Chapter 13
Ontic Narratives:
A Study on Gender Narrative and the Legitimation Styles of Violence Against Women

Busra Kucukeskici
National Defense University, Turkey

Bozkurt Koc
Ondokuz Mayis University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This study examine the role of university students' justification of physical violence and gender role attitudes on the justification of physical violence against women in marriage. Participants completed the content domains for justification of physical wife abuse scale, gender roles attitude scale, and justification of physical violence scale, as well as a personal information form prepared by the researcher. Data were collected from 627 volunteer students aged 18-25 years in Ondokuz Mayıs University. As a result of this study, the justification of physical violence against women in marriage has a significant negative correlation with the gender role attitudes and a significant positive correlation with the justification of physical violence. Based on results, it is concluded that not only individual reasons but also some social or cultural indicators should be evaluated in the prevention of physical violence against women.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the phenomenon of violence against women, researchers have begun to focus on the justification of physical violence against women in recent years. However, in order to properly understand the issue of legitimizing physical violence against women, questions such as what physical violence is, how and through which processes physical violence is legitimized, and how society defines women who have become the object of this violence should be answered first.

How violence is defined is important for both determining the direction of academic research into violence and in combating violence in practice in the field. Because definition helps draw the boundaries of a concept and understand it in detail. A source can be provided for the legitimation of violence on the grounds that acts or phenomena that fall outside the definition of violence by society are not violence. Extensive research to define the concept of violence, or comprehensive reviews for the purpose of the research have been done. (Arendt, 1997; Balcıoğlu, 2000; Koç, 2011; Michaud, 1991; Riches, 1989; Ünsal, 1996). Again, many definitions have been made in the literature and different features of violence are emphasized in these definitions (Arblaster, 1975; Copet-Roger, 1989; Corbin, 19890; Dalhberg & Krug, 2002; Erten & Adalı, 1996; Hamburg, 1998; Harris, 1980; Henry, 2000; Hipp, 2000; Hollin, 1993; Keane, 1998; Marvin, 1989; McFarlane, 1989; Parkin, 1989; Roher, 2011; Somersan,1986).

Physical violence refers to both the damage inflicted and the nature of the action, due to the character of the action. When the concept of violence is evaluated through the definition of using force, physical violence can be summarized as causing damage as a result of using force to cause physical harm. In other words, when physical violence is the case, there is a tangible act and tangible damage. Ünsal (1996) defines physical violence as a "severe and painful outside act against the bodily integrity of humans". On this basis, any behaviour, whatever its actual content may bei that causes physical harm or carries the possibility of causing bodily harm and is intentional could be defined as physical violence. Examples of these behaviors are pushing, pulling, squeezing, putting physical pressure on someone in a way that inhibits movement or bodily functions, kicking, throwing objects, pulling on hair, smacking or punching, using a tool or an object to cause damage by stabbing, hitting, scratching, burning or scraping.

As Ünsal (1996) states, physical violence is unique among types of violence with its "indisputable and measurable characteristics". It may be said that in any culture around the world, while it is debatable for a behaviour to be considered violence not according to societal norms, there is universal unanimity when it comes to physical violence. In every culture around the world, it can be said that there is a universal consensus on physical violence, even though it can be discussed within social norms whether a behavior should be included in the scope of violence. Whether the purpose, intention, scope, or legitimacy of the behavior is discussed, physical violence is physical violence all over the world, and it is a destructive act no matter who is targeted. However, violence against women has exceeded the definition of the concept of violence, and it has become a phenomenon in itself, as it causes social and even universal damages beyond its primary harms.

In the literature, physical violence against women in marriage is considered to be a form of domestic violence. Taken as a form of domestic violence, physical violence against women in marriage differs from other forms of violence due to the higher possibility of its continuation (Gültekin et al, 2004). When learned in the family, the primary learning environment, domestic violence against women may be passed on from one generation to another generation as an unchanging norm that is independent of the specific and economic issues of the household and become a social value drawing on the perception that violence is feasible and normal.

With the change in the perspective on violence against women studies, the scope of definitions of violence has widened. It is a universally accepted fact that violence against women may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic or emotional in form and can be experienced by any woman around the world of any race, religion, language or socio-economic status. The literature supports this point (Altınay & Arat, 2007, Dişsiz, 2008, Ellsberg & Heisse, 2005, Kishor & Johnson, 2004, Krug et al., 2002, Nayak et al., 2003, PIAR-Gallup, 1992, Rigs et al., 2000, Tang & Lai, 2008, Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

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