

# **Intimate partner violence in Malawi and the gender order**

*A quantitative study examining the association between partner violence in Malawi and the gender order*

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## Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is widespread and accepted in Malawi (Chakwana 2004). It is an important issue because it is difficult to gain national development and eradicate extreme poverty if women do not have opportunities to influence their own lives. The Malawian Government has now identified eradication of violence against women as one of the strategies towards attaining poverty reduction (Malaŵi Government 2002). Previous research shows that women irrespective of their age, marital status, educational level, employment status and number of children, are at risk of violence by their husbands (Chakwana 2004). What are the reasons behind the problem if individual socioeconomic factors are irrelevant?

To figure out how a country can fight against intimate partner violence, it is important to discover the causes behind the problem so policymakers and program planners could know where to draw their attention (Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller 1999). The aim of the present study is to explore some of the reasons behind intimate partner violence in Malawi, and how the gender order is associated to IPV. Gender order is not a measurable variable, but a system that structures women and men into power relationship (Jalmert 2006). It structures the power relations between genders and tells what could be expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men might do in different contexts (Hannan 2006). To investigate this association, it was focused on variables that disclosed information on women's power in relation to their husbands, and the prevalence of IPV among empowered women and/or women who acted in line with the expected patriarchal norms and roles. I have focused on two issues in this study:

- The prevalence of IPV associated to the gender order
- Women who transgress the gender order and how it is related to IPV. A woman transgress the gender order when she: takes decisions that are normally prescribed by the husband (economy/health), gains more power through education/income (empowerment), or refuses to follow the norms/roles that are expected of her. I have especially focused on women's empowerment and its relationship to IPV.

For this purpose, data material from the Malawian Demographic and Health survey 2004 was used. Multiple logistic regression analysis was used to determine the risk factors that had a consistently significant and direct effect on a married woman's risk of experiencing IPV. To more specifically explain how gender and power could be understood as interactive elements to understand IPV, I used a *feministic perspective* in this study. A feminist perspective

understands IPV from a *social constructionists' point*, it sees intimate partner violence as a product of its social context, often rooted in patriarchy. For example, in a *patriarchy* the gender relations are structured around male domination which gives the man right to control “his wife”, which further legitimates IPV. To capture a realistic picture of IPV in Malawi this study has concentrated on woman’s physical, emotional and sexual violence by a current husband the last 12 months preceding the survey.

The present study shows that intimate partner violence among married women is a common practice in Malawi, 22, 9% experienced partner violence 12 months preceding the survey. The gender order in Malawi influences the prevalence of IPV to a great extent, and could be helpful when IPV is understood within the Malawian context. More than the majority of the interviewed women had a controlling husband, and such behaviour turned out to be strongly associated with IPV. Sociologists have argued that intimate partner violence is widespread where violence is socially accepted (Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin 2005). If the man’s violence becomes the norm, the violence is not identified as a problem (Lundgren 2004). That may explain why so many women accept partner violence, and why this group of women are more likely to experience IPV. The gender order in Malawi gives men the right to control their women and the right of being the superior. When women oppress these structures, men’s “male identity” could be challenged and violence may be used as a tool to regain “his power”.

When the gender order is challenged, the risk of IPV increases drastically. When women gain more power (through education and income) or refuse cultural norms, the risk of experiencing IPV increases. Transgression of gender norms can “trigger” a crisis of male identity, and violence may be the man’s response to regain power. This shows that IPV is not just an expression of male dominance over women, but also rooted in male vulnerability where social expectations of manhood are unachievable. In line with feminist arguments, violence becomes a method to maintain social control over “their” women.

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## **1. Introduction**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is widespread and accepted in Malawi (Chakwana 2004). To figure out how a country can fight against intimate partner violence it is important to discover the causes behind the problem so policymakers and program planners could know where to draw their attention (Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller 1999). The aim of the present study is to explore more of the reasons behind intimate partner violence in Malawi, and how the gender order is associated to IPV. To investigate this association, it will be focused on variables that can disclose information on women's power in relation to their husbands, and whether it is possible to find less or more violence among empowered women and/or women who act in line with the expected patriarchal norms and roles. For this purpose, data material from the Malawian Demographic and Health survey 2004 (MDHS) will be used. To capture a realistic picture of IPV in Malawi this study will concentrate on woman's physical, emotional and sexual violence by a current husband last 12 months preceding the survey.

### **1.1 Context and background of the study**

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, 60% live below the poverty line and the life expectancy is only 46.3 years (UN 2005). The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (Malawi Government 2002) has acknowledged gender inequality as one of the major causes of poverty. In line with this recognition, issues related to women and violence has gained attention. The national Health and Demographic Survey included for the first time a domestic violence module in 2004. The report revealed some interesting facts. In 77% of the cases, the perpetrator of violence was a husband or male partner. This coincides with global studies. Women are much more likely to be physically assaulted or murdered by someone they know, often a family member or intimate partner. Men, on the other hand, are much more likely to be killed or injured in wars or on the street by a stranger than women (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). The MDHS 2004 also revealed that *all* women irrespective of their age, marital status, educational level, employment status and number of children, are at risk of all forms of violence by their husbands (Chakwana 2004). What are the reasons behind the problem if socioeconomic factors are irrelevant?

Statistics Norway (SSB) suggests that cultural factors may be more important than access to resources when understanding partner violence in Malawi (Mathiassen, Eliasi, Mahowe, Chunga, Iversen, Pederson and Roll-Hansen 2007). The current research on factors that affect

the likelihood of partner violence in developing countries, usually concentrate on individual factors rather than community or societal factors (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi and Lozana 2002). That is also the case in Malawi as many studies focus on individual factors based on small area surveys. Most researchers agree that social factors can greatly affect the extent and characteristics of violence, as well as the way that specific acts are interpreted in different societies. Nonetheless, there have been few systematic attempts to prove it by firm evidence. Most theories about the dynamics of abuse have been based on the experiences of US and European women, and it is unclear how relevant these are to women from other cultures (Heise et.al. 1999, Krug et.al. 2002). We know that women's status is considerably lower than men's in Malawi (CEDAW Malawi 2004). This issue drew my attention toward the social system that structures women and men's power relations. Could the gender order in Malawi put women at risk of experiencing violence from their partners?

Cultural meanings of what is masculine and feminine vary from society to society and from one historical period to another. Sociologists see this as a part of the *gender order*, "the ways in which societies shape notions of masculinity and femininity into power relationships" (Macionis and Plummer 2008: 366). The gender order tells us what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men do in different contexts (Hannan 2006). Or as Jalmert (2003) points out, "what we think is our own free choices are very often shaped of the gender power order we live in". The concept of gender order has been influential in sociology, but it is only recently used in relation to men's violence against women. Today, UN recommends all analysis on gender relations to include gender order because it is essential to understand how the power relations between men and women construct violence (Jalmert 2003).

There are reasons to believe that the gender order affects partner violence in Malawi. First of all, Malawi is influenced by a patriarchal ideology that gives the man right to exercise power over the woman. Another reason is the results from a multi-country study that examined domestic violence and risk factors in developing countries. The study used data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). Zambia, known as being similar to its neighbour country Malawi, had clear correlations between partner violence and gender power relations. This association contributed to a wider insight to the problem (Kishor and Johnson 2004).

## 1.2 Research questions

Intimate partner violence is a complex problem, which makes it difficult to distinguish the risk factors. My intention with this study is not to sort out all the risk factors, but to discover *some* of the reasons behind the problem. As Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller (1999:3) pointed out, “As more becomes known about the scope of gender-based violence and the reasons behind it, more programs find ways to address it”. My main purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between IPV and the gender order in Malawi. To discover more of this relationship, three research questions are outlined:

1. What is the prevalence of IPV, i.e. physical, sexual and / or emotional violence from male partners among married women in Malawi last year?
2. What is the relationship between the gender order, i.e. the power relations between men and women, and risk for IPV?
3. How is risk for IPV associated to transgression of the gender order, i.e. indicators of women's empowerment?

*Research question 1* is descriptive of nature, and it is included as a recommendation by WHO when quantitative data on violence are analysed. It is important to describe the frequency of the violence one is studying (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). *Research question 2* is outlined to explore the relationship between IPV and the gender order. The gender order could not be understood as a measurable variable like income, sex or age, it is the system that creates femininity and masculinity into power relationships in a society. To measure gender order, variables that reveal the power sharing between men and women will be used. To discover how power is normally shared in Malawian gender relations it is necessarily that the explanatory variables first are presented in details (in chapter 4). If a husband's controlling behaviour is a risk factor for experiencing partner violence, it is worth knowing whether this is the social norm or not. *Research question 3* examines the association between IPV and women who transgress the gender order. How will the prevalence of IPV change when women gain empowerment and the gender order is “challenged”? This association can disclose whether it is possible to find less or more violence among empowered women.

To answer the research questions, data from the national Malawian Health and Demographic Survey 2004 is used. With MDHS 2004 it is possible to produce useful information on a population problem. The study has, among many other topics, collected data on domestic

violence and gender norms/attitudes. Parts of this thesis are carried out in collaboration with the Statistics Norway (SSB), and quantitative methods are used to analyze the data-material. I got access to the data material due to my contacts in the international section in the bureau and my job in SSB. To expand my own perspective on Malawi's gender order and its relation to partner violence, a fieldwork in the country was also conducted. A society's gender order is shaped by structures in the society, such as ideology, culture, history, traditions, economy, politics etc. Acknowledgment to these structures is important for achieving reliable results in my study. It is difficult to study a population problems and social structures without a visit to the country. The fieldwork in Malawi gave me inspiration and new perspectives of the problem I was investigating. As quantitative method is the main method, experiences from the fieldwork will not be reported in details. It should rather be understood as an experience that shaped my interpretations and focus throughout the study.

### **1.3 Why study intimate partner violence?**

Intimate partner violence is now recognized globally as a threat to health outcomes, human rights and national development (Kishor and Johnson 2004: xv, Krug et.al. 2002). To achieve the UN Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty, it is necessarily to ensure that the realisation of women rights is in line with international human rights conventions (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007). It is difficult to gain national development and eradicate extreme poverty if women do not have opportunities to influence their own lives. The Malawian Government has now identified eradication of violence against women as one of the strategies towards attaining poverty reduction (Malawi Government 2002). Intimate partner violence is an important issue because it prevents women from living full lives and taking part in the society throughout their life cycle. It reinforces discrimination of women in education, prevents them from participating in political, cultural and social arenas, and from gaining control over economic resources (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007, Ellsberg and Heise 2005). Intimate partner violence not only discriminate women from the society, it also poses a direct threat to women's health (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). It has a damaging impact on physical, mental and reproductive and sexual health, with consequences such as physical injuries, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide attempts, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, gynecological disorders, sexually transmitted infections, increased HIV/AIDS risk, and others (Heise et.al. 1999, Dahlberg and Krug 2006).

## **1.4 Outline of the thesis**

In order to answer my research questions, the thesis is outlined in seven chapters. This chapter (1) examine the background for the thesis, and a presentation of my research questions.

Chapter 2 and 3 outline the baseline of the study. Chapter 2 gives the reader a short introduction to the geographic, social, demographic, historical and political background of Malawi. Women's status, the gender order and previous research are outlined in this chapter. Chapter 3 on the other hand, presents the theoretical framework and analytic tools which are used to answer my research question. In the end of this chapter my hypothesis are presented. IPV is a product of its social context. For that reason suitable hypothesis could first be outlined after both theory and context were presented. In chapter 4 the applied data material and the chosen variables are presented. To measure gender order, variables that reveal the power sharing between men and women are used. The explanatory variables are presented in details to understand how power is normally shared in different situations. Information on the prevalence of the risk factors will be important when the logistic regression model is interpreted.

Chapter 5 presents the statistical analysis and the associations between partner violence and gender order. A bivariate analysis is first presented to look for the associations between the explanatory factors and partner violence. Then logistic regression is used to determine the factors that have a consistently significant and direct effect on a married woman's currently risk of experience of partner violence. This section relates the findings to my hypothesis.

Chapter 6 consists of a discussion based on the elements from the data analysis and the theoretical framework. The current body of quantitative evidence from the statistical analysis is discussed in its relation to the research questions, theoretical framework and hypothesis. In the final part I will present a broad account of my three research questions. It is further discussed how the thesis has contributed to the subject of IPV in Malawi, and reflections on further research. The conclusion in chapter 7 is a summary of the most important findings from this study.

## **1.5 Definition of IPV**

What is intimate partner violence? In line with the growing acknowledgment on family violence, the definitions of IPV have evolved. In the past, scholars used the term 'marital abuse' or 'spousal abuse' as a reference to threats, physical/verbal abuse by a

partner/husband. Sexual abuse was constituted as a separate dimension, and first in 1988 physical abuse was classified as abuse (Barnett et.al 2005). In the 1990 violence by a partner was often referred to as “wife- beating” or “domestic violence” (Heise et.al. 1999). The problem with definition of violence by intimate partners is that it has different meanings in different societies. For example, “domestic violence” is usually understood as abuse of a woman by a male intimate partner, but in other regions, including Latin-America, it refers to any violence in the home, also children and elderly (Barnett et.al 2005). There are different opinions among researchers about the definitions, which makes it difficult to create reliable comparable data (Stefansen 2001, Barnett et.al 2005).

Today the preferred term of interpersonal violence is *intimate partner violence*, or *IPV* (Barnett et.al 2005: 253). WHO (Krug et.al. 2002: 89) defines IPV as: “(...) any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, physiological or sexual harm to those in the relationship”. There is a growing agreement about the nature of intimate partner violence. IPV is not understood as an isolated act or physical aggression, but rather a pattern of abusive behaviour and control:

Intimate partner abuse can take a variety of forms including physical assault such as hits, slaps, kicks, and beatings; psychological abuse, such as constant belittling, intimidation, and humiliation; and coercive sex. It frequently includes controlling behaviours such as isolating a woman from family and friends, monitoring her movements, and restricting her access to resources (Heise et.al. 1999:5).

This definition recognizes that physical violence is often accompanied by psychological and sexual abuse. There are agreements from several scholars that the three violence types often co-occur and should be understood as interactive elements (Krug et.al 2002). There are many advantages of using this term. It can refer to current and formal marital partners, formal and current cohabiters or same-sex partners (Barnett et.al. 2005). It is however important to define the dimension of the violence that is investigated. The question of how violence is defined is important because the definition will, to a great extent, decide the surveys’ subject (Stefansen 2001). According to Stefansen (2001), “partner violence” is understood as gender neutral because it also recognizes women as possible perpetrators of violence. Women can also be violent in relationship, and violence is also found in same-sex partnership (Krug et al. 2002). But in Malawi 77% of the perpetrators of violence is a male partner/husband. To capture a realistic picture of IPV in Malawi this study will concentrate on IPV as: physical, emotional and sexual violence abuse against a woman by a husband during the last 12 months preceding

the survey. When referring to other researchers/studies other violence terms may be used, there are still no universally agreed terminology for referring to violence against women by a partner (Heise and Ellsberg 2005, and Saur et al. 2003).



## **2. Context and previous research**

“Understanding the causes of intimate partner violence is substantially more difficult than studying a disease. For example, diseases usually have a biological basis and occur within a social context, but intimate partner violence is entirely a product of its social context” (Jewkes 2001: 1423). When partner violence is examined, it is very important to take the context of violence seriously. To understand the context means what happened, when it happened, where and between whom. “Where” is an important factor because the understandings of violence can have different meanings in different societies (Griffiths and Hanmer 2005). To enhance the understanding of intimate partner violence in Malawi, a short introduction to the geographic, social, demographic, historical and political background will be presented.

In this chapter I will also give a description of Malawi’s gender order and how the genders are positioned to each other. What is the norm, how is the power shared between genders, and how vulnerable are women in the private and public sphere? Relevant previous research and preventive programs against violence in Malawi will be presented throughout this section.

### **2.1 Country profile**

The Republic of Malawi is situated in east Central Africa, and it is bordered by Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. The country is divided into three provinces, Northern, Central and Southern. The national and administrative capital Lilongwe is located in the Central Malawi. The economy is predominately agricultural with about 85% of the population living in rural areas (United Nations Malawi 2008). Malawi’s population has remained young, it is estimated at 14, 3 million people with a median age of 16, 8 (World Fact book 2009).

From 1891 to 1964 Malawi was under British protectorate, known by the name Nyasaland. In 1953 the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was created, the federation was composed of three countries, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), and Nyasaland (Zanera 2004). The federation was dissolved in 1963, and the year after, 1964, Malawi became an independent nation with Hastings Banda as a president. Dr. Banda’s regime was characterized by various methods of social control and human rights abuses which he, among other things, legitimated with family tradition. In his policy, women should be protected of the male relatives of the mother’s side (Forster 1994 and 2001). He also maintained the elite’s privileges from the colonial period, and the neglect of the rural

population has influenced the current education and medicine sector (Lwanda 2004). After three decades of one-party rule under President Banda, the country held multiparty elections in 1994. The current president, Bingu Wa Mutharika, was re-elected in may 2009 (Malawi SNDP 2009). The legal system today is still influenced by the British protectorate and it is based on English common law and customary law. Most of the population is also Christians (80%) (World Factbook 2009).

Malawi has been ranked amongst the bottom 20 countries worldwide in the Human Development Index since 1991. With approximately 65 percent of its inhabitants living below the national poverty line and 28 percent in extreme poverty, it is one of the poorest countries in Africa (UNDP 2008/2009). 32, 6 percent have a probability of not surviving to age 40. The low HDI is compounded and exacerbated by HIV and AIDS, and the core of the epidemic is linked with socioeconomics and gender issues. The UNDP gender-related development index for Malawi is one of the lowest in the world at 0.432 (UNDP 2009, UNDP 2008/2009).

## **2.2 Women in Malawi and the gender order**

Gender equality is one of the basic principles of National Policy underlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (CEDAW Malawi 2004, Makhumula 2008). Gender equality implies equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender. It involves changing how the sexes relate to each other and a redistribution of power, resources and caregiver responsibilities between men and women. It means mutual respect, and freedom from gender-based violence and harassment (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007). Section 20 of the Malawian Constitution express that discrimination of any person in any form on specific grounds is illegal:

Discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are, under any law, guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status (Malawi Government 2008: chapter IV).

In section 24 it is provided for the substantive right of women to “(...) full and equal protection of the law, and have the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their gender and marital status” (Malawi Government 2008: chapter IV).

Although the awareness of women's legal rights increased in Malawi during 2007 (U.S Department of State 2008), discrimination of women is still prevalent. Malawian women are protected by law, but remain restricted by tradition. According to Malawi's country report on Human Rights Practices for 2007, women do not have opportunities equal to those available to men. Women usually are at a disadvantage in marriage, family, and property rights, and they often have less access to legal and financial assistance (U.S Department of State 2008). The World Bank made these conclusions on gender in Malawi:

(...) women are denied the basic rights enjoyed by men at the cultural level (as manifested in beliefs and ideologies); at the institutional level (as manifested through laws and organizations); and at interpersonal level (as manifested in family and community inter-relationships) (Ngwira, Kamchedzera and Semu 2003:2)

The unequal balance of power between men and women restricts women's access to productive resources (land, income, education, credit, assets) and keeps them economically dependent on their male partners (Kathewera-Banda, Gomile-Chidyaonga, Hendriks, Kachika, Mitole and White 2005).

Gender inequality is costly in terms of economic growth and productivity due to lost earnings and inefficient allocation of labour. Empirical evidence from Asia suggests that growth rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa would have been 30-45% higher if these regions had closed gender gaps in years of schooling at the rate achieved in East Asia between 1960 and 1992 (Klasen 2002).

### **2.2.1 Women at the institutional level**

In the latest CEDAW report on Malawi it was stated that High Court judges still base their decisions on customary traditional views rather than on international human rights practice. It also shows that Malawians have more confidence in traditional justice (CEDAW Malawi 2006). In the Malawian customary law, violence against a wife is acceptable because the customary law expects the husband to exercise a disciplinary role within and outside the home. The Malawian customary law also allows polygamy, early marriages, wife inheritance, and the payment of bride price. Such limitations of the customary law regard the woman as inferior to the man and maintain gender-stereotyped attitudes and actions (CEDAW Malawi 2004). Gender inequality is also prominent in politics. Representation by women in Malawi's

parliament rose to 22 percent in 2009, which is higher than the previous government (Malawi government 2009). But it is still below the 30 percent recommended by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and women still struggle to be approved in the political field. One example could be caught from this year's election (may 2009) in Malawi where female politicians were pelted with stones by males as a tactic aimed to discourage female politicians from participate in politics (Semu-Banda 2009).

There is a significant gender gap in education. Women have significantly lower levels of literacy, education, formal and non-traditional employment opportunities, and access to resources to increase agricultural productivity (U.S Department of State 2008). This is also documented by SSB (Mathiassen et.al. 2007), the literacy levels of women are lower than those of men, only about half of the adult female population can read and write in their mother tongue or English compared to three fourth of men. Education is one of the main factors that increase women's participation in, and choice of, wage employment. There seems to be a considerable wage gap between the sexes in lower paid jobs, where no special skills are needed. According to SSB, this is a case of discrimination against women that should be investigated further. Education increases knowledge and understanding of development issues, educated Malawian parents tend to give a stronger priority to education for their children. But there is still a long way to go, one third of all girls dropped out of school because they were needed for work at home (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). UN considers the gender gap in education a serious problem and Malawi's third Millennium Development Goals is to promote gender equality and to empower women. The target was to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015 (UN Malawi 2008).

### **2.2.2 Women at the interpersonal level**

Malawian women rarely have the final say in decisions related to their own choice, health or spare time. They cannot influence decisions relevant for themselves and for their family, and women only contribute a small amount of the cash income to the household. Even in one third of the cases where women did contribute, someone else decided how the earnings should be spent, and that was not necessarily in accordance with the women's preferences (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). But due to the development of micro-credit programs encouraged by the government, women's access to bank loans has improved in recent years (SIGI 2009).

Women have a considerably heavier workload than men, averaging 40 hours per week, as compared to about 30 hours among men. They have the responsibility for housework, childcare and as providers of food for the household. The gender inequity in workload is probably higher, since tending to children, and even caring for the sick, traditionally female tasks, are not included. Due to the AIDS pandemic, women's work burden has even increased more because women care for the sick and old people. Women's domestic responsibility reduces the time available for income-generating activities and the possibility of bringing cash income into the household (Mathiassen et.al. 2007).

### **2.2.3 Women at the cultural level- beliefs and norms**

Malawi has been profoundly modernized since it embraced democracy in 1994, yet it remains a very traditional society. According to OECD (SIGI 2009), establishing real gender equality will take time as the Malawian customary law still acts as a norm in the socialization process.

Studies from different patriarchal societies have identified a common set of role expectations for women including preparing food properly, caring for children, seeking husband's or other family member's permission before going out, not arguing with husband, and meeting the sexual needs of the husband (Rani, Bonu and Diop-Sidibé 2004). These expectations are also strong in the Malawian society. In a study carried out by the social scientists Saur, Semu and Ndar (2003) on domestic violence in Malawi, the women were asked how they would describe a "real woman". Some of the characteristics were trustworthy, warm and god fearing. A good woman does household chores such as sweeping, cooking and washing dishes. They also said that you are irresponsible as a wife and as a woman if you are "Not giving him bath water when the couple has quarrelled or when the man is coming back from drinking, not doing his laundry and not preparing food for your husband or warming food when he comes home late" (Saur et.al. 2004: 35-36). Fertility is important and many women said that if they can't have children, the man leaves you for another woman who can give him children. When the men portrayed the Malawian "ideal/real man", fertility was also very important.

According to the men, a real man should be able to bear children, and not be an impotent or infertile man. They also portrayed a man who should be able to provide food, clothing, soap, salt and other necessities in the home. Material well-beings are important, such as nice clothes and providing enough food. A real man is the head of the family. If there is meat, sugar, soap and other things in the house, the wife has to seek permission from the husband to use them.

A comment from the fieldwork was used to sum up some of the baseline findings in the survey: “No matter how old they get, women’s intelligence is not at the same level as that of men- they have low thinking capacity” (Saur et.al. 2003: 27). These stories were narrated in 2003.

Cultural views about sex in Malawi are such that sex is seen as the greatest drive for marriage. It is considered very important and is more for procreation and personal gratification than for love. It is natural and, particularly for men, manhood without sex is incomplete (Kondow and Mulera 1999). Even if the wife knows that the husband has many girlfriends, women do not have a say because of cultural practices that men are the heads of families (Kathewera-Banda et.al. 2005). Many women are afraid of asking about contraception in fear of looking suspicious that he is having another woman (Saur et.al. 2003). One out of three married women (33 percent) in Malawi is using a method of family planning. Modern contraceptive (pills, injections, male condom, and female sterilisation) methods increase with the woman’s education and wealth status (Namasasu 2004).

#### **2.3.4 Polygamy**

Polygamy is a practice which allows men to marry more than one wife (Kondow and Mulera 1999: iv), and it is practiced in a number of communities in Malawi. The practice is believed to curb infidelity because when the man has more than one wife, he will not go out with other women (Saur et.al. 2003). This is a problem regarding HIV/AIDS because neither the man nor the woman is tested for HIV before a marriage. This is putting both of them at risk and, in case of the man, risking transmission of HIV to the wife/wives he is already married to.

Polygamy is mainly practiced in the Northern and Southern regions of Malawi (Kondow and Mulera 1999). According to MDHS 2004 (Zanera and Miteka 2004), women in a polygamous union have higher HIV prevalence (16 percent) than those who are in a monogamous union in Malawi (12 percent). According to Okin’s study (1989) about polygamy in Africa, the women affected by polygamy regarded it as an inescapable and barely tolerable institution.

Overcrowded apartments and the lack of each wife's private space lead to immense hostility, resentment, even violence both among the wives and against each other's children. The same results are shown in Saur’s et.al. (2003) study. Co-wives in a polygamous marriage do not like each other especially if the man had not informed the first wife about marrying a co-wife. Some men simply marry new wives and bring them home without consulting or even informing their wives beforehand (Saur et al 2004, CEDAW 2004). In a study on IPV in

Malawi, more than half (57%) thought that traditional beliefs, in particular polygamy, promoted gender violence. 3546 Malawian females were interviewed. This indicates that polygamy may increase the likelihood of IPV (Pelser, Gondwe, Mayamba, Phiri and Burton 2005).

### **2.2.5 Harmful cultural practices**

Malawi still maintains some harmful traditional practices for women. According to United Nations (CEDAW Malawi 2004), culture remains a strong source of resistance and harmful traditional practices that impact negatively on women. As many as one woman in five in Malawi has been subjected to female genital mutilation. To date, the government has taken no action against the practice (SIGI 2009).

Many cultural practices still exist in Malawi. "*Kuchotsa fumbi*" (removing dust) initiation of sexual intercourse after initiation. *Gwamula*, (society accepted rape) is a rite of passage for young boys who are growing into men. It is also reported incest by a father who has sexual intercourse with his daughter before determining "*lobola*" or bride price. Wife inheritance or "*Chokolo*" is a practice where a deceased man's relatives inherit the widow as his wife. This has decreased the last years. "*Fisi*" (hyena) is when a man "secretly" has sexual intercourse with the women during initiation or when a husband fails to procreate without consent. The man is covered with a mask as a hyena and "visits" her at night. "*Kusunga mwamuna*" could occur when a wife is away from home. Then, a woman is selected (usually the wife's younger sister) to live with the husband and take care of him, in order to prevent him from going to other women. "*Kuhaha*" is engagements of little girls from poor parents. "*Kutenga mwana*" is performed to cleanse a new born through a sexual act between the parents whilst holding the baby is a harmful practice if the biological father is dead or away as another man may perform the ritual on behalf of the dead or absent father. Some husband's failure to support his family forces some women to have sexual intercourse with other men (CEDAW Malawi 2004). "There seem to be a belief that men have the right to sexual intercourse regardless of their status and that sex is a tool for addressing many ills in a particular society" (CEDAW Malawi 2004: 59). Many of the cultural practices expose women to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. It is however important to notice that not everyone follow these cultural practices, it is difficult to achieve information on the frequency of these practices. More research should be examined on these issues as they expose women to HIV, as more women than men have HIV/AIDS (Mathiassen et.al. 2007).

## **Summing up**

Women are more vulnerable than men at all societal levels in Malawi. They are subordinated men both in private and public spheres. They are dependent on men and live their everyday life with less rights, dependency, money and power than men. Women are learned to be dominated by men, and are not used to have equal power or the final say of their own life.

## **2.3 Malawi's respond to gender-based violence**

As a result of the international focus on women's rights and gender equality, the government and its stakeholders has started to implement various initiatives against gender-based violence (Chawana 2004). With the recognition of violence against women as an obstacle to achieve development, Malawi has ratified a number of international and regional conventions. In 1988 Malawi submitted the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Malawi 2004). CEDAW is a key instrument with regard to women's rights. It establishes the right of women to make free and independent choices without discrimination, including questions relating to entering into marriage and its dissolution, education, health, and political and economic participation (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007:14). In 1991 Malawi committed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and in 1993 they submitted the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights. In 1997 to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) whose addendum is on the "Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children" (CEDAW Malawi 2004).

In 1995 Malawi was one of the 115 nations that adopted the Beijing Declaration. As a follow-up to the declaration, each country developed a National Platform of Action (NPFA). This platform explicitly recognizes that violence against women creates an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development, and peace at the national level and violates the human rights of women at the individual level. It further recognizes that the lack of data and statistics on violence against women makes progression slowly and difficult (United Nations 1995). The Malawian Platform identified the eradication of violence against women as one of four priority areas requiring an urgent response. The declaration committed the Head of State/Government to place gender firmly on their development agenda. This should ensure equality among women and men in all society-levels, this included preventing and dealing with the increasing levels of violence (Malawi Government 2002). Two years later, in 1997, Malawi committed the Bill of Rights that emphasises Section 24 in the 1994



Constitution of Malawi. It guarantees equality between women and men as well as women's right to property. It also invalidates any law that discriminates against women, in particular, practices such as sexual abuse, harassment and violence (Chakwana 2004).

The policy interpretations of the commitments described above have been translated into the National Gender Policy (NGP), the MPRSP, and the National Strategy to Combat Gender Based Violence. Many national efforts to combat gender based violence has taken form the last years; the "Network Against Gender-Based Violence" (NAGBV) with men as active partners, Police Victim Support Units (VSU) that have been created in all districts, the Ministry of Gender and the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) (Malawi Government 2000). The MHRRC has taken part in various projects to improve the social and legal situation of women so they are able to exercise their rights, in 2003 they started the project "Combating gender-based violence" (Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre 2002). Awareness campaigns and interventions have been designed and implemented over the past five years (Pelser et.al. 2005).

Despite the many significant and important achievements made by the Government in formulating policies and programmes, gender inequalities continue to exist. These inequalities are especially visible in the high levels of physical and psychological violence directed at women because they are *women*. The established Police Victim Support Units has helped very little so far, the officers' capacity to assist the units and document cases was limited in 2007. Even though the law provides a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for domestic violence, the police did not investigate much on domestic violence in 2007 (U.S Department of State 2008). "The conducive legal framework for realising women's rights and addressing gender-based disparities are in place but progress is however slow because of the existing socialisation processes that strengthen male dominance" (CEDAW Malawi 2004:12). But in the last country report on Malawian Human Rights Practices (U.S Department of State 2008), it is noted that the awareness of women's legal rights has increased. Women continue to suffer in silence and do not have opportunities equal to those available to men.

#### **2.4 Previous research on violence and gender in Malawi**

What is already known about the gender order and its relation to intimate partner violence? In Malawi IPV, especially wife-battering, has been treated as a private issue until recently, so

there is a limited amount of research carried out in this field (Chakwana 2004, Rani et.al. 2004). The knowledge of intimate partner violence in sub-Saharan Africa is very limited because most previous research is based on small area surveys (Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Gray and McIntryre 2004). Much of the literature has also been undertaken by social activist who wanted to document the existence of the problem, rather than academic (Bowman 2003). Nonetheless, there exist studies between violence against women from a male intimate partner and women's social status.

In 2003 the Social Scientists Saur, Semu and Ndar studied gender-based violence in three district of Malawi. The main purpose was to understand the social and legal status of women with the emphasis on the impact of gender based violence in particular. About 1220 people were consulted in the data collection, and they applied qualitative methods such as group-discussions and interviews of women, men and children. One of the main findings was how violence against women is openly admitted and considered as a "normal" behaviour. A striking contrast to mostly western/northern countries, is that people talked openly about it and consider gender based violence a norm. Physical violence was seen as an almost unavoidable tool for solving conflicts, but that doesn't mean people don't want changes. Although there are wishes for it, there are few cultural patterns available on how physical violence during conflict can be avoided.

Women, men and children have internalized the fact that 'educational beating' is a necessary measure to become a responsible adult, or a wife for that matter. Herein lays the challenge for finding and implementing strategies and tactics to combat Nkhanza in Malawi (Saur et.al. 2003: 74).

The study also shows the problems of translating Western violence theories to Malawian violence concepts, and how this can cause cultural misunderstandings. Nkhanza means violence in Malawi, and the study reveals that nkanza is not only limited to sexual, psychological and physical violence. Also practices related to food and traditions are viewed as violence. However, almost every interviewed said that an improved economy would ease violence, and according the writers, poverty and hunger can lead to increased Nkhanza. The report concludes that economic empowerment can reduce Nkanza, but only if it is done in a gendered way, *women* need to gain more independence economically (Saur et.al. 2003).

In 2005 Pelsler, Gonwe, Mayamba, Mhano, Phiri and Burton conducted a study of intimate partner violence in collaboration with the National Statistic Office in Malawi. 3546 households were sampled, and within these 3546 females and 2246 males were interviewed. To avoid interpretations they delimited the act of violence to “intimate partner violence”, and the study explored sexual, emotional, physical and financial abuse. Findings from the female components showed that physical violence was the most common violence in the households. 30% of the women reported this violence by a partner. This was followed by economic abuse (28%), emotionally abuse (25%), and sexually abused (18%). The majority of all types of violence occurred in within the home environment. Combining all four types of violence, 48% of Malawian women reported some form of intimate partner violence. Also in this study, the violence is understood as a norm. Just a minority in this study experienced partner violence as a crime. Men’s interpretation of the causes of gender violence varied significantly from women’s. Most commonly, men thought that misunderstanding and disagreements were the cause of violence (27%), followed by alcohol and *chamba* (18%). There exists a divergence between women and men when it comes to accepting partner violence, just one of tenth men consider slapping and hitting their partner to be acceptable. Peter et.al. (2005) suggest this could be due to the increasing attention from policy-makers and the civil society in Malawi. The men know it is bad hitting their wife, but they still abuse because it is the norm.

Rani, Bonu and Diop-Sidibé (2004) carried out a study using data from the DHS conducted between 1999 and 2001 in Benin, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, to examine the correlation of attitudes towards wife-beating and socio-demographic characteristics. Like Peter et.al. (2005), the study finds that men were less likely to justify wife-beating than women, the acceptance was lowest in Malawi, but it is still unacceptably high. Malawi was the only country where the educational level did not have any association with the acceptance of wife-beating. The dominant social and cultural norms create images of “ideal” women among both men and women that include a widespread acceptance of gender roles. The results show that the norms about wife-beating and gender roles will change with socio-economic development, but the effect will not be substantial and it will be very slow (Rani et.al. 2004).

In 2007 Statistics Norway carried out a “Gender-Assessment for Malawi”, it shows that partner violence is widespread. The authors suggest that cultural factors may be more important than access to resources when understanding partner violence in Malawi

(Mathiassen et.al. 2007). The report also verifies that people rarely seek help or talk about abuse, women mainly consulted family and friends. Less than half of the married women who experienced violence from their current partner sought help. This may be a result of little knowledge about the legal institutions that deal with women's right and the accepting of violence.

### **3. Theoretical approaches**

In this section a theoretical framework is established for studying the association between intimate partner violence and gender order. It is important to notice that the theories are presented to understand IPV in a *patriarchal* society and may not be suitable to understand IPV in a more developed society. Intimate partner violence is a product of its social context, and a theoretical framework must be formed by the context where the violence is occurring.

The chapter is divided in two parts: the first part presents the gender order as an analytic concept. I focus on a feministic perspective where power and gender are important elements to understand intimate partner violence. Other perspectives will also be outlined. A feministic perspective understands IPV from a social constructionists' point, it sees intimate partner violence as a product of the unequal power relations between the genders. Part two presents theories related to women who transgress the gender order. This issue is included to get a deeper understanding of the gender order and *how* changes in the gender power balance can influence intimate partner violence. Along with social learning theories, theories on women's empowerment and hegemonic masculinity are also included in this section. In the end of this chapter I will outline my empirical assumptions (hypothesis) based on the theoretical framework and the facts from chapter two.

#### **3.1 The gender order**

Cultural meanings of what is masculine and feminine vary from society to society and from one historical period to another. Just as the constructions of gender differ from society to society, gender violence takes many forms: ten centuries of foot-binding in China, which burning in sixteenth-century Europe, female genital mutilation in Africa, female castration by physicians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States and bride burning in contemporary India. O'Toole and Schiffman (1997) use these examples to illustrate that gender violence is not just a feature of micro-level interactions among intimates, but also embedded at the levels of community and nation-state. To understand intimate partner violence in a patriarchal society, the concept of gender order could be useful.

The gender order defines the way society is organized around the roles, responsibilities, activities and contributions of women and men. It structures the power relations between genders and tells us what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and

men do in different contexts (Hannan 2006). As Jamlert (2003: 9) points out, “(...) what we think is our own free choices are very often shaped of the gender power order we live in”. The lenses we use to understand our lives and lives of thus around are often structured by the gender order. This is in line with a social constructivist perspective that sees gender as shaped through practice and interaction in a certain context (Solbrække and Aarseth 2006:68). From a social constructivism point, social phenomena are social constructed, and this perspective also helps to explain the cross cultural variations in definition of violence. What is condemned as abuse in one culture is not always condemned in another (Barnett et.al. 2005). Much of the literature on intimate partner violence is constructed in the Western world which may cause misunderstandings when it is adapted to an African concept (Arnfred 2004). For that reason, it is very important to take the Malawian context into account in this study, both when establishing theoretical frameworks and interpreting results.

The concept of “gender order” is associated with the work of sociologist Connell. Following Matthews, Connell (1987: 98, 99) sees the gender order as “(...) a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of masculinity and femininity”. He recognizes the gender order as the structural inventory of an entire society. The major elements of any gender order are the structure of power, the division of labor and the structure of cathexis (Connell 1987). The structure of power refers to social relations such as authority, violence and ideology in the institutions, state and domestic life. The division of labor refers to the divisions in the household and labor market between the sexes, while cathexis refers to the sexual relationship such as marriage. The particular forms of gender inequality operate between these three elements. The interrelationship between them, contribute to the organization of the “gender order”, namely, the form of gender relations found in a particular society (Connell 1987: 89, 99). Connell (1987) further recognizes that all types of masculinity and femininities are arranged around one important premise, and that is *male dominance over women*.

The concept of gender order has been influential in sociology, but it is only recently used in relation to men’s violence against women. Today, UN recommends all analysis on gender relations to include a gender order perspective because it is essential to understand how the power relations between men and women construct violence (Jalmert 2003).

### 3.1.1 Gender order- a producer of history

It is important to recognize that the gender order is a product of its history (Connell 1995). The African feminist Banda (2005) criticizes western feminists for not recognizing the negative impact colonialism had on women when people are studying a gender problem or a condition in Africa. A central fact that is often under analyzed is that women were first slaves in patriarchal societies (Lerner 1986 in O'Toole and Schiffman 1997). In the African history, clans killed adult males and enslaved women and their children. Rape and forms of violence against women were used to control and dominate women in their new communities. The colonial era also constructed new gender ideologies where women turned into properties to white men, and women's status decreased. Both violence against women and the social structure that developed around such practices serve to explain key aspects of women's independency and the patriarchy today (O'Toole and Schiffman 1997). To understand more of the dimensions behind the existing gender order in a society, the history is for that reason very important.

It is not only important to see the gender order as a product of history, but also as a *producer* of history (Connell 1995). The gender power order can reproduce itself (Jalmert 2003). For example, in a patriarchal society the gender order will remain the same as long as the patriarchal ideology is influential in the society. But it is important to notice that the gender order is not unchangeable- it changes in line with changes in the social, political, cultural and economic system we live in (Hannan 2006).

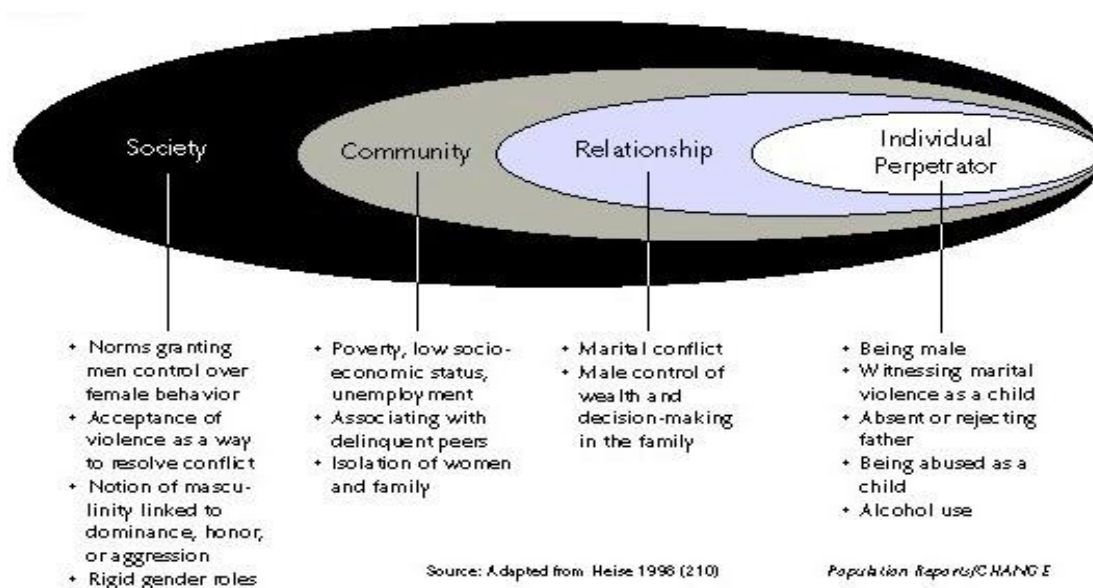
### 3.2 Ecological framework

The gender order is structured on a societal level (Connell 1987). In WHO's report "Violence by intimate partners" (Krug et.al. 2002) the recognition of structural factors is emphasised as important to understand intimate partner violence. Structural inequalities between men and women, gender roles and notions of manhood linked to dominance all serve to increase the risk factors of partner violence. But to capture the whole picture of intimate partner violence, the societal factors needs to be understood in interplay with factors from the community, relationship and the individual level. Many researchers have speculated about the need for multidimensional theories which attempt to integrate several theories (Barnett et.al. 2005).

The heart of contemporary ecological theory is that human behaviour should be analyzed within four levels due to its complex interplay of factors: **The individual level** identifies the

biological and personal history that each individual brings to his or hers behaviour in relationships. Factors such as being abused as a child or witnessing marital violence in the home, having an absent or rejecting father, and frequent use of alcohol influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. **The level of the family and relationship** represent the immediate context in which abuses take place, it is frequently in the family or in intimate relationships. Cross- cultural studies have cited male control of wealth and decision-making within the family and marital conflict as strong predictors of abuse (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). For intimate partner violence, the most consistent marker at this level of the model is marital conflict or discord in the relationship (Krug et.al. 2002). **The community level** represents the institutions and social structures in which relationships are embedded, such as neighbourhoods, workplace, social networks and peer groups. At the community level women are often isolated with reduced mobility and lack of social support. Male peer groups condone and legitimize men’s violence (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). **The societal level** is the economic and social environment, including cultural norms. Studies around the world have found that violence against women is most common where gender roles are rigidly defined and enforced and where the concept of masculinity is linked to toughness, male honour, or dominance. Other cultural norms associated with abuse include tolerance of physical punishment of women and children, acceptance of violence as a means to settle interpersonal disputes, and the perception that men have “ownership” of women (Ellsberg and Heise 2005).

Figure 3.1 The ecological model





The ecological model is an attempt to combine the different levels to better explain why some societies and some women experience more violence than others (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). In a cross sectional study on IPV and risk factors in South Africa the ecological framework was used. The researchers found it difficult to provide support for all the levels in the model. The problem with an ecological framework is to conceptualize the different levels. In particular defining and distinguishing the differences between ‘community’ and ‘society’. If the different levels are used casually, one will at some point understand that the factors influencing intimate partner violence are found to operate at several levels, or all, of them. For example, poverty is said to be a community level factor. But poverty will also impact on an individual level through its impact on male identity, and at a relationship level through its impact on conflict over resources, and at a ‘community’ level through its impact on shared ideas of successful manhood (Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kakana 2002)

It is reasonable to argue that partner violence in Malawi is a complex problem, it is impossible to single out one theory to explain the problem. But an ecological framework is too wide for my purposes of the study. It could rather be used as an overall understanding of how partner violence occurs when various levels interplay. In the statistical analysis I will use variables from all levels, but I will not distinguish them to strict “levels”. My main focus is the societal level (gender order) and how it is related to intimate partner violence. I will further look at the sociological perspectives on partner violence.

### **3.3 Perspectives on intimate partner violence**

Since the 1970s, research on violence against women has developed within a variety of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, criminal justice, public health and social work. Each one has brought their own perspective to understand and eliminate the problem (Barnett et.al. 2005, Jasinski 2001). The sociologist Mary White Stewart (2002: 23) once said that “Perspectives are lenses through which we bring into focus the obscured intricacies of a complex world”. The sociological perspective usually uses structural theories to account for the rates and pattern of violence. A typical topic of a study by sociologists is the examination of the relationship between marital power and violence among couples (Barnett et.al. 2005). But within the sociological field, like in the other disciplines, there are theoretical conflicts about the approaches, causes and explanations of partner violence. There are two major

streams of sociological work on IPV, the “feminist perspective” and the “family violence perspective” (Johnson 1995).

### **3.3.1 Feminist theory- gender and power as analytic focus**

Feminist theories on intimate partner violence should be understood as a theoretical platform which cannot be singled out with one or two theories (Pape and Stefansen 2006). There is a range of different feministic perspectives on partner violence, but there is a broad consensus that it is shaped by unequal power relations between the genders (Yllö 1998). I will briefly give an account of how gender and power could be understood together.

In the literature, *gender* refers to a complex base of norms, values and behaviours a particular culture assigns to one biological sex. *Sex* is the anatomical differences which separate men from women (Segal 2003, Griffith and Giddens 2006). The feministic perspective understands gender from a social constructionist perspective where gender is socially constructed. A social constructionist position sees gender as shaped through practice and interaction in a certain context (Nyheim et.al. 2006). One of the sociology’s “fathers”, Max Weber, defined power as, “The chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action” (Hamilton 1991:387). Most forms of power are not only based on force, it is also legitimated by some form of authority. In a society where male domination is the norm it has to be legitimated by authority (Hamilton 1991). I will use a definition presented by feminist Mason to understand power in relation with gender. Mason sees power as “(...) a form of domination that subjugates women by blocking them from doing certain things or thinking in certain ways; women are controlled through demands for social conformity and obedience” (Mason 2002: 123).

According to feminist theory, violence against women cannot be understood unless gender and power are taken into account (Yllö 1998). The feminists Dobash and Dobash (1992) suggest that focusing on the specific individual manifestations of men’s violence to women as a social problem places individuals in a wider social context. This makes it possible to consider the nature of violence as a dynamic process affecting the lives of men as well as women. This approach includes analysis of factors such as the dynamics of gender relations within a society, the impact of cultural beliefs, values on violent behavior, and men’s power relations to women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992)

### 3.3.2 Intimate partner violence- rooted in patriarchy?

For most feminist scholars, violence against women is rooted in patriarchy. Feminists suggest that the patriarchy, the system of male control over women, is a human invention, rather than an outcome of biological characteristics (Yllö 1998). Patriarchy's chief institution is the family where men hold the power to determine the privileges, statuses, and roles of women and children. "Such a structure is buttressed by traditional gender-role ideology and is further institutionalized and reproduced in gendered power relationships throughout the society, contributing to the perpetuation of gender inequality" Chow and Berheide (1994:15). In feminist literature partner violence is primarily a problem of men using violence to maintain control over "their women", a control that is supported by a patriarchal culture (Johnson and Ferraro 2000: 948).

The Malawian *theologian* Isabel Apawo Phiri (2007: 12) defines the patriarchy as "(...) a father-rule structure where all power and authority rests in the hands of the male head of the family". She argues that the majority of the African societies and African churches are structures on the basis of patriarchal patterns which result in hierarchical institutions dominated by men (Phiri 2007). But patriarchy as an analytic tool has been criticized for failing to explain changes and diversity in gender inequality. Radical feminists have also been criticized for claiming that patriarchy is a universal phenomenon, which ignores the important influence race, ethnicity, history and culture may have on women's subordination (Giddens and Griffiths 2006). The sociologist Sylvia Walby (1990) has presented a more flexible way of understanding patriarchy by including more dimensions into the concept. She defines patriarchy as "(...) a form of social organization in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (1990: 20). In other words, a system that allows men to hold greater power and privilege than women on a social hierarchy. For Walby (1990), the patriarchy takes different forms in different cultures and times. She sees the patriarchy as a structural phenomenon rather than one perpetuated by the individual exploitative man. Walby discusses what she calls the six "structures":

1. *Paid work*. Women are likely to be paid less.
2. *The household*. Women are likely to do the housework and raise the children.
3. *The state*. Women are much less likely to have access to formal power.
4. *Violence*. Women are much more likely to be abused.

5. *Sexuality*. Women's sexuality is more likely to be treated negatively.

6. *Culture*. Women are more misrepresented in media and public culture.

These structures impact upon one another but are also relatively autonomous. Their interrelationships constitute the different "forms" of patriarchy present in a particular society. The degree of patriarchal beliefs could also be examined based on question such as: whether the man has the right to decide about his wife's/partner's employment and her social life, whether it is important for him to show that he is the head of the household, and whether he has the right to have sex with her whenever he wants (Pallitto and O'Campo 2004).

Feminist scholars such as Dobash and Dobash (1988: 57), claim that due to patriarchal norms, the marriage gives the man unrestricted control over their wife, and violence becomes an acceptable means of establishing control. The patriarchy subordinate women and violence becomes then a method to maintain social control and male power over women (Jasinski 2001). Translated to a Malawian context, social factors in the society leads women into subordinate positions to men, and male violence can be understood as an expression of maintaining control.

In a patriarchal society, men's violence against women becomes invisible and normalised. The man's violence becomes the norm, and therefore not identified as a problem (Lundgren 2004). A social condition or norm needs to be recognized as a social problem before people start to fight against it. One example of this could be caught from a Norwegian context. In the 1970s violence in the home was treated as a private issue with no public attention. The police understood this as "domestic noise". But due to women's movement and organizations during the 1970s, the problem gained attention from the society and the politics (Morken and Selle 1995). By shedding light on the problem, domestic noise changed from being an invisible condition to a social problem with women as victims on the political agenda.

### **3.3.3 'Family violence' perspective**

Sociologists from the 'family violence perspective' have criticized the feminist perspective for being too narrow and for their exclusive focus on gender and power (Jasinski 2001). The family violence perspective focuses more on socio economic factors on the individual level to explain violence. IPV occur more frequently among members of the lower socioeconomic classes. Most evidences indicate that poorer individuals suffer from more IPV than wealthier

people do (Barnett et.al. 2005). Researchers within this perspective argue that patriarchy is just one variable in a complex constellation of causes, they criticise the feminists for ignoring factors such as income, unemployment and age (Anderson 1997). The feministic approach has also met critics from researchers claiming that societal reasons cannot explain the individual variations between men. The core of the critics is “why do not *all* men become abusive if societal reasons explain the individual partner violence” (Pape and Stefansen 2006)? Dutton (1994) represent the family violence perspective, he says that macro-structural factors such as patriarchy, cannot alone predict individual thoughts or actions. He argues that there is no existing empirical evidence supporting a relationship between structural inequality, norms and violence against women.

While the feminists have met critics for focusing exclusively on patriarchy and gender, the family violence perspectives has met critics for ignoring the gender dimension and for using a methodology that focus too much on physical violence. The reason the two sociological traditions are arguing about the “right” perspective on couple violence is because they are analyzing two distinct forms of violence (Johnson 1995). According to Johnson (1995), the family violence perspective analyzes “common couple violence”, which is a less aggressive and gendered violence. This violence often occurs from conflicts or disagreements and shows that both men and women could be violent. The feminist perspective studies “patriarchal terrorism”, which is a “product of patriarchal traditions of men’s right to control ‘their’ woman, a form of terroristic control of wives by their husband.” Such violence occurs often and escalates in seriousness over time, and also includes economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics. He argues that this type of violence is a product of patriarchal traditions of men’s right to control “their” women (Johnson 1995, Johnson and Ferraro 2000).

### **3.3.4 Integration of the two perspectives?**

Feminist theories and explanations are frequent in the literature on domestic violence in Africa. As Bowman (2003) points out, it is difficult to avoid a feminist perspective for the reason that almost every African society has been or are patriarchal. Women have been or are subordinated the men, and the institutionalization of this inequality remains common in most African countries due to the customary law (Bowman 2003). In Malawi unequal power between genders are still maintained by the patriarchy, and women experience partner violence across all social levels (Chakwana 2004). It is difficult to understand IPV in Malawi

without taking gender and power into account. By recognizing intimate partner violence as a product of its social context, a feministic approach will be used when understanding partner violence in this study. The violence examined in this study is also closer to what Johnson calls “patriarchal terrorism” than “common couple violence”.

But the feministic perspective is not yet a fully developed framework since it still cannot explain why not *all* men become violent. To explain why not all men abuse their partners in these societies, the sociologist Andersson (1997) states that elements from the family violence perspective, such as socio-economic factors should be integrated. It is important to also realize that violence occurs when different factors interplay, and I will include aspects from the family violence by using some socio economic factors in the statistical analysis. My main perspective will remain feministic, but due to the complexity of IPV, elements from other perspectives should be taken into account.

### **3.4 Transgressing the gender order**

Women who transgress gender norms and do not live up to cultural stereotypes of good womanhood are among the most important variables for risk of intimate partner violence (Jewkes 2002). A woman transgress the gender order when she: takes decisions that are normally prescribed the husband (economy), gains more power through education/income (empowerment), or refuses to follow the norms/roles that are expected of her (Jewkes et.al. 2002, Heise 1998). Traditional understandings of masculinity and femininity are that men learn masculine roles of authority, dominance, and control through socialization, while women learn dependence, nurturing, and passivity (Stewart 2002). According to Stewart (2002), this mutual learning result in relationships where men think they should dominate and control their female partner to maintain the learned masculine role. Women, on the other hand, have learned to take responsibility for the relationship, being cooperative and caring, roles that make them vulnerable to violence from men and to remain in violent relationships. When a woman transgresses gender roles/ norms, the man’s use of violence is legitimized because he has learned to perform social control over “his woman” (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher and Hoffman 2006).

Studies from different patriarchal societies have identified a common set of role expectations for women such as preparing food properly, caring for children, seeking husband's or other

family member's permission before going out, not arguing with husband, and meeting the sexual needs of the husband etc. (Krug et.al. 2002). When women challenge these gender norms, the power balance between husband and wife may change, which could result in violence from the male intimate partner. Various studies have found that women who transgress gender norms are associated with more physical abuse (Go, Johnson, Bentley, Sivaram, Srikrishnan, Celentano and Solomon 2003, Jewkes et.al.2002).

This theory suggests that violence against women is not just an expression of male dominance over women, but also rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unachievable. An inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood can “trigger” a crisis of male identity (Jewkes 2002: 1424). A successful manhood is what Connell (1987) calls hegemonic masculinity, the masculinity that claims to have the highest “status” in the society. Violence against women could be a means of resolving this male-crisis because it is a manner of gaining power (Jewkes 2002). Researchers (Ellsberg and Heise 2005, Barnett et.al. 2005, Krug et.al. 2002) imply that violence also result from women’s attempts to control some of the decisions that are not normatively perceived to be in the realm of women’s control, such as economic decisions.

### **3.4.1 Recourse theory and power imbalance**

The basic premise of resource theory is that the powerful will dominate the less powerful (Johnson 1995). Resource theories see resource as the idea of power. Power is here defined as (...) the ability of one individual to influence the other (Jasinki 2001: 12). The person who brings in most of the resources is in a position of more power. The use of violence is further influenced by societal norms maintaining that violence is a justified method of achieve power (Jasinki 2001).

Men have traditionally held more power than women because of their higher status, grater income and higher/more employment. The resource theory is linked to Goode’s work from 1971. He argued that men who have limited resources may establish dominance through the use of threats or force. In a population based study from United States, it was found that couples experienced more violence and verbal aggression when the husband thinks that he has less power than his wife (Sagrestano, Heavey and Christensen 1999). According to Goode (1971), men who lack of resources that allow them to dominate their partner, such as economy or employment, could use violence to regain the gender status inconsistency. The

resource theory is often acknowledged to a family violence perspective where men's lack of socioeconomic factors results in violence. But as Brownridge and Halli (2001) point out, if violence occurs as a result of a man having fewer resources, then his partner is indicative of an underlying dimension of patriarchy. The association between resources and violence could then be understood through a patriarchal ideology. From this perspective it is the power differences between partners that matters, rather than individual socioeconomic reasons (Anderson 1997). It is the gender order that structures the expected power balance between men and women, and in a patriarchy the man will bring more resources into the family than the women. If the power balance gets challenged, the resource imbalance could be in favour of the woman and the man may use violence to gain control and power. Goode (1971) claimed that the resource theory would outdate as women gain more social power. But in patriarchal societies where male domination is central, the resource theory may still be influential, especially in relation to women's empowerment.

### **Women's empowerment**

Women's empowerment refers to the general process where women gain knowledge about the structures that oppress them, and seek to alter the power imbalances in society and in the family. Bookman and Morgen (1988: 4) define empowerment as the "process aimed at consolidating, maintaining, or changing the nature and distribution of power in a particular cultural context that can range from 'acts of individual resistance to mass political mobilizations'". Women usually gain empowerment through education, income, work, social groups etc. Theoretically, women's empowerment can influence IPV in two directions. Women with high education/ contribute financially may have a higher status in their household, and be less vulnerable to abuse. Studies usually show that high level of female empowerment is a protective factor against IPV because it gives women more resources to deal with violence and/or leave a violent relationship. On the other hand this can also challenge the established power balance between men and women, and so be associated with an increased risk of IPV. Female empowerment may threaten the partner's male identity, which could result in violence. But the association between women's empowerment and violence is not clear-cut (Jewkes 2002). Most countries in the cross-cultural study on domestic violence based on DHS data (Kishor and Johnson 2004) showed that higher levels of education, more independency and women's income was associated with domestic violence. Given the important benefits of women's empowerment, it is important to understand the relationship between empowerment and women's risk of IPV.



### **3.4.2 Hegemonic masculinity**

In line with the concept of gender order, Connell (1995) has developed the theory of “hegemonic masculinity” to refer to the dominant forms of masculinities which claim to have the highest status and influence in a society. The concept of hegemony derives from Antonio Gramsci’s analysis of class relations. It refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains leading positions in social life (Connell 1995). According to Connell there is a leading discourse about what being a ‘successful’ man implies, and that all other masculinities that do not fit into this hegemony, are inferior. There exist many different masculinities in a society, but “At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted” (Connell 2005:77).

According to O’Toole and Schiffman (1997), hegemonic masculinity could work as a ground for gender violence. It is reproduced through the early socialization of boys and girls in family, school, mass media, and in male-dominated institutions such as the military, sport teams, politics and science. Men who do not meet the standards set by hegemonic masculinities are often viewed as powerless. Across societies and cultures, there are central aspects of masculinity, such as the importance of physical strength, the centrality of heterosexuality and control over women (Connell 1995). Male superiority is often manifested through distinct gender roles, a low social value and status for women, and ideas of manhood linked to the control over women and male sexual entitlement (Abrahams et.al. 2006).

According to Connell (1995), the hegemonic masculinity structures dominance and subordinated relations across and between the sexes and legitimates the broad structure of power known as patriarchy. But the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been criticized for being too categorizing and rigid and not taking into consideration resistance and change (Lorentzen 2005). The concept may not leave room for those who want changes. On the other hand, there are different ways of understanding Connell’s theories, and the concept is useful in relation to women who challenge the gender order. Incapability to leave up to “hegemonic masculinity” may be one of many factors that interplay together to explain IPV in Malawi.

### **3.5 The social reproduction of intimate partner violence**

Gender order is what structure men and women into power relations, and it is also important to recognize how the gender order affects each person’s self-identity. Femininity and

masculinity are instilled in us from birth through socialization (Bourdieu 1990). The cultural norms and values in a certain society define the ideal principles of what is desirable and what is morally correct for men and women (Andersen and Taylor 2006)

Traditional gender roles have a great effect on how children experience and deal with violence. Various sociological studies have documented how social interaction shape the ways people act and think about themselves in relation to others in differentially ranked groups (Andersen and Taylor 2006). Women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence has been shown to be greatest in societies where the use of violence is a socially accepted norm (Jewkes 2002). When socialization is applied to violence against women it is often termed the “intergenerational transmission of violence” (Jasinski 2001: 7). The theory suggests that violence is learned in the context of the family, the primary agent of socialization, and that is perpetuating itself from one generation to the next (Barrett et.al. 2005). A girl who witnesses her mother being assaulted by her father learns about victimization and the extent to which men can utilize violence and fear to exert power and control over family members (Jewkes 2002). Experiences of violence in the home in childhood teach children that violence is normal in certain settings. It allows the individual that violence is acceptable when other things do not work. They also learn that those who hit you are those who love you the most. In this way, men learn to use violence and women learn to tolerate it or at least tolerate aggressive behaviour (Jewkes 2002). But everyone who witness abuse does not end up in a violent relationship, so evidence for a relationship between socialization and wife abuse is not clear (Barnett et.al. 2005).

### **Summing up:**

I have focused on theories and perspectives that can help to explore the research question outlined in chapter 1. My theoretical framework has two main approaches: The first is the gender order and the second is women who transgress the gender order.

I have introduced the *gender order* as an analytic concept. Gender order is not a measurable variable, but the system that structures women and men into power relationship. The gender order structures how we look at ourselves and how the roles and norms are shaped between men and women. In relation to the gender power order I have presented a *feministic perspective* on partner violence to more specifically explain how gender and power could be understood as interactive elements in relation to IPV. A feminist perspective understands IPV

from a *social constructionists' point*, it sees intimate partner violence as a product of its social context that is often rooted in patriarchy. For example, in a *patriarchy* the gender relations are structured around male domination which gives the man right to control “his wife”, which further legitimate IPV. Intimate partner violence is a complex social problem and I have also taken into account that variables not linked to power can be associated with IPV.

The second part of my theoretical framework presents theories related to women who *transgress the gender order*. This can give useful insight into the relationship between IPV and the gender order. How varies the prevalence of IPV if women challenge the gender order? The *resource theory* suggests that men with limited resources are more likely to abuse a partner because he is incapable to meet the expected “power balance”. The theory is especially interesting in relation to women’s empowerment. Most studies show that higher level of *women’s empowerment* is a protective factor against IPV, but it could also result in more IPV if women gain more power than the gender order “allows”. I also included Connell’s theory of *hegemonic masculinity*. It differs from the resource theory by focusing more specifically on incapability to meet the ideal male identity. Social problems are structured on a societal level which will influence individuals’ behaviour and beliefs. For that reason I find it useful to include the social learning theory to understand how the gender order we live in shapes our acts.

### **3.6 Hypothesis**

There are many reasons to why a woman experience violence from her husband. I will present some risk factors related to partner violence based on the theoretical framework and the facts of Malawi from chapter two. IPV is a product of its social context, for that reason suitable hypothesis could first be outlined after both theory and context were presented. The hypotheses are relevant for the research questions I am investigating.

#### **Risk variables related to the gender order:**

##### *Justification of partner violence*

Understanding the underlying factors related to positive attitude towards partner violence can be fundamental for designing effective programs to address the issue (Uthman, Lawoko and Moradi 2009). Women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence has been shown to be

greatest in societies where the use of violence is a socially accepted norm (Jewkes 2002). In patriarchal societies the power of men over women is often internalized and the violence becomes normative (Lundgreen 2004). I expect to find an association between women's accept of wife beating and partner violence since partner violence is justified in the Malawian customary law. Also, Malawian women tend to accept wife beating to a greater extent than their male partners (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). The association between partner violence and justification can provide insights into the stage of the social, cultural and behavioural transformation in a specific society. It could also prove the societies' evolution towards a more gender egalitarian society (Rani et.al. 2004). A positive attitude toward wife beating reflects an acceptance of unequal gender roles and unequal shared power (Kishor and Johnson 2004). My presumption is to find higher risk of IPV among women who justify men's right to physically and sexually dominate them.

***Hypothesis 1a):*** *Women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence when they justify partner-abuse*

***Hypothesis 1b):*** *Women's risk of IPV increases with number of reasons she finds justifying for wife-beating*

#### *Husband's controlling behaviour*

The control of women by men is very prominent in Malawi. Such control could be recognized back in the history where women were slaves and how women became subordinated through Banda's regime. Cross-cultural research suggests that societies with stronger ideologies of male dominance have more intimate partner violence (Jewkes 2002, Jewkes, Levin and Penn-Kakana 2002). In Malawi, women are expected to look after their homes and children, and show their husbands obedience and respect. In patriarchal societies where men are "expected" to dominate, it is easier to exercise violence. As Krug et.al (2002: 95) point out, "If a man feels that his wife has failed in her role or overstepped her limits – even, for instance, by asking for household money or stressing the needs of the children – then violence may be his response". Due to the widely occurrence of male domination in the Malawian society, I suggest that women whose husbands having more than one controlling behaviour is more likely to experience IPV. I assume that the rates of violence will rise with the number of controlling behaviours.

***Hypothesis 2:*** *The violence rates will rise with the number of husbands controlling behaviours manifested*

### *Polygamy*

Polygamy is prohibited by the Malawian Penal Code, yet is estimated to affect one-fifth of married women (SIGI 2009). Dena Hassouneh-Phillips (2001) wrote in her PhD that information about intimate partner violence in polygamous families is virtually nonexistent. Malawian customary law allows polygamy. A polygamous marriage does not give women the same opportunity to live freely chosen lives as the men. Marriages between one woman and two or three men do not exist in Malawi. I assume that women whose husbands having more than one wife/partner experience more IPV because polygamy gives women less power in a relationship.

***Hypothesis 3: Women who live in polygamy has a higher risk of experiencing IPV than monogamists***

### **Risk variables related to transgression of the gender power order:**

#### *Decision-making*

The ability of women to take decisions that affect the circumstances of their own lives is an essential aspect of empowerment (Mahowe 2004). Male dominance over women can be manifested in many different ways, including control over household decision-making (Kishor and Johnson 2004). Relationship power is commonly measured by who has the final say in decision making over specific household matters (Levinson 1989, Rani et.al. 2004). In a study of the decision-making process and traditions in Malawi, it was found that Malawian couples used cultural scripts to justify their approaches to decision making. These scripts legitimate power to the husbands over the wives, and the women are learned to do the family and household work (Mbweza, Norr and McElmurry 2008). In Malawi women have little power in final says and decisions in the household (Matiassen et.al. 2007). My first hypothesis within decision-making is related to women's leisure time and own health. Decisions of visits to family or relatives say something about women's freedom and independency. Previous research shows that only about 19% take these decisions alone. Decisions concerning women's own health needs describe a woman's right to decide over her own life. Only about one out of five women in the MDHS take these decisions alone. 70% of the women have a husband that takes health decisions for her (Mahowe 2004). What happens if women do not follow the expected decision roles in the household? Global studies have found that women who take decisions that are normally mans' could "trigger" violence because the gender order

is challenged. I assume that women who take these decisions alone are at a higher risk of experiencing IPV because it “triggers/challenges” the gender order.

***Hypothesis 4: Women who take health-/leisure time decisions alone are at a higher risk of experiencing IPV because they do not obey the norms***

#### *Refusing sex*

“Refusing the man sex” is on WHO’s list of acts that may “trigger” partner violence. This variable is relevant for my study because it reveals a woman’s dignity and power to decide over her own body. The information about women’s attitudes toward sexual rights can also be useful for improving and monitoring reproductive health programs that depend on women’s willingness and ability to control their own sexual lives (Mahowe 2004). According to international human rights laws, refusing sex is a human right where women should be the final arbiters for their decision. I would suggest that women who don’t find any reasons acceptable to say no to sex, will be at a higher risk of IPV. At the same time it is difficult to suggest this due to the social meaning sex has in a marriage. A study shows that cultural views about sex in Malawi are such that sex is seen as the greatest drive for marriage, it is considered very important and is more for procreation and personal gratification than for love. It is natural and, particularly for men, manhood without sex is incomplete (Kondowe and Mulera 1999).

***Hypothesis 5: Women who find reasons to refuse sex with her husband are at a higher risk of intimate partner violence***

#### *Women’s empowerment*

Women with education or income may have a higher status in their household, and could be less vulnerable to intimate partner violence. Education can give social empowerment via social networks, self-confidence, and an ability to use information and resources (Jewkes 2002). I will measure women’s empowerment through their economic and educational level. I hypothesize that women with more empowerment have more resources to deal with the violence.

***Hypothesis 6: Women’s risk of IPV will decrease when women gain empowerment***

#### **Control variables**

*Husband’s alcohol assumptions*

One of the most important variables to influence the likelihood of IPV is a partner's habitual drunkenness (Kishor and Johnson 2004). Men with alcohol problems tend to perpetrate IPV more frequently and seriously than men without alcohol problems (Barnett et.al. 2005). Already in 1989, Peltzer said that alcohol- and cannabis-related disorders were an increasing problem in traditional and especially in transitional Africa. Men's alcohol abuse in Malawi is now a population problem. Results from SINTEF and FORUTs studies on alcohol in Malawi, shows that in Chembe, and to some extent in Lilongwe, men drink at any time of day and any day of the week. In Chembe and Lilongwe, it is not uncommon for children to start drinking alcohol and smoking chamba as early as age 13, 14 or 15, and some start even earlier; at 10, 11 or 12 years of age. Alcohol use could to some extent be understood in relation with the gender order since the prevalence of men who drinks are very high, compared to women's use. In various studies Malawian women blame the alcohol for their husband's violence and his money use (Braathen 2008a). Male domination in patriarchal societies may justify men's money consumptions on alcohol. The widespread alcohol abuse by men can also say support the unequal domestic responsibilities a man and a woman has. A man could be out drinking for days, while the woman is expected to be at home. In the cross-cultural study on domestic violence based on DHS data, the man's alcohol abuse was one of the strongest factors associated to partner violence in all six countries (Kishor and Johnson 2004). I expect to find higher risk of intimate partner violence among women with a partner who drinks often.

***Hypothesis 7: The husband's alcohol use has a significant effect on a women's likelihood to experience IPV***

#### *History of violence in the family*

History of family violence has emerged as a very powerful risk factor for partner aggression by men (Krug et.al. 2002). Violence tends to perpetuate itself from one generation to the next, (Barnett et.al. 2005). Traditional gender roles have a great effect on how children experience and deal with violence. A girl who witnesses her mother being assaulted by her father learns about victimization and the extent to which men can utilize violence and fear to exert power and control over family members. Experiences of violence in the home in childhood teach children that violence is normal in certain settings. In this way, men learn to use violence and women learn to tolerate it or at least tolerate aggressive behaviour (Jewkes 2002). In societies where domestic violence is widespread, the violence is often justified due to culture and traditional social norms (Rani et.al. 2004). Results from the DHS report on domestic violence shows that in all six countries, women who knew that their mothers were abused by their

fathers, were much more likely to have experienced partner violence than women who replied “no” to the question (Kishor and Johnson 2004). It is however important to notice that not all men who witness abuse become abusive themselves. I assume that women who witnessed their father beating their mother are at a higher risk of violence than if their father were not abusive.

***Hypothesis 8:*** *Women who has/had a father who beat their mother are at a higher risk of experiencing intimate partner violence*

**Summing up the hypothesis:**

***Hypothesis 1a):*** *Women are more likely to experience partner violence when they justify partner-abuse*

***Hypothesis 1b):*** *The likelihood of experiencing partner violence increases with number of reasons the woman finds justifying for wife-beating*

***Hypothesis 2:*** *The violence rates will rise with the number of husbands controlling behaviours manifested*

***Hypothesis 3:*** *Women who live in polygamy has a higher risk of experiencing partner violence than monogamists*

***Hypothesis 4:*** *Women, who take health-/leisure time decisions alone, are at a higher risk of experiencing partner violence because they do not obey the norms*

***Hypothesis 5:*** *Women who find reasons to refuse sex with her husband are at a higher risk of partner violence*

***Hypothesis 6:*** *Women’s risk of partner violence will decrease when women gain empowerment*

***Hypothesis 7:*** *The husband’s alcohol use has a significant effect on a women’s likelihood to experience partner violence.*

***Hypothesis 8:*** *Women who has/had a father who beat their mother are at a higher risk of experiencing partner violence*



## 4. Data and methods

In this chapter the data material will be presented. This includes how the sample was selected, what instruments were used and how ethical clearance was obtained. Certain variables have been selected to answer the research questions. In this section the variables will be revealed and explained why specific methods were used. In relation to the presentation of the dependent variables, research question 1 will be investigated in this section:

*“What is the prevalence of IPV, i.e. physical, sexual and / or emotional violence from male partners among married women in Malawi last year?”*

### 4.1 Why a quantitative approach to intimate partner violence?

Quantitative research can make generalizing conclusions and produce useful information on a population problem (Griffiths and Hanmer 2005). Quantitative method can also be used to obtain information about people’s opinions and behaviour, such as gender roles/-attitudes and justifications of partner violence. According to UN (Kishor 2005), the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are committed to meeting the highest ethical and safety standards for the collection of data on domestic violence. Quantitative information about domestic violence is already being collected in tailor-made surveys, such as in the Demographic and Health Surveys. What remains is to publish and distribute this information in a better and more visible way (Øvensen 2008).

Some critics imply that quantitative surveys do not capture information about *how* women experience violence. It is often criticized for not understanding complex processes or their causes, and for providing fairly superficial information. Qualitative results allow you to understand the phenomena from the respondents’ point of view (Ellsberg and Heise 2005, Griffiths and Hanmer 2005). But, DHS collects data across different societal sections which make it possible to discover the elements that define the context in which violence occurs and risk factors for experiencing partner violence (Kishor and Johnson 2004). The advantage with the MDHS 2004 data is that it collects information on gender-attitudes and power-sharing, which is important to answer my research question. A qualitative method could have given me more detailed information about few people. But the purposes of this study are to understand the relationship between gender order and partner violence for the broader population, not just a community. This makes the use of a large data-set more suitable.

According to Ellsberg and Heise (2005), most research objectives are best achieved through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Multiple methods can allow the researcher to view the subject from different perspectives and to look for potential inconsistencies, which can enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the findings (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). In this study the main method is quantitative, but I will also use some qualitative elements when exploring my research questions. Qualitative inspiration comes through my fieldwork in Malawi together with use of previous qualitative studies to compare the quantitative findings.

#### **4.2 Fieldwork in Malawi**

A society's gender order is shaped by structures in the society, such as ideology, culture, history, traditions, economy, politics etc. Acknowledgment to these structures is important for achieving reliable results. To expand my own perspectives on Malawi's gender order and its relation to IPV, a fieldwork in the country was conducted. The purpose of the fieldwork was to increase my acknowledgments of the context, rather than collecting data. For that reason, the fieldwork will not be retold in details. A fieldwork was recommended by many of the organizations that have been in touch with this study, such as FORUT, the Norwegian Embassy in Malawi, Statistics Norway and Norwegian church Aid. After various meetings with these organizations I established contact partners in Malawi, and structured a program for the fieldwork. The fieldwork was carried out by the author alone, and included various seminars and visits to aid organizations and other Norwegians collaborators. With help from two social anthropologists in Oslo, I also achieved contacts with normal Malawians and their families. These experiences gave me insight to the Malawian lifestyle, such as gender roles, food preparations, family relationships etc. I did not plan to do interviews, but during visits to villages in central-Malawi interviews/conversations with women occurred naturally. Even though English is the main language at school, there are few people talking English in the poor, rural areas and an interpreter had to be used. The problem of partner violence appeared to be much more widespread than the existing statistics of MDHS 2004. I was also surprised that women talked so openly about partner violence, this illustrates that the problem and human rights may have gained public acknowledgment. On the other hand, the sample and the fieldwork are too small to make reliable conclusions on this background. The fieldwork was mainly carried out in Lilongwe, but other areas and cities were visited as well. A fieldwork made it possible to achieve a closer relationship to what was studied, and to develop new points of view related to the research questions. More acknowledgment of what *had been*

*done* and *should be done* was also achieved. Malawian people are very welcoming and friendly, it is important to remember that not all men are abusers. The purpose with this study is not to present men as evil beaters, but to discover more of the reasons behind IPV with a focus on the gender order.

## **4.3 Presentation of the dataset**

### **4.3.1 Sample**

Data from the Malawian Demographic and Health Survey 2004 is applied to answer the research questions in this study. It is a nationally representative survey of 11698 women aged 15- 49 and 3767 men aged 15-54. The numbers of eligible women were 12229 with a response rate on 95.7% (11698 interviewed women). The great response rate could be explained by face to face interviews and various visits to those who did not reply in the first place. For both women and men, the main reason for non-response was failure to find the respondents despite repeated visits to the households (Chakwana 2004). I got access to the MDHS data due to my job in SSB and the collaboration I had with the international section in the bureau. Statistics Norway has collaborated with NSO the last eleven years, and has access to all the national surveys in Malawi.

The MDHS is a part of the worldwide Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Department for International Development (DfID) of the British Government, UNICEF, and UNFPA also provided funds for the survey. The ministry of health and gender contributed to the development of the questionnaires, but overall the survey was carried out by the Malawi National Statistical Office (NSO and ORC Macro 2005). The survey is carried out every 4<sup>th</sup> year, and one of the new features in 2004 was the collection of information on domestic violence (DV). The DV-module was included in recognition of gender-based violence as an economic, human right, and health issue in Malawi (Chakwana 2004). The MDHS survey used a two-stage sample based on the 1998 Census of Population and Housing and was designed to produce estimates for key indicators for ten large districts in addition to estimates for national, regional, and urban-rural domains. When data are collected with such sampling techniques, it is possible to carry out statistical analysis and to generalize the results of the study to a larger population.

### 4.3.2 Limitations

The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) provide data for a wide range of monitoring and impact evaluation indicators in the areas of population, health, and nutrition. I will only concentrate on two modules from the MDHS 2004: gender/domestic violence and women's status/empowerment module. 9701 women are participating in the domestic violence module, this count for 83% of all the interviewed women in the survey. Throughout this report respondents with missing values are excluded from each table as long as missing cases count for less than 2 percent of the relevant population. It is also important to notice that calculations performed on exceptionally small samples (26-49 cases) will be noted in the respective tables. When the sample size is less than 25 it will be excluded from the analysis.

Another important limitation is marital status. Women included in the domestic violence module are either currently married or formerly married. Those who have never been married are only asked one question. Table 1.2 shows the proportion of interviewed women in the DV-module by marital status:

*Table 4.1 Women interviewed in the domestic violence module, by marital status*

	Frequency	Percent
Never married	1647	17.0
Formerly married	1197	12.3
Currently married	6856	70.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9701</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As one can see in table 1.1, only 12.3% of the interviewed women are divorced, and 70, 7% are currently married. I will for that reason restrict the sample to only count for currently married women. The 'women's status module' also exists of many questions to those who are currently married, such as who has the final say in decisions and whether their husband has other wives. It could have been interesting to study divorced women because the highest rates of partner violence are often reported by this group. But when the effect of gender order (understood through norms, power sharing and attitudes) is examined, I would have missed too much information on the divorced women. By examining currently married women, it is possible to receive useful information on *present* violent relationship and its' connection to the *present* gender order.

## **4.4 Gaps and challenges**

### **4.4.1 Data collection on violence against women**

Collecting data on domestic violence is challenging. Even women who want to speak about their experience with domestic violence may find it difficult because of feelings of shame or fear. Women are far more likely to deny or minimize experiences of violence due to shame, fear of reprisals, feelings of self-blame, or loyalty to the abuser. It is always possible that results are biased by either over-reporting or underreporting (Ellsberg and Heise 2005, Chakwana 2004). Multipurpose surveys have the risk that violence could be significantly underreported, which can cause serious misunderstandings. “Underestimating the dimensions of violence could prevent violence intervention programs from receiving the priority they deserve in the allocation of resources” (Ellsberg and Heise 2005: 44). DHS has made many attempts to minimize underreporting of partner violence. The guidelines for the data collection are based on WHO ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence, such as:

Special training for interviewers and supervisors to sensitize them to the problem of domestic violence and the challenges involved in collecting DV-data. The domestic violence module is placed toward the end of the woman’s questionnaire to achieve an established contact between the interviewer and the respondent before the DV-module. All the interviewers had to read a statement before the module informing the respondents of the survey objectives and that they were going to be asked questions that may be personal. The interviewers were also instructed that they could only proceed when maximum privacy was ensured. If any other adult would come into the room during the domestic violence module, the interviewer had to change the subject immediately and even stop the interview, if necessary. By interviewing only one woman in each household for the domestic violence questions, possible security breaches due to other persons in the household knowing that information on domestic violence was given is minimized (Kishor 2005).

Fieldwork for the 2004 MDHS was carried out by 22 mobile interviewing teams. Data collection commenced on 4 October 2004 and was completed on 31 January 2005 (NSO and ORC Macro 2004).

#### **4.4.2 Under-reporting**

Face-to face interviewing have both strengths and weaknesses (Kishor 2005). Even though the interviewer had special training on questioning violence in non-judgmental tones, it is impossible to guarantee that all interviewers managed to build trust and rapport. This could be a source for under-reporting. One can assume that the reported violence rates are higher in reality. It should also be noted that discussions of sexual or conjugal issues is discouraged in Malawi, and sexual violence has probably been underreported in the study (Mathiassen et.al. 2007, Chakwana 2004).

A major part of the DV-module consist of dichotomous answers were the respondent has to agree or disagree with various statements. When the answers are restricted to only two response-alternatives, acquiescence may occur. This means that the respondent tend to agree with the presented statements. For example, when the respondent is asked “He (is/was) jealous or angry if she (talk/talked) to other men”, the respondent may tend to agree, according the acquiescence theory. As a result of the critics, many researchers prefer to use the “Likert five point scale”, which include alternatives such as strongly agree, agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly agree (Schuman and Presser 1996). Such an inclusion may have given more correct answers. Another gap is that MDHS does not take account for the differences in the matrilineal and the patrilineal families. According to Saur et.al (2003), the violence is also influenced on whether the women live with her husband’s family of her own family.

#### **4.4.3 Conflict Tactics Scale**

The Malawian Health and Demographic Survey 2004 use a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) to measure partner violence. The original CTS, developed by sociologist Murray Straus in the 1970s, consists of a series of individual questions regarding specific acts of violence, such as slapping, punching, and kicking. Although CTS is the most commonly used quantitative measure of domestic violence, the original CTS has been criticized on several grounds. The feministic approach has criticized it for ignoring the gender dimension, and for not collecting data on the context, intentions and consequences (Yllö 1998, Kishor and Johnson 2004). It is also criticized for ranking the severity of abuse, excluding sexual abuse and for assuming that violence takes place in certain places.

The modified CTS used in the MDHS 2004, incorporates questions on sexual violation along with questions on physical violence and it does not assume that violence takes place only in circumstances characterized by conflict. The module also contains questions that investigate the consequences and context of violence (Kishor 2005). The original scale has 19 items on physical violence (Barnett et.al.2005), while the modified list used by the MDHS program includes 15 acts of physical and sexual violence. By asking separately about specific acts of violence, the violence measure is not affected by different understandings between women of what constitutes violence. “All women would probably agree what constitutes a slap, but what constitutes a violent act or what is understood as violence may vary among women and across cultures” (Kishor 2005: 4). The modified CTS used in my data-set correct several inadequacies of the original CTS and will be consistent with a feminist approach. The used CTS scale takes account for the context and intentions of violence, and it also includes sexual violence.

#### **4.5 Analyse strategy**

By using two different statistical analysing methods I will try to reveal more of the association between gender power order and women’s risk of intimate partner violence. In this section I will present the statistical analysis methods and disclose why they are suitable to explore my research questions.

#### **Bivariate analysis**

I will first perform a bivariate analysis that shows the association between partner violence and the explanatory factors. Bivariate methods illustrate the relationship between two variables, for example “experiencing violence” and “polygamy”. In WHO’s domestic violence guide for researchers, it is recommended to first perform cross-tabulations to look for the associations between violence and risk/protective factors. This involves comparing different groups of women to find out whether women with certain characteristics/status have a greater frequency of partner violence (Ellsberg and Heise 2005).

#### **Multivariate logistic regression analyze**

When studying the association between risk factors and a specific problem (violence), confounding can occur. It means that another characteristic exists in the study population and is associated with both the problem and the risk factor under study. Confounding can affect

the study results by creating the appearance of a cause-effect relationship that in reality does not exist. Confounding variables could give misleading results about what risk factors influence the occurrence of violence. One way to control for the effects of confounding variables is multivariate logistic analysis. Which factors have a consistently significant and direct effect on currently married woman's risk of ever experience of violence? Logistic regression helps to uncover the degree to which several explanatory variables are related and to control for confounding variables (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). In order to identify the factors that significantly increase or decrease the risk of experiencing violence, multivariate logistic analyses will be conducted.

Compared to bivariate analysis, logistic regression can illustrate to what extent a dependent variable is affected by or has causal relations with different independent variables (Skog 2005:214). This is important to answer my research question and to examine the strength between gender order and IPV. My dependent variable is dichotomous (has two values and is not continuous) which makes a logistic regression more logistic than a linear regression (Ringdal 2001:391). In other words, a linear regression is not possible. The values "yes" and "no", will at some point reach the bottom and the top, which makes the curve rather like an S-shape than linear (Skog 2005: 345). To handle the curve I will have to do a logit-transliterate to throw away the bottom and tops, and the differences will change from absolute to relative (Skog 2005: 355).

### **Interpretation of logistic regression**

In a logistic regression we get logits. By looking at the signs on each X (b-values), a + indicates that it is appositive relation while – indicate a negative relation. Apart from that, logits do not give us much information, and they are not recommended when interpreting the data. I will present the logits in the logistic regression, but I will rather focus on odds, odds ratios and probabilities when interpreting the results from the statistical analysis.

The calculation of odds and odds ratio are based on the logit. It is done by taking the antilogarithm for the regression-coefficient to find the odds ratio and the antilogarithm to the interception for odds. The odds will tell us how much more likely or less likely the probability of an occurrence to happen or not to happen (Skog 2005: 363). Odds ratios signify the odds' *relative* increase when the independent variable increases with one unit (Skog 2005: 364).



When an odds ratio equals 1.0, it means that there is no association between two variables, and a value greater than 1.0 indicates risk. A value less than 1.0 indicates that the exposure has a “protective” or preventive effect with regard to the outcome. The odds ratio will tell us whether the risk of partner violence is the same for two groups. To get probabilities of the regressions coefficients the odds for the reference category must be calculated, and then to probabilities through this formula:

### Odds

1+ Odds

To calculate percentage of the odds:

$$100 * (\text{Exp (B)} - 1)$$

## **4.6 Statistical significance**

In order to determine whether IPV actually varies with women’s power relation to her husband and with her beliefs and attitudes, I will perform tests for statistical significance. The word “significance” does not refer to the importance or size of the difference, but to the likelihood that the associations are real and not simply due to chance (Ellsberg and Heise 2005: 192). The p-values for each regression coefficient will tell us the probability for whether the respondent’s answers are significant for different groups in the sample. I chose a significant-level on 5%, which means that accept a 5% (0.05) possibility that the observed differences are a result of coincidences. This p-value was chosen both for my bivariate and logistic analysis. The lower the significance level gets (0.05) the greater truth we get (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). The significance probability can reveal whether the values on the coefficients are significantly different from each other.

How “good” are the developed logistic regression models? While the p-level discover whether the regression coefficient describe the real empirical associations, the log likelihood ratio test (-2ll) could reveal how good the analysis models are suited to the data. I will especially use this test in table 5.2 where I compare three logistic regression models to reveal which model are most suitable to the data. Low values indicate a good suitable model.

## 4.7 Description of the variables

In this following section, descriptions of the used variables are presented. The MDHS survey consists of thousands of variables. I had to do many restrictions and changes to get suitable variables for my aims of the study. To discover how power is normally shared in Malawian gender relations many of the explanatory variables will be presented in details. This is done to understand how power is normally shared in different situations and to reveal whether the condition is a social norm or not. If a husband's controlling behaviour is a risk factor for experiencing partner violence, it is worth knowing whether this is the social norm or not. The descriptive data will later be used to interpret the findings in chapter six. In this chapter, the dependent variable will first be presented. Further, the explanatory/risk variables will be presented and then the control variables. My research question 1 will also be revealed in this section:

*“What is the prevalence of IPV, i.e. physical, sexual and / or emotional violence from male partners?”*

### 4.7.1 Dependent variables: “Experienced IPV last year”

To construct my dependent variable I had to compute three new variables from the questions in the CTS-scale: sexual, physical and emotional violence (were experienced was coded 1, and not experienced was coded 0). I chose to restrict the dependent variable to violence the past 12 months to get the most reliable results. By examining violence the past year preceding the survey, it is possible to see whether the violence is frequent or if it just a one time-occurrence. Most research shows that current violence rates are usually similar to rates of ever-experience of violence in countries where the women have a subordinate status and where for example formal divorce is difficult to obtain (Kishor and Johnson 2004:12). These theories are supported by table 1.2 and table 1.3. The prevalence of violence between *last year* and *ever* is quite similar. “Prevalence is defined as the number of persons having a specific characteristic or problem, divided by the number of persons in the study population who are considered to be at risk of having the problem, usually expressed as a percentage” (Heise and Ellsberg 2004:86). I constructed a new dichotomous variable, which is my dependent variable. Women who *did* experienced partner violence (physical, emotional or sexual) the past 12 months were coded 1, while women who *did not* experienced partner violence (physical, emotional or sexual) the last year were coded 0.

Most global quantitative studies on the causes of intimate partner violence focus solely on physical violence (Jewkes 2002), but “(...) limiting abuse only to physical aggression fails to capture the true gamut of harmful family interactions” (Barnett et.al. 2005:12). It could be interesting to see if the gender order affects sexual, physical and emotional violence differently. But separating them can also give an incorrect picture of the situation because the three types very often co-occur. Various researchers (Krug et.al. 2002, Heise et.al. 1999) suggest that physical violence in intimate relationships is very often accompanied by psychological abuse, and in one-third to over one half of cases IPV is associated with sexual abuse. Multi-reports on domestic violence carried out by WHO, DHS and UN the last years, recommend a combination of the violence-form in analysis because emotional, physical, and sexual violence are likely to co-occur (Krug et.al. 2004, Ellsberg and Heise 2004). In the existing research on MDHS 2004, women reported multiple forms of violence (Chakwana 2002).

*Table 4.2 Percentages of currently-married women who have ever experienced IPV*

	Sexual violence	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual, emotional or physical violence
Did not experience violence	86.8 (5947)	88.0 (6033)	80.5 (5520)	70.3 (4815)
Experienced violence	13.2 (907)	12.0 (821)	19.5 (1355)	29.7 (2039)
Total	100.0 (6854)	100.0 (6854)	100.0 (6855)	100.0 (6854)

*Table 4.3 Percentage of currently-married women who experienced IPV 12 months preceding the survey*

	Sexual violence	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual, emotional or physical violence
Did not experience violence	88.4 (6064)	90.1 (6175)	87.1 (5974)	77.1 (5284)
Experienced violence	11.6 (792)	9.9 (681)	12.9 (883)	22.9 (1573)
Total	100.0 (6856)	100.0 (6856)	100.0 (6857)	100.0 (6857)

*Answering research question 1:* Table 4.1 shows that 22, 9 % experienced sexual/physical/emotional violence from their husband 12 months preceding the survey. The MDHS data is collected through face to face interviews, and respondents may have underreported the facts. One can assume that the prevalence of IPV among currently married women may be higher than reported in this survey. Table 4.2 also shows that physical violence is the most widespread violence type, followed by sexual violence and then emotional. Nearly 12 % of all married women experienced forced sexual intercourse last year. Considering the danger of HIV and the patterns of unsafe sex in Malawi the numbers are alarming.

*Figure 4.1 Percentage of currently-married women who experienced IPV 12 months preceding the survey*



#### **4.7.2 Independent variables**

In this section I will present the independent variables that measure women's degree of power in relation to their husband. The risk variables have been computed to the different assumptions (hypothesis) described in chapter two and three. The independent variables are connected to power, and are suggested to have an effect on women's prevalence of IPV. Global research shows that *history of violence in the family* and *alcohol abuse* is closely linked to the prevalence of IPV. MDHS 2004 has also collected data on these issues, and even though the variables do not measure the power balance in the relationship I will include them as controls. Also wealth will be included as a response to the family violence perspective that finds social class influential on the prevalence of violence. Excluding variables that probably have a consistent effect on IPV could have decreases the reliability of the statistical findings.

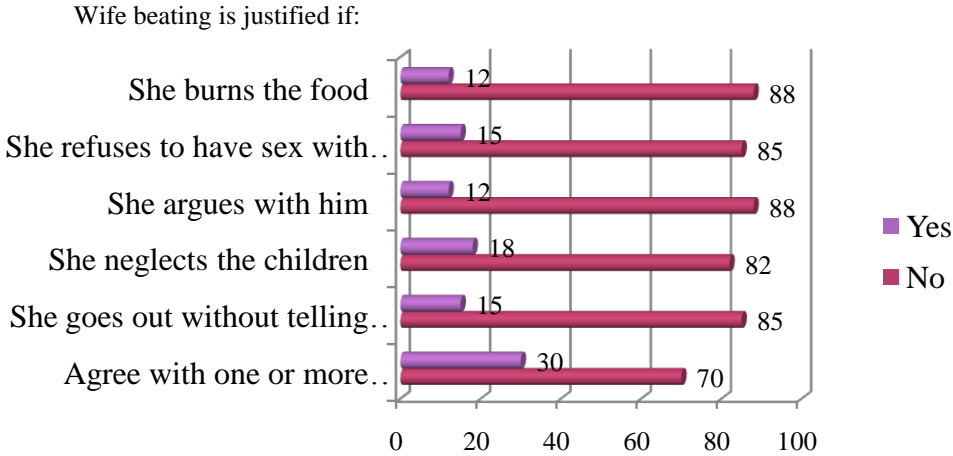
In next chapter I will reveal whether it is useful or not to include these control variables by using the -2ll test.

**Risk variables related to the gender order:**

*Attitudes on wife beating*

Attitudes toward wife beating can provide insight into the level of the gender roles in a society. They can be a good indicator of the status of women in a specific social and cultural setting (Rani et.al. 2004). To assess women’s degree of acceptance of wife beating, the 2004 MDHS survey asked women, “Sometimes a husband is annoyed or angered by things which his wife does. In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife in the following situations?”: “If she goes out without telling him”, “If she neglects the children”, “If she argues with him”, “If she refuses to have sex with him”, “If she burns the food”. The questions explore women’s acceptance of norms that give men power over women and subordinate the rights of women to those of men. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statements “Yes” or “No”.

Figure 4.2 Percentages of currently-married women’s attitudes on wife beating



It would not have been relevant using this variable if only 2 percent had accepted reasons for a man’s beating. But as one see in figure 4-5, about 30% of the married Malawian women find one or more reasons justifying for a husband to beat his wife. In other words, there is an acceptance of unequal gender roles. The acceptance of wife beating among married women is high, which makes it a very interesting variable to examine.

To capture the affect these attitudes have on the likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence, a new index-variable that measure the justification on a scale from 0-5 was computed. If the respondent does not agree with any of the reasons it has the value 0 on the scale. If the respondent agrees with two reasons it is two, and so on. The first plan was to part the index into two, one with strong patriarchal degree and the other with low degree. On the other hand, whatever reason you find justifying for wife beating will almost be considered the same. Whether you find arguing or sex-refuse as a justified reason to beat, they both say something about an unequal gender order. By using the index in the cross-table-, and the logistic analysis, it is possible to discover the overall effect attitudes have on partner violence. An index can reveal how the risk of violence varies with increased acceptance of violence.

*Controlling behaviour by husband*

A variable that says something about a patriarchal ideology is the husband’s controlling behaviour over his partner. Cross-cultural research suggests that societies with stronger ideologies of male dominance have more intimate partner violence (Jewkes 2002). In the MDHS, various behaviours were described in a phrase, and women were asked whether the phrase applied to their relationship with their husband. The behaviours are: “*He is jealous or angry if she talk to other men*”, “*He frequently accuses her of being unfaithful*”, “*He does not permit her to meet her female friends*”, “*He tries to limit her contact with her family*”, “*He insists on knowing where she is at all times*”, “*He does not trust her with any money*”.

*Figure 4.3 Percent distribution of husband’s degree of power/controlling behaviour*

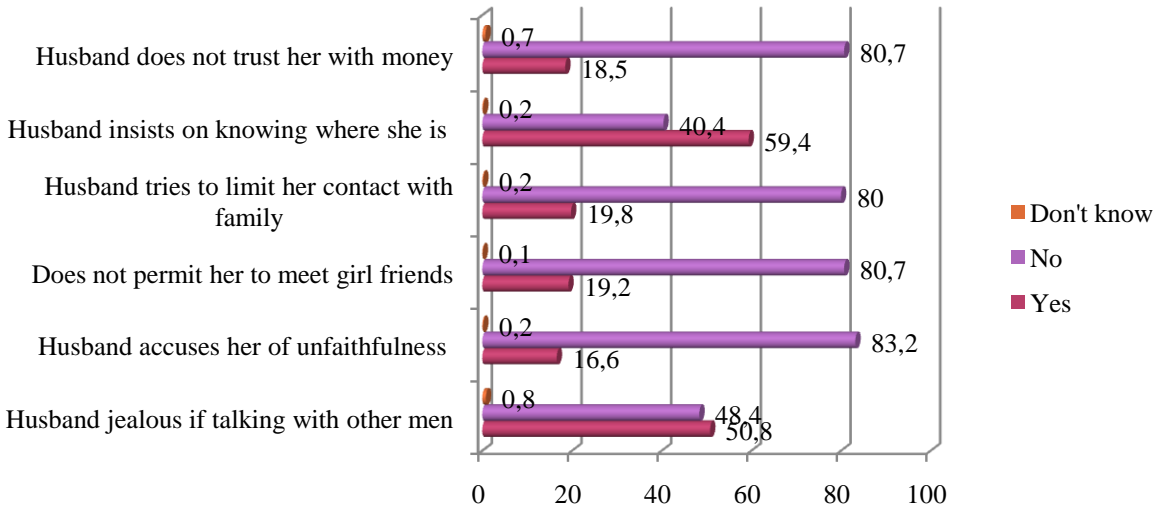


Figure 4-7 gives an overview of Malawian husband's controlling behaviour. As much as 59.4% says that their husband insists on knowing where she is all the time, and about 50% of the husbands are jealous if they talk to other men. To use these variables in a multi logistic regression a control-index was used. The index was already constructed in the MDHS data. It is more useful to use an index that shows how many controlling issues the husband has, and whether violence increases with his degree of control, in a logistic regression.

*Table 4.4 Percent distribution of husband's degree of controlling behavior*

Number of control issues	Frequency	Percent
0	1490	21,7
1	1775	25,9
2	1558	22,7
3	984	14,4
4	602	8,8
5	302	4,4
6	144	2,1
Total	6856	100

### *Polygamy*

Polygamy says something about patriarchy because it regards the woman as inferior to the man. According CEDAW (2004) it is a discriminatory practice. About 57 % of the Malawian women interviewed in Pelsler et.al. (2005) study though that traditional beliefs, in particular polygamy, promoted gender violence.

As illustrated in table 2.1, 16% of currently married women live in polygamous families. The variable had originally 10 variables, but because there are very few men having 4-10 wives, I rather constructed two dummy variables, polygamous or not polygamous. The constructed variables have the values 0 and 1, were value 1 are given to those who answered "yes" to the chosen category, and 0 is given to the remaining categories.

*Table 4.5 Percentages of currently-married women who live in polygamy*

Polygamous (Has one other wife or more)	Not polygamous (Has only one wife)	Total
16% (1067)	84% (5760)	100 (6856)

### *Respect and consultations*

In the domestic violence module, women were asked this question: "When two people marry or live together, they share both good and bad moments. In your relationship with your husband do the following happen frequently, only sometimes, or never"? Two of the alternatives are suited to my research question because they say something of equality in the relationship: "He consults you on different household matters", "He respects you and your wishes". The variable is dichotomous where "yes" is coded 1, while "no" is coded 2. The variable is not directly connected to the gender power order, but it disclose information whether less conflict over power (whether there is marital harmony or not) is associated with less IPV.

### **Risk variables related to transgression of the gender order:**

#### *Decision making*

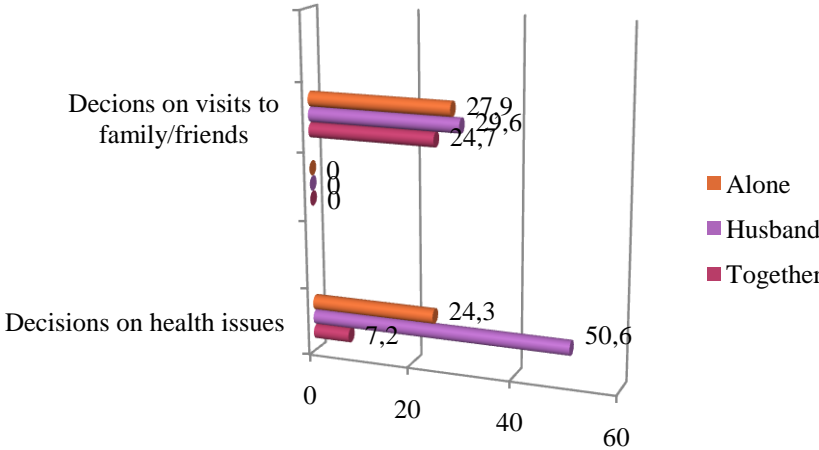
Male dominance over women can be manifested in many different ways, including control over household decision-making (Kishor and Johnson 2004). Researchers suggest that wife beating occurs more in societies where men have economic and decision-making power in the household (Krug et.al. 2002). Participation in decisions about one's own needs, household needs, and the needs of children is an indicator of women's engagement with and control over their household environments. In MDHS the respondents were asked: "Who in your family usually has the final say on the following decisions?" I am interesting in the differences in the likelihood of experiencing partner violence according to whether the respondent takes decisions alone, takes it together with her husbands or the husband takes it alone. The decisions are: "*What food should be cooked each day*", "*Decisions of visits to family or relatives*", "*Decisions about the woman's own health care*", "*Decisions about contraception*" and "*Decisions about making large household purchases*".

Not every decision is relevant for my research question, such as decisions about food making or household purchases. Contraception use would have been interesting, but the variable has too many missing. The two remaining variables were women's health care and visits to family/friends. I made three categories (respondent alone, husband and together) on each of the independent decision-variables. The results from each variable were pretty similar, so I computed three new variables, one with information on decisions (own health care and visits to family/friends) made by respondent, another on decision made by the husband and the last



one where they take decisions jointly. I wanted particularly to see the effect women’s decisions had on IPV, so I chose this variable as reference category variable. The constructed variables have the values 0 and 1, where value 1 are given to those who answered “yes”, and 0 to the remaining categories.

Figure 4.4 Percent distribution of currently married women on who in their household makes decisions

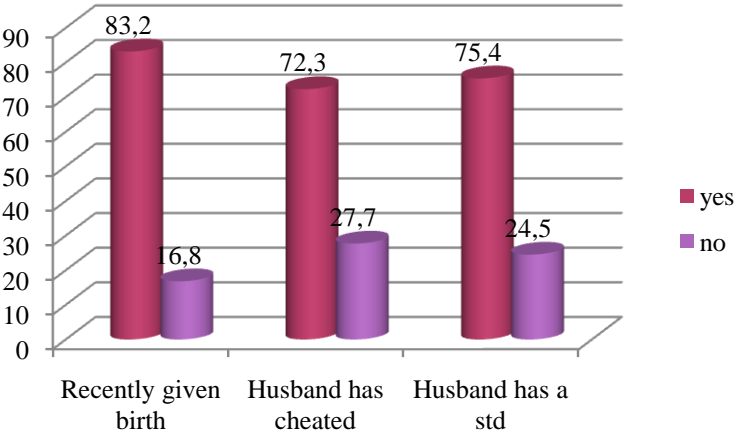


Reasons to refuse sex

Another important gender order-predictor is norms related to sex. According international human rights laws (United Nations 2006), refusing sex is a human right where women should be the final arbiters for their decision. In MDHS there is a question asking women whether they think that a wife is justified to refuse sex with her husband under several specified circumstances. This question explores the social norm towards a man’s power and a women’s bodily security. Women were asked if they thought a wife is justified in refusing sex to her husband if: “she has recently given birth”, “she knows her husband has sex with other women”, she knows her husband has a sexually transmitted infection (STI)”. The respondent had to answer “yes, “no” or “don’t know”. It is expected that some of those who answered “don’t know” lies close to those who answered “yes” (Kishor and Johnson 2004). If you do not know whether you can refuse sex to your husband, you may agree, at least sometimes. On the other hand, such speculations are too unsecure for this analyse, so I coded “dont’t know” as 0 (no). I constructed dummy variables for each variable where 1 is given those who agree with the reasons to refuse sex, while those who don’t are given the value 0. Table 4-5 shows that many women accept the unequal power between men and women. About 30% of the

women don't find a husband's cheating as a reason to refuse sex. It is also alarming that women still have sex if her husband has a STD, both of this relations decrease the risk of HIV.

Figure 4.5 Percentages of currently-married women who agree with different reasons for which a wife is justified in refusing to have sex with her husband.



Earnings for work

In a patriarchy women are likely to be paid less than men. Without access to money women are depended on their husband and are not able to gain their empowerment. Similarly to education, women in paid work have the possibility to influence her life more. In Malawi women work more hours than men, and earn less (Mathiassen et.al. 2007).

Table 4.6 Percentages of currently-married women's earnings

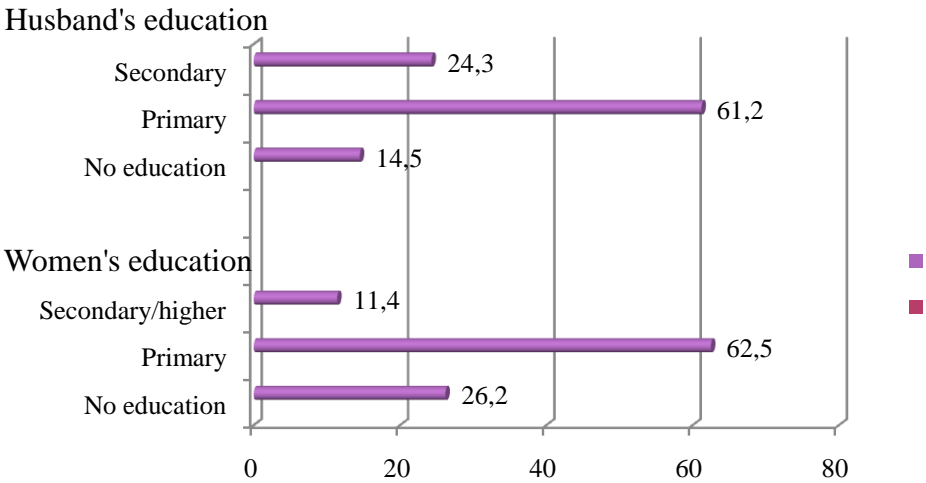
Earn cash	Work for free
22,9%	77,1%

Educational level

Education is often used as a background characteristic assuming that women with higher education have more resources to deal with a violent partner. The level of education has a positive impact on welfare in the household, and it increases knowledge and understanding of development issues. Education may lead women to question the social norms regarding gender roles and wife-beating that supports the notion of male superiority (Rani et.al. 2004). Even though education did not have any impact on partner violence in previous research with

this data material, I still want to use it as a control because other studies have found relations between education and violence. In this study I focus on currently married women, which may give another result than women in general. I dummy-coded the variable, and chose women with “primary education” as the reference-group because this is the group most of the married women belong to.

Figure 4.6 Percent distribution of currently-married women’s and their husband’s education level



**Control variables**

*Partner’s habitual drunkenness*

One of the most important variables to influence the likelihood of domestic violence is a partner’s habitual drunkenness. Also in NSO’s multi-report on domestic violence, women’s experience with violence is strongly associated with the extent of their husbands’ or partners’ alcohol consumption (Kishor and Johnson 2004). The question in the MDHS is “How often does your partner gets drunk”. The variables has originally three values, I constructed three new dummy variables: “Never”, “Sometimes”, “Very often” for the logistic regression. Husbands who never drink will be the reference category.

Table 4.7 Percentages of husband’s habitual drunkenness

Never	Sometimes	Very often	Total
27,4% (1882)	62,5% (4297)	9,8% (674)	100 (6856)

### *Father beat mother*

This variable can tell us something about the intergenerational effect and if childhood gender socialization has a significant relationship with partner violence. Table 3.2 shows that about one third of married women had an abusive father. When the prevalence is that high one can assume that the violence is connected to cultural norms which allow such behaviour. For that reason I included this variable as one of the explanatory variables.

*Table 4.8 Percentages of currently-married women who had a father who abused their mother*

Father hit mother	Did not hit mother	Total
16% (1067)	84% (5760)	100 (6856)

The information on the mother's experience is reported by the respondent. Among women who said that they did not know whether their father beat their mother lies between those who said "yes" and those who said "no." This is to be expected since for at least some proportion of these women the answer is "yes" (Kishor and Johnson 2004). But to get as reliable results as possible I coded don't know as "no" when the variable is used in the logistic regression. Respondents who contested "don't know" is estimated with a response rate on 10%. Respondents who had a father who hit their mother are coded 1, while those who did not are coded 0.

### *Wealth*

A wealth index computed by the MDHS can disclose women's social class. The index is divided five: poorest, poorer, middle, richer, richest. This variable was not associated with IPV in Chakwana's (2004) analysis, but the results could be different when only married women are measures and logistic regression is determined.

### **Summing up the three sections**

- *Gender order.* Variables used in this section are women's attitudes toward partner violence, husband's controlling behavior, polygamy, feels respected and consulting husband
- *Transgressing the gender order.* Chosen variables are: women's decision-making, reasons to refuse sex, type of earnings and educational level, husbands controlling

behavior, polygamy/monogamy, women's final say in health and visits decisions, and marital harmony (whether the women feel respected or/and have a good communication with her husband).

- *Controls.* Variables within this section include husband's alcohol assume, history of IPV in the family, and wealth status

## **5. Presenting the results**

There are many reasons and factors that help explain why some societies and some individuals are more violent than others. Some causes of violence are easy to see, while others are deeply rooted in the cultural and societal level (Krug et.al. 2004). There has been looked for possible risk and/or protective factors for experiencing intimate partner violence in association to gender power order. This chapter will first present some results from the bivariate analyses that show the association between experienced intimate partner violence and the risk variables. Then logistic regression is used to determine the factors that have a consistently significant and direct effect on a married woman's currently risk of experience of IPV. The nine hypotheses deduced from chapter two will be tested in section 5.2.

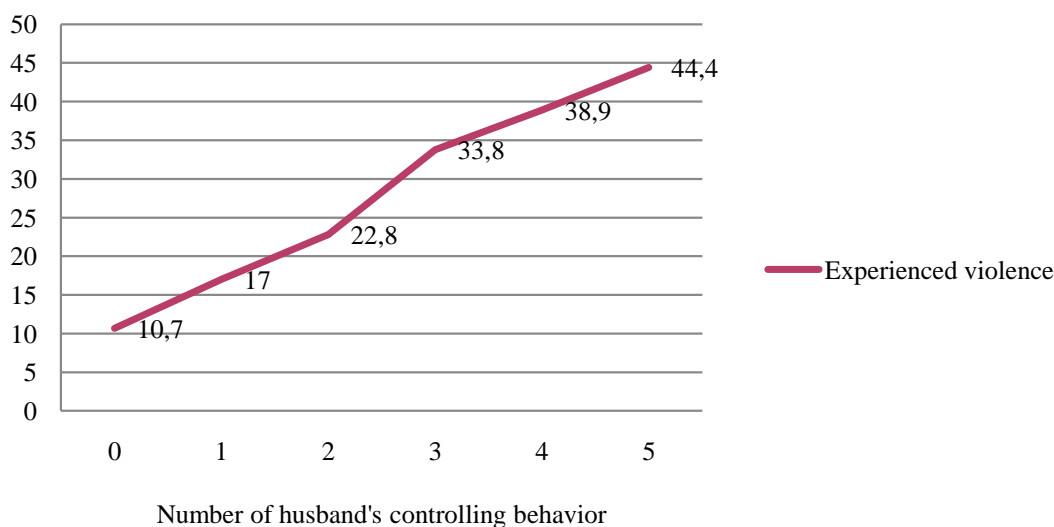
### **5.1 Bivariate analysis: Associations between intimate partner violence and risk factors**

#### **Gender order**

The first panels in table 5.1 shows that nearly 30% of the married women who find one or more justifying reasons to beat a wife, experienced IPV last year, compared to about 20% of those who did not justify beating.

Although experience of violence last year varies significantly with accepts of wife beating, it does not increase monotonically. When a husband perform power through domination (controlling behavior), a woman is more likely to experience partner violence. In fact, a woman has almost four times higher violence rates when her husband has five controlling behavior than none. 44, 4% of women whose husbands are very controlling experienced violence last year.

Figure 5.2 Percentages of currently-married women who experienced IPV last year, according to the degree of husband's controlling behaviour



The same results are shown when women live in polygamy. They experience more partner violence than monogamists. Table 5.1 shows however that women who lives in marital harmony, feels respected and has a consulting husband experience less intimate partner violence. About 60 percent of the women who feels disrespected by their husband experienced IPV last year.

### Women who transgress the gender order

There is no clear pattern between women who agree or disagree with reasons to refuse sex, and the results are neither significant. A reason for that could be underreporting because discussions about sex is often discouraged in Malawi (Chakwana 2004). Even though “refusing sex” is a human right, many of the Malawian women do not agree with this right. Women’s decision-making is surprisingly not significant, and there are no great differences between IPV and different decision-makers.

Women’s degree of empowerment, such as income and education are all significant, but they do not demonstrate a very strong relationship to the experience of IPV. The patterns of women’s and husband’s education level are difficult to interpret. Married women with primary education are the most likely to experience partner violence, while the lowest rates are found among women with secondary or higher education. A rare finding is that those without any education at all, are almost as likely as those with high education to experience

violence, it do not exist any monotonic pattern on education level. Women who do not earn money are somewhat less likely to experience partner violence than women who are paid.

### **Controls**

Women who had a father who abused their mother experience more intimate partner violence. Table 5.1 also shows that alcohol abuse is close related to the frequency of IPV. Women who report that their husband's drinks very often experience intimate partner violence than women who have a husband who do not drink. 41.3 percent of these women experienced violence from their partner last year, compared to 20 percent of those who have husbands who never drinks. Women's wealth is significant in the cross table, but do not demonstrate a systematic pattern for the prevalence of IPV.

### **5.2 Multivariate analysis: Adjusting for confounding factors**

The bivariate cross table illustrates the association between partner violence and how it is related to the risk factors. What we do not know is whether there exist a characteristic in the study population which is associated with both the problem and the risk factor under the study. This can create serious misleading impressions. By measure the variables in the logistic regression it is possible to find out if the risk factors are consistent, and not created by an effect that does not exist in the reality. I have conducted a logistic regression analysis that includes three sets of risk variables: one that measures the gender order, one that measures transgression of the gender order, and one that includes these two sets and controls. Table 5.2 shows that a model including the three sets of variables (gender order, transgressing the gender order and controls) are the most suitable and significant to find women's risk/protective factors for experiencing IPV in Malawi. The controls variables contribute to a better significance of the model, and model 3 will for that reason be used when the associations between IPV and risk factors are interpreted. I will not comment model 1 and 2, or how the variables change from one model to another. My main purpose is to capture the associations from the best "suited" model.



*Table 5.2 Multiple logistic regression models: The associations between a married woman's likelihood of having experienced IPV in the past 12 months and different sets of risk variables*

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Risk factors:	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Attitude-index (0-5)	.112**	.021	.099**	.027	.102*	.040
Controlling behavior index (0-5)	.322**	.019	.336**	.026	.298**	.039
Polygamy	.265**	.078	.221	.099	.189	.145
Feels respected	-1.181**	.151	-1.514**	.189	-1.303**	.294
Husband consults with his wife	-.523**	.101	-.551**	.130	-.471*	.217
Health decisions: Husband			-.359	.167	.127	.257
Health decisions: Together			-.025*	.102	-.192	.154
Decisions on visits: Husband			.086	.109	.140	.162
Decisions on visits: Together			.079	.112	.141	.169
Refuse sex: Husband has a std			-.053	.114	-.015	.171
Refuse sex: Husband cheating			-.153	.110	-.354*	.162
Refuse sex: Recently birth			.360*	.131	.474*	.207
Women's education: primary			.436**	.096	.520**	.148
Women's education: higher			.225*	.178	.662*	.283
Partner's education: primary			-.008	.114	-.100	.178
Partner's education: higher			-.356*	.149	-.524*	.244
Type of earnings (Ref: cash)			-.381**	.083	-.304*	.128
Father beat mother					.521**	.124
Alcohol use: Sometimes					.331	.244
Alcohol use: Very often					.985**	.254
Wealth index					.055	.052
Constant						
-2ll	-419	.155	-223	.257	-1.171	.474
	6743		4072		1690,6	

p <0.001=\*\* p<0.05=\*

*Table 5.3 Multivariate logistic regression: The associations between a married woman's likelihood of having experienced IPV in the past 12 months and the gender power order*

Risk factors:	B	S.E.	Exp(B)
Attitude-index (0-5)	.102*	.040	1.108
Controlling behavior index (0-5)	.298***	.039	1.347
Polygamy (Ref: no)	.189	.145	1.208
Feels respected (Ref: no)	1,303***	.294	.272
Husband consults with his wife (Ref: no)	-.471*	.217	.624
Health decisions: Husband	.127	.257	1.135
Health decisions: Together	-.192	.154	.825
Decisions on visits: Husband	.140	.162	1.150
Decisions on visits: Together	.141	.169	1.151
Refuse sex: Husband has a std	-.015	.171	.985
Refuse sex: Husband cheating	-.354*	.162	.702
Refuse sex: Recently birth	.474*	.207	1.607
Women's education: primary	.520***	.148	1.682
Women's education: higher	.662*	.283	1.940
Partner's education: primary	-.100	.178	.905
Partner's education: higher	-.524*	.244	.592
Type of earnings (Ref: Paid in cash)	-.304*	.128	.738
Father beat mother (Ref:no)	.521***	.124	1.683
Alcohol use: Sometimes	.331	.244	1.393
Alcohol use: Very often	.985***	.254	2.677
Wealth index	.055	.052	1.056
Constant	-1.171	.474	.310
-2ll	1690,563		

p <0.001=\*\*\* p<0.01=\*\* p<0.05=\*

### **5.2.1 Associations between IPV and gender order**

#### *Justify wife beating*

As in the bivariate tables, a woman's attitudes toward gender issues, such as reasons to justify wife-beating is significantly associated with a woman's risk of experiencing IPV. Women who justify wife beating are at a higher risk of current violence than women who do not justify it. For every extra reason she justify for wife-beating, the odds for experiencing violence increases. I expected to find more violence among women who justifies partner violence and the findings support *hypothesis 1*. When controlling for the other variables, the odds for experiencing partner violence increases with 66, 5 % if a woman agrees with five reasons and *hypothesis 2* is supported.

#### *Controlling behavior*

As in case of attitudes toward wife beating, women's likelihood of experiencing violence varies with the husband's controlling behavior. Both the bivariate and the logistic regression show that controlling behavior and the risk of partner violence is valid and significant. A wife whose husband has five controlling behaviors gives a married woman 57 percent probability of experiencing intimate partner violence. If the husband does not show any controlling behavior, the wife's probability of experiencing violence is 24 percent. In other words, the likelihood is almost twice as high if the husband is very controlling and *hypothesis 3* is supported. These results suggest that a husband's domination over his wife strongly affect her risk of experiencing violence.

#### *Polygamy*

A woman who shares her husband with other women is at a higher risk of violence from her partner than if she had lived in monogamy. But the suggested positive association contrasts with the bivariate association and is no longer significant in the logistic analysis. *Hypothesis 4* fails.

#### *Respect and communication*

The association between marital harmony and intimate partner violence turns out to be significant and valid. The odds that a woman will experience IPV are consistently lower for women whose husbands respect them and consult with them on household matters. Even though we do not know whether this is a cause or outcome, it shows that women with less stress and more harmony in the relationship are less likely to experience intimate partner

violence. The odds for experiencing current partner violence is 72, 8 % higher for those who do not feel respected than those who does. If a woman has a husband who never consult with her, the probability for having experienced partner violence the past 12 months is 38%.

### **5.2.2 Associations between IPV and women who transgress the gender order**

#### *Decision making.*

I expected to find more violence among women who took their own decisions because they could “trigger” violence by challenging social norms. But none of the relationships between intimate partner violence and decision-making are significant in the logistic regression analysis. *Hypothesis 7* is not supported. It is not surprising since the differences were already very small in the bivariate analyze.

#### *Reasons to refuse sex*

In contrast to the bivariate analysis, attitudes concerning sex are associated to partner violence. Two of the reasons for “refuse sex” are significantly associated with current partner violence when it is controlled for the other factors. A woman who can refuse sex if her husband is cheating, has lower odds of experiencing intimate partner violence than those who say they you cannot refuse sex. Refusing sex after birth is also significant, but shows an opposite effect than cheating. Current partner violence is much more likely to happen if a woman refuses to have sex with her husband after birth. If a woman disagrees with the right to refuse sex after birth, the odds for experiencing partner violence is 60, 7 percent significantly higher than if she would have agreed. Refusing sex if the husband has a STD is no longer significant. Even though there exists some association between women who say ‘no’ to sex and violence. I hypothesized that “Women who find reasons to refuse sex with her husband are at a higher risk of partner violence”, but the patterns from table 5.3 are not clear enough to support *hypothesis 8*.

#### *Type of earnings*

Type of earnings for work has a significant effect on married women’s experience of intimate partner violence. The odds of having experienced IPV are consistently and positively associated with type of women’s earnings. Women who earn cash are more likely to experience IPV. The odds for experiencing intimate partner violence is 26, 2 % higher than if they would have worked for free.

### *Education*

The odds for experiencing IPV are significantly higher if the woman has secondary or higher education than if she has none. This is surprising and contrast from the bivariate table that suggested that those with primary education were the most likely to experience partner violence. I hypothesized that women with higher education were less likely to experience partner violence because they gained empowerment and dependency. Among men it is opposite, the higher education he has, the less likely his wife is to experience intimate partner violence. Men's educational effect is the same as in the bivariate analysis. In other words, the odds for experiencing IPV are highest when the husband has low education, and when the wife has high education. When controlled for all other variables, the odds for experiencing intimate partner violence are 94% higher for a woman with higher education than for a woman with no education. When the same is done with the husband's education, it shows that the odds for violence are 41% higher when the husband has no education than if he has secondary/higher education.

### **Controls**

#### *Alcohol*

The husband's alcohol consumption has one of the strongest consistent relationships to IPV. Of all the variables measured in the logistic regression, this is the factor that is most likely to influence the likelihood of experiencing intimate partner violence. Despite controls for all the variables, women whose husbands drink very often are consistently much more likely to experience violence than women with sober husbands. The odds for experiencing intimate partner violence is 167.7 % if your husband drinks very often, than if he does not drink. The risk of experiencing partner violence is also higher if a husband drinks sometimes, but when controlled for de other variables this association is no longer significant. Overall, the strong significant relationship between violence and those who never drinks/drinks a lot, support *hypothesis 5*.

#### *History of family-violence*

Sociological theory has often found a connection between women who witnessed or experienced violence as a child and current intimate partner violence. I expected women with a history of family violence to be at a higher risk of violence, and *hypothesis 9* is supported. Table 1.7 shows that history of family abuse appears to be consistently related to IPV.

Currently experience of intimate partner violence is much higher for women who had a father who did beat her mother. The odds for experiencing IPV are 68, 3% higher if the woman witnessed her own father beating her mother.

#### *Wealth status*

When wealth is controlled for other variables, it is no longer significant, which is not surprising because of the weak correlations in the bivariate. A woman's wealth does not affect the risk of IPV.

When women gain empowerment through economic or educational empowerment, they are at a higher risk of experiencing violence from their partner. It was hypothesized that women who gained power and acknowledge would be at a lower risk of IPV, and *hypothesis 11* fails.

#### **Summing up:**

I will summarize the current body of quantitative evidence from the statistical analysis. Logistic regression analysis has been shown in Table 5.3 that the likelihood of IPV for a wife escalates rapidly when the number of the husband's controlling acts increases. It is at least a doubling of violence for each controlling behavior. The same results are found for women who accept behavior that gives women less power, such as acceptance of violence. For every extra reason women find justifying for wife beating, the risk of intimate partner violence increases. The logistic results also show that women who earn money and have high education are stronger associated with IPV than women that do not have. The last association was surprising. Due to the existing theory on women's empowerment and IPV, I expected highly educated women to be at a lower risk of violence than their fellow sisters with no education. But high education increases the risk of experiencing violence from a husband. Equality in the relationship, such as having a man who consults with her and respects her is strong protective factors for experiencing partner violence. Even though 30% reported partner abuse last year and 60% have husbands who insist on knowing where they are all the time, most of the Malawian wives feel respected.

As 70, 8 percent of the interviewed women have a husband who takes the health decisions for her, I expected to find more violence among women who did not follow the norms and took decisions herself. But decision making did not have any directly significant effect on partner violence. Neither did polygamy, place of residence or wealth status. *Hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9*

were supported by the data, while *hypothesis 4, 6, 7* were not supported. The variables that have a significant association to intimate partner violence is: a husbands' controlling behavior, high accept of wife beating, history of family abuse, equality in the relationship (feels respected and has a husband who consults with her on various matters), refusing sex (sex after birth), a husband's alcohol use, earning cash (own income) and educational level. How can we understand these findings?

## **6. Discussion**

The reason why some Malawian women are at a higher risk of IPV than others is an interesting sociological question. I assumed to find a strong relationship between the gender order and intimate partner violence, and my purpose with this chapter is to describe more of this association. In this chapter findings based on the statistical analysis will be related to the research questions, empirical assumptions (hypothesis) and my theoretical framework. I will first try to answer research question 2:

*“What is the relationship between the gender order, i.e. the power relations between men and women, and risk for IPV?”*

One way to explore the gender orders’ effect on violence more specifically is to see how women who transgress the gender order is associated with IPV. I will especially focus on women’s empowerment to explore this association. When women gain more power they “transgress” the expected gender power balance, and my question is how such power effect the risk of IPV? I assumed to find less likelihood of partner violence when women gain empowerment. I will try to answer my second research question:

*“How is the risk for IPV associated to transgression of the gender order, i.e. indicators of women's empowerment?”*

To understand how the gender order in Malawi affects intimate partner violence, the risk factors must be understood as interactive elements that together influence the risk of violence. It is difficult to present the risk factors separately due to the reason that IPV is influenced by a number of factors. In the final part I will present a brief account of my three research questions. I will further discuss how this study has contributed to the subject of partner violence in Malawi, and reflections on further research.

### **6.1 Interpreting the statistical results**

This study is based on cross-sectional data, which in some cases makes the direction of causality unclear to discern. It is usually difficult to assess accurately of what came first, exposure to the suspected risk factor or the condition (Kishor and Johnson 2004). It is difficult to say if having a controlling husband increases women’s risk of being abused or whether it is actually a consequence of abuse. Another problematic association is marital harmony and intimate partner violence. To feel disrespected can be a consequence of



violence, rather than being a risk factor. We do not have enough information on when the wife started to feel like this, has the husband always acted disrespectful against her? Or did she start to feel disrespected after the abuse started? But it is sometimes possible to assume that one event occurs before another. Witnessing partner violence as a child is an example of a risk factor with clear direction of causality. It is also possible to assume that certain factors/attitudes come first due to their cultural meaning. Due to the use of cross-sectional data, it is more reliable to talk about “associations”, rather than “cautions” (Ellsberg and Heise 2005: 199). Results from other studies on IPV will in some cases be used to interpret my findings.

## **6.2 IPV and unequal power relations between men and women**

Malawi is still influenced by a patriarchal ideology which maintains a power structure that gives men more power than women. Feminists have demonstrated that men with patriarchal views are more likely to abuse their female partners, a statement that is confirmed by my findings. When a woman has a controlling husband, she is much more likely to experience intimate partner violence. If the husband does not show any controlling behavior, the wife’s probability of experiencing IPV is 24 percent, compared to 57 percent probability if the husband is very controlling. Less control gives less violence, but women still are at a risk of violence. In general, controlling behaviour is understood as an individual act, but in Malawi it should rather be understood as a social norm as male domination is very common. More than 50% of the married women have a husband that insists on knowing where she is all the time and the same amount get jealous if they talk to other men (see figure 4.4). Feminists have demonstrated that men with patriarchal views are more likely to abuse their female partners, a statement that is confirmed by my findings. It can be useful to understand the association between male domination and partner violence within patriarchal terms. Male domination is supported by a patriarchal culture, and the violence becomes then an acceptable means of establishing control over “their women” (Johnson and Ferraro 2000, Dobash and Dobash 1988). The gender order in Malawi is maintained by a patriarchal ideology that gives the man right to control his wife, and to use violence as a tool to sustain the control. Such ideology not only put women in a greater risk of being abused, but it also affect female autonomy, different access to political systems, less influence in the economy, and unequal gender participation in academic life and the arts (CEDAW Malawi 2004, Jewkes 2002). In this sense, the current gender order in Malawi influence the prevalence of IPV to a great extent. The gender order

structures men and women into unequal power relations, where men's violence is used as a normative tool to control the power balance. My statistical findings show that the likelihood of partner violence decreases where there are less conflicts over power in the relationship. A woman who feels respected by her husband and has a husband that consults with her, are associated with a lower risk of intimate partner violence. Where there are no conflicts of power there are also less violence. But caution must be exercised when this relationship are being interpreted. We do not know whether it is a result or a cause, and the cultural meaning of "respect" must also be taken into account.

### **6.3 When violence becomes normative**

Sociologists have argued that partner violence is widespread where violence is socially accepted (Barnett et.al. 2005). If the man's violence becomes the norm, the violence is not identified as a problem (Lundgren 2004). That may explain why so many women accept partner violence. In Malawi about 30% of the married women accept partner violence, and such attitudes put them at a higher risk of violence. My statistical results show that the risk of violence increases rapidly with a woman's number of violence-justifications. The findings are not unique for Malawi. Also in South Africa, abused women were more likely than the total sample to recognize violence as acceptable in conflicts between adults in some (more than one) situations (Jewkes et.al. 2002). When women accept partner violence it could be understood in terms of self-blaming and a mechanism of self-defense. But also that the use of violence is seen as normative in the society or in the home they grew up. As illustrated earlier in this study, "educational beating" is especially accepted in Malawi. As one interviewed woman in a previous study pointed out:

(...)when the man slaps you it means he loves you he does not want you to go back to your village but that you should just change your behaviour, it could be that he has tried several times but you did not listen (Saur et.al. 2003:37).

Partner violence is normalised in Malawi. When an act becomes "invisible" it is often related to learned behaviour (O'Toole and Schiffman 1997), and what we think is our own free choices are very often influenced by the dominating gender power order (Jalmert 2006). The gender order define the ideal principles of what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men do in different contexts. The given power between men and women are already given at birth. Girls learn that boys are first priority at school, they learn to

respect the man and they may also learn to accept violence. The interviewed women who accepted partner abuse in MDHS were at a much higher risk of experiencing violence from their partner. In sociology this is called the intergenerational transmission of violence (Jasinski 2001). My statistical analysis found that when a woman witnessed her mother being abused by her father as a child, the risk of IPV increased drastically. If a girl witnesses her mother being abused, she early learns that violence is normal in certain settings. She also learns about victimisation and to accept the unequal gender power sharing. These unequal gender roles in Malawi are passed on from generation to generation and can be observed from the time a girl is born, through puberty, marriage, adulthood, and even until death (CEDAW Malawi 2004). My findings show the importance of shedding light on the role socialization plays in intimate partner violence. Women learn to be inferior to the men which make them more vulnerable to violence. Women in Malawi are socialized into the idea that men are dominants and should be superior. Men, on the other hand teaches to treat women as property (Saur et.al. 2003, CEDAW Malawi 2004). The unequal gender order affects intimate partner violence to a great extent because it structures women and men into relationships where violence is accepted and the man is superior. It is important to notice that the gender order is maintained, to a considerable extent, by cultural norms and practices that teach women to see them as less capable than men.

#### **6.4 Alcohol abuse**

All over the world, alcohol use by men usually appears to be consistent in relation to violence (Krug et.al. 2002). That is also the case in Malawi as husbands' alcohol abuse turned out to be the strongest risk factor for experiencing intimate partner violence. Even though Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, it has some of the world's richest alcohol companies established in their country. The abuse-problem is increasing (Braathen 2008 b). Peltzer (1989) suggests that the alcohol and cannabis problem in Malawi needs to be recognized as a lifestyle problem in a wider context, it needs to be responded by an alternative socialization model. According to my analysis, the likelihood for experiencing intimate partner violence is 84, 3 % if the husband drinks very often, as if he had not been drinking. Only 7, 6 % of the married women have a husband who never drinks. There is, however, a considerable debate about the nature of the relationship between alcohol use and violence and whether it is truly causal. There are researchers who see alcohol as a situational factor that increases the likelihood of violence by reducing inhibition and judgments, which provides for arguments

between couples. Others argue that the link between violence and alcohol is socially learnt, and exists in settings where the collective expectation is that drinking causes or excuses certain behaviors (Krug et.al. 2002, Jewkes et.al. 2002). In South Africa, for example, men speak of using alcohol in a premeditated way to gain the courage to give their partners the beatings they feel are socially expected of them (Krug et.al. 2002).

According to Saur et.al (2003), signs of material well-being, strength and ability to provide the family are some characteristics of an “ideal man” in Malawi. Braathen’s study (2008 a) revealed that reasons for drinking are close connected to ideal masculine characteristics, such as material power and strength. The masculine hegemony is often established through media, education and ideology (Giddens and Griffiths 2006), and in media alcohol is promoted as something glamorous for the rich people. Alcohol could be used to fill some if the inability of successful manhood. A further factor is that a woman is more likely to criticize her man when he comes home drunk. Due to women’s inferiority such conflicts are likely to result in a fight (Jewkes et.al. 2002). The reasons why men may be drunk when beating women are complex, and my data do not content sufficient information on whether the relationship between alcohol and violence is socially learned, or whether it is only the alcohol that causes aggressive behavior the association. Alcohol use could be linked to gender order because it allows men to control the economy and do what they want to do. If it had been the women who came home drunk, it is possible that the violence would have increased even further due to the cultural expectations of an “ideal” woman. Further studies should examine more of the relationships between alcohol and partner violence.

### **6.5 Women who transgress the gender order**

If a woman “challenge” the gender order, either by taking decisions that are normally prescribed the husband (economy/health), gains more power through education/income, or refuses to follow the norms/roles that are expected of her, she could be at a higher risk of IPV. The statistical findings in this study show that women who transgress gender norms and do not live up to cultural stereotypes of good womanhood are at a higher risk of IPV. In patriarchal societies women have learned to be inferior, while men have learned to dominate and control “their women”. Decision making was not significant with the prevalence of IPV, but transgression of sexual norms turned out to be significant. Married women who refuse to agree with the cultural norm of having sex after birth are at a higher risk of IPV. If they had

agreed with the practice, they would have been less likely to experience intimate partner violence. I will further look at how women who transgress the gender order through empowerment are associated with the prevalence of IPV.

### **6.5.1 Women's empowerment**

In the theory, women's empowerment can turn into two directions when it is associated to IPV. Higher levels of female empowerment can trigger a crisis of her husbands' "male identity" because the gender power balance is challenged. This can result in violence from the man as a mean to regain "his" power. But research also shows that women's empowerment is a protective factor for IPV because she gains acknowledgment of the structures that oppress her, and gain resources to leave a violent relationship. Are Malawian women at a lower risk of IPV when they gain empowerment?

#### **Educational empowerment**

I hypothesized that women with more education would have more resources to deal with IPV. Education usually provides benefits, such as functional literacy, access to improved employment opportunities, inroads into selective collegial networks, and entrée into more exclusive marriage markets (Kishor and Johnson 2004). Education not only improves a person's social status in a community, but also the opportunity to improve his/hers life skills. But the effects of women's education level did not live up to my hypothesis. My statistical results show that a woman with high education is at a higher risk of intimate partner violence than women without education. When women gain more power than the gender order "allows", a conflict over power becomes a reality. Education is not tied up to the meanings of femininity, and when women "trigger" traditional gender roles, the man could react with violence because his internalized power is threatened. If a man feels that his wife transgresses the norms or the cultural stereotypes of "good womanhood", then violence may be his response. This could be identified at several places in the statistical analysis. One example could be caught from the statistical analysis and the tradition called "*Kutenga mwana*" (having sex right after birth) (CEDAW Malawi 2004). When a woman do not follow sexual "expectations" she is more likely to experience partner violence. If she had accepted *kutenga mwana* she would have given the power over her own body to a man, and would have experienced less partner violence.

We know that married women in Malawi are controlled by their husbands to a great extent. It is reasonable to assume that when women gain more power the men feel incapable to meet the social expectations of a successful manhood. Malawian men will not be able to live up to the “hegemonic masculinity” due to lack of money, education and material well-beings. When another factor challenges his male identity, such as his wife’s education (understood as power), the power balance between them changes and his response may be violence. Violence could then be a mean to regain the power balance in the relationship. This association shows that violence is not just an expression of male dominance over women, but also rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unachievable.

One should not, however, argue that education is negative for the prevention of partner violence. Education is necessarily for women to gain acknowledgment about their rights and opportunities (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). Education increases knowledge and understanding of development issues, which is partly confirmed by my statistical results when the husband’s education level is examined. Husbands’ with second/higher education were less likely to abuse their wives, compared to men with primary and none education. Even though the differences between the educational levels are not very large, it shows that men’s education has a positive effect on gender equality and IPV. Higher level of education is almost certainly a protective factor for partner violence, but it is important to notice that educational empowerment *alone* is not a guarantee of less violence. That was also a finding in the study “Sanctions and sanctuary” (Counts, Brown and Campell 1992) where wife-beating was examined from a cultural perspective. The authors made a very interesting conclusion. By concerning wife beating in 15 western and non-western countries the authors found that educational empowerment carries a risk of violence until a certain level of education dominate in the society. During periods of transition in gender relations women may be at increased risk of violence (Counts, Brown and Campell 1992). This highlights the importance of examining the educational effect when the next MDHS results are available. In Malawi gender is on the agenda, and it is possible that Malawi is in a social transition whereby “femininity” and “masculinity”, and the expectations tied to them, are in change.

To understand more of the educational effect, educational differences between the couples could have been examined. In the DHS multi-report on domestic violence (Kishor and Johnson 2004) only one other country got the same results as Malawi. In Haiti, women were more likely to report violence when their educational level increased. When educational differences

were examined, two more countries showed the same results. Women with more education than their husband were more likely to experience violence than if they had less education than their husband. It is however important to notice that my restrictions and variable-selections are different than in the DHS report. In my case, confounding may have occurred due to the reason that as much as 62, 5 % of the married women have primary education and only 0.5% has higher education. After dummy coding second and higher educated women into one, the percent amounted of 11, 4%, which were the utilized variable. Nonetheless, when I controlled for the other variables, the findings showed that lack of education is a “protective factor” to experience intimate partner violence.

### **Economic empowerment**

I hypothesized that married women who earned cash would be at a lower risk of violence due to more power over her life. Economic empowerment can improve a woman’s independency which makes her less dependent on her husband and help her to leave a violent relationship. But also in this case, women who gain more power are more likely to experience partner violence. In other words, women are at a higher risk of violence if they have economic income than if they work for “free”. As in the case of education, more economic independency is not a guarantee of less violence. A woman will not necessarily gain empowerment if she does not have control of its use of the money she earns. Very few women, married as unmarried, control the financial decisions or control economy in Malawi. The possibility of bringing cash income into the household is also difficult for women due to their domestic responsibility (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). Malawi’s economy is agriculturally, and in almost all cases, men own the land which makes the tobacco or maize registered in their names (Mathiassen et.al. 2007). Research (Saur et.al. 2003, Braathen 2005a) shows that men often take advantage of women’s illiteracy by not telling their wives the truth about their earnings. One example is the male participants in Saur’s’ et.al (2003) study. They admitted that after getting their payment from tobacco sales, they stay in rest-houses at the district headquarters and do not return until all the money is used up. It shows that as long as women do not have power over the money or its use, they will not automatically gain economic empowerment. As long as economy/money is associated to masculinity, women will remain economically dependent on their husband.

## **6.6 Reflections on non associations**

Reflecting on what was not found associated with abuse is also of interest. Decision making was surprisingly not associated with violence. There were no clear patterns between the decision maker (wife or husband) in the family and intimate partner violence. Figure 4.5 revealed that women to a very little extent take personal decisions. Only a minority takes their own health decisions or decides when they can visit family and friends. But neither the bivariate or logistic analysis found associations between these factors and violence. It could be that decisions are not directly linked to the husband male identity, such as being the provider or having most resources. A woman who takes personal decisions may not threaten the masculinity in the same degree as education or economy does. It could support the arguments that violence rather occurs when women gain more power through acknowledgment and economy. More empowerment could lead women into situations where they confront their husband about the unequal power or his domination. Some of the standard socio economic indicators, such as wealth was neither associated with partner violence. These strengthen my findings that partner violence is linked to social factors, rather than individual socio economic factors. Polygamy is not associated with IPV when controlled for other factors. One explanation could be that women in polygamy struggle to be the husband's "number one". As revealed in previous research, co-wives in a polygamous marriage do not like each other. It could be that women in polygamy do not provoke the power balance in fear of losing their husbands' favour. By following the gender norms within and outside the household they do not challenge the masculine identity or and the gender order. But this association are only assumptions, and further research needs to be done to understand more of this relation.

## **6.7 Summing up the research questions and hypothesis**

### **Brief account on research question 1**

In chapter four, the first research question was examined: "*What is the prevalence of IPV, i.e. physical, sexual and / or emotional violence from male partners among married women in Malawi last year?*" My findings show that 22, 9 % of currently married women experienced IPV from their husband 12 months preceding the survey. The MDHS data is collected through face to face interviews, and respondents may have underreported the facts. The prevalence of IPV *ever* was 29, 7 %, which support my theories that IPV is frequent in Malawi, and not just a one time-occurrence. The results also show that physical violence is the most widespread



violence type, followed by sexual violence and then emotional. Nearly 12 % of all married women experienced were forced to sexual intercourse by their partner last year. Considering the danger of HIV and the patterns of unsafe sex in Malawi the numbers are alarming.

### **Brief account on research question 2**

The second research question was examined in this chapter (chapter 6): “*What is the relationship between the gender order, i.e. the power relations between men and women, and risk for IPV*”? By exploiting descriptive data in the method-chapter it was recognized in which situation men usually had the power. Later, logistic regression was used to determine the risk factors that had a consistently significant and direct effect on a married woman’s currently risk of experience of IPV. In relation to this question, *hypothesis 1 a) and 1 b), 2 and 3* were tested. *Hypothesis 1a) and 1b)* expected to find higher risk of intimate partner violence among women who justified the abuse, and that the likelihood of IPV would increase with the numbers of justifying reasons. Both hypotheses were supported. Also *hypothesis 2* was supported as the likelihood of IPV increased in line with the husband’s degree of controlling behavior. The findings showed the same pattern as the multi-report on partner violence in developing countries. *Hypothesis 3* had never been examined in an IPV related study in Malawi, and expected to find higher risk of IPV among women who lived in polygamy than monogamists. But when controlling for confounding factors in the logistic regression the hypothesis failed. Polygamy is not associated with IPV in Malawi.

The gender order in Malawi is influenced by a patriarchal ideology which structures women and men into relationships where the power is unequal shared. The gender order is maintained by cultural norms and practice. In Malawi women learn to see them as inferior to the men. Men on the other hand learn to be controlling and superior in the society. When men are socialized into the idea that they should control their women, violence becomes normative and just a tool to keep the power relation in control. My findings show that women whose husbands control them are at higher risk of IPV, and women who accept wife beating are also much more likely to experience IPV. These associations count for many of the married women, which makes it possible to draw these findings to the gender order and not just individual factors. These women are socialized into the traditional understanding of femininity and masculinity, which makes the more vulnerable to IPV.

It is however important to recognize that IPV occurs when different factors interplay. The gender order in Malawi shape relationship where spaces for violence are encouraged, but it is also important to realize that certain individual factors/characteristics also influence the risk of IPV. Risk factors such as witnessing IPV as a child and the husband's alcohol abuse was significantly associated to the risk of IPV. A woman's wealth status was however not associated with IPV. This thesis has focused on social factors, with gender order and power as central elements. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the gender order in Malawi affects the prevalence of IPV to a great extent, and should be included when IPV is understood in Malawi.

### **Brief account on research question 3**

The third research question was examined in this chapter (chapter 6): *“How is risk for IPV associated to transgression of the gender order, i.e. indicators of women's empowerment?”* To explore this association it was focused on variables that could say something about women who “challenged” the gender order. To explore this relation, *hypothesis 4, 5 and 6* were tested. *Hypothesis 4* expected to find a higher risk of IPV if women took health-/leisure time decisions alone. The hypothesis was based on previous research of the MDHS 2004 that showed that these decisions were normally taken by the husband. But decision making were neither significant in the bivariate nor in the logistic analysis, and the hypothesis fails. *Hypothesis 5* is difficult to support or reject. It was hypothesized that women who agreed with reason for refusing sex would be at a higher risk of intimate partner violence because they challenge the gender order. Sexual decisions are usually taken by the husband in the Malawian culture, and refusing sex is a very serious “punishment” against a husband. The findings show that women who refuse to the cultural practice of having sex after birth have a stronger risk of IPV. It shows that women who find the cultural tradition *“kutenga mwana”* unacceptable are more likely to experience IPV. But women who refuse to have sex if the husband has been unfaithful are less likely to experience partner violence. Maybe unfaithfulness is a more acceptable reason for refusing sex? The associations are difficult to interpret and the hypothesis must be rejected. *Hypothesis 6* expected that women's risk of IPV would decrease if she gained female empowerment (through education and income). The hypothesis is not supported, as women's risk of IPV increases in line with their empowerment. *Hypothesis 7* was supported because husbands' alcohol abuse has a significant effect on women's likelihood to experience intimate partner violence. Due to global research

on IPV, *hypothesis 8* expected to find more violence among women with a history of IPV in the family. The hypothesis was supported.

The findings show that the gender order in Malawi is so strong, that when it is challenged, women's risk of IPV increases. The gender order in Malawi gives men the 'right' to control women due to the patriarchy. Women who oppress these structures challenge the learned "gender power balance" which can trigger the husband to use violence to regain the old power relation. My findings show that women's empowerment in Malawi varies with intimate partner violence, but not necessarily in a positive way. Malawian women who challenge the "expected" gender order by taking higher education and/or own income (more empowerment), are at a higher risk of experiencing violence from their partner. This finding shows that IPV in Malawi is not just an expression of male dominance over women, but also rooted in male vulnerability where social expectations of manhood are unachievable. An inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood can "trigger" a crisis of male identity, and violence may be his response to regain power. Also, women who refuse to follow the cultural norm of having sex after birth are at a higher risk of IPV. If they had agreed with the practice, they would have been less likely to experience intimate partner violence.

My results show the importance of taking women who transgress the gender order into account, as it gives a deeper insight into the gender orders' relation to IPV. Even though women's empowerment is almost certainly a protective factor for experiencing intimate partner violence, women's empowerment *alone* is not a guarantee of less violence. It needs to change in line with other structures and norms in the society.

### **6.8 What has this study contributed to?**

Due to intimate partner violence as a relative recent investigation subject, there are very few studies focusing on how social factors affect IPV in Malawi. This study contributes to some of the demands of how norms, attitudes and power are related to IPV in Malawi. It shows the importance of including gender order when IPV in Malawi is examined. It also shows that Malawi may be in a social transition whereby "femininity" and "masculinity" and the expectations tied to them, are in change. Such changes can lead to an increase of violence in a short term. Will the risk of IPV decrease when women's empowerment has reached a critical

level? These are some of the subjects of further research that could be pursued to provide effective policy and programs against partner violence in Malawi. Results from the next MDHS will be published during 2009, which makes it possible to compare results from 2004. This issue could be of interest to gain more acknowledgment about the problem and for program planners to see how changes in women's status interact with IPV. This thesis has outlined a base for some of this comparison.

The risk factors for IPV in the present thesis have been identified through interviews on women. This study indicates that IPV in Malawi is rooted in male vulnerability where social expectations of manhood are unattainable. Women are for example at a higher risk of IPV when they transgress the gender norms/order. Men's change in beliefs and attitudes will for that reason be vital in preventive programs, but it will also be essential to understand more of men's risk factors for using violence against their female partners. This study has revealed some of women's risk factors for experiencing intimate partner violence. Further research should explore more of husbands' reasons for performing IPV. Many of the significant risk factors for women are linked to power between genders, which support the needs of understanding IPV in Malawi through a feministic perspective. But one should also take into account that individual factors influence the risk of IPV. Some socio economic factors turned out to be significant, but if the prevalence of IPV increases as a result of the man having less power (resources), the associations are still intact with a feministic perspective.

### **6.9 Reflections on preventive programs**

Conclusions reached by African authors are that the problem of violence will maintain as long as the structural inequality between men and women exists (Bowman 2003). According to the sociologist Mary Stewart (2002), it is powerless to fight against violence as long as women are "the other" and devalued because they are female rather than men. The results of my study suggest the need for preventive programs that involve both men and women by acknowledging the presence of the norms among them. Campaigns and preventive programs should include ways of changing attitudes and social gender norms. Changing the gender order is a slow process, but it is not impossible. I will not present possible preventive plans in this study, but I will briefly present some thoughts on how prevention could be related to my findings.

As my findings indicate, women's empowerment *alone* is not enough to eliminate intimate partner violence. Reducing the prevalence of IPV requires men's as well as women's liberation from the binding stereotypic gender norms. Also political and economic restrictions are needed to lead to cultural changes in beliefs, attitudes and definitions of gender (Stewart 2002). Human rights should be more visible in the society, such as in the legal system. High Court judges in Malawi need to achieve a higher status than customary law. Attitude changes in social institutions are needed so that patriarchal gender norms and roles are not passed on from generation to generation. If human rights become more respected and visible in the legal system, equal gender values may gain a higher status in the society. Another arena for social change could be the church. Compared to the educational system and public life, the church is a place where everyone has in-pass and access. The church is very important for Malawians as almost everyone goes to church on Sundays. Norwegian church aid in Lilongwe has just started a project in cooperation with the priests where they demand more female priest and preaches to talk more about gender roles. Similar projects should be achieved in all social institutions in Malawi.

## **7. Conclusion**

The aim of the present study was to explore more of the reasons behind partner violence and how the gender order was associated with IPV in Malawi. To discover more of this association, it was focused on variables that could disclose information on women's power in relation to their husbands, and whether it was possible to find less or more violence among empowered women and/or women who acted in line with the expected patriarchal norms and roles.

This study shows that partner violence among married women is a common practice in Malawi, 22, 9% experienced intimate partner violence 12 months preceding the survey. The MDHS data is collected through face to face interviews, and respondents may have underreported the facts. It is however clear that partner violence is rooted in the structural and cultural systems that create and maintain the unequal power relations between the sexes. The gender order in Malawi influences the prevalence of IPV to a great extent, and could be helpful when IPV is understood within the Malawian context.

Feminists have demonstrated that in societies where male violence is a social norm, the men are more likely to abuse their female partner. The theory is confirmed by my findings, women are much more likely to experience IPV if the husbands show controlling behaviour- and more than the majority of the interviewed women have a controlling husband. It can be useful to understand this association within patriarchal terms. The gender order in Malawi is still arranged around the premises of the patriarchy, where male-dominance over women is central. Discourses in patriarchal societies define what it means to be a man or woman and subsequently what gender roles are tied to those meanings. Male domination is supported by a patriarchal culture, and the violence becomes then an acceptable means of establishing control over "their women" (Johnson and Ferraro 2000, Dobash and Dobash 1988). Sociologists have also argued that intimate partner violence is widespread where violence is socially accepted (Barnett et.al. 2005). Where IPV is normative, sanctions against violent men are usually low and the exercise of violence is often seen as masculine. That may explain why so many women accept partner violence, and why this group of women are strongly associated to the prevalence of IPV.

Women who transgress the gender order and do not live up to cultural stereotypes of good womanhood are among, are at a higher risk of IPV. Women's empowerment in Malawi varies with intimate partner violence, but not necessarily in a positive way. Malawian women who challenge the "expected" gender order by taking higher education and/or own income (more empowerment), are at a higher risk of experiencing violence from their partner. This finding shows that IPV in Malawi is probably not just an expression of male dominance over women, but also rooted in male vulnerability where social expectations of "ideal manhood" are unachievable. An inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood can "trigger" a crisis of male identity, and violence may be his response to regain power. Also, women who refuse to follow the cultural norm of having sex after birth are at a higher risk of IPV. If they had agreed with the practice, they would have been less likely to experience intimate partner violence.

This study shows that it is useful to take women who "transgress the gender order" into account when IPV is investigated. This gives us a deeper insight into *how* the gender order could be understood in relation to IPV in Malawi. It illustrates that women's empowerment *alone* is not a guarantee of less IPV. It needs to change hand in hand with other structures and norms in the society. Only when empowerment has reached a critical level, its benefits may outweigh this. This needs to be further understood and taken into account in preventive programs (Jewkes 2002). As long as other structures are organized around male domination, women's empowerment will probably not result in less IPV. Higher risk of violence among empowered women could signify that Malawi is in a social transition whereby gender roles and attitudes are changing under hard resistance from patriarchy. Research show that violence usually increases in a short term when gender norms are challenged (Rani et.al. 2004).

The findings of this study have also drawn attention to the needs for preventive programs that involve both *men* and *women* by acknowledging the presence of the norms among them. Campaigns and preventive programs should include ways of changing attitudes and social gender norms among men and women. It is important to recognize that the gender order is not static. It is possible to change it. Our ways of understanding the social world is structured by the social context we live in, and this context is not unchangeable. As Giddens and Griffiths (2006: 8) say, "Human societies are always in the process of structuration. They are reconstructed at every moment by the very 'building blocks' that compose it- human beings like you and me".

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All sources used in the thesis are included in this list.

Number of words in this thesis: 32 606

## 8. Appendix

### Appendix A: Chapter 5

Table 5.1 Percentages of currently-married women who experienced partner violence last year, according to different characteristics and factors.

<b>Risk factor:</b>	<b>Experienced violence last year</b>
<b>Gender power order</b>	
<b>Number of justifying reasons to beat a wife (index)</b>	
0	20
1	29,5
2	28,2
3	26,9
4	31,6
5	33,1
<b>Number of husband's control issues (index)</b>	
0	10,7
1	17
2	22,8
3	33,8
4	38,9
5	44,4
<b>Polygamy</b>	
Yes	30,3
No	21,5
<b>Feels respected by husband</b>	
Yes	21,6
No	59,8
<b>Husband consults with her</b>	
Yes	21,2
No	40,1
<b>Women who transgress the gender power order</b>	
<b>Decision sharing</b>	
<i>Decisions on own health</i>	
Respondent	25,6*
Husband	23,2*
Together	17,3*
<i>Decisions on visits to family/friends</i>	
Respondent	24,5*

Husband	22,1*
Together	23,1*
<b>Reasons to refuse sex</b>	
<i>Her husband has a STD</i>	
Yes	22,4*
No	24,5*
<i>Husband has other women</i>	
Yes	22,8*
No	23,2*
<i>Recent birth</i>	
Yes	23,2*
No	21,4*
<b>Women's education</b>	
No education	19,2
Primary	25,4
Secondary or higher	18
<b>Husband's education</b>	
No education	23,6
Primary	24,1
Secondary or higher	19,6
<b>Women's earnings</b>	
Not paid	23,6
Paid work	21,6
Controls	
<b>Father abused mother</b>	
Yes	32,6
No	19, 2
<b>Partner's drinking habits</b>	
Never	21,4
Only sometimes	27,2
Very often	42,3
<b>Wealth index</b>	
Poorest	24, 6
Poor	24, 5
Middle	22, 7
Richer	23, 1
Richest	20, 0

\*Not statistically significant based on the chi-square test ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Appendix B**

SECTION 10: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP																												
DV00	CHECK HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE, COLUMN (8A): WOMAN SELECTED FOR THIS SECTION <input type="checkbox"/>	WOMAN NOT SELECTED <input type="checkbox"/>	→ DV29																												
DV01	CHECK FOR PRESENCE OF OTHERS: DO NOT CONTINUE UNTIL EFFECTIVE PRIVACY IS ENSURED. PRIVACY OBTAINED ..... 1 ↓	PRIVACY NOT POSSIBLE ..... 2	→ DV28																												
READ TO ALL RESPONDENTS: Now I would like to ask you questions about some other important aspects of a woman's life. I know that some of these questions are very personal. However, your answers are crucial for helping to understand the condition of women in Malawi. Let me assure you that your answers are completely confidential and will not be told to anyone.																															
DV02	CHECK 501, 502, AND 504: CURRENTLY MARRIED/ LIVING WITH A MAN <input type="checkbox"/> ↓ WIDOWED/ SEPARATED/ DIVORCED <input type="checkbox"/> ↓ (READ IN PAST TENSE)	NEVER MARRIED/ NEVER LIVED WITH A MAN <input type="checkbox"/>	→ DV14																												
DV03	When two people marry or live together, they share both good and bad moments. In your relationship with your (last) husband/partner do (did) the following happen frequently, only sometimes, or never? a) He usually (spends/spent) his free time with you? b) He (consults/consulted) you on different household matters? c) He (is/was) affectionate with you? d) He (respects/respected) you and your wishes?	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>FRE- QUENTLY</th> <th>SOME- TIMES</th> <th>NEV- ER</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FREE TIME .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CONSULTS .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AFFECTIONATE ...</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RESPECTS .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		FRE- QUENTLY	SOME- TIMES	NEV- ER	FREE TIME .....	1	2	3	CONSULTS .....	1	2	3	AFFECTIONATE ...	1	2	3	RESPECTS .....	1	2	3									
	FRE- QUENTLY	SOME- TIMES	NEV- ER																												
FREE TIME .....	1	2	3																												
CONSULTS .....	1	2	3																												
AFFECTIONATE ...	1	2	3																												
RESPECTS .....	1	2	3																												
DV04	Now I am going to ask you about some situations which happen to some women. Please tell me if these apply to your relationship with your (last) husband/partner? a) He (is/was) jealous or angry if you (talk/talked) to other men? b) He frequently (accuses/accused) you of being unfaithful? c) He (does/did) not permit you to meet your female friends? d) He (tries/tried) to limit your contact with your family? e) He (insists/insisted) on knowing where you (are/were) at all times? f) He (does/did) not trust you with any money?	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>YES</th> <th>NO</th> <th>DK</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>JEALOUS .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ACCUSES .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NOT MEET FRIENDS</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NO FAMILY .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WHERE YOU ARE .</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MONEY .....</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		YES	NO	DK	JEALOUS .....	1	2	8	ACCUSES .....	1	2	8	NOT MEET FRIENDS	1	2	8	NO FAMILY .....	1	2	8	WHERE YOU ARE .	1	2	8	MONEY .....	1	2	8	
	YES	NO	DK																												
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ACCUSES .....	1	2	8																												
NOT MEET FRIENDS	1	2	8																												
NO FAMILY .....	1	2	8																												
WHERE YOU ARE .	1	2	8																												
MONEY .....	1	2	8																												
DV05	Now if you will permit me, I need to ask some more questions about your relationship with your (last) husband/ partner. 5A. (Does/did) your (last) husband/partner ever: a) say or do something to humiliate you in front of others? b) Threaten you or someone close to you with harm?	5B. How many times did this happen during the last 12 months? YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> NO 2 ↓ YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> NO 2 ↓																													

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP
DV06	<p>6A. (Does/did) your (last) husband/partner ever:</p> <p>a) push you, shake you, or throw something at you?</p> <p>b) slap you or twist your arm?</p> <p>c) punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?</p> <p>d) kick you or drag you?</p> <p>e) try to strangle you or burn you?</p> <p>f) threaten you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon?</p> <p>g) attack you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon?</p> <p>h) physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?</p> <p>i) force you to perform other sexual acts you did not want to?</p>	<p>6B. How many times did this happen during the last 12 months?</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p>	
DV07	<p>CHECK DV06:</p> <p>AT LEAST ONE 'YES' <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NOT A SINGLE 'YES' <input type="checkbox"/></p>		→ DV09
DV08	<p>How long after you first got married to/started living with your (last) husband/partner did (this/any of these things) first happen?</p> <p>IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, RECORD '00'.</p>	<p>NUMBER OF YEARS <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>BEFORE MARRIAGE/BEFORE LIVING TOGETHER 95</p> <p>AFTER SEPARATION/DIVORCE 96</p>	
DV09	<p>9A. Did the following ever happen because of something your (last) husband/partner did to you:</p> <p>a) You had bruises and aches?</p> <p>b) You had an injury or a broken bone?</p> <p>c) You went to the doctor or health center as a result of something your husband/partner did to you?</p>	<p>9B. How many times did this happen during the last 12 months?</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p> <p>YES 1 → TIMES IN LAST NO 2 12 MONTHS ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p> <p>↓</p>	
DV10	<p>Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked or done anything else to physically hurt your (last) husband/partner at times when he was not already beating or physically hurting you?</p>	<p>YES ..... 1</p> <p>NO ..... 2</p>	→ DV12
DV11	<p>In the last 12 months, how many times have you hit, slapped, kicked or done something to physically hurt your (last) husband/partner at a time when he was not already beating or physically hurting you?</p>	<p>NUMBER OF TIMES ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/></p>	

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP				
DV12	Does (did) your husband/partner drink alcohol?	YES ..... 1 NO ..... 2	→ DV14				
DV12A	How often does (did) he get drunk: very often, only sometimes, or never?	VERY OFTEN ..... 1 SOMETIMES ..... 2 NEVER ..... 3					
DV14	<p>CHECK 501, 502 &amp; 504:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> MARRIED/LIVING WITH A MAN/SEPARATED/ DIVORCED/WIDOWED </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> NEVER MARRIED/ NEVER LIVED WITH A MAN </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> From the time you were 15 years old has anyone other than your (current/last) husband/partner hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically? </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> From the time you were 15 years old has anyone ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically? </td> </tr> </table>	MARRIED/LIVING WITH A MAN/SEPARATED/ DIVORCED/WIDOWED	NEVER MARRIED/ NEVER LIVED WITH A MAN	From the time you were 15 years old has anyone other than your (current/last) husband/partner hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?	From the time you were 15 years old has anyone ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?	YES ..... 1 NO ..... 2 NO ANSWER ..... 6	<input type="checkbox"/> → DV19
MARRIED/LIVING WITH A MAN/SEPARATED/ DIVORCED/WIDOWED	NEVER MARRIED/ NEVER LIVED WITH A MAN						
From the time you were 15 years old has anyone other than your (current/last) husband/partner hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?	From the time you were 15 years old has anyone ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?						
DV15	Who has physically hurt you in this way?  Anyone else?  RECORD ALL MENTIONED.	MOTHER ..... A FATHER ..... B STEP-MOTHER ..... C STEP-FATHER ..... D SISTER ..... E BROTHER ..... F DAUGHTER ..... G SON ..... H LATE/EX-HUSBAND/EX-PARTNER ..... I CURRENT BOYFRIEND ..... J FORMER BOYFRIEND ..... K MOTHER-IN-LAW ..... L FATHER-IN-LAW ..... M OTHER FEMALE RELATIVE/IN-LAW ..... N OTHER MALE RELATIVE/ IN-LAW ..... O FEMALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE ..... P MALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE ..... Q TEACHER ..... R EMPLOYER ..... S STRANGER ..... T  OTHER _____ X (SPECIFY)					
DV16	CHECK DV15:  MORE THAN <input type="checkbox"/> ONE PERSON MENTIONED ↓	ONLY ONE <input type="checkbox"/> PERSON MENTIONED →	→ DV18				

NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP
DV17	Who has hit, slapped, kicked, or done something to physically hurt you most often?	MOTHER .....01 FATHER .....02 STEP-MOTHER .....03 STEP-FATHER .....04 SISTER .....05 BROTHER .....06 DAUGHTER .....07 SON .....08 LATE/EX-HUSBAND/EX-PARTNER .....09 CURRENT BOYFRIEND .....10 FORMER BOYFRIEND .....11 MOTHER-IN-LAW .....12 FATHER-IN-LAW .....13 OTHER FEMALE RELATIVE/IN-LAW .....14 OTHER MALE RELATIVE/ IN-LAW .....15 FEMALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE .....16 MALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE .....17 TEACHER .....18 EMPLOYER .....19 STRANGER .....20  OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)	
DV18	In the last 12 months, how many times has this person hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to physically hurt you?	NUMBER OF TIMES ..... <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
DV19	CHECK 201 AND 226:  HAS ONE OR MORE LIVE OR NON-LIVE BIRTHS OR IS CURRENTLY PREGNANT <input type="checkbox"/>	NO LIVE BIRTHS, NO NON-LIVE BIRTHS, AND IS NOT CURRENTLY PREGNANT <input type="checkbox"/>	→ DV21A
DV20	Has any one ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically while you were pregnant?	YES ..... 1 NO ..... 2	→ DV21A
DV21	Who has done any of these things to physically hurt you while you were pregnant?  Anyone else?  RECORD ALL MENTIONED.	CURRENT HUSBAND/PARTNER ..... A MOTHER ..... B FATHER ..... C STEP-MOTHER ..... D STEP-FATHER ..... E SISTER ..... F BROTHER ..... G DAUGHTER ..... H SON ..... I LATE/EX-HUSBAND/EX-PARTNER ..... J CURRENT BOYFRIEND ..... K FORMER BOYFRIEND ..... L MOTHER-IN-LAW ..... M FATHER-IN-LAW ..... N OTHER FEMALE RELATIVE/IN-LAW ..... O OTHER MALE RELATIVE/ IN-LAW ..... P FEMALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE ..... Q MALE FRIEND/ACQUAINTANCE ..... R TEACHER ..... S EMPLOYER ..... T STRANGER ..... U  OTHER _____ X (SPECIFY)	
DV21A	CHECK Q514: EVER HAD SEX?  HAS EVER HAD SEX <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER HAD SEX <input type="checkbox"/>		→ DV22



NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP
DV21B	The first time you had sexual intercourse, would you say that you had it because you wanted to, or because you were forced to have it against your will?	WANTED TO ..... 1 FORCED TO ..... 2 REFUSED TO ANSWER/NO RESPNSE 3	



NO.	QUESTIONS AND FILTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP
DV23	Have you ever tried to get help to prevent or stop (this person/ these persons) from physically hurting you?	YES ..... 1 NO ..... 2	→ DV25
DV24	From whom have you sought help?  Anyone else?  RECORD ALL MENTIONED.	MOTHER ..... A FATHER ..... B SISTER ..... C BROTHER ..... D CURRENT/LAST/LATE HUSBAND/PARTNER ..... E CURRENT/FORMER BOYFRIEND ..... F MOTHER-IN-LAW ..... G FATHER-IN-LAW ..... H OTHER FEMALE RELATIVE/IN-LAW ..... I OTHER MALE RELATIVE/ IN-LAW ..... J FRIEND ..... K NEIGHBOR ..... L TEACHER ..... M EMPLOYER ..... N RELIGIOUS LEADER ..... O DOCTOR/MEDICAL PERSONNE ..... P POLICE ..... Q LAWYER ..... R  OTHER _____ X (SPECIFY)	→ DV26
DV25	What is the main reason you have never sought help?	DON'T KNOW WHO TO GO TO .... 01 NO USE ..... 02 PART OF LIFE ..... 03 AFRAID OF DIVORCE/DESERTION ..... 04 AFRAID OF FURTHER BEATINGS . . . 05 AFRAID OF GETTING PERSON BEATING HER INTO TROUBLE ..... 06 EMBARRASSED ..... 07 DON'T WANT TO DISGRACE FAMILY ..... 08  OTHER _____ 96 (SPECIFY)	
DV26	As far as you know, did your father ever beat your mother?	YES ..... 1 NO ..... 2 DON'T KNOW ..... 8	

THANK THE RESPONDENT FOR HER COOPERATION AND REASSURE HER ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF HER ANSWERS. FILL OUT THE QUESTIONS BELOW WITH REFERENCE TO THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MODULE ONLY.

DV27	DID YOU HAVE TO INTERRUPT THE INTERVIEW BECAUSE SOME ADULT WAS TRYING TO LISTEN, OR CAME INTO THE ROOM, OR INTERFERED IN ANY OTHER WAY?	YES ONCE	YES, MORE THAN ONCE	NO
	HUSBAND .....	1	2	3
	OTHER MALE ADULT ....	1	2	3
	FEMALE ADULT .....	1	2	3

DV28 INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS / EXPLANATION FOR NOT COMPLETING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MODULE

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DV29	RECORD THE TIME.	HOUR .....	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>					MINUTES .....	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>				