

TO BREAK THE CIRCLES OF SILENCE

The impact of the discriminatory laws and practices on women and
evaluation of the progress of gender equality in Jordan
Violence against women as a study case

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*« What about a woman who gets married to escape the violence
of her father, then has to abandon her children if she wants
to escape the violence of her husband...» Asma Khader*

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TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	4
1. Background.....	5
2. Objectives	6
3. Method	7
4. Definitions.....	8
5. Statistics and data.....	9

FIRST PART

QUALITATIVE PHASE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

I. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS PERPETUATION OF GENDER POWER STRUCTURES.....	11
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A. HOW TO TALK ABOUT VIOLENCE IN JORDAN TO DAY? THE FIRST WORDS.....	11
B. FACES OF VIOLENCE: from "ORDINARY" VIOLENCE to "HONOR" CRIMES	13
1. "ORDINARY" VIOLENCE or THE DAILY LIVES OF WOMEN	13
2. "HONOR" CRIMES as THE EXTREME FORM OF VIOLENCE.....	17
C. MALE OR PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE.....	19

II. ROOTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND AGGRAVATING FACTORS	20
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A. THE PROMINENT ROLE OF RELIGION IN SOCIAL LIFE	21
1. Religion as a reference for a fair society	21
2. Interpretations or distortion of religious precepts.....	22
3. Religion as an excuse for violence against women	23
4. Religious fanaticism	23
5. Political ISLAM.....	24
B. CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION.....	25
1. Society under patriarchal control	25
2. Family as a sacred value and the basis of social order	27
3. The mechanisms of social reproduction	27
C. THE IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL CONTEXT.....	28
1. A region of conflicts	28
2. An environment of theocratic and non democratic regimes	29
D. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION	30
E. THE MEDIA	31

III. THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SITUATION	31
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A. THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN.....	31
B. JORDANIAN SOCIETY BETWEEN MODERNITY AND TRADITIONALISM ...	33

IV. THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL POLICIES	35
---	----

V. THE MAIN TENDENCIES OF EVOLUTION 40

- A. PREVAILING POSITIVE PERCEPTION..... 40
- B. SOME ALARMING SIGNS 42

VI. SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS..... 43

- A. MAIN OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES 43
 - 1. Social model of strong patriarchal dominance 43
 - 2. Women as captive actors of social reproduction 44
- B. WAYS TO CHANGE 47
 - 1. Priorities and emergencies 47
 - 2. Knowledge as a first step for action 49
 - 3. Legislation as a precondition 50
 - 4. Awareness raising 50
 - 5. Upbringing, education and media 51
- C. ACTORS AND TOOLS FOR CHANGE..... 53
 - 1. Crucial role of the NGOs 53
 - 2. National policies and tools 54
 - 3. The International Conventions 56
 - 4. Women’s participation in politics 60

SECOND PART

QUANTITATIVE PHASE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. Background Information 64
- B. Results 66
 - 1. The perception of violence..... 66
 - 2. The qualification of violence 69
 - 3. The causes of violence 69
 - 4. Which Evolution? 70
 - 5. The main reasons of the evolution 72
 - 6. The perception of the services provided for the women victims of violence 73
 - 7. Evaluation of the different systems of help 73
 - 8. Which solutions to violence against women 74
 - 9. Personal experience of violence against women as witness..... 75
 - 10. Personal experience of violence against women as victim..... 75

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS 77

ANNEXES 80

- 1. Guide for the Interviews 80
- 2. Questionnaire 81
- 3. List of the interviewed 83
- 4. Answers to the question 10.Experience of violence as witness. Verbatim..... 84
- 5. Studies and Data about violence against women in Jordan 88
- 6. Arab Women’s Call to Arab heads of states for the 30th anniversary of CEDAW 93
- 7. References and bibliography..... 94

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Diversity is our common treasure.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Present societies and political systems are largely influenced by male-dominated structures, ideologies and values. Due to this, women are deprived of their fundamental human rights; they are underrepresented in social and political decision making processes, and have less access to the labor market, institutions and resources. Constitutions and international conventions ratified by the States formally refer to a ban of gender discrimination. However, though the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is named as one of the Millennium Development Goals, present policies in numerous countries still underestimate the vital importance of gender equality. Furthermore women's lives and rights are increasingly threatened by the growing influence of conservative thoughts and religious fundamentalisms in political and social spheres.

Patriarchal system based on the domination and the control of "the other" has gone across all countries and all types of societies. The patriarchal society both excludes and includes women, as support to men. However, male dominance does not mean that all men are dominant and oppressive. It does not mean that women are only passive victims either – they are also oppressive. It means that the society is ruled by a traditional and universal system of patriarchy that generates and perpetuates violence against women, gender based discrimination and inequality. Dominance and control can be violent but they can be also very subtle, coming to the everyday life as "norms" and "values" to which we get used to and can't recognize as abuse.

Male violence against women occurs all over the world. The World Health Organization estimated that up to 70 percent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime. It happens everywhere; at home and at work, on the streets and in schools, during peacetime and in conflict. Women of different nationalities, religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds or sexual identities are facing these crimes from birth to death, from battlefields to private homes. This violence is crossing geographical, political and social borders as well as historical phases. About 1/3 of all women and girls in the world have been exposed to rape or to physical violence of some other kind at least once during their lifetimes and about half of all the murders of women have been committed by their own partners. (WHO 1997) Since 1997 violence against women has been defined as a priority health issue by the WHO.

International Organizations as United Nations and Amnesty International define violence against women as one of the most widespread violations of human rights and one of the most serious health problems in the world. However, this phenomenon is still actively tolerated in public as well as in private spheres.

On the occasion of the 10th UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, (November 25th 2009) the Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee of the European Parliament, Eva-Britt Svensson, called for a European year to tackle violence against women and for the EU to approach the issue from a gender equality perspective. "Violence deprives women and girls of their human rights, affecting their daily lives. We must break the silence and cooperate within and outside of political systems to eliminate this kind of violence This is a structural and widespread problem across the globe. It is a public health problem, a social problem, and it is further evidence of gender inequality. Therefore, we must attack the problem from an equality perspective."

In the Middle East countries gender related concerns are shaped by the juridical, political or social interpretation of the dominant religious paradigms. The persistence of discriminatory

practices against women interacts with surging domestic violence and economic dependency. Since women cannot enjoy their rights and their security, they can't develop their capacities to contribute fully to the social development.

In Jordan, the prevalence of violence against women represents one of the greatest challenges to government. This violence is a threat to the fundamental rights of half of the population and one of the major obstacles to social progress, health, education and economic development. While the constitution states that all the Jordanian citizens are equal by law, certain legislations discriminate against women and do not protect their rights. Moreover the gender equality is hampered by the weight of culture and traditions. Women are the vulnerable part of the society, they are the most affected by the poverty, they represent the larger part of the unemployed, they are absent from political life and from the decision making processes that affect their lives. Their participation in the public life is increasing very slowly. Each of these aspects constitutes violence against women and at the same time is generating violence.

With this in mind, Arab Women Organization (AWO) has undertaken a study on violence against women and its consequences on the lives of women and on the society as a whole. The purpose is not to attain knowledge about the amplitude of this phenomenon, or about its different expressions. It is to better understand the perception of this phenomenon to day, the perception of the actions and policies developed to fight it, the perception of the role and impact of the international conventions, especially the CEDAW. It is also to bring light to the main aspects of the changes and developments that have taken place and their origin on the national and international level.

One of the main recommendations of the Beijing platform in 1995 has been to urge the States "to promote the research, to organize the collect of data about the prevalence of the different kinds of violence against women, especially the domestic violence, and to encourage the research on the causes, the nature, the severity and the consequences of this violence, as well as on the efficiency of the measures implemented to prevent this phenomena and to face its consequences". This study contributes to this laudable objective.

2. Objectives

The main goal of the study is to assess in the particular field of violence against women, the official and civil society efforts towards the implementation of CEDAW. It puts focus on the impact of discriminatory laws and practices and of the personal status code on women and on society.

The study strived especially:

- To give light to the perception of the root causes of the abuses inflicted on women in spite of the ratification of the UN treaties and regional frameworks.
- To evaluate the level of social tolerance towards violence against women.
- To provide better knowledge and understanding of the types, hierarchy and kind of justifications of violence against women.
- To give more clarity of the process of implementation of CEDAW and relevant legislation; governmental action, NGO's action, dialogue between Institutions and NGO's, obstacles, challenges and progresses.
- To find out the perception of the evolution of violence against women.
- To research propositions of solutions to curb this phenomenon.

The overall objectives:

The study's overall objective is to contribute to the efforts to uncover the interconnection between gender equality and democracy building, violence against women and human security and how these issues have an impact on women's lives and opportunities by bringing more experimental knowledge to the theoretical insights and thus build a more stable bases for lobbying for social change and policy action.

It strives to contribute to breaking the silence surrounding violence against women and diminishing the social tolerance towards it. Furthermore, by promoting and echoing women's experiences as a constitutive part of a democratic development, it wishes to contribute to the strengthening of women's position in a country where strong patriarchal values affect severely women's human rights.

And finally by shedding light on the rise of religious fundamentalisms and its consequences on women's human rights it aims to contribute to broadening, vitalizing and enriching the political debate on democracy and women's human security as a constitutive part of it and to developing an agenda for action which will help to change the existing discriminatory patterns, attitudes, policies and legislative frameworks addressing violence against women.

3. Method

The study has been developed in three phases and has adopted a complementary approach: a qualitative one of in-depth interviews and a quantitative one of questionnaires. The method of interviewing allowed following the interaction of thought and experience and the selected sample was led to contribute with their expertise. The questionnaires were directed to a broader sample of Jordanian women who contributed more with their knowledge and experience as social actors. The interest of the study is in the diversity of voices of the interviewed, their insights and the diversity of lights brought on the issue.

❖ Initial phase: a desk study

- * CEDAW: reservations, CEDAW Committee recommendations, Government response.
- * Previous studies, reports, documents about violence against women in Jordan as well as in other countries, international studies, reports and resolutions.

❖ Second phase : a qualitative phase of in-depth interviews

Thirty two women and men were selected to be interviewed: twenty two women and ten men from the different directorates and with different professional and activist background, leaders and members of women's human rights organizations and networks and women and men who in their professional field or voluntary involvement have been working on or in different ways connected with the question of violence against women. The interviewed were:

- * Members of Institutions and Gender bodies,
- * Leaders and members of human rights and women's rights associations;
- * Lawyers, teachers, trainers, journalists, and people from the cultural sphere.

All the interviewed have agreed to have their names mentioned as contributors to this study (cf. annex 3).

The interviews were structured around a set of questions about:

- perception of violence against women,

- evolution of this phenomenon,
- its causes and roots,
- its consequences,
- evaluation of the national policies,
- role of the international conventions,
- priorities and urgencies to be solved,
- solutions to eradicate violence against women,

❖ **Third phase: a quantitative phase of auto-administrated questionnaires**

The questionnaire has been distributed with the support of Arab Women Organization to grass root associations. About 30 questionnaires have been sent to each of the 12 directorates. Altogether 292 questionnaires have been exploited.

The set of questions was focused on:

- Definitions of violence against women according to own perceptions,
- Situation in Jordan regarding this issue,
- Causes of this phenomenon,
- Its evolution,
- Perception of the services of help and protection,
- Ways to prevent and to limit violence against women,
- Personal experience of violence (as a witness and as a victim).

The **anonymity** has been guaranteed and respected through the method of distributing and collecting the questionnaires. They have been spread via the AWO local focal points and sent back directly to the AWO office in Amman.

4. Definitions

“There is no definition of violence, there is more than one form of violence and they have in common that they devalue the human worth.”

Different concepts are used to talk about violence against women: patriarchal violence, male violence against women, gender-based violence, and domestic violence. All of them refer to different contexts or reflect different perspectives. Patriarchal violence underlines the link of violence with the patriarchal power structures. Male violence against women put the light on the perpetrators: according the World Health Organization 90% of the perpetrators are men. Violence against women put the light on the victims. Gender-based violence qualifies gender inequality as a cause of violence without identifying the victim or the perpetrator.

This report combines the use of violence against women and patriarchal violence against women in order to underline the link with between violence against women and the patriarchal power structure.

The definition of violence against women used throughout the study is the UN definition formulated in the Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. Violence against women is:

“Any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including

threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberties, whether occurring in public or in private spheres"

We also refer all along this study to the declaration of the specialized group about VAW in the Council of Europe (1997) that defines violence against women as a social mechanism by which women are forced into a subordinate position in relation to men, as well as a manifestation of unequal power relations. **"Gender specific violence is directly structural and symbolic. Every manifestation of violence at women relates the universality of the human rights."**

The quoted excerpts from the interviews refer to all the above terms. Even though our purpose has not been to get any formal definition of violence against women from the interviewed, all of them expressed the idea of a very wide spectrum of behaviors and attitudes that results in physical, sexual and psychological harm to women and girls, whether occurring in private or in public sphere; from forced marriage to unfair divorce, from slap to murder, from insult to deprivation of inheritance rights.

"Any gender-based discrimination or attack against women's rights is violence against women, whatever its face: verbal violence, ignorance, despitte, spreading rumors, spoliation, slap, mutilation, murder. "

The underpinning principle of this report is that women's rights are an integral part of human rights.

5. Statistics and data

"We have no data, we have no statistics"

Research on violence against women in Jordan has been ongoing since 1998 with an increase during the past few years and followed by the publication of various studies on the prevalence of violence in Jordan.(cf. annex6) Nearly all of them point out the lack of credible data on the prevalence of violence against women. Nevertheless, the relevance of the data provided for official statistics and national policies depends highly on the questions raised and the ways of gathering the data. Violence against women remains a taboo and the law of silence is prevalent for the sake of protection of the family and the community. Moreover, it is well known, for example, that a consequent number of honor crime cases are classified under other designations, such as suicides or accidents. Now that the debate is in the public space, the police might investigate honor crimes as if they were car accidents, fallings etc, for the same purpose of protection of family and community.

Women's organizations estimate that around 80 % of women are victims of violence in Jordan. Available data remain too scattered and uncertain to qualify and describe the real amplitude of the phenomenon and to evaluate how decisions were taken to prevent and to address efficiently this issue. The focus remains mainly on domestic violence. There is limited information on incidence of violence against women in the public sphere or in the workplace. Information about sexual harassment and assault and sex trafficking is not available. Majority of the active organizations are working mainly on domestic violence.

Even if many reports indicate that the extent of violence against women is alarming and even globally increasing, the lack of reliable data is a major problem in many countries. The study by the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) entitled "Domestic Violence in Jordan: Knowledge, Attitudes and Reality" published in 2008, inferred that one third of the sample

population have indicated that they have heard or seen cases of domestic violence. Nearly 11% of the sample indicated that they themselves have physically abused their sons, daughters, wife and mother in the 12 months preceding the study. Further questioning in the frame of this study indicates that the majority of the interviewees have been verbally and physically abused by a member of their family. (More detailed results of this study are presented in annex 6 H).

Women's organizations and experts across the world who work on the issue of violence against women know that violence against women is highly underreported and is much more prevalent than any existing data show. Because of patriarchal beliefs, traditional education and gender stereotypes, threats and fear of reprisal, it remains widely unrecorded. The reported cases represent only a very tiny part of the reality and the problem. They use to be the most severe cases of abuse and murder and give us a picture of only "the tip" of the iceberg, if "the iceberg" would represent the whole range of violence against women, as commonly agreed by experts. But another severe part of the problem is that these huge numbers of women remain unreachable because their cases are never reported. They are clouded in silence.

FIRST PART
QUALITATIVE PHASE
ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

I. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS PERPETUATION OF GENDER POWER STRUCTURES

"Men and women need to live together, then why this control from men on women? "

Violence is based on a balance of power between at least two persons, in which one of the protagonists is trying to get power over the other and to dominate him/her through physical and psychological brutalities. The relation of domination which characterizes the two sexes is engendering aggressive behaviors. Patriarchal violence is a part of the basic mechanisms of the social control of women.

A. HOW TO TALK ABOUT VIOLENCE IN JORDAN TO DAY? THE FIRST WORDS

"Violence is so obvious that there is no need for words. "

What comes first in the minds and in the lips is the universality of the violence against women which is spread all over the world, even with differences regarding the social perception of the phenomenon and the social tolerance of it. The first words of the interviewees outline different aspects of the marginalization and lack of recognition of women's needs and make the link between violence against women, patriarchy and gender power structures that sustain and perpetuate gender power misbalance.

"Violence is not specific to Jordan; the difference is that the victims are looked as criminals."

"Violence occurs everywhere. It is a global issue that needs to be addressed. It is linked to domination and to patriarchal privileges that nobody wants to give us. "

Due to its large extent, violence is perceived to affect not only women's lives but the whole society.

"Violence against women affects the quality of the life and the well-being of the whole society."

"The violence against women shows the control of men over the whole society on the economical, social and cultural level."

"Violence is prevalent, and it is present in all the families, including mine. "

"Violence is globally increasing in the society. We have reports about extreme forms of violence, burns, acid, hits, rapes...."

Severe violence affects women from their birth to their death.

"The way society looks at women as inferior members of society from the moment of birth until she becomes an old woman. And the way women are considered as an annex to men, and for the fulfillment of his needs."

"There is discrimination and violence against women. , all kinds of violence which begin as soon as the childhood with abuse and discrimination then violence when older."

The light has been recently put on the issue of violence against women.

"It is high time to deal with this problem. We have to face this phenomenon; too many victims need to be helped. It is late, but it is never too late to act."

Violence against women relates to social problems that urgently need to be solved.

"The familial violence is the most preoccupying and the social violence. The whole society is violent against women, it is not new, but now we know."

"The divorce, the polygamy, the depriving of one's salary, the depriving of movement is severe violence against women."

"The main idea that comes to mind is the inheritance law, and the partition among the heirs, and the taking away of women's rights to inheritance."

The unwritten "law of silence" that surrounds violence against women is prevalent. It contributes to the persistence of this phenomenon, its reproduction and its increasing. Violence against women is a global problem that has been concealed for generations in the secrets of families and dressed feelings of shame of the victim. Shame and fear of reprisal lead to protect the perpetrators and leave them unpunished. The Personal Status Law justifies such inequalities between women and men; it grants legally privileges to men on behalf of sanctioning the women which results in unfair and unequal access to inheritance, to freedom of residence, to divorce or ownership. This discriminative legislation regulating all the relations between women and men, sustains the law of silence instead of condemning violence against women. Through it women are denied legal justice and safety, in addition of bearing the burden of lack of social awareness and condemnation.

"Everything is done to limit the reality of the phenomenon. When a woman is committing suicide, the case is changed into an accidental poisoning, some mark on the face becomes a banal fall, and there are pressures over the doctors and the police to hide the width of the phenomena."

But also the institutions come into the picture. Silence is the rule... especially for women

"A woman who is not talking is the best socially acceptable. Talking is transgressing the rules."

Silence for women is a "no choice": they have to either "choose" to stay silent not to be deprived from their rights or to be separated from their children. There is a high price to be paid for the ones who break silence.

"One of the main reasons for violence against women is her silence, and she wonders what the price for this silence is: her children, her social conditions, her economic conditions?"

"A friend of mine, living in Amman has been severely beaten by her husband because she went out for shopping with her sister. She had so visible marks on her face that she had to cover it. We advised her to ask her brother to pick up her from home to protect her, but if she is leaving home, they will deprive her from her children. So the woman is facing a double cruel choice, she chooses the less worse: to stay at home and to keep silent...In reality, women have no choice. They must tolerate this violence."

The wall of silence built to protect the reputation and the unity of the family is isolating women and separating them from their keens.

"When they are beaten with visible signs, women don't dare to go out."

"Violence against women is surrounded by several circles of silence: the victims don't ask any help neither to their family, nor to their friends or to the society."

One of the strongest support of this wall is the deeply and widely spread social perception that violence against women is a private matter. To speak about violence remains anyways a taboo.

"Violence against women is a taboo. Much happens behind closed doors, there are a lot of excessive behaviors that we can not know about."

The lack of awareness is contributing efficiently to perpetuate silence.

"Nobody talks, especially the women. They are ashamed; they don't know what to say. They don't know what violence is, they don't know their rights."

The challenge is to raise the voices of women themselves who are today too dependent on men and too afraid to speak up against violence. The cause for women dying is double: on one hand, the social, family and individual silence and, on the other hand, the open and socially accepted violence of the perpetrators.

B. FACES OF VIOLENCE: from "ORDINARY" VIOLENCE to "HONOR" CRIMES

1. "ORDINARY" VIOLENCE or THE DAILY LIVES OF WOMEN

"Thousands of women are dead without having been killed, since their dignity has been killed. They are desperate; they are living for the only purpose of cooking. They are dead living persons."

"Ordinary" violence means for a lot of women prominence of fear, submission to the permanent threat of being beaten, insulted, abandoned without resources, deprived from their children, having to face a violent father, then brother, then husband.

"The family which is supposed to be your main refuge is your main threat."

"Some women are afraid of leaving the house because they might be beaten and insulted, they would only do it in secret. Many women chose to get married because that is the only way away from the brother or the father authority/abuse."

"The refusal that women are visiting their families, phone to their friends, have the disposal of their own salary, that they are living under the threat of divorce. "

The studies in Jordan show that violence includes a wide range of physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, economic and social abuse. The social tolerance and legitimating of violence by the customs and the tradition has made it a permanent part of the daily lives of a big majority of women.

- **Physical violence** that is any form of physical abuse, from light to heavy physical injuries is crossing social and cultural borders. It is one of the extreme forms a structural phenomenon which expresses the historically unequal power relations between men and women and that has led to male domination over women. Physical violence is a fundamental obstacle to the achievement of full equality between women and men in all areas of life. It is also an effective way to spread and sustain fear of the female victim.

"The major part of women is vulnerable, including the women of the rich areas who have no contacts with the associations and who are prisoners of the silence because of their social status or position. "

"90% of the Jordanian women are living in insecurity .Go and visit the hospitals; you will see beaten women, broken women, women, burnt with cigarettes..."

- **Economic violence** In spite of Jordan's continuous commitment to human rights and gender equality through ratifying conventions and developing programs pertaining to women's advancement, some important gender gaps still exist in the economic field. Recent statistics from 2006 indicate that merely 11.9% of the Jordanian female population over 15 years is economically active compared to 63.1% of males. More importantly, the unemployment rate among females over 15 years reached 25% compared to 11.9% of males for the same year. The most widespread forms of economical violence are seen to be:

- Deprivation of ownership: less than 5% of the land owed by women

"Not a single woman is owner of her shop. "

"A gender approach of money, money deposits, stocks, real estates, registered business ...would show where the national wealth is concentrated. "

"Registering a property in her name becomes a form of diminishing his manhood, or masculinity, and an issue like this might lead to divorce."

- Charges for the loans

"44% of the loans are made by women to solve the financial problems of the family."

"There is also economic violence, where women are obliged to take loans without being the beneficiaries of these loans (on behalf of their husbands for example). "

- Prohibition to work

"It is the first violence. Even if the Islamic rule gives to women this right, a lot of them are not allowed to work. "

- And when working, the deprivation of her salary, even if it is not legal, is considered as a right. Furthermore it is socially validated that the woman gives her salary to her husband or father or brother.

"When it comes to a woman's salary, the husband or the parents have a right to it."

"Women have not the right to decide what they will do with their money. "

- Lower salaries than men for the same job and position

"Women get lower salaries than men for the same position. It is violence."

"Women must give their salaries to men, if not they make their life intolerable."

- Absence of retirement allocations for women, for having raised their children, while the men get them

“The economic factor is the main one that affects the situation of women, and the level of violence against women. In a way it pushed women to the labor market without ensuring her minimum rights, or empowering her to have full control over her income and salary. Her salary becomes the salary for the family or for the husband, while his salary is his, without any kind of protection... Salaries and the gap between what men and women earn, as well as social security and retirement allowances.”

- Deprivation of their economical rights in cases of divorce

“The divorce is unfair to women, preventing women from seeing their children, depriving them from alimony for the working wife Currently she loses her right in alimony if she is working.”

“A woman does not get a divorce because of the economic situation. She receives alimony for 3 months only.”

- Lack of sharing of the common wealth, she has contributed to accumulate

“The law doesn't look at woman's contribution in the marriage as a salary when it comes to divorce. The only acknowledged financial contribution is the dowry at the start of the marriage. However in most cases divorce is a difficult struggle that ends with the woman giving up everything and leaving without even her dowry.”

- Deprivation of inheritance: the prevalent tradition prevents women from inheritance not to transmit a part of the family wealth to “outsiders”: her husband and her own children.

“A woman doesn't take from her brothers”.

“When a woman receives the legal inheritance from her parents, she can't get profit of it, she has not other alternative than to stay silent. ”

The Christians have adopted the Islamic law for inheritance. The brothers get 2/3 of the inheritance, the sister 1/3.

“The Jordan law gives for inheritance twice more to men than to women. My own father refused this law and has told to his children to deal with this question between them “(woman from a Christian family)

To maintain economical dependency is a way to keep the control over women, to deprive them from the ability to resist and to say no, to keep the possibility to exercise on them discrimination and violence.

“The majority of violence is coming from men, because they are in charge of the economy and resources, in our society, men make money and take the financial decisions.”

“The woman must have her economical independency to have the capacity to say no.”

Recognizing this, the UN General Assembly adopted in 2004 a resolution urging States to strengthen the empowerment of women and improve their economic position by giving them the right to both land and ownership and the right of inheritance.

A woman who is economically dependent is an easy prey for the perpetrators. Women's lack of property is described in poverty analyses as a basic cause of violence as it means women

cannot leave violent husbands without running the risk of being marginalized, left without resources and rejected by both the society and the family.

“A woman who works outside is more powerful than the one who stays at home.... To give her salary to her husband is not binding and is not legal. “

“ If you are not the owner at least of a part of the house that you have contributed to buy, you can be easily pushed out of it ... Since the women are deprived from resources, the perpetrators consider that they will not defend themselves because they have not the economical capacity to be autonomous and they will continue. “

➤ **Psychological and affective violence**

“The women who are victims of the familial violence are suffering physically but emotionally also, since the ones who aggress you are your closest. “

The fear of divorce and the threat to be deprived of one's children is described as one of the most spread and cruel forms of violence. This “permanent” threat synthesizes several sources of violence: using the religion, lack of protective legislation, culture of male domination.

“Divorce is the most spread out violence, since man only is deciding. It is a threat for women.”

“Fear of divorce is at the first rank among the types of violence with the famous ‘I will send you your paper’. The fear to have the second wife, sometimes in the same house”

The World Health Organization has shown that not only open violence but also the threat of violence creates health diseases among women and girls in the form of depressions, anxiety and the like.

➤ **Verbal violence**

This form of violence appears to be, in the social context of Jordan, a type which may hurt even more than the physical one. As it is often a “public “event, it affects the dignity of women in front of her children, her family, her community, her neighborhood and diminishes her personality and self confidence. When this verbal violence is coming from women- “the only violence they can afford”- it is perceived like a provocation and an important source of violence beside economical reasons.

“Verbal violence must be put on the same level as the physical one. Sometimes women prefer to be beaten than insulted publicly; it is a matter of dignity, to be despised-- in front of family, neighbors, children... “

➤ **Sexual and reproductive violence**

Elaboration on sexual violence, in any of its forms, is widely absent from all the speeches., even if forced marriages, denial of the right to use contraception, rape or incest-mainly in connexion with honor crimes are evoked by few interviews. The social taboo about sexual violence is quite strong and the wide overlap between sexual violence and domestic violence contributes to keep the silence around it.

Married or non-married, women are not supposed to have the choice of their own sexuality, the free disposal of their own bodies. As for using contraception, women need the agreement of their husband.

“When a woman has a huge number of children in order to have a son- that is violence, forced marriages and then obligation to give birth to a boy”

Abortion is legal only in case of serious danger for the mother. Thanks to the action of the women’s organizations, the definition of danger for the health of the mother could be widened to the psychological and mental health. The situation still remains very difficult in this field and the women’s organizations are reporting some tragic cases.

“A young girl of 14 years old– had been raped by her father.... She did not find any medical centre to get abortion.....”

Sexual violence can also take the form of neglect or abandon.

“The man can be abstinent and abandon his wife, ignore her sexually during three, four weeks; it is a form of violence against her.”

2. “HONOR” CRIMES as THE EXTREME FORM OF VIOLENCE

“Honor crime is the worse....to considers the murderer of a woman as a hero is intolerable.”

A significant number of girls and women are victims of violence perpetrated by their family members or partners. Some of them are conducted in the “name of honor”. Their average in Jordan is estimated to be 25 a year. Honor is being used as an extenuating circumstance in legal cases of killing.

Honor crimes are acts of violence, usually a murder, committed by the male family members against the female ones, who are seen to be responsible to have brought dishonor upon the family. Crimes of honor are generally socially tolerated and they get the community approval as social cleansing of shame. Mothers too are involved by demanding that their daughters accept the subjugation, as they did themselves, often because they are economically dependent on the persecutor. But in the patriarchal model of society mothers are also traditionally assigned the role of preserving the “chastity” of their daughters. As such, they are often pressured to take impossible decisions.

Honor is defined in terms of women’s and men’s assigned sexual and familial roles as dictated by traditional and patriarchal family model. Adultery, relationship out of marriage, rape, love relation or feeling with an ‘inappropriate’ person may constitute violations of family honor.

“Honor crime” is an extreme way to control female sexuality. It is also a way to hide some incestuous practices which are a taboo for the society or some villainous money affairs.

“There is violence in the division of inheritance, some try to cover it up through honor crimes, in order to gain their sister’s share of inheritance.”

Inheriting the Roman, French, Italian, Ottoman laws, legislative measures dealing with crimes of honor in the Arab World, Jordan included, grant a full or partial excuse for perpetrators which reduces their penalty or totally exempts them from punishment.

"If the initial punishment for an honor crime is 7 years, it comes back to 5 years, then 3 with the royal pardon ...the family takes its charges off and most of the perpetrators are spending 6 months in jail and go out, when they should stay 25 years!"

Killers "for honor" spend an average of six months to one year in prison. The perpetrator is the brother, father, son, cousins, nephew, uncle, mother, sister, or another relative.

If he is young, he will be put in one of the rehabilitation centers. This event will not be filed in his records as a juvenile as they are protected from mentioning such issues by law. This encourages families to choose a juvenile to do the killing. Boys are allotted the role of guardians of sisters and cousins and are coerced into carrying out executions on behalf of the family.

"The perpetrator is often the young brother, a minor, to avoid the jail."

Those crimes do take place mostly in the urban, popular areas. But they concern all the social categories. They may be committed in middle or upper-middle class for rumors, suspicion, being victim of rape or incest, pregnancy out of wedding, marrying against family wishes, for reasons of inheritance, missing or escaping from home, talking to or seeing a man out of the family, prostitution.....

"Violence in the name of honor" has been defined as one dimension of patriarchal violence by, among others, Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy, former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. In her report "Cultural Practices within the Family that are Violent towards Women", from 2002, she stated that *"a distinctive feature of this violence is not its physical manifestations but the fact that it is encouraged by the collective as part of a structural and institutionalized oppression and represents a means of exercising control over individuals, primarily women and girls, in societies where honor is equated with control over women's sexuality"* (Patriarchal violence. An attack against human's security Gerd Johnsson-Lathan .2005 .p.24)

Rana Husseini was a pioneer to make the issue visible in Jordan, together with other activists. This movement led to the creation of *The National Jordanian Campaign Committee* to finish with the impunity for the perpetrators and the *Jordanian coalition to help Women in Protective Custody*. In 2005, the Ministry of Justice proposed amendments to the penal code in order to stop the use of honor as an extenuating circumstance in verdicts.

Jordan civil rights activists are encouraged to speak about and combat this phenomenon by the Monarch and the Royal family. Several interviewed underlined the fact that Jordan took the risk and had the courage to open a debate and to face the issue of honor crimes. However, Jordan should not be consequently pointed out as *THE* country of "honor" crimes because of this. As soon as 1997, the late king Hussein called in front of the national parliament to put an end to violence against women and to declare that *"Women in Jordan were still being exposed to inhuman practices that deprived them of their basic essential rights and that's why we must pay serious attention to some of the dangerous phenomena that remain a source of women suffering and which, unfortunately, constitute an inhuman violation of their basic rights ... The most serious and dangerous of those is hidden violence."* (Rana Husseini. Murder in the name of honor. P. 40)

The recent years have witness the participation of some members of the royal family in demonstrations against article 98 and 340 of the Penal Code.

In spite of this increasing recognition of the problem, the efforts are still too limited to address efficiently this phenomenon.

"The honor crimes are about 20 to 30 honor crimes each year. It is a lot, one single would be already too much... The government undermines this phenomenon. "

C. MALE OR PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE

➤ An agreement to talk about "patriarchal violence"

The majority of the interviewed strongly linked the prevalence of violence with the patriarchal structures of the society. To qualify the violence against women as a patriarchal violence is to put the light on patriarchy as a global and prevalent frame, even if this term is not deeply rooted in the culture of the society.

"Patriarchal violence, all is about patriarchy..."

"The patriarchal mentality is reflected in and includes laws, statements, religion, culture traditions, women and men .We can talk about patriarchal religion, laws...it are clearer."

"Patriarchy is the main reason for violence. The male authority is imposed by diminishing the presence of women. The policies and laws give a larger role to men with relation to women."

This word reflects the daily life of women in relation to men's privileges, "based on gender rather than abilities." And in terms of their oppression.

"Yes, patriarchal .This mentality is something that is prevalent, it is inherited socially and culturally, it is part of tribalism which has made this attitude entrenched in society and reinforced the concept of violence against women, with the idea that they are weak creatures who have to obey while he orders..."

"Patriarchy is something prevalent in Jordanian society, and it is a reflection of the reality of violence. The woman is constantly the one who is blamed, and in the wrong, and has no ability to take any decisions."

➤ A debate around the term "male violence" against women

Some interviewees are justifying the term "male violence", since the major part of the global, social and domestic violence is perpetrated by men and by the male members of the family.

"Violence is always from a man against the woman, and if it happens to be the opposite it's because the woman is in the position of defense. It is a realistic assessment of what happens in society."

"The majority of violence against women is from men, even if it's in the form of the institution or the law, or the people in charge."

"The male mentality is the dominant one that influences the behavior of men and some women."

But the main part of the interviewees expressed their refusal of this expression. For them to talk about male violence means:

- ✓ To undermine the extent and spread out character of the phenomenon.

"I don't want to put this issue in a corner. "

- ✓ To ignore the role of the women in the production and reproduction of violence, even if the man is dominant.

"There is the mother's violence, the aunt's one, the whole family's one, the community, the society's one. There is also violence from the mothers against the men. "

"It is generally the men, but not only them, who are having this patriarchal mentality. Mothers are sharing it."

"Violence is perpetrated by the family and its male members, but the women are part of it."

- ✓ To limit the questions to individuals, when violence against women refers to a social, political and economical system.

"It is not the man vs. the woman, but a system of domination that makes the masculinity a value superior to womanhood. "

"The man is not the only responsible for violence against women, because there is legal violence, institutional violence and violence of women against women."

- ✓ To forget that men also are victims of family - in case of honor crimes - and social violence and to consider that there is a violent male human nature and a peaceful female one, when it is a social and cultural phenomenon.

"Women have the male hormone as well, and this patriarchal mentality is in women as well. This is apparent when it comes to elections, and councils, and how they fight successful women. "

The patriarchal system is conceived as a neutral space, generating neutral gender domination. In this social construction, the respective roles for men and women are shaped more by economic, political, religious contexts and references and never by the men themselves as a group. "Gender" is still more associated with women as a group, while men are seen mainly as individuals. Awareness that men too, lose out on the violence is very limited.

"Male violence against women was very prevalent around 80% especially in villages however, now there are other sources of violence against women."

II. ROOTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND AGGRAVATING FACTORS

The causes of violence against women are multiple and are embedded in the social, economical, cultural environment. Violence stems from the deeply rooted in the patriarchal society inequality between women and men, where men are in a superior position towards women and where women are subordinated to the authority of men. Different socio-economical and political factors interrelate with each other to support this injustice on women and to perpetuate it though the centuries-long patriarchal domination.

Religion plays a prominent role in the Jordanian society. However, even if the majority of the interviewed show awareness of the patriarchal power structures, very few make the connections between these patriarchal structures and the role of religion. Religion is perceived as rather being misused for the purpose of violence and not as being interwoven in the roots of tradition and culture in a way to limit the women's equal role in society and their freedom of movement and action in the private and public space.

A. THE PROMINENT ROLE OF RELIGION IN SOCIAL LIFE

The references to the role of the religion are widely present in all the speeches. The prevailing speech refers to the drifting of religious thought: misusing, bad interpretations of the texts, fanaticism and political Islam. Also the lack of religion and the ignorance about it are defined as sources of violence.

"Violence against women is resulting from a lack of knowledge of religion or law, from a lack of understanding of rights and duties and from the violence in homes of the fathers and mothers that transmit this violence to the children , it results also from poverty."

Only one of the interviewees referred to religion as being a source of violence itself as it allocates inferior role to women as compared to men. Two other considered religion as a contributing factor to the violence against women.

"The religion is a source of violence because it limits and breaks women's freedom."

"Islam supports violence through certain rules, through the unequal approach of one man is equal to two women"

"For the Muslims the husband is the head of the family; they say that god gave them this right. In the Christian families, women must also be devoted to men, but less"...

1. Religion as a reference for a fair society

Islam is presented as a religion which respects women, gives them their rights and establishes a social order with a fair definition of the roles of men and women. The life of the prophet himself becomes a reference and a model in this regard.

"Religion has clearly indicated the roles for both sexes. We need the going back to the center or heart of religion since it contains all solutions, and the adoption of the central - moderate - stream within the religion."

"Religion states clearly the legal and social responsibilities of men and women. Even in the Koran, a lot of strong women are present like myriam, balqis, and the queen of Sheba. Religious men are controlling the society; they are interpreting religion and telling people how they have to understand. "

“Islam as a religion gives women all their rights. She is equal for her opinions, her inheritance, her education, her marriage. The prophet’s wife was a businesswoman. He was his employee ... it was a normal, an ordinary thing ... now women have not the right to work.”

“Women in Islam have their rights. It is the only religion that has set regulations to protect women’s rights in the society. Islam did not imprison women among four walls.”

The respect of the religious precepts is consequently seen as a way of preventing abusive male behaviors or a tool to promote women’s rights in some spheres of the society.

“All the religions give women their rights, but none of those rights is applied.”

“One kind of violence can be for a husband to marry a second wife without having enough financial means.... Religion should be the main reference, since it’s a holy convention.”

“There is a need to use the “religious language” or language that the society will accept. And the strongest language is the language of religion. Sometimes there is a need to go to religious figures and to invite imams who have the power in mosques to adopt human rights issues.”

2. Interpretations or distortion of religious precepts

“Religion is defining roles and responsibilities of men and women, but there is a bad understanding of this definition.”

Religion, as well as tradition, are interpreted by men and become a male construction of gender stereotypes and strict rules on how women have to behave, to dress and to relate to the world. Then the distortion of the religious thought leads to exercising of violence and oppression, while for the victims or the witnesses of these acts, this leads to tolerate and even justify them.

“There is a bad interpretation of the Islamic precepts that submit women to the men of their family, their father, and then their husband.”

“The religious thought that is present nowadays is a dark thought which gives priority to the suffocation and segregation of the woman, separating her, preventing her from taking part in the social and political life.”

“The inheritance law is serious issue, even if in religion women have a right to inherit. However in rural areas women do not get their inheritance.”

“Because of some abusive interpretations of some verses of the Koran, violence against women is justified also by women themselves.”

This situation is severely hindering the social development and its capacity of evolution.

“I don’t see any kind of solution to this violence. Eventually in 200 years... In our Arab communities we have to solve political, economical, social problems and all the misunderstandings about the issue of religion. “

3. Religion as an excuse for violence against women

"Religion becomes an excuse to hide abusive behavior towards women."

Religion is used to both justify and abuse women. As the man represents the authority in the family and in the society and religion has a prominent place in both private and public life of people, it makes it easier for a man to use the authority of religion to justify his violence. Since people do not question neither the authority and action of man towards women nor the role of religion in the public space, it turns to be an easy way for men to justify any kind of violence against women through:

- The recourse to physical violence against women justified with religious texts

"To threaten his woman and to beat her is told to be accepted by the Koran. It is not true! Sisters in Islam have a very good brochure about this which shows that Islam does not authorize the men to beat their wives."

- The recourse to psychological and economic violence. Marrying several wives or practicing abusive recourse to divorce. Men do not need any reason to leave their wife and children, while the woman is left without resources and has often no other choice than to go back to...the father

"In our region, the men are using the religion to justify their bad behavior : to divorce with any reason , since four women are authorized by religion when you have enough money to take equally care of them all..."

"Having more than one wife, leads to big families, and the use of religion in this aspect to oppress women is a wrong interpretation of religion."

- The recourse to homicide. Religion is also used to provide different justifications for murders committed "in the name of honor".

"In Islam we need four witnesses attending the penetration to prove adultery (Rumors are not enough to kill a woman) "

"Women are killed to allow the members of the family to walk with one's head held high. It is not religion."

4. Religious fanaticism

There is a social conspiracy of silence in addition to some fanatic religious preachers who spread terror under the banner of honor, purity and chastity of the society. They are stigmatizing the bodies of women and are acting to develop mistrust and fear of the western world.

"The raising of the three religious fundamentalisms allows violence against women and contributes to increase it "

"Religious fanaticism which turns women into a slave for man, even though religion has emphasized equality between people, however, the wrong interpretation of this religion has led to the practice of violence against women."

“Since decades, the Muslim societies have continuously endured some deep changes and the context has moved in favor of an improvement of the feminine condition. However it happens that, sometimes, after some traumatizing failures of this imported and excluding modernity, the women are the focus of all the resentment: they become the symptom of a persistent and deep-rooted fear in the mindset of the conservative circles and the neo fundamentalists streams.

This stigmatization of the woman linked to the global denunciation of the thinning down of morals, as a supposed feature of the modern world, is a part of the deep psychology of neo-fundamentalism, phenomena that we can observe in all the religions and societies, not only Islamic (extremist Hindu activists, ultra orthodox Jews, American fundamentalists, European catholic fundamentalists ...etc.” (Adderrahim Lamchichi “The condition of the woman in Islam , improvements and backlashes” in Women and Islam – between modernity and fundamentalism . L’Harmattan . 2005 . p34).

The last responsibility lies in the hands of those with political power and it is seen that it is also the government responsibility to address the issue of violence against women and dismantle its legal and moral justifications with religion.

“There is the fear to loose our acquirements due to the Islamic fanaticism, so we have to put some pressure on the government.”

5. Political ISLAM

The Islamist groups strongly oppose the women’s rights movements that refer to the Universal Human Rights and International Conventions to reach equality between men and women. They accuse them to be paid by the West and try to spread suspicion of their personal morals and beliefs. They are using the idea that strengthening of the status of women is threatening the preservation of Arab and Muslim religion and culture.

Political Islam is perceived by several interviewed as a severe danger for women’s rights, as an obstacle for the implementation of the CEDAW and for the creation of governmental policies to strengthen the women’s role in the society and towards gender equality.

“When the reservation 16() has been lifted up, there were daily attacks from the Islamists in the newspapers. “*

“The conservative Muslims are now raising a strong protest against the lift up of the reservation on article 15. “

“Political Islam is a big danger, we have to built some protection by promoting rules and laws against the discriminations. “

This danger requires a common resistance and a unified platform between government, institutions and the women’s human rights and the human rights NGO’s.

“The Islamist wave is growing and the anti-Islamist movement is divided. We must support the efforts of the Jordanian government to canalize them. “

B. CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION

"Culture and traditions are finally stronger than religion."

Patriarchal perceptions of male superiority dominate in many parts of the world. The male is thought to represent the norm and the female is the deviant. In this patriarchal power structure women and men are given different roles and enjoy different rights. Culture, tradition and customs are perceived like some important sources of violence since they restrict women within the framework of inferiority. The male culture is the norm. The lack of social support for women, the lack of information and awareness by women about their legal and human rights are contributing to this situation.

"Traditions and customs impose the inferiority of women and summarize women's issues in terms of her body. Women contribute to the spread of these values since she transmits them to her children as well."

Customs and traditions are seen as major factors that hinder gender equality within the Jordanian society.

1. Society under patriarchal control

"Violence is engrained in Jordanian society".

"I led a study in 1996 with my students, a class of 58 students - men and women. According to this study, 52 of them (92%) are subjected to one form of violence or another."

Society is described as violent by itself, tolerating violence, encouraging it, even demanding it as a proof of respect for the traditional social roles. Thus, violence comes from the social system and from men as a group and as individuals. Violence against women reflects both a lack of gender equality in society and perceptions of women as inferior to men.

"Sometimes the social environment encourages men to be violent or even obliges them to be so...They have to prove to the society that they are men"

"The social rule is to allow violence against women, even to encourage men in their violent actions".

Women in the traditional patriarchal culture are inferior by essence and minors for life. They are stereotyped into the reproductive role and are discriminated against as a result of a social value system and cultural beliefs. They do not enjoy free sexuality and the scope of their independent choices is extremely narrow. As men have the power in the society and the social norms are set by men, it is they who set the laws and who control the economy.

The strength of the descriptions when it comes to the respective roles of men and women illustrates an absolute male domination where the man is everything and the woman...is the opposite.

"The society? But it is the man!"

"The gender roles are the roots of violence against women. The man is allowed to everything, he is the boss, and he is the god."

“Whether it is in an urban setting or a rural area, men are behaving in the same way. The man is the master of the situation, the man takes and doesn’t give. All his wishes and demands are obeyed.”

“Help or aid is given to him, and in marriage, the wife is expected to work and to give him her salary.”

“The root of the violence against women is the fact that the man is thinking that he is God and that the woman is submitted to him.”

If she wants to be stronger or tries to show that she is stronger than the man and wants to take independent decisions for her life, the woman will have to oppose him and ... to pay the price.

“When women reach the stage where they are asking for their rights, they face opposition from men who want them to go to the home, and not to work.”

“When women are strong, men feel threatened, they have to prove that they are stronger and they do it through violence.”

It is not tradition that gives woman the bad role, since the woman is supposed to be “bad” by nature. Therefore she needs to be “educated” and controlled.

“The popular culture considers the woman as an “instable person”. Consequently the violence is committed under the pretext to educate women and to get from them a better behavior as if they were children.”

And through the controlling her, men control the whole family and ultimately the whole community.

“The major problems are the culture and the social tolerance towards violence. Men have to be tough and to control the family, especially the women.”

The women are facing this control all their lives and are brought up to accept it.

“Causes are mainly upbringing of girls who are required by the society to accept unlimited paternal authority. The third cause is traditions and customs, the society traditionally accepts violence against women....The social situation leads to girls being raised in homes where they lack care and attention and do not receive enough awareness of abuse or harassment that they might face in society, which makes them tolerant without knowing of this violence and could lead them to be morally compromising.”

They can expect help neither from their family, nor from society or State. Society is depriving the victims of the needed support in terms of individual support but also in terms of institutional or legal support. In addition, the whole blame and responsibility is put on the victim herself. Awareness of this situation is lacking among women, while men themselves are entrapped in fear to challenge their social role of an abuser and are lacking knowledge on how to change this situation, even if they are entitled with all the power to do so.

“Women sometimes accept the violence, since they have not another choice. Nobody helps them, neither the family, nor the society.”

“The violence is not confined to man, but is also reflected in the public sector, through governmental departments and laws. The male dominated society has led to the absence of any procedures on the ground: there are laws, but there is no enforcement. “

“The culture of society, which is reflected in the husband’s culture, and his level of understanding, of how his violence against his wife is reflected on the rest of his family, and his constant need to control, as well as the way the parents, and the extended family does not provide the woman with protection, due to the lack of acceptance of divorce in society. “

2. Family as a sacred value and the basis of social order

The high level of social formalism leads the society to make the choice of a united family, without raising the question of its harmony. To preserve this socially required unity, the law of silence and the submission of women are prevalent. In case of domestic violence, if the woman talks, she will lose the support of her family.

“The percentage of acts of violence against women is globally equivalent to many other countries but the consequences are heavier because of the culture: the rights of the family are dominating the rights of women.”

“One of the evidence of violence is the authority of the father, husband, and brother. The society’s culture hasn’t changed in terms of men’s authority over women, so that this authority is transferred from the father, to the brother, to the husband, and might eventually be passed on to the son.”

The studies about violence against women show that patriarchal violence is widespread, systematic and structural and is based on perceptions of female subordination and men’s right to ultimately practice violence. Then there comes the men’s impunity within the family. The family is considered by many societies and religions as a male kingdom.

The family centric type of society is not only a characteristic of the Muslim culture. In some catholic countries, like Poland, the sacred value of the family, regardless of its disharmony, is described, by the women’s organizations, as a severe obstacle to fight violence against women.

The World Health Organization reports show that it is more traumatizing to be assaulted by someone in a near relation than by someone unknown. This leaves a deeper emotional scar in the victim, as the family is expected to be the supportive unit of the society where relations are expected to be built on trust and mutual respect.

3. The mechanisms of social reproduction

“My grand father was doing this (beating his wife), my father also. Why not me?”

The social tolerance towards violence against women is a widespread characteristic. It includes the young generations because of the education they have received that leads them to deal with this situation as an ordinary one.

“Violence is primarily a cultural inheritance: a flawed upbringing and a discrimination against girls since childhood which continues into adulthood between man and woman.”

In regards to this phenomenon, the role of the upbringing is essential, mainly the parental model and the way of bringing up the children, but also the school system.

“They get more the capacity of memorization than the capacity of being critical”

The boys, then the men, are reproducing the violence that they have seen perpetrated by their fathers...

"It becomes a habit for men, that women are abused. If there are economic problems, the wife, the sister, the daughter carry the brunt of this.... The problem is with upbringing, having a bad example, since the sons follow their fathers in dealing with their sisters, wives or daughters."

A university teacher, whose mother had been beaten "everyday until blood "is reproducing the same violent behavior, justifying it as follows:

" If my mother suffered so much, neither my wife, nor my daughter, nor any woman in the world is better than her and has a reason to escape. "

C. THE IMPACT OF THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

1. A region of conflicts

"The political context in the region is influencing all our lives, then the level of violence also..."

Jordan being in the center of a politically unstable area has various economical, social and political challenges to face. Even if the connection between women's rights, gender equality, economic development and peace is globally increasingly apparent and recognized, the traditional concept of security, referring to the safety of states is not first of all preoccupied with security matters concerning individuals and civilians and especially in the conflict zones. The women's issues are far back on the political agendas, even more in the conflict zones.

"Violence against women is linked with political and economical crisis. During the war, this violence is having more extreme faces since the situation of women is this case even farther again to be a prior preoccupation. Women are never generating the crises, but they are the first to face their heaviest consequences "

The situation in Palestine is perceived as being the most crucial problem as it affects personally the major part of the Jordanian population. The emotional aspect of this situation is expressed by the frequent use of the words "boiling context", "anger", "exasperation", "unhappiness" or "frustration". Violence is part of the daily life, killing itself becomes "ordinary" and is normalized. It should be noted that in the context of war the traditional gender roles are reinforced and women and children are described as "the weaker part" of the family and society.

"The context with the situation in Iraq, Palestine has an impact of course. Everybody is watching at the news and it is only blood and violence. The Palestinian people are the most affected."

"Occupation in Palestine strengthens the violence against women, since unhappiness, frustration and defeat engenders violence: men are beating women, women are beating children, and children are fighting together.... It affects the whole social body. "

“There is an influence of the regional context due to the lack of satisfaction of the political situation, this leads people to be stressed, and takes out this anger and frustration on the closest and the weakest persons. Especially when there is a feeling of external danger that is threatening the psychological situation, and economic progress. The consequence is an extreme violence in society.”

“Political situation is affecting women. Any kind of frustration that man feels is expressed into violence against the weaker part. A man’s inability to achieve his ambitions turns into violence against the women which starts a cycle of violence involving children and the other members of society.”

“There is definitely a reflection of what happens in the region on violence in general and on violence against women. There is a repetition of frustrations, political and economic crisis, which means that the frustration is dumped on the weaker part.”

This regional context has internal political consequences. The precariousness of the situation and its turbulences justifies the lack of implementation of gender equality provisions. It also provides the government an excuse to postpone adopting measures and policies that lead to strengthening of women’s rights on the basis that other issues are more urgent... or that those women’s issues could lead to social and political instability. Women are the first victims of this situation of conflict.

“The government does have priorities which is the external threat. This leads the government to focus and consider these external threats as priority rather than dealing with internal Jordanian matters.”

“The lack of stability both economic and political leads to an increase in violence against women as a way to dump this frustration. The regional context is very much reflected in policies undertaken by the government.”

“It affects the general situation specially the social conditions. Lack of stability leads to an increase in violence against women because women issues are not urgent, and not a priority when compared to the difficulties and problems in the region.”

“Jordan is in a war region. Women live in constant worry and violence that is persistent both economic and psychological. An increase in frustration among men and women leads to violence on women directly and to deficient policy and vision in postponing women’s issues, while concentrating on external issues”

2. An environment of theocratic and non democratic regimes

In comparison with the countries in the region, Jordan is presented like relatively more socially advanced. However some interviewed ask for more democracy and a more democratic dialogue between the government and the NGOs.

“In the Region we have totalitarian regimes which are excluding opposition parties. In Jordan we have 20 parties with two growing Islamic wings. ”

“When there is no democracy, women are more silent again; violence against them is a very minor issue.”

“The political pressure is one of the contributing factors to violence against women. A man can face a lot of frustration because of the political situation which might lead to violence against family member, which is then unleashed directed at women. I think that if there is a culture of democracy, the right of expression, media, a real development in the cities, these

are important factors in the development of the society which would provide a bigger space for women to adopt their real position in society, and empower them to participate fully to the social life."

"Among the Arab countries, Jordan has an intermediate place. The situation is of course here much better than in the Gulf countries, but our improvement is quite limited."

"Which democracy when the government considers that the consultation of the NGO's is a gift? "

The political and social context leads to the increasing of the problems faced by women and girls and in the same time to draw back this issue as a non priority.

"I can't say much about Jordan specifically, but violence is increasing in the whole region. What do you think of a 8 years old girl who has been married with a 70 years old man?"

"It affects the general situation specially the social conditions. Lack of stability leads to an increase of violence against women because women issues are not urgent, and not a priority when compared to the difficulties and problems in the region."

The consequences of the presence of forced migrants and refugees from Palestine and Iraq are another factor for social, familial and conjugal violence.

"The regional context influences violence in terms of economy since during wars there is immigration, which leads to high economic costs on the government which affects people's economic conditions and leads to a greater degree of violence, and more frustration, which leads to a higher degree of depression, and level of harm among children, and women. For me personally during the war on Gaza, I saw how my father became more frustrated and violent during that period."

"Some fathers who have Iraqi citizenship and cannot find work end up leaving the family."

This situation has an impact on the whole social body and is translated in terms of political measures. The consequences here again appear to be especially heavy for women.

"The political situation in the region, the war in Iraq, occupation of Palestine, provokes many social changes such as forced immigration, rise of refugee number, which might lead to men taking second wives, which results from fragmentation of the families. This situation has led to a passing of a law that requires the husband to inform the first wife of the second marriage. There have been new laws and policies to respond to the fact that there are more immigrant workers in particular, labor laws. The political situation affects also women in the way that they are not allowed to pass on their nationality to their children because of the Palestinian refugee problem and a large number of immigrants or refugees from Iraq."

D. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

"Economic difficulties and unemployment lead to violence."

Economic violence is perceived very strongly as a major form of violence. Economic factors as poverty, precariousness and unemployment are described as being some of the most important sources of violence against women since they intervene in a rational social and family context.

Poverty generates frustration and humiliation by affecting men's dignity, since they are not in capacity to assume their traditional male role of head of the family, money provider and protector. Even if the increasing of the level of life does not mean the end of the violence

against women, poverty engenders frustration that creates violence against “the weaker part” of the family: women and children.

“One of the strongest reasons of the violence against women is the financial situation of the man. If he has a bad salary, he will beat his wife to prove himself that he is a man. “

“Political and economic pressure combined with the pressure of the Arab family . Women might be the weaker link in the familial setup despite the fact that she is the centre of the family, Therefore anger is coming to her, she is the victim of the difficult conditions of life, and economic crisis.”

“The economic situation and the lack of satisfaction with what people have and financial insecurity is translated into violence against women in the society. The large number of members of a family and limited income leads to an increase in violence. When people don't feel safe or satisfied, it leads to violence.”

E. THE MEDIA

The media has a crucial role to play in combating gender stereotypes. They should contribute to presenting a realistic picture of the skills and potential of both women and men in modern society and avoid portraying women in a degrading and offensive manner. For several interviewees media is perceived as one of the elements that contribute to perpetuation of violence against women via two channels:

- Either by following and adopting the traditional ways of thought,

“When you read in the media “a brother kills her adultery sister” where is the guilt? “

“The media are against organizations which adopt “western ways” of thinking. They consider that they act against the teachings of Islam. Their orientation is against women efforts. Women organizations and advocates for women's issues have to justify and defense themselves.”

- Or by spreading sexualized stereotypes borrowed from western culture.

“Media is also one of the parties responsible for the violence against women, by stereotyping women as sex symbols, victims, or inferior beings.”

“Current TV channels specially satellite ones are run by capitalist intentions that present women as a commodity and a sex object to be exploited.”

“The wife is compared to the image he sees on television, which in turn is reflected on the wife and children in the form of violence. Young men want to imitate.”

III. THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SITUATION

“A man beating his wife in front of her children affects the psychologically state of the mother, she loses her personality and presence and she is the one who raises the children.”

A. THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

“Due to the absence of proper knowledge of rights, the call for women's rights becomes a form of revolt or delinquency.”

“There are articles everywhere about violence against women, but the measures are not taken against the perpetrators.”

It seems that women live in a world turned upside down. Women who work hard for women's rights and therefore for a more just world are looked upon as revolting against "the social order". This "social order" on the other hand limits considerably women's life choices; it sustains and perpetuates violence against them as a way to control them. Furthermore women, who are humiliated, despised, deprived of human dignity, beaten and finally murdered, instead of being offered the support and understanding of the society, are blamed and shamed for their own humiliation. The home turns to a space of abuse and terror, the prison offers safe home for the woman victim. At this same time the male abuser walks free: free from responsibility and social apprehension or consideration.

❖ **The guilt is on the victim**

The guilt is on the victim and the criminal is acquitted of responsibility and walks free.

"Women are blamed in all cases. The society puts the blame on the woman, she has to have patience and accept the guilt. The society does not punish the man. Men are not obliged to punish their wives or the women in their family if they behave badly, because the society will somehow punish them. "

When the woman victim of violence complains or tries to escape, she has to face the guilt, suspicion and shame from their community and from society.

"A beaten woman, 40 years old, escaped from home to get refuge at her father's home. She is caught after a call for witnesses in the newspapers, and had to support a gynecological exam to check if she has not had recent sexual relations. The suspicion of adultery is on her shoulders."

"The other reason of violence is the culture of shame or taboo, which prevents women from getting any sort of protection. . . This culture of shame is part of the traditions and customs of society."

❖ **Prisons turned Shelters**

The fact that victims of patriarchal violence are considered responsible for their own situation is cruelly illustrated by the way women victims are "protected" from the punishment that they "deserve", when endangering the honor of the family. As if their own suffering was nothing compared to the threat their body is representing.

To protect the women from being abused or killed, they are kept in prison as the only possibility to give them safety. Time spent in prison might vary from weeks to several years. Governors in different governorates are using "Preventing from Crime" law for such cases. As there are no shelters they have the authority to imprison women under the term of "protective custody" in order to provide them protection when their lives are threatened by their families.

"The ultimate form of violence is the honor crime ... women are staying in prison not to be killed some of them never go out of it..."

Jordanian NGOs together with some governmental and security departments formed in March 2006 the "Jordanian Coalition to support the women who are at the protective custody".

Shelters are often a matter of life and death and a precondition to be able to provide a substantial support to women victims of violence.

Jordan's experience in providing shelters for women victims of violence is relatively recent. Three shelters are formally recognized and provide safe space for cases of violence. The Jordanian Women Union (JWU) has been providing a shelter for victims of violence since late 1990s. JWU provides for the victims different services including occupational rehabilitation.

Other organizations, which do not have a formally acknowledged shelter, provide temporary protection for women victims of violence. Mizan, SIGI and Family Awareness and Counseling Centre offer such services by either renting furnished flats or host the victims in their own houses.

Jordan, through the Public Security Directorate, provides protection for women at risk in rehabilitation centers. Women rights organizations are lobbying for sustainable solutions, which would allow the victims to remain part of the society. A new program entitled "A new beginning" has been launched in cooperation with the Public Security Directorate to find alternative solutions and shelters for women at risk. However, the responsible for the violence, the abuser and the perpetrator still enjoys the freedom in the public and the private sphere, the social approval and legal pardon.

B. JORDANIAN SOCIETY BETWEEN MODERNITY AND TRADITIONALISM

"The question of violence is now taken in account by the government, but it must be also considered on the cultural level.... We want to preserve the harmony and the unity of the families and its values, but also on the bases of equality between men and women. "

Jordan has managed to reach its Millennium Development Goals in the areas of health and education. More specifically, the gender gap in education Jordan has been closed. The rate of girls in the educational cycle, including at university, matches those of boys. Illiteracy rate among women has declined from previous years to 13.7% but still high when compared to 5.1% among males. Yet at the same time, in July 2009, a young man stabbed 26 times his 22 years old sister. The reason: she was divorced and had been seen talking to a man.

After all the victories of women, including overtaking men in some fields, they are still threatened by ancestral and medieval practices, which prevent them to play their real role and exercise their talents. This leads to deprive the society from the contribution of half of the population and to dangerously tear to pieces the social structure between the necessity of modernization and still holding to some old patriarchal values and practices coming from the far past, with women's bodies as a stake.

"We are in an area that is constantly on edge politically and the conditions are difficult, however, I see that life goes on, and the government has to work better on internal reform to face these conditions, and reform should be comprehensive with regards to human rights, and women's rights within this framework, because a sick society can not protect its country, and face its political challenges. "

Several interviewees underline the danger of such a coexistence of traditions and social taboos and the modern ways of life.

"I let you go to the University, but if I see you talking with a man I will kill you! " What a gap between a social evolution that sees the entry of women in the university and the persistence of archaic practices."

"In TV dramas, the role models are stereotypes of (abused) normal women ready to leave their jobs, stay at home, being 2d or 3rd wife, accepting domination of men...."

They underlined this increasing antagonism between the traditional concept of "honor" and the evolution of the context where it takes place.

The tolerance towards violence and oppression of women is linked to the perception of the man as family provider, while other members of the family are provided for and protected but kept in a subordinate position. Modernity is threatening the traditional power and prestige of the family leader and this social construction is now increasingly coming into conflict with the interference of the State in the issues of order, justice, education, and healthcare.

The economical situation requires the contribution of women to the resources of the family.

"The general economic pressure, the high demands, the limited incomes requires a women to work. When a man is looking for a wife he prefers one that is working and with an income."

Women are advancing at a much faster rate than the system is adjusting to their needs. They are advancing in a much faster rate that men themselves can adjust to accept and acknowledge.

"Rights are in principle, which is an issue that women need to become more aware of. Since there is the desire for this emancipation with out the preparation of the ground in order to obtain these rights."

"The women now are much more educated. But they have not more possibility than before to leave a violent husband. "

Women are more aware of their rights since there has been an extensive awareness raising work going on. But it is not balanced with raising her awareness of her responsibilities.

"Patriarchy is widespread in societies that are underdeveloped or developing, and in sick societies that believe in men's superiority, and the right for them to lead exclusively."

In the same way, the increasing presence of women in the labor market has not been followed by any changes, neither in the traditional roles in the family, nor in the distribution of the tasks at home. This situation is a source of social disease and violence.

"There is an increasing violence: it is related to employment and empowerment through work. There has been an additional burden put on women: they are expected to raise children and they get a job... this is not fair and becomes violence against women who are expected to be machines constantly "on".

"There are great changes in Jordan, there is an increase in the level of violence and the evidence is an increase in the percentage of divorce, and the suffering of working women from long working hours inside and outside the home. Especially with the presence of men who are not understanding of the role of women, and the need for him to take part in the domestic duties. In her opinion there is economic empowerment of women, however, the main person who benefits from this empowerment is the man. Nowadays a man wants to get everything, and the tax for a women's education and work, is his own needs and wants."

“ There is an increase in the violence against women specially in the economic field, and an increase in a culture of violence in Jordan, and an increase in the level of violence of women against women.”

“Despite the increase in awareness there is an increase because of the economic situation and the dissolution of the family unit.”

Despite the fact that reports show patriarchal violence and oppression which afflict hundreds of millions of women and girls and represent an obstacle to development in many countries, violence is frequently undermined as such an obstacle and very few analyses have been conducted about the costs of the violence for the countries in terms of social and economic well-being.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL POLICIES

“The government must interfere and promote laws to really protect women when they say no.”

Even if Jordan's constitution states that Jordanians are equal before the law, women continue to be denied equal nationality and citizenship rights with men. Jordanian law is a mixing of code Napoleon, Islamic Shari'a and influences of tribal traditions. The Jordanian Personal Status Law, derived from Shari'a is applied in all personal status matters: as inheritance, child custody, marriage, and divorce.

According the Personal Status Law the husband has to provide maintenance for his wife including food, clothing, housing, and medical care in relation with the husband's role as a provider and as the head of the matrimonial household.

Polygamy is allowed for Muslim men. If a man can satisfy all financial and legal requirements, he can be legally married up to four wives at the same time. Women do not have the same rights as men to marriage and divorce. The most common divorce procedure is the talaq: arbitrary divorce, which is exclusively a right of the husband to divorce his wife without providing any legal reason. Although there is increasing social resistance in Jordan to men's arbitrary right of divorce, there are no legal restrictions on this practice. A woman seeking a divorce in Jordan has now with the khulu divorce preceding the possibility to request dissolution of the marriage. However, as women are required to give up all their marital rights, khulu rule excludes women who are in situation of poverty or economic dependency.

❖ Some remarkable improvements

Since the end of the nineties, Jordanian women achieved a number of positive gains and some important legislative measures have been taken to improve women's rights. In 1992, the government established the first official governmental advisory commission on women's issues: Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) whose role has been expanded in 1996 to work as an umbrella and coordinate public and civil efforts to improve the status of women and increase their participation and role in society.

The joint action of the government and of the NGOs has led to the development of a National Framework for Family Protection in 2005 which strives to develop some efficient help for the victims of violence. The royal family is personally involved in the fight against violence against women.

“We have a very open minded royal family. The king declared “violence against women and children are red lights for me “and there was the adoption of the law against familial violence in spite the hostility of the Islamists. “

In 2008 Jordan endorsed a law on Protection from Domestic Violence, protocols and procedures for family protection and established new departments on domestic violence in the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Social Development; the Jordanian National Commission for Women founded an ombudsman’s office in 2008 to receive complaints and forward them to the appropriate authorities for follow-up.

Some modifications have been brought to the Personal Status Law and the Penal Code. The Election Law granted women a 20% quota in the Municipality election and six-seats are reserved for women in the lower house of the parliament. The Passport Law has been amended to improve the freedom of movement for women and the Labor Law saw the abolishing of a provision that excluded employers’ household members and domestic workers.

❖ Yet, lack of political will and determination

Having numerous means at its disposition in terms of legal reforms, law enforcement, education and awareness raising, the government can play a crucial role in protecting and promoting human women’s rights. However, the legislation, that is a constitutive part of the society, remains built up and enacted by men and in favour of men. A traditional and conservative model that is underpinning the Personal Status Law is still ruling over the lives of women and men giving legal justification for women subordinate position to men. In addition, the Penal Code, the Nationality Law and the Labor Law still contain provisions that discriminate against women, articles that reflect and strengthen the perception that women are inferior to men.

“The laws in general are protecting the man against the woman.”

“The laws are a result of the work of legislators who are men and who are bound by this culture and mentality and are therefore defending their own interests, and privileges.”

The predominance of a religious and conservative political thought and the weakness shown by the government to resist their strong influence leads to control and limit the impact of the political decisions related to women's rights. Most of the amendments on Personal Status Law remain temporary laws in order to avoid rejection in parliament where tribal groups have allied power with religious groups. (Shadow report on the implementation of the Istanbul Plan of Action for Gender Equality and women’s rights. Executive Summary EMHRN, Oct 2009).

The policies that concern violence against women are seen to be characterized by a lack of understanding and awareness among the decision makers about the global stakes related to this issue. The law against domestic violence, for example, considers cases that take place only within the domestic sphere; the law obliges the service providers to inform on abuse cases, leaving no space for the victim’s willingness and consent; the role of the prosecutor is not clearly identified etc.

“Generally they are trying to prove that the will is here, and we have some positive initiatives, but there is a lack of deep understanding of the link between violence against women and

economical development and performance , the social cost of the phenomena is not taken in account. “

“The government is responsible of the situation of women since it does not attacks seriously enough the question of violence against women... there are no rules, no laws , no restrictions to stop this violence .”

“The criminal laws are not efficient enough. We must put pressure on the government to get more binding laws and to put end to this violence. “

Fundamentally, women’s issues are not a priority, even if the government’s performance is seen to be better in relation to other countries in the region.

“If Jordan was really a democratic state, it would have adopted stronger policies to defend women’s rights. Even if a lot of NGOs are, working for women and their rights, VAW is increasing. The national policies are not effective because the situation of women is not a priority for the government. “

“The Jordanian government is much better than others in the Region. They have tried to promote some laws; even they are not the best. There was the creation of the first centre for family reconciliation, but women and children are never at the first rank of the political agenda.”

Moreover, there is a lack of efficiency of the governmental measures, as these are seen insufficient or they lack implementation.

“There are good laws, but the ones who have to apply them contribute to limit their positive impact and there is a gap between the legislation and the real life.”

“Despite the number of organizations working in this field, however, many women are still living in the same conditions, and haven’t been affected by the changes or improvements in the lives of women, or the changes in society in general specially areas beyond Amman. These policies are not being implemented in a real way on the ground.”

“Policies by the government are good. And they are widespread in many rural areas, however, execution and implementation is limited. “

“We have a recent law against violence against women. Some people think that this law will not any concrete impact.”

Furthermore, the absence of sufficient laws to protect women and the existence of discriminating laws are considered as a source of violence by themselves.

“The other reason of the violence is law, the presence of discriminating laws against women, and if there are laws that are positive or in the interest of women, these laws are not activated. The government is responsible for finding solutions for this issue; the government is not doing what it can, or what it is required to do. Even the laws that are required to be changed or amended, this is not done based on studies, and understanding, so changes are done randomly.”

The limitations of the governmental measures are attributed by some interviewed to the fact that they have been achieved under the double pressure of the international context and the civil society but without the will and the political commitment to open a broad debate on the roots and the deep causes of violence, to listen to the voices of women and to learn. In this context the women’s organizations are perceived as a major actor for changes.

“Women issues are linked to foreign agendas, as if calling for women’s freedoms will influence the society in a negative way. National policies do not have any depth, and are just cosmetic changes to improve Jordan’s external image.”

“Civil society effort has led to some progress in the public policies.”

“There are national policies to deal with violence against women, however, its not adopted seriously by the official institution, and it is not widespread in the society. In my opinion the civil society organizations are much more effective, and do adopt women issues, and are more widespread.”

“The government is responsible of the situation of women since it does not attack seriously enough the question of violence against women...”

“The criminal laws are not efficient enough. We must put pressure on the government to get more binding laws and to put end to this violence. ”

Basically, women’s issues are not a priority, due to the political undermining by the government of the phenomenon of violence against women.

“If Jordan was really a democratic state, it would have adopted stronger policies to defend women’s rights. Even if a lot of NGOs are, working for women and their rights, VAW is increasing. The national policies are not effective because the situation of women is not a priority for the government.”

❖ **Some obstacles to the implementation**

Different factors contribute to limit the efficiency and the impact of the governmental measures and of the services installed to help women victims of violence.

➤ **Lack of cooperation**

There is a lack of cooperation between the institutions dealing with violence against women. There is no systematic dialogue among them, on the one hand and between them and the NGOs on the other, to sharpen the understanding of violence against women and its devastating for the women and society effects.

“There is a miscommunication between the institutions dealing with violence, and a lack of cooperation among them. There is not a global agreement on the meaning of this phenomenon and no national monitoring procedures to fight it”

➤ **Lack of services**

Services for women victims of violence are very few and they are offered predominantly by NGOs. Another problem is that most of these services are based in Amman. Unluckily, their availability in the governorates remains limited.

“Listening to various radio programs it becomes clear that even when there are problems there are few organizations to refer women to, or addresses where they can seek help.”

➤ Lack of knowledge

There is a lack of knowledge of the existing services by the women themselves. Sometimes linked to the personal experience, there is lack of trust in the capacity of these services to solve women's problems or to preserve the confidentiality of their personal statements.

A study conducted by the Jordanian Centre for Social Studies (2007) concluded that, in spite of the number of NGOs implementing awareness raising programs on violence, 54% of women are not aware of services provided for women victims of violence. The research indicates that only 11% of the victims of violence have requested help from an organization or from an institution.

“Reaching the sector of society that is really suffering from violence, and being able to enter the homes of women who can not leave is a necessity. Women, who attend workshops and lectures, are the ones who already have awareness.”

“There are services available, but they are not known by all the women.”

“Women don't know the possibilities of recourse, they don't trust in their capacity to preserve their privacy, they are afraid of reprisal; they want to preserve the image of their family in the community. Often the women who asked for assistance are regretting it, since their witness is becoming public and more: they don't get the help they were waiting for.”

➤ Lack of awareness and understanding

The reality and the meaning of violence against women is not always clear for the services that provide help due to a lack of professionalism or to the influence of the deeply rooted patriarchal culture. Society does not accept that women go to shelters or service centers and encourages the culture of silence. Violence is often perceived by these services themselves as a private matter. All this contributes as well to the level of mis/trust for the services by the victims, as discussed above.

“Even men who are working with the police themselves who are aware of cases of violence against women deny this violence.”

“The students that I try to help to escape to forced marriages, by sending them to the family protection department, are not receiving any kind of support since their case is considered as a private matter.”

➤ Lack of qualification

The professionals who provide services like psychological and social counseling are perceived as often lacking adequate education in regards to violence against women. If a psychologist is lacking awareness or education on the violence against women, she can easily turn to blaming the victim, due to the deeply rooted patriarchal culture, as mentioned above. The number of professionals who have experience of working in this field is still too limited.

“As far as I know, Jordan is trying to do something. A law has passed against domestic violence – women now can have recourse. But I am not sure that it is implemented and I am

not sure that the professionals are in capacity to work, to help women and not to blame them. You can have the best law, without the appropriate human resources, it doesn't help. "

Institutions like the police, prosecutors and courts are not using adequate methodologies to protect and collect data.

"Even if there are beneficial laws, policies and services, people who are responsible for the provision of these services are not qualified, or do not have the right level of awareness which leads to negative results. Services are inappropriate for the community, for example women in certain areas will not be comfortable going to the police if they are in danger."

V. THE MAIN TENDENCIES OF EVOLUTION

"We don't know if there is an increase or a decrease because things happen behind closed doors."

A. PREVAILING POSITIVE PERCEPTION

Generally things change for the better due to a certain level of political will and engagement of the women's NGOs. Two third of the interviewed see some encouraging steps. Only one third was describing a negative picture or had a perception of stagnation.

The more widespread idea is that, due to the presence of women organizations, and an active women's movement to support women and to fight violence, there is a positive change. There is more awareness among women and the level of violence is decreasing. The laws which led before to the silencing of women and viewing them as the weak part of society are less discriminating against women. The fact that women are approaching organizations for protection is a form of awareness in society.

Even if they are slow, there are positive and sustainable changes showing the interest of the government in women's issues and its efforts to improve the situation of women: not only Jordanian women but also migrant working women. This interest has been reflected in some legal reforms and this is a result of women organizations work, international pressure and the raise of awareness of women.

The improvement is linked mainly to the following interconnected factors:

➤ **Better knowledge and awareness about violence against women**

The physical violence against women came out of the shadow recently. There is more awareness: women begin to talk and to call the hot lines. It does not mean necessary an increasing of the violence; on the contrary, the perception is that the breaking of the silence would lead to a decreasing of violence.

"The increasing of reported cases doesn't mean increasing violence. On the contrary there is some improvement of the governmental policies in this field. "

"We have now a failure in the honor crimes. Before there was no possible protection, now there is a mobilization around this issue. "

“Violence against women was present however, but no one was paying any attention to it. If a woman was subjected to violence it was the normal thing. With the work of organizations and society on women issues there is now more focus on these issues.”

“There is now more awareness about honor crimes, 15 years ago, nobody was talking about them.”

“Violence has not increased in society, however, due to studies, media and awareness it has become more apparent, and the real extent of violence in society is now in the open.”

The increase in awareness and knowledge about violence against women is perceived to be due to the action of the women’s organizations and to the media.

“The women’s organizations have made an important work to encourage women to talk and the society is more ready now to listen to them. “

“Globally the tendency of the evolution is positive. The papers, since 5 or 6 years are constantly talking about honor crimes. “

“Now there is a focus on violence against women, which is the issue that is being dealt with by the media. Because of the media, and the spread of information, this has led for women issues to reach the top of social issues. Cultural, social awareness and increase in media coverage might be a reason why this issue is being dealt with on a wider scale.”

The perceptions of a decrease of violence against women are however mostly connected with the honor crimes, which represent the most extreme form of violence, resulting in homicide. The “ordinary” forms of violence that follow women throughout their whole life are not necessary witnessing such a positive evolution.

➤ **Evolution and the modernization of the society**

The increasing number of women on the labor market is a factor of major importance.

“The situation is improving. Now the women can work and contribute to raise their children; they are not 100% depending on men.”

In 1997 and 2002 the WHO published major reports on violence against women and girls, revealing severe injuries as results of “violence in the home”. The consequences of this violence are often translated in terms of social and economical costs and the access of women to responsibilities in the economical field is often translated in terms of performance and profit. But at the same the access of women to the professional sphere time increases their capacity to say “no” to violence and gives them the status of resource provider.

“The society, the women, don’t accept anymore the physical violence and men need their wives on the economical level. “

As this study is grounded in social justice and democracy when discussing women’s rights, it does not enter the debate promoting justification of gender equality with economical performance or profit.

This social evolution also brings together with the action of the NGO’s some changes in mentalities.

“There is a social evolution around this issue of violence. After a TV show against violence against women, (September 09) 83% of the public declared to be in favor of an interference of the law in the private sphere to contribute to solve the problem.”

“In the last ten years, awareness has increased and it has encouraged women to apply to jobs, and some items such as social status (married or single) have been taken out from job applications.”

“Now there is a generational struggle. The young generation rejects struggle more than the old one, and there is more acceptance of women in position of leadership or decision making.”

➤ **Governmental efforts and the personal involvement of the King**

Both the involvement of the government, and personally the King and his family, have contributed to the development of services and some legislative redress, as mentioned in previous chapters.

“The government is trying to do something. There is a new department and a place to welcome women who can now take actions against their perpetrators. These are positive changes.”

“There is now more shelters and more centers to fight against violence against women, women have more possibilities for a legal recourse.”

“There is awareness in school, and there are some positive steps in that direction in Jordan. The king has also put more emphasis on the role of these organizations to reach a stage where women are a main partner in development in all areas of the kingdom.”

These factors all contribute to breaking social taboo and weakening the wall of silence. They create a more supportive atmosphere that encourages and empowers victims of violence to report and to ask for social or legal action.

“There are now shelters, legal aid services, a family protection unit and a new law ...all this encourages women to report.”

“Women are more courageous in approaching these organizations which provide the infrastructure and protection so that women can talk freely about their problems”.

However, in spite of these positive changes, the situation doesn't change fundamentally. Some forms of violence have been discouraged, but they have been replaced by new ones.

There are new forms for the manifestation of this violence. Due to the effort to raise awareness of violence in the society, this has led to opposing groups to push for new forms of violence.”

“There is an evolution in the way of a greater awareness and capacity of women to speak about it. It is also an evolution: that it is more acceptable that women are going to the police or are having legal recourse. But it is in contradiction with this social acceptance of the phenomena.”

B. SOME ALARMING SIGNS

For the interviewed who perceive the evolution concerning violence against women as negative, the increasing of violence is linked to:

- **The degradation of the economic situation and the rise of the conservative and religious thought.** The statistic reflecting the reality of the level of poverty on the ground is not perceived as accurate as and the contradiction between the evolution of the society

and the persistence of patriarchal mentalities in the society contributes to this increasing of violence.

“Violence is increasing and there are a lot of objective reasons for this: the economical crisis touches everybody, men are getting more violent, and the whole social atmosphere is affected. More than 60 % of the population is poor, the official statistics shows only 40% -and it is not right. The major part of the population has no social insurance. UNRWA is decreasing its help to refugee people in rural zones and the peasants are becoming poorer and poorer.”

“Violence is increasing in spite of all the efforts of the society, among other things because of the difficulties of the life, the economical situation and the raise of the religious fundamentalism.”

“There is more violence, more honor killings.... the general context is calling for more authoritarianism, more strictness towards women. This is a public issue, not a private one. The political language is very much against women calling for more firmness and severity against women. The religious rhetoric calls for the need to restrict women, the dealing with her as a body an object so that she is turned into property, and not dealt with as a full human being.”

- **The national governmental policies** which do not protect women’s human and do not include them in the citizenship rights. Instead these policies put the rights of women as a political stake between the women’s organizations and the Islamic movements.

“The society is improving itself, including regarding violence against women, because of the action of the NGO’s since 30 years, but also because of education and media ... but globally the violence is increasing since there is no efficient politics against”

“There is an increase in violence because of the lack of equality between men and women. The government is not fair to women.”

- **International context also** characterized by violence against women

“Honor crimes are increasing, rapes and marital rapes also. The more women organizations work on it, the more you discover that it is a wide spread phenomena ... In Sweden also we have it! “

VI. SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

A. MAIN OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

“The main obstacles to the implementation of policies are customs and traditions, the incorrect interpretation of religion, and religious statutes. The prevalence of a culture that is hostile to women’s rights, and the acceptance of women themselves to insult and violence.”

Traditions and social culture, ignorance, social taboos, interference of the religion in the public sphere, lack of awareness, discriminative legislation and contribution of women themselves to their own oppression are perceived as main obstacles on the road to equality between men and women. The patriarchal mentality legitimizes violence against women, and compels some women to surrender to this violence. The growing influence of religious fundamentalism limits the political will to combat violence against women on the pretext of respecting religion and tradition.

1. Social model of strong patriarchal dominance

A society built on the idea of the inferiority of women and shaped by a very strong patriarchal system requires a very strong and determined political commitment and involvement to integrate some changes in favor of equality between men and women.

The patriarchate is prominent and active.

“Our society is a patriarchal society, so of course it will be against any values that oppose its interest. So it will oppose any laws that call for equality or end of discrimination or calls for women’s rights.”

“The main obstacle is social acceptance that needs a lot of raising awareness.”

But the determination of the decision makers is missing. In spite of some positive measures, violence against women is far from having become a political priority.

“There is no real follow up or attention, and the belief that this issue (violence against women) is not a priority and can be delayed or postponed.”

“The main obstacles are the absence of a real intention for change and the lack of belief in this issue.”

The dominant role of the father (the male figure) in the functioning of the society itself produces some fatal gearing in cases of economical difficulties, that prevent from finding good solutions or that lead to adopting the most unfair ones, the most criminal ones for women.

“The man is the main economic support of the family, so to put the perpetrators in jail is a heavy responsibility. Since the consequences are important for all the family members, we are looking for alternative means to protect the victims.”

“When there is incest, and when the girl is pregnant they choose the easiest way (they kill her), if not the man will go in prison and who will take care of the family.”

2. Women as captive actors of social reproduction

“Women have a part of responsibility in the violence they are suffering from.”

According to a survey conducted by the department of statistics published at the end of November 2008, around 20 percent of Jordanian women approve being beaten by husbands to discipline them. The study included nearly 15 000 families and 11 000 married women. Most of the respondents were between 15 to 49 years old.

The role of the women in the reproduction of the gender stereotypes and the acceptance of the violence against them is underlined by several interviewed: from ignorance to lack of solidarity, from passivity to resignation, women are seen as major contributors to perpetuation of violence.

➤ Lack of solidarity among themselves

“Women don’t help each other enough... Guilty or not they are not fighting enough.”

“There is no solidarity between the women. When a mother or a sister attends violence, they don’t say anything. They don’t find solutions, they are afraid; they don’t have enough self confidence to do something.”

"Some women are adopting the traditional concepts and modes of thought, and also out of jealousy and of the need to destroy other women."

➤ Lack of self confidence

"Women are not enough aware and they have not enough self- confidence, they don't raise their voices, they don't protest. If women don't act themselves, they will not be able to escape from their condition."

➤ Lack of revolt, resignation

"The women are not complaining, she has no revolt to allow her children to be raised in a united family. They don't even think about the consequences for children to have a beaten mother."

"There is no hope on the side of women, no belief that there is some possibility of solutions to their problems. They don't think that the system is able to solve their problems."

"A woman doesn't have her rights, she does not have her dignity, and she might herself be responsible for this violence since she accepted it, and accepted to be a victim, and did not take initiative in grabbing in her chance in education and work. As a result that woman has compromised, given up, or not bothered to fight. "

➤ Passivity

"Sometimes women are unfair to themselves by accepting violence and by compromising and accepting servitude, being less, being followers."

➤ Lack of competence of elected women

"We have some women in the parliament, but they don't do anything."

➤ Justification of their own oppression

"Some women are accepting the violence in the name of the Koran."

➤ Lack of awareness

"The women are brought up in a certain way and if they have not the luck to hear something else, they will reproduce what they learn..."

"A woman can have a role in preventing violence against herself, through her knowledge of her rights, and through her participation fully as a partner in the family, or home. "

"And her lack of knowledge and understanding of her ability, responsibilities, and rights. There is a women's lack of their own appreciation of their own value. "

"Sometimes women are provoking violence by their own verbal violence, their demands, their lack of respect ... a double education is necessary."

Women's proactive contribution to the patriarchal traditional model is illustrated by the privileges mothers give to their male children. Even if the dominant role of men in the patriarchy as a system is acknowledged throughout the study, the role of the father in the family and in raising the children is not linked to his dominant position in the society and the responsibility is seen to lie solely on the mother. Consequently, the mother's involvement in

committing of “honor” crimes is judged without linking it to the male nature of the whole “honor” process leading to the crime.

“There is a male dominated mentality that is widespread in society, not only among men, but among women too.”

“Sometimes women accept the violence. Sometimes the mother is privileging the son, especially if is his unique with several sisters.... It is also violence.”

“The mother is responsible by discriminating between the son and the daughter, giving more prominence to the son and requesting that her sister serves him.”

“We have to talk about the role of the mothers and the grand mothers when they say “kill your sister, she is putting shame on all of us, lowering our heads. “

“In the situation of violence of women against women, women emphasize this feeling that men are superior, they are usually weak women who use religion as an excuse for servitude.”

In the logic following the description in “The world upside down “(ch III A.), women themselves shoulder a heavy responsibility for violence they are suffering from. While the perpetrators themselves are never directly tackled as a social group, as men. They always have the benefit of mitigating circumstances: be it the social, family or religious pressure.

“During a visit to women in a prison, I met a young man 28 years old, who was born in a tribe, and now is a lawyer who is working with the police. I was complaining about the situation of these women without merci, without future. The man answered me that if he was facing an “honor” situation he would kill himself his sister or his daughter, précising that he was not a monster but also a victim of this society.”

How can the “weaker” part of the society be at the same time the major and most powerful actor of its own domination?

“The ignorance of women and her lack of knowledge of her rights, and her acceptance of violent practices against her and her playing the role of the victim. Her refusal to go the legal system to protect her rights, her lack of economic empowerment.”

“Roots of violence are a lack of awareness. Women do not learn from their experience...of the past relationship. They are ready to face the repetition of the same bad experience.”

“ The role models and women who are supposed to raise awareness about this issue are themselves victims of violence so they are unable to really raise awareness; it takes off a part of their credibility, they need themselves to be more aware of this issue. They are not enough aware to promote this issue. “

“Change can take place if women can have a different outlook on this issue. For a long time women thought that it’s a man’s right to exercise this kind of violence, they would withstand the violence and pretend that everything is ok .However with more women entering the work force and an increase in the level of education, a larger number of women have become aware of this. Some women are not ready for the change yet however, the concept of duties and rights is not clear. Some women who want to enter the workforce are not yet ready for the consequences, and how this might affect their families.”

Many UN documents and NGOs reports show that violence and oppression of women is linked to the stereotypical perceptions of men as violent and women as passive and taking little part in the initiatives to combat violence. Innocence is on the men’s side, since their

violence is attributed to the social and family pressure. But guilt is on the women side since they don't act to combat this violence and even worse, they contribute to its perpetuation.

Even if all the studies show that the only common point between perpetrators is that they are men, and between victims that they are women, violence against women is often perceived and explained in terms of individual or psychological characteristics, as for example violent or unemployed men, and passive and non educated women. In this way the social and cultural causes of this violence are veiled and silenced.

Already in 1947, 70 years ago in her book *Le Deuxième Sexe /The Second Sex* (1949) Simone De Beauvoir described how this model functions, the "norm" being defined by and as male and women being the deviation from it, the "second sex". As long as women are considered minors that men need to educate, as long as men's feelings of dignity, jealousy and honor give them rights over women's lives, as long as the system of domination and the gender power structures remains uncovered, there will not be equality between men and women and therefore no democracy. Women are part of this social system and if it does not change the women and men will not change either.

B. WAYS TO CHANGE

"The entire society has to be changed, and it might take years, even generations"

"The NGO's, the women, the institutions don't face truly, in reality the question of women's rights."

1. Priorities and emergencies

The first issues to be tackled in order to improve the situation of women are below. The order of the presentation respects the weight of the issue in terms of number of quotations in the interviews. The interviewed are stressing the importance of addressing not only the violence and oppression of women but also the factors and causes that contribute to them.

To be addressed in priority

➤ **Economical violence** comes at the first rank of these issues in a context where a lot of women are not allowed to work, or have to stop when they give birth to their first child.

"Economic violence is the most urgent of all forms of violence, because poverty of women is a major factor in their acceptance of violence."

Economic autonomy of women is viewed as a major precondition to curb violence. Autonomy needs to be strengthened by adopting measures to strengthen women's self confidence and empower them to take more active role in the public space and in the society as a whole. Awareness raising about her economic rights is also needed in addition to spreading a general awareness about the discrimination of women in the family.

"Economic situation plays a role in the life of a family, so that a man's authority allows him to use violence for economic gain. Man takes over his wife's, sister's or daughter's salary."

"We must fight against this phenomena and prepare women to invest some active roles in the society, not only to stay at home. The lower economical status of women makes them easy victims."

Women's economic autonomy needs to be supported as well by anti-discriminatory legislation. The urgency is seen in changing the discriminatory laws in the Personal Status Law that deprives women from their legal and human rights to inheritance.

"70 % of the population doesn't have inheritance; it is a tragedy, since religion allows it"

"Economic violence should be given the priority: the salary of a working woman is the right of the husband, and is spent on the daily expense of the family. The loans are taken in the name of the wife, without compensation, return, or insurance/ guarantee. The law in case of a divorce or separation should take into consideration her contribution to the house, and the contribution of her salary during the time of the marriage."

➤ **Honor crimes** as archaic practices reflect the whole injustice for women. Strengthening of the punishment for the perpetrator is a necessary precondition on the way to raise awareness of the whole society of civil values and respect of the human rights of both women and men.

"It is a big mistake to act as we do towards people who are criminals. They stay in jail no more than six months, when they deserve a life in prison. When they go out they are considered like heroes."

➤ **Physical violence** is next on the scale since it damages the integrity of the women's bodies with heavy consequences for their whole life.

"There should be a law for all types of violence against women. A woman should be able to go to any police station if she is harassed in the street. There should be a law regarding harassment in the work place."

"A woman cannot feel her humanity and dignity in front of this type of violence."

➤ **Legislation** and especially the discriminative character of the Personal Status Law need to be addressed urgently. Parallel to this, it is necessary to strengthen the penalties in the Penal Code for perpetrators of all kinds of violence. These two steps will give normative signals to the society that will support its transition on the way to modernity and in abolishing archaic practices against women that hinder such a development. The most urgent situation is seen to be the one of the women who are kept in jails for protection. Legislative changes in this direction would ease their situation and their way back to the family and society. Changing of the legislation in regards to divorce is another perceived concrete emergency.

"The divorce is the most important violence, it is shameful for women and it has an impact on the family and children."

"The most urgent is the situation of the women victims who stay in jail. We have to strengthen and change the law."

"The personal status law engages all the aspects of the women's lives from the birth to the death."

"The burning problem is the situation of women kept in prison to protect them. In 2004 there were 40 women in this case, unlike the officials are saying, this number does not decrease."

The Nationality Law is also described a direct discrimination against women since Jordanian women who are married to non Jordanian men cannot grant their nationality to their children. Through changing this legislation, some other should follow.

"The nationality law will be the gate to solve all other kinds of violence."

"There is a need to give constitutes women the right to pass on her citizenship to her children. 40 to 50% of Palestinians living in refugee camps do not hold the Jordanian citizenship."

"Women organizations should urge other civil society organizations to work on the nationality law. To do a study on this issue and to document case studies of mothers and children separated from each other because of the citizenship law. The effect that this issue has on the society as a whole, and to create a network to lobby on this policy."

➤ **Traditional and retrograde mentalities**

Specific cultural explanations are still allowed to justify violence against women displacing its roots from the context of patriarchal structures. This prevents the society to take its part and to assume its responsibility. The work for changing of this culture is a priority, including the custom of forced marriages and early marriages. Spreading awareness among men and women as well as including education on human rights and gender equality in the school curricula is another matter of emergency.

"Changing school curriculum and raising awareness in schools around rights is a priority that would change the society's culture that is accepting of violence."

"Women need to be respected as a whole in their entirety and as a complete human being. If it was the case there would not be any kind of violence whether psychological or physical. The essence is to respect women and it would be reflected in customs, traditions laws and the preservation of their dignity."

2. Knowledge as a first step for action

Several interviewed underlined the importance of knowledge as a way of raising awareness and a step forward to finding solutions. To reveal people's lives stories, to uncover with help of statistics and data the extent of violence, its mechanisms and consequences for the daily lives of women, as well as for the development of society, has been in many countries a way to involve the decision makers in the research of solutions together with the granting of financial means required to implement them. A recurrent preoccupation is to focus not only on the expressions or on the extent of the violence but on its causes and roots in order to be able to fight more efficiently against it.

"One of the solutions to the issue is to undertake studies through research centers in universities to understand the reasons for the phenomena of violence against women."

"Identifying violence leads to the discovery of ways to deal with it, especially in terms of reforming certain laws. "

"Violence in the area of work, however, we cannot talk about it excessively because there are no statistics or studies to support this."

"There has to be a comprehensive study of the economic situation of the women so that she is able to take these decisions (such as ending her marriage for example). At the moment the legal system falls short from ensuring her rights or providing alimony."

“Another important issue is the issue of citizenship. Of explaining what the issues are. Putting a face on the cases, telling the stories of people, and what they face because of the citizenship problem, comparing that to the number of Jordanian men who marry non Jordanians, and who receive the citizenship, which is an issue that is not touched upon.”

3. Legislation as a precondition

Abolishing discriminative laws and adopting civil legislation towards more equality between women and men inevitably has an effect on social practices and attitudes.

“All the laws must be improved, the discriminatory laws must be changed. “

Although women are granted equality under Jordan's constitution, some discriminatory laws directly violate this guarantee by denying women full legal competence. Family and personal status laws, covering marriage, divorce, inheritance, ownership, citizenship and nationality, are still mostly governed by traditional or customary legal systems rather than state civil codes. Children 'born out of wedlock' are still considered as the product of a crime, women can not get custody of the children, and they are placed under government care until they are eighteen years old. A divorced woman loses the custody of her legitimate children if she marries anew. Jordanian men can give their nationality to their foreign wives and children, but Jordanian women married to foreigners are not entitled to have the same right. These are just the most shocking cases of discriminative legislation from development perspective.

Civil rights activists intensified their lobbying against the unjust Penal Code articles 98 and 340 related to honor killings. The debate concerning this issue is almost nationwide now, putting pressure over the legislative body to propose amendments to this outrageous legislation.

“There is nothing in the penal code against honor crimes. Honor crimes must be qualified as crimes. “

But changing the legislation is only half of the way; the implementation of the laws is the other half.

“Equality, we got a law, but it is not applied yet. “

“The laws exist,, but they are not applied. It is not necessary to create new laws. Let us apply what already exists.”

4. Awareness raising

Awareness about violence against women and its root causes has considerably increased. Today, there is much greater consciousness of how patriarchal structures use violence to maintain male domination and privileges. However this issue is never a priority on the political agendas.

Political will and determination is needed to work for changing of the patriarchal attitudes and behaviors based on the denial of gender equality. Women's bodies are still considered and used as male properties; physical violence is socially tolerated and is seldom punished. The shame and guilt remains for the victims. The traditional mentalities reproduced by both men and women, contribute to keep the domestic violence in the shadow of the familial

sphere and to consider it a private matter and a banal habit. One major result of the quantitative phase of this study is that more than one half of the respondents considers that violence against women is a social or political matter and not a private one.

The family life is ruled by the male domination and control over women's lives and bodies. Male family members are the guardians of the family's reputation, the familial dignity and honor. They have the right to punish the female member who damages this reputation or challenges the familial or social power structure. The well being comfort and protection is the responsibility of a male relative: father, husband or brother. The father has to take care of his daughter until she gets married. If a married woman gets divorced she usually returns to her family and her father will take care of her anew.

The system of protecting and being protected speaks by itself against equality. The protected is put in advance in a subordinate position to the one of the protector, reaffirming the patriarchal gender roles assigned to women and men. According to their belonging to sex, women are confined to be the "weak" sex and be protected by the "strong" sex, the male. But in this patriarchal system the violence comes from the "protector", from the nearest in the family. Women's movements across the world have long put the question: "And who is then protecting women from their "protectors"?"

A woman in Jordan gets married only with the approval of a male guardian. It happens that women don't get this approval from their brother or father for economic reasons. When married, women are supposed to take care of the family in private sphere, while men work outside in the public sphere, following another traditional but also universal pattern. The women's lives are confined to raise the children and take care of the household.

As for sexuality, men will not marry a girl if she is not a virgin. The family is responsible of the daughter's chastity and the mother is prescribed the role of upbringing the daughter in a way to preserve it. The virginity of the girls involves not only their "honor" but the "honor" of their family with consequences for all the girls, if the shame is on the family. They will not be able to find a "good" husband, a man coming from an honorable family.

Most of the Jordanian women's organizations have awareness raising programs as a part of their main activities in the field of women' rights. Several interviewed referred to them as awareness raising programs designed for women in the local communities. These have also been effective to open the debate on the issues of inheritance, divorce and "honor" crimes.

"Violence against women is decreasing with the knowledge and awareness of women....It is necessary to spread knowledge among women. Knowledge is power."

Awareness raising is described as a major tool to fight violence against women and it is the responsibility of family and school, women's organizations and media.

5. Upbringing, education and media

"Awareness is needed to enlighten the importance of women achieving their full rights to participate fully in all aspects of life."

The role of upbringing, education and media is of a crucial importance in the spreading of stereotypes but also in fighting them by giving women the knowledge of their rights, the strength to fight for them, and by opening the minds of both men and women, both boys and girls on the perspective of a social development based on equal rights and responsibilities.

The necessity is underlined to focus on the new generation, mainly the young men, so that they don't imitate their parent's behaviors.

"There should be an awareness campaign to re-formulate awareness among individuals through the family, school, university, and media, to reduce this phenomenon."

The idea of inferiority of women is nourishing girls and boys and must be fought as soon as at early age.

"Children are brought up , as soon as there are born , in the idea of the difference and of the superiority of the men, of the repartition of the roles in the family and in the society .So we have to work transversally on this issue and to attack all these problems."

It is perpetuated in and outside the family, among others via the school system.

"We have to promote the values of well-being and happiness. Education is a key, but which kind of education? An education to respect human rights and equality, now on the contrary, the system is encouraging the idea that we have to accept the rules and the values of the patriarchal society. The whole process around violence against women should be part of the scholarship courses that would focus mainly on raising awareness among children and youth and educating them about rights of themselves and rights of others as awareness for men and women about gender equality."

As well as via the media

"It is important to activate the role of the media, and its adoption of women's rights."

"The media are a very important tool if it operates a real democratic environment and has the freedom to tackle this issue and raise awareness. It has the power to communicate with people of different levels of education and can create real change. It is a powerful weapon and can be a real platform to deal with women's issue. For example to have a genuine program , a women channel established to deal with these issues."

In this context the women's organizations have a major role to play.

"The role of civil society and their work with the media is required through drama and non profit media projects .because it is more effective than workshops since it relies on simple language and can reach majority and in a deep way. The civil society should create a TV channel dedicated to women issues. "

"Women have to be made more aware in all areas and the awareness of society as a whole needs to be raised. Supporting NGO's work in this field is very important since they are undertaking much of the responsibility in this area."

As decisive is the access of women to education but also to education about their rights.

"Education is a very important issue for women; it gives her a chance to fight for their rights, and to achieve their economic independence. When women learn more about their rights, they know how to approach institutions that might aid them, which would mean that the (violent) man is stopped."

"Women's right to education and work is urgent. If a woman is receiving a University degree she will be more open more able to decide the kind of husband that she would like to marry."

C. ACTORS AND TOOLS FOR CHANGE

1. Crucial role of the NGOs

“All the women’s organizations around the world appreciate the issue of women’s rights as a first rank political problem.”

With more than 120 women’s NGOs, Jordan has over the past sixty years developed a strong women’s civil society network that has been active in many spheres of public life: from humanitarian assistance to economic development.

Various terms are used by the different organizations to refer to the issues of violence according to their mandate and the services they provide in the sphere of prevention and protection against violence: Gender Based Violence (GBV), Domestic Violence, and Violence against Women (VAW).

The action of the NGOs is considered as a major factor to raise awareness, to develop women’s rights and to change the society as well as to preserve these rights from conservative attacks.

“Women’s organizations are active in Jordan since 1955. At this moment, there was a wave of repression, the political parties, the associations were prohibited. People considered that the place for women was at home and nowhere else. If the women had not played a major role we would still be at the same place.”

“To change this society, it needs political will but also the action of the civil society to face the Islamist wave.”

Consequently some of the interviewed deplored the division of the women’s movement as a source of weakness and their lack of presence in the rural areas as a limitation of their role and influence.

“Women’s organizations must unite themselves and share experiences and knowledge to fight against this phenomena.”

“The NGOs and the civil society are not doing enough, they are not strong enough...”

“We are not really divided, we just don’t have contacts between organizations. “

“NGOs working in the capital should work more in other governorates, because women are more in need. The closer women are to the capital the more rights they have, whereas there is a huge need in rural areas.”

They expressed the wish that they get a stronger support from the State for their action.

“In terms of civil society, they are to some extent the reference in promoting human rights, and raising awareness in society, from the legal and human rights point of view. However, in the absence of democracy in its desired form, there is no support or protection for these organizations in a real sense.”

“There is an importance to support financially women’s organizations, and provide protection to these organizations that are meant to change society.”

There are a lot of initiatives of the women’s movement to change the laws, to implement the national legislation and international conventions.

“The civil society among its abilities is pushing for raising awareness of this convention (CEDAW) implementation on the ground. In many instances civil society is taking over the role of the government, or filling the gap.”

“Even if we have not precise data, now we have more declarations from women and we can reach them more. Before the legal recourse was not possible, now we can send a perpetrator in jail. “

“The civil society among its abilities is pushing for raising awareness of this convention (CEDAW) implementation on the ground. In many instances civil society is taking over the role of the government, or filling the gap again.”

NGOs are leading concrete actions on the ground. MIZAN, Law Group for Human Rights is working for mediation and reconciliation to avoid appealing to the courts, trying to preserve the unity of the family and to limit the conflict in the couple.

“We received a woman who could not find the way to escape to the violence of her father. We rented a room for her in a hotel. She had the economical capacity to do it herself, but it was not tolerable for her mother, it was an attempt to her dignityWe work for the criminalization of violence. The victim does need to have witnesses. The first step is the recognition by the perpetrator of his acts, his apologies and his commitment not to do it

Jordanian Women’s Union launched a hot line in 1996. Organizations providing help for victims of violence have a positive image, but they are rather limited in number and are concentrated in the urban areas.

“Its good to have lectures, workshops, and these forms of awareness need to continue however, not at this level, efforts should be directed elsewhere. Most of the concentration is in Amman, and more should be taking place in rural areas. Many women can’t even leave their homes, and these are not the ones targeted by women programs. There has to be a presence for women’s organizations or family protection units within the courts, that offer support, and advice to women who are using the legal system to obtain their rights. “

In 2007 a large campaign was conducted by JNCW to commemorate 16 years for the 16 days campaign against violence against women. The campaign celebrated Jordan’s achievements in fighting violence against women and the network “Shama” was one of its major outcomes.

2. National policies and tools

The UN document adopted in 2000 in New York, in the follow-up of the Beijing World Conference on Women, makes clear the responsibility of States to punish the perpetrators, protect the victims and take preventive measures to counter the violence. If they can’t assume it, they may be judged guilty of a breach of human rights.

Although the national policies, declarations and laws show national efforts to tackle violence against women some important gaps persist and improvement in the legislative field is urgently needed to curb the conservatism of society that hinders development and push the society backwards. Furthermore, financial means must be allocated to prevention of violence as well as to spare women’s sufferings and to allow women to have a full role in society in accordance with their skills and abilities.

“Women do not lack thought, or awareness that enables her to take her real position in society. The decision makers should adopt all regulations that would reform laws that enable women to achieve their rights, and end discrimination against them. And since the government is part of society it will need some time to adopt these kinds of regulations and laws.”

“There should be a complete equality legally supported. A law is needed to protect women every where and not only from domestic violence. The current labor law has a clause about women’s safety and health and maternal leaves. It should also include the provision of services: care, kinder gardens. It must not be only legal protection but also service provision. “

Some major measures that the government should implement to show its determination to fight this phenomenon are:

- Increasing the number of services and the professionalism of the people who work and come in contact with women victims, police, medical personnel and courts and supporting the women’s organizations which combat violence and help to reintegrate the victims in the society.

“It would be important to have a study about the help centers, how are they working, how many cases, which methods do they use..... (Especially in the provinces). “

“We have a lot of centers of official services, how much can they help? It is a major question. Training the professionals involved in the fight against violence against women is needed. “

“Some measures have to be taken for the professional reinsertion of women victims of violence.”

“The government must improve the services for women who are abused. They must give freedom to the civil society and push media to talk about this issue.”

“Another solution is to create services that provide counseling and are run by the government to solve social, legal, and psychological problems.”

- This political determination requires political choices in terms of financial investments.

We have to create standards for women’s rights , they have to know what are their rights. That means financial means and national budgetary policies which integrate the fact that prevention spares sufferings and money.”

“The government must transfer a percentage of the military budget towards shelter homes for women and children.”

“The government must support civil society organizations with real and financial means.”

- The government has inter alia the urgent responsibility to reinforce some laws to punish the perpetrators, to forbid polygamy, to change discriminative legislation concerning divorce and ensure alimony for the single women and their children, protect the dignity of women as citizens; that is, to reconsider the whole archaic base of Personal Status Law.

“We must implement the law that is leading to increase the punishment regarding violence against women.”

“Even if it is better to be divorced than to live with somebody you don’t love, after divorce the women here have not many rights. The personal status law does not protect the women in this regards.”

“There has to be a law that criminalizes polygamy. The government is the one that is responsible for the women, during divorce, with taxes for the men, as a way to oblige men to pay alimony. There has to be real policies for the protection of women and their dignity, through the canceling of unjust divorce.”

“There is an urgent need to change four types of laws: Abusive or unjust divorce, Khulu’, Alimony, visit rights of children. “

But there are some obstacles to face to improve such policies, mainly the conservatism of the society and of the Parliament. The Lower House Parliament failed to put an end to impunity for men who murder female family members in the name of preserving the "honor" of the family.

“Since the government is part of society it will need some time to adopt these kinds of regulations and laws.”

“The government has to play a large role in terms of activation and change of laws, and this calls for having a better parliament. In her opinion the only authority that is capable of making real changes, and affecting laws in the interest of women is the higher authority of the king. Since the parliament is the part that is constantly opposing real change of laws.”

3. The International Conventions

“I think that CEDAW is a reference for decision makers in order to improve the external image, and keep up with the international community and other countries.”

Jordan has ratified CEDAW in 1992 and published it in the official gazette in 2007. Yet, Jordan is keeping reservations on some articles 9 (2) and 16 (1) of the convention and has not ratified the optional protocol.

The Concluding comments of the CEDAW committee about Jordan stressed the link between the violence against women, their economic dependency and vulnerable position in the family and in the society. It emphasized the need to consolidate efforts to address issues of violence against women urging the government to:

- Enact legislation on violence against women;
- Implement educational and awareness raising measures aimed at law enforcement officials, the judiciary, health care providers, social workers, community leaders and the general public;
- Amend applicable provisions of the penal code to ensure that perpetrators of “honor” crimes do not benefit from a reduction of penalty under article 340;
- Ensure that “honor” crimes are treated as seriously as other violent crimes in regard to investigation and prosecution, and that effective prevention efforts are put in place;
- Establish a sufficient number of accessible shelters and crisis centers for female’s victims of violence in both urban and rural areas;
- Replace the practice of protective custody with other measures that ensure the protection of women without jeopardizing their freedom and to accordingly transfer all women currently held in protective custody to the Family Reconciliation Centre or other safe shelters.

All of the United Nations Instruments: CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, UNSCR 1820 and recently UNSCR1880 and 1889 are described by the representatives of the NGO's as important and useful tools for change. Their role appears to be essential reference to the national obligations of both government and society. MISAN has for example the project to use CEDAW in front of courts. It would be the first time in Jordan.

"CEDAW is an important tool that favored a common approach, awareness, language and understanding in our countries. The women's rights activists remain a minority and without these international tools, they could not go so far in their fights. "

Apart from the important role of the NGO, most of the interviewed agree on the importance of the convention and they underlined the improvement of its perception in the Jordanian context. CEDAW has become a reference document which affects decision makers and policies. The recent lifting of the reservation on freedom of movement is an example of this positive influence. Policies are perceived as becoming more progressive and providing more rights for women thanks to CEDAW.

"Civil society is now more engaged in promoting CEDAW around."

"CEDAW is an important reference. . . Many of its articles are part of the Jordanian law, and constitution and are implemented for years. Decision makers have an understanding of this convention and governmental policies are in accord with this convention. In terms of civil society organizations there is a high level of response towards this convention, however, there should be greater effort directed at decision makers to commit to all articles in CEDAW and to activate their implementation."

But it is necessary to go further by:

- Raising awareness about CEDAW and using the convention as a space for mobilization and cooperation with government and politicians.

"CEDAW is the convention that is most just for women, and preserves their rights. There is no cooperation with the government. The media is not playing enough of a role on the level of the kingdom to raise awareness with them. There should be meetings with parliamentarians on CEDAW. Women organizations hosting parliament members like in Aqaba or Irbid to discuss CEDAW."

"Men would agree with certain articles if they realize their affect on their sisters, or their mothers. Less emphasis should be on controversial points that would create more objections to CEDAW. Men have to be invited to these workshops so that a debate is created around violence if men are the main or central actors in this issue."

- Making the international conventions binding in order to make them implemented.

"I believe in international conventions. Women can use them; it is a frame of reference for them. They are important since they are a way to put a pressure on the governments and to impress them. They are a tool for fight and for mobilization ... but they must go with binding sanctions because the non respect of them is not punished nowadays. They should be legal bindings, not only recommendations."

"The international conventions could help if they were applied! "

- Lifting all the reservations and signing the Optional Protocol.

“The international conventions are very important. If the government adopts them, it is really important since they are stronger and overpass the national laws. We demand the lift up of all the reservations! “

“CEDAW is a useful reference, however more awareness is needed since this lies squarely on the shoulders of civil society organizations.. Regarding decision makers it is an important reference, but the reservations that discriminate against women must be cancelled.”

“After the removal of political obstacles and the lifting of reservations, CEDAW can be an important reference to prevent violence against women. “

➤ Considering CEDAW only as a step.

“For a lot of NGO’s, CEDAW is equality, for me, it is not a target, CEDAW is a start.”

Not forgetting that the implementation of CEDAW is facing numerous obstacles, mainly the opposition of the religious and conservative lobbies.

“Unfortunately the CEDAW as a bad reputation, it is perceived to be on the western side and anyway is not well known. We made lobbying until now but there is still no implementation. “

“The decision makers are in favor of CEDAW, but it has not being promoted in the right way because of religious pressure, and lobbies that are opposing it to a great degree. So the government adopts it, but does not really push for its implementation. “

“CEDAW is a very important tool. The Islamist political parties are fighting against it because it stands against the holy right of men. There was a lot of communication about CEDAW these last months. It is needed to support the Jordan government in this regard.”

“CEDAW is one of the conventions that have a negative image, because it was used by people who are against women’s rights, and took advantage of articles that were not clear. One of the points raised is that the US supported CEDAW yet they have not signed it. Many points that were weaker received a lot of media attention and the strong points that would support women’s rights were neglected.”

Some of the interviewed considered the role of the religion still very dominant over the society and according to them the support of the religious leaders is needed to facilitate the implementation of policies, national laws and international conventions.

“It needs to have the support of the religious leaders. “

“In our society, in general the main reference is a religious one, and of course the people who are proponents of religion, they see CEDAW as threat to their interests, and they oppose it as a kind of western thought. In its basis CEDAW contradicts certain religious values, which prevent the government from adopting it as a main reference for advocating women’s rights.”

Several members of the government themselves have made declarations against CEDAW, presenting it as in opposition to Islam. Some interviewed themselves consider that CEDAW must not be applied if it contradicts religion.

“International conventions should be aligned with the Islamic Shari’a, and doesn’t divert from customs and traditions, or the Islamic religion. There is no other way. The international conventions reinforce and better women’s situation. There is a major role that these conventions play also in terms of human rights, while focusing on the articles that apply, since there are ones that are not applicable to Jordanian or a Muslim society.”

"I think that CEDAW is a reference for decision makers in order to improve the external image, and keep up with the international community and other countries..... For me personally it can be a reference so long as it doesn't contradict religion, which gives us the right to maintain certain reservations on articles that contradict religion"

This opposition to the convention is backed up by the lack of determination and national political will.

The decision makers have adopted the convention out of external and international pressure, without real conviction and policies are not adopted in order to ensure its implementation."

But again the lack of awareness and concern among the population is prevalent. CEDAW remains a foreign body, partly because people neither know nor perceive the concrete effects of the convention on their daily lives.

"CEDAW and international conventions.... It is ok for the professionals. The ordinary people don't feel concerned by them; they have no idea of the link with the national legislation."

"In terms of the civil society, I think that it is not a reference for everyone because it is not widespread and there is not enough awareness around it. Society needs more awareness and education about this agreement. "

"I agree that NGOs are supporting CEDAW, even if I see that they have not any effective effect on women's lives on the ground."

There is the idea of a non compatibility of the convention with national traditions and culture even if the culture and tradition themselves were seen as major obstacle for strengthening of women's position in the society. CEDAW is anyways seen as a tool to combat violence against women even if more efforts are required by some countries.

"The declaration of human rights should be the basis for the demands for women rights, and CEDAW should be treated as a part of this international declaration. However CEDAW faced a lot of opposition in third world countries because of cultural differences, and older traditions and values. As any new idea it faces opposition and many concerns and warnings accompany it."

"The fact that some of the articles were not clear put women's issues backward. Some women did not absorb these texts, specially the ones related to familial relations. For example the issue of independent residence for a woman. This is an issue that would be hard to accept."

"The international conventions are useful and important to raise awareness among women, but they are contradictory with our traditions. We have to promote them to help us to combat violence"

On December 2009, Arab women launched a call to Arab Heads of State for the 30th anniversary of CEDAW to promote the equality and citizenship of Arab women. They demanded in particular the governments to withdraw all reservations to the Convention as well as to reform all discriminatory laws which constitute obstacles to the fulfillment of the rights of women as citizens and to support the efforts of non-governmental organizations to raise awareness on the Convention.

The appeal welcomes the positive measures that have been taken in recent years in this area, among them the withdrawal by Jordan and Algeria of reservations to Article 15(4) on freedom of movement and choice of residence. But it raised the concern of the Coalition for

Equality without Reservations about the persisting gaps between constitutional provisions, the requirements of national laws, political commitments and institutional practices of Arab countries which maintain and strengthen discrimination and violence against Arab women and their exclusion in both the public and private spheres.

Finally the call reiterates the recommendations of the second regional conference (Amman, Jordan - May 2009), which emphasized the need for Arab governments to take all measures to ensure that the women of the region can enjoy all their human rights and full citizenship. (cf annex 7)

4. Women's participation in politics

Political life in Jordan demonstrates another striking example of unequal distribution of power between men and women with men being largely over-represented. To day 6 seats of the Parliament 110 seats (6,4%) are reserved for women after a quota was introduced in 2003. The representation of women in the leading bodies of the political parties is modest considering that only three political parties out of 33 in Jordan have one woman each in their leadership and one political party has two women in its leadership.

Jordan is not a single case; male political dominance is universal. At present only **18.6%** of the parliamentary seats in the world are occupied by women. (Inter-Parliamentary Union, www.ipu.org)

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system consisting of an elected Lower House and an Upper House of senators appointed by the King. Jordan has an increasing number of women as ministers, governmental or high judicial positions, and an increased, though limited, participation of women in elected positions.

Women got the right to vote and be candidates in 1974. However they voted for the first time after the end of the long break of the parliamentary life in 1989. But giving the rights to women to vote is not sufficient if other formal and informal barriers to enter the political sphere are not removed. Women's participation in public life faces a lot of obstacles and the glass ceiling remains a barrier, denying women access to politically influential positions in all fields. Several interviewed qualify the refusal to involve women in politics and the refusal to vote for woman as violence in itself.

The idea of reserving some few seats for women is not sufficient today. It is already well known that less than 30% representation cannot accumulate a critical mass that is needed for a sustainable change. Quota system that should aim at a minimum "critical mass minority" of 30% or 40% needs to be applied until all barriers for women's political participation stop to exist.

"The violence against women also exists in the public space. For the elections in the Parliament, if two persons a man and a woman, of the same party are candidates, the man will be elected. Men are deciding who will be elected, and women don't want to counteract – here also there is the threat of divorce on them. "

"During elections there was discrimination against women and then there was tribal discrimination. The quota is an important policy in elections, otherwise in municipalities and local council elections it would be inconceivable to elect a woman. Nevertheless there was forgery."

Even if the election law treats women as a category by attributing some “reserved seats” as for other “minorities”, quotas are considered as an important step to transmit women's voices and to limit violence against women. As women represent at least 50% of the population, the quota system of minimum 30% to start with, is most relevant and would most efficiently address their under-representation.

“There is a positive influence, for example new policies such as elections that have opened the gates in front of women, women can work in the army or as a prime minister. The quota has allowed women to win seats in municipal elections.”

“One solution to combat violence is to adopt the quota in elections for a long period of time.”

“There have been some policies and laws that have been adjusted or changed to increase women’s participation helped in empowering women. For example the quota which resulted in 6 seats in parliament and 20% of the seats in local council and municipality elections. This is considered an achievement. There has been a major shift, women are now encouraged to approach any governmental or official office. There are now 58 women members of local councils 35 of whom are members of the national forum.... Awareness campaigns took place to inform women of their role as council members, election law.... which encouraged women to take part in the elections.”

The presence of women in the political sphere is a democratic necessity rather than a contribution to the promotion of their rights. It represents an important challenge for the traditional conservative social model. It challenges the idea that the women at work are responsible for unemployment (of men) and that if they were staying at home a large part of the problems would be solved. One of the fundamental issues raised through the participation of women in the political sphere is the place of women and their right of existence, of movement and of expression in the public space.

“The political situation helps give women a role, and improving women’s position and the role they play in the political arena and in the public sphere gives a chance for women issues and women rights to come to the surface.

“Activation of the role of women in the parliament is needed to affect policies, to break norms. They are given positions such as ministers and other positions of power yet they still don’t have enough power.”

Improvements and changes in the election legislation are needed to facilitate women’s participation. Quotas are nothing else but a sign that one part of the population is discriminated against and needs affirmative measures to correct this discrimination. For some of the interviewed the quotas did not lead to get more efficient women in the political sphere. Women’s organizations that often face the argument of inability or incompetence of women in politics use to answer that they never hear about questioning of the capacity and competence of any male participating in the political sphere.

“The Election law is another issue and the way the quota is calculated is reflected in the representation of women in a negative way, and leads to the election of women who do not really represent women’s interests This obliges us to call for a quality quota not a quantitative one.”

“The quota system has not led to the prominence of the right women for these political positions, the selection process did not help women with better capacity to reach these positions specially in parliament.”

"Tribalism also plays a major role in the ability of women to reach positions of power. In order for the quota to work properly there has to be conditions especially on the candidates, their level of education, experience, and understanding of issues.... The women who were elected to the legislative council have no idea about the problems in the laws, and how negative they are for women. They are not working on gaining support to change these laws. Their role is marginal, weak, and does not in any way put pressure within the parliament."

Therefore the women's organizations are asking for an increasing of the quota to minimum of 30% as one of the affirmative measures that the government should undertake to ensure women's rights, among them, their rights to participation in society and in the decision making arena.

"There are policies and laws, that are in the right direction however, we are asking for more. Improving laws, for example quotas in the parliament and local councils are good at empowering women, however they need to be improved and the election law needs to be revised."

Women's participation in the political life and its efficiency is tightly linked to the role and place of women in society. Women will not have an effective role in the politics as long as they do not have access to the decision making sphere and the economical life.

"The fact that there are women ministers and ambassadors are just cosmetic measures."

"Having a woman who is active and offers her contribution, affects her participation in the political life. If she takes part in decision making, if she is a candidate. If the role of women is not reinforced, if she is not empowered she will not be able to contribute to society and to political life."

SECOND PART

QUANTITATIVE PHASE

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The results of the quantitative phase of this study achieved among 292 women representative of diverse parts of Jordanian society, show a number of general characteristics to be found similar in the different groups studied, independently of age, family status, rural or urban residence, housewives or women working outside.

Importance of verbal violence

60% of the respondents quote verbal aggressions as being always violence against women, more frequently than physical or psychological violence.

About 50% see violence as physical or psychological.

About 40% rank economic violence as violence at the same level as sexual violence.

Violence against women: a social problem as well as a private issue

Almost half of the respondents state having been personally victim of violence.

12% did not answer the question.

47% consider violence against women as a **social** problem, i.e. almost the same proportion as those who perceive it to be first a private matter.

5% consider it is a political issue.

An increasing of violence against women

A bigger part of the respondents perceive an increase of violence against women rather than a decrease. The main reason is seen to be the economic situation.

The weight of tradition, necessity of awareness and the positive role of protective network.

More than 50% of respondents quoted tradition as the main cause for violence.

25% perceive culture as the main cause.

12% consider religion to be the main cause.

Raising awareness is the first measure proposed to prevent or decrease the level of violence.

2/3 of the respondents consider the protective network as efficient and/or prevalent.

Legal services and psychological services are considered as the most effective resources to help victims of violence.

A. Background Information

Altogether 292 questionnaires coming from the 12 Jordanian directorates have been exploited. The equal distribution between the directorates has been respected. The major part of the interviewed are living in town, but the country side is also well represented -30%. In terms of nationality, the Jordanians are dominant. 95% of the interviewed refer to a religious belonging. Islam is widely prominent. 60% of the interviewed are less than forty years old. 42% of them are working outside the home. There is an equal distribution between the married women and the others.

Region	Number	Percentage
Ajloun	28	9,6%
Amman	26	8,9%
Aqaba	23	7,9%
Irbid	26	8,9%
Jerash	22	7,5%
Karak	28	9,6%
Maan	26	8,9%
Madaba	25	8,6%
Mafraq	15	5,1%
Salt/ Balqaa	37	12,7%
Tafila	25	8,6%
Zarqa	11	3,8%
Total	292	100,0%

Place of residence	Number	Percentage
Village	82	28,1%
City	183	62,7%
Refugee camp	10	3,4%
N/A	17	5,8%
Total	292	100,0%

Nationality	Number	Percentage
Jordanian	232	79,5%
Palestinian	43	14,7%
Other	7	2,4%
N/A	10	3,4%
Total	292	100,0%

Religion	Number	Percentage
Islam	245	83,9%
Christianity	31	10,6%
Sa'iba	1	0,3%
N/A	15	5,1%
Total	292	100,0%

Age	Number	Percentage
18-29	83	31,5%
30-39	98	27,2%
40-49	64	18,5%
50-59	34	13,0%
more than 60	13	9,8%
Total	292	100,0%

Profession	Number	Percentage
Working	122	41,8%
Student	15	5,1%
Not Working	155	53,1%
Total	292	100,0%

Family Status	Number	Percentage
Single	92	31,5%
Married	159	54,5%
Divorced/ Separated	19	6,5%
Widow	18	6,2%
N/A	4	1,4%
Total	292	100,0%

B. Results

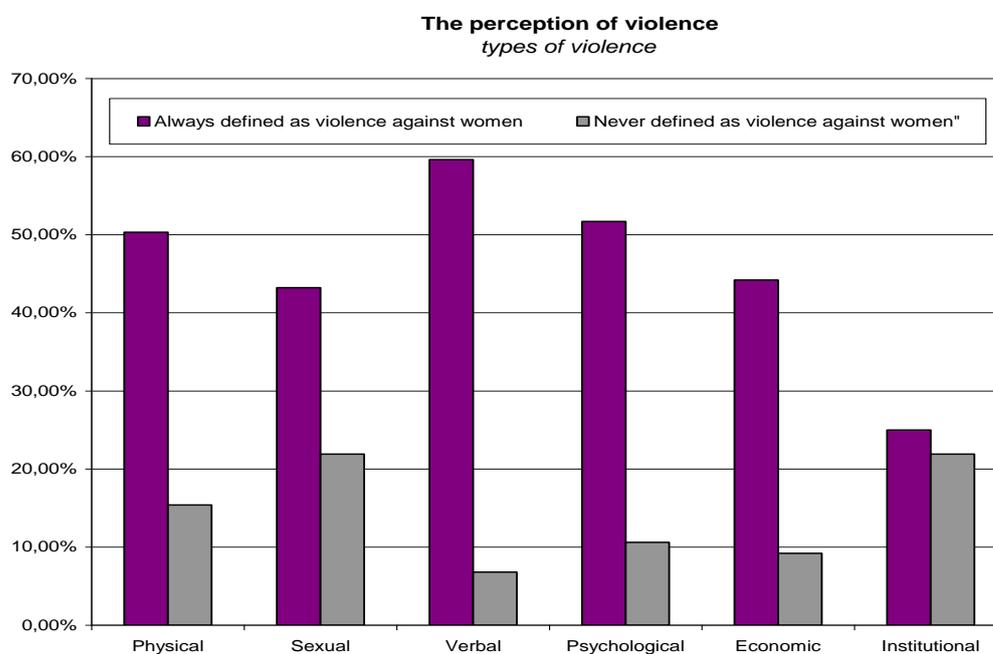
1. The perception of violence

Q. 3 What would you define as violence against women?

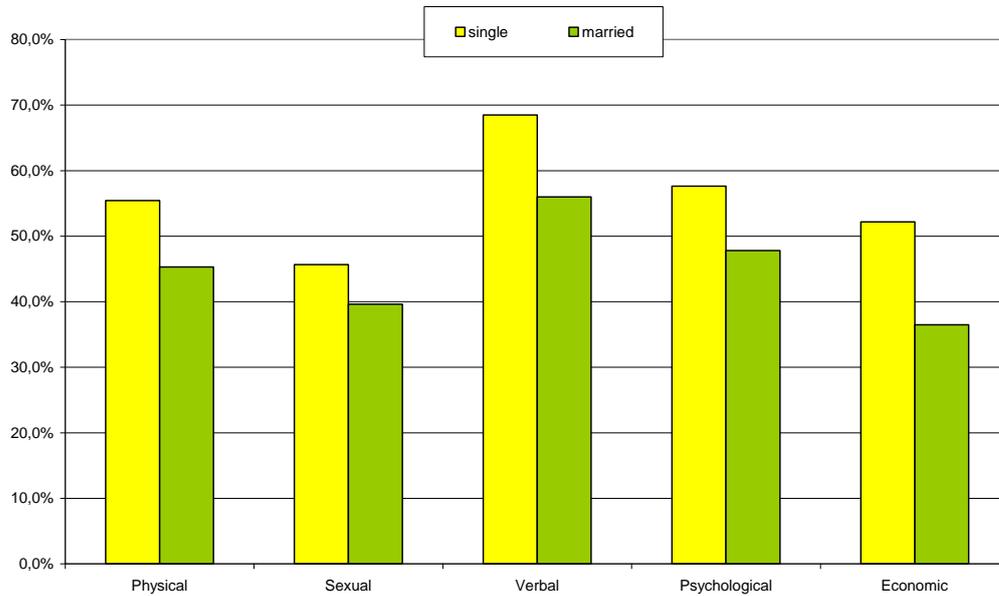
Type of Violence	Always		Sometimes		Never		N/A		Total	
Physical	147	50,3%	95	32,5%	45	15,4%	5	1,7%	292	100%
Sexual	126	43,2%	88	30,1%	64	21,9%	14	4,8%	292	100%
Verbal	174	59,6%	90	30,8%	20	6,8%	8	2,7%	292	100%
Psychological	151	51,7%	103	35,3%	31	10,6%	7	2,4%	292	100%
Economic	129	44,2%	121	41,4%	27	9,2%	15	5,1%	292	100%
Institutional	73	25,0%	138	47,3%	64	21,9%	17	5,8%	292	100%

Almost half of the interviewed considered that the physical violence is not always violence. The verbal violence is perceived by the majority as being always violence. As underlined in the qualitative phase, the verbal violence, being often “public” is damaging the dignity of women in front of their children, family, neighborhood, community. Moreover the qualitative phase shows that verbal harassment threatens the freedom of women in the public space.

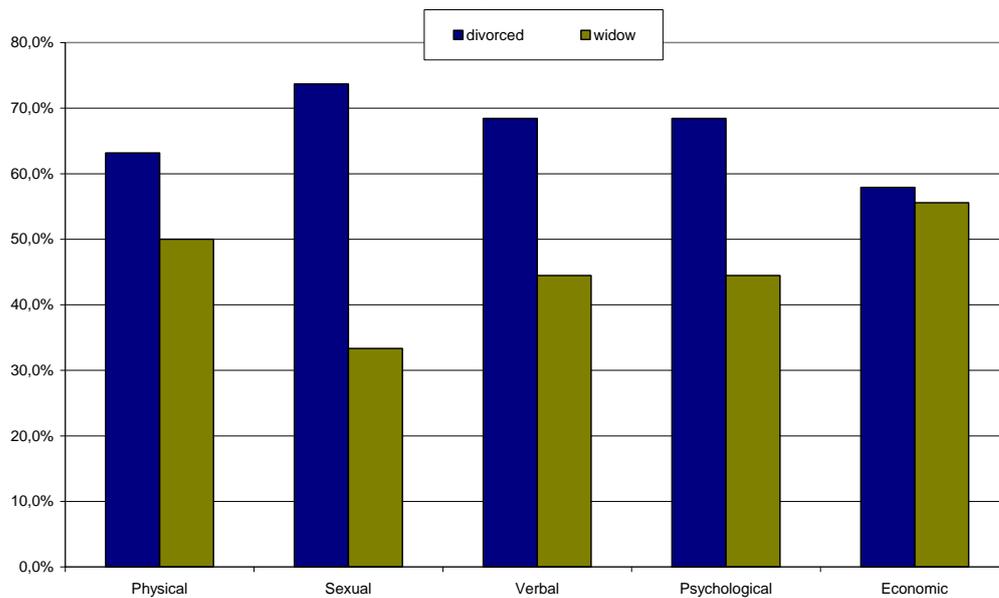
Psychological violence: threat of divorce, separation from the children, and economic violence: deprivation of the right to work or of the free disposal of one’s salary, deprivation of inheritance, take a major place compared to the physical violence.

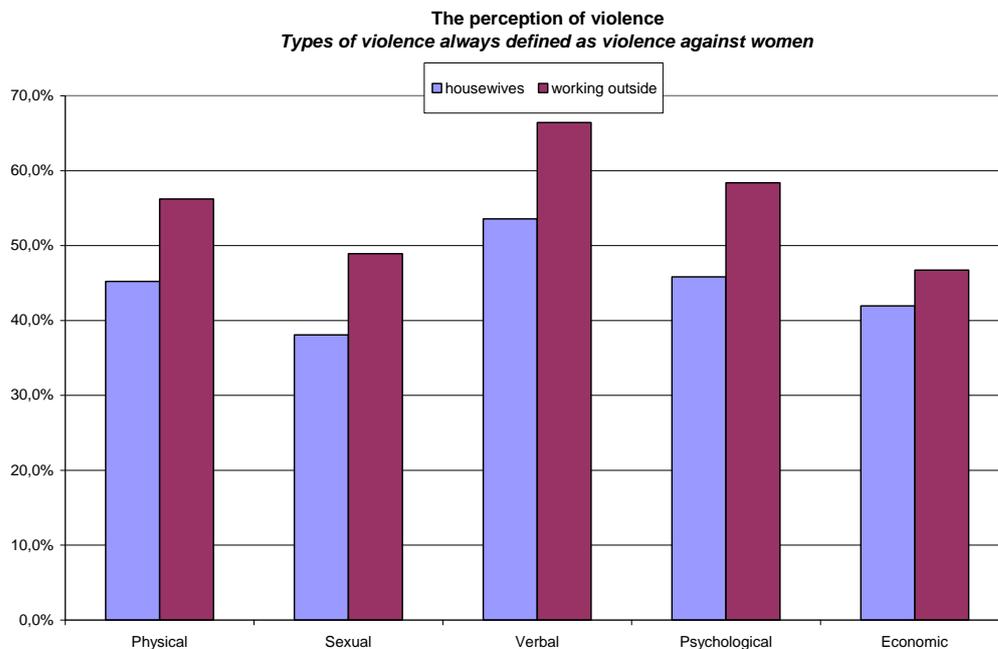
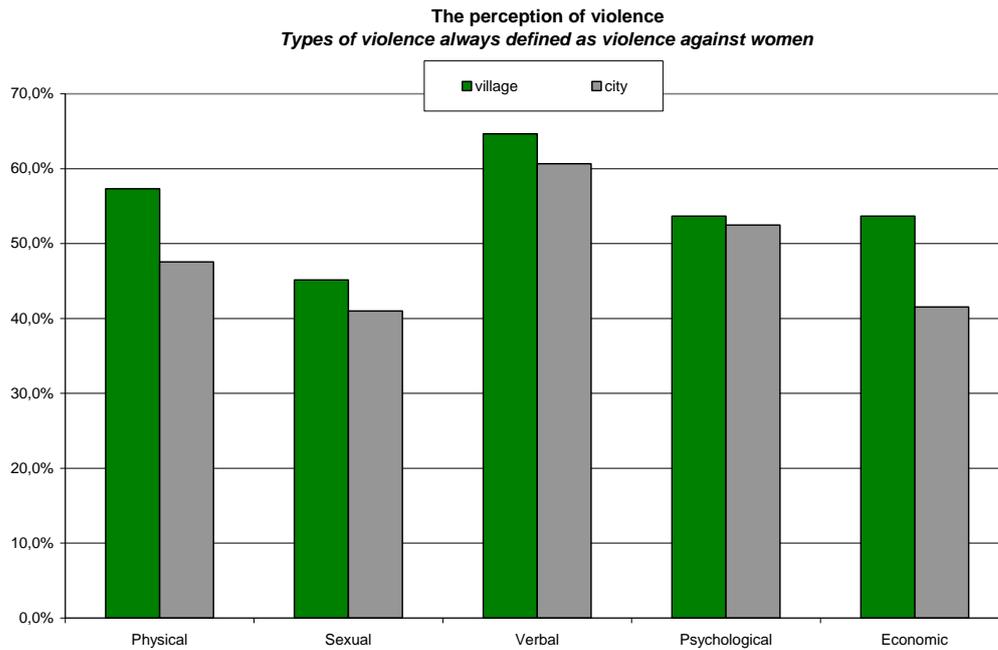


The perception of violence
Types of violence always defined as violence against women



The perception of violence
Types of violence always defined as violence against women





Single or non married women are more sensitive to all forms of violence than the married women, but all together are adopting almost the same hierarchy with a prominent place attributed to verbal violence.

The economic violence dominates the sexual one among the non married.

The sexual violence appears as the first form of violence among the divorced women while it is coming at the last rank among the widows.

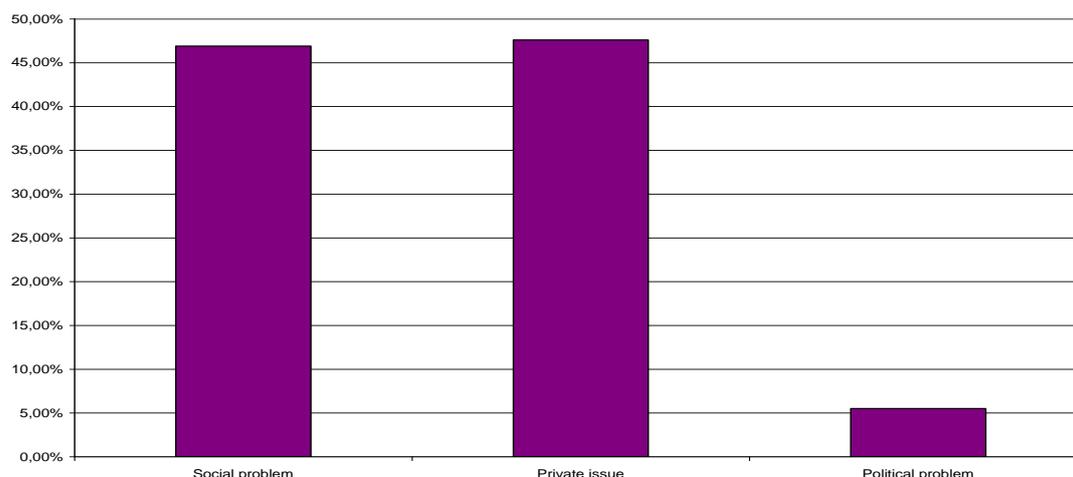
The divorced women are more sensitive to violence whatever its form than the widows. In the same way, the "active" women are more sensitive to all forms of violence than the women staying at home. All of them establish the same hierarchy regarding physical, psychological and sexual violence.

2. The qualification of violence

Q 4. How would you consider violence against women in Jordan?

Type of problem	Number	Percentage
Social problem	137	46.9%
Political problem	16	5.5%
Private issue	139	47.60%
Total	292	100%

The qualification of the violence



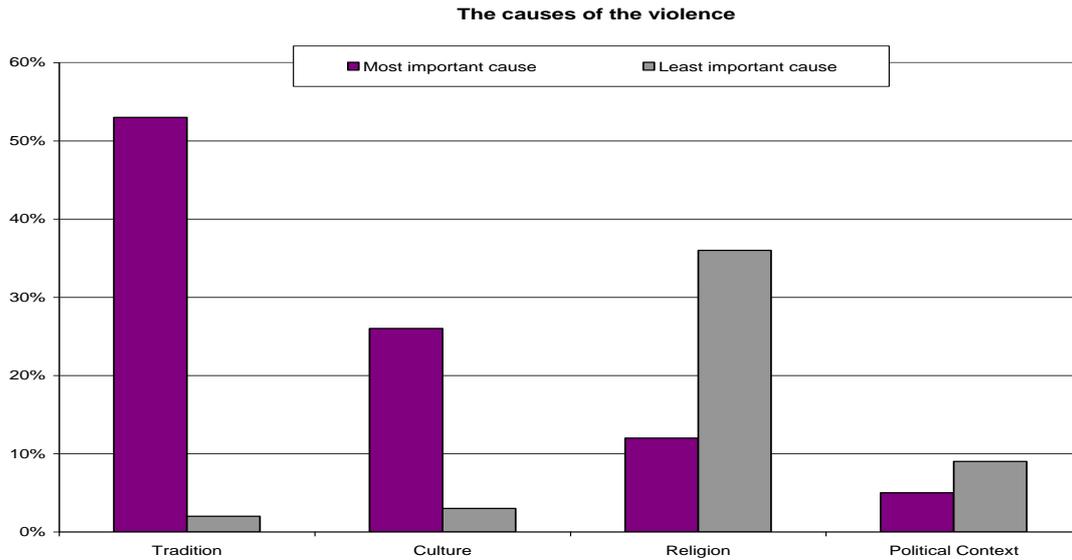
Half of the respondents consider violence against women as a social or political issue and not a private matter. This shows the necessity of more awareness raising about violence against women as an issue of political importance. This result is also an indicator of the impact of the NGO's campaigns and the efforts of the government to take violence out of the family sphere, keeping in mind that the dominant and universal thought still strives to hold family- and domestic violence in the shadows of the private sphere.

3. The causes of violence

Q. 5 What are the main causes of violence against women?

	Most important cause		Least important cause	
Culture	76	26%	9	3%
Tradition	155	53%	6	2%
Religion	36	12%	104	36%
Political Context	16	5%	27	9%
Other *	3	1%	2	1%
Don't know or no answer	6	3%	144	49%
Total	292	100%	292	100%

* Economic situation, poverty and unemployment, Lack of awareness of women's importance and role; Level of education; Women are the reason for the violence against them



Traditions and then culture are defined as the uppermost important causes for violence against women. Religion is defined as such by a small minority and by a majority as the least important cause of violence against women.

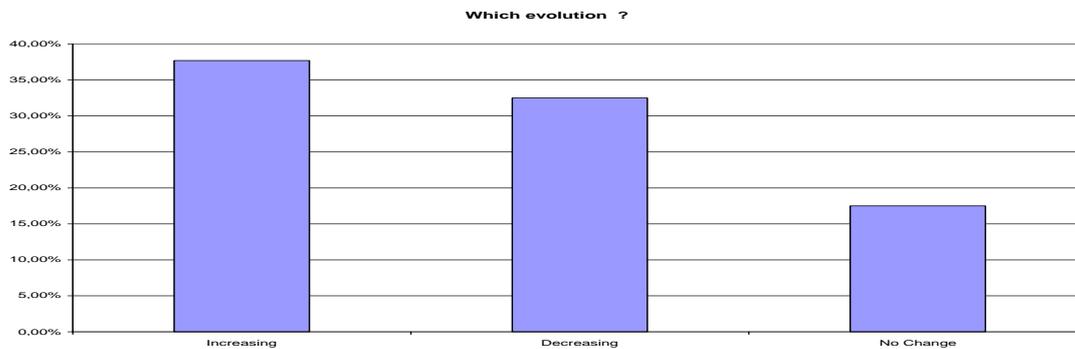
This result corroborates the qualitative phase which describes the interpretations of the religion as causes for the violence but not the religion itself.

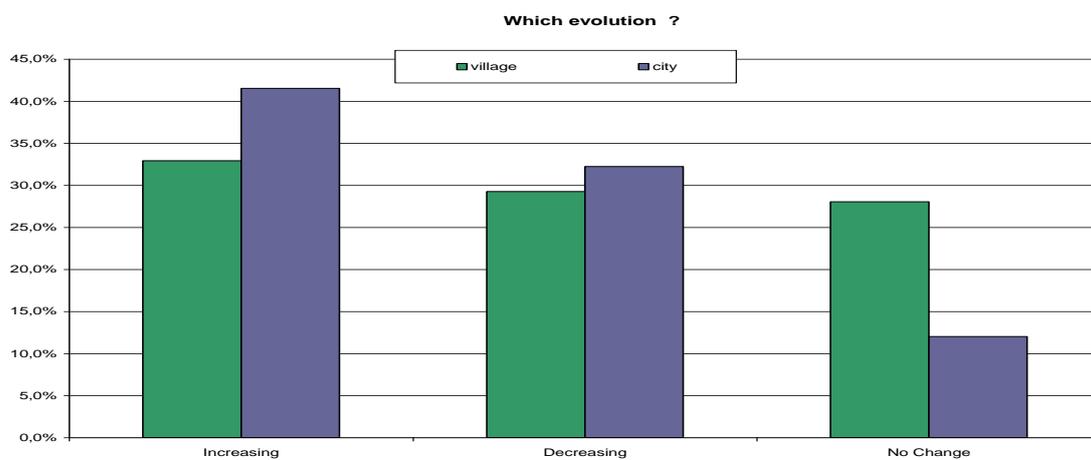
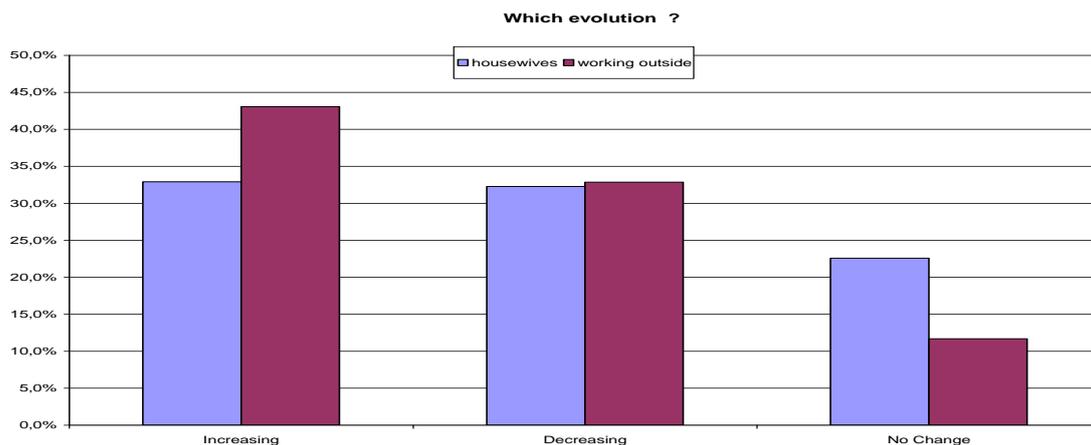
Unlike in the qualitative phase the role of the political and economical context and of the lack of awareness of women are not described as sources of violence by the respondents.

4. Which Evolution?

Q.6 How do you estimate the changes in the level of violence against women in Jordan these past few years ?

Direction of Change	Number	Percentage
Increasing	110	37,7%
Decreasing	95	32,5%
No Change	51	17,5%
Don't Know or N/A	36	12,3%
Total	292	100%





The asserted opinions are almost equally distributed between the two scenarios. However, the perception of increasing violence is slightly prevailing. On the contrary, the interviewed in the qualitative phase, perceived violence as decreasing, as a result of an increased awareness, the efforts of the government and the modernization of society.

5. The main reasons of the evolution

Q.7 If there was any change, what is the main reason for change?

Main Reason for Change	Number	Percentage
Economic Situation	147	50,3%
Political Situation	31	10,6%
Awareness and Education	26	8,9%
Cultural and Social Situation	17	5,8%
Return to religion	7	2,4%
Other	21	7,2%
N/A	43	14,7%
Total	292	100,0%

The economic situation is clearly the most important factor of evolution.

Respondents considering that the economic situation is the first cause of evolution regarding VAW		
Economic Situation	Number	Percentage
Increasing	81	55,1%
Decreasing	37	25,2%
No Change	17	11,6%
Don't Know	12	6,8%
Total	147	100,0%

It is perceived as a source of increasing violence in coherence with the results of the first phase of the study. In the qualitative phase the economic issues are very present in terms of personal rights and as one of the major faces of violence against women. Furthermore the interviewed presented it as the first emergency to be solved. However, the economic situation does not appear with such strength as a factor of increasing violence.

6. The perception of the services provided for the women victims of violence

Q.8 How would you evaluate the protection network available for women in Jordan?

Protection Network is:	Number	Percentage
Efficient or Prevalent	191	65,4%
Efficient and Prevalent	46	15,8%
Efficient	75	25,7%
Prevalent	70	24,0%
Neither	95	32,5%
N/A	6	2,1%
Total	292	100%

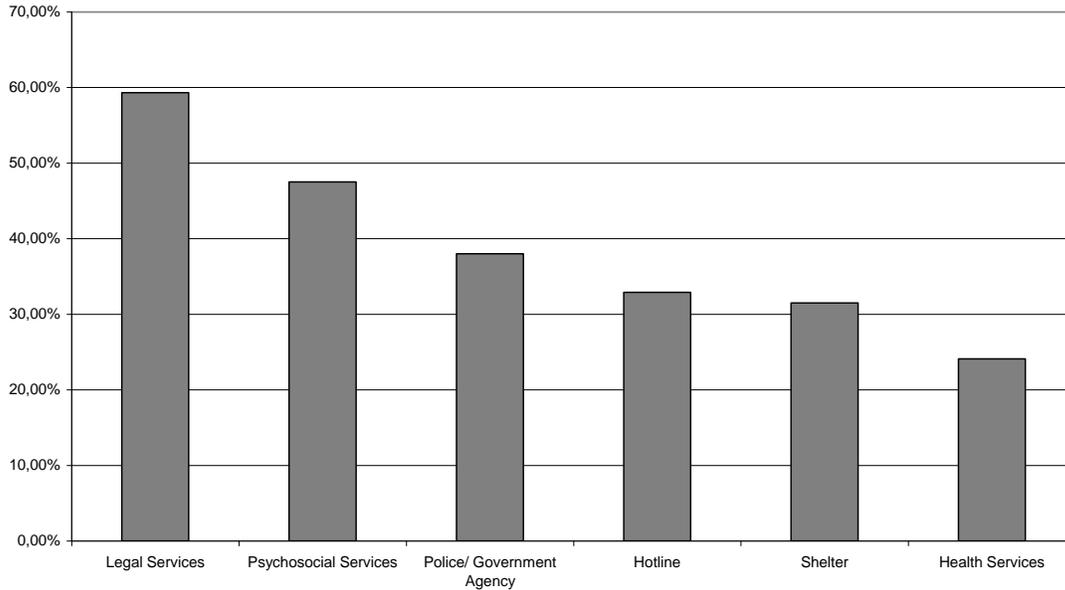
The majority of the respondents have a positive perception of the services provided for victims of violence, both in terms of quality and availability. Without being contradictory the results from the qualitative phase stress the weak points of the services more than their performance (see p. 37-38)

7. Evaluation of the different systems of help

Q.9 Which do you think are the 3 most effective resources to support/help women victims of violence in Jordan?

Respondents who quoted one of these resources		
Type of resource	Number	Percentage
Legal Services	175	59,3%
Psychosocial Services	140	47,5%
Police/ Government Agency	112	38,0%
Hotline	97	32,9%
Shelter	93	31,5%
Health Services	71	24,1%
Don't know	21	7,1%
Total of respondents	292	100%

Evaluation of the different systems of help



The legal services are perceived as most efficient. This result must be linked with the new possibility for the victims to have a legal recourse.

8. Which solutions to violence against women

Q.10 What do you think is the best solution to prevent/ decrease the level of violence?

Respondents who quoted at least one of the following solutions		
Solution Proposed	Number	Percentage
Awareness	135	46,2%
Passing laws and enforcing punishment	32	11,0%
Returning to religion	24	8,2%
Empowering women economically and Socially	24	8,2%
Protection Network	9	3,1%
Psycho-social Services	5	1,7%
Education	2	0,7%
Cultural and Tradition changes	1	0,3%
No Response	72	24,7%
Total of respondents	292	100,0%

The above solutions were proposed for preventing/decreasing level of violence. Raising awareness is by far the most prevalent solution. It is important to note that almost a quarter of the respondents did not answer to this question. The perception of a dominant weight of the

tradition among the causes of the violence against women and the perception of the economic context as the most important reason for its increasing can explain the difficulty to answer to this question. (Verbatim of more detailed answers annex 4.)

9. Personal experience of violence against women as witness.

Q.10 What is the last act of violence against women that you have witnessed? (specify)

Most often the acts are committed without witnesses or in the presence of witnesses who depend on the authority or on the resources of perpetrators and seldom can or dare report on what they have seen.

More than 40% of the respondents declared they have been witnesses of violence against women.

In 75% of the cases there was no legal recourse.

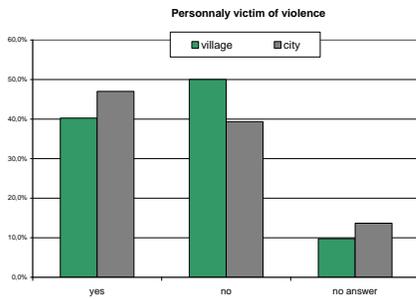
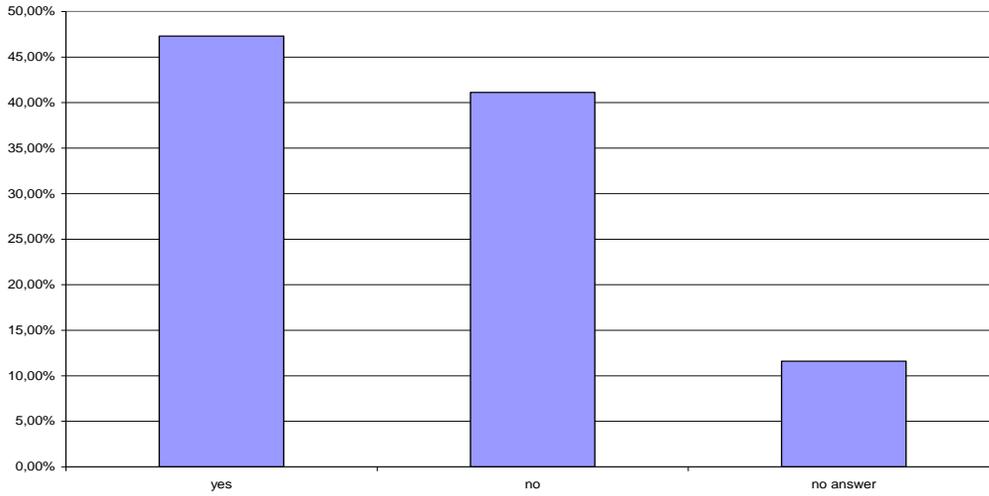
The list of testimonies exposed in annex 5 gives us precious knowledge about the events that leave impression on women’s minds and remain as memories of violence. Almost half of the reported cases are related to physical violence inside the family (56 events). Cases of economic violence as deprivation of inheritance and of salary follow (19 events). On the third place comes psychological violence including abandon and polygamy (18 events). Verbal violence is quoted only once. Even though it is perceived as a major form of violence against women by the respondents, here it is not given the social status of violence that “deserves” to be reported. Verbal violence is meant to attack, often publicly, the women’s dignity as expressed in the first phase of the report. (“Faces of violence” p.15) Verbal violence and harassment depriving women of freedom in the public space is a part of the daily lives of women and is so integrated in the social habits that women don't feel legitimated to report it as "an event".

10. Personal experience of violence against women as victim.

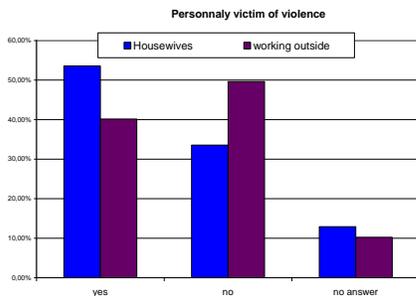
Q.11 Have you personally been a victim of gender based violence?

Victim	Number	Percentage
Yes	138	47,3%
Yes once	46	15,8%
Yes several times	69	23,6%
Yes on a regular basis	23	7,9%
Never	120	41,1%
N/A	34	11,6%
Total	292	100%

Have you personally been a victim of gender based violence ?



Almost half of the respondents declared to have been confronted personally with violence, more the housewives than the women working outside. This last result illustrates the fact that a woman who is economically dependent is an easier prey. The difference between rural and urban women is probably linked to a heavier weight of the tradition and social taboo around violence against women in the rural areas, leading to a stronger will to protect the family and the community and valorizing the role of the sheik in the conjugal conflicts resolution.



8% of the respondents declare that they are beaten on a regular base. To be noted that, according the international human rights criteria, violence can be considered as torture when it becomes a part of the everyday life.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

"We are not very clear in our definition of violence. Is it violence to slap a woman?"

How not to answer yes? United Nations define violence against women as the most flagrant manifestation of gender inequality and as the base of the system that keeps women in a subordinate position. At the same time, the majority of the studies underline the universal social tolerance towards this phenomenon.

This report underlines the necessity to urge the decision makers, the opinion leaders and the civil society to work together for "a zero social tolerance" for violence against women.

Women's access to resources and opportunities as well as all existing efforts towards gender equality are hindered by the persistence of the patriarchal structures, independently if their faces are the existence of discriminatory laws or the central role of the family, the unequal distribution of tasks at home or the social gender stereotypes.

Widespread and deeply rooted in the traditional cultural context, violence against women is extremely costly both to individuals, in terms of their lives and sufferings, and to society in terms of balance and capacities for development. Violence against women is not only related to personal situations and social pressure: political will, economic factors and international context, also play a role. The consequences of the economic crisis and the global increase of religious conservative thought contribute to its increase.

The traditional culture contributes to keep domestic violence in the dark and to prevent it to go out of the private family sphere. This violence, considered as a part of the daily life cycle, is remaining widely hidden and often denied by the victims themselves. To break this silence, to name the violence and make it appear in the public space are essential challenges.

Women are facing a double violence: they are suffering from it and they don't get any individual family or social support. Women are left alone to face a "no choice": either to leave their family or to stay with a violent or repressive husband or father. They don't act since they are afraid to be blamed; the guilt is put on them, with all the consequences for the whole family, especially for their children. The severity of this situation is worse among the refugee and migrant women. Men who experienced violence in early childhood and witnessed their fathers as perpetrators see violence as a normal phenomenon and use it as a "natural" tool to control their own wives.

Economic dependence that keep women under control and deprive them of the capacity to resist, fear of divorce and threat to be deprived of one's own children are described as the most spread and cruel forms of violence against women. They take their origin in a blend of discriminative legislation, patriarchal traditions and use of religious precepts.

Achieving substantial and lasting improvements requires addressing informal codes, social norms, customs, traditions, but also religious interferences in the civil life and legislation. Religion is not addressed in this study as a source of violence in itself, nor is any connexion made between patriarchal structures and religion, or the way religion is interwoven in the roots of

tradition and culture to rule and limit the women's role and the women's freedom of movement and action in the public and private space. These limitations are attributed to distortion or misusing of the religious thought.

The gap between national legislation and international conventions, between existing legislation on women's rights and its implementation, between the general civil legislation and a Personal Status Law based on religion, are creating a frame of inequality which has to be acknowledged and challenged. In Shari'a courts two female witnesses are required to equal one male. The root causes of violence against women are in the denial of women's and men's equal worth and value.

The King declared no tolerance towards violence against women. It is perceived as "a new step" in the policies regarding this issue. What would be a "new step"?

The level of violence is tightly linked to the general status of women in society in terms of their economic, family and social role and political representation and participation.

How to empower women and to enable them to achieve more individual and collective control in their personal and social life? Recent years important efforts have been focused on crimes in the name of honor and on domestic violence. Less attention has been paid to other forms of violence linked to discrimination, oppression and perceptions of women's subordination. Some strong political steps have been achieved during the last decade to address violence and to improve the situation of women. However a lot remains to be done.

Changing legislation, awareness raising, improving economic level of life, involving more women in politics, supporting women's NGO's are some important steps that need to be taken in emergency. The report expresses a general demand towards Jordanian authorities to strengthen national policies in regards to gender equality. The qualification, by a majority of the respondents in the questionnaire, of violence against women as a social and political matter, is a way to claim that government and institutions have to face and deal with it.

That means in priority:

- To address the roots and the causes of violence against women in all the spheres of the women's lives, both private and public.
- To reform discriminatory laws and to strengthen legislation linked to violence against women; to improve and make known the existing laws in order to guarantee and promote the human rights of women regardless of their marital status.
- To lift all the CEDAW reservations and to sign the optional protocol; to support the efforts of the women's organizations to raise awareness on the Convention.
- To support financially and politically relevant institutions and existing structures dealing with violence against women and to strengthen the coordination between them. Help to victims must include long term support in terms of financial means, empowerment and security. Promoting women's right to live free from violence requires a transversal approach among the institutions and a sustainable partnership between the institutions and the civil society, especially the women's organisations.
- To build a data base on violence against women at the national level using reliable and well known systems of collecting data to make violence visible.

- To plan a national awareness program on the issue of violence against women for both men and women including media.
- To include in the school curricula chapters on women's rights and gender equality.
- To expand the provision of services to reach all areas of Jordan especially rural areas and to improve the qualification of the professionals; to provide education programs for the relevant institutions that come in contact with the victims, as police, hospitals and courts.

These different policies should include specific measures to tackle violence against migrant and refugee women which are facing the consequences of structural gender inequalities both from the country of origin and from the host country.

On the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, thanks to the persistent efforts of women's rights organizations all over the world, violence against women is recognized as a human rights issue, as a peace and security issue, and an urgent concern to both men and women.

Women's organizations around the world are pressing for women's independency, equal right of inheritance, fair legislation on divorce and nationality, equal access to the decision making spheres, dignity, autonomy, security and freedom.

Women should not be considered primarily as victims but as full rights citizens, who have the right to a life free of fear and injustice. That is a matter of democracy since the first cause and deep root of violence is domination of power structures and gender inequality.

This study shows that there is a lot of hope for the Jordan government to demonstrate that patriarchal violence, from daily violence to "honor" crimes, is a matter of high political priority and to send clear signals that violence against women is no more tolerated.

ANNEXES

1. Guide for the Interviews

The Arab Women Organization (AWO) is undertaking a study on “Violence against women and its consequences on the lives of women and on the society”.

The purpose of this study is to better understand this phenomenon to day, the roots and the perception of its different expressions, the main aspects of the changes and developments that have taken place and their causes.

Thank you for your participation in this study. This interview will be anonymous and confidential. Only the general results will be published. However if you agree we would be happy to mention your name as a contributor to this work.

- 1. Generally, what could you tell me about violence against women in Jordan?**
 - R What comes first to your mind when we talk about violence against women?
 - R How would you define it?
 - R What are the most prevalent manifestations of violence against women in your country?
 - R How do you personally perceive, or understand, or consider violence against women?

- 2. What about the changes that took place in this field in Jordan, during the past few years?**
 - R Is violence against women increasing, decreasing?

- 3. What do you think are the main causes of violence against women?**
 - In Jordan
 - Globally
 - R. More precisely, how would you define the deep roots for this violence?

- 4. Do you think that the political and social context in the Region has an impact on the level of violence against women?**

- 5. According to you, does this political and social context have an impact on the national policies undertaken to address violence against women?**
 - R. In which way?
 - R. How do you evaluate the national policies that address violence against women?

- 6. Do you have any suggestions to improve their efficiency or to facilitate their implementation?**
 - R. What are the obstacles for this? Which kind?

- 7. Do you think that CEDAW and International Conventions are a useful and supportive framework in the field of violence against women for the work of political decision makers?**
 - R. For the action of civil society?
 - R. How are they influencing them?

8. **What do you think of the following expressions that have been used by studies and research concerning violence:**
 patriarchal violence against women ?
 male violence against women ?
9. **Finally a more personal question that I would like to ask you, in your opinion which form of violence against women need to be addressed most urgently in your country?**

Something that you would like to add??

Thanks a lot for this interview. Will keep you informed of the results of this study.

2. Questionnaire

For women leaders / activists/ members of associations living in the context of Jordan.

Please check the box that corresponds to your answer :

1. **Age** : 18 -29

30-39

40 -49

50-59

More than 60

2. **Professional occupation** (Specify) :

Family Status: Single Married Divorced or separated Widow Housewife

Place of residence: Village City/ Urban Center Refugee Camp Nomad

Origin : Jordan Palestine Other

Religion: Muslim Christian Other

3. **What would you define as violence against women globally ?**

Type of Violence	Yes always	yes it depends	no
Physical violence (beating, slapping, pushing...etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual violence (harassment, undesirable sexual relations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal violence (verbal harassment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological violence (threats, intimidation, blackmail, pressure through children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic violence (unemployment, minimum wage, irregular employment, inheritance laws, blocked from financial resources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Institutional violence (justice, law, police...etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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4. What about violence against women in Jordan? How would you qualify it?

(please classify : 1 to 3 . 1 for the most important issue , 3 for the least)

- as a social problem
- as a political problem
- as a private issue

5. What are the main causes of this phenomenon in this country?

(please classify : 1 to 4 . 1 for the most important cause , 4 for the least)

- culture
- tradition
- religion
- political context
- other (specify):-----
- I don't know

6. How do you estimate the changes in the level of violence against women in Jordan these past few years?

- increased decreased I don't know

7. What are the main reasons for this change?

- religion economic situation political situation

8. How would you qualify the protection network available for women in Jordan (in terms of services, institutions, human and financial resources)?

- efficient and sufficient
- efficient only
- sufficient only
- neither

9. Which do you think are the most effective resources to support/ help women victims of violence in Jordan?

- Hotline
- Legal services
- Health services
- Shelter
- Psychosocial services
- Police/ government organizations
- Other (specify):-----
- I don't know

10. What is the last act of violence against women that you have witnessed? (Specify)

- Did the victim take legal recourse?
- How did the people/ community react?

11. Have you personally been a victim of gender based violence?

- Yes once
- Yes several times
- Yes on a regular base
- Never

In which context ? (several answers are possible)

- Home/ family

- School/ university □
- Work □
- Public space □

Thank you for your kind cooperation. Please do not forget to put this in the accompanying envelope and deliver it to AWO office.

3. List of the interviewed

Name	Organization	Governorate
Ghada Telfah	Gathering of women's committees	Irbid
Ola Al Sawa'I	Lawyer	Irbid
Salma Al-Rabadi	Al-Rabad Castle Women Cooperative	Ajloun
Ali Freihat	Journalist/ Alrai	Ajloun
Awatif Al Marafi	Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Organization	Tafeileh
Yusra Al Shabellat	Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Organization	Tafeileh
Dr. Ahmad Al-Garar'a	Sharaka of local Society Centre	Tafeileh
Maha Obeideen	Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Organization	Tafeileh
Mona Makhamreh	Young Women's Christian Association	Amman
Asma Khader	Lawyer SIGI	Amman
Lamis Nasser	Human Forum for Women's Rights	Amman
Emilie Naffa	Human Forum for Women's Rights	Amman
Ahlam Masnna	Lawyer	Karak
Dr Ayah Al Asmar	Writer	Karak
Shadyeh Rusan	Aqaba Women Organization	Aqaba
Hana Kreisem	Women Charitable Society	
Zeinab Hilal	Jordanian Red Crescent Society	Aqaba
Dima Khawaldeh	Ma'an Orphans Society	Ma'an
Eman Shamout	Ma'an Orphans Society	Ma'an
Dr. Issa Masarweh	Lecturer	Madaba
Rayya Arabiyat	Salt Women Handcraft Cooperative	Balqa
Rana Husseini	Journalist	Amman
Abla Abu Elbeh	Women Activists	Amman
Mohammad Al-Jalous	Painter	Amman
Abeer Issa	Actor	Amman
Su'ad Abu Deyyeh	Equality Now	Amman
Nadia Shamrookh	Jordanian Women Union	Amman
Arwa Al-Amiri	Clinical Psychologist	Amman
Eva Abu Halaweh	Lawyer. MISAN	Amman
Mohammad Ka'oosh	Journalist	Amman
Lima Nabeel	Journalist	Amman
Dalia Al-Kuri	Film Producer	Amman

4. Answers to the question 10. Experience of violence as witness. Verbatim

Number	Story
4	She saw children tied up in chains in Amman (Wehdat) cigarettes were being put out in their feet
8	A woman was not allowed to visit her family
10	Husband beating his wife
11	A woman was divorced when she was around sixty because she became sick and her husband decided to abandon her because she could not fulfill her marital duties. She was obliged to live with her children. Her daughters were unable to take care of their divorced mother because of their husband, since she had no income.
12	One of her relatives was beaten and was subjected to physical and psychological violence
13	Husband threw out his wife in the middle of night because of his mother who does not want her in the house
16	A woman was beaten by her husband in the street and no one interfered
17	My husband use to beat me all the time
18	Her neighbor beat his wife when she left the house without his permission
19	I was beaten by my brother because I went out without his knowledge
22	The maid was beaten up because she did not do her work
23	A colleague at work was beaten by her husband in front of her co workers during the early days of their marriage
24	My father beats my mother over unimportant matters
32	I saw a man beat his wife because she went out without permission
33	My brother beats me very badly without any reasons
36	A woman was exposed to violence by her husband
37	A friend was beaten up by her husband and he disfigured her face she stayed away for one year then she went back to him and he was the same
38	Personally my employer made sexual advances to me and when I refuse he was very violent
39	My husband use to beat me all the time
40	The control of brother or father in choosing the job. Inheritance law
42	One woman beaten every day not only from her husband but from his sister and mother. Another story the husband is a teacher and he is educated but he treats his wife badly and she can not tell any one because she does not want people to talk
44	One of my cousins is married to a man who beats her on a regular basis. He beat her violently when she was pregnant which led to bruises on her body, and he hit her on her head which could have killed her. She was pregnant and now she is back in her husband's house.
46	A woman forced to marry her relative
50	A mother of four is accused by her son that she wants to kill him which is what his father asked him to do he gave false medical reports
51	Women can't speak in front of their husband in fear of being insulted and beaten in front of people
62	Violence has become a phenomenon in Jordan. Not only beating but also insults and verbal abuse, especially at work. Another thing is the refusal to employ a large number of women in Banks.

64	A man took a second wife in order to have children (boys), even though she already had 8 girls and one boy. She was already old, and got pregnant at a late age, and the boy child was born sick which cause a lot of psychological pressure on her.
65	The husband attacked the wife and children by beating and swearing at them, which led to separation between the couple without divorce. The husband was imprisoned and the wife ended up by taking responsibility for the home, and children including all expenses.
67	Brother beating his older sister
68	A woman mother a three girls ...????
69	Man beating his wife
73	A colleague at work was beaten by her husband
74	Forcing a woman to marry her cousin
76	She was witness of a discussion the wife was not allowed to express her opinion her husband asked her to remain silent
77	The building concierge beats his wife
78	A girl was forced to wear the hijab even though she was not convinced she was beaten and insulted
88	A man took a second wife when his first wife asked for more money to spend for the children; he then beat her to go with his second wife in front of every one
89	A woman was beaten by her husband for visiting her family without his consent.
92	A man beat his wife very violently she went to court and he also beat his children.
94	Husband takes the working wife's salary
122	A husband was hitting his wife on her head
125	Heritage laws exclude women from non financial assets. And the negligence of mothers by their married sons
131	A woman was beaten and insulted by her husband, he then divorced her and she was left with her children in the street.
134	A man remarried and was not fair in his treatment of his first wife which is in violation of Islam
136	An ideal woman who helped her husband in everything including the building of a joint house, once the house was done he registered it in his name and divorced her and married another woman.
139	The husband beats the wife for having gotten pregnant, she has no option in this since they do not use any contraceptives, and he refuses to, yet holds her responsible
142	a neighbor of hers is beaten by her husband every time he comes into the house. He puts her in corner and slams her to the floor and the wall. She got divorced after two years even though they got married after falling in love.
143	One woman got married for one year during which she had a child, her husband continued to beat her up and they got divorced.
146	A woman was beaten up and she was prevented from religion. Many women in Jordan are forced to leave the house to earn money even if it was illegally.
151	A friend of hers, her husband has cut off her domestic allowance, and doesn't talk to her, and abandoned her in bed.
153	A man was beating and insulting his wife because she gave birth to daughters and didn't have any sons, which is against religion.
163	To continue to be silent towards bad treatment because of the children
165	her colleague was hit by her husband at the work place
167	I was hit by my husband because I couldn't have any children. Which has affected me negatively. He would swear, and beat, and imprison me in the home, anytime I would make a small mistake.

168	I was beaten by my husband because my mother in law would tell him stories. I want to get divorce but I cannot because of my children.
170	Her son hit her daughter in law, and she threatened him by disowning him. The main reason was an economic one.
171	A husband attacked his wife in the street, hitting in front of people and their children. Throwing the wife out of the car and driving on.
178	There was a dispute between a man and his wife regarding her salary. When she refused to give it to her husband, he hit her, and threw her out of the house.
179	A husband beats his wife every day because of excessive jealousy.
181	A colleague at work, her husband didn't want her to work. One day he came to the workplace, and started insulting her, and made her leave work by force.
182	A couple started fighting in a shop over the purchase of an electrical appliance. The husband started hitting his wife in front of everyone present.
184	I was harassed on a regular basis at the workplace.
189	Two stories: the first a woman discovers that her husband is marrying another woman, when she objected he tried to beat her. The second story is of woman whose husband is an alcoholic, and neglects her and her children.
205	A woman was threatened
206	I was attacked by a man on the street, because of my religion, and that I am a stranger, he started insulting me.
207	a friend is beaten by her husband if she refuses her husbands sexual advances.
208	My father refused to allow my sister to get married so that she doesn't get divorced like me
209	A woman got beaten up by her brother because she wanted to leave the house. However, he has no problem with her leaving to go out to work, and bringing him back the money.
210	I am a widow, and I am not allowed to leave the house to work
212	A brother didn't allow his sister to get married so that he doesn't lose her monthly salary.
213	A girl came to the hospital paralyzed, because her brother heard that she has been seeing a guy. He beat her until he broke her spinal cord.
214	My brother rapes me regularly, and then beats me up. He threatens me if I tell my parents. When my mother asks me about the bruises on my body I tell her that I fell. I need to be helped.
215	I am Christian, and my husband constantly beats me. I have tried to go to the church for help, however, because of my religion I can not get a divorce.
216	My neighbor is threatened by her husband with divorce if she doesn't find a job.
218	A woman's face was injured by a knife, by her husband, because she asked him where he had been. She was then explaining that it was her that provoked him.
219	A friend who was working in a factory requested an increase in her salary. She was fired.
220	A woman I know would have a fight with her husband, and he would beat her, after giving birth to a girl. She finally gave birth to a boy, and I don't hear anymore about any violence, which means it might have receded or that she with the birth of the boy is withstanding more.
222	Taking over her inheritance, especially one of her brothers who is a judge.
225	A husband insults his wife, and accuses her half joking half serious that when she leaves the house she betrays him. The wife does not respond except by crying.
226	An employee doesn't receive her salary, her husband takes it instead, and gives her pocket money.
227	A man married a second wife, and he would have sexual relations with the new wife in front of the old wife.
229	A man beats his wife in front of her children

230	A wife is regularly forbidden from taking part in social occasions; she is beaten, and not allowed to spend her own money. She did not take any action against him, in fear of society's reaction, and protection of her married daughters. He ended up by marrying a second wife, and divorced her.
233	I witnessed a husband who beat his wife regularly which led to divorce.
234	A neighbor constantly would beat his wife in front of people, because he used to drink, his wife would run away to the nearby school for protection. She is still living in the same conditions.
235	A woman was married to a man who doesn't have a Jordanian nationality. He then died, and she is now back with her two children living with her parents, without any income.
236	A woman was deprived of her inheritance after her father died. Her brother threatened to kill her if she asked for her share.
237	A husband insults and beats his wife at the end of each month to get her salary. She hasn't reacted because she wants to remain with her children.
238	A husband beats his wife because of her children's behavior.
240	A man beats his wife constantly, and the police has not been able to protect her. He drinks, and smokes.
241	A girl with down syndrome was neglected by her family, she was raped, and then killed.
242	A woman who finished her studies, and is now working. Her family is preventing her from getting married because they want to keep her salary for themselves. She is suffering from psychological problems now, and has been diagnosed with autism.
243	A woman was beaten by her husband because her son fell while she was working.
244	A husband managed to appropriate his wife's money, and then remarried, and abused her psychologically.
245	A girl in her twenties was killed because she was talking to her fiancé who is in Syria, and she in Jordan, on the phone,
246	Her sister was married to a man in Saudi Arabia who was smoking hashish. He would hit her until she became unconscious. She came to visit her family after two months, and was divorced.
247	I witnessed a man swearing at a woman
248	A woman in her sixties, her husband remarried, she has three children, and has no income, and unable to work. I advised her to go to the national welfare fund, since it hasn't recognized that she has been abandoned by her husband.
249	A woman who is beaten very badly by her husband for economic reasons, and because there is an educational gap between them, she has a masters' degree while he hasn't completed basic school education.
250	Medical abuse
253	A man abandoned his wife for seven years, without providing for her, or allowing her to see her children, he then divorced her, and remarried.
256	A woman was forced to give up her house that she bought in installments, and once she did he kicked her out of the house, and beat her up then divorced her.
259	Forcing a woman to marry someone she doesn't want
262	Physical violence, beating and insulting from her husband.
264	A friend was abused by her husband, this included preventing her from visiting her family, working, or even using the internet.
268	One of my neighbors was beaten up because there wasn't enough income. She didn't go to court, because she has no other alternative.
269	My sister was beaten up by her husband, however, she didn't go to court, because she doesn't want her children to suffer.
270	My sister in law was beaten up because of her demands, she didn't go to any court.

271	One of my neighbors was beaten by her husband who was unemployed, and she needed money for house expenses.
272	my brother beat his wife very hard
274	A woman I know her parents died, and left some inheritance to her and her sisters. The elder brother wants to take over the whole inheritance.
278	A friend of mine had a stroke as a result of her husband's extra marital affairs, and a failed second marriage.
279	My neighbor is beaten on a regular basis by her husband. He beats her very late at night.
281	A woman who has been orphaned is living in the family house. Her brother treats her well, but her sisters treat her badly since she is still living in the family house.
282	A woman was beaten by her husband because she got pregnant with her fifth child, and her husband didn't want any more children.
283	A woman was beaten by her husband because she was late visiting her family, and didn't come back at the assigned time.
284	A young woman was beaten because she refused to marry a certain man until she accepted.
285	A girl was beaten by her brother, because he found it she had a relationship with a guy.
286	A woman was beaten by her husband, because she requested an increase in her the house allowance.
287	My sister asked her husband for money, and he didn't have enough.
288	A man beat his wife because she asked for one of her rights, which is that he provides her with money. He claimed that he couldn't provide her with money.
289	A neighbor was beaten by her husband after questioning him about whether he had a relationship with another woman.
290	A friend of mine was subjected to sexual harassment in the street. The guy used gestures and insults that were offensive.
292	A man pressured his wife not to leave the house after he remarried by threatening her to take her children away from her if she left.

5. Studies and Data about violence against women in Jordan

A. National efforts to curb the Violence against women phenomenon in Jordan- Prepared by: Dr. Hanan Halasah (2009) A Study presented to the UN during a special session to discuss Honor Crimes on April 26,2009.

Official statistics indicate that the majority of women killed in honor crimes are predominantly teenagers. Most are buried in unmarked graves, disgraced even in death. Jordan has one of the lowest rates of homicide; however, a 1998 United Nations study of official figures from the mid 1990's showed that murder was the most frequent crime against women, and the honor crimes (including murder, and accidental murder) accounted for largest category 55% report violence, especially if perpetrated by a member of the family. The UN estimates 5000 a year (victims, but not necessarily killed) categorized as follows:-Permitted under Jordanian law, articles 98 and 340;-Usually carried out by father or brother of victim;-Partner faces penalties if victim found not to have been virgin.

Additionally, there is an average of 25 crimes in Jordan occurring every year clearly as honor crimes. Almost 99% of these crimes target women only. However, the number of honor crime cases that are categorized under other reasons such as suicides or accidents.

The following are based on activists' investigations over a period of almost 13 years, (taking into consideration that the real numbers could be higher than those registered under other different crimes as mentioned above):

Year	Number
2009 (till the end of April)	10
2008	4
2007	19
2006	17
2005	19
2004	20
2003	18
2002	22
2001	19
2000	21
1999	19
1998	23
1997	25

B. Study on the violence against wife in the Jordanian society.

Conducted by Amal Salem Al Awawdeh and supervised by Dr. Mousa Abu Housah.

The study aimed at exploring the most popular violence types against wife prevailing in the Jordanian society and how widespread among the wives.

Examine the effect of the democratic, economic and social changes on the violence phenomenon.

Field of study covered married women in Amman- Capital City, and included the 4 social sectors:

* Bedwen: Mouqar area; * Rural: Sahab area; * The Palestinian Camps: Al Hussein Camp; * Urban sector of Amman.

The study which involved 300 women gave the following results

1. Social violence reflected by preventing the wife from employment was the most popular and came to 56.8%;
2. Verbal violence reflected by cursing was 42%;
3. Health violence (depriving the woman from suitable health circumstances and not paying attention to the pregnancy health) 5%;
4. Sexual violence and forcing the wife to practice sex with husband under the threat that he will marry another woman 34.9%
5. Physical violence which was the less among them 30%,. Most popular forms of this violence were slapping 62.3%.

The results pointed to the early underage marriage among the study specimen that subjects the woman for all types of violence. The results also showed that violence is more among the

younger and poorer categories, but it increases within the lower social poorer classes where poverty, illiteracy and ignorance prevail.

The results also showed that neither both profession and education of the woman nor her age have any effect in preventing violence which confirms the male domination in the family.

C.JORDAN: Government moves to curb domestic violence, IRN

The number of domestic violence cases in 2006-2007 rose to 132, according to a recent study covering 11 kingdom's 62 courts. Most of the victims ended up having to recuperate in bed for 10 days.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=76150>

D. Violence Against Women: Jordan, 20% Approve To Be Beaten (ANSAmed November 26 2008)

AMMAN. Around 20 percent of Jordanian women approve being beaten by husbands to discipline them, according to a survey conducted by the department of statistics that was published today.

The study included nearly 15,000 families and 11,000 women who got married, said the report. Most of the respondents aged between 15 to 49 years old. Luck Steve, representative of UN Agencies which helped conduct the study, said measures must be taken to fight violence against women following surprising results of the survey.

<http://europenews.dk/en/node/16533>

E.Domestic Violence against Women in Jordan: Evidence from Health Clinics

Journal	Journal of Family Violence
Publisher	Springer Netherlands
ISSN	0885-7482 (Print) 1573-2851 (Online)
Issue	Volume 24, Number 8 / November, 2009
Category	Original Article
DOI	10.1007/s10896-009-9255-2
Pages	569-575
Subject Collection	Behavioral Science
SpringerLink Date	Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Abstract: To explore women's attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV) and their determinants, as well as to document the prevalence of various types of violence among women attending public health centers in the Balka region, Jordan. A cross-sectional study among ever-married women aged 18-49 who visited the public health clinics in the governorate of Balka, Jordan, was carried out in August 2006. A total of 356 women was successfully interviewed. Descriptive statistics and adjusted odds ratios from logistic regression were used to assess associations between attitudes towards IPV and selected background variables. The vast majority

(87%) of women reported different types of IPV against them in the last 12 months. The most common types of reported violence were emotional abuse (47.5%), followed by wife beating (19.6%). Almost one-third of women justified wife beating by husbands. Older age, younger age at marriage, rural residence, and non-working status were significantly associated with supportive attitudes towards wife beating. The study shows a high prevalence of IPV against women during the past year, and a high rate of justifications for wife beating. Increasing women's empowerment, particularly economic security through work outside the home, may protect women from violent behavior in this context.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/r7115w8542483342/>

F. Jordan : report bemoans working conditions of children, women.

(ANSamed)- AMMAN, SEPTEMBER 8 - Employment of children in Jordan is rampant and women's participation in the labor market is below expectations, an international survey on labour conditions in Jordan showed today. According to the report, conducted under the Labor Watch Project, in cooperation with the Germany-based Friedrich Ebert Foundation, there are at least 35,000 working children in the labor market. Some children suffer from maltreatment and are forced to work long hours without health insurance or financial benefits. "Children are subject to exploitation by their employers, who make them work longer hours in difficult conditions for lower salaries," showed the report. Women's participation in the labor market was found to be disappointing, with nearly 14 per cent of the workforce which is female, one of the lowest rates in the region, according to the report, which also found out that unemployment remains near the official figure of 13 percent. The report supported widespread complaints by labor leaders and women rights activist that female work force is discriminated against in Jordan tribal dominated society, particularly in promotion and salaries.(ANSamed).

<http://www.ansamed.info/en/jordan/news/ME02.WAM20117.html>

G. Violence against women: Assessing the situation in Jordan

Task force on violence against women of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender

Equality website: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tf_vaw.htm

<http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/uploads/Jordan%20-%20VAW%20assessing%20the%20situation%20in%20Jordan%202008.pdf>

There are no available national figures on the incidences of GBV in Jordan. Nevertheless, the recent available studies and publications provide some basic indicators on the prevalence of and forms of violence in Jordan utilizing data made available by the organizations providing services to victims of violence.

The focus of the various studies is on domestic violence rather than GBV. To that extent, the available data on domestic violence:

1. Rely on the records of the organizations that provide services for the victims. Since each organization uses its own system for registering the cases, there is no common reference system to avoid registering the same victim more than once.

2. Is based on interviewing representative samples from the society to examine certain issues relevant to domestic violence, such as attitudes, general public awareness on the subject or on services providers.

H. NCFA study entitled “Domestic Violence in Jordan: Knowledge, Attitudes and Reality” published in 2008 is based on a research conducted in cooperation with WHO in 2005. The study seeks to define the term “domestic violence” within the Jordanian society and identify the level of awareness on the subject among the various segments of the society. One of the main conclusions of the study referred to a common perception among the interviewees that domestic violence is mainly related to physical violence.

In addition, the study inferred that one third of the sample population have indicated that they have heard or seen cases of domestic violence. Moreover, nearly 11% of the sample indicated that they themselves have physically abused their sons, daughters, wife and mother in the 12 months preceding the study. Further questioning within the aforementioned study, indicates that 60% and 40% of the interviewees have verbally and physically abused a member of their family.

According to the CEDAW third and fourth periodical report, 56% of the sexual abuse victims that were registered at the Family Protection Department between the years 2001 – 2004 were females. The percentage is slightly less for physical abuse whereby 50% of the victims were females for the same period. However, it is worth noting that while physical abuse cases registered at Family Protection Department were 100% caused by a family member compared to 7.8% of sexual abuse cases that were caused by a member of the family.

Available literature on domestic violence in Jordan indicates that women are more likely to be subjected to violence than male members of the family. Similarly, studies available provide evidence that forms of violence include a wide range of physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, economic and social abuse, “honor crimes”, early marriages and deprivation of right to inheritance are also practiced in Jordan.

Information on other forms of violence outside the family is rather scarce and studies on violence against women within the workplace and in the public sphere, i.e. sexual harassment and assault and/ or sex trafficking are not available. In fact, as the stakeholders’ analysis section of this report shows that most of the active organizations are working mainly on domestic violence except for the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), which considers complaints of migrant labor.

The following are some of the numbers presented in the study entitled “Violence against Women in Jordan” (NCFA, USAID 2008):

- The Family Protection Department’s data for 2006 reported 1764 cases of violence (430 violence against females);
- The Ministry of Social Development data for 2006 reported 1200 cases of violence against women;

□ In 2006, the National Centre for Forensic Medicine reported 120 sexual assaults on women including 18 cases classified as honor crimes

□ The Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) data for 1999 – 2006 registered 775 cases that utilized the shelter services; and

□ Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI) data for 2007 reported 225 cases for women who requested their legal services.

There are no specific data from the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) within the refugee community. Nevertheless, according to the interview held with UNHCR, a high number of SGBV incidences are reported through individual interviews with the refugees. This has led, as discussed later in the report, to UNHCR agreement with national institutes and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to provide the required services for the victims of violence.

On the other hand, a relatively recent study entitled "Educated Housewives: Living Conditions among Palestinian Refugee Women", which was published by Fafo in 2004 reported that 13.7% of Palestinian Refugee Women were "ever beaten by current husband". However, the study does not track other cases of domestic violence by other members of the family within the various stages of the female life cycle.

I. Honor Killings in Jordan (2002-2003), UNIFEM (in Arabic), 2007

<http://www.unifem.org/jo/Attachments/1365/0b50dac6-65ab-44b9-b3f0-74f8450c00d5.pdf>

6. Arab Women's Call to Arab heads of states for the 30th anniversary of CEDAW

« On the 30th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the regional Coalition for "Equality without reservation" launched a call to Heads of State of Arab countries to promote the equality and citizenship of Arab women and in particular to:

- Withdraw all reservations to the Convention and reform all discriminatory laws which constitute obstacles to the fulfillment of the rights of women as citizens.
- Integrate the principles of equality and non-discrimination based on gender into constitutions, laws and action plans and ensure their implementation.
- Support the efforts of non-governmental organizations to raise awareness on the Convention and contribute to its implementation in order to end all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality.

The Coalition for "Equality without reservation", established at the conclusion of the first regional conference on the withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW and the ratification of its Optional Protocol, held in Rabat, Morocco in June 2006, is composed of women's rights organizations and generalist human rights organizations from the Arab world. The Coalition's main objective is to encourage Arab states that have not yet done so to ratify CEDAW (Sudan and Somalia), and to call upon states parties to withdraw reservations which are incompatible with

the aims and objectives of the Convention as well as to ratify its Optional Protocol, whilst harmonizing national legislation with the provisions of CEDAW.

The Coalition, in its appeal, welcomed the positive measures that have been taken in recent years in this area, in particular:

- The withdrawal by Egypt and Algeria of reservations to Article 9(b) concerning nationality
- The withdrawal by Jordan and Algeria of reservations to Article 15(4) on freedom of movement and choice of residence
- The announcement by the Moroccan government of its intention to withdraw reservations to CEDAW
- The ratification by Tunisia of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, thereby becoming the second country after Libya to have ratified this Protocol
- The ratification by Qatar of the Convention.

However, the Coalition expressed its concern about persisting gaps between constitutional provisions and the requirements of national laws, and political commitments and institutional practices of Arab countries. These discrepancies maintain and strengthen discrimination and violence against Arab women and their exclusion, in both the public and private spheres.

The Coalition drew attention to the significant efforts of human rights and women's rights organizations to overcome obstacles which prevent Arab women from enjoying their human rights, in particular concerning transmission of nationality, personal status, violence and political participation.

The Coalition called on the League of Arab States to organize a regional event to celebrate International Human Rights Day and to effectively include national institutions for the promotion of women's rights and non-governmental organizations.

Finally the call to Arab leaders underlined the efforts undertaken by the Coalition to bring about the withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW and the ratification of its Optional Protocol, and reiterated the recommendations of the second regional conference (Amman, Jordan - May 2009), which emphasized the need for Arab governments to take all measures to ensure that the women of the region can enjoy all their human rights and full citizenship. »

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