Domestic Violence: A Common Problem of State and Society

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Domestic violence is the most widespread gender problem in Azerbaijan. In most households, domestic violence reveals itself in certain forms: as physical and sexual violence, or psychological oppression and some form of coerced isolation. Are domestic violence cases in Azerbaijani society similar to those of other societies, and has research on this issue revealed that it is a local or a global problem? What measures should be taken to prevent domestic violence, who can play a significant role in its solution, and what is the importance of the solution? By answering these questions, I argue that while studying the causes and consequences of domestic violence, state and the community should take a joint initiative in its prevention and resolution.

To fully explain my point, first of all, I give a broad explanation of domestic violence, its causes, and forms. Then I look at how various organizations and social systems approach to the solution of this issue. Afterwards, I explain how the problem of domestic violence is a joint problem of the state and society, and I also present some examples in order to demonstrate the possible consequences of this problem for the state and the society if there is no serious attention to its solution.

I need to note that the explanations I provide at the beginning of this article are based on my experiences from a training I participated in in Chicago on how to work with the victims of domestic violence, as well as when I worked on court cases concerning domestic violence victims and their children.

What is Domestic Violence

Domestic violence commonly refers to violent acts against wives and women, beating a family member, or a fight between spouses. However, domestic violence has legal and clinical definitions. The legal definition of domestic violence is reflected in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Prevention of Domestic Violence." According to this law, domestic violence is "a deliberate infliction of physical and moral damage by persons to others, covered under this Law, caused by abuse of close relative relations, current or past cohabitation" (1058-IIIQ). As regards the clinical definition, domestic violence is a sequence of offensive and violent behavior such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological pressure, and economic dependence or deprivation of adolescents and adults against their intimate partners (Schechter and Ganley, 1995).

The clinical definition of domestic violence is much broader than its legal definition and, therefore, it is of great importance to explore. Thus, the choice of domestic violence or violence is a problem that is more typical of behavior, and this problem usually becomes a process that has been tested in a subsequent way by the testimony of the extent to which a parent has committed violence against one another during childhood (Fitch and Papantonio 2007, 190). The choice to use violence to gain patriarchal values and power and control of domestic violence is one of the main reasons.

Thus, domestic violence or choosing to commit violence is a problem that is more typical of behavior, and this problem usually becomes a process that is *later learned* by individuals depending on how frequently they witnessed violence between their parents during their childhood (Fitch and Papantonio 2007, 190). Patriarchal values and the choice of using violence to gain control over the partner is also one of the main reasons of domestic violence.

Domestic violence between a violent person (abuser) and a victim can be between married, divorced or unmarried people

who are or were in relationship regardless of their sexual orientation and gender, duration of their relationship or whether they have children. The key to distinguish domestic violence from other violence among family members is that the former occurs between two intimate partners. From a behavioral point of view, violence can occur between two individuals who do not know each other; for example, such as bullying, harming, murder, rape, abductions, enslavement, property damage, and intimidation. But unlike these, victims of domestic violence *continuously face the mentioned violence forms*, and the effect of violence is intensified by the intimacy of their relationships (Schechter and Ganley 1995). In domestic violence, the abuser constantly reaches the victim, knows the victim's everyday lifestyles, and continually commits physical violence and manages to control the victim's daily life. The -intimate or partner relationship of the abuser with the victim, as well as the fact that they live together, gives the former this opportunity, and thus, leaves little chance for the victim of domestic violence to leave or get away from the abuser.

According to Schechter and Ganley, although domestic violence is similar to other cases of violence among family members (violence against children, violence against children's parents, violence between siblings, and violence against elderly family members), because of its specific peculiarities it belongs to a different category. In the case of domestic violence, two young people or two adults, who have equal rights and equal responsibility, apply force against and control over each other. However, none of them has the legal right to rule or control the another. *Domestic violence is a violation of this legal equality in relations between these people with equal rights.*

A person who commits domestic violence uses physical violence to carry out any control function, and "the focus on violence as a tactic of gendered entitlement is a characteristic of a patriarchal structure that gives men more right to power than

women" (Busch et al. 2002, 1095). The abuser aims to increase his domination and control over the victim and to pursue his own interests. In addition, the violence used by the abuser in domestic violence is not merely one kind, but rather different forms of violence which replace one another. Domestic violence has the following forms: physical, sexual, psychological, and economic. In domestic violence, incidents are related to the previous ones and often lead to another incident. Along with physical and psychological violence, victims of domestic violence are usually subjected to sexual violence, too. All forms of violence may not be physically proven and sometimes physical violence can result in bodily injury and serious health problems, which can later result in severe and chronic illness. Regardless of physical violence, all types of violence have a negative impact on the victim's psychology and cause severe damage to the victim's mental health, social activities, self-reliance, and self-worth.

The forms of domestic violence are almost identical with other forms of violence. Even researchers note that violence tactics used by abusers in domestic violence are similar to the tactics used against war prisoners (Graham et al. 1988). Domestic violence is similar to the psychological and physical violence used against war prisoners to get information from them and to make them follow orders. Moreover, the violence in domestic violence is more tragic because it is committed by the closest person to the victim, *the intimate partner*, and therefore, domestic violence is more complex behavior. Let us take a look at the forms of domestic violence committed by intimate partners.

Physical violence: it includes grabbing, twisting, pushing, hitting, scratching, biting, choking, punching, shaking, dragging, hair pulling, keeping the victim in a closed room or anywhere else, spitting, slapping, using any household item, knife or gun against the victim. Most victims of domestic violence are women and children, and most abusers are men. Acts such as pushing or slapping, which are justified by

abusers on the grounds that they are “lightly committed,” can sometimes even cause severe injuries, bodily damage, nervous system trauma, loss of teeth, and so on. Injuries to the victim’s head can cause very dangerous traumas and lead to psychological problems or syndromes in the future. In cases of domestic violence, deaths are also the result of physical violence.

Sexual violence: Sexual violence, like physical violence, involves a set of behavior or actions. The most encountered sexual violence act is forcing the victim into sexual intercourse, threatening or manipulating the victim with physical violence or rape if she does not agree with sexual intercourse, forcing her[i] into sexual intercourse that she does not want, for example, to have sex with a third person, or forcing her to perform a sexual act that she finds humiliating (Schechter and Ganley, 1995). It also includes any sexual coercion when the victim does not agree to or does not verbally confirm her agreement to sexual intercourse; for example, when she is tired after physical work or around other people or children, after she has been subjected to physical violence, when she is under the influence of alcoholic beverages or asleep. The victim’s objection on this basis usually results in new physical violence against her. Therefore, victims of sexual violence also face physical violence. According to the joint survey by the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Macro International Inc, “fifty-five percent of women who ever experienced sexual violence had cuts, bruises, or aches during at least one episode of violence; 35 percent received from eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns as a result of sexual violence; and 12 percent reported receiving deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or any other serious injury due to sexual violence” (SSCRA and MII 2008, 223).

For many victims of domestic violence, sexual violence is a very sensitive and grave subject. Because there is no sexual

education in Azerbaijan, many victims are unaware of the fact that sexual violence is a form of violence and that they face it.

Psychological violence: Psychological violence is more complex and it has several types. These types are related to other forms of violence committed by the abuser and depend on the choice of appropriate psychological pressure tactics in a given time and environment. Let us look at some examples: The abuser manages to control the victim by threatening her or her relatives (or friends) with physical violence. Sometimes the abuser demonstrates it by words, sometimes by his actions. In some cases, the abuser forces the victim to do something illegal, and then threatens her with a complaint to the police or the relevant authorities (Schechter and Ganley, 1995). In the case of gay couples, this threat is observed if the abuser threatens the victim (who is not openly gay) to inform the latter's family, friends, and acquaintances that the victim is homosexual. Another method of psychological violence is to keep the victim under control by harming the latter's belongings or pets. For example, the abuser breaks the victim's most loved household items, cuts off her clothes, and hides the bag with her personal documents. Sometimes, by breaking the door of the victim's room and punching the objects or the wall surrounding the victim, the abuser implies that the next punch will be directed to the victim. All of this is done to put the victim under the abuser's psychological threat.

The abuser also puts his partner under psychological danger by breaking the victim's relationships with other people. He isolates the victim by separating her from her close friends and relatives as well as preventing the victim from communicating with them. For example, the abuser prohibits the victim to contact some of her friends on the grounds that the latter are immoral (filthy) women whose behavior is not appropriate to their own family, or the abuser forbids the victim to communicate with her relatives or her family by

saying that he wants to spend more time with her. Over time, this isolation becomes even more severe, and the abuser even commits violence against people who want to be around the victim. The abuser also lies and distorts the environment for the victim in order to stop her from going to the police. Because of the isolation of the victim, she fears and believes her violent partner and does not try to take other steps to save herself from violent influences.

The abuser has a psychological impact on the victim as a result of his emotional violence. For instance, the abuser humiliates the victim by verbally insulting her, touching on sensitive issues such as insulting her recently deceased father, making fun of her self-esteem, accent or speaking behavior, and her treatment of her children; all these humiliating words are said in the context of the fear of violence (Schechter and Ganley, 1995). Verbal emotional violence is committed by slander, humiliation, and nicknames, and they are used as derogatory rather than a joke (Retzinger 1991, 40). In other cases, the abuser verbally humiliates the victim in front of her family, friends, or strangers in the streets.

One of the most common forms of psychological violence is children intimidation. The abuser constantly forces the victim to comply with what he says by threatening to take their children away or remove her from the guardianship of the children by a court decision (Schechter and Ganley, 1995). Sometimes the abuser uses children to spy on their mother to know what she says and where she goes. In domestic violence, children are sometimes victims of violence and injuries. For example, children become victims of violence when the abuser pushes the mother while she holds her children, locks the children into the next room while beating the mother or subjects the older children to violence when they try to help their mother. The abuser sometimes harms the children when they keep their mother’s side.

Economic violence: it occurs if the abuser controls and makes decisions about the household income when both partners or only the victim work. Usually the abuser does not allow the victim to work or go to lessons that would enable her to work in the future, and by time the victim becomes economically dependent on the abuser for things such as grocery expenses, clothes, the daily needs of their children, or public transportation. The lack of money for the most ordinary needs can cause the victim to meet the demands of her abuser and endure violence. Even if the abuser gives money to the victim, she cannot spend that money on her own free will. As a result, the abuser manages to take the victim under his control. Economic dependency can also occur in families of different economic levels, regardless of class differences. Sometimes, even after separation, the abuser can deliberately destroy the jointly created and collected funds; or while living together the abuser can force the victim to take a loan from the bank or borrow money from someone, and after their divorce he can put an additional debt on the victim by putting the whole obligation on her. Deliberately organized expensive court proceedings can also be considered a form of economic violence. Economic violence within the framework of domestic violence is explained in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Prevention of Domestic Violence in the following way: "1.0.5. Domestic application of illegal limitations of economic character – means actions by persons covered under this Law towards each other aimed at deprivation of the right to own, dispose of or use property, or obtain income, or at creating, sustaining and abusing the situation of economic dependency" (1058-IIIQ, 2010).

Theories About the Causes of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is specifically gender-related. Traditionally, men make up the largest percentage of those who commit domestic violence. Since the victims of domestic violence are mostly women, it is often referred to as gender-based violence. The 1993 Declaration of the General Assembly

of the United Nations defines the term gender-based as “any act (…) that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (UN, 1993). In some cases, women can also commit violence, but in most cases they use violence to protect themselves or their children. Additionally, gay couples also experience violence between two men or two women, which should be treated as domestic violence between two intimate individuals, and factors such as strength and control of one over another are also characteristic in this form of domestic violence.

The women’s movement to combat domestic violence began in the United States in the 1970s. Since then, researchers have been able to propose a number of theories to gain insight into the causes of domestic violence in order to prevent it. Among these theories the most widespread discussions were on *social learning* theory, *cycle of violence* theory, and *power and control* theory.

Social learning theory: Most studies on domestic violence support the idea that domestic violence is a form of *behavior that is socially learned*. During the investigation of incidents of other violence, including domestic violence, it was found that these violent acts are often committed by those individuals who saw or were personally subjected to domestic violence by their own parents. This type of violence can be attributed to domestic violence since all forms of violence are interconnected due to their motives and causes (Michallic and Elliot 1997, 26). Individuals who witnessed violence against their mothers or who were subjected to violence at home are more inclined to commit violence in the future. Such people, growing up in a family or social environment (such as a kindergarten and school) where violence was seen normal, perceive violence as a norm of daily living. There are also cases where individuals experiencing domestic violence during their childhood do not commit violence in the future. However,

more opinions were exchanged on the theory that violence is a form of behavior that is socially learned, and this opinion was justified.

As for girls growing up in a violent environment, it is possible that girls who have witnessed violence against their mother in their family will not face violence by their husbands in their future families, but often the situation is the opposite for two reasons: The first reason is that a girl who has witnessed violence against her mother and saw that her mother was not seeking any help during the violence will not be inclined to seek help if she is subjected to violence by her husband in the future, and the violence will appear to her as normal (in most cases). Or she will do whatever her husband says in order to avoid violence from him because she saw during her childhood and adolescence that her mother was subjected to violence when she did not obey the orders of her husband. Since women who are less educated and have not been given an opportunity to develop their worldview are not aware of alternatives, they will see positively responding to the demands of their husbands as the best way to avoid domestic violence. But it is known that well-educated women also face violence. The second reason is that a woman who witnessed or was subjected to violence in her own family can live with a violent partner in the future, and this time she can be subjected to violence by her partner.

Cycle of violence theory: The abuser of domestic violence sometimes regrets that he has committed a crime and promises that it will never happen again. Pouring tears, giving gifts, gestures that express regret, such as “forgive me I was angry” can be giving as examples. However, it is interesting here that if the victim does not positively respond to the gestures, the abuser begins to commit violence again. We can see that domestic violence is a regular and periodic behavior in the form of violence. According to the cycle of violence theory, violence is a three-step process. Disagreement between the partners is observed at the first stage by *the emergence*

of tension. At this stage, the abuser experiences feelings of excessive anger and belligerence. The tension, in the second stage, results in an *explosion*. At this stage, the violence committed by the abuser shows itself in physical, psychological, and sexual forms. After violence is committed, for example, a few days later, the initial forms of communication between the partners are restored, and relations are gradually normalized, which marks the third stage or the *honeymoon* phase (Coleman 1997, 422). But some researchers were skeptical about the explanatory power of the cycle of violence theory. For in some cases, the honeymoon phase is not observed after violence, and the abuser always deliberately keeps the victim under pressure (Frederick, 1997).

Power and control theory: Then, it was suggested that *the intention of the abuser to exercise power over, and control, the victim* lies at the root of domestic violence. It should be noted that the theory of power and control, which is the feminist theory of violence against women, "rests on three concepts: power, control, and traditional gender roles" (Busch et al 2002, 1095). The abuser controls the actions, thoughts, and choices of the victim by using certain tactics, and thus, achieves his goal, that is, to force the victim to obey him and to carry out only his (the abuser's) wishes. According to the theory of power and control, physical and sexual violence are the main tactics for gaining power. These tactics cause victims to fear and make them believe that power is concentrated in the hands of the abuser. By using psychological and economic violence, coercion as well as other forms of undetectable violence, the abuser manages to continue to take full control of the victim.

The cause of widespread cases of domestic violence is that religious beliefs such as the concentration of power and authority in the hands of men, patriarchal values, toxic masculinity, and the subjugation of women to men are social norms. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action states that "Violence against women is a manifestation of the

historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement" (UN 1995, paragraph 118). The increasing number of domestic violence cases is the result of direct or indirect involvement of society in this issue. Domestic violence becomes an even more socially-burdened problem when relatives, neighbors and other members of society justify it by blaming the victim and citing traditional beliefs such as the necessity of male dominance in a relationship.

Certain beliefs of some organizations also play an important role in the ongoing process of domestic violence. Religion, media, the education system, and legal and social support systems affect the continuation of the violence: for example, the religious emphasis that a woman is subject to, and the property of, her husband; the approach to domestic violence as usual news and its insufficient coverage in media outlets; improper consideration of the complaints of victims of violence; the unserious attitudes of police officers towards the woman complainant; failure to give appropriate penalties to the abuser or failure to enforce those penalties; low quality education, negligence or avoidance of teachers to teach equal rights of men and women to pupils; lack of social work and social assistance systems; and the lack of mechanisms for doctors to take appropriate steps if they suspect or know that the injuries of their patients are related to domestic violence. An indifferent societal approach to the use of violence and its justification lead to increasing domestic violence cases. When such beliefs are supported by police officers and other persons in law enforcement agencies, it results in the failure of people, who have a key role to play in solving and ending domestic violence, to properly fulfill their obligations and implement the law.

What Are Not the Causes of Domestic Violence: It is wrong to think that in cases of domestic violence, the victim is guilty. This view ignores the acts of the abuser, reduces the

importance of, or simply justifies, his actions. Disagreements between couples may result in uttering rude words, and other grievances, but no action of the victim can be cited as a justification for violence against her.

It is often claimed that domestic violence occurs due to alcoholic consumption or drug usage. However, as a result of alcohol, a person suddenly does not turn into a violent person. Edward Gondolf, who studies the relationship between alcoholic drinks and hegemonic masculine behavior, power, and control, states that “alcohol abuse and wife assault are not causally linked, but are the manifestation of an underlying set of socially induced issues. Alcohol abuse, in this light, emerges as another weapon in a larger battle for control and dominance in an intimate male-female relationship” (Gondolf 1995, 276). It turns out that the abuser is potentially vulnerable to committing violence with or without consuming alcohol and alcoholic consumption is not the root of the problem.

It is also controversial to show stress as a cause of domestic violence. In our daily lives, we face many stressful things: at work, at home, and in our social lives. When the abusers, however, unable to solve a stressful incident with their bosses in the workplace or friends in a cafe, take out their anger on their partners at home, how can they blame their partners for the stress? Therefore, it is wrong to say that stress is the cause of domestic violence committed by the abuser. As in cases of robbery or murder stress cannot constitute a justification, it cannot be considered a justification for domestic violence.

Usually, we hear of anger management problems as the cause of domestic violence. However, it is known that abusers also intentionally commit violence when they are calm. The aggravating state is sometimes artificially created by the abuser to frighten the victim. When such a situation occurs, using violence is a form of behavior which the abuser has

socially learned in his development process. Since the abuser does not have experience dealing with his anger in a calm manner, he prefers to use violent methods he has learned from his life experience. If the abuser justifies his actions on the grounds that he was angry, he should be told that violence is not the only way to deal with tensions and he should try to find the real source of his anger (Potter-Efron 2015, 31). Therefore, in order to change the behavior of abusers who cite anger as the basis for their violent actions, in some countries, the judicial system, besides a certain penal procedure, sends them to training programs which teach different ways to deal with violence, the completion of which is obligatory.

Domestic Violence in Azerbaijan and the Problems With Its Solution

Domestic violence is one of the most challenging problems of Azerbaijani society, but it's solution also depends on the development of society, the autonomy of individuals, and the institutional responsibility of the state to thoroughly address the problem. In Azerbaijan, however, domestic violence is still considered a social issue rather than a problem of state importance. As in other societies where patriarchal values are strong, Azerbaijani society still considers a man to be the head of the household, thus, his committing violence against his partner is perceived as normal. Many justify the actions of the abusers on the grounds that "a man can both love and beat," "his wife, his business," or "what right does a wife have to challenge her husband?" In the joint survey by SSCRA and MII concerning the opinion of men and women about domestic violence against women, "women and men were asked whether a husband is justified in beating his wife under a series of circumstances: if the wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sexual relations. Men are more likely than women to agree with at least one of the reasons justifying a husband's beating of his wife (58 percent of men compared with 49

percent of women)" (SSCRA and MII 2008, xxviii).

Apparently, all of the mentioned examples are reasons for domestic violence in Azerbaijan. Violence is believed to be so normal that punishing women with violence for almost any minor or major problem is considered to be normal by approximately half of both men and women. In particular, in Azerbaijan, unmarried women are subjected to violence by their mothers, fathers and brothers. After marriage, this violence is committed by their husbands, mothers-in-law, and other close relatives. Studies have also proven that mothers experiencing violence are inclined to commit violence against their own children, and mothers who are not able to respond to their abusers, take out their anger on their children. In many cases, due to the effects of physical and psychological violence, it becomes difficult for mothers to show their love to their children, nevertheless, usually protecting their children from violence is priority for mothers experiencing violence from their husbands.

Although the number of domestic violence cases is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas, fewer abusers of domestic violence are legally charged in rural areas. In the Azerbaijani law on domestic violence, adopted in 2010, we can see that the police and local executive authorities have certain responsibilities in domestic violence prevention. The law addresses where the victims of domestic violence should seek legal and psychological assistance, and it states that the victims (women) should be transferred to shelters and be provided with social assistance. However, human resources (such as police, psychologists, social workers, and public defenders) and programs designed to provide shelter and temporary accommodation are not available. The law On Prevention of Domestic Violence describes the process to be executed in the following way: "7.0.1. provide an aggrieved person with immediate medical aid, temporary shelter in a support center, clothing and food at public expense, as well as forward information about the aggrieved person to the

relevant executive authority for conducting a course of psychological rehabilitation" (1058-IIIQ, 2010). Despite the adoption of this law, the actions prescribed and the obligations stated in the law are not implemented, and the state's mobilization in this issue is not observed. In the women's crisis centers created by law, workers are not employed and financial assistance and other reforms are not undertaken for the active functioning of these places. Therefore, these rooms, which are often created in school or educational centers, are not used for its purposes or they simply remain closed.

There are serious irregularities in issuing and enforcing short- and long-term protective orders. As stated in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Prevention of Domestic Violence, "Protective order" – denotes an act of limitations applied on contingent actions of the person who committed domestic violence against the aggrieved person" (1058-IIIQ, 2010). This act is issued to prevent the abusers of chasing and harassing their victims in their houses or shelters. As indicated in the law, protective orders are given for short and long terms. A short-term protective order, issued for a month, must be provided within 24 hours from the date of application by local executive authorities. A long-term protective order, issued for a six-month period, is issued on the basis of the local court's decision. If the abuser does not comply with the requirements of the short-term protective order, then the court shall pass a resolution within three days to extend the order up to six months. The duration of the long-term protective order in Azerbaijan is relatively short compared to other countries. For example, in the United States, this period is up to 2 years. Persons who fail to comply with the prohibitions laid down by protective orders may be subject to criminal and administrative liability. However, as it is seen, the number of protective orders issued is low, in a country with a high number of domestic violence cases, and those who violate this order are not properly

punished or prevented.

According to Elgun Safarov, the head of the Information and Analytical Research Department of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, a total of 7 people in the country were given a protective order in 2017. Three of them were short-term, and four were long-term (Ibrahimova 2017). As I have personally worked and gained experience in the United States Family Court system, I would like give an example from Chicago, which has a population (about 2.7 million) similar to Baku. In one district domestic violence court in Chicago, 1097 protection orders were issued in 2016 (Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, 2016). Apparently, there is a great lack of activity in issuing protective orders in Azerbaijan. Although the law provides a guideline for the prevention of domestic violence and penalties for violators, there are shortcomings in the implementation of the law as well as in the organization of the work of the police, the judiciary, and the local executive authorities. The police and court judges regularly and systematically violate the law on domestic violence. "Police blatantly violate the law by rejecting applications or purposefully postponing depositions, forcing the victims (who are often under additional pressure from their husband and/or other relatives) to abandon their application" (Wilson 2017, 305). The author interviewed several local public associations in Azerbaijan and quoted the statement of an employee of one of them about the attitude of the police to a woman who had come with a complaint about domestic violence:

"Another problem, one of the most important ones, is the unprofessional conduct of police workers. For example, I came with a woman once to the police. She was telling an investigator that she was battered … Here are the actions of the police investigator [right in front of me]: … he says: 'why were you beaten?' She starts telling the story anew. 'Do you know that if you were a good wife, a man would not beat you? Just think: maybe you did something wrong? Perhaps you

cheated on him? Maybe you didn't have dinner ready on time? Or perhaps you were rude to him and maybe that's why he was beating you?' So the woman started crying. Here's what she said: 'at home I was exposed to physical violence; when I came to police, I am punished for this: get exposed to psychological violence'" (Wilson 2017, 305).

Apparently, in Azerbaijan, women's complaints against their husbands made to the police are not taken seriously, they are postponed, and complaints of victims are not provided on the grounds that women should not dissolve their families and they should reconcile with their husbands, i.e. their abusers. Moreover, initiatives such as involvement in reconciliation and working for a family reunion are also reflected in the law on domestic violence: "8.0.8 assist in normalization of relations between parties and resumption of family affairs" (1058-IIIQ, 2010). It should be noted that this clause of the law on domestic violence is ambiguous and not inclusive, and probably police officers justify their "normalization" actions based on the above-mentioned clause. Normalizing the relations of abusers with the victims, who were subjected to different forms of violence by their partners, such as physical, sexual, and psychological, that may have physically and mentally traumatized them, but managed to complain to the police in order to escape from their abusers, might not be the priority of those victims. Moreover, these reconciliation tactics most probably had already been used by family and relatives at some time before the official complaint (because domestic violence is periodical and spiral or serial behavior), and positive results had not been achieved. Because of these facts, only a few people complain about domestic violence in Azerbaijan, and there is a lack of accurate statistics about those complaints. While media outlets and government websites report that the facts of domestic violence are registered, the statistics are not published or publicly disclosed.

Domestic Violence is a Common Problem of Society and State

Society and state should work together in the prevention of domestic violence. If individuals who inform the police about physical violence in their neighbor's house are condemned by society, or if the abuser is ignored on the grounds that "it is his private family business" instead of being told that he is guilty of committing violence, and if the state does not improve sensitivity and professional training or implement other social structure reforms in the police, then we, as a community and state, play a direct role in the increasing number of domestic violence cases. A comprehensive approach is required by different groups of society to prevent domestic violence. Obtaining inter-professional cooperation is critical to its resolution (Bent-Goodley and Tricia 2007, 98). Of course, it is not enough just for one organization or a group of professional people (such as women's organizations and psychological assistance centers, which are believed to be responsible for finding solutions to domestic violence) to take all the responsibility for the solution of this problem.

Stereotypical beliefs that the man is head of the household and his wife and children are his property are empowered by religion, traditions, and the traditional gender roles (i.e. women should do housework and men should earn money) of Azerbaijani society. This sense of ownership is reflected in the whole life of Azeri women. For example, women cannot independently make decisions on issues like their clothes, workplace, where they go, or even their children's kindergarten and school selection. Especially if a woman prefers "open" clothes and does not spend most of her time at home, neighbors and relatives become suspicious. If her husband sees these suspicions or if he himself is against his wife's behavior, then the issue of *namus* (patriarchal moral values; especially about respect to sexual integrity) comes to the fore. In Azerbaijan, the causes of domestic violence also include cases involving women's unfaithfulness, their *alleged* betrayal as well as their husbands' suspicion and anxiety in this regard. Stereotypical social norms, the family and

environment in which one grow up, and one's mental health status plays a major role in this situation. Nevertheless, the role of patriarchal social norms is very important here.

In societies where patriarchal values are strong, a man's *namus* depends on the behavior of women in his family. A woman's *namus* is determined by her shyness and lack of close relationships with other men. In such societies, even the possibility that a woman's met with other men is considered a disgrace on her husband's honor and dignity and results in his humiliation by the society. If a husband does not punish his wife, who is believed to meet with other men, he is not respected in his society and he is not considered a "man" (Vandello et al. 2003, 998). Therefore, a response to sexual dishonesty often leads to violence or "honor killings." It should be emphasized that betrayal and such cases are not assessed equally by the society when it comes to men and these are gender issues. So, if a man betrays his wife, the society accepts it as normal and believes that the is no need to make a fuss about it. But, if a woman betrays her husband, her actions lead to severe physical punishment, degrading actions, and even death.

From a legal point of view, any family and its members have the right to equal protection. Two individuals, having entered into marriage relations, establish equal rights, equal responsibilities, and equal property between themselves. Two individuals enter into a certain property relationship do not have a right to commit violence against one another. Married people make a commitment to each other concerning their personal sexual life. Legally speaking, the side which has been betrayed can initiate a divorce case on the grounds that the other side has violated their commitment. However, a man has no right whatsoever to commit violence against a woman because of cheating. The main thing is that women's rights are human rights, and human rights are protected by law, and no one has the right to violate them. As in other offenses, administrative and criminal charges are brought against the

person who violated a law, a similar response is given to abusers in cases of domestic violence.

The Role of the State in Addressing Domestic Violence: It is clear that domestic violence is a violation of human rights and an intention of one of the two equal rights holders in the intimate relationship to obtain *unjust domination* over the other. By approaching the domestic violence from a human rights framework, we can see how important the role of the state is in this matter. As Thomas and Beasley state, the concept of human rights is one of the values acknowledged by all states. “Domestic violence violates the principles that lie at the heart of this moral vision: the inherent dignity and worth of all members of the human family, the inalienable right to freedom from fear and want, and the equal rights of men and women” (Thomas and Beasley 1993, 37).

The state initiative in preventing domestic violence and implementing social reforms is crucial. Traditionally, domestic violence was believed to be a family matter, and it was thought that the state had no right to interfere in the domestic affairs of a family. However, as a result of the women’s rights movements and the application of feminist approaches in the world, the direct role and responsibility of the state in preventing domestic violence is revealed. Thomas and Beasley argue that the responsibility of the state is its “systematic failure to prosecute acts committed either by low-level or para-state agents or by private actors” (1993, 41). According to the authors, even though violence in cases of domestic violence is not directly committed by the state, it becomes indirectly involved in the violence if it fails to punish the abusers and take appropriate measures. If a victim of domestic violence, by avoiding her husband, manages to complain to the police and hopes that the police will stop the abuser or that the abuser will rightly be punished, and if the police violates her right to complain or humiliates her by saying things such as “probably you disobeyed your husband,” “you didn’t cook on time,” and “anything can happen within a

family, did you come to complain about your own husband?" that police officer violates the law adopted by the state in accordance with international human rights and, thus, commits a crime against the state.

Therefore, the state should directly organize programs to increase the efficiency of law-enforcement system, and to train the officers about their role in domestic violence and its prevention. To improve the lives of people who have suffered domestic violence and to create structural changes, relevant social work, laws, resolutions, and orders should be developed and their implementation should be controlled by state. A number of shelters for victims of domestic violence should be built with the support of the government, non-governmental organizations, public associations, and individual initiatives or donations, and a system should be prepared to control them as well as to support their material, technical, and other works. Involvement or assistance of the state in the creation and implementation of programs to ensure unity among non-governmental organizations, active members of society in this issue, the courts, asylum seekers, social workers, law enforcement agencies, psychological and legal clinics, would have made great contributions to the solution of the problem.

Impact of Domestic Violence on the Development of Society: In societies where domestic violence occurs frequently, its outcomes are directly noticed in the development of these societies, and high number of domestic violence cases negatively affects society and the state. As a result of the persistent persecution of women, they face with a number of physical injuries and illnesses. Even the abuser may not allow the victim to seek medical assistance after being subjected to violence. (Bent-Goodley and Tricia 2007, 93). Women living in a domestic violence environment experience mental shocks from other types of violence as well as psychological violence. Those women see decline in their social activities, and in the days they experience violence their concentration and

participation at work decreases too. Mothers who lost their self-confidence and hope cannot properly engage in the upbringing and education of their children at home. We know that due to traditional gender roles, it is mothers who are primarily responsible for the upbringing of children in Azerbaijan.

One of the most serious consequences of domestic violence for society is its devastating effects on children's mental health. 60 percent of children living in an environment of domestic violence experience some type of mental problem in their lives, and these symptoms can even deteriorate and reach clinical levels (Graham 1988, 196). Of course, the negative effects of domestic violence depend on what the child has witnessed and how old they were at that time. In cases of domestic violence, infants typically experience serious problems in their sleeping and eating habits as well as a significant increase in their crying, which hinders their normal development (Knapp, 1998). Children at preschool ages living in an environment of domestic violence experience excessive shyness, unwillingness to communicate, and, like children of secondary school age, they blame themselves for the occurrence of domestic violence in their families. Occasionally, due to their psychological trauma, children experience some physical symptoms such as nervousness or seizures, and sometimes they themselves become victims of physical violence.

One of the main factors of domestic violence that negatively affects the development of society is the spread of domestic violence from one generation to another like an infectious disease; in a society that justifies violence and in a family that justifies the violence of male members against female member(s), a new generation of males would think that as a partner (e.g., lover, fiancée, husband) and a relative (father, brother, uncle, cousin) *they have the right* to commit violence against another in their relationships (due to beliefs such as they are the head of the household or they

should punish others for alleged bad behavior), and thus, they will have a negative impact on future relations.

Another factor is the undesirable effect of domestic violence on the development of negative cultural norms and the weakening of citizen participation. In an environment of violence, verbal aggression, physical, sexual and emotional humiliation, there is no room for the development of non-violent social skills (Parks and Crawford 2016). This shows that sustained domestic violence can lead to the development of negative cultural norms in society. By negative cultural norms, I mean, for example, physical punishment of pupils by school teachers. Such teachers do not see a problem in applying physical punishment because they were punished in a similar fashion by their own teachers during their school yearsç and other teachers at school, i.e. their colleagues, also use the same form of penalty against their pupils. Hence, physical punishment becomes a norm for those teachers.

Families frequently experiencing domestic violence experience anger and isolation; as a result, members of such a family are not inclined to actively participate in improving the overall well-being of society. On the other hand, members of such families become hesitant to be in close contact with others in order to avoid any possible rebuke. This often occurs because of the social and emotional isolation of family members by the abuser. Lack of participation in society leads to negligence to, and inadequate investigation of, the problem of domestic violence.

Conclusion

Domestic violence is a collection of behaviors that one intimate partner exercises to create his domination or control over the other. It is possible to understand the causes of domestic violence by mostly studying clinical aspects of this behavior. While discussing theories concerning the causes of domestic violence, this article stated that domestic violence

is (1) socially learned, (2) recurring, and (3) an act committed by a violent partner to gain power and control over the victim. Sometimes violence is wrongly justified on the grounds that the victim was guilty, or the abuser could not control his anger due to stress at his workplace and in the family. However, none of these things give a right to one partner to subject the other into violence. Just as being stressed or drunk is not a justification to commit other forms of violence or to break the law, domestic violence should not be justified by citing these reasons.

Domestic violence is a social problem, and it is commonplace in societies where patriarchal values are dominant. However, the direct involvement of the state in the prevention of domestic violence, the solution of the problems of victims and the punishment of violent individuals is inevitable. In the prevention of domestic violence throughout the country, it is pivotal for the state to play a direct role in giving instruction to law enforcement on domestic violence, increasing knowledge and skills in dealing with a person who has been subjected to or committed violence, the establishment of new shelters as well as providing shelters with human resources such as psychologists and lawyers. The state’s activeness should be directed at law enforcement agencies, in particular, in order to make them carry out their activities and check their performance. For the police commit a crime against the state by going against the law and improperly fulfilling its provisions. Thereby, the international commitments undertaken by the state in the field of human rights protection are insufficiently fulfilled.

Domestic violence, as a social problem, has negative impacts on society. As a result of damage to the mental, physical and reproductive health of victims (mostly women) of domestic violence, their participation in society as social individuals is prevented, they are isolated from society by their abusers, serious problems arise in their self-confidence, and obstacles are created in their activities in their work and families.

Children who grow up in families experiencing domestic violence do not see enough care and love; they experience self-isolation, shyness, weakness in their lessons, and serious shortcomings in their upbringing and education. Let me mention again that domestic violence is a socially learned behavior and children who grow up in such an environment will more likely be violent partners, fathers or relatives in their adulthood. Children with physical and mental health problems, as well as improper education, become unable to play an important role in the development of society.

But as a society and state we must stand against social norms that support men's domination over women, investigate how we are responsible for the occurrence of domestic violence and how we can solve or at least prevent it. As a society and a state, our recklessness in the problem of domestic violence, which can be seen in the number of cases of domestic violence, results in the degradation of the society.

The article gives a few statistical examples on domestic violence due to the lack of information on domestic violence cases and related legal procedures in Azerbaijan. It would be desirable if future studies on this issue focuses on social security of the population and how to better provide social assistance such as free legal, psychological, and social benefits to victims of domestic violence as mentioned in the law. Taking into account the clinical definition of domestic violence, psychological research on this issue in Azerbaijan would also be of great importance, which would also describe the general psychological and social picture of domestic violence.

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[i] Translator's note: since the majority of domestic violence victims is women, I will refer to "the victim" as "her" throughout the article.