wilkins, Tsao, Hertz, Davis, & Klevins, 2014).

The Case for Nicaragua

According to a comparative analysis report compiled by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), intimate partner violence against women is widespread in Nicaragua (Bott, Guedes, Goodwin, & Mendoza, 2012). One third of women in Nicaragua living with a man either married or unmarried have been subjected to interfamilial violence or sexual abuse during their lifetime (IPS, Refworld, 2009). The Nicaraguan Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2010/2011 indicates that 20% of women surveyed had experienced physical violence at least once in their lifetime and 10% had experienced sexual violence (National Institute for Development Information,

Ministry of Health, 2013). Additionally, 36.7% reported having experienced verbal violence at least once (National Institute for Development Information, Ministry of Health, 2013). Furthermore, the prevalence of women having experienced physical or sexual violence was highest in Managua, the capital city, than any of the other cities in Nicaragua (30.3%). Femicide, the gender-motivated killing of women, is also fairly common in Nicaragua, with almost 50 cases during the first six months of 2013 and 30 cases during the first quarter of 2014 (Moloney, 2013; Women's Rights and the Media, 2014). In 2012, Nicaragua introduced the Comprehensive Law Against Violence Against Women, or *Ley 779*. Defining numerous types of violence against women and recognizing the rights of women and victims, *Ley 779* was implemented in an effort to eradicate violence against women throughout Nicaragua (Law 779, 2012; Luffy, Evans, & Rochat, 2015).

MPI began working with the families living in La Chureca in 2004 and has since followed their clients to their new location in Villa Guadalupe. Committed to helping their clientele create and promulgate a culture of self-directed prosperity, MPI has established a number of programs directed at meeting the basic needs of the community – chief among them professional medical care and food security.

A community needs assessment survey was conducted in the summer of 2015 by a multidisciplinary team from Emory University in collaboration with our partner organization, Manna Project International (MPI). MPI is a community-focused NGO that was founded in 2004 and has now grown to provide programs and services in business development, health promotion, education, and medical services.   The community needs assessment found high rates of various types of intimate partner violence in Villa Guadalupe, as well as concerning findings regarding women's beliefs about abuse (Global Health Institute Report, 2015). In terms of perceptions about romantic relationships and gender dynamics within relationships, About half

(53%) of the participants agreed with the statement: "A good wife should obey her husband even if she does not agree with him," and 18% agreed that "a wife has an obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn't want to." These findings suggest that cultural norms seem to uphold women's subservience to men. More than a third of women (37%) reported having been beaten or physically abused by someone, including family members, *before* turning 15 years old. The same percentage (37%) reported such abuse *after* the age of 15. Of these women abused after turning 15, over three quarters reported that their abuser was their current or prior husband/partner. Nearly half (44%) of all women surveyed reported witnessing their father or stepfather physically abuse their mother or stepmother during childhood. Women were asked about their current or past experiences with different types of abuse by partners, with questions asking about specific acts of violence under each type of abuse. Between 27% and 54% of women reported having ever experienced some form of spousal maltreatment and control, such as a partner demanding that they ask permission before seeking medical attention or a partner trying to prevent them from seeing their friends. Between 28% and 61% of women reported having ever experienced psychological/emotional abuse, with the majority of women (61%) reporting that a partner had insulted them or made them feel bad about themselves. Lastly, between 18% and 46% reported a partner had physically abused them at one point in their lifetime.

In order to develop interventions targeting intimate partner violence and its impact on numerous adverse physical and mental health outcomes, community beliefs and attitudes must be explored to understood how violence is expressed and understood. The high rates of intimate partner violence in Villa Guadalupe, and the unique character of this newly resettled community, make it a priority for research. Although significant research has been done on intimate partner

violence in Nicaragua, most research has focused on communities outside of Managua. Further, to the researcher's knowledge, no project has explored intimate partner violence in particularly marginalized communities like Villa Guadalupe.

The purpose of study is to explore women's perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of intimate partner violence within their communities, in order to provide recommendations to address issues of intimate partner violence in the Villa Guadalupe community. As intimate partner violence is a multi-faceted, socio-cultural phenomenon that is comprised of various layers, this project utilizes the SEM as a conceptual framework to gain a better understanding of the various contextual factors shaping women's experiences, beliefs, and responses to violence. Specific research questions include:

4) How do multiple forms and expressions of violence (emotional, physical, sexual, economic) affect women's everyday lives?

5) How do women understand their experiences of intimate partner violence within the context of their relationships and those of others?

6) How are women's coping strategies and responses to violence shaped by their perceptions of what is normal and acceptable in a relationship and in a society?

Chapter III. Methods

Study Design Overview

This project used a qualitative approach to explore women's perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of intimate partner violence. Specifically, this project aimed to understand how women experience multiple forms and expressions of violence, how they understand their experiences of violence within their relationships, and how their coping strategies and responses to violence are shaped by perceptions of social norms. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study as the research questions are exploratory in nature and involve obtaining in-depth information on the perceptions and personal experiences of women that simply cannot be obtained using quantitative techniques (Sterk & Elifson, 2004). Qualitative interviews allows for collaborative interaction between interviewer and interviewee, situating the study participant as the expert. The interviewer seeks to understand the participant's internal – or emic – perspective, rather than the researcher's 'outsider' point of view (Hennink et al., 2011). In-depth interviews were conducted on these highly personal and sensitive topics to obtain rich, descriptive, and meaningful data on this complex cultural issue.

Data was collected in the summer of 2015 from early June to late July. A letter of non-research determination was obtained from the Emory University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix), as results were not intended to be generalizable to a greater population and therefore the study did not meet the definition of human subjects research. However, field procedures still adhered to ethics guidelines: verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants, participants were informed that they could cease participation at any time, and information collected from participants was kept confidential.

Participants

The study population consisted of female heads of household ages 15 to 50 residing in Villa Guadalupe. The qualitative component was conducted in tandem with the community needs assessment survey, which shared this criterion; participants were not recruited on the basis of experiences with intimate partner violence due to ethical considerations and safety concerns. Rather, eligible participants were recruited regardless of experience with violence, as long as they were: aged 15-50, considered the chief female in their household, and resided permanently within Villa Guadalupe. Every third women who participated in the community needs assessment survey was asked privately if she would be interested in participating in an interview focusing on relationships and violence. Contact information was obtained for 29 potential participants in order to schedule interviews, and interviewing continued until the desired sample size of 20 was reached. Participants were contacted a week in advance as well as the day prior to the interviews to confirm their participation; when requested by the participants themselves, the researcher went to their homes to remind them and/or to pick them up to go to the clinic to conduct the interview.

Instrumentation

The interview guide was developed to understand the multi-level factors involved in women's experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes relating to violence in the community of Villa Guadalupe. After writing an initial draft, the guide was reviewed by professionals trained in qualitative research and local Nicaraguan community members who reviewed and provided comments and suggestions for improvement. Clarity, understanding, and proper translation of the questions were assessed by the in-country director of MPI as well as the psychologist working in the MPI health clinic.

The interview guide included 23 questions divided into sections loosely based on the SEM (See Appendix B). The first set of opening questions aimed to establish rapport and ask about the participant's background. The next section asked participants about their family history and relationship experiences, including experiences with violence. Questions then turned to cultural norms on domestic violence and beliefs and perceptions on gender roles, "healthy relationships," and domestic violence within their community. The final section asked questions pertaining to services available for victims of domestic violence and policies addressing domestic violence.

Procedure

After obtaining informed verbal consent from the participants, participants received a brief introduction explaining the purpose and format of the interview and were offered the opportunity to ask questions. All interviews were digitally audio recorded with participants' permission. The researcher, a fluent Spanish speaker trained in qualitative research methods, conducted the interviews in Spanish in either a private room in the Manna Project International health clinic or in the participant's home away from other family members. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 2 hours 18 minutes, depending on the participants' availabilities and levels of engagement. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher wrote detailed field notes to document key points of the interview.

Data Preparation and Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, de-identified, and analyzed in Spanish to preserve the language and meaning. The quotes presented here were translated into English following analysis in order to disseminate the results. Qualitative analysis was conducted with MAXQDA

Version 12 using thematic analysis, a common strategy that entails discovering patterns and developing themes. The first set of four transcripts was reviewed to identify major themes in the data and to create preliminary codes to operationalize identified themes. The researcher met with thesis advisors to discuss preliminary codes and code definitions before returning to the initial transcripts to check initial coding and assure consistency of coding. The codebook was developed to include both inductive codes (emerging from the data) and deductive (representing study aims). The researcher then coded the remaining transcripts with the finalized codebook. After interviews were coded, a brief case summary of each participant was completed to highlight significant events and characteristics of the participant. These summaries were later used as a reference during across-case analysis to provide context for individual quotations. The coded data was reviewed to identify major patterns within the data including theme co-occurrences and relationships between different themes.

Chapter IV. Results

Participant Characteristics

To give context to the following results, a brief overview describing the demographics of

the sample of women is provided. Nine of the women had moved to Villa Guadalupe from La

Chureca, whereas eight had moved from El Albergue, a temporary housing shelter for families

whose homes were destroyed by floods. One participant did not state her former community. Of

the 19 participants, 17 women had experienced some form of abuse in their lifetime from an

intimate partner. Age varied widely, with the youngest participant being 16 years old and the

oldest being 55 years old. At the time of the interview, 12 women reported being unemployed,

three had jobs at the recycling plant, one worked at the MPI cooperative, and three worked in

informal jobs (e.g. selling goods from their home, washing and ironing clothing). Lastly, 15 of

the 19 women were in a relationship at the time of the interview. It is important to note that the

majority of women have had several partners in the past, and being single at the time of the

interview did not signify that they were not previously in a relationship.

Case Study 1: **Teresa**
Teresa is a 33-year-old single mother of four children who recently left her abusive partner of 17 years "for the sake of her children." She explained that he was kind and loving ("cariñoso") at first but that he progressively got more aggressive, particularly after each pregnancy. Finally, she realized that the violence would continue to get worse, and she did not want her children to grow up in that environment. She took the initiative and left her relationship with him:

"One is owner of one's own destiny, so I no longer wanted to continue with that problem, with that abuse, with that inequality."

After leaving him, she realized that she was very dependent on him and even missed him, despite the abuse.

"I felt like, like dependent—how can I say it, what's the word (pause) that I was already used to him, to what he said, to what he talked about, to the vulgarity… so when he was no longer there, it's like I needed him…"

She sought help from a psychologist, who helped her overcome these feelings and get back on

her feet.

> *When he was no longer here, I missed him, I needed him… so I talked with the psychologist, I told her about it, and she told me the word for it—co-dependent—something like that. And so I told the psychologist about it, I talked with her, and so having those talks with her helped me a lot.*

She does not currently have any support, as her mother passed away and her father is elderly. Her other family members are struggling economically themselves, so she does not feel she can ask anyone for help.

Teresa's father abused her mother for many years, and she spoke at length about what it was like to grow up watching her father abuse her mother and how that impacted her:

> *"I told myself that I didn't want to go through the same thing my mother went through, of all the suffering caused by the hands of my father… when I was 13 years old, my father wanted to hit my mother, so I came and was disrespectful to him and told him that he couldn't touch her—because we were already older at that point—and he told me that he would hit my mother again… so they would argue, he would say terrible things to my mother… and my mother would cry… and so I told myself that I didn't want to live that life."*

Teresa's case represents the typical experiences of women in Villa Guadalupe and highlights four key themes that are emergent throughout the majority of the interviews: personal and collective efficacy, *masoquista* [submissive], for the children, and *el marido no es padre* [he's a husband, not a father]. Teresa was in an abusive relationship for several years, a common experience for many women living in Villa Guadalupe. Although she ultimately left her partner [*control over one's life*], she experienced feelings of dependence and emotional attachment [*masoquista*], sentiments found not only among women in her community but generally in cases of intimate partner violence. Her children played a key role in her life, most notably in her decision to leave her relationship [*for the children*]. Lastly, although she did not specifically state the expression, "el marido no es padre," this theme aligns with both *masoquista* and personal and collective efficacy, as will be explored below.

Control Over One's Life

Six women held the belief that an individual can change her own circumstances. There was a sense of collective efficacy when women spoke generally about women's ability to take control of their situations and perform actions to bring desired outcomes, such as putting a stop to violence or leaving abusive relationships. Elena, a 55-year-old woman who showed resistance to abuse by her former partners and even physically retaliated against abusive partners, explained:

> *Men only go as far as we want them to go, because if we say only up to this point ("hasta aquí nomas"), we are…more than men, we are bolder/more daring than them.*

Natalia, a 32-year-old woman who did not report any experiences of abuse, similarly reported:

> *Things have changed-and it depends on us if we let ourselves be maltreated or not, but there are also many women with fear… depression, "that he will kill me, that he will do something."*

Emilia, a 20-year-old who left her abusive partner after he sent her to the hospital for severe physical abuse, also talked about women's power to put an end to violence:

> *If from the beginning a woman puts a stop to it [violence], then the man gets scared and says, "no no, it's better if I don't involved with this one," (laughs)*

In addition to speaking generally, some women themselves exhibited a sense of empowerment and control over their life, or the belief that one is in control of their situation. As mentioned in her case study, Teresa explained that she did not want to continue with the abusive relationship, and since she held the belief that a person is the owner of their own destiny, she ultimately left her partner. Leticia, a woman who originally had a very controlling partner, explained a similar situation:

He is very jealous, he doesn't like that I pay attention to anyone, to anyone, that I talk,

that I converse, so I left him, "I want a man who will support me," I told him, "look at

the situation I am in, I don't want that, that I work and you take away what I earn," so I

left him.

For the Children

For the Children was a recurring theme throughout the interviews, particularly in the

context of the nature of relationships and women's responses to intimate partner violence. Many

women said that they stayed – or left – their relationships *por los hijos* [for the sake of the

children].

Reasons to Stay

Participants brought up a variety of reasons why women with children may decide to stay

in a relationship or leave, including economic support, father figure, Participants discussed how

children may influence women's decisions to stay in relationships that may be considered

abusive or unhealthy, for reasons such as having a father figure for the children or having

support in raising the children. Children may be the reason why a couple decides to prolong a

relationship, or they may completely change the nature of the relationship by diminishing the

abuse between partners. Elizabeth, a 26-year-old with four kids, explained how the relationship

nature between her and her partner changed due to their children:

Interviewer: Why do you think he has changed?

Participant: Tal vez por los niños Perhaps for the children…that they're bigger…he has

two daughters and also two sons…I say that's the reason…because he tells me he loves

me and cares for me and says he won't be the same as before, 'not anymore,' he says,

'my children are big,' so I think that he has changed for them.

Another participant, when asked why women stay with an abusive partner, similarly reported:

Because maybe so that the children won't think wrongly… they say to give a good example to my child, I will put up with this man, that is why. The children are already big. (Sara, 37)

Reasons to Leave

Other women, like Teresa, spoke of personal experiences in which they mentioned the role of children in their decisions to leave a relationship. One of these women, Vanessa, a 16-year-old from El Albergue whose partner is heavily involved with drugs, explained:

I love this little girl… If he wants to leave, let him leave, but this little girl stays with me. Now I have someone to move forward and succeed for. If he ends up leaving I will not worry about it because I have my child, I will not die because he left - for a man who only cares about drugs and drinking. I will not be one of those women. I will continue to take care of my daughter. I will not die for a man, no, because children come first, and for those reasons I don't want to continue my relationship with him.

Women expressed their concern that they did not want their children to grow up in an abusive environment witnessing violence for fear that they will be traumatized and grow up to become perpetrators or victims themselves. Several women, including Teresa, spoke heavily of the intergenerational transmission of violence, the vulnerability of children, and the likelihood of becoming traumatized.

Masoquista

When women were asked why women stay with their abusive partners, more than a third of women used the word *masoquista* [masochist/submissive] to describe themselves or other

women who, despite being abused, decide to stay and *aguantar* [endure] the abuse. The literal

translation of *masoquista* is "masochist," however it can also mean "submissive," particularly in

cases like these where women seem to accept the abuse and stay in the relationship. Women who

spoke of masochistic/submissive women often referred to these women as being accustomed to

an abusive way of life, and reluctant to change. In some ways, the use of this term by women

may reflect underlying cultural notions of suffering and nobility of suffering. Indeed, one

participant (Emilia, age 20) did state, "Yes, but yeah, I know that the beatings of life teach

women to move forward and grow," and several women brought up the term *martirio*

[martyrdom] to describe the suffering that they have experienced throughout their lives.

Various participants spoke of masochism in terms of mental health issues such as trauma,

low self-worth, and emotional dependence. Estefani, a 29-year-old who has responded

assertively to intimate partner violence, explained that masochism is a result of women not

having self-worth:

> *It's not fear, it's masochism, it's masochism with women themselves and they don't*
>
> *have—they don't know how to values themselves, you see? So since they don't know how*
>
> *to value themselves, then their self-esteem is down on the floor, and it shouldn't be like*
>
> *that.*

Natalia, a 32-year old who did not report any experiences of abuse, also spoke of mental

health issues involved with women's acceptance of violence. Using her sister's story as an

example, Natalia highlighted the psychological aspect of trauma in women's

masochism/submission and the role of intergenerational violence and observational learning:

> *There are many women that are masochists—that was the case of my sister—she was a*
>
> *masochist, she liked men that mistreated her. Psychologically she was left traumatized*

because now her son repeats the same pattern of behavior with her and she accepts it.

She even prefers her son over her daughters because, she says that the son is the father's

image… so the same way she was abused and accepted that with her partner—now she

accepts it with her son. So I think it's a—like a trauma and something psychological, like

she turns blind and gets used to it…

In addition to speaking of masochism generally, a couple of participants described personal experiences of feeling like a *masoquista*. For instance, Ana, a 30-year-old woman who had separated and gotten back together with her partner over the years, described feeling emotionally attached to her abusive partner when she was younger:

In reality, I felt like I loved him very much, and that I couldn't leave him, and more so

because he was my first man, my first partner, and I felt this love for him. When I was no

longer with him I felt like I needed him, knowing that he would hit me, like a masochist

because knowing that he hit me and I still felt that I loved him always.

El marido no es padre (He's a Husband, not a Father)

Six women mentioned variations of a phrase that compared husbands and fathers, which essentially contrasted the ability of a father to discipline his daughter to how a husband should treat his wife. These expressions include, "el marido no es padre," "el hombre no es un padre" and "no somos hija del hombre" when referring to men's controlling behaviors. These phrases indicate that a woman's partner has no right to hit or control her as a father might but instead should respect her. In other words, a woman should not have to be submissive to her partner because she is not his daughter. Women explained that only fathers can demand respect and punish a child if they are being disrespectful, but men do not have the right to hit or control their partners. Rather, the women argued, men are their partners for life, their companions, and there

should not be any abuse if, for instance, a woman disagrees with something her partner thinks. Five participants who spoke about this mentality strongly exhibited "assertive" behaviors towards their partners.

Norma, a woman who claimed to have a healthy relationship with her partner, stated that she tells her husband that the day that he lifts his hand to hit her is the day she will lose respect for him, because "yo no soy su hija" – I am not his daughter. She explained the significance of the statement, "yo no soy su hija":

> *Interviewer: Do you think there are circumstances where it's acceptable for a man to mistreat his partner?*
>
> *Participant: No, I would not like that, not at all…we women are partners, we are not daughters…sometimes I tell my partner, show me a paper that says I am your daughter, that you have the right, not at all, and there are women who are foolish, that let themselves be abused*
>
> *Interviewer: What does that saying, "I'm not his daughter" mean?*
>
> *Participant: It means that, for example, if my husband comes and hits me today, I put my head down and then he does it again, he says, "I have her in my hands, treat like a daughter, like a child," and that's not how it should be…I always tell him, "I am not your daughter, and you are not my son, to be disrespecting and raising a hand," we both deserve respect here.*

Another participant, Elena, added that age in a relationship should not matter in a relationship and that just because a man is older than his partner does not mean that he is justified in controlling her:

My last partner who was with for ten year is 61-62 years old because he is seven years

older than me. The fact that I am younger than him, that doesn't mean I will be his

daughter or that I will be his puppet, because I work…

Here, Elena also highlights the role of employment, and its relation to empowerment and independence. Several women spoke about how important it is for women to be financially independent, and various women like Elena expressed a desire and love for working and being able to provide for oneself.

Case Study 2: **Isa**

Isa is 26 year-old mother of one child who currently lives with her partner of 10 years, mother-in-law, and sister-in-law. She discussed the nature of her relationship, highlighting her partner's verbal, psychological, and physical abuse towards her. She explained that she feels isolated and trapped at home, in large part because her partner does not allow her to go anywhere outside the house and does not permit her to work:

I have to be confined twenty-four hours. That day you guys arrived, I was with my niece, I got to be outside for a little bit, but after that, I'm practically trapped inside. I feel like I'm a prisoner, as if I'm confined between four walls. I can't scream, nothing.

She spoke at length about her desire to work for various reasons. Primarily, she wants to work in order to get out of the house and clear her mind. She also explained that she wants to earn money so that she can buy her own house for herself and her son. As a result of her partner's abuse, she has experienced many mental health issues including depression and anxiety.

I can't even go out. If I go to the park, if I walk around with my son—"no, don't go, what are you going to do outside?" So I have to be shut in here. "What?" I say to him, "we're just going for a walk." He doesn't want me to go, "just send the kid," he says. So it's like I'm being kept prisoner. Sometimes I say I would prefer to die than be here. But I think about my son, who he would stay with, what would happen to him, what education he would be getting. He's the only one that is keeping me here.

Despite being aware of the abuse, Isa's mother-in-law and sister-in-law do not support her and do not permit her to go to the police. Isa hopes to be able to report her partner to the police once she lives independently without the pressure of her in-laws. Isa does not have any source of support, and mentioned that both she and her partner witnessed abuse growing up.

Here I have my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law, and my husband. I don't have my mother or father. I don't know anything about them… Ever since I came here with my husband, I don't know anything about my mother, my father, because they left me in the streets. I'm practically alone. That's why I want to work, to clear my mind.

Isa's case highlights two additional major themes in the data: social support and legal matters. Her story particularly illustrates social isolation, brought about her through her partner's controlling behaviors and economic dependence as well as the lack of support from her family. Although her case does not go in depth on legal matters, she highlights one reason why women may not press charges against their partner: familial influences. As will be explored below, women have a variety of reasons for not pressing charges.

Social Support

Social Support was a salient theme throughout all the interviews. It captured women's discussions on the various individuals and places that offer support as well as the various types of support that women seek, including emotional and instrumental support.. Women spoke the most about emotional support received through psychologists and family members, as well as feelings of isolation resulting from lack of support.

Emotional Support

Participants spoke about the importance of being able to *desahogarse* - venting, relieving, or unburdening oneself through talking or crying, particularly when discussing psychologists. Several women talked about how helpful psychologists are and how they have helped them or others to release pain and tension by talking, thinking out loud, and even crying.

Participants seemed to be able to vent/unburden themselves by talking – platicando - with others, through talk therapy, with psychologists, as well as conversations with friends, family, neighbors, and for a couple of participants, while being interviewed for this study. Women also talked generally about the importance of sitting down and talking with people in order to get

advice, clear one's head, and resolve conflicts. Elizabeth, for example, discussed how she would talk with her grandmother:

> In my case when I was like that I was scared to talk…I was still there with my mamita, my abuelita [grandmother], so with her I would talk and I would tell her and I came to a time where I no longer wanted to continue with that [her relationship with partner] and so we separated…

Similarly, Rebecca, age 44, talked about the advice her grandmother gave her and how it had stuck with her:

> My grandma used to say to us girls that a women should never endure/tolerate hunger, illness, abuse, or infidelity. That is what my grandma used to say. That's why she decided to stay by herself with her kids, because no man would be abusing her or her children. Now I remember her advice. So I started to have experiences, and I was blind before, but not anymore.

Elena also spoke about the advice her aunt had given her growing up and how it had stayed with her all of her life:

> She always advised us that no woman should ever have to be afraid of any man, a man will never be greater than a woman. Always defend yourself. He is not your father. He is your husband, but he is not your father nor your executioner. So we grew up with that ideology, with that mentality, that we shouldn't let ourselves be abused by any man.

Furthermore, Elena talked about the importance of telling people of one's abusive experiences and letting it all out for the sake of their own liberation.

Social Isolation (Lack of Support)

Several women talked about experiencing a lack of support, particularly from family

members and people in the community. Women such as Isa often spoke of this lack of support in tandem with feelings of isolation. Leticia, a woman who mentioned that she had no support from her family, reported these feelings of loneliness and isolation:

Interviewer: When you feel lonely or depressed, who do you talk with?

Participant: With no one, I try to deal with it all by myself. I am so depressed. I lock myself in my room, thinking, sometimes I have come to the point of trying to kill myself, and I don't do it because I have my two young daughters and I don't want them to suffer. I don't have anyone to help me. And I can't leave my daughters alone, without any support from anyone, and so that's why I stop myself from doing it.

When asked why women may stay with their abusive partners, Emilia mentioned that they may choose to stay to avoid being criticized by community members. When asked to elaborate, she explained:

Well, here in this community you see a lot of things like this because they say, "she left her partner to get involved with another"… they never blame the man.

A few women discussed the need for women to feel supported within their community. Women discussed the need for community gatherings, discussions/talks, and a supportive atmosphere for women to talk and share their stories with one another. Participants also provided recommendations for future programming, including having *charlas* (discussion sessions), educational seminars, and counseling sessions with psychologists. Several women stated that they were not aware that MPI had a psychologist on staff, and those who were aware mentioned that the psychologist needs to expand her working hours into the afternoons as many women can't make morning appointments.

Self-Determination

Some women exhibited a sense of self-determination or resilience, which strengthened their abilities to take control of their life and move forward with their lives. Terms such as *luchar* and *salir adelante*, meaning to fight and move forward, were common words expressed by women to describe picking oneself up and striving to move forward in life. This theme is present in Teresa's story above, but it echoes in other women's stories as well. Vilma, a 29-year-old who has learned to be assertive with her partner over the years, explained that men are not the boss of the house and that women are equal to men:

> *What we [women] should do is find out how to not feel inferior to men, because we are worth just as much as men, we are worth more than men…*

Twenty-year-old Andrea had experienced various life stressors including abuse by her father and loss of her parents to AIDS, explained that she always stays strong and moves forward:

> *They see me as the strongest and bravest person. They tell me that I've always smiled at life. Despite everything that has happened, I still have my smile. I always stay strong.*

Victim-Blaming

Throughout many of the interviews, sentiments of negative and judgmental attitudes toward other women emerged. Women spoke generally about other women who take advantage of the legal system. Four participants stated that *Ley 779* gives women opportunities to falsely accuse their partners of abuse in an attempt to leave their relationships and move on with other men. Some women like Elizabeth expressed mixed feelings about the law, claiming that it supports women while also giving them unfair advantages:

> *Participant: On the one hand, women feel more secure and protected because that law is in place, but… the majority do it for that reason, to leave their husband and get together*

with another man…

Interviewer: And do women who are not abused also use that law to leave their partners?

Participant: Yes, like they say—we say, "the law is with us."

When asked why men become violent with their partners, about half of the participants mentioned that women provoke men or do something wrong. Nine women stated that women bring abuse upon themselves or perpetuate abuse either by engaging in wrongful acts such as infidelity or by simply accepting/tolerating the abuse. For example, various participants mentioned that women sometimes do things they are not supposed to such as get involved with other men and engage in unfaithful acts or do something without first obtaining the permission of her partner. A few women mentioned that in instances of infidelity, men are justified in mistreating their partners. Natalia explained that infidelity justifies abuse, giving an example that if she were to engage in sexual acts with another man in her home while her husband is away at work, that he has the right to abuse her because in being unfaithful, she has violated the trust. Another participant stated that a man would not become violent if a woman does not do something to merit abuse.

Additionally, a couple of women spoke personally of having been accused of provoking their abusers. For example, Elizabeth explained having been accused by her mother:

When I was nine years old, my uncle raped me. I told my mother and she told me it was a lie, since I was dressed in a tank top that, "if he did something, it's because you provoked him, it's not his problem," so then I never... I say that it's as if I never had a mother, to me my mother is already dead, I say that I don't have a mother.

Another participant, Ana, said that her partner blamed her for his violence toward her:

> *So he comes and says to me, "you see? You provoke me, you are the one that makes me*
>
> *angry, you make me like this."*

Some participants talked negatively about women who do not speak up if they are abused.

Vanessa, for example, exhibited strong feelings against women who may be afraid to speak up

and leave a relationship:

> *If he hits me and I stay quiet, then it's my fault. If I wake up dead, it's my fault because I*
>
> *stayed quiet. It shouldn't be my fault, it's abuse, and they abuse me, and then I wake up*
>
> *dead because they killed me, because I stayed quiet. Women should talk, they shouldn't*
>
> *feel alone… it's not right, they should talk. They die because they don't talk… it's like, I*
>
> *stay quiet and on top of that, I let them abuse me.*

Legal Matters

Legal matters such as women's reasons behind not pressing charges, police responses,

and perceptions on *Ley 779* were brought up in discussion throughout several interviews.

Going to the Police

Many women, like Isa, discussed why they did not contact the police and have their

abusive partners arrested. In her case, Isa was unable to go to the police because her mother-in-

law and sister-in-law forbade her to do so. Other women reported similar limitations, including

in-laws dissuading them from having them arrested or, if she already had, going to get the man

out of jail. A few women who reported having their partners arrested recalled that they had felt

guilty and later had them released. Other women discussed how fear plays a big role in women's

decisions to have partners arrested because men often threaten to kill their partners once they are

released from jail. Leticia explained:

> *They're afraid because the first thing that the man says to the woman is, "ah yes you*

send me to jail, but I once I get out you better believe I'm going to kill you and go after

your family"

Ana explained that she called the police only to be separated from her partner but not to have him arrested:

No, I told her, I don't want him to go to jail. I said He helps me with the children, cleans the house. He would send what he needed to give to the kids, the milk. And so we were like that for a time—one year, almost one year. We were separated and in that time, he would come to the house, but he wouldn't stay. He would only come, see the kids, and then he would go back. He left me money. And then he said he wanted to come back, that he didn't want it to be like this anymore, that he wanted the kids, that he wanted his family, that he would change.

Police Response

Some women spoke about the corruption and inadequacies of the police station in Villa Guadalupe. Andrea mentioned that the police station was not helpful or very receptive to women wanting to make a complaint. She explained that sometimes women are ignored or told to come back the next day to file a report. Sometimes even the policewomen are disrespectful and aggressive towards the women:

They don't give them much attention, it's like they ignore them. Sometimes they say, "I didn't tell you to get involved with that man," so they're disrespecting the women, too. Sometimes they're aggressive, they're like, "look at me, don't touch me." The policewomen are divas, but we still have rights. It's like, we're just simple domestic women, and they treat us like animals. And I think that's why there are so many dead women, because of their own ignorance.

A couple of participants expressed concern over the poor police efforts to protect women and their non-compliance with the law. Emilia, for example, stated that good laws sometimes fail and do not function the way they should. As an example, she told the story of a local man who abused his partner and was sent to jail for only five months before he was let go. She said that women often think there's no point in sending them to jail if nothing is going to be done.

> *Participant: The police sometimes don't comply with the law and they say, "what does it matter to me if they're not doing anything to me," and they let them go free*
>
> *Interviewer: Is there a lot of corruption within the police?*
>
> *Participant: Yes too much, sometimes they pay them to take people out. (Emilia)*

Perceptions on Ley 779

In the interviews, women were asked about their thoughts on *Ley 779*, a law introduced in 2012 in an effort to eradicate violence against women in Nicaragua. All participants knew about *Ley 779*, although levels of knowledge and understanding varied. Many women brought up concerns about the law, particularly in terms of its impact on both men and women. *Other women, such as Vanessa, provided positive feedback on the law and explained that it offers a source of support for women:*

> *I've heard that it is for women, because that's how deaths are prevented, that's how you prevent women who are abused from staying quiet. They have help, we women have help. We have that Ley 779 and we no longer will feel alone, we will feel accompanied and supported, and that's good.*

Other participants explained that the law has done more harm than good, as it has distorted the situation by resulting in more extreme male behavior. Ana, for instance, recalled a conversation with her partner where he explained that the law is killing women, because men

think that if they are going to jail anyway, they might as well kill their partner rather than simply abuse her. Indeed, several participants echoed this sentiment, explaining that men would prefer to go to jail for something more than just a little abuse. Another participant noted a new pattern of men killing their partner and then killing themselves to avoid confronting the legal system and going to jail. Natalia explained that men are afraid of this law:

> *There are many men who prefer to not go to jail but rather kill their partner and kill themselves and that's it, problem over. For fear of the law, that the weight of the law would fall on them, so they say, "before the law falls on me, it's better if I kill myself, but I will kill her first." So that law has distorted things.*

Chapter V. Discussion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study utilized a qualitative approach to understand the multilevel factors influencing perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of intimate partner violence among women in Villa Guadalupe. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first qualitative research regarding intimate partner violence to take place in Villa Guadalupe. The results from this research provide a deeper understanding of how violence is perceived and experienced in this community in Nicaragua in an effort to inform future research, interventions, and programming.

The SEM was utilized as a conceptual framework to gain a better understanding of the various contextual factors shaping women's experiences, beliefs, and responses to intimate partner violence. To better understand the findings, the SEM was used to contextualize the themes and results from the interviews. Additionally, select constructs from the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) were integrated within the SEM to develop a more comprehensive understanding of intimate partner violence in this community.

Women's perceptions and experiences of violence are a result of an interplay of factors at various levels including the intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. As per the SEM and SCT, all these factors intertwine to shape how women understand, experience, and respond to intimate partner violence (See Figure 2.).

Beginning with the intrapersonal level, the themes of history of violence and self-efficacy and empowerment emerged. Many women who had experienced abuse by a partner reported a family history of violence, which according to the literature, often places women at risk for intimate partner violence later in their lives (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & García-Moreno, 2013; Bair-Merritt, Blackstone, & Feudtner, 2006; Abramsky, Watts, & García-Moreno, 2011; Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt,

& Kim, 2012; Mandal & Hindin, 2015; Peterman, Bleck, & Palermo, 2015). Several participants brought up references to the intergenerational transmission of violence when asked why men become violent with their partners. In incorporating the SCT's construct of "observational learning," one can understand why women in this study frequently voiced their concerns about children growing up in abusive environments. "Observational learning" posits that individuals learn to be violence by observing the behaviors of people close to them such as parents and peers (Mandal & Hindin, 2015). As such, many women who left their relationships did so "for the sake of their children," so that the children would not be psychologically traumatized and be put at risk for violence victimization or perpetration later in their lives.

In addition to women leaving abusive relationships for their children, participants discussed *staying* in relationships for their children. One study found that one of the reasons for delayed help-seeking among abused women was women's concern about their children's well-being growing up in a single-parent home (Ahmad, Driver, McNally, & Stewart, 2009). Participants felt responsible for providing a united family for their children, and expressed worry about being able to financially support their children. Similarly, another study that explored women's decision-making on how to respond to intimate partner violence found that women who stay in relationships "for the sake of the children" do so because they are fearful of leaving their children in the custody of their father, where they may be abused by a future step-father (Horn, Puffer, Roesch, & Lehmann, 2015). Although this latter study found "for the children" as a reason why women stay in relationships, the underlying explanations differed from this current study where women's explanations included financial dependence and having a father figure for the children.
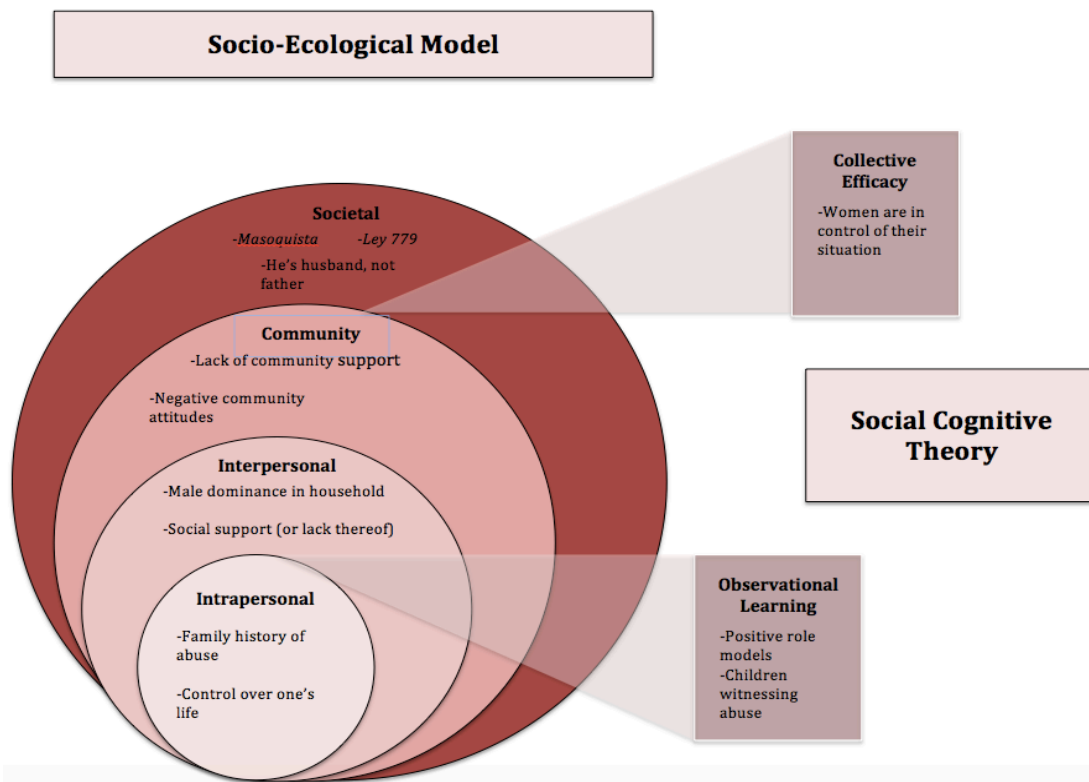
Figure 2. SEM and SCT "Observational Learning" and "Collective Efficacy"

Several participants spoke collectively about women having the ability to control their

situations, while others talked about personal experiences in which they demonstrated resistance and

assertive responses to intimate partner violence. There is not sufficient literature on resilience and

intimate partner violence as the majority of research has focused on negative health consequences

for women. However, one phenomenological study that was conducted with survivors of intimate

partner violence found similar findings to this study in that women engaged in resistance behaviors

such as opposing, avoiding, and/or pushing back against abuse, the abuser, and the abusive

relationship (Crann & Barata, 2015). Like the findings of this study, women left their relationships,

contacted the police, and/or viewed their abusive partner and their relationship differently which led

to them leaving the relationship. Another study also found that women used individual factors such

as "control over one's life" in their resilience process (López-Fuentes & Calvete, 2015). Findings

from that study and the current study also touched on economic independence and the feelings of

control and empowerment that working brings to women's lives.

At the interpersonal level, themes of social support, isolation, and relationships with family members all came up, and were intrinsically linked to the themes that emerged at the individual level. These findings are supported by the broader literature, which cite that social support and relationship dynamics greatly influence women's understandings, experiences, and responses to violence. In their article, Horn et al. (2015) found that one of main factors that prevented women from leaving abusive partners was financial dependence on the partner. Conversely, it has also been found that having financial independence or social support contributes to women's resilient behaviors such as ending an abusive relationship (Horn et al., 2015; Jose & Novaco, 2015; Ahmad, Rai, Petrovic, Erickson, & Stewart, 2013). As seen through several participants, social support received through family members was tied to women's personal resilience and empowerment at the individual level. "Observation learning" is applicable here, as women had positive role models who advised and counseled them their whole lives, while shaping their ideologies and understandings about intimate partner violence. Conversely, women also spoke of social isolation, which was tied to not only a lack of social support but also to the economic dependence of women whose partners would not let them work. Several women experienced economic abuse, or controlling behaviors that negatively affect a woman financially and inhibit her from becoming economically independent (Weaver, Sanders, Campbell, & Schnabel, 2009). Furthermore, women's experiences of social isolation was commonly experienced through a lack of community support as discussed below.

A key finding from this study falls under the community level in the SEM: the perceived lack of community support and "victim-blaming" sentiments exhibited by women. On the one hand, there was a sense of collective efficacy that participants spoke of, in that women are in control of their situations and can leave a relationship or put a stop to abuse. On the other hand, however,

women expressed or shared negative attitudes toward other women or themselves. There was often

discussion of women's role and responsibility in intimate partner violence, with participants often

blaming women of causing or perpetuating abuse. This finding is strongly supported by the

literature, where studies have documented these negative community attitudes in various regions

around the world, and their impact on women's responses to intimate partner violence (McCleary-

Sills, Namy, Nyoni, Rweyemamu, Salvatory, & Steven, 2016; Horn et al., 2015; Odero, Hatcher,

Bryant, Onono, Romito, Bukusi, & Turan, 2014). A qualitative study that explored resources and

women's response to intimate partner violence in rural Kenya found that women were often blamed

or perceived to be responsible for the violence they have experienced, which suggested that

community sentiments may influence women's responses to violence (Odero et al., 2014).

Participants also spoke about the stigma attached to single women, and how women may stay with

their abusive partners to avoid being criticized by community members. This mirrors other findings,

where single women are not only stigmatized but also accused of wanting to leave a relationship for

the sole purpose of having other men (Horn et al., 2015; Ahmad et al., 2009).

 In addition to directly accusing women of instigating abuse or providing justifications for

abuse, participants used particular words and phrases that seemed to express disapproval of women

and men's behaviors as well as social norms. Their use of the term *masoquista* seemed to

communicate a form of victim-blaming, and may thus reflect underlying cultural notions of

suffering and nobility of suffering. The theme "he's a husband, not a father" illustrates an interesting

yet ironic sentiment contrasting the ability of a father to discipline his daughter to how men should

treat their wives. In women's use of this phrase, it is implied that fathers have the ability to hit their

daughters, a belief that may be intrinsically linked to the intergenerational transmission of violence

in the community. Like *masoquista*, local idioms often reflect underlying cultural notions and social

norms that may often influence women's understandings and responses to intimate partner violence and/or perpetuate that violence. Terms such as *marianismo* ["marianism"], *martirio* ["martyrdom"], and *machismo* are common in the Latin American culture and reflect cultural norms. *Marianism* and *machismo* are the idealized gender roles, which dictate norms and behavioral expectations for members of society ("Marianismo and Machismo," 2012). While participants in this current study did not bring up *marianism*, their discussion on *masoquismo* sheds light on the concept of marianism and suggests that the two may be linked. It is important to think about how women's usage and understanding of *masoquismo* ties in with the cultural norms of *marianismo* and *machismo* embedded in Nicaraguan society, as these societal norms may be a good place to target for interventions.

The additional theme that emerged at the societal level was women's perceptions of *Ley 779*. Women held mixed feelings on this law. Some perceived that it offers support for women and has improved the intimate partner violence problem in Nicaragua. The majority of participants, however, voiced strong concerns over the law and its impact throughout the years. Many women held the perception that it has led to increased femicide and altered led to more extreme male *machista* behaviors. The findings regarding this law are consistent with the findings of a qualitative project conducted in 2014 that explored women's perceptions of Ley 779 in Ocotal, a city in North Central Nicaragua. In this study, women also perceived that the law had led to more femicide throughout the country (Luffy, Evans, & Rochat, 2015).

Recommendations

As the purpose of study was to explore women's perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of intimate partner violence within their communities, in order to provide recommendations to address issues of intimate partner violence in the Villa Guadalupe community, the following section will

provide recommendations and areas for future research.

Many of the recommendations for community programs and interventions came from the participants themselves. Their recommendations in tandem with the results point to the need for interventions targeting factors at various levels of the SEM, specifically breaking the intergenerational transmission of violence and fostering community support.

Interventions such as those on "capacity-building" which emphasize the strengths and agency of abused women can foster resiliency among women who have experienced intimate partner violence (Jose & Novaco, 2015). Building confidence, self-efficacy, and boosting self-esteem and self-worth is crucial for women to overcome feelings of emotional attachment toward their abusive partners and move forward with their lives. When participants were asked about the types of programs and services they would like to see offered in the community, several participants suggested having *charlas* or discussion sessions for women to help them find self-confidence, self-worth, and strength to stand up for themselves and leave unhealthy relationships. Women also suggested holding these sessions for couples so that they can talk and express their thoughts and opinions openly and safely with each other.

As various women stated, using violence in place of communication to express emotion and resolve conflict is not normal. In order to remedy this, participants suggested holding educational seminars or discussion sessions for children to learn how to express their emotions and openly communicate with others rather than turn to violence. "Observational learning" can be used as a key construct of an intervention or program aiming to teach children and adolescents about relationships, communication, expression, and violence. School-based programs featuring positive role models can be beneficial for children who may have been witnesses or victims of abuse at some point in their life. Additionally, targeting individuals early on in childhood has the

potential to break the intergenerational transmission of violence and prevent future violence.

Future research should further explore the phrase, "el marido no es padre" – he's a husband, not a father - and its connection to the intergenerational transmission of violence. Given the high rate of family history of abuse, it is possible that this phrase reflects a societal acceptance of child maltreatment. It is important to note that women do recognize child abuse as a problem. However, the line between discipline and abuse is unclear, and shedding light on this phrase and the meaning society ascribes to it may help to uncover underlying cultural assumptions and understandings.

It is clear that the concern over femicide rates in connection with Ley 779 is widespread across Nicaragua, which point to the need for communication between policymakers and laypeople regarding the impacts of that law. Additionally, as several women in the study expressed concern over women unfairly taking advantage of the law or of police units not complying with the law, there is a need for stronger regulation and more education/awareness on the law and its consequences.

Interventions targeting gender inequalities, conceptualizations of masculinity, and *machismo* are warranted. Engaging the male population to address *machismo* and gender inequality is likely to be more beneficial than simply focusing on women and victims of violence. There is a dearth of research exploring men's perceptions and experiences of violence, and therefore it would be incredibly beneficial to conduct studies with men in an effort to identify discrepancies and differences in the ways men and women understand and experience violence. There is evidence suggesting that prevention programs aimed at changing norms among men and boys may be more effective at changing attitudes than actual behaviors surrounding violence (Ellsberg, Arango, Morton, et al., 2015; Abramsky, Devries, & Kiss, et al.,

2014; Peterman et al., 2015). Studies suggest that community-based interventions targeting community attitudes are a promising approach to interventions (Peterman et al., 2015).

Although not presented here in the findings, several participants brought up concerns relating to their community itself and challenges of their transition to Villa Guadalupe from their former communities. Future research focusing on this transition, and on relations between neighbors in Villa Guadalupe, particularly how that influences the quality of life and well-being of community members, would be incredibly insightful. Future programming may be able to not only address violence in the community, but also existing community tensions, conflicts, and corruption that may directly or indirectly be impacting violence in Villa Guadalupe. As community cohesion and social support seems to be lacking in Villa Guadalupe especially for victims of intimate partner violence, it would be beneficial to investigate further the relations and underlying strains present in the community.

Limitations

This study is subject to several important limitations. First, this study focused on understanding intimate partner violence in the context of Villa Guadalupe. Thus, the majority of the findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable outside of this community. However, as noted earlier, certain findings such as women's perceptions on Ley 779 align with findings from studies conducted in other areas within Nicaragua (Luffy, Evans, & Rochat, 2015), which only strengthen the argument for needed interventions at the societal level. Second, a mixed-methods approach to this study, examining specific demographic variables such as education, number of partners, age of having first partner, among other variables, in tandem with in-depth interviews would have been beneficial in order to examine potential correlations and associations. Additionally, conducting focus groups to gauge community attitudes as a whole and

interactions among women would have been beneficial and is something to consider for future research. Last, as the interview guides for this project were lengthy and questions spanned various topics, the researcher had to exclude certain content not directly relating to the topic of intimate partner violence.

Conclusion

Many of the general findings of this study are consistent with the broader intimate partner violence literature and what is known about factors that help to conceptualize intimate partner violence and understand women's perceptions, experiences, and responses to intimate partner violence. However, as this was the first qualitative study on intimate partner violence to have been conducted in Villa Guadalupe, cultural and context-specific findings were revealed that add to the broader literature on intimate partner violence. Additionally, this study utilized an integrated theoretical framework consisting of the SEM and SCT that helped to contextualize the findings and offer a multi-level and multi-perspective overview of intimate partner violence in this community.

In summary, intimate partner violence is a context-specific, multi-faceted phenomenon. Findings point to the need for more community support, dialogue, and understanding among men and women and community members. Future research and interventions should focus on fostering community support, promoting awareness and education on relationships and intimate partner violence, and engaging boys and men in conversation and research in an effort to thoroughly address intimate partner violence.

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Appendices
Appendix A.

Letter of Non-Research Determination

EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

May 14, 2015

Karen Andes, PhD
Rollins School of Public Health
1518 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30322

RE: **Determination: No IRB Review Required**
     Title: *Villa Guadalupe: A Community Health Needs Assessment in a Resettled Managua Neighborhood*
     PI: Karen Andes

Dear Dr. Andes,

Thank you for requesting a determination from the IRB. Based on our review of the materials that you have submitted, we have determined that your proposed project "Villa Guadalupe: A Community Health Needs Assessment in a Resettled Managua Neighborhood" does not require IRB review as it does not meet the definition of "research" with "human subjects" as set forth in Emory policies and procedures and federal rules, if applicable. Your proposed undertaking would best be classified as a needs assessment.

The objective of this undertaking is to conduct a needs assessment in Villa Guadalupe, Managua, the results of which will be used to inform MPI in order to better serve its population through its programs and clinical services. The three modes of data collection that will be used to obtain this information are: (1) a survey of approximately 100 households, (2) a set of approximately four focus group discussions, and (3) A set of 10-15 qualitative food security interviews. It is anticipated that the knowledge gleaned from this needs assessment will help improve MPI's understanding of specific key community-centered issues, in order to facilitate future planning for programs and clinical services. In addition, you have indicated that there is no intent to generalize the data that will be collected to a population beyond that of the Villa Guadalupe neighborhood.

Please note that this determination does not mean that you cannot publish the results. This determination could be affected by substantive changes in the study design, subject populations, or identifiability of data. If the project changes in any substantive way, please contact our office for clarification.

Thank you for consulting the IRB.

Jennifer Truell
Jennifer Truell, MA
IRB Analyst Assistant

Appendix B.

<u>In-depth Interview Guide (Spanish)</u>

Introducción

Hola. Muchas gracias por hablar conmigo hoy. Mi nombre es G.G. y yo soy un estudiante de la Universidad de Emory en Atlanta, GA- E.E.U.U. Estoy haciendo un estudio explorando las ideas, percepciones, experiencias, creencias de las mujeres con respecto a la violencia domestica en la comunidad de Villa Guadalupe. Estoy aquí hoy para hablar con Usted sobre su conocimientos (knowledge?), creencias, y experiencias. Su participación es totalmente voluntaria, en cualquier momento puede parar la entrevista. Si alguna pregunta le es incomoda, por favor dígame y pasamos a la siguiente pregunta sin ningún problema. Con su permiso quisiera grabar esta entrevista y tambien quiero tomar algunas notas durante nuestra conversación.
Nuestra discussión de hoy es totalmente confidencial. No habrá ninguna forma de identificarle y nadie fuera de la gente asociada con este estudio tendra acceso a esta discussión. Después de transcribir la enntrevista todas las grabaciones seran destruidas.
Tiene alguna pregunta antes de empezar? Tengo su consentimiento para esta entrevista? Me da permiso para grabar nuestra conversación. Gracias!

Preguntas de inicio

Cuéntame sobre su vida
 Cuantos años tiene?
 Tiene pareja?
 Tiene hijos? Cuantos hijos?
 Estas trabajando/tiene trabajo?
 Es religiosa?
 Donde vivio antes de mudar a Villa Guadalupe?

Cuéntame un poco de su vida en Villa Guadalupe
 Como ha cambiado su vida y la vida de su familia desde que se mudaron a Villa Guadalupe?
 Se siente parte de la comunidad?
 Como ha cambiado el sentido/sentimiento de comunidad?

Experiencias

Cuénteme sobre la relación de sus padres cuando era niña
 Estaban casados?
 Vivieron juntos?
 Había vioencia?
 Había amor entre ellos?

Hablame de su relacion actual (dejale que te cuente su historia)

Como se conocieron? Cuando se casaron? Desde cuando viven juntos?
Cuanto tiempo estan juntos?
Cuantos hijos tienen?
Hubo alguna vez violencia en la familia? Es el muy controlador?
Cuando fue la primera vez que le maltrató? Cuando fue la última vez?

Alguna vez ha tenido miedo de su pareja?
Cuándo fue la última vez que ha tenido miedo de su pareja?

Usted tiene medidas de seguridad o de proteccióno para evitar o desminuir la violencia en la casa?

Creencias

Qué cree que es el papel de la mujer en su comunidad Cuál es la responsabilidad de la mujer?

Cual es la responsabilidad del hombre en su comunidad? En su familia?

Por que cree que los hombres se vuelven violentos con sus parejas?

Cómo responden las mujeres a la violencia?

Bajo que circustancias es acceptable que el hombre maltrate (grite o pegue o lastime) a su pareja?

Por que crees que las mujeres que son abusadas se quedan con sus parejas?

Como se habla de la violencia domestica en esta comunidad?

Como cree que los problemas maritales (entre pareja) deben solucionarse?
Cree que otros miembros de la familia deben intervenir?

Percepciones

Cuénteme, que es para Usted una "relacion saludable"?

Qué es para Usted la "violencia domestica"?

Como se espera que una mujer responda si es que es maltratada, abusada ya sea fisica o emocionalmente (gritos, palabrotas) por su pareja/ marido?

Conocimientos

Qué pasa cuando un hombre es acusado de maltratar a su pareja?

Si la mujer quiere buscar ayuda, adonde recurre?

Qué servicios y recursos existen para las victimas de violencia domestica?

Conocen la Ley 779? Que piensa de esta Ley?

Si la mujer quiere salir de una relación abusiva, tendrá la habilidad de hacerlo?
  Tendrá el apoyo de la familia, amigos, comunidad?
  Tendrá el apoyo de la Iglesia?
  Seguira dependiendo económicamente?

Cierre

Quiere compartir algo más conmigo hoy?

Aquí termina la entrevista. Muchas gracias por su participación. La información que me dió será muy útil para el estudio. Gracias otra vez port su ayuda y su tiempo. Le agradezco sinceramente.

In-depth Interview Guide (English)
Introduction

Hello. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is Gabriela Granados and I'm currently a student at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health in Atlanta, Georgia, in the USA. I am conducting a qualitative study to explore women's attitudes, perceptions, experiences, and beliefs about domestic violence in the Villa Guadalupe community. I am here today to talk with you about your own knowledge, beliefs, and experiences. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and you may decide to stop it at any time. If there is a question you do not feel comfortable answering, please let me know and we will move on to the next questions. With your permission, I would like to record the interview, and I will also be taking notes throughout the interview.

Our discussion today is completely confidential. Please be assured that all identifying information will be de-identified and no one other than the people associated with this study will have access to our discussion here today. After all recordings have been transcribed, they will be destroyed.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Do you consent to participate in this interview? Do I have your permission to record the interview? Thank you.

Warm-Up Questions

Tell me a little bit about yourself
       Probe: How old are you?
             Do you have a partner?
             Do you have kids? How many kids do you have?
             Are you currently working?
             Are you religious?
             Where did you live prior to Villa Guadalupe?

Tell me about your life in Villa Guadalupe
       Probe: How has life changed for you and your family since you moved to Villa
             Guadalupe?
             Do you feel like you are part of the community?
             How has the sense of community changed?
Experiences

Tell me about your parents' relationship while you were growing up
       Probe: Were they married?
             Did they live together?
             Was there ever violence?
             Was there love between them?

Tell me about your current relationship (have them tell their story)
       Probe: How did you meet? When did you marry? When did you move in?

How long have you been together?
How many kids do you have?
Was there ever violence? Was he ever controlling?
When was the first time he maltreated you? When was the last time?

Have you ever been afraid of your partner?
    Probe: When was the last time you felt afraid of your partner?

Do you have protective/coping strategies to avoid or diminish violence in the household?
Beliefs

What do you think is a woman's role in your community? What is a woman's responsibility?

What is a man's role/responsibility in your community? In your family?

Why do you think men become violent with their partners?

How do women respond to violence from their partners?

Under what circumstances is it okay for a man to mistreat (or say hit, beat, yell at) his partner?

Why do you think abused women stay with their partners?
How is domestic violence talked about in this community?

How do you think marital problems (between partners) should be handled?
    Probe: Do you think other family members should intervene?
Perceptions

What is a "healthy relationship"?

What is "domestic violence"?

How is a woman expected to respond if she is hit, beat, or yelled at by her partner?

Knowledge

What happens when a man is accused of maltreating his partner?

If a woman wanted to seek help, where would she go?

What kinds of services and resources are available for victims of domestic violence?

Are you familiar with Ley 779? What do you think about this Ley?

If a woman wanted to get out of an abusive relationship, would she have the ability to do so?
    Probe: Would she have the support of her family, close friends, community?

> Would she have the support of the Church?
> Would she be financially dependent?

Closing

What else would you like to share with me today?

This concludes the interview. Thank you so much for your participation. The information you have provided today was informative and incredibly valuable for this study. Thank you again for your willingness and time. I sincerely appreciate it.