

## **Functional Analysis of the Socio-cultural Factors of Violence against Women**

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**Abstract:** *Violence has dramatically increased in recent years. The statistics of social and cultural factors of the violence against women has turned into an acute social problem and this unnatural growth is a sign of different factors. If we want to reach a common and continuous solution there is a need for fundamental revisions through the political, social and cultural structures in order to provide a proper psychological and cultural context. The present article deals with the analytical aspects of the key studies about violence against women and documented statistics and information. Then there are key guidelines that can help in the creation of the proper cultural and social context. Finally it is suggested that it is better instead of concentration on finding the differences or similarities between women and men, we search for their common existential points to use the whole abilities of these two genders in the development of the human life.*

**Keywords:** *functional analysis, violence, women, social-cultural factors.*

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### **Introduction**

Violence and aggression causing a minor damage in all of the social dimensions of human beings or their destruction in an extensive form is a problem that make people think. Some people are amazed while confronting aggressive factors and do not find an answer to its causes but, for many people, violence is a common, daily matter which is a part of their lives. Though, may be at some moments they ask the question: where are the roots of violence and aggression? Storr, a contemporary psychiatrist, believes that the deep roots of violence is found in the nature of human beings and it is necessary for the protection of self and prove of personal identity, since there is a kind of unity between the general forms of positive and negative violence. In Caplan's idea violence happens when the balance between strains and self-control is broken (Caplan and Sarook, 1999, 272).

Among the schools of thought only Islam has mentioned the equality of women and men for the first time and following that equality of rights have been explained despite believing in differences in personal duties. So in the Holy Quran, God in all of the verses related to the creation of man and woman, have always excluded gender from the domain of their nature and essence and has never included being a man or woman as a means for difference among the human beings. There has never been a positive emphasis on it in the schools of thoughts. So today the ideal man is not the one who has an aggressive power, rather the ideal man is the person that is in harmony with other people and with the conditions. There is no definition of violence in the law and only words such as battery are mentioned. Also there is no definition of violence in the psychology, but it has been used with different meanings. Some believe it is an unprovoked sudden attack to cause bodily harm and some other define it as any form of active effort. In Michael Kamils' idea manliness is also a set of concepts that are built in the process of our relation with ourselves, with others and with the world around us. Manliness is socially built and is not made of our nature rather it is built by culture.

So women are perfect creatures that have been created by God and should be able to use their talents in their areas of interest. Violence is the deprivation of enjoyment, never in any school, or country it has not

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been considered as something positive, rather in every place the hatred of it is used as a non-human instrument. So far, all of the thinkers and theoreticians have emphasized non-discrimination and have objected violence. So, based on the goal of the study and through previous studies and theories, this study pays more attention to the common existing points among men and women and not their gender, violence, identity that result in underdevelopment and is undesirable in the social life of a person.

### The Importance and Necessity of the Study

From this point of view culture is a social heritage from the past that affects the present and the future behavior. There is coexistence in the original culture, but sub-culture directions also exist toward violence, especially among some specific nations and among the groups with lower incomes. In some of the conditions, a violent response is a subculture response which in that subculture is a normal response (Vanhasselt, et. al. 1987, 66). So the researcher has studied it based on the importance of this subject. Preskat says: the origin of violence, is the deprivation of enjoyment. The stimulation of the nervous system related to joy, automatically prevents the stimulation of nervous systems related to the violence, just like seesaw, for this reason, the kids that are victims of sexual abuse, or are beaten, are turned into violent adults (Rafiei, 1994, 17).

### Concepts

*Table (1): types of violence*

Row	Types of violence	Definition
1	Physical violence	Physical violence against women has different forms, beating, torture, murder, this type of violence is defined as any type of asocial behavior that hurts the body of the women (Kar, 2002). Its examples are beating, fist, biting, slapping, choking, hitting with an object or fist, stabbing, shooting, mutilation, premature burial, murder, ... (Mohebi, 2001)
2	Affective violence (psychological)	Violent behavior that hurts the dignity, honor and self-confidence of women. This behavior has the forms of unjust criticism, humiliation, scurrility, insult, josh threatening to divorce or remarriage (ibid, 2001)
3	Financial violence (economic)	It is a type of violence in which women have a lower access to financial resources in the family and society. Its forms are parsimonious husbands, seizing their wives' income, not providing the necessary needs of the wife, obsession in controlling the costs of life, not paying the cost of living, misuse or stealing the properties of wife (Mohebi, 2001)
4	Social violence	Is a type of violence in which women are forbidden of activities and interaction with others and in society? In this type of violence , the wife is intensely controlled by her husband and she is socially isolated, forbidden from social relations with family members, families, depriving of education or job (Kar, 2001), social-economic status: for the evaluation of social economic status of the family
5	Social resources	Social resources are defined as the amount of social support that women receive from different groups and people (Alivardinia et.al. 2011)

### Research Method

In recent years the interdisciplinary field of study of cultural studies has been formed and is developing fast. The aim of the cultural studies is that with the combination of the collection of social and cultural studies and the data provided through empirical and theoretical studies or observers, an analysis and theory is provided about the social and cultural issues of the human beings. The combination of the results of the previous studies helps the completion and unification of all of the research efforts in this area. The review of previous studies, besides connecting the previous and future studies together, results in the logical organization of scattered studies in a certain area. With the combination of the studies a hidden general model can be achieved (Shekarkan, 1998). So the unit of analysis in the meta-analysis of the scattered studies is about a certain subject.

## **Theoretical Basis and Review of Literature**

### ***Theory of strain***

Strain theories believe that crime is a function of the opposition between goals and instruments that people can use legitimately to reach their goals. Durkheim, one of the pioneers of the pressure theory, formulated the Anomy theory for the explanation of crime. In his view anomy is the root for different social abnormalities (Raeisi, 2003, 140). Martan believes when people do not have legitimate means to reach their goals, they feel strained and so they possibly choose illegal and illegitimate means to reach their goals and commit crimes (Gidenz, 1997, 141).

### ***The power theory***

Essentialism in the idea of essentialists is an essential and natural power and is merged with the physical conditions; people who were powerful through history were physically more able. Rousseau's view about primary societies is based on this. In his work 'les origines de l'ine'galite' danse la race humaine' he emphasized this idea. In line with this idea, in the family the emergence of the fatherly figure is based on the physical power of the man. So power is not just essential, natural and bodily, rather it is social. With this view, the social figures in the society have been powerful people without being physically powerful. Sentimentalism- many believe in the human affections as the source of power. In their view the true power is created when affections are more present.

### ***The resources theory***

The resources theory that was mentioned by William Good in 1971, emphasizes that mostly men have the economic resources and this results in their hegemony in the family relations. Good mentions that people with more power in the family, are less prone to use physical violence, because they have other resources through which they can exert their power. But among the people who have social-economic weakness, the only power source is the physical power. In this theory, the point is to stabilize the structure of the family, so they use different resources for this stability, which violence is one of them (Ezazi, 2001, 81). Glass and O'Brien revised the theory of resources of Good and introduced the status conflict theory (Vanhasselt, et.al. 1987, 61).

### ***Social control theory***

Social control are mechanisms through which the society exerts its dominance over people and makes them harmonize with the values and norms of the society (Kose and Rozenberg, 1999, 107). Social control are unofficial, official controls and positive and negative social controls. (Sotoudeh, 2001, 139). In Hirshi's idea, crime happens when the commitments of the person to the society is weakened or is totally destroyed (Moshkati and Moskati, 2002, 12). In adapting this theory with family, Golz explains that since in family the public supervisory institutes are absent, men can use violence against their wives. On the other hand, there is an attitude in the family that its base is to share power based on the gender.

### ***Social learning***

In Bandora's idea children though watching their parents learn how to use violence. Violence of adults are rooted in their childhood. It is even said that violence is born from violence (Ezazi, 2001, 21). The base of the social learning theory is the same traditional learning views. Based on these views, learning means a change in behavior that is a result of experience or exercise. In this theory, children learn the roles related to the gender for both sexes and also learn which gender behaviors to copy. So, the social learning theory explains that children learn specific behaviors related to gender in the family and through their parents.

### ***Social inequality theory***

The hierarchy of the society is shaped based on different basis. In addition to inequalities that form different social classes in relation with production, distribution and exchange of wealth in the contemporary societies, other forms of inequality such as gender, age, race and nationality, religion, and unofficial gender biases all affect the changes and life styles of people and the different distribution of social privileges.

Women face issues and problems in their family and working environment that is defined as glass ceiling in the sociology literature, which are invisible limitations in the public area of life and maybe the private area of family that women have to deal with (Tapperman, 1998, 241).

### ***The theory of gender identity and the gender sociability***

Michel Foko believes that in the western societies people consider their identity the same as their gender identity and consider themselves gender based creatures. They connect this self-gender concept to their ethical and traditional lives. i.e. that each person in order to know how to behave and what expectations the society have of him, first imagines a model that a creature with his gender should act according to (Tavakoli, 2003, 80). Kamil believes that gender violence is created out of three factors: 1- unjust and asymmetric social power of men and in some cases their use of violence (against women and against other men, themselves, nature, ...) for maintaining it or at least strengthening the sense of power, 2- feeling of deserving the power that is experienced by most men, 3- having the social, legal and cultural permission to commit gender violence that exists mostly in all of the men oriented cultures (ibid, 82-83).

### ***Theory of functionalism***

Against the attitude of feminists, the theory of functionalists about family violence justifies the violence. They consider the family as a group in which people with different genders and age groups have a close relationship with each other for a long time. Against other groups, in this group the hierarchy is not based on expertise or competence, rather it is based on gender, age and economic power. The existence of different interests in this heterogonous group results in the creation of evident or hidden conflicts. These conflicts destroy the characteristics and proper functions of the family. So, any act in line with the removal of family conflicts, although based on power and in cases violence, is justified and essential (Ezazi, 2001). So, in the functionalism view, violence is used for the survival of the family. From this point of view, people have dominant roles in the family group. For example the husband is considered the breadwinner of the family and wife as the mother has the duty of house work. Each of the individuals in the family group play different roles for their survival, based on the necessities and institutional social expectations, (Seif, 1989, 56).

### ***The culture theory***

The culture theory of violence is one of the other theories explaining female hurting. This theory expresses that the base of all of the different types of abuse such as domestic violence, child abuse and abuse of aged people is formed via the society. From this point of view, culture is the social heritage of the past that affects the present and future behavior of human beings. Dobash and Dobash have found a clear relationship between male violent behavior against females and the social norms. Men that misbehave their wives, live in a culture in which men have dominance over women. Some of the other features of this culture, the effect of violence of men, the existence of male dominance and the obedience of women. So, in the father oriented societies, the use of power for the stability of male dominance is legitimate. In some of the societies, when the social system is endangered, in order to reestablish it, violence is used. This form of social control, i.e. exertion of violence for the survival of social order in the society is exercised in the major and minor levels (family) (Ezazi, 2001, 71).

### ***The theory of transmission among generations***

Based on this theory that is based on the social learning theory people that experience violence in the family in a low age or witness it, will likely use it in their adulthood (Shams Esfandabadi, 2003). Parents award their children for the behaviors they think is proper for the gender of the child. Parents and other adults use different methods in their interaction with other women and men. The child learns being a 'boy' or 'girl' in accordance with the behavior that receives awards and learns to stick that label to himself and consider positive value for it. Based on this theory, the gender identity is formed after the shaping of the behavior based on the gender role and this does not happen in a specific age (Garret, 2001, 35).

### ***Feminism***

Feministic theories should be considered based on the social conditions. In contrast, in addition to the realization of this objective reality that through the passage of time something change, the recognition that the feministic theories should be studied again in the light of the emerging social conditions is to some part a result of the issue that feministic theories lack practical success.

The main idea of this theory is that direct and indirect social and economic processes act in line with supporting of a type of specific social order and patriarchy family structure. Patriarchy results in the lower status of women and so the historical model of the systemic violence against women is shaped (Gells and Straus, 1979).

### ***Radical feminism theory***

The main position of the radical feminism is considering a very positive value for women and deep hatred for the violence against women; radical feminists confirm the specific value of women in confronting the world that underscores them. Radical feminists, consider violence as the whole index of the society. Any institute of the society is a system through which some of the people dominate some other people.

### ***Liberal feminism***

Fundamental and scientific research about liberal feminism was formed in 60s and was popular in a comprehensive way. The following ideas made this theory popular:

- 1- Equality of men and women as the parents for watching after their children.
- 2- Need for the education of children regardless of their gender.
- 3- Freedom and equality in the choices for occupations for both genders.

### ***Marxist feminism***

Marxist feminists combined the social objections of women and Marxist class analysis and proposed a quiet form of gender inequality. Most of the studies of Marx and Angles were about the class pressures and one of the works in which the position of women from the view of Marx and Angles is the famous work of Angles 'origin of family, private ownership and government' that was written in 1884 one year after the death of Marx. The most important subjects in this book are:

- a) The biological place-social place is not the same in the historical context and it can be studied historically and even change it.
- b) The reason for the inferior position of women in families is the lack of access to the production instruments and her defeated position in this area.

### ***Socialist feminism***

The theoretical body of socialist feminism is constituted of factors such as patriarchy, capitalism and domination. The socialist feminism combines and regulates Marxist feminism and radical feminism and adds its own theories.

### **Review of Literature**

In the resolution of "eliminating violence against women" in 1993 the General Assembly of the United Nations defined violence as: "any type of violent behavior that is made on the basis of gender and its inevitable or possible result is sexual, physical or psychological abuse of women or hurting them. These behaviors include threat to actions such as bullying or arbitrarily limiting others of freedom-public or private domains (Raeisi SarTashnizi, 2002, 66-45).

One of the most important discussions in the area of power in the family relations is being proposed by "Blood and Wolf" that consider an explicit relation between power and resources in the family and define the power as the potential ability of one member for dominance over the behavior of another person (Blood and Wolf, 1960, 29). Also in this method, usually one of the members of the family is asked who makes the final decisions in the family or says the last word? Clear questions about family

decisions such as buying car, expenses, determining education places, and ... are asked, so the person who has the final saying, has a more power and authority (Ezazi, 2001, 81).

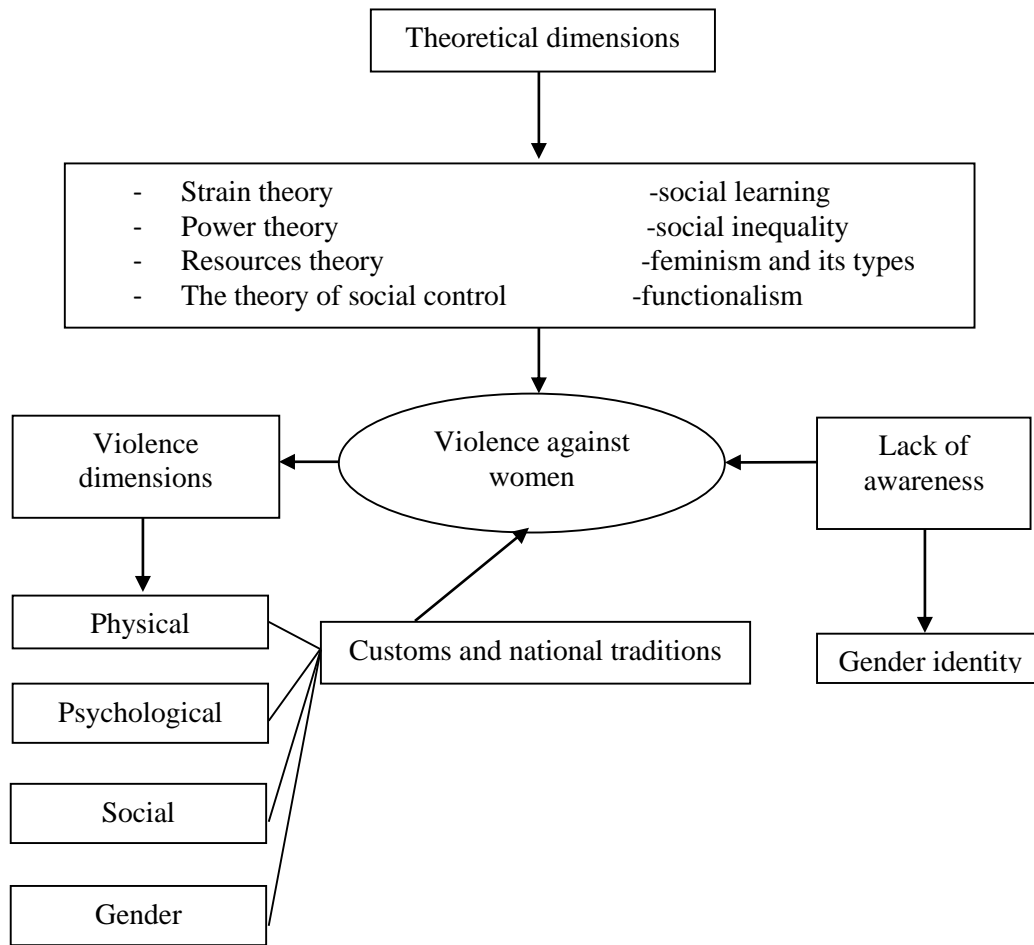


Figure (1): Theoretical model

Wolfgang and Ferera Kiot believe that the talent for violence is different among people having a subculture. Because violence depends on the psychological factors that the people of one subculture use (Wolfgang and Ferakati, 1982, 324). O'Brien believes that basic conflict can lead to family violence. When the husband feels that his traditional position within the family is threatened by a skilled wife with higher education, he resorts to violence to maintain his dominance (O'Brien 2, 1971, 36)

Abdalreza Adhami, Zohreh Roghanian (2009) have studied the formed ideas of gender inequality in the family (case study: women working in the Education Organization of Hamedan), the effect of formed ideas of gender inequality in the family among the women working in the Education Organization in Hamedan.

Faezeh Mohammadi, Rahmat Mirzaei (2012) have studied the social factors affecting violence against women (Ravansar study), and found that family violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women with the most social, psychological and economic consequences. It was conducted in the form of a survey with the help of a questionnaire for 200 of married women in Ravansar that had been married at least for one year and has been done by cluster and systematic sampling.

Akbarali Verdinia, Davud Razi, Sedighe Aeni (2013) the sociological explanation of violence against women: the empirical test of resources available for women and radical feminism, found that violence against women is a global phenomenon. Most of the studies show that there are differences in the

occurrence of violence against women that is a result of unique cultural factors. So the difference in culture, whether based on the geographic area, national territories, religion or nationality has resulted in a difference in the attitude towards violence against women. The sample population of the study was chosen from among all 15 to 45 year old married women living in Sanandaj. Totally 400 of these women were chosen by cluster random sampling in several stages.

### **Conclusion**

The lack of supervisory control and the existence of traditional attitudes facilitates violence against women. Because family is a private institute, the family violence is not expanded to the society and so it is not possible to control it by public organizations (police forces or the court). Based on the social learning theory, the roots of violence has variable limits that extends from the previous experiences of the aggressor to the learning and different types of external factors, as in when people are grown in families with violence. In contrast with the main stream of social inequality theories of sociology, feminists and theories based on gender believe that any type of theory about social inequalities without paying attention to the social status of women and dominating powers of patriarchy will be imperfect and should be revised. With weaker family ties the second type of family will be formed where there is a possibility that the differentiation of family roles will decrease. (Theory of Bhatt). So the role of the family ties should be stronger.

Suggestions and guidelines based on the theoretical application and literature review:

- Not using the status conflict that leads to family violence.
- The adaptation of the family based on power, not based on the power division on the basis of gender.
- Social system and believing in ethical legitimacy with the closeness of “school, family, society”
- The effect of close relations with the people in the society, committing violence. ‘Bandura: most of the behaviors of people is based on observation and modeling process’
- Inequalities in the societies based on the: classes, age, gender, nationality, race, religion and citizenship should become weaker.
- Using culture that all of the value and norms come from it.
- Using the social system of the mind theory in the mental level.
- Action flexibility, affection with a positive view.
- Using positive personal traits, positive trade, and the commitments of organizations based on humanity.
- Positive affect, cognitive process such as judgment, memory, affects the guidelines for problem solution
- Negative affect, fear, depression, violence, results in physical reaction of the person.
- The presence and role of women in the history of Iran has faced ups and downs. But in the present age there should be more effort for the facilitation-satisfaction and happiness and healthy life in the cultural-social development of women in the society and the moral and materialistic growth of humanity.

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