“Macak, masak, manak”:
Javanese Muslim Women’s experience of Domestic violence

The Thesis submitted for Master Degree
By Erwin Nur Rif’ah
Supervisor: Dr Diana Gibson

The Amsterdam Master’s in Medical Anthropology
Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
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Erwin Nur Rif'ah
This is a qualitative study describing how social and cultural factors interface with domestic violence occurring in Javanese Muslim society living in an urban area.

The objective of this study was to explore Javanese Muslim women's experience, perception, beliefs regarding domestic violence and the way they exercise agency in responding to the violence. The study was conducted in three urban sub-districts of Jember district, East Java province, Indonesia, for the period of six weeks from the third week of May to the end of June 2004. The total number of samples participating as informants in the study was nine consisting of six victims of domestic violence and three key informants. The informants were selected through snowball effect method. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interviews. Most data collection was conducted in Indonesian language and only a few parts were done in Javanese language.

The findings suggested that gender relation still played important roles in placing positions of men and women within marital relationships and affected the types of domestic violence occurring in Javanese Muslim society living urban area. Their beliefs and practices within the marital relationship were mainly shaped by both Javanese values and Islamic teachings. Women were still considered responsible for domestic works regardless of their relatively high education. This happened because doing household works was considered as one form of service and obedience to their husbands and failure to do so would make them faced a social stigma as incompetent wives. Regarding to the types of violence, most women considered physical violence as intolerable and a crime. However, most of them still tolerated economical violence as long as their husband still behaved well by avoiding drinking alcohol, gambling, and having affairs.

The most common form of domestic violence experienced by the informants was verbal violence. It was also considered as the most hurting violence by them after the psychological violence such as that when their husbands had affairs with other women. In addition, all the informants also stated that mother in-laws also often perpetrated violence either directly or indirectly. Whereas the ways the informants exercise agency in dealing with domestic violence vary, depending on the time of its occurrence, types of the violence, and status as well as ability of the informants.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Gender-based violence is increasingly receiving global attention as a significant public health and human rights issue (Heise 1996). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO 1997), violence against women is a crucial violation of the human right to liberty and freedom from fear. One of the most common forms of gender-based violence is domestic violence.

Domestic violence is categorically different from acts of violence between individuals who are not related in family kinships, either officially bonded in marriage or not. First, domestic violence tends to take place in the privacy of the home, while most other violence takes place in public settings—indeed that there are also some non domestic violence taking place in the home, such as in the case of burglary but its occurrence is less when compared to domestic violence. Secondly, when violence occurs in public settings, there are often bystanders present who might intervene and either break up the fight or aid one of the participants. Violence at home is a private affair with no bystanders (other than children or, in some cases, other members of extended family) and nobody to assist. Thirdly, when violence occurs in a public setting, someone may directly interfere or call the police before or during the affair to break it up. In instances of domestic violence, bystanders, such as relatives or neighbours, mostly consider this as a private affair of the husband and wife. They usually find it is not easy to involve themselves in it. However, even if the police are called into a home, their response is likely to be quite different from their response to public violence (Gelles in Roy 1977:46).

Dobash and Dobash (1979, 1998) and Dobash et al. (1996) argue that violence can be regarded as the result of the conflicts of interests within domestic relationships, based on the more powerful status and position of men in a patriarchal society. Dobash and Dobash (1979, 1998) identified four themes that exemplify conflict leading to domestic violence, namely: 1) Men’s possessiveness and jealousy, 2) Disagreements and expectations with regard to domestic work and resources, 3) Men’s sense of their right to punish ‘their’ women for perceived wrongdoing, 4) The importance to men of maintaining or exercising their power and authority.
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Based on available national surveys across industrialised and developing countries, one out of every three women has experienced violence in an intimate relationship at some point in her life (WHO 1997). Most studies indicate that wife abuse occurs in some communities in as many as one in three marriages (Davies 1994:2).

Compared to other countries, Indonesia does not provide sufficient services, legal assistance, and protective legislation in relation to domestic violence. It is nevertheless accepted that there is a serious problem with all forms of violence against women in the society and especially with domestic violence. A number of major obstacles pose difficulties in uncovering and recording the number of cases of domestic violence in this country. These obstacles include societal norms, myths surrounding domestic violence, and the fact that this issue is very sensitive and tends to be rationalised away due to conflicts of interest and the prevailing cultural norms (UNIFEM Jakarta).

A study done at a woman's crisis centre, Centre hospital Cipto Mangunkusumo Jakarta from June 2000 to December 2001, found that 173 cases of domestic violence occurred. In addition, Yayasan Rifka Annissa, a woman's crisis centre in Yogyakarta, also dealt with 994 cases of domestic violence between 1994 to 2000. From the case documentation it was ascertained that the most of perpetrators were husbands (69-74%) (Journal Perempuan no 26). However it is difficult to estimate the actual incidence of domestic violence. According to Gelles (1987:21) the known number of incidents only shows ‘the tip of the iceberg’. Beneath this tip many domestic violence incidents may be hidden.

So far, research on domestic violence has been done in various countries, different cultural setting and different contexts; and it might be influenced by the ways in which researchers approach the topic. Hence, in understanding the context of domestic violence, it is important first to comprehend the context of the lives of men and women within a society and to understand the roles that they play in order to fullfil society’s expectations (Squire, 2003). To grasp how domestic violence occurs and why it happens in certain communities and in wider society in general also requires comprehension of the social and cultural context behind the occurrence of the domestic violence.

Furthermore, Hoff (1990) asserts that violence against women occurs in a climate of socially structured inequalities for women, exemplified not only by the ideology and practices of patriarchy, but also by sexism. In a social system in which
women's subordination to men is regarded as natural, violence continues to be viewed as a necessary and acceptable means of controlling women. An understanding of cultural constructions and practices related to gender inequality, masculinity, femininity, and perception of sexuality within marriage in a specific setting would provide insightful knowledge of the processes that create and maintain domestic violence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Glaser (in Lystad 1986:5) violence committed by any individual cannot be fully understood without knowing the meaning and experience of violence in that person's home and other life situations, while these settings are only properly comprehensible by taking into account the social and cultural influences upon them. This study is first and foremost an effort to contribute towards the understanding of domestic violence from Javanese Muslim women's experiences.

There has been some research on domestic violence in Indonesia - mostly in rural areas. One was also conducted in an urban area and based on secondary data. Muhammad Hakimi et al studied the prevalence of domestic violence during pregnancy and its effect on pregnancy outcomes in Purworejo district, Central Java in 2000. He included a longitudinal study on nutrition during pregnancy and focus group discussion with field workers. Another study was done in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, and was based on experiences of women who were clients in a marriage-consultancy bureau in 1998 (Latifa 1999). An ethnographic study was done in the rural area of South Sulawesi province among the Bugis ethnic group. The study investigated women's experience of marital violence, including physical violence, sexual abuse and marital rape, as well as psychological and emotional abuse (Idrus and Bennet, 2003). Several studies on domestic violence have been done among less educated Javanese- most of whom are Muslims living in rural areas. Little research has been done on domestic violence in urban areas. Thus, I thought it was important to investigate domestic violence among Javanese women, whom are mostly Muslim, well educated, and living in an urban area.

I would like to describe and analyse how social and cultural factors interface with domestic violence occurring in Javanese society, especially in an urban area. My study focuses on Javanese Muslim women's experiences as both the victims and survivors of the domestic violence and it includes an effort to understand how women's
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exercise agency when dealing with domestic violence.

Notions about human agency have a strong correlation with ‘choice’, in the sense that the individual is free to choose to act or not to act, and in doing so, to select whatever action she desires or may discriminate between different available options and pick the most suitable (Hughes 2002:83). Furthermore, it can also be broadly defined as ‘an individual making active choice’ (Gammeltoft 1996:6). However, agency is always conditioned by either the local or wider sociocultural, economic and political context - such as cultural perceptions and practices - and is more or less constrained by fragmented knowledge and the (un)availability of services and technology (Lopez 1997:160). Most agency is taken to mean that individuals make decisions based on their available choices within the limits of their constraints.

With regard to domestic violence toward women, I see agency as related to coping, that is how women deal with the stressful situation, by selecting, consciously or without really thinking about it but rather acting on experience and instinct, the most suitable choice among the available possibilities within the constraints of local sociocultural, economic, or even political context.

I am interested in writing on this topic for several reasons. Firstly, domestic violence is a serious issue and a major health problem in Indonesia. In relation to this, most NGOs in Indonesia working on women’s empowerment have been struggling to force the government and the legislative authority to promulgate laws to address violence against women. Secondly, until recently, research investigating the social and cultural context of domestic violence, especially in Javanese society, has been limited. I hope this study will contribute to the better understanding of my fellow activists working in the field as well as to the government of Indonesia as the basis for developing a policy regarding the problem. This paper might not be sufficient for these purposes; however, further research might be done to explore on a similar topic from different perspectives and setting are recommended. Based on the above background, problems and literature review, I defined the objectives of this research as follow:

1. To explore women’s experience, perception and beliefs regarding domestic violence
2. To identify types of violence that occur to Javanese Muslim women within marriage
3. To explore how the women deal with domestic violence
4. To identify how women recognise that they are being abused and begin to take action or to show more agency even if it against their social beliefs

1.3 Literature Review

1. Domestic Violence

The family and the domestic domain are often considered as a safe and sacred place. It is often thought to involve a group of kin who are committed to non-violence between its members. Family members are supposed to maintain benevolent and loving relationships and to act in each other's interest. However, in reality, there is a discrepancy between the idealized picture of the family and what that actually goes on in the family regarding violence (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974).

In the wider definition of family, Murdock argues that many anthropologists use the terms 'domestic violence' and family violence' that encompass behaviour between or directed toward a wide range of family members including spouse, children, siblings, co-wives, and the elderly (Murdock 1949). In countries with extended rather than nuclear families, the authority to physically punish a woman may well extend to others than merely her husband, including virtually any male relative who is her senior (Richters 1994). In Indonesia, especially in Javanese society which values an extended family system, mothers in-law are often involved in punishing the wives of their sons - this does not necessarily involve physical abuse but often includes psychological abuse. Mothers in-law avoid using physical abuse as it usually leaves physical marks and this can result in bigger disputes involving the family of the wife (keluarga besan).

According to Straus and Gelles (1983), physical abuse is an act which is performed with the intention of harming the body of the victim. It might start from slapping and pushing up to the abuse with weapons, including terrorising with weapon (Cahn 1996:2). In Java, a study by Latifa (1999), based on the data collected in a research in Jakarta, showed that the most common form of physical abuse involves the husband hitting the wife and can include slaps, punches, and also other physical attacks such as banging the woman's head against a wall, kicking her, pulling her hair choking or drenching with water, and throwing objects at her (Latifa 1999:126).

Verbal abuse in this case, refers to any verbal act intentionally done to irritate, offend, and insult. It can include calling someone names using bad words with negative connotation, shouting angrily, mocking, etc. directed at irritating, offending, and
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underestimating someone. With the above in mind, this thesis uses the definition of domestic violence based on Hester’s et al’s (1998) proposition. They defined domestic violence as any violent or abusive behaviour, whether physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal or financial, which is used by one person to control and dominate another with whom they have or have had a relationship. It may include various forms of coercion and intimidation, such as degradation, humiliation, deprivation, systematic criticism and belittling (Squire, 2003).

2. Women’s response to domestic violence

Many studies have focused on the responses of the victim of the domestic violence across cultural settings. In addition to resisting or even leaving the abusive relationship, a large number of women victims often have no choice except to react strategically by being compliant to their abusive situation, otherwise they will jeopardise themselves or their children. Even, worse, help or protection is often not available as most societies still consider domestic violence in the home as part of the private sphere, unlike other types of violence such as street violence, which is recognised as crime. Many governments have not properly addressed domestic violence, as indicated by their being hesitant to take action and legislate on it (Hotaling et al 1988).

A woman’s response to abuse is often limited by the options available to her (Dutton, 1996). Most cite similar reasons for staying in their abusive relationships. They are namely: fear of retribution, lack of other means of economic support, concern for the children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, and an abiding hope that “he will change” (Ellsberg et al 1999; Armstrong 1998: 149). The problem is exacerbated in countries where being single or unmarried is frowned upon for woman. In local Javanese culture, a divorced a young woman is often called Janda Kembang, with the negative connotation of a bad woman who seduces married men. All these factors contribute to women’s decision to remain in destructive marriages (George, 1998).

At the same time, denial and fear of social shaming often prevent women from trying to obtain help. In surveys in the southern American countries, for example, from 22% to almost 70% of abused women said that they have never told anyone about their abuse before being asked in the interview. Those who reached out did so primarily to family members and friends. Very few have ever contacted the police (Heise, 1999).
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Those who decide to leave an abusive relationship have usually gone through a long process, which often includes periods of denial, self-blame, and endurance before women come to recognize the abuse as a pattern and to identify with other women in the same situation (Heise, 1999). This is the beginning of disengagement and recovery. Most women leave and return several times before they finally leave once and for all regrettably, leaving does not necessarily guarantee a woman's safety. Violence sometimes continues and may even escalate after a woman leaves her partner (Jacobson et al 1996).

In Indonesia, the responses of victims of domestic violence are various and include resisting or fighting back (violence), leaving their husbands (departure), seeking help, and complying with the abuse. The last response, however, was found to be the most frequently taken by victimised women since they were reluctant to unveil the abuse due to several factors such as economic dependency, shame, fear, or a sense of family loyalty (Latifah 1999).

An ethnographic study conducted among the Bugis ethnic group in South Sulawesi indicated that majority Muslims perceive the values of siri or shame and respect which is similar to the Javanese value of ngajeni. The study reported that most victims attempted to minimise contact with their husbands in order to avoid violence, for instance, by sleeping with their children or, when possible, in another room, or trying to avoid being alone with their husbands. Those who remained in the violent marriages for long periods tended to minimise active resistance to their husbands’ violence to avoid its escalation (Idrus and Bennett, 2003).

The above study also indicated that there were many reasons for women to remain within their abusive marriages. The most prominent reason was that most women were economically dependent on their husbands. In addition, the Bugis people thought that unveiling domestic violence to public disclosure would bring shame to their natal families/relatives and could jeopardise the alliance of their natal families with the in-laws. The third reason was the internalisation of the normative belief by those women that sex and violence is appropriate instruments through which men may express their superiority over women in marriage (Ibid.).

3. Women’s agency

Women most often respond to domestic violence by coping with it in some way with the violent relationship. Coping as explained before, can be translated as how an
individual, in this case a woman, deals with a stressful situation by involving her agency in making decisions based on available choices within the existing constraints (see section 1.2. problem statement). There are various ways how women deal with domestic violence. Mostly she will use active strategies with the objective of surviving in the marriage and to protect herself and her children, which indicates her agency in seeking for either her own or her children's safety. Some women even decide to resist and flee after many others attempt to keep the peace by complying their husbands' demands (Heise, 1999).

The reactions of women who endure severe, persistent, and escalating violence usually indicates that they do not remain helpless and inactive but also seek help from a wide variety of individuals and agencies (Dobash and Dobash 1979:137-40). Although continuous coercion, intimidation and violence can create anxiety, distress and depression and even attempted or actual suicide and murder, it also creates determination, action and bravery (Stark, Flitcraft and Frazier 1979:461-63). This, then, encourages women to actively make decisions based on their available choices by involving their agency.

Far from helplessly remaining with violent men, women engage in an active process that refers to as ‘staying, leaving and returning’ (Dobash and Dobash 1979). Help-seeking of this nature is not static, either she stays or she leaves, but is a dynamic, evolving process. In this process, women make active and conscious decisions based on their changing circumstances: they leave for short periods in order to escape the violence and to emphasize their disaffection in the hope that this will stop the violence. In the beginning, they are generally not attempting to end the relationship, but are negotiating to reestablish the relationship on non-violent basis. Women return for a myriad of reasons: because men promise to reform; they are concerned about the welfare of their husband and children; they accept to powerful ideals associated with an intact family; they do not wish to discard their emotional and material investment in the relationship; they have no accommodation and few prospects for meaningful employment; and they fear the violent reprisals of men who are often at their dangerous who women leave. Relatives and friends have traditionally played a significant role in these deliberations and negotiations. For instance: helping to remove shame and guilt, sometimes blaming the victim, sometimes providing meaningful economic and material support and sometimes counseling reconciliation (Dobash and Dobash 1992: 231). Throughout this process that might be referred to as ‘negotiating for a non-violent relationship’, women are active, seeking the
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involvement of variety of individuals and agencies, and trying numerous tactics and activities indicating women’s agency.

However, when women first seek to comprehend the violence, they usually look to their own actions for an explanation (Dobash and Dobash 1979:140-43). This is not surprising in societies, which make wives responsible for happy husbands and families. Women are expected to question how their own behavior ‘caused’ their husband’s violence (Dobash, Dobash and Cavanagh 1985:142-65). Women eventually realize that solutions to the man’s violence do not reside in a change of their own behavior. For some this realization comes fairly quickly while others take longer to overcome such culturally constructed notions.

In the Javanese culture, the ideology of the man being like god and the woman being his servant result in the women being considered as inferior and as having a lower status than men within their family (Keeler 1987; Hatley 1992, in Kusujiarti 1995:71). As the family is viewed as a microcosm of society, it reflects the real macro structures of society. Hence, the inferior position of women in the family is widely shared in the Javanese society. In addition, a Javanese husband and a Javanese wife enter the marriage in a hierarchically based relationship, which is perceived to be a divine destiny, thus, Javanese individuals tend to accept it. These, then, limit the women perception of available choices whenever they have to make decisions under violent relationships, and clearly indicate that women’s agency in making such decisions is very much confined by the social structure.

1.4 Javanese context

In Javanese society, there are several factors that influence the prevalence of domestic violence, such as Javanese values, Islamic teaching and state policy, even though these have been much improved, especially in the urban and educated society. The Javanese culture and Islamic teaching, which were gender bias, were no longer applied automatically without critically considered. The following are a description of what can be seen as Javanese values, Islamic teaching and state policy that contribute to the prevalence of domestic violence in Javanese society. All of these intersect to sustain masculine domination and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001). This kind of violence is not necessarily physical, but involves the ways in which the larger structural forms of domination of men over women is supported and reinforced, for example by religious
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principles, state policy and legislation, the gendered distribution of work and power in the household and such. All of these come together in the kind of symbolic violence where both men and women are socialized into understanding the differences between them as being natural and the way things are supposed to be.

1. Javanese Values

According to Javanese ideology, within the family of procreation, husband and wife must show affection and love (*tresna*) towards each other. A wife has to show respect towards her husband (*ngajeni*), as he is assumed to be older than his wife (Koentjaraningrat 1985). The *penghulu* - the Islamic scholar- always gives advice to the couple during the wedding ceremony with regard to the task and responsibilities of a husband and a wife in a family. He always emphasises the obligation of the wife to respect her husband and not the other way around. The wife's sphere of interest centres mainly on the household. The husband is the head of the household and has primarily to concern himself with external matters, and usually takes little interest in the day-to-day household routine. Very often, for example, a husband does not even know that his wife has credit problems in her household economy (Koentjaraningrat 1985). He only gives his wife a certain amount of money at fixed periods, with which she has to run the household for the entire period.

In the Javanese culture, the ideology of man being God and woman being servant widely prevails and women are generally assumed to have inferior characteristics to those of men, and this results in them having a lower status (Keeler 1987; Hatley 1992, in Kusujiarti 1995:71). The family, viewed as a microcosm of society, reflects the hierarchical relations of the macro structures of society. Husband and wife represent different status and roles. A Javanese husband is deemed to have great spiritual potency, and has little involvement over daily household business (Keeler 1987, in Kusujiarti 1995:69). Husband and wife enter the marriage in a hierarchically based relationship. Since the hierarchical relations are perceived to be a divine destiny, individuals have to accept it. So women are supposed to have their agency curtailed by structure.

Citing Hatley (1990), Kusujiarti (1995:71) describes the proper image for higher class women as having the characteristics of *elegance, modesty and refinement* but at the same time they are also supposed to be weak and dependent. In addition, women are perceived to be lacking in spiritual potency which is considered as a crucial aspect of Javanese life. Because of these assumed characteristics, women are in need of protection.
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and guidance from their husbands.

Furthermore, women’s social standing and status are dependent on their husbands’ reputation. There is even a widely used saying in Javanese, which says: wong wadon iku swargo nunut neroko katut which literary translated means that when the husband goes to heaven, the wife follows and when a husband goes to hell, the wife also has to follow. This ideological image serves as a cultural ideal of Javanese womanhood. This saying means that a wife has to be a part of her husband’s lot with complete obedience.

In reality, the status of a wife in societal life depends on the status of her husband. When a husband has a high status, wealth, career position, etc., his wife can receive the benefits and when he is in serious trouble, his wife is supposed to share it with him with complete obedience, even if she does not have anything to do with it. This is because men are supposed to give women protection, guidance, and status, but in return women are expected to care for their husbands’ emotional, and domestic needs, and to be submissive to their husbands’ desire and supportive of their interests (Kusujiarti 1995:72). Hence, it is obvious that in Javanese society, a wife is considered as powerless and highly dependent on her husband. Such values are even supported by religious tenets as well as state policies concerning women (ibid).

2. Gender inequality in the State Policy

In Indonesia, gender inequality is embedded in the idealised roles constructed for women and men in national development ideology (Manderson, 1980). In this ideology, a woman’s official roles are defined in relation to five principal duties, as: 1) wife and faithful companion to her husband; 2) manager of the household; 3) producer of the nation’s future generations; 4) mother and educator of her children; 5) citizen.

Women’s roles and obligations, not rights, are emphasised by the state (Sullivan 1994:133) and the prioritisation varies in accordance with the specific objectives of different ministries. The state officially prescribes the women’s duties by putting the roles of women as wives in the first place and their roles as citizen as at the last priority (Sullivan 1994:193). The failure to acknowledge explicitly women’s rights in national development discourse has been linked to the ideologies of ‘State Ibuism’ (Suryakusuma 1987) and functionalism (Smyth 1993).

Suryakusuma (1987) used the term State Ibuism to describe the state’s
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construction of the idealised women as a domesticated, dependent wife and mother, whose purpose in life is to serve her husband, family and country without personal reward. In addition, state Ibuism can also be defined as an ideology of self-sacrifice, which plays on the centrality of motherhood to women’s identities (Djajadiningrat 1987:44).

Smyth (1993) has identified the state’s preference for functionalist approach to development and the consequences of this for women in New Order era. In the functionalist approach, the state sees the function of women in the development of a nation as more important than their rights. She asserts that the government’s gender policies were “functionalist in that they give priority to the function women can have in development and the family. The benefits women themselves should derive from the development are considered secondary or even not considered at all (Smyth 1993:126). This approach, along with the ideology of state Ibuism, reinforced the official notion that women should participate selflessly in national development, motivated primarily by their sense of duty to others. Istiadah (1996:1) also described the state ideology of the New Order regime as patriarchal, as reflected in the government’s insistence on defining women’s principle roles in society as dependent and subordinate wives. Even though the regime was ousted in May 1998, the new governments have not reviewed this patriarchal ideology.

Furthermore, gender inequality is also institutionalised in Indonesia’s 1974 Marriage Law, which was still used until recently. The law supported the subjugation of women. Women are domesticated in the sense that their main duties are to take care of their husband, children and the house, while activities outside their homes, including economic activities are the responsibilities of their husband. The law explicitly designates women as ‘managers’ of the household and men as the ‘heads’ of Indonesian families (article 31 and 34). In addition to this, the state’s sexual subjugation of Indonesian women is further apparent in Dharma Wanita and Dharma Partiwi, women’s organisations whose membership includes the wives of male pegawai negeri (civil servants) and military personnel. Regardless of their educational background or their professional status within the civil service or defence forces, women’s status in these organisations is determined in accordance by their husband’s position (Gerke 1992:47; Suryakusuma 1996:98).

Sullivan (1994) has aptly described Indonesia’s development policies and
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programs as male-conceived and male-directed. Consequently, women's roles are prioritised in development policy in terms of their relationship with men, as wives (Sullivan 1994:132). Similarly, in the case of Islam, most religious intellectuals are men, which ensure that male interests are both represented in religious and state doctrines, again ensuring that principally men determine women's status and roles. While women’s group and NGOs involved in health advocacy and human rights are active in challenging male-centred interpretations of religious texts, the majority of grass roots community leaders rely on interpretations that perpetuate existing gender inequalities. Thus the ideal positioning of Indonesian wives encourage women to endure hardship and self-sacrifice, and not to challenge their husband’s authority. This enables men to justify the perpetration of marital violence via both religious and official discourses, and encourages women to normalise such violence as acceptable within marriage (Idrus and Bennett in Manderson and Bennett 2003:45).

Regarding to the availability of legal recourse such as laws, acts, or even specific article in the criminal codes, currently, there is no active national legislation dealing specifically or comprehensively with violence against women, even though since the establishment of the Indonesian Commission on Violence Against Women, following the May riots in 1998, drafts of anti-rape and domestic violence acts have been produced, but are not yet and still to be ratified. It reflects the state’s decision not to challenge religious and cultural ideologies of male dominance or to uphold women’s right to freedom from marital violence. Consequently, the issue remains untouched by public domain and is mainly determined by religious ideology and law (Syari’ah). The result is that neither rape in marriage nor domestic violence is recognised as constituting a crime in Indonesian law (Idrus and Bennett in Manderson and Bennett 2003:49).

The only key legislation dealing with acts of violence against women in Indonesia is the Indonesia Criminal Code (1993). This code includes only physical forms of violence against women and fails to recognise the existence of other forms of abuse such as verbal, psychological, sexual and economic violence or threats of violence. As a consequence, the continuum of violence experienced by many women in marriage is discounted, encouraging women to accept abuse rather than to challenge their husband’s authority to commit such crimes (Ibid). In turn, prevalence of domestic violence will be higher because this condition also will encourage the husband to do such violence against the wife.

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The criminal code addresses five forms of physical violence such as rape outside marriage, statutory rape, forced abortion, the kidnapping of women and the sale of women. Rape is explicitly defined as an act of forced penetration that takes place outside of marriage, between a man and a woman who is not his wife (article 287). Thus, rape within marriage is not only absent in Indonesian legislation, but is legally impossible. Effectively, a husband's right to rape his wife is enshrined in current legislation because wives are legally excluded as potential victims of rape (Idrus and Bennett in Manderson and Bennett 2003:45).

The legal construction of rape explicitly labels the act as an 'ethical crime' rather than as a crime against a person or against humanity (articles 281-97). This indicates that the moral and ethical foundations of social behaviour are considered paramount, while the rights of individual women are secondary. While it is possible to regard this as compatible with Indonesia interpretations of collective human rights, privileging the interests of the group over the individuals, we would argue this is not clear-cut case (Budiman and Tsuru 1998). The individuals whose rights are violated in this instance are gendered, they are women. The common interests protected are also gendered, as it is men who require other men to behave ethically by refraining from having sex with women with whom they do not have legitimate access. If women's individual human rights were privileged in legislation, by constructing rape as a crime against the individual and her humanity, men's sexual entitlement to their wives would be disrupted and the notion of rape within marriage would emerge as a legal possibility.

Similar criticism can be made of the existing legislation on statutory rape, which specifies that a man may not have sex with a woman who is not his wife and is under the age of 15 (article 287). Statutory rape is further legislated against by specifying that a man may not marry or have sex within marriage with a woman who is under the minimum age such as 15 years old (article 288). This construction of statutory rape regulates the conditions under which men are legally entitled to sexual access to women as their wives, but again fails to protect women's right to consent or decline sexual relations. Current legislation reinforces state and cultural ideals of marriage as an institution in which women's sexual consent is assumed as synonymous with their consent to marriage. The levity with which rape is treated in legal term is further evidenced by the maximum sentences for men convicted of raping a woman who is not his wife, which are 7 years for statutory rape and 12 years for the of an adult woman.

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(article 287). In practice, conviction rates are exceedingly low and perpetrators rarely serve sentence longer than two years, regardless of the brutality of the crime (Kompas 2001).

Therefore, it is obvious that domestic violence in Indonesia is considered as trivial in legal discourse, addressed only marginally in the 1974 Marriage Law, and is not recognised as criminal. ‘Cruelty and battering’ are legally designated as just grounds for either partner in a marriage to request divorce in the civil courts (article 39). However the application of the Marriage Law is rare in civil court and tends to be bypassed due to the dominance of religious courts in addressing matters perceived to be domestic. Legal mentions of cruelty and battering as grounds for divorce is also problematic because the language is gender neutral and fails to acknowledge that it is women who are overwhelmingly the targets of male violence in marriage. The law is also inadequate because it is typically more difficult for women than men to initiate divorce in either religious or civil courts.

Furthermore, while the legislation refers to cruelty and battering within marriage, it does not consider women’s safety, compensation for crimes committed against them, or the persecution of men who abuse their families. The abuse is merely constructed as symptomatic of an unhealthy marriage and as justification for ending the union.

3. Islamic teaching

The state’s institutionalisation of female subordination within marriage is also supported by popular interpretations of Islamic law with regard to gender. However, there is a great debate concerning the duties and sphere of activities of women in Islam. The Qur’an contains several discriminatory statements, which may reinforce and legitimise women’s subordination (Berninghauscn and Kerstan 1992, in Kusujiarti 1995:58).

The Qur’an states that men are leaders of women. This verse is often interpreted as meaning that men have the right to dominate women in all spheres of life, and place men as leaders in the household. Thus, every decision in the household is in the hands of men. In additional, wife beating is conceptualised as a form of chastisement—the husband’s right to ‘correct’ an erring wife (Jejeebhoy 1998). The Qur’an also mentions that men and women have equal rights and duties, but men have a higher degree of obligation and rights than women (Q.S. Al Baqarah: 228). This verse is interpreted as
either, that women and men have equal yet different rights and obligations, or that women have lesser rights than men because of their lesser responsibilities. Those who support the latter view often argue that the different responsibilities of women and men relate to the domestic sphere for women and public life for men, and that within the family women and men have mutual rights and obligations (Hadits by H.R. Ahmad cited in Hamidi 1985). However some argue that proper gender relations for Muslims require men to have authority over their wives.

Women’s subordinate position in religious and state ideology is legitimised by invoking the doctrine of *kodrat* (referring to women’s nature or destiny) to naturalise gender inequality (Murray 1993:1). The colloquialism *ikut suami* (follow the husband) is frequently invoked in popular interpretations of state and religious rhetoric that seek to instruct women on appropriate gender roles and relations, whilst attempting to normalise women’s subservience.

The *Qur’an* does not explicitly name the practice of marital rape, but does refer to the issue of women refusing to have sex with their husbands. One Hadits states: “a woman who refuses her husband may be cursed by an angel until morning”. Orthodox interpretations claim that it is a sin for woman to refuse her husband. However, more liberal Islamic intellectuals argue that this *hadits* is weak and perhaps has meaning to suggest that a woman has the right to negotiate with her husband if she has a reason not to engage in sex, for instance, if she is tired, has her menstrual period, or is unwell. According to Mas’udi (1996), a man who forces his wife to have sex when she is unwilling commits a sin because he violates the principle of *mu’asyaroh bil ma’ruf* (always discuss good things in the right way for the sake of good results). This teaching actually requires Muslims not to use force but discussion for the good of all involved, including the case of unwilling wife to have sexual intercourse with her husband.

Another key passage relating to sex within marriage is a verse that states: “wives are likely the land for planting, so men are expected to visit their lands whenever they want” (Q.S Al-Baqarah: 223). This verse is often used to justify men’s sexual entitlement within marriage and to argue that marital rape is impossible according to Islam. So not only did marriage allow a man to bit or hit his wife, it was also a licence to rape his wife. The counter-argument is that the metaphor of ‘land’ for ‘wives’ refers to a woman’s vagina, and thus implies that a husband should ‘visit’ his wife in the ‘appropriate place’ to avoid the ‘deviant’ sexual acts of sodomy. This verse is thus understood to direct the
husband to release his sperm exclusively into his wife’s vagina (Idrus and Bennett in Manderson and Bennett 2003:45).

In the Qur’an, the verse An Nisa’: 34, outlines the steps that spouses should follow in the event of marital discontent. Initially, verbal consultation in the form of a warning is suggested. Second the couples are encouraged to sleep apart; the last resort is that the wives can be struck. Literally interpretations claims this gives men the right to verbally and physically abuse their wives, while more moderate interpretations suggest that strike refers to a psychological strike (hukuman bathin) as physical violence would disrupt and cause harm to the family and society (Hamidi 1974:104). However, this verse often interpreted as giving the rights to husband as the head of the household to hit his wife as a form of punishment upon perceived mistakes.

However, the Qur’an contains very diverse and coded illustrations so that various interpretations are plausible (Engineer 1992). This creates different sometimes even contradictory interpretations of its verses. In fact, one of the important characteristics Islam is its principles of equality, in which women and men are viewed equally before God and both of them also have the same rights to mercy and redemption. But the Javanese community often shares the misinterpretations as they are considered in accordance to their values.

I would argue that the above three legs of macro structural influences, namely Javanese values, which are strengthened by the state policies, and Islamic teaching based on popular misinterpretation of the Qur’an, strongly influence the pattern of gender relation, and perpetuate the structures and practices of male domination over women. This, in turn, exacerbates the prevalence of domestic violence. AS discussed above, Bourdieu (2001) calls this as “symbolic violence”. He (2001:116) says that violence is the result of symbolic domination, which is not only visible through physical violence but is perpetuated by wider interaction between macro structures such as education system -- in which social values are internalised— religion, and state. In this study Bourdieu’s notions of symbolic violence will be my starting point. One of the main critiques against Bourdieu is that he does not give recognition that, even when severely abused, women will have some agency which will impact on how they might try to deal with it. In this respect I will also give attention to this aspect especially in relation to how women finally manage to end their abuse. As I will show, there is probably no all encompassing agency, but rather multiple forms of agency that the women will express as influenced by the
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sociocultural, economic, political context, and individual context which, in turn, might constrain or enable their decisions and choices (Lopez 1997).

Thesis outline

This thesis, as described in the introduction, is aimed at finding out how women experience domestic violence, how social cultural context influence the occurrence of domestic violence, and how women deal with the domestic violence when they experience it. I begin the thesis with an introduction, presented in chapter 1 which contains the background, problem statement and the significance of this study. In addition, the chapter also presents the literature review which provide theoretical framework of this thesis. Whereas in chapter 2, I describe the research methodology, including the research samples, data collection techniques, analysis methods and the writing process of the thesis. In chapter 3, readers can find the results of the study which covers the difference of being a husband and a wife and its consequences in Javanese Muslim community living in an urban area. This chapter describes how Javanese values, Islamic teachings and state policy influence the positions of women in the community, particularly in marriage institutions. Furthermore, in chapter 4, I present research findings about the domestic violence experienced by the Javanese Muslim women. This chapter describes the types, perpetrators, and impacts of the domestic violence experienced by the informants. Chapter 5 presents how women deal with violence and how socio-cultural context influence the choice of strategy made by women when they experience domestic violence. In addition, in chapter 6, I also include three case studies in chapter describing the experiences of three informants about domestic violence. The thesis, is then, ended with conclusion and recommendation presented in chapter 7.
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study type

There is very little available information on this topic, hence, this study is exploratory study. It was conducted on a small scale and is more qualitative rather than quantitative. It attempts to achieve insight into women’s experience of domestic violence and women respond and agency to domestic violence by exploring the emic views of six Javanese Muslim women.

2.2 Study themes

To explore the experiences of Javanese Muslim women of domestic violence and how they deal with domestic violence, I divided study themes into four groups: socio cultural context, gender relation, personal factors and state policy. I then broke down those themes into the following questions:

1. How do women’s experience, perception, beliefs and practice regarding domestic violence
2. How do personal factor such as education, income, women status in the family, children and mother in low affect or as a trigger of domestic violence
3. How does gender relation affect decision making process and job description in the family
4. How many types of violence that occur to Javanese Muslim women within marriage
5. How do the economic factor relate to domestic violence
6. How do state policies help or exaggerate domestic violence
7. How do the women recognise that they are being abused and begin to take action or to show more agency even if it against their social belief
8. How do the women deal with domestic violence?

2.3 Research Setting and sampling

1. Research setting

The study was conducted in Jember, a district in East Java province. Jember is situated in the eastern part of the province with the total population of around 2.105.150. Jember has 31 subdistricts of which 3 of them are located inside the town (urban subdistricts), while the other 28 subdistricts are located outside the town (rural
subdistricts). Jember district occupies a total area of around 3.293,34 km sq. Majority of Jember population depends their livelihoods on agricultural activities whereas the rests work in service sector.

I did my research in the three urban subdistricts of Jember due to several reasons. First, I considered Jember appropriate district for my study because I wanted to investigate domestic violence among educated Javanese women who live in an urban area. The three subdistricts could be categorized as an urban area and the majority of the population living there were relatively highly educated. In addition to that, the selection of the area was also due to practical reason, namely I have known the area very well because I used to work there as a social worker of a local NGO for several years. During that time, I came to know a number of women who subsequently became participants of this study. This was very helpful for me in doing this research considering that I had to conduct a study on a sensitive topic within only six weeks.

2. Sampling strategies

I used two strategies in selecting the participants of my study. First I identified among colleagues, friends and women I knew, those of whom were the victims of domestic violence. Then, I asked my earlier participant to introduce me to other women who were also victims of domestic violence. Thus I used the snowball effects for selection. The total number of participants was nine. Six of them were my informants of whom were the victims of domestic violence and three of them were my key informants. I selected those informants based on the conditions that; first, they were married women; second, they were not more than 45 years old, third, they have been divorced or in the process of divorce, fourth, they were educated women, and fifth, they had to live urban area. While for my key informants, I selected them because of two criteria, first, they lived in Jember where I did my field work and second, they had to be experts in the fields relevant to my study, namely Javanese culture, Islamic scholar and women activist. The details of those participants were as follow:

A. Informants

1. Annisa: I knew her because she was my classmate when I took an English course. She was 36 years old. She graduated from a senior high school and she came from Jakarta. She moved and lived in Jember because she actually ran away from her husband whose religion was different from her. She was the last child of five siblings. When she was
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young, she often witnessed violence perpetrated by her father toward her mother. When she was grown up, she again often saw her older sister being physically abused by her husband who worked in the army. Whereas she knew that her sister was always loyal and waited for her husband who was often went for a tour of duty in other islands outside Java (her details is presented in the case study at the last chapter).

2. Hasanah: She was the neighbour of Annisa in Jember and she once shared her problems with her. When I came to Hasanah for the first time, I asked Annisa to accompany me and introduced me to her. When I came to her and explained my intention to interview her for my study on domestic violence, she was a bit afraid and refused to participate. She said that what she experienced was the shame of her family (aib keluarga) and she should not tell that to other people. However, after I explained that by telling her story, she might help other women having similar problems as they could learn from her experience, she finally agreed to share her experience with me. At the beginning, she also refused to have a recorded interview. But, she finally also agreed after I explained that the recording was just to ease me recalling and analysing her story and I also explained that the results of the interview would be used for the thesis of my master study in the Netherlands and I promised not to use and publish her real name.

She was 34 years old and a graduate of a senior high school. Her ex-husband was her high school classmate who had a different religion with her. She had one when she divorced. She told that her husband divorced her without any clear reason. She believed that her husband divorced her because he was interested in a ‘tante girang’ a local term for a middle age women who seduce younger men.

3. Jamila: She was 36 years old and had a university degree from faculty of education majoring in English language teaching. She married with a man living next-door who was one year older than her. She lived with at the same roof with her husband only for 3 months and then they were divorced. She said that her husband and her mother in-law continuously perpetrated emotional violence towards her. I knew her from a friend who was an activist of an NGO.

4. Aisyah: She was 35 and had a university degree in education and teacher training. She experienced economic violence because her husband did not provide her “nafkah” or financial and economic supports because he was fond of gambling and spent all his income on gambling. This was her reason to get divorce from him. She has one daughter.

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I had known her long before she became my informant because she had been working as a kindergarten teacher owned by my mother-in-law. I had never known that she was actually also the victim of domestic violence unless my mother-in-law told me that she was.

5. Rahmah: She was 33 years old and had a university degree. She experienced psychological violence either from her husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law. I knew her because she was a friend of my husband. She herself decided to participate as my informant when I told her that I was doing a study on domestic violence for my thesis.

6. Fatimah: She was 45 years old and graduated from a faculty of education majoring in adult and continuing education. She experienced physical, psychological and verbal violence from her husband. When the study was conducted, she was in the process of filing a lawsuit for divorce. She was making efforts to collect evidence of her husband violence to support her lawsuit. I knew her from a friend who was an activist of an NGO and later I also found out that she actually was a friend of my husband.

B. Key Informants:
1. Alfianda. She was an activist who often involved herself in advocacy of domestic violence cases.
2. Ayu Sutarto. He was a university lecturer and a doctor whose dissertation was about Javanese society of Tengger.
3. Kyai Muhyiddin. He was a Muslim scholar in Jember who was concerned in women problems.

2.4 Data collection techniques
The process of collecting data was conducted over a period of six weeks, from the third week of May to the end of June 2004. The data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interviews. Most data collection was conducted in Indonesian language and only a few parts were done in Javanese language. All interviews were recorded. I hired a transcriber to assist me writing up the transcript of every interview. I, then, always rechecked every transcript with the recordings.
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The fieldwork applied the following techniques:

1. **In-depth interview**

   Through this technique, I gained insight into women experience and agency, also cultural context in which domestic violence occurs. This method also provided deeper understanding of the socio-cultural context and gender issues related to domestic violence and women’s agency, which was not revealed in FGDs.

   At the beginning of every interview, I always introduced myself, explained the topic and objectives of my interview to each participant and asked their permissions to record the interview. Some informants refused to be interviewed at the beginning because they considered that the topic as shameful of the family and should not be shared to others. However, after I explained that the interview was to support a study for my master thesis in the Netherlands and I also convinced them that I would not use their real name in the thesis and it might also be useful for other women having similar problems, finally they agreed to be interviewed. All the participants initially refused when I requested permission to record the interview. One of the informant, Fatimah, even said, “Please don’t record the interview, just write it down. I will speak slowly so that you could take notes and keep pace with all I have said.”

   Some informants knew that my husband worked for a radio station in Jember, I often was invited as a guest speaker in a talk show program in the radio, so they were worried that the recording would be used for that purpose. However, after I explained that the interview recording was not for publication in the radio but for my research, they finally also agreed.

   The informants whom I had already known before were always more open and easier to be interviewed compared to those whom I did not know from. For the later mentioned informants, I always came with a mediator, somebody closed to them, to introduce me to them. At the first interview, I did not directly ask about my research topics, but we always chatted about family, kids, hobby, jobs and other issues to make use feel closer. At the second interview, I came by myself and started to interview them about the topic of my study.

   As the topic of was sensitive, during the interview, I did not directly ask them about the problems of domestic violence, but I requested them to tell me about their life history, from their first time meeting their husbands until they got divorced and their lives currently. I tried to be a good listener and friend. And in between their story, when I
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considered it relevant to my research questions, I asked questions to dig up deeper information.

I usually did the interview in my informants’ homes, by making appointments beforehand. Only one interview was conducted in my home because the informant wanted me to pick her up and had the interview in my place when no body was in my house. Each interview usually lasted for 1.5 - 3 hours, dependent on the situation of their homes. The interview was usually interrupted when there were people coming in or out of their homes or when there was the “adzan” namely the sound from a mosque calling for praying. The duration of interview was also influenced by the informants’ fondness for telling stories. One informant, for instance, could give a very long answer and tell a very long story to answer one question, hence, we spent long time to finish all the questions.

There were also informants who did not like speak much and only answered questions straight to the points. One of the informants was even found it difficult to answer my questions and kept saying, ”Mmmm...I don’t know what to say. Ya, it was just happened like that...I don’t know how to say.” In such a case, I usually told something about myself, or told a story to enable her expressing herself more open, or made statements that could stimulate her easiness to respond or made more relaxed situation to enable her telling story without any burden.

2. Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted before and after core informant interviews. It was aimed at obtaining deeper insight into the topic of domestic violence from different perspective such as Javanese values and Islamic teaching and also its practices. For this purpose, I interviewed three key informants. The first was Kyai Muhyidin, a Muslim scholar who was concerned with problems of women; the second was Dr. Ayu Sutarto, a lecturer of the university of Jember whose expertise was Javanese culture and the third was Alfianda, an NGO activist who was always involved in advocacy for women problems especially domestic violence.

3. Focus group discussion

The FGDs were used to explore general opinions, cultural norms, and perceptions held by women on Islamic teaching, Javanese values, femininity, marital status, family values, perception of sexuality and women’s agency, which relate to domestic violence. This method provides a possibility to further pursue issues that arose in individual interviews.

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The participants of the FGDs were all the 6 informants. They were mostly very enthusiastic when I invited them for FGDs because they wanted to exchange their feeling, thoughts and experiences besides also wanted to have more friends. The only difficulty to conduct the FGDs was to synchronize the time of the participants as 5 of them were teachers with different schedules. However, finally we could agree to meet twice on every Sunday, because most of them were free except for Annisa who had a teaching schedule to teach in an Islamic boarding school on Sunday. However, she agreed and managed to come for the FGDs by changing her teaching schedules.

2.5 Data Processing and analysis

Data from the research was processed manually. the early stage of analysis was done during the process of interview. After each interview, a transcriber assist me to write the transcript of the recording of which I always re-checked with the recording upon completion. During the process if rechecking, I sometimes found missing or unclear information that required further inquiry. In this case, I then made another appointment for the second interview. During this process I also analysed the results. The analysis was based on research questions to look for similarities and variations. Women’s experiences of domestic violence and women’s agency and respond to domestic violence was explored by using their own way of talking as much as possible.

I coded the transcripts and classified them in accordance with the themes and sub-themes. After it was accomplished, I then continued with the second analysis.

2.6 The Limitation and Validity

The data of this study were collected in a very limited time from a limited number of samples in a specific area and the samples were also selected based on practical reasons, hence the findings of this research can not be generalised for other areas and for other cases of domestic violence. Even though, I was also interested in involving the husband or ex-husbands of the informants to obtain more objectives and balance information, however, I could not manage to do it because of time and staff limitations. This opens opportunities for further study which investigate the same case from the perspectives of men.

Six weeks was sufficient to obtain valid information, even for a sensitive topic which was considered taboo by the community. One reason is that I have worked as a social worker of an NGO in the area, I was familiar with the social and cultural issues of

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the community in the area. My experience and familiarity with the area contributed to the easiness of the process of my study.

In addition, I also showed sympathy and empathy toward what they told me during the interview processes. I always put myself in the position of a good listener as if I were their best friend. Furthermore, my background as a social worker also helped me be able to get close to somebody and make them open to share with me. This also made them trust me. However, I always kept myself not to be trapped as a counsellor to their problems.

2.7 Ethical consideration

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, I started every interview with a clear explanation of the purpose my study and information that I need. I promised my informants to keep their identities confidential and I would be the only one knowing their identity. I also never forced them to answer my questions whenever they did not feel like answering them. However, during all my interviews, all my informants were willing to answer all my questions. There was only one interview with Fatimah in which she asked me to keep one part of her life story off the record and secret. She insisted that it was only I who could know the story, hence, I did not write that in this thesis. In addition, to keep the confidentiality of my informants and their information, I never mentioned the names of my informants during the recorded interviews. However, to indicate which information from whom, I wrote the alias name of each informant on every cassette before interviews.

Conclusions

All the above information clearly describes that this qualitative employs three methods of data collection, namely in-depth interview, key informants interviews and focus group discussion. The number samples were limited namely 6 Javanese Muslim women as informants and 3 key informants. The duration of the field study was only 6 weeks and this was considered very short for a very sensitive topic. Therefore, this made the study, in some way or another, was not free from limitation.
CHAPTER III

BEING HUSBAND AND WIFE IN JAVANESE SOCIETY

Introduction

In the Javanese society, Javanese values, the state policies and Islamic teaching based on popular misinterpretation of the Qur'an and hadits, strongly influence the pattern of gender relations, and perpetuate the structures and practices of male domination over women. This, in turn, exacerbates the prevalence of domestic violence. As Bourdieu (2001) argues, such unequal relations between males and females are made and through socialization, to seem somehow natural and unavoidable.

In this regard society also shapes the roles and statuses of a husband and a wife in Java. The society puts a husband in the position as the head of the family and a wife as a husband’s companion who has to serve and respect her husband. Besides, the status of a wife in societal life also depends on the status of her husband. When a husband has a high status, wealth, career position, etc., his wife can receive the benefits and when he is in serious trouble, his wife is to share it with him with complete obedience, even if she does not have anything to do with it. This is because men are supposed to give women protection, guidance, and status, but, in return, women are supposed to care for their husbands’ emotional, and domestic needs, and to be submissive to their husbands’ desire and supportive of their interests (Kusujiarti 1995:72). Hence, it is obvious that in Javanese society, a wife is considered as powerless and highly dependent on her husband. Such values are even supported by religious tenets as well as state policies concerning women, which is Bourdieu (2001) calls “symbolic violence”. He (2001:116) says that violence is the result of such symbolic domination, which is not only visible through physical violence but is perpetuated by wider interaction between macro structures such as education system -- in which social values are internalised-- religion, and state.

Based on how the Javanese society views marriage, its consequences, as well as the different roles and status of husbands and wives, I tried to give insight into how gender also affect power relations between husband and wife and how these, in turn, impact on the prevalence of domestic violence. I use in-depth interviews with the informants and the key informants of this study regarding their perceptions on marriage and its consequences, the differences of being husbands and wives, tasks distribution in the family, responsibilities in the family, and their views about good husbands and good
3.1 Perceptions of marriage

Most Javanese women do not have much information about marriage. All they seem to know is that they will have partners in their lives with whom they will share their happiness and sorrow. They usually imagine married life as beautiful and have little expectation of the changes it will cause in their lives. They often do not realise that once married, they will have less freedom. Often they also do not realise that marriage will bring them a lot of responsibilities (even double burdens). They also do not anticipate that the harmonious family lives they dreamt about, often does not materialise. This is as what Annisa said about her perceptions towards marriage lives.

I used to imagine that marriage lives was beautiful, not as terrible as my reality. I used to dream that when I got married, I would have a man to love and protect me from any harm. I wanted to have somebody to share my happiness and sorrow and I still could have my freedom, with certain limit, of course. However, all of them were only a dream and very far from reality. You know, before marriage, I imagined that I would have a harmonious family, very nice. But in reality, it was terrible lives that I got from marriage. It made me thought and made a conclusion that when we decided to enter marriage lives, it also means that we are to be ready to be limited and confined as well as loose our freedom. (Annisa, 36 years old)

The same situation was also experienced by Jamila; 36 years old. Her marriage was also not as beautiful as she had imagined. She explained what she experienced in “first night” after her wedding and in her honeymoon period. In Indonesia and many other eastern countries, the first night after the wedding is supposed to be the first time women experience sexual intercourse.

I thought marriage was beautiful and nice, especially in the first night and in the early months, you know it is honeymoon. I imagined that it would be romantic, always hugging, staying on bed and making love. But it did not happen to me. At the first night after our wedding, I tried to put my arm around my husband chest, but I was so surprised and embarrassed when he put away my hand. I thought he was kidding and I tried again, but that time he refused and toppled down my hand harder. He moved out the bed and slept on the floor. I decided to also move down to the floor next to him, but then he stood up and started to burst out with anger without any clear...
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reason. He just said that he did not like what I did and he felt very disturbed. He grumbled and moved to other room. At the second weeks of our marriage, he already talked about his intention of having polygamy, but I firmly refused him. Since then, our relationship was getting worse and worse. The most terrible part was when I got many telephone calls from several women who claimed they were the close friend of my husband. (Jamila; 36 years old)

In the Javanese society, marriage is also called “berkeluarga” (having a family) because after marriage a woman will have a new family which is different from her previous one. She will have a husband as well as children in the future. Along with the new change, her identity also changes in the sense that she is no longer as a ordinary woman, but also as a wife, a mother and daughter in-low who automatically has different roles. After marriage women rarely have an identity apart from that ascribed to them as wives, mothers, and daughters. Departure from expected behaviour was discouraged and punished. Thus, in historical or religious writings women are almost never individually named or discussed, except in relation to exceptional ability or inability to fulfill family obligations (Dobash and Dobash 1980:32).

Women were subordinate to men, particularly in marriage and the family. In the family, the parameters of woman’s behaviour were set, her undifferentiated nature was reiterated, her relationship with men was defined, her subordination was taught, and her deviations were controlled (Dobash and Dobash 1980:33). Annisa explained about the position of a wife in Javanese culture:

In Javanese culture, a wife has to completely obey her husband, when a woman enters a marriage life, it also means as the end of her personal life journey. Since then, she has to accept being controlled and being confined by her husband. She will loose her freedom. In short, I can say that as soon as a woman get married, she has to fully comply with all her husband commands and that was also what I saw in my sister’s family life. While, for a man, marriage means differently, it is the beginning for him to have full power over his wife. You know, I have just realised that recently......(Annisa, 36 years old).

The confinement of women by men as soon as they get married is usually conducted in the form of prohibition for the women to work outside the home.

My husband had never prohibited me to go out of our home or follow any kinds of
activities outside home as long as I asked for his permission and I explained him the
good objectives of my activities. However, he only did not allow me work. He already
told me about this prohibition since we were engaged. Before, I worked as a teacher
at a Junior high School, and I had to stop working as soon as I was engaged to him.
Once during our marriage, my husband lost his job and our household had a terrible
economic condition. However, when I asked him to let me apply for a job, he insisted
not to give me permission. (Aisyah, 35 years old)

Marriage does not only constrain a woman's ability to be employed outside the home, but
also involves the obligation to follow their husbands:

Before I got married, I was a teacher at MTs (an Islamic junior High School),
however as soon as I enter my marriage life, I had to follow my husband moving to
the other town from which my husband originally came from. I had to leave my jobs
and I was also not allowed to apply for another job. Even though my husband and his
big family owned an Al-quran learning school but he did not allow me to teach in
their school. (Rahmah; 33 years old)

There are also many husbands who do not directly forbid their wives to work. They
nevertheless indicate their disagreement through their attitude:

As soon as I graduated from the English department of the faculty of education, I
offered private lesson to many students at my home, and it continued until I married.
However, since I had married, I did not feel comfortable doing the job anymore,
because my husband always showed his wrinkled sour face anytime I was teaching.
He usually also became angry without any clear reasons. This made me feel
depressed and I tried to change the schedules of the lessons into the time when he was
not at home, such as when he was working. But I found it very difficult to arrange
schedules suitable to my condition, because for private lessons, it was I who had to
follow the schedules of my learners. (Jamila; 36 years old)

Although marriage is experienced as a loss of freedom, Javanese women generally do not
have many options. They are expected to get married as this is the most desired state for a
woman and it increases her status and dignity. Jamila explained her perceptions based on
her own experience as follow:

In Javanese culture and Islamic teaching, women are seen as to have more dignity if
they are married. This is as I experienced myself. Before I got married, many people
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talked behind my back that I was a “perawan tua” (an old girl whom no man wants to marry) and people were suspicious to me as if I would seduce married men. Now, I have the same experience when I was divorced. As a young widow, people name me as “Janda kembang” (a young widow). They are always suspicious that a young widow like me will seduce husbands of other women. It made me behave very carefully and always consider what people will think of me before I decide to do anything. (Jamila; 36 years old)

3.2 The role of wife and husband

The family is viewed as a microcosm of society and reflects the hierarchical relations embedded in the macro structures of society. The ways of behaving like men and women, the appropriate roles and expectations of each also influences peoples unconsciousness and behaviour (Bourdieu 2001). Husband and wife represent different statuses and roles and this is not only seen as the way things are supposed to be, but also makes it difficult to challenge (Ibid). A Javanese father is deemed to have great spiritual potency, while effectively have little direct involvement in daily household business (Keeler 1987, in Kusujiarti 1995:69). Husband and wife enter the marriage in a hierarchically based relationship. Since the hierarchical relations are perceived to be a divine destiny, individuals have to accept it.

Female subordination within marriage is also supported by popular interpretations of Islamic law with regard to gender, although, there is a great debate concerning the duties and sphere of activities of women in Islam. The Qur’an contains several discriminatory statements, which may reinforce and legitimise women’s subordination (Beminghausen and Kerstan 1992, in Kusujiarti 1995:58). The Qur’an states that men are leaders of women. This verse often is interpreted that men have the right to dominate women in all spheres of life, and place men as leaders in the household. Thus, every decision related to the household in relation to the public sphere, is in the hands of men

However, recently Javanese communities living in urban area have become more critical of interpretations of Islam. They increasingly incorporate notions and values taught in school and university into their understanding of the world and they are more exposed to international trends through media and such. In this regard Bourdieu’s (2001) masculine domination and its resultant symbolic violence can be challenged. As stated
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earlier, that Bourdieu gives no attention to agency, or the ability of people to act outside
of the structure within which they are caught up. Thus, even when living in such a male
dominated society some, if not necessarily all, women, and even some men, will also
respond and make choices which are influenced by their own understanding and exposure
to a wider world. The world is not as completely insular as Bourdieu seems to think of it.
At the same time, it is not as simple as making an individual choice every time. Women
are strongly influenced and even coerced by the wider macro structural factors to behave
in expected ways.

As I wrote in the literature review, in the Javanese culture, the ideology of man
being God and woman being servant widely prevails and women are generally assumed
to have inferior characteristics to those of men, and this results in them having a lower
status (Keeler 1987; Hatley 1992, in Kusujiarti 1995:71). However, the results of
interviews indicated that all informants refused to be considered as servants or to view
their husbands as their masters, let alone as gods. Most of them wanted to be equal to
their husbands. As wives they wanted to be considered as partners, or friends by their
husbands. Their different views on this are presented as follow:

Jamila used to live in a Javanese family, her father is high official of the
government office, she used to be raised in an egalitarian way. She expressed her view
about the husband as the head of the family as follow:

I used to live in the family with my parents and my two sisters. We used to solve every
problems through discussion involving all family members. I never saw my father
commanded my mother to do certain things for him. Hence, when I got married, I
never considered my husband as my leader, because I believe that every individual
has to be a leader of him/herself. So, I think wife and husband has to always share
opinions and discuss solutions for every problem in the family. There has to be
balance relationship between husband and wife. However, my husband thought that,
as a husband, he had to be cleverer or more dominant than me. (Jamila; 34 years
old).

A similar view was also expressed by Aisyah:

I consider a husband as a partner or a friend because as a friend we can exchange
ideas and share feelings, I don’t consider him as in a higher of lower position. We are
always open to each other (aisyah; 35 years old).
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Annisa had a different view about the topic. She agreed that a man should become the leader or the head of the family provided that he has wisdom. She stated that:

*In Islam, men always have higher position. Because we live in the patriarchal society, men are the leaders for the women. I actually agree with the ideas because Islam teaches us that are supposed to have higher position than women do as far as they can fulfil the condition. Men have either rights and obligation and they can have their rights of being the leaders of the families if they can also meet their obligation. They can not just demand their rights without fulfilling their obligation. I think a wise husband will not suppress their wife. (Annisa; 36 years old)*

Yet in the past Javanese leaders were not necessarily always men. Javanese traditionally recognized both men and women as leaders in the past, as described by the key informant of this study:

*Leadership in Javanese value is very loose. In the sense that it is not only men who must become leaders. In history, Javanese never had any dispute whether a kingdom led by a king or a queen. It has been depicted in the epoch of “pewayangan” (puppet show) that even a woman, named Srikanidi, can become a war commander. In the Javanese community of Tengger, men and women have exactly the same rights in the sharing of inherited properties from their parents. In addition, women in that community never feel fear of losing men as their head of the family because they are very independent. (Ayu Sutarto-Javanese expert)*

Nevertheless a woman's social standing and status is dependent on her husband's reputation. As I indicated in the introduction the Javanese saying, *wong wadon iku swargo nunut neroko katut* means that a wife's position and status depends on that of her husband and represents the cultural ideal of Javanese womanhood. This saying means that a wife has to be a part of her husband's lot with complete obedience. The informants' responses varied, showing different interpretations:

*I know that saying, but if my husband likes gambling, betting in cock fight and bull fight, why should I follow him? (Rahmah; 33 years old)*

Jamila has interpretation she should follow her husband in the right thing:

*I will follow my husband completely if he will really bring me along him toward heaven, but if he wants to go to hell, why should I follow? (Jamila; 36 years old)*
3.3 **Responsibilities of husband and wife**

The views of Javanese society on the responsibilities of husband and wife vary, although most people agree that husbands must carry the economic support and obligations of the family, while women have to take care of the household work, such as cleaning and taking care of children.

*I agree that husband has a higher position, as long as he fulfills their obligation and responsibility. The husband responsibility is to obtain income for the family and to protect his wife and children. If husband can meet their obligation, then, he has his rights to prohibit us of not doing certain things that he does not like and as a wife we have to obey him and serve him. Hence, I agree with the Islamic teaching that the responsibilities of women in the family are only “macak”, “masak”, “manak”, and the rests are the responsibilities of a husband. Hence, obeying and serving husband are the obligation of women toward their husbands, but when husbands fail to fulfill their responsibilities, they can not force their wives to obey and serve them. (Annisa; 36 years old.)*

Similarly, Aisyah stated that the responsibility of a husband was to earn an income for the family while that of a wife was to take care of the household works, such as taking care of the children:

*My husband once said: “You don’t need to work, that’s my responsibility to work and give you a living. Just mind your own responsibility to take care of our children”. So, in my opinion, the responsibility of a husband is to make a living for the family, to provide psychological welfare to his wife and to give attention to the wife and children. (Aisyah; 35 years old)*

Some of the Javanese women living in the urban area are beginning to negotiate with their husband over the distribution of household tasks. Yet this idea is not common as most people still consider housework as the duty of a wife. If wives do not perform these duties, they are viewed as incompetent wives. According to Jamila;

*Before we married, I told my fiancée that I don’t like washing and ironing clothes, and we agreed to share responsibility in doing household works. He would take those works and I would cook and clean the house. At that time, my husband said “OK”. After we got married, I thought that he would wash our cloths, but to my surprise, he washed only his own cloths. After a few weeks, may be he was influenced by his...*
friends, he even did not want to wash his own clothes, instead he brought them to be washed by his mother. That of course raised questions to his mother and she considered me as an incompetent wife. She spread around the story me being incompetent even to the village hall. I believed that many people assumed that my household must have been messed up because of my being incompetent and that gave me a psychological burden, hence I decided to force myself to do the washing and ironing which I hated it very much (Jamila; 36 years old).

Just like a good wife is expected to take care of the household and of the children, the good husband has his own duties to perform. As Bourdieu (2001) stresses, such ways of doing things become so entrenched in society that people do not see them for what they are any more, but simply behave in the expected ways. All of these serve to further sustain the unequal relationship between men and women. Yet, as also mentioned, not everyone will necessarily adhere to these expectations in all ways and at all times. This issue will be taken up in chapter V.

3.4 The good wife and good husband

Being a good or bad a husband depends very much on how good a man can fulfil his responsibility toward the family, such as to earn a living and to protect his family.

_A good husband can make his family happy and divide his time for his jobs and family. When he is home, he has to devote his time for his wife and children. He has to use his time at home for the family, not to bring his jobs home and make his wife and children feel inconvenient due to that._ (Annisa; 36 years old).

According to Jamila, a good husband is that who know his responsibility and obligation without being asked for:

_In my opinion, a good husband knows his responsibility and obligation toward his family such as giving economic support, etc. without being asked._ (Jamila; 36 years old)

Whereas the man is the head of the household, the woman is there to attend to his and his family's needs. The views of informants about a good wife vary between one and another, in general, however, they perceived a good wife as that who could serve her husband well and who tries to protect the honour of the family in the eyes of others:

_A good wife is the wife who fully obeys, serves and be devoted to her husband, with a_
condition that her husband is good one. She has to give full attention to her family, stay at home, and never do anything without permission from her husband, not even to get her hair trimmed if her husband does not allow her to trim her hair. I knew this after I got married. Before I married, I thought that I would help my husband by relieving his burdens whenever he has problems. I wanted to be the best companion for him to share his any story. (Annisa; 36 years old)

Another informant, Jamila, considered good wives as those who were able to give the best service to their husbands and who uphold the dignity of the family by not shaming it through revealing its secrets.

At that time, I wanted to be a good wife and I thought a good wife was a wife who serves her husband as good as possible... and if there was a problem, I should not tell anyone and I have to satisfy my husband need on bed, yaa... sometimes acting like a prostitute on the bed if necessary. As a wife, I should not feel ashamed to do that and I also play active role there. (Jamila; 36 years old)

The understanding of Javanese women of Islamic teachings and Javanese values and the way they adhere to them vary from one woman to another, depending on their levels of education and the environment in which they grew up. Annisa, agrees with the application of Islamic teaching and Javanese values which are gender biased. She graduated from senior high school and came from a broken family with strained economic resources. She often witnessed her father perpetrating violence on her mother, who never fought back. Furthermore, since childhood, Annisa had always lived in an environment where men were always in a higher position and more dominant than women.

Currently more educated and urbanised Javanese do not hold as strongly to such practices and beliefs as before. However, the more senior generation still holds tightly their 'traditions', mostly when it is in their own interest to do so.

Only certain limited community which still follow such tradition. Those with relatively good education usually do not follow it anymore. In recent days, there have been a lot of women movements which have a very strong bargaining power aiming at opening up the confinement of tradition. Actually, there is a tendency that people begin to have looser ties with their traditions. Traditions have been fading out. Hence, I think it is only interest which makes people want to put women in the position as the were in the
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old days, not the tradition. (Ayu sutarto-Javanese expert)

Furthermore, relationships between gender, leadership, ideas about maleness and femaleness in Javanese society involves many contradictions (Brenner in Brettell and Sargent, ed.; 2001). This might also be the cause of differences between one individual and another in understanding or accepting the Javanese teachings. This was stated by the key informant of the study, an expert in Javanese culture, Ayu Sutarto:

Not all the Javanese traditions were disadvantageous for women. Indeed that there are some traditions in Javanese society which put women in disadvantageous position. This exists because of bad understanding due to lack of education. For instance, women are only obliged to do three things, namely “macak” (dressing up and putting on make up), “masak” (cooking), manak (producing children). In addition, there are also many Javanese sayings about women with not very good connotations and these are quite popular among the society. For instance, women are considered as “lemek” (sleeping mat) or “slimut (blanket). Another example is: “wong wadon iku konco wingking” which means women are men companion who has to be in the kitchen. These all strongly indicate that women are considered as the second class citizen. In addition, in Javanese history, there was an old tradition called “upeti”, (loyalty gift) in which parents would give their daughters to a king as a sign of devotion and loyalty. Indeed that in the old days, a king could have tens of concubines, although he had only one wife. It was even depicted in the story of “pewayangan” (puppet show) by a male character named Arjuna. He was considered as the male of the world or “Lelananging jagad”, the real tough and macho man because he had so many wives. All of these, of course, underestimate women. But, on the other hand, if we look how Javanese tradition respects mothers, just like the way the Islamic value on mothers, it is completely contradictive. Mothers have extraordinary highly respected positions. We are not even allowed to yell to our mothers because mothers are considered as a visible God or “gusti alloh kang katon”. It is widely believed that if people disrespect their mothers, they will be cursed and get bad luck. This means there is actually a conflicting values and paradox in Javanese tradition. There are some traditions which underestimate women and, on the contrary, there are also traditions which highly value women highly. The understanding of such traditions depends very much on education. (Ayu Sutarto)

Furthermore, in Islam, there are many teachings and verses which actually support the
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rights of women, as stated by one key informant of the study, namely a Muslim scholar, Kyai Haji Muhyiddin:

*In the Al-quran and Al-hadits, there are many verses which defend the position of women. In addition to that, in many books of 'fiqh' (Islamic law), there are special chapters, namely 'fasakh' and 'khuluk' which specifically defend and protect the rights of women and provide solutions when women experience violence of which one of them they can report their case into the Islamic court. Therefore, if there are many violence against women and the perpetrators justify them using the Islamic teaching, it is because they don't have comprehensive understanding about the Islamic teaching or even misinterpretation of the verses of Al-quaran and Al-hadits. Because Islam holds highly the principles of justice, fairness, egalitarian, and the objectives of Islam to be sent down to the universe was to improve the lives of mankind by creating peace on earth, so it is impossible that Islam tolerates or even legalises violence perpetrated by anyone toward anybody with whatever reasons. (Kyai haji Muhyiddin-Islamic scholar)*

However, Indonesia still has many state policies which disadvantage women or discriminate against them in some way, although many improvements have been made, as stated by Alfianda:

*There are still many policies which disadvantage women, for instance, in the case of divorce. When a women file a divorce suit to the court, she will lose her rights to obtain her shares of properties owned by her and her husband during the marriage. Such wealth in Javanese language is commonly called "gono-gini" or in Islam "nafkah mut'ah". Only when the men file the divorce suit to the court, in most cases men use reasons that put the women on blame, can the women get their rights to obtain her share for the wealth.

"Nafkah mut'ah" according to the Islamic court is the money which has to be given to the women as consolation because she is divorced. The amount is as much as the monthly income that her husband usually gives her times the number of months of their marriage. The calculation is actually not fair for the women, especially for the women whose husbands gave them only small amount of money every month or even never gave them any monthly money during their marriage. This is also unfair for the women who are divorced after a very short marriage. The amount of money given to*
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the women as compensation of being divorced should be a lot more than that calculation. It is even worse because, usually, the Islamic court does not take any measures towards ex-husbands who disobey the court order to pay for the money (nafkah mut’ah or gono gini). (Alfianda-activist)

Conclusions

Patriarchal ideology and gendered relations position women and men as opposites. Women are socialized into and constructed as being inferior, dependent, and powerless, while men are socialized and constructed to be superior, powerful, and independent. These attributes become part of the ways how women and men position themselves. Bourdieu (2001) says that men’s domination is an agreement between cognitive structures and social structures. Women’s status identified by cultural construction, opposite to that of men, is perceived as natural and normal in society. This is also true with women in Javanese society, where women are considered as the followers and servants of their husbands. They are required to show obedience and give good services to their husbands. Whereas, the husbands are considered as leaders who have rights to control and dominate their wives. Such conditions are in accordance to the theory of symbolic domination advanced by Bourdieu (2001) in which masculine domination is seen as natural.

Position of Javanese Muslim women is still very subordinate, particularly after they get married. They are subordinate as wives who have to obey their husbands and as mothers who have to look after their children. They are responsible for all the domestic works within their households. Apart from that, women are also required to behave in accordance to the expectations of the society of which influenced very much by the Islamic teachings and Javanese values.

Although getting married and being wives make women subordinate, they feel obliged to enter the married life. This is because being a single or divorced woman is viewed negatively in Javanese society and women want to avoid this social stigma (Ondicho; 2000). In addition, the fact that there has been no law protecting divorced women - for example ensuring their property rights and rights over their children after divorce- many woman stay married regardless of the subordination or domestic violence they experience. In the next chapter, I will present how socio-cultural values and moral standard leading to domestic violence in the Javanese society.
CHAPTER IV
WOMEN EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction

Javanese women have their own experience based understanding of domestic violence. Their definition usually depends on the types of violence experienced by the women and the extent to which they can tolerate it. All the participants had different views about what such violence entails and usually related it to their own experiences. When a husband does not provide economic support, for example, one participant did not see it as a form of domestic violence, yet another did. All considered physical abuse such as slapping, hitting, etcetera as domestic violence. At the same time, they viewed psychological abuse as more insidious and long-lasting in effect than physical abuse. They said when they were physically abused, they would feel physical relief within a few days, but when they were psychologically abused, the after effects lasted much longer.

4.1 Types of violence

All of the women considered verbal violence such as swearing, shouting, mocking and calling them by animal names as psychological violence.

_In my opinion, swearing, hitting, telling lies, I consider all those violence. But, if my husband did not give me money for a living, I did not consider that as violence, because I always got money from my mother in-law for helping her in her catering business._ (Annisa; 36 years old)

Hasanah did not even know what exactly domestic violence was. She just felt hurt, betrayed and emotionally disturbed when her husband had an affair.

_I don’t know exactly what domestic violence is. But for me, I just could not accept when my husband had a mistress. In the mean time, I never had any complaints even though he did not give me money for a living. Sometimes he gave me money, but I never asked for more even when it was not enough. I never complained but I just did not understand why he had a mistress. That hurt my heart so much...what did he really want? What were my faults? What was lacking from me?. (Hasanah; 34 years old)_

Research conducted in Jakarta found that women are exposed to various kinds of violence such as physical, economic, verbal, psychological and sexual abuse.
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Physical abuse, according to Straus and Gelles (1983), is an act which is performed with the intention of hurting the victim. It might start from slapping and pushing to injuring with weapons or terrorising with a weapon (Cahn 1996: 2). In Java, based on the data collected in a research in Jakarta, the husband hitting the wife is the most common form of physical abuse and the forms of abuse can be slaps, punches, and also subjected to types of physical attacks such as having her head banged against a wall, being kicked, having her hair polled, being choked or splashed with water, and having objects thrown at her (Latifa 1999:126).

Verbal abuse in this case, refers to any intentional act aimed at irritating, offending, and insulting the woman. It can include calling someone bad names, shouting angrily, mocking, etcetera directed at making the woman feel offended or being looked down upon.

In my research, Annisa, Jamila, Fatimah, Rahmah and Hasanah experienced verbal violence from their husbands and, sometimes, from their mothers in-law. They said that their husbands often got angry with them, mocked and shouted at them. It was only Aisyah who did not experience verbal violence. Annisa, Jamila, Fatimah, Hasanah and Aisyah experienced psychological violence because their husbands had affairs with other women. It was only Rahmah who did not experienced psychological violence. However, none of them experienced sexual violence. Of the 6 women, Annisa had the most complex situation because she experienced physical, verbal, and psychological violence. Anisa continuously felt unsafe and threatened. She also experienced economic violence since her husband rarely gave her financial support.

*My husband used to punch, slap and kick me. Sometimes, he even used hammer or small chair to hit me, even though it missed my head. He even threatened me in front of my kids and made them crying of fear. He often shouted and swore at me using bad words: “You know a slave?! That’s you, you look like a slave!” he often called me as a dog or monkey with a facial expression as if he was disgusted of me. In addition, my mother in-law also often behaved very rudely to me, even though I always helped her in her catering business. You know, I was physically tired helping her cooking or cleaning, but it was nothing compared to the pain in my heart due to her rude words. Tiredness could disappear within short time, but feeling offended could last for very long time. Imagine if your mother in-law shouted at you as stupid, deft, idiot, etc.(Annisa; 36 years old)*
Fatimah also has very complex and bad experiences:

*My husband also often shouted at me and slapped me and when he was angry because he was not satisfied enough with what I had done, he often left home for weeks, without leaving any message.* (Fatimah; 42 years old)

Jamila experienced psychological violence:

*My husband always blamed me for everything that I had done everyday, although I had tried to do my best for him. He often left home and hang out with his friends although we were just married for a few weeks. Sometimes, he left home in the morning and returned home at two or even later in the next morning. He always considered his friends as more important than me. He always went out with his friends. Besides, since just 2 weeks of our marriage, I often received phone calls from women who claimed as my husband’s close friend without respecting my status as his wife. It was even worse because his mother also often became angry with me and she liked to backbite with the neighbours that I was an incompetent wife.* (Jamila; 36 years old)

Aisyah suffered economical violence as her husband rarely gave her money for a living and he often spent his money on gambling.

*My husband never got angry with me or hit me. He just never gave me money since we were married, meanwhile we got a kid who needed financial support. He liked to bet on cock fights or bull fight and always spent his money there. Later on, after 3 months of our divorce, I knew that his new wife had already delivered a baby and it explained to me that he already had an affair with that woman 7 months before we divorced.* (Aisyah; 35 years old)

Her mother in-law and his older sister were very rude to her and also abused her:

*My husband was never angry with me and he also loved me. What I could not bear was his mother and his older sister. They often said rude words that hurt my feeling. They never remembered the good things I had done. What they had in their minds was only my weakness.* (Rahmah; 33 years old)

4.2 The factors behind the domestic violence

There are many factors causing husbands and mothers in-laws to perpetrate violence, such as their own feelings of inferiority or that the wife is and inferior being,
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jealousy, or when the wife doesn’t meet her husband’s or mothers-in-law’s expectations. According to Dobash and Dobash (1979), husband’s violence towards his spouse results from a male need to control and to determine his spouse’s behaviour based on internalized patriarchal beliefs about men’s superiority. While the violence committed by mothers-in-laws towards their daughters-in-laws or sisters-in-laws towards the wives of their younger brothers, usually occurs because of the feeling of superiority. They feel they are older or more senior and deserve respects from the new family member. They usually still want to control the life of their sons or younger brothers.

Jamila, for example, thought that her husband was always angry with her because he could not provide the family with enough income and could not satisfy her sexual needs. He was always angry because he was worried about losing his power, control or domination over her. Babcock et al. (1994) suggested that males who lack power and are not dominant in their relationships use violence to compensate. And Idrus and Bennett (2003) found in the Bugis tribe South Sulawesi Indonesia that violence within marriage stems from the husband’s “crisis of authority”. Furthermore, in Javanese society, husbands are responsible to provide for the family’s economical needs, hence when they fail to fulfill their responsibilities, they are worried that their wives will not respect them any more and that this will jeopardize their control and domination over their wives. In the case of failure to satisfy the wives’ sexual needs, it is closely related to the image of men as masculine or macho. Therefore, they try to cover up their weakness by perpetrating violence.

The participants had many explanations as to why they were subjected to different kinds of violence. They talked about jealousy, anger, frustrated expectations and religious differences as reflected in the following narratives:

I did not exactly the causes that made my husband angry, because although I already served him very well, he still often became angry. Once, he went home from work and he was wet all around due to the rain. I, then, prepared warm bath and towel for him so that he did not get cold. Instead of thanking me, he suddenly became very angry and grumbled that he was not a patient who should be treated like that. I just suspected that he actually felt inferior to me because she did not give me any financial support, or he was worried because he could not satisfy my sexual needs. (Jamila; 36 years old).
Annisa explained that her husband was always angry with her because of jealousy:

The cause of our arguments before we got children was due to my work at a cosmetic counter. If I worked in the morning shift, I started work at 9 am and went home at 5 pm. If I got afternoon shift, I usually started work at 1 pm and returned home at 9 pm. At that time, he worked at home by buying and selling second hand car. So, may be he was boring to just stay at home while waiting for me to return. Besides, may be he was jealous, because I always left home dressed-up and in full make. At that time all the arguments were triggered by my job. (Annisa; 36 years old)

Besides, Annisa believed that her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law often became angry with her because she refused to comply with their expectations:

I believed that my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law often treated me rudely because they expected me to change my religion into their religion, but I refused to do so. This made them disliked me and always behaved so rudely to me. (Annisa; 36 years old)

4.3 The Results of violence

The women interviewed, suffered as a result of the violence in many different ways. They felt traumatised, became suicidal, were afraid of future relationships or felt paranoid. They expressed their suffering in the following ways:

My husband was always angry everyday with unclear reasons and this made me feel depressed. I was so afraid of my husband so that anytime my husband returned from home, I was even peeing on my panties, something that I never experienced in my life. It happened when our marriage was only about 1-2 months. I still feel the trauma until now. (Jamila; 36 years old)

I even thought of ending my life. Because at that time I could not file a divorce because I did not have money to pay for the cost. Several times I decided to leave him and went back to my parent’s home, but he always came and begged me to return. He knew how to make me feel pity on him and finally accepted his requests. One day, I was going to a bridge and thought to jump to the river... but suddenly, I had a flash of my little kids in my mind and this made me stop my crazy intention (she was crying when telling the story). On that bridge, I was still doubtful. I believed because Alloh still did not wanted me to die, hence I was reminded by the flash of my kids in my mind (Annisa; 36 years old).
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In general, the participants were afraid to remarry; they believed that they had to be very careful to decide whether or not they got married again. This was of special importance for selecting a future husband (which was almost inevitable since a divorced woman was so stigmatized). Of the 6 informants, only Jamila already had a boy friend. However, even though she had seen him for more than 4 years, she still did not have courage to consider marriage.

*I had to be very careful in selecting another man to remarry. I am afraid that I will have the same experience as my previous marriage (Jamila; 36 years old)*

*Until now, I am still afraid to get married again. If my husband is better than my ex-husband, it’s ok. But what if he is worse than my ex-husband and does not like to take care of my kids? (Hasanah, 34 years old)*

*To get marry again? It is not that easy. How if my new husband is not responsible man who don’t love my kids? Moreover, I am getting older now (Aisyah; 35 years old)*

Domestic violence also made the victim become paranoid, as experienced by Fatimah. I observed it from her daily behaviour. She always closed all her house’s doors and windows tightly and she tended to be over protective to her children.

*Since I experienced the violence from my husband, I often became so afraid of him. Any time I said or did something, I was afraid that what I had said or done would not satisfy or even annoy him. Until now, although my husband is no longer at home, I often have a nightmare and feel frightened. I always remind my children to always lock the door and not to open it whenever my ex-husband, his friends, or strangers knock at our home (Fatimah; 42 years old)*

4.4 Involvement of Mothers In-Law

In countries with extended rather than nuclear families, the authority to punish a woman physically may well extend to others than merely her husband, including virtually any male relative who is her senior (Richters 1994). In Indonesia, especially in Javanese society which values the extended family system, mothers in-law are usually involved in punishing the wife of her son even if only by means of psychological and verbal abuse. Mothers in-law avoid using physical abuse as it usually leaves marks and this can result in bigger disputes with the family of the wife *(keluarga besan)*.
All the informants stated that mothers-in-laws were always directly or indirectly involved in the violence they experienced. Directly, mothers-in-laws often perpetrated violence themselves, usually by conducting verbal and psychological violence. While indirectly, even though mothers-in-laws did not perpetrate the violence themselves, but they could become the trigger of the violence in their marriage lives, for instance, by intervening their family business too much, covering the mistakes of their husbands, telling their husbands something could lead them to perpetrate violence on them. Interviews with Annisa revealed that she experienced both direct and indirect violence from her mother in-law. Her mother in-law often mock and swore at her as well as intervening her family business too deeply:

_We married when we were both still quite young, 22 years old, so my husband was not mature enough. Any time we had a problem, my husband always went to his big family and told them. Each time we had a problem, we were always called for a trial by big family and usually his mother in-law led the trial. Of course, my husband always got supports and I was always to blame for every problem._ (Annisa; 36 years old).

While Aisyah experienced indirect violence from her mother in-law, namely she was doing too much intervention in her family affairs:

_My ex-husband was a mommy's boy. One time, he decided to apply for a policeman recruit. He had followed and successfully done several tests up to the provincial level in Surabaya. But when his mother told him not to continue he decided to stop: "You had better not continue your plan to be a police. If you are accepted and posted in the station out of Jember, then what about me."_ (Aisyah; 35 years old)

Like Annisa, Rahmah experienced both direct and indirect violence from her mother in-law and her older sister in-law. They often shouted rude words to Rahmah and involved too much in her family affairs:

_Husband and wife should always discuss and find solutions for their own problems without involving outsider, but my husband refused and insisted on involving his mother. He was a mommy's boy. His mother still treated him as her small child, any time she wanted to go somewhere, such as to the market, she always asked my husband to take her. I felt that he spent more time for his big family than for me as his wife. We even rarely had time to chat. I was so annoyed by this. You know, at that_
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time we did not have TV set, and he always went to his mother's home to watch TV. When I initiated to buy a TV, he disagreed and said: "What's wrong with going to mother's home? We had better chat with my mother and sister than with other peoples." (Rahmah; 33 years old)

Jamila also experienced either direct or indirect violence. Her mother in-law often became angry with her without any obvious reasons. She also thought that her mother often told her husband something that made him become angry with her:

   My mother in-law tended to be very emotional. She often became angry to me without any cause. Behind my back, I believed that she often judged me as incompetent wife and told my husband of her judgment. That's why, then, my husband felt ashamed about me to his mother and older sister. When he felt that way, he usually would go home and became angry with me. (Jamila; 36 years old)

While Fatimah did not experience direct violence from her mother in-law, but she felt that her mother in-law covered up her husband bad behaviour:

   One day, I looked for my husband at my mother in-law's home because she had not come home for several days. I was sure that my parent in-law knew his whereabouts, because my husband could only be at his parent's home or his office. When I was there, I even saw my husband shoes on the rack. But my mother in-law said, "How am I supposed to know where your husband is? You are the wife and you should have known where he went." At that time, I could feel that she was covering my husband whereabouts and his false behaviours. (Fatimah; 45 years old)

Conclusions

In Javanese Muslim society, socio-cultural values are very influenced by the interpretations of Javanese values, Islamic teachings and state policies regarding women's status, positions, and roles, as well as responsibilities. These teachings and values are conceptualized based on gender discrimination of patriarchal ideology, in which men are constructed as powerful being as compared to women, hence, they are endowed rights as leaders of women. This notion causes men have rights to control women in their entire life-spheres. The control of men over women is explicit through the conceptions of masculinity, superiority, and dominant characteristics owned by men. In turn, women were constructed to be powerless, dependent, weak, and passive. This notion causes women in Javanese society are perceived as followers and servants of husbands.
who have to fully obedient to them.

All the socio-cultural constructs above create consequences both for men and women. As leaders, men have full rights to control and dominate women and full responsibilities to suffice the family economical needs. However, when men failed to fulfill their responsibilities, the society considers their failure as acceptable. Men usually attempt to cover up their failure by perpetrating violence because they are worried that their wives would not respect them any more and this would jeopardize their control and domination over their wives. On the contrary, as followers, women have to obey and serve their husbands as well as possible. Unlike men, when women failed to perform their responsibilities due to certain reasons, the society considers this failure as unacceptable. In such a case, women are judged as incompetent wives (istri tdk becus).
CHAPTER V
DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

Introduction

Anthony Giddens (Ritzer & Goodman 2003) sees structure and agency as so closely linked to each other that they can be conceived as a duality that cannot be separated. He argues that consciousness and structural conditions which make certain actions possible, are in turn created by individual people’s actions. According to Giddens people act in an ongoing process whereby they develop routine practices- these, in turn, give them a sense of control and makes it possible to live their lives with some efficiency. While structure, its rules and resources, systematizes and gives form to similar social practices, it cannot exist outside the actions of human actors. Accordingly structure can constrain actions, but it can also enable it.

Contrastingly Archer sees structure and agency as interrelated but independent from each other. She argues that agency should be seen in the context of the many interrelated theories, beliefs, and ideas that influence it. Agents are able to either reinforce or resist the influence of the cultural system (Ritzer & Goodman 2003). Thus it can be argued that when women prefer to stay with an abusing husband they are reinforcing masculine domination rather than resisting it. On the other hand, this can also be seen as one of many possible choices a woman makes against the background of the options available to her. With regard to domestic violence towards women, I relate agency to any kind of coping, that is how women deal with the stressful situation, by selecting, consciously or without really thinking about it, but rather acting on experience and instinct, the most suitable choice among the available choices within the constraints of sociocultural, economic, or even political context.

The following sub sections are the results of interview indicating the informants’ views on agency and the supporting factors as well as constraints which affected the way the women respond to the domestic violence they experienced.

5.1 Dealing with violent situations

Mostly the women used active strategies aimed at survival while remaining within the marriage and to protect herself and her children. Some women resisted and
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fled, but most attempted to keep the peace by complying to their husbands’ demands (see Heise, 1999).

A woman’s response to abuse, and thus her ability to act, can be limited by the options available to her (Dutton, 1996). As mentioned earlier, most of the women mentioned similar reasons for staying in their abusive relationships. They were namely: fear of retribution, lack of other means of economic support, concern for the children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, and an abiding hope that “he will change” (see Ellsberg et.al. 1999; Armstrong, 1998: 149). The situation is made worse by the stigma attached to divorced women and in Javanese society, a divorced woman is often called *Janda Kembang*, meaning bad woman who seduces married men. All these factors interact to make women decide to remain in destructive marriages (George, 1998).

Those who decide to leave an abusive relationship has usually gone through a long process, which often includes periods of denial, self-blame, and endurance before they come to recognize the abuse as a pattern and to identify with other women in the same situation. This is the beginning of disengagement and recovery. Most women leave and return several times before they finally leave once and for all regrettably, leaving does not necessarily guarantee a woman’s safety. Violence sometimes continues and may even escalate after a woman leaves her partner (Jacobson et.al., 1996)

In Indonesia, the responses of victims of domestic violence can include resisting or fighting back (violence), leaving their husbands (departure), seeking help, and finding ways to survive without escaping from the abuse. The last response is largely related to women’s reluctance to make the abuse known. The reasons for this included economic dependency, shame, fear, or a sense of family loyalty (Latifa, 1999). The responses of women when experiencing domestic violence varied and shifted over time.

Annisa said that the first 3 months of her marriage was just fine. However, in the fifth month, her husband insisted that she stop working and he also started to hit her. Once, he tried to slap her on the cheek but she fought back.

*In every fight, we always started with arguments but then he usually hit. Before, we had a child, I always hit back if he hit me. When he slapped or punched me, I always punched him back. One time, we even made our bed broken down because we fought on the bed. In short, every argument always ended with hitting. If he failed to hit me, he usually hit his own head against the wall or plunged his head to bath tub. After, we...*
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had a child; however, I was worried about my child’s mental growth when she always saw us fighting. So, I decided to restrain myself not to argue or fight back. (Annisa; 36 years old)

She also explained why she decided to fight back:

At that time, when my husband was mad, I also became very mad, although I knew that wife should always obey her husband and not to resist, argue or even fought back. But when I lost my temper, I could not control myself and I fought him back. (Annisa; 36 years old)

In relation to agency, Annisa might be argued to initially be resisting the influence of the cultural system which expects her to be obedient and accepting. Yet, once she had a child, she developed certain ways of behaviour which gave her a sense that she could at least control her husband’s violence to some extent by being submissive. While doing this made it possible for her to stay within the marriage and so maintain a kind of marginal custody.

The responses of abused women often involved more nuanced or hidden resistance. When they experienced violence, they usually showed their disdain and disaffection by being silent, but disapproving. This was expressed through their body language, which usually was understood by the perpetrators, but could not be punished because nothing was said.

When my mother in-law behaved rudely to me, I decided just to keep silent and not to resist or argue back. I usually only indicated that I did not like what she had done by changing my facial expression. I did not see any points of arguing back because even if I did she was still my mother in-law. But, who could stand to be treated that way? So, the only thing I could do was just changing my expression and keeping silence. Sometimes, I even felt lazy to speak with my own kids when my heart was hurt (Annisa; 36 years old.)

I never fought back when he was angry and hit me. Sometimes, I only tried to avoid when he slapped me. If he was angry, I kept silence, not even a single word. I used to think, may be he was right to get angry because I suspected him for certain thing and became curious of his private business. (Fatimah; 42 years old)

When I was in my mother in-law’s home and she was grumbling and criticizing
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angrily, I never said a word or when it was too much, I just left her and went to my
own home while crying. I also always kept silent when my husband was angry and
shouted at me. The only thing I used to do to resist was staring my eyes at him.
(Jamila; 36 years old)

I would argue that when a woman draws on such unspoken ways of expressing their
disgust, they were actors, although their actions adhered more closely to local
expectations of and options available to women. In Javanese society parents often advise
their married daughters to be patient and try to win the hearts of their husbands, for
instance, by dressing up or putting on make up to look more beautiful and by giving their
husbands the best service either at the table or in bed.

When our marriage was 1-2 years, my husband often hangs out with his friends to
disco. In week we usually spent time together only for 1-2 days. The rest of the time,
he went out with his bachelor friends from night till small hours. Then, I remembered
a novel that I read before that made me thought: “maybe I was not so interesting, so I
would have to improve my appearance, I had to look more beautiful in order to make
my husband love to stay at home. In fact, although I had tried that hard, he did not
change at all. (Annisa; 36 years old)

I tried to serve my husband as good as possible. For example, every morning, before
he left for his office, I always prepared his shirt, trousers, underwear, tie, shocks and
shoes neatly. He just needed to put them on pakaian. I also prepared his back. In
short I prepared everything for him as if I were his servant. (Fatimah; 42 years old)

Denial and fear of social shame often prevented women from trying to obtain
help. Most of abused women said that they have never told anyone about their abuse
before being asked in the interview. Those who reached out, did so primarily to family
members and friends. Few ever contacted the police (Heise, 1999).

The results of interviews indicated that some of the respondents tried to share
their problems with other people. Annisa decided to share her problems with the mother
of her daughter’s friend. She chose the lady because she trusted her and she did not know
her each other with her or her husband’s big families.

I used to keep the problems with my husband as a secret from my parents and my big
family. Because, actually my parents did not agree with my marrying my husband, but
I insisted, so I did not want them to know and started to blame me for my wrong
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decision. Besides, I believed that my parents would just get divorce if they knew about my problems. I began to have bravery to share my problems to others when my child was 6 years old and started to go to school. Because then, I could get out of my home when I was taking my child to school and waiting for her. Before that, I could never have any reason to leave home freely and meet friends. Let alone to share my family problems. Only after that time, I had the opportunity and bravery to share my problems with somebody who did not live in my neighbourhood, a mother of my kid’s friend. I did not like to share my problems with a neighbour or with somebody who knew my big family or my husband big family. I was so afraid if they heard about the problems. (Annisa; 36 years old)

Aisyah decided to talk to her aunt:

I never told my story to my mother; I only shared my problems with my aunt because she also liked to share her problems with me. But I still kept some secret from her. I just told her that I wanted to get divorce because we were not getting along each other anymore. I never told her that my husband never gave me any money and never fulfil his financial obligation to the family. I also, did not tell her that my husband also liked gambling in cock fighting and bull fighting. I did not want anybody to know about the bad things of my husband, because his shame was also my shame, so I covered it up. (Aisyah; 35 years old)

Rahmah preferred to discuss issues with a close friend:

I only shared my problems with a close friend; you know it was not easy to share such problems with others. I asked her the way out of my problems. (Rahmah; 33 years old)

It was only Jamila who decided not to discuss her abuse with anyone.

I never told my problems to anybody including my own big family, such as my parents or my sisters. I considered such problems as a shame of mine and my husband that had to be covered up. I knew that from my Islamic teacher, she told me that after we got married, we are not allowed to tell others about our family problem because it is the secret of the family and telling others is considered sinful. But eventually, my parents could see that I already did not get along well anymore with my husband (Jamila; 36 years old).

As seen above, there were many factors that influenced the decisions and actions of the
participants in relation to the different kinds of violence they experienced. Some of the issues discussed, involved trust, opportunity, social norms and religious teachings. Annisa, for instance, saw the opportunity and found somebody she trusted to share her problems. She carefully selected the person who neither knew her family nor her husband's. Jamila, in contrast, decided to keep her problems a secret from others, because she believed that religious teaching did not allow her to share her family problems with outsiders.

5.2 Support, bravery and rebellion

The types of strategies or actions the women chose were highly dependent on the situations of each informant. Below are the views of informants regarding the factors affecting their courage in deciding on whether or not they resisted their violent husbands. They often seemed to be reactors, rather than actors in the sense that Archer (see Ritzer and Douglas 2003) considers agency. Their ability and choices to act seems to shift and change all the time. In this regard some issues encouraged Javanese women to resist or rebel when experiencing domestic violence. These are highlighted in the following narratives:

*At that time our marriage reached the age of almost 11 years. I was 32 years old and we had 2 children. Every time we had problems, my husband would tell his big family and we would be called for a trial. I usually kept silent, but one time I tried to defend myself in front of his big family and told them that Andree, my husband, always beat me up when we had arguments. They could also see the bruises on my face and body and, to my surprise, his mother and sisters defended me and blamed him for the physical violence. When I felt that somebody supported me, I began to get courage and determination to get out of the violent situation. I did not want to be beaten up and treated that way again. (Annisa; 36 years old)*

*At that time, I had the bravery to go because I had money. At that time my husband had been unemployed for about 6 months and he always got angry almost everyday. Even the child was afraid when she saw her father came home, not happy like other children. (Annisa; 36 years old)*

*I did not want my child grew abnormal, who was always afraid, and traumatic due to seeing violence at home. I was afraid if my kid grew as somebody without any*
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confident. Because I worried of my kid mental development, and at that time I had 100 thousand rupiah plus some saving of my child, I decided that we left our home. (Anisa; 36 years old)

Besides, my husband also prohibited me to take pray: “If you get up in the middle of the night, I know that you take pray! Don’t even try if you do not want to see the effects!” He always threatened me. (Annisa; 36 years old)

Other issues contrained the participants ability to act and affected them in ways which diminished their courage to resist or leave their abusive relationship.

I wanted to escape from that violent situation, but I did not have money at all. How could I flee, rebel, or divorce if I did not have money? (Annisa; 36 years old)

If I challenged him to divorce me, my husband lost his temper and became very mad:” If you tried to get away from me and you tried to ask for divorce, you will not save from me! I would rather the four of us die together! I’d rather the four of us committed suicide by drinking poison together! I don’t want us to be divorced”. At that time, if I asked for divorce, he would become mad and if I ran away to my parents home, he always found a way to make me come back. (Annisa; 36 years old).

Fatimah said she did not have a heart to leave her husband because she still loved him very much:

I did not know why I did not resist and fight him back at that time, may be because I loved him too much. Me heart was fully blinded by that love and I was so afraid that he left me (Fatimah; 42 years old)

As seen above, responses of community, family and friends contribute greatly to shaping how battered women themselves recognise and cope with the abuse (Dutton, 1996; Landenburger, 1998 in Ellsberg, 2000). Social support also plays a vital role in the recovery and readjustment of victims of violence. The final act of breaking out of domestic violence is through divorce.

5.3 Divorce

Many studies indicated that women experienced domestic violence tended to continue staying with their batterers because they wished the abuse to end, but not the relationship. However, the most cited reasons why respondents continued to stay with
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their batterers were: difficulties in finding alternative accommodation or no safe to go, fear of the social stigma attached to divorce, children or financial constraints, lack of support etc. (Ondicho, 2000).

These also happened to the Javanese women. Before they decided to get divorce, they have to go through a lot of considerations before they decide to get divorce. There are so many factors influencing their decisions. They were usually afraid to be considered negatively by the society due the fact of being widows. Besides, they also decided to stay in the violent relationship because of economic dependency, no place to stay, worry of their children growth, etc. One of the informants, Annisa stated that she finally decided to get divorce because she found support.

The motivation to get divorce came from a friend, a mother of my child’s classmate. At that time, my child started her school and I had to take and waited for her at school. While I was waiting, I often shared my problems with another parent of my child’s classmate, who was older than me. Because I believed she was wiser in seeing my problems. She advised me: It’s better that you end your marriage than you always have arguments and fights everyday. It is good for your child of she witnesses her parents always fight everyday. She will hate men when she grew up because she saw her father hit you all the time. Moreover, you still young and you can try to get a job or even remarry in the future”. (Annisa; 36 years old)

For many divorce is not good decision, but it is the best option among the many bad ones.

When I was about to divorce, I was confused, afraid, and worried with my new predicate as a widow and its consequences. I worried about my economic condition after divorce. I was afraid that my child would become a broken home and pessimistic child without self confidence. But, I finally could go over all those worries due to the complexity of my marriage problems. There was no way out but divorce. It was the best option among the worst (Annisa; 36 years old.)

The informant also explained that she decided to file a divorce law suit because she wanted to clarify her marital status:

I don’t want to have unclear marital status. You know, I still held the status as Mrs. Mody, but he had left and never come home for long time, what for then? I would rather get divorce and have the chance to remarry if I find a better man. (Hasanah; 34 years old)

Erwin Nur Rif’ah
Fatimah wanted to be divorced because she could not bear her husband’s attitude anymore:

*My husband has left home for 2 months without leaving any message, why should I wait for him. I also do not want to look for him even though I know where he works. I am now the process of divorce. I am now trying to collect evident of his violence on me. I want to catch him red-handed when he is messing around with his mistress, so that I can make him be fired from his office or put in jail. I want to teach him a lesson.*  
*(Fatimah; 42 years old)*

Another reason of the informant to file a divorce suit was because she worried that living in violent marital relationship could change her personality and she did not want it to happen to her:

*I don’t want to change my personality. Before marriage, I was a happy, active, friendly, and open girl, but after I got marriage, I became a quiet and gloomy woman who got angry easily and very close to others. I had completely different personality than before and I didn’t want to be like that. Therefore, I decided to get divorce although my marriage was still very young.*  
*(Jamila; 36 years old)*

While Aisyah decided to get divorced because she felt she was being abused economically:

*Since we were married, my husband had never had a job. So we had to depend for our lives to our parents. Sometimes, we stayed 4 days in his parent home, then one week in my parent home. We continuously lived that way until I delivered my first child in my parent’s home. My mother had a small shop selling daily needs and I helped her to run the shop. My jobless husband often came to the shop and took anything he wanted such as cigarette. I felt ashamed because we did not help to develop the shop but take advantage from it. I would rather divorce than being abused economically by him.*  
*(Aisyah; 35 years old)*

As described above, there were a lot of reasons that made women decide to end their marriage through divorce. Some of them were because they obtained support from their parents’ family or relatives or they were still relatively young. In addition, they also chose divorce because they did not want to be abused economically, worried that their personality would change due to living in a violent marriage, could not bear taking their husband’s attitude anymore, and considered divorce as the last best solution after trying...
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other alternatives that did not work. In addition to the above reasons, the participants also explained that the decision to get divorced was made after they got enlightenment from God or spiritual leaders which made their determination stronger.

_Lately, when he was deeply asleep, I slowly got up and took my ritual ablution and night prayer. Then, I got a dream as if I were in another world and reading Al-quran. Every night, I always awakened and stared at the innocent faces of my two kids who were deeply asleep. It made me get power and determination to get out of my terrible situation._ (Annisa; 36 years old)

Before I decided to get divorce, I took “Istikharoh” prayer to get enlightenment and clue from God. I always prayed that my husband would change into a better person. I kept praying, but my husband was never changed better, whereas I God promised that the prayer of the suppressed will be granted. Then, I thought, may be, that my husband was never change was actually the clue from God for me to get divorce (Jamila; 36 years old)

In Javanese tradition, mystical or supernatural power is widely believed in and practiced. The informants of this study also explained that they also tried to ask for help from “Dukun” to solve their marital problems, although they had different objectives:

_I came to a “dukun” one time in order that I had a determination and easiness to get divorce from my husband. Because so far, I had decided to get divorce and left home but when my husband found me and begged me to come back, I always became weak and approved his request._ (Annisa; 36 years old)

_I had asked for helps from the “dukun” in order that I had a better marriage with my husband, did not get divorce, and I could convince my husband to go back to Jember where I came from._ (Rahmah; 33 years old)

Conclusions

Javanese women's responses to domestic violence, and thus their ability to act, are limited by the options available to them. Most women mentioned reasons such as fear, losing their children, lack of economic support, still loving their husbands and the abiding hope that their partners will change (see Ellsberg et.al. 1999; Armstrong, 1998: 149). The situation was made worse by the social stigma imposed on divorced women, particularly when they are still young. All these factors interact with one another and

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Discourage women from leaving their destructive marriages (George, 1998). They nevertheless try to find other ways to deal with their predicament.

Most of the available options for the women to respond to the domestic violence are affected by socio-cultural values, personal conditions, economic factor and resources of the women. In patriarchal society, women are constructed as powerless and, as the consequence, women always have to go through long process which often includes periods of denial, self-blame, and endurance before they finally decide to take action to resist, rebel or divorce. In addition to that, Javanese and Islamic teachings also recognize values of respecting elders, in the sense that younger people have to respect to the older ones. This values, respectively, affects the ways mothers-in-law and older sisters-in-law behave towards the wives of their sons or their younger brothers. This often causes many mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law in Javanese society also involve in perpetrating violence towards the wives of their sons or younger brothers. The violence usually occurs because of the feeling of superiority. They feel that they are older and deserve respect from the wife.
CHAPTER VI
CASE STUDIES

Introduction

In this chapter, I present three case studies describing the experiences of three participants in my research. I include their cases in more detail in a separate chapter because I want to give a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of how the many complex issues intersect in the lives of individual women. The case study will enhance the theory that socio-cultural construction in which gender inequality play crucial role control over women.

I decided to select the experiences of Annisa, Jamila and Fatimah in the case studies because they underwent the most complicated domestic violence compared to other informants. They were abused by their husbands and mothers in-law in during their marriage. Their live stories illustrate the ways in which the women have to go through a long process before they decided to leave their abusive relationships due to socio-cultural constraints.

Annisa; 36 years old – Closer to the religion

Annisa married a Chinese man who had a different religion. In the beginning of their marriage, her husband decided to convert to Islam. They got married through Islamic marital laws. As background, Indonesia does not recognize marriage by different religions - it only regulates Islamic marriages. She explained that they married when they were still very young and that's why her husband was still not yet mature. She explained about her marriage:

*We married when we were both still 22 years old and My husband was not yet mature. Every time we had a problem, my husband always went and told his mother and his big family and this made me and my husband were always called for a family trial at his parent's home. He always got support from his big family and I was always blamed for our problem. After the trial, my heart could not accept that I was always to be blamed, but I could not do anything as I felt reluctant to my mother in-law, her older sisters so I had to take the blame and kept silent.*

She also explained that her being ethnically different from her husband had a great influence on the way she was treated by her husband’s big family. This issue is very sensitive because it not only involves the perpetrator and the victim of domestic violence.
but also lead to the problem of racism.

_Sometimes, the attitudes of the Chinese toward the indigenous Indonesian were very rude and underestimating. They considered us as out of date villagers. In educating children, for instance, they considered indigenous people as having low intellectual. You know, in that family, I was a daughter in-law who, at the same time, also a servant. If my husband brother or sister came, sometimes, I became confused to serve which one first. For even a very simple thing like putting jam on bread, they always asked me to help._

After five months of marriage she was pregnant with their first child and her husband told her to stop working. He also decided to return to his previous religion. Since then, her husband started to be violent towards her. As soon as her husband changed back to his old religion, she thought of getting a divorce. This was because she knew that according to Islamic tenets, a Muslim woman who marries a non-Muslim man is considered to be having an adulterous sexual relationship with him. But, she could not file a divorce suit at that time because she was still pregnant.

_At that time, my husband could not pretend anymore to be a Muslim. My husband said that he had tried to learn Islam but he just could do it, so he had to return to his previous religion and he asked me to support him". I had no choice, because at that time I was pregnant and already stopped working. Actually, I could not accept his decision because it meant that I committed adultery but what could I do. Finally, I told me to accompany him to go the church and meet a father. He also persuaded me to also follow his religion. He often said: The head of the family is the man, not the woman. So it is you who have to follow me, not the other way around."_

She explained that, at first, the trigger of every argument was because she was working and he wanted her to quit from her job. But, after she stopped working, conflicts/arguments were not reduced but became even worse. The frequency of arguments increased even more after her husband returned to his previous religion. Since then, religion was always the trigger of arguments. She was forced to convert to her husband's religion. She pretended that she obeyed her husband but she could not bear it and decided to flee out her home.

_At the beginning of our marriage, the trigger of arguments was because I was working, but then it still continued and became even worse after I had stopped_
working. The trigger was then always because of our different religions. He forced me to change my faith to his religion. I pretended as if I followed his religion because I had no choice. Even though I agreed to change into Christianity, but in my heart I was still a Muslim and believed in Islam. Every two weeks, a priest came to our home and taught me about the Bible, and every week, I had to go to the Church. And during that time, he did not allow me to do my Islamic prayers. I had declared that I was Christian, but I could not stop my Islamic habits, hence when there was a sound of thunder, for instance, I always said: “Astaghfirullah” spontaneously, and this became the trigger of an argument. Other example was, before every meal, I always prayed almost automatically in Islamic way and this also became the cause of big quarrel. He did not like my habit and he told his mother about that. Of course, his mother also criticized me for that rudely. I defended myself by explaining that it just happened as reflex because I had been raised with this habit so I could not stop easily. I told her that I need time. I pretended like this for around 6 months.

Because she could not bear it, she finally decided to run away. However, finally, her husband’s family found her and asked her to return home and gave her permission to become a Muslim again.

After that I ran away from my home and went back to my parents. I told them that I could not bear to live with a husband with a different religion anymore and I wanted to get a divorce. Because, I knew that my husband would look for me in my parents home, so I tried hard to avoid meeting him. However, after a few days, he could find me in my sister home. He persuaded me to return home. At that time, my sister told him that what made me ran away was actually because my husband told me to change religion into Christian. My sister told him that I could not accept that. Eventually, my husband and his big family allowed me to return to Islam.

Even though she was permitted to become Muslim again, she never had any freedom to practice her religion, such as praying.

After that I went back home again and became Muslim again. I was very tolerant at that time. Every week I took him to church and I never disturbed him when he had a service. But on the contrary, he never had any tolerance to me. Although he permitted me to be Muslim again, but I never had freedom in doing my religious activities, such as prayers. For instance, when I was praying, there was a phone call from my mother
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in-law. Then, if my kid answered the phone and told her that I was still praying. Later when I called her back, she was angry and said: "Why do you always take pray every time I call? Do you want to avoid me or what?" Then she told my husband about that and he also was angry to me. They did not believe me despite the truth that I told them.

In addition to that, when I was praying, my husband always turned on music loudly. During the fasting month, when the time to break up the fast came, he always asked me to do this and that on purpose. He actually knew that I had not eaten anything the whole day and wanted to break my fast. I usually protested him: "You know that I have not eaten anything and I wanted to eat something, but you asked me to do this and that." This then made him angry and we often started to have arguments.

Later on my husband prohibited me to pray. He threatened me if I insisted on doing my prayers when he was at home. I never went to mosque any more during fasting month during my marriage. I did have the freedom any more. I had to wait until he was going out of home if I wanted to read Al-quran. I also felt awkward when the time for praying had come but he was at home.

Besides, she also felt that her husband tried her patience and played with her emotions. For instance, one day he suddenly said that he was bored of working and asked Annisa to work instead:

He liked to make me frustrated and emotionally disappointed. He was easily bored with job and often changed jobs. One time, he decided to stop working and became unemployed for several months. He told me that he was bored working and wanted to rest. He asked me to look for a job instead. I applied for jobs here and there. I had to change jobs for three times until finally I got a good job as a beauty adviser in a bonafide company.

When her husband was jobless, Annisa felt that her husband was testing her patience by behaving strangely:

When he was unemployed, he really tested my patience and made me depressed. He often behaved like an abnormal person. He sometimes slept under the bed and laughed to himself. I believed he just wanted to get our attention. When her mother and older sisters knew that, of course, they worried and got angry with me.
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Although she worked, she did not have the right to use her own income because she had to give all the money to her husband:

Even though I worked, I could not use my own salary, because my husband forced me to give my salary to him. I could not hide some of the money because he always asked me for the pay roll. I usually got paid twice a month, every 1st of the month I got my basic salary and every 15th, I got the commission from the amount of sales I made. I usually could hide a little bit from my commission because he did not know the exact calculation of my commission. I usually got 3-5% of my total sales, but he never knew how much I could sell every month, so I could keep some of the money by myself. I usually gave some money to my mother. I had to do it secretly, because he did not want me to give any money to my mother. It was so strange because I worked and earned money but he had the full control of my money.

When she already got a job, because of following her husband’s wish for her to work again, he unexpectedly told her to stop working because he worried that the children would not be well taken care of:

After one month, he then asked me to stop from the job because he said he already got his motivation to work again. I was, of course, very annoyed and disappointed because I had worked hard to pass the test and undergone the training, then, when I already got it, he asked me to stop. So I decided to resist and retain my job because it was not easy to get a job, whereas I was already 30 years old and may be I would not be accepted any more for the same position next time. Besides, I had to think of my own future because I had children and my husband also liked to gamble. I worried about our future. So if had to earn my own income.

He often used our children as he reasons for arguments. He said that because of my job, I neglected the children education. Indeed that when I worked in the afternoon shift, I usually arrived at home at 10 pm. But, although I was tired, I always checked my kid home work and there was a mistake, I would explain to her the next morning before she went to school. I knew my duties as a wife and I wanted to be a good wife.

Because the violence she experienced was escalating and her husband continuously was pressing her to leave her job, she finally decided to quit her job after a very serious argument:

Eventually, he tried to do anything to force me stop working. One night, around mid
Night, we had an argument about my job. He took my uniform and threw it away to the garden outside. Then, he took a knife and he threatened me: “If you insisted to work, go out of this house right now. Take that uniform and don’t come back home!”. This of course made my kids awake and cry. I took the uniform and went out my home. It was mid night and I did not know where to go, but a neighbour asked me to stay at their place. They knew that we were quarrelling and they heard my husband shouting and swearing at me.

My two kids were crying. I was also crying. I knew actually they felt pity on me but they could not help me. They wanted to follow me but their father locked the door. The next morning, I insisted to go to my work. When I was working, my niece who looked after my children called me. She suggested that I did not go home after working because my husband was still mad and carrying knife.

After work, I went to my mother-in-law’s home. She asked me what actually the problem was. I told her that my husband wanted me to stop working but I refused. Because my husband liked spending the income on gambling and if I worked, I did not need to worry every month because I had my own money.

At that time, his mother and his sisters supported me and blamed him for forbidding me to work. That made him even angrier with me and took my uniform and plunged it to the well behind the house. If I passed in front of him, he always stared his eyes to me as if I was his enemy. Finally, I could not bear such situation and I let him win. I agreed to resign from my job.

Because she felt oppressed by her husband, she began to think of running away from her husband to the place that he can never find. She began to think about strategy:

I felt as if I lived in other world. I used to take pray and read Al-quran when I was a child until a couple of month before I got married. After I got married, I felt that my life is far from Islam. I lost my freedom to do my religious activities. I often woke up at night and looked at the innocent faces of my children. They gave me power and determination to get out of my situation. But then I worried because I did not know from whom I could get support for my life. I did not have a place to live and I could not live with my parents and sisters forever. If I brought my two kids, I was afraid I could not support their education. My older child was about to go to Junior High. While my second child was still at grade one of primary school. Finally, I had my...
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determination that I had to run away from home but would take only my second child, because I believed I could find a way to pay for her primary education.

She began to think of finding a way to collect some money to buy a ticket for her flee. My husband was unemployed for 6 months and at that time we always got money form her mother because I helped her working at her catering business. We had money only enough for our daily needs, so I could not save anything. However, sometimes, his sister asked me to go out for shopping and she gave me a little money after that. Every time she gave me money, I save it until I had 100 thousand rupiah.

At last, the opportunity to flee from her abusive relationship arrived:

The opportunity to run away finally came. At that time, I was helping my mother in-law in her home. My husband was also there. We had a little argument because I wanted to go home but my mother in-law and he did not permit me. During the argument, he kicked me from his seat. It was not hard though. But I was so insulted and became very angry. My second child saw what happened and I thought it was the best time to flee, because my son always said: “If daddy hit you why did not you go from home. I will go with you”. Because I insisted to go home, my husband finally told me to go home. I brought my son with me. As soon as I arrived at home, I was packing our cloths, some toys and other necessary documents as quick as possible, then we left our home. I told my son that we would go to my relative in East Java and we would also bring his older sister later. I had only 100 thousand rupiah plus my son saving of 60 thousand rupiah when we ran away. It was already late in the afternoon, we spent the night first at one of our relative in Jakarta, before we went to east Java. But I never told them that I was on the run. The next morning, I went to the Jatinegara train station. Actually I did not know where to go because I did not have any relative outside Jakarta. I just wanted to ran away as far as possible that my husband could not find me. On the train station, we met an old woman. On the way, I talked to her and I did not know why I also told her all my life story, I told her that I was on the run and I did know where to go. Then she offered me to go with her to Jember. Her name was Mrs. Atikoh, who has Islamic boarding school (pondok Pesantren).

Actually, I was still doubtful while I was on the train. I remembered the advice of my friend mother. She told me to be patience for the sake of our children. Because if I divorce, it would not good for our children. But, it was just too hard for me to hear,
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especially, when I had to lose my freedom to do my religious activities. I was also afraid of the sin marrying a man who was non-muslim, because Islam considered our sexual relationship as adultery. I had my determination again when Mrs. Atikoh advised me to go on with my decision because she believed it was the best option for my situation. Finally, I arrived in Jember where I lived until now. I did not have problem for housing because I lived in an Islamic boarding school (Pondok Pesantern). My problem was money to support my son needs, such as milk and school. So I decided to write a letter to my parents to ask for money. The letter was actually had no address, I just asked my parents to send me money to a bank account owned by a friend in the Boarding school. I did not how but, my husband could trace down my whereabouts and finally came to Jember. He persuaded me to go home but I had made up my decision to stay. He could only bring my son with him back to Jakarta. In Jember, I had to be creative ad do many things to survive. I made and sold snacks, sold “Jilbab” (women head scarf), etc. to support my life. After two years I lived in Jember, I filed a divorce suit to the court. And now, I feel that I am closer to religion and God.

2. Fatimah; 45 years old - Time to revenge

Fatimah’s marriage with Agung was her second. She divorced from her first husband with whom she had children. Agung was a widower with one child. He worked as announcer at a local radio owned by government. Fatimah knew Agung because she often listened to his program and liked to send regards among listeners. After several months, she got closer to him and she finally agreed when he proposed her to marry. Fatimah explained that she agreed to accept Agung proposal because of the following reasons:

Agung was a radio announcer at a government owned radio station in Jember. I often listened to his program. In fact his drew attention to quite a number of listeners. We usually sent and received regards among listeners via phone calls. We even made a listener fans club and held several occasions for all the fans of the program. I met Agung in person when his radio invited all the fans club members for a certain activity. He was charming, handsome, macho, and looked very polite at that time. He came on a nice car, wearing a nice suit and necktie and seemed to be a rich and educated man. I was so impressed with his appearance and behaviour. You know, he met all the criteria of a man with whom I wanted to be married with. That was my
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weakness, you know. I was easily deceived by someone performance. Later, I knew that it was not his car and the only vehicle he had was an old scooter provided by his office. Since then, I was crazy about him and really felt in love with him. After we knew each other for one month, he often visited me at my home and brought some gifts.

Most Javanese women always have dreams of a perfect husband and a harmonious family life they expect to have before they enter the marriage lives, However, not all of those dreams can become reality. Fatimah, then, explained how Agung slowly changed his behaviour just a couple of months after they got married.

I finally accepted Agung proposal to marry me and we were engaged for several months. Three months before our wedding, I actually had begun to feel that our marriage would not turn to be as good as I wished. One night Agung told me that he had a program at Rembangan mountain resort and stayed over night there. The next morning, a woman called at my home and told me that she was the one who was going to the resort with Agung. My relatives actually had also warned me about Agung negative behaviours, but I was too deft by love to listen to them. I was so crazy about Agung.

Love was often blamed as making someone blind from seeing the reality. this was also true with Fatimah and she finally got married with Agung. Since they were engaged until they were married, Agung had shown his improper behaviour. She suspected that Agung had an affair with another woman. She knew when she listened to his program. There was a woman who routinely called to his program and sent special regards to him. From the way the woman talked to him on the phone on air, she could feel that there had to be something special between the woman and her husband:

When we got married, I thought Agung would change his behaviours. I though he would stop his habit to hang around at night with women whom he always claimed as the fans of his program. I knew he even went steady with one or two of them. I knew that from the way they talked on the phone or air when I listened to the program. They always sent a special regards to Agung and in return, Agung also sent his special regards, which sounded too romantic for a married man, to one of the women. He always mentioned the initial and address of the woman. One day, I even tried to trace
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I passed by the house and to my surprise, I saw a pair of shoes which I believed Agung shoes in front of the door.

Although, Fatimah knew that her husband had an affair with another woman and often saw them together, but she did not have the courage to catch them red handed.

I did not have the bravery to directly come to the woman’s house when Agung was there. I even had no courage to ask my husband directly. When my husband was at home and I though that the situation was right, I usually asked him indirectly by making up story. I had to do it very carefully because I was afraid that he would become angry with me. However, my husband always got mad as soon as I asked something related to another woman. He usually replied my question by shouting at me and telling me not to interfere his business. After that, My husband usually left home for several days, even for one week without any information. Then, I decided not to ask about it any more.

Due to such kinds of reactions from her husband, Fatimah tried to be more careful in her behaviour towards him. She was afraid to offend him. She tried to serve her husband as well as possible, since, when her husband did not like what she did, he always got mad, sometimes slapped her on the cheek, and then left home for several days without any notice. She experienced physical violence from her husband several times:

One night, I was asking him something which made him offended and became very mad at me. He beaten me up until my face turned black and blue. My eyes was even swollen. I could do nothing but crying and asking his apology. The next morning, I still served him as if there had been nothing happened the night before. I made him breakfast and prepared all his needs. He then left home at about 10 a.m. I thought he was going to the mosque because it was Friday and it was about time to go for Friday praying. But he did not return home until late in the afternoon. I began to feel worry about him. I was afraid that he might regret what he had done to me and did crazy things to punish himself, for instance, by jumping into the river next to my place. At about 5 pm, I heard a knock at the door. When I peeped out the window, I saw two police officers and the head of my neighbourhood were standing there. “Oh, He must have died or been hospitalized and the policemen were about to tell me the news.” I thought. I was so afraid and worried to open the door. After a few minutes, I was
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somewhere felt relieve because I heard the voice of my husband calling, "Fatimah, open the door, please." I rushed to the door and opened it with astonishment why my husband came home with two policemen and the head of our neighbourhood. It was so surprised when one of the policemen said that they came to arrest me on a charge of threatening to do violence to my husband. He told me that my husband had filed a report to the police station for that charge. I was shaking due to shock, however, I tried to defend myself, "Based on what evident you will arrest me. Do you think that I really have the ability to perpetrate violence to my husband? Look at us please, I am so small as compared to him. Do you think it makes sense that I threaten to do a physical abuse to my husband. It was he who have tortured me officer. Please look carefully to my faces. This is what I call evident of violence." Saying that I opened my jilbab (head scarf) and showed them my blue swollen cheek. The officers believed me and said that they wanted to take in my husband instead because he had committed violence and filed a false report. But I begged them not to. I told them that it was a family affairs and it was common that there was a conflict within a family. I wanted to settle that down ourselves without involving a law.

For Fatimah love is blind and also forgiving. Fatimah always thought positively about every incidence of violence she experienced. She even blamed herself for what happened to her. She thought her husband was angry with her because she failed to be a good wife.

Wife abuse strikes at the core of a woman’s social identity as wives and mothers, which makes it especially devastating to her self-esteem. This is consistent with research which suggests that shame and self-blame are powerful mechanisms keeping many women entrapped in violent relationships (Landerburger, 1989 in Ellsberg, et. Al, 2000: 1605). Furthermore, she also told one story when she felt so angry with her husband but she had no courage to do so and only asked politely:

One night I was surprised to see my husband peeping into my daughter’s room. She was at the Junior high school at that time. I directly asked him why he was peeping to my daughter’s room but he denied that. I just politely to him that my daughter also meant his daughter. It is also his responsibility as my husband to also love and protect her. Since then, I asked my daughter to always lock the door and put on trousers when she was sleeping. However, I did not tell her the reason why.

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Fear for the safety of their children often give the courage and power to women experiencing domestic violence to resist. In addition, women’s experience of domestic violence will also affect how the women deal with violence, as told by Fatimah bellow:

One day, he was offended by what I had done. Very often, he did not like the way a served him even though I had tried to do my best. Then, as always, he would become angry and left home without notice. This time he left home for months but I did not care and I did not try to look for him as usual. Up to now, He has already been away from home for about two years. I could not bear it any more and I have lost my patience for him. I might still tolerate him when he beaten me up, but now he has gone too far by jeopardizing the honour of my daughter. I was so worried with my daughter after I saw him peeping at my daughter’s room while she was asleep. Fortunately, I was at home and I caught him red-handed. But what if he raped my daughter when I was not at home? Somehow, I was more relieve and less worry when he never come home again.

Until we had the interview, Fatimah was still in the process of filing a divorce law suit with her husband. She intentionally made the divorce process become lengthy and difficult for her husband because she wanted to teach a lesson to him so that he could not easily get marry again with his girlfriend:

I do not care that he left home and I do not want that he comes home. I also intentionally make the status if our divorce uncertain. I do not want to divorce him easily without giving him any lesson. Now he can not get marry again before the divorce process is over and we are divorced lawfully. I decided to make it difficult as could as I can handle. Now, I even want to catch him red-handed when he is staying or sleeping with his girlfriend. Because if I can do so, I will have evident to report to his superior officer and he can be fired from his job according to civil service regulation. I want to make him feel regret for what he has done to me.

3. Jamila; 36 years old; Short marriage

Before she met her husband, she was having a serious relationship with a man with a different religion. She even had started to talk about marriage with him. As marriage law in Indonesia require that a couple have the same religion, her boyfriend has even decided to convert his religion into Islam. However, his parents could not agree on
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his decision and forced him to break up his relationship with her. She had a broken heart at that time. After that, she met Joko with whom then she got married. She told a story how she met her husband at the first time.

*I met him coincidentally because his older sister was my friend in an Islamic study group. Because we were neighbours, since our acquaintance, my husband often visited me to my parent's home and we became close to each other. Three months later, he proposed me to marry him. My parents did not automatically accept his proposal because they thought our relationship was too short to be used as a basis to marry. However, he and his parents somehow convinced my parents and finally they accept the proposal. The wedding day was then set.*

She also described what was actually the reasons that made her and Joko decide to get marry soon:

*My husband said that he did not want to wait too long to get married. At the same time, I was also tired of going steady with men several times but finally we failed to continue to wedding. But, before making decision, I was praying to ask for clue from God in order that I could make the right decision. I also tried to get to know more about my husband by meeting some of his friend. Finally, I married him when I was 32 and you know, in my place, it was actually considered too late for woman to get married over 30 years old.*

She said that since two weeks of their wedding, her husband was often angry to her:

*I did not really remember our exact wedding because I really wanted to forget it. In the first week of our marriage, everything was still going well, although I began to see some strange behaviours of my husband. Usually, a couple who has just married always treat one another romantically and even makes love several time a day, isn't it? But it did not happen to us. At that time I wanted to treat him like a couple in honeymoon, such as when I tried to hug him, but he refused. The next morning, I did not discuss about it with him because I thought he behaved that way because he was still tired. However, after I did that several times in the following days and he still refused, I began to wonder why. Two weeks after our wedding, he began to talk of having polygamy and of course I rejected his idea. After that, I began to receive phone calls from women who claimed as my husband's close friends. Since then, my husband became so easily upset with anything that I did. Everything that I did was not*
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right in his eyes and this made me depressed. Sometimes, when he was angry, he did not go home for two days either he stayed in his parent’s home or in his office. When it happened, I usually cooked nice food and brought to him to his office.

In addition to that, she also said that her mother-in-law often became angry with her and she also often mocked her as an incompetent wife. This was also influencing the attitudes of her husband toward her:

Besides, his mother was often angry with me. I never knew why she did that to me. This made me feel more depressed. Once, I visited his mother at her home. It was around two months after wedding. Without knowing the reason, she said many rude words to me telling me as incompetent. I was so insulted by her, going home and crying. My husband asked me why I was crying. I just told him to ask her older sister because she witnessed what happened. When he knew that, he defended me in front of his mother. Then his mother became angry to him considered him as a child who did not respect his mother. He regret of doing that and since then our relationship was getting worse and worse.

She also experienced violence from the surrounding community:

You know, my husband just gave 200 thousands or sometimes 150 thousands rupiahs every month. I was wondering why he gave me such a small amount of money, so I decided to come to his office to figure out how much actually he earned monthly. Of course I came secretly when my husband was not at the office. But all his colleagues covered it up. They even made fun of me by teasing me that my husband might have another wife to share his income. When my husband left home, some neighbour blamed me as incompetent wife who were unable to take care of a husband.

Because she was tired of the way her husband and mother-in-law treated her - they often got angry with her and her husband often to left home, she began to think of ending her marriage. Moreover, she said that it was not easy to find a solution for their problem, hence she thought that divorce might be the only feasible solution:

At last, after we married for 3 months, my husband was very mad at me and he decided to move out to his parent’s home. I did not remember what was the cause but he said that he could not bear to stay with me anymore and wanted to stay with his parents. One month later, he came home and asked me what I really wanted with our marriage. I was crying and told him that I wished to maintain and even to improve
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our marriage. Then, he told me that he could not decide, he wanted to talk it over with his mother before he decided. After that, we usually just communicated via telephone. Sometime, I still visited him at his office and brought him some food. I did that because I thought it was still possible for us to fix our relationship. I even asked him to take me to the market once in a while. In short, I tried to maintain communication with him even though we had no longer relationship like a husband and wife. As I could not live like that any longer, I insisted that he make decision immediately. A couple of days later, I was invited to come to his parent's home for a family meeting. At the meeting, he asked me to confess that it was I who made him leave our home, but I challenged his statement and made him angry. But I kept talking and asked him to make decision on whether or not we would continue our marriage the day after the meeting. His parents suggested that he make decision one month later. But I disagreed as I thought it was too long to wait for another month. I did not feel convenient as a wife living alone at my home as it created negative rumours about me. Finally we had an agreement that decision would be made within one week time. So, decision to divorce took long time and involved his big family.

The existence of another women also encouraged her to demand for divorce from her husband:

That night, I went to his parent's home to meet him. We talked about our problems. I said, "Our problems are very complex, however, I think we still fix our relationship if there is no other woman between us. What do you think about it?" Then, he said that it was not possible anymore to fix our relationship. His statement made me come to a conclusion that he already had an affair with another women. Hearing that, I told him to process our divorce as soon as possible. In the his divorce lawsuit he charged me of having an affair with another man, of course, I strongly disagreed with his allegation. However, I could not do a lot because I was alone and a lot of family members supported him.

She explained that many people blamed her for what happened. They thought that their marriage could not last long due to her failure to serve her husband, so that he left their home and decided to live with his parents. But, she did not care any more and she insisted to end her marriage. She believed if she maintained that kind of relationship, it would change her psychologically.
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Conclusion

The above case studies indicated that each Javanese woman employs different strategies in dealing with her problems upon experiencing domestic violence. The selection of the strategy was influenced by various factors, namely: the socio-cultural factors i.e. Javanese values, Islamic teachings and state policies; the personal factors i.e. educational background, children’s safety and development, and childhood experiences; as well as resources i.e. economic dependency and availability of supports either from their big family, relatives or surrounding environment.

They always went through relatively long processes before they decided to choose certain action among the available options as a response to the domestic violence they experienced. All of these decisions were always based on careful considerations on possible risks that they could receive after they took the actions. The processes include self-blame (in the case of Fatimah), departure (leaving her husband - in the case of Annisa), efforts to fix the marital relationship (in the case of Jamila).

All the three cases presented above showed that they decided to select divorce as a final solution when they were not successful after trying several efforts to fix their marital relation and expect to change the behaviours of their husbands in order to end the violence.

Javanese women were also disadvantaged by the Indonesian marriage law when they wanted to get divorced from their husbands. In the case of Fatimah, for instance, she had to carefully think of her strategy prior to filing a divorce suit against her husband by collecting hard evident of her husband’s mistreatment towards her. She had to do this because according to the Indonesian marriage law, when a wife files a divorce suit without having evident that her husband committed mistakes, she is not entitled for a divorce compensation, called nafkah mut’ah as well as wealth owned by the family during their marriage. However, when Fatimah could present hard evident that proved her husband mistakes, she would be fully entitled for the compensation and the wealth.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Conclusions

The study brought out some important findings. Firstly, the finding suggested that both Javanese and Islamic teaching intermingled in shaping the informants' beliefs and practices regarding domestic violence as well as informants' agency when dealing with violence. Although Bourdieu's (2001) notion of masculine domination and symbolic violence can be applied to Javanese society, the women in this study also displayed different levels and kinds of agency at different times. Sometimes they adopted strategies that made it possible to survive, even when it was done in ways which might reinforce their own oppression. Staying safe and surviving are also forms of action. At the same time, all the women in the study finally divorced their husbands, even when it had negative consequences for them. Yet, for them, divorce was at the same time also an act of great agency and even a form of freedom.

It is clear that gender relations still played important roles in assigning positions to men and women within marital relationships and this, then, affected the types of domestic violence occurring in Javanese society. In Javanese society, women were commonly placed in the second position after men. They were considered as "Konco Wingking" or as men's companions in the family who had to take domestic responsibilities, namely "macak, masak, manak" (looking after her physical appearance, preparing meals, and delivering children). Such a case was also true to the Javanese women living in urban area. Even though most of them had good education, women in Javanese urban society were still considered responsible for domestic work. This happened because doing household work was considered as one form of service and obedience to their husbands and failure to do so would make them faced a social stigma as incompetent wives. Bourdieu named this kind of treatment towards women as symbolic violence.

The roles and behaviours of husbands and wives are much influenced, formed and judged by the society. A husband has to be the leader and the protector of the family due to his masculine characteristics of being stronger physically than a woman. Whereas, women were always symbolically associated with characteristics such as femininity, domesticity, weakness, passivity, powerlessness which all suggested that they had to be...
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dependent and obedient to their husbands. A wife is judged as good or bad based on her obedience and ability to serve her husband. Because husbands were considered as the protectors and the leaders of wives, hence, in return, they were obliged to devote their lives to husbands by offering their best services to their husbands. Such conditions was even boosted by the Javanese values of 'swargo nunut neroko katut' which considered wives as husbands' followers either to heaven or hell. This posed other obligations over wives to always safeguard the dignity of their family, especially their husbands by not sharing the problems, secret and shame of the family to the outsiders. They considered the mistakes and shame of their husbands were also their own shame.

The interviews also revealed that task distribution regarding household work is still not yet easily acceptable for the Javanese Muslim society. One of the informants stated that she tried to negotiate with her husband about sharing responsibilities in doing domestic work. However, she finally failed to maintain such agreement because her husband found it difficult to accept the duties and the community, represented by his big family, also still could not accept the fact that a man did domestic work.

In urban Javanese society whose education was good, the physical violence was not common and not tolerable. Of six informants, two of them experienced physical violence and both their family and community considered these as unacceptable. They all viewed physical violence by a husband to a wife as completely wrong. They considered physical violence by a husband to a wife as a crime and, in fact, such violence has been regulated in the criminal codes.

Another type of violence unveiled during the interviews was economic violence, in which their husbands either provided insufficient income or did not provide any income to sustain the livelihood of the family. However, most of them still tolerate economical violence as long as their husbands behave well. They always referred to Islamic teachings when setting standards of men’s good behaviour. Men were considered to behave well when they did not do things prohibited by Islamic teachings, such as gambling, drinking alcohol, adultery, etc.

Verbal violence was the most common form of domestic violence experienced by the informants and they considered verbal violence as the most hurtful violence after other psychological violence of a husband having affairs with other women. All the informants also confessed that the involvement of mother in-law in their marriage lives.
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influenced very much their relationship with their husbands. They also stated that, apart from their husbands, mothers-in-laws also often perpetrated violence themselves either direct or indirectly.

With regards to their response to domestic violence, the interviews revealed that the informants dealt with domestic violence in various ways, depending on the time of its occurrence, types of the violence, the perpetrator of the violence, and status as well as ability/resources of the informants.

7.2 Recommendation

The problems of domestic violence are complex problems involving not only a husband and a wife experiencing the violence, but also socio-cultural and state, which also play roles in stimulating the occurrence of domestic violence. Therefore, women empowerment dealing with the case is imperative to be promoted in order that they have better understanding and ability in taking decisions from the available choices whenever they experience domestic violence. In addition, legal protection on women experiencing domestic violence has also to be promoted so that women’s legal rights will be more ensured, either before or during marriage as well as after they decide to end their marital relationship, if such cases were unavoidably take place.

Adequate knowledge on marriage, its consequences, and rights as well as obligation, including those related to domestic violence are necessary for the youth, either men or women, before they get married because this will help them undergo their marriage lives. Furthermore, as this study investigated only the women perspectives on domestic violence with a small number of samples, hence similar study with bigger samples exploring both the men’s and women’s perspectives on domestic violence would be useful to obtain more comprehensive understanding of the case and to suggest solutions.

Finally, the Indonesian government is also responsible to promote women’s rights, to provide facilities for the prevention of domestic violence, and the protection of domestic violence victims because so far the available facilities for those purposes are very limited and are not yet widely known by the community. When women are more acknowledged, secured and ascertained legally, they will be braver and confident in exercising agency upon experiencing domestic violence. A campaign would be essential for this purpose.
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Annex-1
Consent Form

Amsterdam Master’s in Medical Anthropology
Consent Form of women’s Experience of Domestic Violence

Introduction
The purpose of this study is to explore and understand women’s experience of domestic violence and how they deal with domestic violence. Also to explore how social-cultural factor embedded domestic violence. This study will be conducted in Jember district, East Java among Javanese Muslim women who have been divorced or in the process of divorce, because I want to look at women’s agency.

Procedure
The informants in this study will be asked to share their views, experience and believe about domestic violence. Their participation in this study is voluntary without any coercion if they refuse to participate. Furthermore, the informants are free to withdraw at anytime. The interview will be recorded to avoid missing information.

Risk
There is a possibility that the interview might be overheard while the researcher is conducting it. In additional, some questions may bring up emotional and personal issues.

Benefit
There may no direct benefit for informant to participate in this study. However, this study is one out of several ways to break up the silent of the victims of domestic violence, and may be the result of the of this study will be used to give recommendations and suggestion for women’s empowerment program.

Confidentiality
The result of this study may be published or presented for scientific purpose. The informant’s words may be quoted, however, they will be identified by false names so that their identity and personal information will be kept as confidential as possible. All research materials will be held in strictest confidence. Only the researcher knows their identity.

Consent:
After I read descriptions above, I agree to participate in this study. I understand that this interview will be recorded.
Jember,

Informant’s signature

Reseacher signature

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Annex-2
Question Guidelines

A. Question in Focus Group Discussion
1. How do you see domestic violence from the perspective of Javanese values and Islamic teaching? Are there any values of Javanese culture or Islamic teaching that accept or legalise domestic violence?
2. How do Javanese values and Islamic teaching see the status and the position of women? What are the consequences of that way of seeing? Do those values endorse then subordination of women or empower the position of women?
3. How is the status of a woman after she gets married according to Javanese culture and Islamic teaching? Is there any different before and after her marriage?
4. How does domestic violence actually occur in Javanese community? What types of violence can be categorised as domestic violence?
5. Is there any local term that refers to ‘agency’?
6. How does the Javanese community see wives who resist to their husbands because they were treated violently?
7. Are there any Javanese values or Islamic teaching which advise or allow women to resist to their husbands upon experiencing domestic violence? If so, can you explain?
8. How is the women’s experience of domestic violence in general?
9. How do women deal with domestic violence in general?
10. How did you usually react when you were violated, did you ask for help from other people? Who did you usually ask for help? Why?

B. In-depth interview Guideline

Socio-cultural
1. How do Islamic teaching and Javanese values influence the prevalence of domestic violence?
2. What is your opinion on the statement in Javanese culture that ‘a wife will follow her husband whether he goes to hell or heaven? If you agree why, if disagree why?
3. There is Javanese statement say that a woman’s role are cooking, washing, serving sex and making herself beautiful (dapur, sumur, kasur, pupur). What is your opinion on this statement? What did your ex-husband think about this statement?
4. In Islamic teaching also say that a man is leader for woman, what is your opinion on this statement? If agree why, if disagree why?
5. What are the characteristics of a good wife and a good husband?
6. What are the characteristics of a good marital relationship?
7. Do you think you live in the patriarchal society? If so, why, how do you deal with it, if not why?

Personal Factors
1. Did your ex-husband drink alcohol? Did he do the violence when he was drunk?
2. Is there any history of violence in your parent’s family or your parent’s in law family?
3. How is the social status of your family compared to that of your ex-husband? Is it
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equal, higher or lower?

4. Do you have children? Did children ever become the triggers of domestic violence? Was there any of the violence you experienced that was triggered by argument about children?

5. What types of domestic violence did you experience?

6. How often did you experience domestic violence?

7. Did you ever try to seek for help? Where? To whom? How?

8. Where did you live after you got married? Did you live with your parent, parent in-law, or you lived separately (only with your husband)? Why, how?

9. Do you know any information about domestic violence, gender or women? If so, how did you know that information? Does it help you?

10. Do you have any jobs? Do you earn your own income?

Gender Relation

1. How do you perceive the status of your ex-husband (leader, friend, superior etc.)?

2. How did your ex-husband perceive your status (follower, friend, inferior etc.)?

3. Who was the main decision-maker in your family? Who made the decision most often in the family?

4. In your experience, what were your responsibilities and tasks as wives? What were your rights as wives?

5. What were men’s responsibilities and tasks as husbands? And what were their rights as husbands?

Economic Factor

1. Did the economic crisis affect your household income significantly? How?

2. Did financial problems ever trigger an argument in your family and led to violence? If so, what types of financial problem? Can you give examples?

3. Who was responsible to earn income in your family?

4. Who was responsible to hold and manage the family income?

Agency

1. How were the reactions of the community, your extended families (relatives), and your ex-husband when you decided to file a divorce?

2. What was your consideration when you decided to divorce and leave your abusive relationship?

3. Was there anybody who supports, motivates, disagrees, or even protests your decision to divorce? Who?

4. Was there anybody who was involved in helping you making the decision of divorce?

5. How was the process from the intention until you arrived at the decision of divorce?

6. Do you know about agency? Is there any local term that refers to agency?

7. Do you realise that what you did was one form of agency? If yes, why? If not, why?

C. Key informant interview Guidelines

Islamic Leader

1. In many cases of domestic violence, husbands often claimed that what they did were allowed or even legalised by Islam. In your opinion, how does actually Islam see domestic violence? Is that permitted or even legalised? Is there any Islamic...
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teaching which protect the rights of women?
2. In Islamic teaching, are women allowed to resist, disobey or fight back to their husband, especially when they are treated violently?

Anthropologist

1. In many cases of domestic violence, husbands often claimed that what they did were allowed or accepted according to the Javanese values. In your opinion, how does actually Javanese culture sees domestic violence? Is that really accepted? Is there any Javanese value(s) which protect the rights of women?
2. According to Javanese values, are women allowed to resist, disobey or fight back to their husband, especially when they are treated violently?

Activist

1. What types of violence do NGOs often identify to occur in the community?
2. How can NGOs play roles in dealing with those violence? Why?
3. In what situation do usually victims come and seek for helps to NGOs?
4. What kinds of helps do NGOs offer to the victims of domestic violence?