



**Attitudes to and Perceptions of Domestic Violence against  
Women in an Arab Community: A Case Study of Libyan  
Migrants in the UK**

**Suaad M A Elabani**

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**Department of Sociology  
The Manchester Metropolitan University  
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## Abstract

*This study comprises an analysis of the attitudes and perceptions of Libyan migrants in the UK concerning domestic violence against women (DVAW). It is exploratory as well as explanatory in nature and is one of very few studies of gender violence with regard to Libya or Libyan migrant communities to date. It aims to understand how cultural, religious and social factors can interact, leading to women's subordination.*

*The research, on which the study is based, consists of a questionnaire survey administered to a sample of 175 migrants (108 women and 67 men) mainly in Greater Manchester as well as in Leeds. Twenty semi-structured interviews were carried out with 13 women and 7 men: these enabled deeper insight into respondents' frames of reference, opinions and understandings. The topics explored in the survey and the semi-structured interviews included definitions and conceptions of DVAW; perceptions of causes of DVAW [for instance economic deprivation or control, or general social attitudes, or socialisation processes]; justifications given for DVAW; perceptions of the prevalence of DVAW, and the impact of migration to the UK on attitudes towards DVAW. Various socio-demographic factors were tested in the survey sample to ascertain how important these independent variables were in shaping expressed attitudes. Of these, gender and educational levels were the most important, as well as previous residence in Libya (e.g. large cities vs. small towns). In the semi-structured interviews gender differences in attitudes toward violence also emerged, as well as a general tendency to perceive violence as a private matter. The study took a feminist standpoint, arguing that explanations of DVAW should centre on gendered social arrangements and power. It used both analysis of patriarchal systems and the idea of 'gender order' as frames for analysis, finding that DVAW draws upon household and wider power and control. Gendered power relations in Libyan communities are structured by the premise of male domination in micro and macro levels.*

*One of the findings of the study is that migration to and length of time spent in the UK has not substantially altered attitudes to DVAW among migrants, although women's attitudes have shifted more than men's, particularly among better-educated, urban and divorced women. This points to the persistence of systems of gender subordination within Libyan families and communities.*



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## **Declaration**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and all the material provided in this thesis are original and have not been published elsewhere.

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the University's research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution.

SINGED

*Suaad Elabani*

## Table of Contents

<b><i>Introduction</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b><i>Chapter 1</i></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><i>Exploring Theoretical Explanations for Domestic Violence Against Women</i></b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2 Individualistic and Interactional Explanations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.3 Structural Approaches to Subordination</b>	<b>15</b>
1.3.1 Patriarchy	15
1.3.2 Intersectionality	19
1.3.3 Gender Regime/s and Gender Order	21
1.3.4 Gender Regimes in Muslim/Arab Communities	31
<b>1.4 Conclusion</b>	<b>37</b>
<b><i>Chapter 2</i></b>	<b>38</b>
<b><i>Definitions and Meanings of Domestic Violence against Women</i></b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.2 Meanings of Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.3 Types/Forms of Domestic Violence</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>2.4 Effects of Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>2.5 Extent of DVAW and Under-reported Incidents</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.6 Law, Policy and Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2.7 Conclusion</b>	<b>59</b>
<b><i>Chapter 3</i></b>	<b>60</b>
<b><i>Domestic Violence in North Africa and the Middle East and Migration Contexts</i></b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.1 Introduction</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.2 Arab Countries of the MENA Region</b>	<b>61</b>
3.2.1 Education and Gender Disparity in the MENA Region	62
3.2.2 Women's Participation in the Workforce in the MENA Region	64
3.2.3 Family, Gender and Islam in the MENA Region	66
3.2.4 Women's Legal Position and Rights in MENA Region	73
<b>3.3 Violence against Women in the Middle East and North African Countries</b>	<b>77</b>
3.3.1 The Role of Arabic/Muslim Families in Relation to DVAW	81
3.3.2 State, Law and Domestic Violence against Women	83
3.3.3 Support Mechanisms for Abused Women	84

<b>3.4</b>	<b>Status and Position of Women in Libya/Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>87</b>
3.4.1	Women’s General Status and Position in Libya	87
3.4.2	The Issue of Domestic Violence against Women in Libya	91
<b>3.5</b>	<b>DVAW and Studies of Migration</b>	<b>94</b>
3.5.1	Studies on DVAW in the Context of Migration	94
3.5.2	Theoretical and General Issues: Ethnic Boundaries and Gender	96
3.5.3	Factors Contributing to DVAW among Migrant Women	102
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>		<b>108</b>
<b>Methodology and Methods</b>		<b>108</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Interpretive Epistemological Approach</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Feminist Approaches</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Methodological Approach Developed in the Research</b>	<b>113</b>
4.4.1	Quantitative Data Collection Techniques	114
4.4.2	Qualitative Data Collection Techniques	115
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Fieldwork for the Questionnaire</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Fieldwork for the Semi-structured Interviews</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>4.8</b>	<b>The Insider/Outsider Issue</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>4.9</b>	<b>Process of Qualitative Data Analysis</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>4.10</b>	<b>Justifications for Using Statistical Analysis Tools</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>4.11</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>		<b>153</b>
<b>Understanding Domestic Violence against Women: Definitions and Terminology</b>		<b>153</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Quantitative Analysis: Socio-demographic Summary of the Survey Respondents</b>	<b>153</b>
5.2.1	Quantitative Analysis: Definition of Domestic Violence against Women	157
5.2.2	Quantitative Analysis: Behaviours Considered to be Domestic Violence	165
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Qualitative Analysis: Definitions of Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>170</b>
5.3.1	Men in the Sample: Understandings of Domestic Violence against Women	171
5.3.2	Women in the Sample: Understandings of Violence against Women	176
5.3.3	Perceptions of Different Types of DVAW	180
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>186</b>



<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>189</b>
<b><i>Domestic Violence against Women among Libyan Migrants in the UK:</i></b>	<b>189</b>
<b><i>Perceptions of Causes and Justifications</i></b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>6.2 Quantitative Analysis of Perception of Causes of Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>189</b>
6.2.1 Economic Reasons for Domestic Violence against Women	190
6.2.2 Social Learned /Psychological Causes	197
6.2.3 Educational and Cultural Causes of DVAW	200
6.2.4 Social/general Causes of Domestic Violence against Women	206
<b>6.3 Qualitative Analysis of Causes of DVAW</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>6.4 Justifications for Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>216</b>
6.4.1 Justifications for Domestic Violence against Women in the Quantitative Sample	216
<b>6.5 Justifications for DVAW in Qualitative Sample</b>	<b>219</b>
6.5.1 Justifications for Domestic Violence by Men	220
6.5.2 Justifications for Domestic Violence by Women	226
<b>6.6 Islam and Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>6.7 Conclusion</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>239</b>
<b><i>Perceptions of the Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women in Libyan Communities</i></b>	<b>239</b>
<b>7.1 Introduction</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>7.2 Quantitative Analysis of Perceptions of the Prevalence of DVAW</b>	<b>239</b>
7.2.1 Women’s Experiences of Emotional and Verbal Abuse	244
7.2.2 Women’s Experiences of Physical Violence	246
7.2.3 Men’s Perceptions of the Occurrence of Physical Violence	254
<b>7.3 Factors Preventing Women from Leaving a Violent Relationship</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>7.4 Conclusion</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>268</b>
<b><i>Migration and Attitudes towards Domestic Violence against Women</i></b>	<b>268</b>
<b>8.1 Introduction</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>8.2 Quantitative Analysis of the Influences of Migration on Views about DVAW</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>8.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Influences of Migration on Views about DVAW</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>8.4 Quantitative Analysis Views on DVAW in Libya: Laws, Policies towards DVAW, and Social Changes in Libya</b>	<b>284</b>

## Table of Contents

<b>8.5</b>	<b>Qualitative Analysis: Comparison of DVAW in Libya and the UK</b>	<b>287</b>
8.5.1	Views on Women’s Legal Position and Rights	288
8.5.2	Family Support/Services for Abused Women in Libya	292
<b>8.6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Chapter 9</b>		<b>296</b>
<b>Discussion</b>		<b>296</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>Factors Influencing Attitudes towards Domestic Violence against Women</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>9.3</b>	<b>An Analysis of Gender Regimes/Orders within UK Libyan Communities</b>	<b>301</b>
<b>9.4</b>	<b>Migration and the Persistence of Patriarchy among Migrant Communities</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Chapter 10</b>		<b>325</b>
<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b>		<b>325</b>
<b>Appendices</b>		<b>333</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Application for Ethical Approval</b>		<b>334</b>
<b>Appendix 2: The Approval Letter from the Ethics Committee</b>		<b>347</b>
<b>Appendix 3: The Consent Form</b>		<b>348</b>
<b>Appendix 3A: The Consent Form (Arabic translation)</b>		<b>349</b>
<b>Appendix 4: The Questionnaire</b>		<b>350</b>
<b>Appendix 5: The Questionnaire (Arabic translation)</b>		<b>357</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Interview Checklist - Semi-Structured Interviews</b>		<b>365</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Target quantitative Sample of Libyan Migrants in the UK</b>		<b>368</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Demographic Information for survey respondents Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11</b>		<b>369</b>
<b>References</b>		<b>373</b>

## List of Tables

Table 4. 1 Correlations of the indices.....	148
Table 5. 1 Summary of the survey’s respondents characteristics divided by gender.....	154
Table 5. 2 Definition of domestic violence against women .....	157
Table 5.3 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index <i>‘Definition of DVAW’</i> .....	160
Table 5.4 Chi Square analysis for definition of DVAW and socio-demographic variables .....	162
Table 5.5 Multi-Regression analysis for definitions of domestic violence against women .....	164
Table 5.6 Behaviours that are considered to be covered by the term <i>‘domestic violence’</i> .....	165
Table 5.7 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with index <i>‘Behaviours which are considered to be DVAW’</i> .....	167
Table 5.8 Multi- Regression analysis for behaviours which considered to be covered by the term <i>‘domestic violence’</i> .....	168
Table 5.9 Women in the qualitative sample: Understanding of domestic violence against women linked to their educational levels .....	177
Table 5.10 The most common form of violence against women within Libyan communities .....	181
Table 6.1 Economic causes of domestic violence against women .....	190
Table 6.2 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index <i>‘Economic causes of DVAW’</i> .....	192
Table 6.3 Chi Square analysis for economic reasons for domestic violence against women .....	193
Table 6.4 Multi- Regression analysis for economic reasons for domestic violence against women.....	193
Table 6.5 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index <i>‘Socialisation factors for DVAW’</i> .....	198
Table 6.6 Chi Square analysis for socialisation factors for domestic violence against women .....	199
Table 6.7 Educational and cultural causes for domestic violence against women .....	200
Table 6.8 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index <i>‘Education and cultural causes for DVAW’</i> .....	202
Table 6.9 Chi Square analysis for educational reasons for domestic violence against women.....	204
Table 6.10 Multi- Regression analysis for educational and cultural reasons for domestic violence against women .....	205
Table 6.11 Social and general causes of domestic violence against women .....	206
Table 6.12 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with social and general causes for domestic violence against women .....	208

## List of Tables

Table 6.13 Chi Square analysis for social reasons for domestic violence against women .....	210
Table 6.14 Justifications for domestic violence against women .....	217
Table 6.15 Chi Square analysis for justifications for domestic violence against women .....	218
Table 7.1 Perceptions of the prevalence and occurrence of DVAW .....	240
Table 7.2 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with prevalence and occurrence of DVAW .....	243
Table 7.3 Experiences of domestic violence against divorced women in the qualitative sample .....	248
Table 7.4 Men's a perceptions of the occurrence of DVAW within qualitative sample .....	256
Table 8.1 The difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW.....	271
Table 8.2 Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the influences of migration on views about domestic violence against women .....	273
Table 8.3 Women's perceptions of whether life in UK had altered views about DVAW .....	276
Table 8.3 Men's perceptions of whether life in UK had altered views about DVAW .....	276
Table 8.5 Laws, policies towards DVAW, and social changes in Libya.....	286
Table 8.6 Chi Square analysis for Laws, policies towards DVAW, and social changes in Libya and socio-demographic variables.....	288

## List of Figures

Figure 1. 2 Gender regimes supporting DVAW in Libyan families and communities.....	32
Figure 4. 2 Correlation of Indices .....	147

## **Introduction**

This thesis explores attitudes towards different forms of domestic violence against women (DVAW)<sup>1</sup> within Libyan communities. Attitudes are not the whole story; they are however, important (VicHealth, 2010). Understanding attitudes towards DVAW is crucial for prevention strategies as attitudes shape perpetration of DVAW, women's responses to victimisation, and community and institutional responses (Flood and Pease, 2006). This study operates within a feminist theoretical framework, so that DVAW is seen to be a result of unequal gendered power relations in households and in wider society. In most Arab societies including Libya, the right of men to control and chastise women is accepted, justified and legalised (Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah, 2002; Abu-Hilal and Aal-Hussain, 1997).

This study has three principal aims. The first involves investigating attitudes towards domestic violence perpetrated by husbands, brothers and fathers among a sample of people of Libyan origin in England. The second is to ascertain migrant Libyan women's ideas about the extent, nature and reasons for domestic/intimate violence. The third is to ascertain beliefs and opinions about DVAW among a sample of migrant Libyan men. These aims were translated into more specific objectives, comprising:

a) Exploration of how attitudes towards and perceptions of DVAW among a sample of Libyan migrants to the UK are linked with socio-demographic profiles within the sample;

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis uses the term Domestic Violence Against Women (DVAW). This recognises that the terms used to refer to domestic and intimate violence, as well as the wider forms of violence against women, are referred to differently within different communities. See chapter 2, for further discussion of definitions.

- b) To undertake a comparison of women's and men's perceptions of DVAW in UK Libyan migrant communities;
- c) To analyse gender orders (Connell, 2002) within Libyan migrant families, households and communities, in order to comprehend the gendered regimes in relation to attitudes towards DVAW.

There exist a general lack of studies and resources about gender violence in Libya. Domestic and intimate violence remains a problem in the Libyan context, similarly to other countries in the region. DVAW is rarely reported, as victims usually hide its occurrence for fear of isolation, rejection or retaliation. The project is one of the few substantial studies of DVAW either in Libya or among UK Arab migrants, and hopes to make a contribution to this important field.

The theme of `domestic violence against women` mainly involves husbands and wives, but in some cases the abuse could be from the wider family or lineage. Although the focus here was on experiences of wives, the situations of daughters, and sisters were also taken into account.

In the course of my professional life teaching Sociology at the University of Tripoli, I came across many cases of experiences of DVAW, as we were involved in empirical research on gender and social change, which included some material on gender violence. I was concerned about the causes of women's suffering and the lack of remedies for DVAW (Department of Sociology, Tripoli, 2006). I become motivated to investigate this issue at PhD level. I was aware that Libyan women are often controlled by males, particularly husbands, and are not

expected to voice their views or experiences. Researching DVAW amongst Libyans is a highly sensitive and challenging issue partly because it was seen to be a private family matter. Whilst I was aware of the challenges, I still believe that there is a need to study and explore DVAW in the context of Libyan society and of Libyan migrant communities. In order to minimise the risks, I concentrated on people's attitudes and perceptions rather than an in-depth exploration of their personal experiences. I also felt this would minimise any psychological discomfort to individuals taking part in this study.

Originally, the aim of my research had been to carry out research within Libya, using a stratified sampling procedure, to compare men and women's attitudes as well as how attitudes vary by social backgrounds (e.g. urban and rural; by social class). I submitted my first research proposal (winter, 2011) with the intention of conducting fieldwork in Tripoli and in small towns or villages outside the city. However, the uprising in Libya from February 2011 and subsequent change in government affected my research. The Libyan uprising began in Benghazi, on 15<sup>th</sup> February, after protestors assembled outside city police headquarters to protest the detention of a human rights activist. The protest soon turned into a riot and by 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011, violence escalated rapidly. Soon protestors were using looted bulldozers loaded with dynamite used for fishing to enter armories; protests were reported across the country, including in Tripoli and several coastal cities. There was a growing perception that what began as an uprising had become a long civil war (Varun *et al.*, 2011). It became evident that in the situation of armed conflict, fieldwork was not feasible, and would likely be dangerous, particularly since the topic of gender violence was already sensitive. I therefore

decided to conduct my research on the same theme but to be carried out with a sample of Libyan men and women living in the UK.

Libya is a traditional country in terms of cultural and religious beliefs and norms, whilst recently undergoing a massive transition as the result of the revolution against Gaddafi. Libya now lacks a strong centralised government as the result of growing power and support for armed militia groups (many, being Islamists) who enjoy much control over the country. Moghadam stated,

Libya cannot be said to have embarked on democratisation, as it lacks a centralised government with control over the military and the capacity to carry out citizen expectations of security, human rights, and public services. In a political environment notable for its rival armed militias, Libyan women's participation and rights cannot be realised, much less form the basis of a democratising process (2014: 140).

### ***Libyan migrants in the UK***

Migrants are those people who have moved from one area to another over centuries, including both those individuals who have been in the country for both short and long periods of time, as well as permanent and temporary residents (Smith, 1986; Glover *et al.*, 2001). The Arabic term for diaspora is '*shatat*'; this means 'dispersal' or 'scattering' as in the original Greek. The term 'diaspora' has been used to refer largely to a group of people who are linked by common ethno-linguistic, national and/or religious bonds who have left their homeland, usually under some form of coercion. They have often developed a strong identity and mutual solidarity in exile (Cohen, 1997). The term has been used more broadly to include colonial populations who are living outside their home countries and which retain linkages with their



origin countries (Safran, 1991). Libyan people in the UK as migrants or a diasporic group might have a relationship with their real or imagined homeland. However, a diaspora should exist throughout generations (Butler, 2001). At present, most Libyans in the UK are of the first generation and many Libyans in this sample are temporary residents in the UK. Therefore the term used through the thesis is `Libyan migrants`.

Libyan people are one of the Arabic-speaking groups forming the UK's multicultural society. Approximately 240,000 British Arabs were recorded as living in the 2011 UK Census (Office for National Statistics, 2012:4). Arabs living in the UK come mainly from the Middle East, with a small percentage from North Africa and Somalia (Jalili, 2004). Within the context of Arab communities, migration is often a male phenomenon (Richards and Waterbury, 1996), but some females have been "identified as actively pursuing migration as a path to improve their educational and employment outcomes, as well as to escape politically volatile and/or socially constrictive situations in their home communities" (Killian *et al.*, 2012: 443. See also Hass and Van Rooij, 2010; Khafagy, 1984; Khaled, 1995).

Most research into migration in the UK has centred on Asian, Black African or Caribbean, Chinese and, recently European immigrants (Bhachu, 1993; Luk, 2009; Garapic, 2008; and Ryan *et at.*, 2009). A very limited number of studies have been carried out on Arab migrants to the UK; Khaled (1995) argued that the main reason for the relative lack of Arab migration studies is due to limited availability of data.

A few Home Office statistics are available on migration to the UK from Libya. Brad (2008) reviewed the official data about Libyan nationals in the UK, and stated that the vast majority

of Libyans in the UK are students and businesspeople (Brad, 2008:108). According to official data, 15,046 Libyan people resided in the UK in 2011 (UK Census, 2011), with Manchester as a main area of settlement. The number of Libyans entering Britain has increased in the last few years. The new arrivals are seeking asylum, with a few being sent home after being refused entry (Brad, 2008). The Home Office does not disaggregate data on asylum seekers by gender. However, it has stated that there has been an increase in applications from Libyan females making claims for asylum on the grounds of gender-based violations of human rights. Brad (2008) stated that their principal complaints have focused on their fear of being, or becoming, victims of mistreatment. They were also anxious that they might suffer murder at the hands of their own families, should they have had an extra-marital affair, been raped or were suspected of transgressing moral and family codes and values. (Home Office, 2007: 8).

The increased migration of Arabs and Libyans to the UK has been due to a combination of political and economic factors, with politics usually being the primary reason for leaving or staying in the UK. Motivations to migrate have often changed over time, dependant on life circumstances, and the political and economic situation in the country of origin or the host country (Killian *et al.*, 2012). The principal reasons for emigration by Libyan people prior to 2011 were a desire for further education or research opportunities and better incomes and lifestyles. Marriage is also a reason for migration, as many female Libyan migrants leave in order to join their husbands or are already in the country living with their spouses. Nevertheless, motivations to migrate have often changed over time, dependant on life circumstances, and the political and economic situation in the country of origin or the host country (Killian *et al.*, 2012). The results of a study by Benamer *et al.* (2007) showed that at

that time, approximately half of the respondents (54%) declared they definitely or probably would return to Libya.

The construction of an Arab community in the UK is new but highly complex. The family is the cornerstone of Arab and Libyan migrant culture. Most authority rests with the father (Abudabbeh, 1996). Arab/Libyan migrants in the UK usually prefer to socialise with family and friends, and a preference to reside close to relatives, exists (Abudabbeh, 1996). Raj and Silverman (2002) stated that Arab migrant women might not have their own family geographically close by, and instead often live with or close to their husband's family due to cultural dictates and economic necessity. They may also experience isolation, due to language barriers, lack of qualifications and economic insecurity (Raj and Silverman, 2002). These factors, coupled with a perception the migration is temporary, can create situations in which DVAW can flourish.

The next section outlines the structure and content of the thesis chapters.

### ***Structure of the thesis***

Chapter One explores the theoretical framework for the study. It presents feminist perspectives on the relational and structural aspects of gender subordination that frame DVAW. Many feminists in both East and West have drawn attention to the fact that the patriarchal order is '*singularly*' the most fundamental cause of women's subordination in almost every society and culture around the world' related to patriarchal gender orders. Furthermore, feminist scholars have argued that domestic violence against women is rooted in broader systems of gender stratification and discrimination (e.g. Dobash and Dobash, 1979;

Kalmuss and Straus, 1990; Yodanis, 2004; Walby, 1990). However, the nature and causes of women's subordination from society to society and cultures vary, as does the gender order, femininities and masculinities. Different conceptualisation of patriarchal social relations are presented here, as well as Connell's idea of gender regimes and gender orders (Connell, 1987, 2002).

The focus in Chapter 2 is to investigate the issue of DVAW as a common phenomenon internationally. The aim is to provide an overview of existing literature with regard to interpretations of intimate violence as well as its incidence. A brief outline of definitions of domestic/intimate violence is given, as well as discussion of different manifestations of violence.

Chapter 3 seeks to explore the main studies of the status of women in the MENA region, focussing particularly on studies of intimate and domestic violence. Women in the region are subject to discriminatory laws, policies, norms and beliefs, which affect their life-chances. The chapter explores the dynamics of family structure in Arab societies, and how this shapes peoples' attitudes towards DVAW. The MENA countries are predominantly Muslim and so the chapter focuses on Islam and *Sharia's* law's influence on formation of attitudes and on the way the family functions. The chapter introduces a discussion of women's status, the legal situation and the issue of DVAW in Libyan society, before offering a short discussion of DVAW in the context of migration more generally.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology chosen for this study and the rationale behind methodological choices when the focus of research shifted to study within the UK. Within a

feminist methodological framework, this exploratory and explanatory study has employed a mixed method approach. The study had approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee and this chapter further discusses ethical considerations that followed in this research. Questionnaires were administered, followed by individual interviews. The use of questionnaires offered a practical means of obtaining data from 175 male and female participants and semi-structured interviews with 20 people allowed a more interpretive analysis of the data.

The empirical data findings from the fieldwork are presented and analysed in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the thesis.

Chapter 5 addresses respondents' opinions with regard to definitions of DVAW, as well as perceptions about different elements constituting DVAW (e.g. physical; psychological). The chapter is structured in two parts. The first presents the results of analysis of the 175 questionnaires distributed and administered to Libyan migrants. The second discusses men's and women's definitions of DVAW derived from the semi-structured interviews carried out with 13 women and 7 male informants.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the findings, again drawing both on the survey and semi-structured interviews, widening the discussion to examine the possible causes and reasons for DVAW in Libyan communities, such as social or economic. It also explores how different forms of DVAW have sometimes been justified by some women and men within the sample.

Chapter 7 explores the experiences of and perceptions of the prevalence of DVAW, taken from the quantitative data as well as those from semi-structured interviews. Although the

semi-structured interviews did not set out to ask directly about experiences of violence, on occasion, in the course of the semi-structured interviews, women discussed their own experiences. Opinions as to why women stay in violent relationships, drawing mainly on data from the semi-structured interviews, are also discussed within this Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 addresses the issue of DVAW relating to immigration of Libyan families to the UK. It discusses responses within both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of research, in respect of the impact of migration on the participants' and their perceptions of DVAW. The chapter also explores perceptions of women's experiences of DVAW within Libya, and the findings concerning stability or change within migrant communities resident in the UK.

Chapter 9 presents a summary and discussion of this study. The empirical findings are first summarised. The second part of the chapter revisits the idea of gender orders as applied to Libyan and Arab migrants and uses this as a frame to discuss the findings. The third section of the chapter briefly discusses reasons for the persistence of gender subordination in the context of the migration experience.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis and provides suggested avenues for policy, practice and future research.

In the following chapter, I turn to theoretical discussion of gender subordination.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Exploring Theoretical Explanations for Domestic Violence Against Women**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this study and aims to explore different approaches to domestic violence against women (DVAW). The first section below discusses several perspectives on gender violence from outside ‘mainstream’ feminism, drawing on evolutionary psychology, social learning theory and family systems. The second section takes up more structuralist approaches within feminism, and focuses on feminist perspectives i.e. relational and structural on gender subordination, which forms DVAW. However, it is also acknowledged that individualistic/relational approaches are not sufficient to explain DVAW. The study also incorporates a structural approach as key to explain DVAW because it is considered that patriarchal social relations and systems provide a basis for it. However, the nature and causes of women’s subordination from society to society and culture to culture vary, as do gender orders. Cultural and religious factors are considered important in shaping the nature of gender regimes and will be discussed in the current chapter. Some feminist views implicate patriarchy as the major cause of DVAW; however, feminists disagree over the conceptualisation of patriarchal social relations. Connell’s idea of gender regimes will be taken up as a relevant frame to understand women’s subordination across different societies and cultures, including Arabic societies such as Libya.

## 1.2 Individualistic and Interactional Explanations

Different theoretical standpoints provide explanations of patriarchy, gender subordination and DVAW; some give more weight to psycho-pathological theories whilst others stress social and gender-based causation. Some feminist explanations of DVAW originate from psychological perspectives, which focus on individual and interpersonal relationships (Barnish, 2004). Evolutionary psychologists have debated applying the feminist analysis of DVAW. Evolutionary psychologists put emphasis primarily on the underlying biological and psychological factors to explain the causes of violence (Silverstein, 1999). Biological determinism believes that DVAW is rooted in innate and fixed attributes of males and females (Goldberg, 1993; O'Toole and Schiffman, 1997; Jackson and Scott, 2002). Masculine behaviour is thus seen as aggressive whereas females are perceived to be passive and subordinate (Bem, 1981). Male aggressive and female passive behaviour sometimes are attributed to levels and nature of hormones in both sexes (Goldberg, 1993). Biological differences between the sexes are also seen to define how gender roles (Bem, 1981).

Evolutionary psychology theory was criticised because of lack of interpretation of why women accept coercion and domination by men. This interpretation also could not explain the value of such coercive acts on females' behaviour as a victim in pre-modern social situations, due to the lack of empirical evidence (Plotkin, 2004). Nor can explain variation in male as well as female behaviour within or across societies.

This section now explains DVAW from two main standpoints stemming from behavioural sciences; social learning theory and family systems theory.



### ***Social learning theory***

Theories of social learning and family systems argue that DVAW is a learned behaviour rather than innate and that humans internalise behaviour (including violence) through different psychological, relational and environmental processes. These theories mainly focus on the abuse of power and control by the abuser although the conceptualisation of the nature of causes of violence may vary (Nolan and Julio, 2012).

Social theories focus on the influences of the individual's social context such as social norms and attitudes to violence. Learning theories suggest that DVAW is linked to the child's upbringing, a series of learned associations within a specific social context, and behaviours learnt from role models (Bandura, 1977). The theory focuses on observational learning and reinforcement of the perpetrator's performance (Ganley, 1989). A number of studies have shown that boys who come from violent backgrounds are more likely to commit acts of violence against their partners than those who grew up in less violent environments (Bandura and Walters, 1963; Black, 1999). Based on this theory, role models provide a useful information about the consequences of the actions and observers can experience vicarious reinforcement or punishment through observing their experiences. It is considered that violence is transmitted through generations as children receive feedback from others regarding their behaviour and seek out models that match these standards (Nolan and Julio, 2012: 12).

In learning theories, environmental factors are assumed to play an important role in guiding behaviour. Bandura (1973) points out 'human nature is characterised as a vast potentiality that can be shaped by social influences into a variety of forms' (Bandura, 1973:113). For example,

emotional behaviour, such as aggression, can be learned through observing others acting aggressively in the child's environment (Bandura and Walters, 1963). It is important; however, to note that Bandura's explanation of social experiences has different applications in different societies; for instance in the West the role of peer groups is considered to be more important than in Eastern societies `such as Arabic societies` where family relations still play a major role in shaping children's social behaviour (Ahmed, 1992).

Despite emphasising the role of the environment in regulating and evaluating one's behaviours and emotions, as a consequence of the mechanism of reward and punishment, social learning theory does not address the role of the self in regulating hostile behaviour. These theories cannot explain why some children do not perpetrate violence despite being exposed to it. Meanwhile, there are many abusers who did not experience any exposure to family violence (Cunningham and Baker, 2004, 2007).

### ***Family systems theory***

Family systems theory is based on the assumption that individuals should not be seen in isolation but in terms of the interactions, transitions and relationships within the family (Nolan and Julio, 2012). This implies that violence is a process that inevitably reproduces itself within a specific familial context and reproduces itself through socially learnt behaviour. For example, Chodorow (1978) argued that mothering and expectations related to femininity are learnt in the family where girls are socialised in a way that will enforce the internalisation of accepted roles for them by society. For a comprehensive understanding of why violence occurs against women, this perspective shifts the focus from individuals to a family group. Families

are seen as dynamic and interdependent social systems in which the behaviour of a member of the family may reinforce violence. Most families as institutions have specific rules for both males and females in terms of acceptance of different statuses as well as levels of the family power structure. Such power imbalance between genders may lead violence.

### **1.3 Structural Approaches to Subordination**

Individualistic and interactional perspectives based on sex/gender differences do not fully explain women's subordination across societies and cultures. Social science theories do not see sex/gender differences as fixed or biologically determined (Butler, 1990; Bradley, 2007; Walby, 2013). Rather, they are constructed and maintained through socioeconomic and power divisions between men and women. The next section aims to explain women's subordination from the standpoint of more structural views of male domination, including the concept of patriarchy.

#### **1.3.1 Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is often referred to as control by the father, or by males (Oxford Dictionary Online, 2014). Max Weber described that patriarchy occurred when the father had unconstrained power within a household (cited in Jacobs, 2010:35). This definition stresses the role of male elders in extended families; the male domination we observe in society is inherent due to the rule of the father. However, later definitions of patriarchy concentrate not only on direct rule of fathers but on male domination more generally. This may reflect the diminution of direct paternal power – at least in Western societies – and the move to a more generalised system of male domination. Some feminists such as Butler (1990; 1993) and Bradley (2007) disagree

with this notion and argue that it is human social practices i.e. the process of ‘gendering’ or ‘doing gender’ every day that causes male rule to prevail in society.

Different feminists have defined patriarchy in varying ways. According to Hartmann, it is “a set of social relations between men, which have a material base and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (Hartmann 1981:14-15). Chapman defined patriarchy as:

A relationship of dominance and subordination sturdier than any form of segregation, and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring simply as the systematic domination of women by men and domination of men by other men (Chapman, 1995:98).

Or, for Dobash *et al.* (1992) it is a social system in which males, especially fathers, have central roles of political leadership, moral authority, and property.

Many patriarchal societies as in those in North Africa (See Chapter 3) are based on patrilineal kinship systems. Patrilineality means that membership of the lineage goes through the male/father’s line, that wives are (usually) incorporated into the husband’s lineage and property and title are inherited through the patrilineal-based kinship system.

The concept of patriarchy as put forward has been long criticised as being overly over-arching and universalistic, Walby’s (1990) position was an attempt to answer such criticisms, as well as to theorise the idea of patriarchy (See discussion on Gender regimes section). Walby argues that patriarchy consists of six social structures: paid work; housework (or the ‘domestic mode of production’); culture, sexuality, violence and the state. In terms of their interrelation, she argues that each of these structures impacts upon one another but are also relatively

autonomous – that is, they have impact and importance in their own right. It is of note here that violence is seen as one of the key ‘underpinnings’ of patriarchal systems. Thus, DVAW, including domestic violence, is part of a systematic attempt to maintain male domination in the home and in society (Dobash and Dobash, 1970). Feminist argument indicates the patriarchal system of female subordination to be a direct cause of DVAW rather than interacting with other causes (Brownmiller, 1976; Caputi, 1989; Firestone, 1994; Griffin, 1971; Millet, 1977; Russell, 1975; Dobash and Dobash, 1970). Patriarchy creates an environment ripe for abuse (Mooney, 1992; Yllo, 1993). However, Walby (1990, 2003) argues that patriarchy is not a stand-alone system of social relations, and that feminists must attend to its varying nature and causes. She also notes that women’s actions and agency are important: to posit a patriarchal system does not mean that women are always passive victims. Like men, women can act out of rational self-interest. Additionally, not all women are subordinated (or, not in all ways: e.g. they may be dominant through class or racial position) and not all men are dominant.

### ***Class, capitalism and patriarchy***

Feminists influenced by socialist and Marxist movements have long argued that male domination or patriarchy exists alongside other systems of stratification, particularly social class (Hartmann, 1976; Delphy, 1984; Walby, 1986; Mies, 1998; Crompton *et al.*, 2007). An associated discussion is whether patriarchy grew up ‘with’ capitalism or pre-dated it. Hartmann’s intervention (1979; 1986) argued that patriarchy and capitalism operated in tandem – alongside one another. Men as dominant in the family exploit or benefit from women’s productive and reproductive labour in the family as well as outside it. It is through

the unequal sexual division of labour that patriarchy survives within capitalist economic and labour relations. Hartmann argues that a woman's labour benefits both the majority of husbands as well as the capitalist class. Although women do not all have the same class position, patriarchal relations in the home and society nevertheless link them.

The nature and extent of patriarchy before the development of the capitalist mode of production is also worth discussing (Williams, 2001; Jacobs 2010). Firestone (1994) and Brownmiller (1976) argue that patriarchy preceded private property, as do a number of social anthropologists. For Firestone and Brownmiller the basic contradiction was between the sexes rather than social classes. The existence of male dominated pre-capitalist systems has been noted by a number of social anthropologists (e.g. Reiter, 1975). For instance, the patrilineal systems noted above which often support patriarchal practices and rules, existed long before the development of capitalism and systems based on profitability and wage labour. Mies (1998) suggests that an asymmetrical sexual division of labour has evolved historically, supporting the patriarchal gender orders.

### ***Critiques of patriarchy***

The idea of patriarchy, particularly as put forward by some feminists, was much-criticised (Connell, 1987, 2002; Butler, 1990, 1993; Bradley, 2007) for universalising the position of women, for not attending to women's varying social positions and for lack of theorisation. For this reason, some feminists, particularly within social anthropology preferred the term 'women's subordination' – seen as more flexible and able to account of social variations (Whitehead, 2006). As noted, Walby's (1990) intervention was an attempt to answer some of

these critiques. Hunnicutt, in a discussion of patriarchy and domestic violence against women (2009) summarises these critiques as the following: “a) oversimplifying power relations between men and women; b) false universalism among women; c) ignoring differences among men and casting men as a singular group; d) not being able to account for violence against men by women, or between men, and finally e) lack of ability to account for why only some –not all- men employ” (Hunnicutt, 2009: 554).

Part of the critique of patriarchy concerns the inability of [some versions of] the concept to take account of other differences among women as well as among men. These include differences in socioeconomic status; culture; religion, marriage status; racialized or ethnic position, sexuality, and age. The intersectionality framework helps to encapsulate these differences among women and their experiences due to their varied social positioning e.g. ethnic, religious and class background [of women] have an impact on their experiences with power structures of a society. The next section discusses intersectionality further.

### **1.3.2 Intersectionality**

The term ‘intersectionality’ was coined by Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) to shed some light on the intersecting effects of race and gender on Black women’s experiences of discrimination and racism in the USA. As a black feminist, she criticised the tendency of feminist scholarship in bringing forth race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis. The main argument put forward by feminists of colour was the inaccurate description of the category ‘woman’ in white-Western feminists’ accounts. They rejected this as universalistic and ignoring the experiences of black and ethnic minority women in the West. Therefore,

intersectionality can be defined as the analysis of multiplicity of social categories or relations of inequality such as gender, race, class, religion, migration, age, etc. (Crenshaw, 1989; Hancock, 2007; Davis, 2008). Different types of inequality can sometimes reinforce one another (Shields, 2008; Davis, 2008; Anthias, 2012). According to Davis (2008), intersectionality refers to a never-ending list of individual identities and the intersection of those multiple identities with social structures.

The concept of intersectionality has been widely acknowledged in academia particularly by many feminists, nonetheless, the concept has been criticised by other feminists such as Phoenix and Pattynama (2006), Angela Davis (2008), Ludwig (2006), Yuval Davis (2011) and Anthias (2012). Ludwig (2006) argued that the drawback of using intersectionality is that empirically the list of categories of difference [or analysis] keep extending, therefore, the researcher must be selective as per what is important in a particular time and space. Phoenix and Pattynama (2006) argued that categories of difference have been developed due to their specific historical context; however, intersectionality does not take this into account.

Some feminists like Richie (2000), Garfield (2005) and Yoshihama (1999) have employed an intersectionality framework to study experiences of abused women of colour. Richie (2000: 1136) challenges the notion of universal risk to all women and suggests that women of colour from the working class are “most likely to be in both dangerous intimate relationships and dangerous social positions”. She argues that the anti-violence movement’s avoidance of a race and class analysis of DVAW “seriously compromises the transgressive and transformative potential of the anti-violence movement’s potential to radically critique various forms of social



domination” (Richie, 2000: 1135). The failure to address the multiple sites of oppression of women of colour jeopardises the legitimacy of the anti-violence movement.

Yoshihama (1999) argues that the prevalence of DVAW cannot adequately be measured without taking into account the fact that different cultures define this violence differently. She suggests that there should be alternative means of measuring DVAW, as there are major limitations to mainstream measure of DVAW because they lack socio-cultural contexts: “what is considered DVAW or a specific meaning a woman may give to her partner’s act is partly based on the interviewees’ viewpoint shaped by her socio-cultural background” (Yoshihama, 1999: 873). Garfield (2005) for instance, found that African American women’s perception of violence differ from other USA women. African American women did not always regard physical abuse as an act of violence against themselves; in contrast, an incident of racism was always perceived as an act of DVAW.

The concept of gender regime allows flexibility in analysis of public and private causes and forms of women’s subordination. The next section discusses the concept further.

### **1.3.3 Gender Regime/s and Gender Order**

The terms ‘gender regime’ and ‘gender order’ were introduced by Connell (1987). The terms have proved useful and has been taken up by others. For instance, Walby has shifted her focus from patriarchy to gender regime (Walby, 2003) in her more recent work due to it being more flexible in analysis of public and private forms of women subordination. Connell (1987) proposes that gender relations are shaped, organised and constrained by societal gender structures. The structural inventory or the ‘gender regime’ of an institution accounts for the

structures of gender such as labour and power that constrain enable practices in a given institution and result in a given sexual politics (George, 2005). Walby (2009) notes that the rules and relations of public gender regimes are different from the private regimes. According to Walby (2013), *gender regime* involves the four major institutional domains of economy, polity, violence and civil society. On the other hand, the *gender order* is the relationship between different gender regimes or “the current state of play in the macro-politics of gender” (Connell, 1987: 20). Gender is a structuring mechanism that orders social life according to accepted definitions of masculinity and femininity, and undertakings that seek to address gender relations will invariably address relations of power (Connell 1987, 1995). Gender is not relegated to a corner, impinging on a small area of social experience; it structures the entire social gamut, from interpersonal relationships to the relationships people have with institutions.

According to Connell (1987; 1995), gender is a manner in which social practices are organised. These practices relate particularly to the processes of reproduction and human bodies. Connell (1987) argues that gender differences are a product of social construction that is reinforced through social processes. Further, gender differences appear to be subject to a hierarchy of value, which leads to inequality of life- chances and life choices. Connell argues that gender difference means really gender *inequality* as a result of gender power and hierarchy. Empirical sociological research provides evidence that there is a socially constructed gender hierarchy of unequal power and prestige between men and women (Connell, 1987).

The practice of gender is not limited to isolated actions but are referred to by Connell as ‘collections of gender practices’. Connell describes how institutions are gendered not only as

a metaphor but also in an active manner. The state, for example, is gendered since state organisational practices are constructed in relation to the field of reproduction. The fact that it is still mostly men who hold key position of power in the state is not only the reason for the state's masculinity, but also its outcome (Connell 1987, 1995). Male violence is systematically condoned and legitimated by the states that often refuse to intervene against it except in exceptional instances. Due to such violence (rape and other forms of sexual abuse, female feticide, dowry murders, wife-beating) and the continued sense of insecurity that is instilled in women as a result keeps them bound to the home, economically exploited and socially suppressed.

For Connell (1987), the relationship between gender regimes is an important part of understanding the 'gender order' of a given society. She identifies three potential types of relationships between gender regimes, where the gender structure in a particular institution may affect the gender relations in another institution:

- a) The relationship could be an additive or complementary one, where the gender relations in one institution functions to support the gender relations of the neighbouring regime;
- b) The relationship could be conflictual, where gender relations in one institution could contradict with other regimes;
- c) The gender relations of two institutions could function in a parallel manner as part of a common strategy (Connell, 1987: 134-136).

Connell also put forward the concept of 'hegemonic and subordinated masculinities' (Connell, 1995). Connell defined hegemonic masculinity as: 'a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes' (Connell, 1987:184). There can be a number of

subordinated masculinities, including for instance, homosexual or bisexual masculinities. On a hypothetical ‘scale’, ‘bisexual masculinities would be ranked at the bottom of the ‘scale’ of masculinities. However, femininities are seen as hierarchically equal to, or below, subordinate masculinities and thus well below ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 2002). The hierarchy of masculinities is seen as a pattern of hegemony, not a pattern of simple domination based on force. Connell (2002) argues that the *gender order* of male domination legitimizes DVAW and subordinated forms of masculinity because of hegemonic masculinity’s alleged superiority. The idea that hegemonic masculinity is not immutable and can be changed and challenged, including in a direction of greater gender equality. Connell noted:

The dominance of men and the subordination of women constitute an historical process, not a self-reproducing system. “Masculine domination” is open to challenge and requires considerable effort to maintain (2005: 844).

Further Connell argues that this *gender order* is produced through three components: *labour* (domestic and in the market), power (physical and through sites of authority) and *cathexis* (intimate relationships including sex and parenting). In her more recent work; however, Connell has suggested a model that includes four intersecting facets of our gendered selves, which affect the way gender/sexes are organised and positioned in society (Connell, 2002) as depicted in **Figure 1.1** p: 32. They are: 1) Gender power relations (control, authority), 2) production relations (the cycle of production and reproduction), 3) emotional relations (marriages, family system), and 4) symbolic relations (cultural, religious meanings of gender). Connell’s model will be adopted for the analysis of DVAW in this study in order to

understand gender relation in Libyan communities. The next sections will discuss the application of Connell model in more detail.

***i. Gendered power relations***

Gendered power relations define the positioning of both sexes/gender in connection to each other in a particular social context in terms of their ability and access to authority and control. Connell (1987) describes gender structure of power as authority, coercion, and control, which are achieved by different tactics, ranging from brute force to the assertion of hegemony. Gender and power both intrinsically and extrinsically linked to each other at micro- (family, peer group etc.) and macro-levels (policies, laws, values/traditions). This in turn can affect women's experiences and attitudes towards violence. Patriarchal power is not just a matter of direct control of women by individual men, but is also realised impersonally through the state (Connell, 2002: 58) through state policies and laws regarding gender equality. Power operating through institutions or *institutionalised power*, the oppression of one group by another, is an important part of the structure of gender. The institutionalisation of gendered power can be observed through male control of woman's economic, social, political, cultural/religious aspects of life. The control and authority over women's resources, defines kinship structures that underpin and deny women their legal rights and access to resources. For instance, in Muslim communities, a daughter's share in her father's inheritance is half of the son's.

Unlike the idea of existence of a central or unified power agency/structure or institutionalisation of power in society, the Foucauldian (1977; 1986) perspective of power is discursive. According to Foucault, power is widely dispersed in society and operates

intimately and diffusely through the way we communicate and organise ourselves in society around others. Power is seen as moving beyond structures and institutions and emerges from and through human actions and practices. He believed that this diffuse but tenacious power impact directly on people's bodies as *discipline* as well as on their identities of their place in the world. An omnipresent sense and recognition of male power is imperative in a patriarchal gender order to persist. Such a *gender order* or structure is created by constantly *doing gender* like, a movie script that creates and re-invents the character as it is rehearsed (Butler, 1990).

In another extreme, we find examples of power over women's bodies and sexuality to a point of honour killings and control of women's freedom and mobility (e.g. Muslim women cannot travel without a *mohram* 'male guardian'). Both the idea of institutionalised power and discursive power broaden our understanding of the distribution and organisation of social power in society between the sexes. As Connell (2002) argues, total domination is extremely rare; even some fascist dictatorships could not accomplish that. Gendered power is no more overarching or total than other kinds and varies with women's ability to resist male domination.

## *ii. Production relations*

Production relations not only define a person's place with respect to the product, the producer and the produced, but also shape experiences in the family and outside (Mies, 1998). The division of labour that exists in society on a wider scale points to the fact that it is influenced by the way gender/sex is organised or practiced in societies (Butler, 1990; Connell, 2002). Connell (2002: 61) argues that the whole economic sphere is culturally defined as men's

world, regardless of the presence of women in it, while domestic life is defined as women's world, regardless of the presence of men in it. The labour performed outside is bought and sold in comparison to the reproductive work (housework, childcare etc.) that is done in home 'for love'. A strict sexual division of labour in society is crucial for women to hold on to the inferior ranks of society. Women due to their roles as mothers tend to dominate professions such as nursing and caring in the public sphere, which are paid considerably less than the male dominated professions (Connell, 2002). This means that the sexual division of labour in the family shapes women's experiences in the public and vice versa. Men's control over women's labour and bodies go hand in hand (Jacobs, 2014). Connell (2002) argues that the division of labour itself is only part of a larger process. In a modern economy, the shared work of women and men is embodied in every major product, and every major service— therefore in the process of economic growth. Yet women and men are asymmetrically located in that process. The strict sexual division of labour that persists in the majority of male dominated societies around the world connected to masculine power and control of men. According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2010), in spite of the changes that have occurred in women's participation in the labour market, women continue to bear most of the responsibilities for domestic work and childcare. In all regions, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work. Further, women who are employed spend an inordinate amount of time on the 'double burden' of paid work and family responsibilities; when unpaid work is taken into account, women's total work hours are longer than men's in all world regions.

Delphy (1984) suggested that the issue is not the only division between tasks men and women perform rather the problem is due to the social relations under which these forms of work are done. The unpaid work performed by women leave them with little or no time and resources to invest in building up marketable skills thus keeping the patriarchal *gender order* intact. Mies (1986; 1998) suggested a gendered accumulation process that was developed through a dual process of colonisation and 'housewifisation' in the global economy. Women in the colonised world (formally full participants in local non-capitalist economies, in her view), have been increasingly pressed into the 'housewife' pattern of social isolation and dependence on a male breadwinner. Occupational sex segregation, the gender pay gap and inequalities in the education system are some of the examples of gendered accumulation.

### ***iii. Emotional relations***

Emotional attachments comprise of not only individual feeling but also the pattern of relationships inside an important social institution, the bourgeois family for instance. According to Connell (2002), people have both positive and negative emotional commitments such as prejudice against misogyny or homophobia. Sexuality is understood as a major arena of emotional attachment. Heterosexual relations between a man and a woman are considered a sexual norm in many cultures and societies across the world and also the root cause of women's subordination by some feminists (Jackson, 1978; Butler, 1990, 1999; Hartmann, 1981; Walby, 1990; Langan and Morton, 2009). Millett (1977) argued that heterosexuality is not seen as an individual preference, as something into which people either drift or are fixed as a result of psychological processes in childhood, but rather as a socially constructed institution. The marriage contract between a man and women set grounds for the terms of their



relationship. Often in such relationships, women are restricted to undertake domestic work and childcare as their primary functions while men are considered to be the breadwinner of the family. Subsequently, women's position and roles are considered inferior to men in the household. As mentioned earlier, the sexuality and the sexual division of labour work together in perpetuating gender inequality and DVAW. However, the dynamics of contemporary families are changing rapidly with more same-sex relationships.

Mackinnon (1989) suggested that sexual objectification of women's bodies is a source of the patriarchal gender order. She argued that male and female sexualities are constructed in such a way that sexuality supports women's submission to male aggression (Mackinnon, 1989). Pornography, in her views, is a part of men's power over women; it is used to terrorise and control women. Sexuality is the terrain or medium through which men dominate women (Walby, 1990:119). In contrast to objectification of women's bodies in the West, in many Muslim communities women are segregated and secluded to a point that they have to cover their head and even face as well. The *hijab* (seclusion) is considered a social institution that safeguards woman's sexuality (virginity) before marriage while reducing them to sexual beings only. Aghtaie (2015) argues that in Muslim communities, women's sexual desire is perceived as non-existent prior to marriage. In some Northeast African and Arab cultures, genital mutilation is considered an acceptable norm in order to control women's sexuality and desires. Although seclusion and genital mutilation seem opposite to sexual objectification (e.g. pornography) of women's bodies, in reality both means are used to control and to subjugate women. In Muslim societies, male subordination of women and control over female sexuality formally allowed and resulted in discriminatory laws (Aghtaie, 2015).

*iv. Symbolic relations*

Symbolic relations according to Connell (2002) are the cultural meanings of gender that have evolved over time and space. She argues:

Whenever we speak of a woman or a man, we call into play a tremendous system of understandings, implications, overtones and allusions that have accumulated through our cultural history. The meanings of these words are enormously greater than the biological categories of male and female (Connell, 2002: 65).

Connell (2002:59) argues that the discourse of fashion and beauty positions women as consumers, subjects them to humiliating tests of acceptability, enforces arbitrary rules and is responsible for much unhappiness, ill health and even some deaths. It is imperative to understand how gender is symbolised and interpreted within cultures. For instance, what is considered to be an act of DVAW is also shaped by socio-cultural practices of men and women. The understanding of gender identity i.e. maleness/femaleness or meanings and interpretations of the issues surrounding DVAW within Libyan communities is different from white-Western communities. The symbolic meanings of gender and gender-based violence are mostly borrowed from Arab culture and religious/Islamic ethos and its interpretations in Libyan, Arab and many other Muslim communities. These are intertwined and overlap so much so that it is hard to separate or to delineate them. That is why it is deemed important here to explore the symbolic meanings of gender and gender-based violence among Arabs and Libyan people.

DVAW exists in different forms in almost all societies and cultures around the world (WAO, 2002). Cultural factors, however, derived mainly from the subordinate social position of women, have an influence on the nature and outcome of DVAW. For instance, culturally

prevalent views of people particularly of men, in relation to women's position and DVAW are a matter of concern for scholars, feminists and researchers around the world. It is also important to see how different religious and cultural meanings of gender change with time and space. For example, the way Islamic/Arabic cultural ideals and meanings regarding gender are interpreted and understood in the West is a matter of concern from an intersectionality standpoint. An intersectionality framework can help focus on how gender and gender-based violence in Libyan communities in the UK is shaped by the gender regimes operating at both private and public arenas (Yoshihama, 1999; Garfield, 2005). There is a link between violence against women in public sphere and private sphere in Muslim societies. Aghtaie (2015) argues that legitimizing violence against women within the public sphere normalises DVAW within the family. The next section further explores gender inequality and DVAW in Libyan/Arab communities

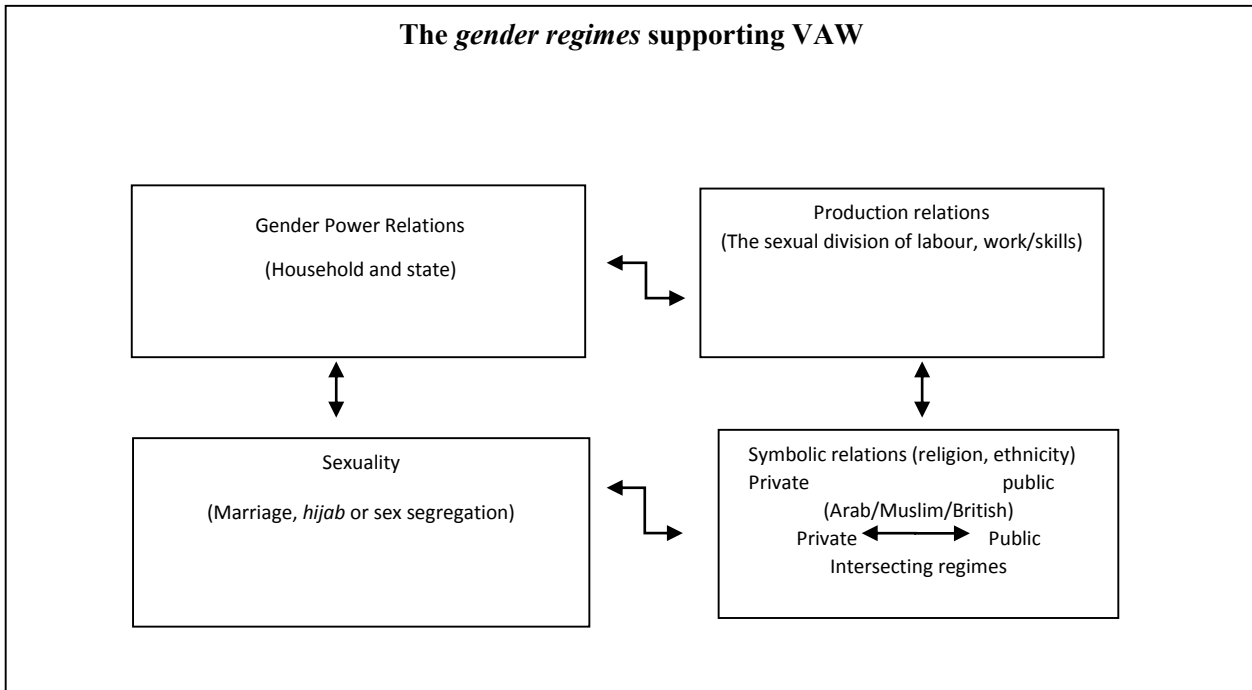
#### **1.3.4 Gender Regimes in Muslim/Arab Communities**

Structural aspects of the patriarchal social order in Arab families and communities are reflected in the lower status of women compared with men in the economic, educational, political, and legal institutions. This is reflected in values, beliefs, and norms, which justify male dominance in virtually all social areas and domains (Yllo and Straus, 1990). Caldwell (1982) described the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia as the 'patriarchal belt', where patriarchy denotes specific gender arrangements based on patrilocal residence and patrilineal descent.

Using Connell’s argument (2005) concerning hegemonic masculinities, in Arab societies, the cultural ideal of masculinity legitimises the domination of men over women. To conform to ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in Arab societies, men should be authoritative; should have complete control in the family; must be able to support the family financially and if possible have, several wives; should be pious; should be respected in the community. These “masculine” characteristics are socially produced and enforced through social norms. Most men practice and benefit from patriarchy although individual men are not always themselves not able to fully embody hegemonic masculinity. For instance, younger, physically weaker, gay and disabled men may have a low status or find themselves threatened or controlled.

Gender regimes supporting women’s subordination in Arab/Libyan families and communities are outlined and presented in Figure 1.1 below.

**Figure 1. 1: Gender regimes supporting DVAW in Libyan families and communities**



**Figure 1.1** shows the four intersecting facets or social relations that organise the positioning of men and women as illustration of the concept ‘gender order’. These overlapping social relations keep intact the asymmetrical gender orders. As Connell (2002) argues, gender structures are ordered or organised in four main dimensions – power relations, production, emotional relations and symbolism. The above diagram is an attempt to ‘map’ the gender order in Libyan communities onto Connell’s concept of gender order.

Thus, 1) gendered power relations in Libyan communities are structured by the premise of male domination in society as well as within the family. More specifically, this specifies the positioning of men as heads of families, and women as less important and as dependents: this underpins male access to authority and control over women.

2) Production relations and division of labour in Libyan communities usually specify that women do domestic work and men work outside the home for wages, or else own farms and enterprises. Women’s prime roles are as wives and mothers and wives in Libya cannot work outside the home-or indeed, leave the home – without male permission. Migrant women may not be able to access paid work in the UK even if they are educated.

3) Emotional Relations or ‘*cathexis*’: in Libyan communities marriage gives men the right to control wives and children, and ‘good’ women traditionally accept their roles or risk reprisals. The culture emphasises the importance of female deference; of female chastity but acceptance of less-controlled male sexuality; sexuality only in marriage but compulsory within marriage; of acceptance of power of fathers and husbands.

4) Symbolic Relations: socio-cultural and religious practices consider men as powerful and authoritative and women as inferiors and less powerful within Libyan communities. Cultural

and religious norms see women as ‘impure’ and allow men to dominate women. *Hijab* is also considered by both cultural and religious norms, as a social institution that safeguards woman’s sexuality.

Moghadam (1992) maintained that patriarchal gender order in Arabic family persists in a family and social system in which male power over women and children derive from the social role of fatherhood, and is supported by a political economy in which the family unit retains a significant productive role. Patriarchy exists in Arab society because the family is the basic unit of society (Joseph, 1993 and 1996a). The notion of man’s rule in Arab communities is strong (Barakat, 1993); hence, egalitarian structures are rejected in the public and private spheres of life (Mann, 1986). In the public sphere, males share power. Within the private sphere of extended and nuclear families, the senior male member wields power over everyone else, including younger men, and exercises modes of control over women which transcend cultural and religious boundaries. Thus, the husband is culturally considered the central authority to whom the wife and children must ultimately respond (Haj-Yahia *et al.*, 2002).

The widely accepted interpretation and understanding of Islam in Muslim societies is an important factor in determining the status of women in families and society. In addition to considering the patriarchal nature of Arab society, patriarchy in the Islamic context should be considered as Islam’s dominance over organisational and socio-cultural frameworks in Muslim society (Moghadam, 2004). Thus, Islam has a strong impact on every aspect of society, including definitions of gender roles, the status of men and women in general, and family life and marital relations in particular. In this connection, Islam emphasises the complementary attributes of women and men and dictates their roles accordingly (Joseph,

1993 and 1996a). Women are meant to depend on men to safeguard them and to ensure that men maintain high moral standards. In this spirit, the Quran teaches that men and women were created as companions and are to treat each other with affection and compassion within the bond of matrimony (Stowasser, 1993). However, the Quran also includes passages, which clearly indicate that obedience and respect for husbands is the Muslim wife's duty and that in some situations wife beating is justified (Verse 4:34 of the Quran).

Gender inequality in Arab communities, however, is far too complex to be attributed solely to religion. Cultural aspects of male domination in Arab communities also support the concealing of incidences of DVAW because large segments of society support the control of women by means of force. Force and the use of power in this respect are not considered abuse: rather such acts are perceived as corrective measures (Joseph, 1996a). Peter Krauss (1987) defines the gender order of Arab communities as a hierarchy of authority that is controlled and dominated by males, originating in the family. Barakat (1993:100) contended, "the traditional Arab father has authority and responsibility, expects respect and unquestioning compliance" and that, men maintain their power by control over land, resources (property rights) and income. Many scholars agree that kinship is central to Arab society (Ahmad, 2008; Hammad *et al.*, 1999; Shryock, 2000). It sustains a person's sense of self and identity, and shapes their position in society. The centrality of kinship has implications for male domination: kinship transports patriarchy into social life (Joseph, 1996a).

The next section discusses the role of kinship in maintaining the current gender order and consequent control of resources by men in Arab communities.

*Kinship in Arab communities*

Patrilineal kinship is traditionally the primary source of economic security, and males and elders are considered to be financially responsible for women and younger relatives (Joseph, 1996a). Inheritance rules in Arab communities favour male descendants and male patrilineage. In most Muslim legal systems, daughters do inherit, but they inherit less than sons. However, many Muslim women never claim or obtain their full inheritance, in deference to their brothers and also to retain brothers' support in case of abuse in marriage. Some women accept this as insurance for the future, should they need to return to their father's or brother's household in case of divorce or widowhood (Joseph, 1994). Male control of economic resources in the family is dependent on labour of family and kin; they can call upon others, particularly women and young people, for services and the labour (often unpaid). The assumption here is that males and seniors are more able to reciprocate, when females and younger family members reciprocate, they do so through the male and senior kin. Relatives pool resources for investments, open businesses together, or run agricultural endeavours collectively (Joseph, 1994). Kin-based shops, crafts, businesses and farms account for a significant proportion of small and large businesses in the Arab communities (Joseph, 1994). Whilst some of these enterprises may entail co-ownership, financially able kin frequently employ other kin in their businesses. Even where females and juniors are involved as workers and co-owners, males and seniors are usually the primary owners and decision makers (Joseph, 1994). Such gender and generational privilege can be justified by the assumed superiority of men, especially that of older men, in specific jobs and professions (Moghadam, 2005).



#### **1.4 Conclusion**

This chapter explores and explains the conceptual framework of the thesis. It has looked into different standpoints explaining gender inequality and women's subordination i.e. individualistic, relational and structural approaches. Social learning theory was also considered as it is relevant in understanding the reasons of gender difference and imbalance particularly at interpersonal levels. Nonetheless, it is assumed that individualistic approaches are not sufficient in making sense of the extent and nature of DVAW across different societies and cultures globally. The chapter proceeds by including structural explanations of gender inequality and DVAW in society. The concept of patriarchy is used by many feminists as an overarching explanation for women's subordination and male domination. However, other feminists have abandoned the idea due to concerns about its universalism. As Walby (1990) argues, not all women are subordinate nor are all men dominant in society. Therefore, we need to take account of the cross-cultural variations in the concept and practice of patriarchy. Connell's (1987) idea of gender regime is considered relevant as compared to patriarchy in incorporating the changing nature of gender and gender-based violence in society. Her four-faceted model (2002) is considered particularly useful in explaining DVAW among Libyan migrants in the UK. The model proposes that gender power relations, production relations, emotional relations and symbolic relations are salient in understanding gender and gender-based violence in society.

The next chapter explore different meanings, interpretations and manifestations of the subject of DVAW.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Definitions and Meanings of Domestic Violence against Women**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter mainly presents a discussion on the issue of domestic violence against women (DVAW) by looking into different meanings, interpretations and manifestations of intimate violence. The discussion will bring forward the idea that DVAW is as an aspect and outcome of gender inequality and patriarchy at multiple levels. DVAW has many manifestations: for example, physical, psychological and financial. This chapter considers various types of violence committed against women and looks at the impact of this violence on individuals. It is also important to explore the cultural variations in the comprehension of domestic violence against women, as its meanings and manifestations can depend on its context or legal interpretation. The chapter presents an extensive literature review on the topic of domestic violence, with debates mainly extracted from feminist literature.

#### **2.2 Meanings of Domestic Violence against Women**

This section mainly considers definitions of DVAW. Defining DVAW is important to understand its causes and consequences (Rights of Women, 2011). The discussion outlines the terms `domestic violence` and `intimate partner violence`.

##### ***Defining domestic violence***

A diverse range of terms has been used to describe DVAW. It can be regarded, as an issue for women in a marital or other intimate relationship, sometimes termed `wife abuse` or `wife

battering' (Bograd, 1990; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991). The main definition of DVAW is that of a pattern of abusive behaviours, which are perpetrated by one partner against the other in an intimate relationship. The term 'domestic violence' is similar to other terminology, including domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, and intimate partner violence. It is shown to be a pattern of abusive behaviours. According to some researchers the actual problem, however, lies in society's unspoken perceptions of DVAW (Buzawa and Buzawa, 2002).

The term, domestic violence, is a gender-neutral phrase, and does not fully clarify who is the perpetrator and who is the victim. As a result, the true situation that it most usually involves males subjecting females to violence is masked (Bograd, 1990; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991). Men can be victims of domestic violence, and the dynamic of abuse differ between men and women. Men can experience both physical and emotional abuse, and they can be affected by emotional and verbal abuse as well as physical abuse (Hayes, 2008). It is difficult to establish reliable estimates of male victims of domestic violence as few men are willing to report that they have been abused (Barber, 2008). According to Tjaden and Thoennes (1998), the findings from the US National Violence against Women Survey indicated that 25% of women, compared with 8% of men, said they experienced partner violence. Additionally, women are likely to experience more extreme forms of violence, with women more likely than men to be injured (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998). The 2001 /2002, British Crime Survey found that 19% of domestic violence incidents affected male victims, and that about half of these incidents were committed by women. The 2004 /2005, British Crime Survey found that 28% of women

and 18% of men had experienced one or more forms of intimate violence (Barber, 2008: 36).

Nevertheless, women experience significantly more domestic violence than do men.

Domestic violence can thus also be seen as violence between any persons who live together or have formerly lived together (Buzawa and Buzawa, 2002). The World Health Organisation has defined DVAW as follows:

Intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 2002: 38).

Williamson (2013) mentioned that the WHO definition does not include 'a gendered dimension of abuse' explicitly. Gelles and Straus (1979) defined DVAW as any act carried out with the intention of, or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person, whilst others have defined DVAW as "a behaviour by person against person that intentionally threatens, attempts, or actually inflicts physical harm" (Crowell and Burgess, 1996:10). According to Astbury and Cabral (2000: 67) domestic violence is a "chronic syndrome characterised not only by episodes of violence but by the emotional and psychological abuse used by men to control their female partners".

DVAW does not have a universally accepted definition. Commonly used terms may well possess different meanings, dependant on the region or area concerned and are derived from diverse theoretical perspectives and disciplines. There is, however, increasing international consensus that the abuse of women and girls, regardless of where it occurs, should be considered as 'gender-based violence,' as it largely stems from women's subordinate status to men (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). The word 'domestic' refers to an act which occurs within the

domestic sphere, but does not include relationships which are intimate but exclude co-habitation. This causes a problem due to the diversity of family structures (Mama, 1996), and the fact that women can suffer violence in spite of being separated from their spouses (Binney *et al.*, 1981; Pahl, 1985; Mooney, 1993; Hester and Radford, 1996). Moreover, the term 'domestic violence' masks its gendered scenery, in which women are generally the sufferers and men most often the perpetrators (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Mooney, 1993; Abrahams, 1994). Over 90% of violence is estimated to be directed by men towards women, (McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993:65) a gender element must be included in the investigation of mistreatment in order to understand the complexities of domestic violence. Deeply embedded in the use of violence is the abuse of authority that can replace the use of physical strength. This occurs in cultures where sexual relations are formed within a hierarchical structure. Feminists regards violent behaviour as a means by men to maintain control over women (Kelly *et al.*, 1992). (See Chapter 1).

For these reasons, several feminists have used other terms, to bring to the fore the gendered and intimate nature of domestic violence. An example is the term 'DVAW from known men'. The notion of DVAW from known men is what is referred to as 'domestic violence' throughout this study. This choice reflects the work of feminists whereby DVAW from known men is acknowledged as a common term despite inconsistent definition of it (Hague and Malos, 1993; McWilliams and McKiernan, 1993; Mooney, 1993; Mullender, 1996). According to Smith (1989), DVAW is usually categorised as violence perpetrated by a man upon his spouse or partner, either in the family home or in public. However, the term can refer

to violence which occurs between siblings, parents and children, and other relationships such as heterosexual, gay and lesbian relationships, courtships, and ex-partners.

The term `violence` has been frequently applied to broadly include a variety of behaviours such as verbal mistreatment, physical aggravation, intimidation, rape, sexual assault and homicide. The official United Nations (1993) definition of DVAW 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 liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined gender-based violence as harmful behaviour suffered by women and girls because of their sex, including wife abuse, sexual assault, dowry related murder, marital rape, selective malnourishment of female children, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and sexual abuse of female children (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). Various multilateral bodies such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have also recognised DVAW as a human rights issue (Richters, 1994).

### ***Intimate partner violence***

The most pervasive form of DVAW is abuse of women by intimate male partners (Heise and Ellsberg, 2002). The term ‘intimate partner’ applies to a definition which applies to intimate partner violence between two people in a close relationship (HOW, 2002) and is a general term covering previous and current spouses and dating partners. Thus, it is somewhat broader than the term `domestic violence` This term describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former spouse or non-marital partner, such as a boyfriend, girlfriend, or dating

partner (Saltzman *et al.*, 1999; HOW, 2002). Intimate partner violence does not require sexual intimacy. It can take place between any couple, heterosexual or same-sex and HOW (2002) defines it as a real or threatened physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or stalking abuse by an intimate partner. Women internationally suffer from various forms of intimate violence and studies have confirmed that intimate violence affects many women around the globe. In a summary of 80 population-based surveys conducted in over 50 countries, Ellsberg and Heise (2005) stated that between 10% and 60% of women who have ever been married or had an intimate partner have experienced at least one incident of physical violence at the hands of their partner (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005:2).

Thus, in this study, the concern will be on the term Domestic Violence Against Women (DVAW), which refers to the abuse carried out with the intention of physically or emotionally harming any woman who is related by blood, marriage, or common law marriage. It includes all violent incidents, involving partners, household members or other relatives (WAO, 2002) as well as abuse by a senior male or other males in the family who assist him. DVAW is regarded as covering behaviour, including physical violence, comprising behaviours, which threaten, attempt or actually inflict physical harm as well as psychological/emotional abuse. This can include acts, which cause damage psychologically, an example being serious verbal abuse.

The next section addresses acts considered as domestic or intimate violence and their effects on women.

### 2.3 Types/Forms of Domestic Violence

DVAW is context specific and depends on specific social, economic, cultural and political circumstances. The focus of some of studies (Saunders, 2002; Hearn *et al.*, 2001; Jackson, 2003; Jacobson *et al.*, 1994) relates to intimate partner violence or intimate sexual violence, emphasising violence concentrated on physical, sexual, and emotional and psychological aspects. Alternatively, other studies have placed emphasis on male controlling behaviour relating to economic abuse including the denial of a woman's access to her own income and other situations considered justification for violence and depriving women of financial independence (Dobash *et al.*, 1992; Nazroo, 1995; Buzawa and Buzawa, 2002; Hagemann-White, 2007; Piispa, 2002; Blumel *et al.*, 1993; Kane *et al.*, 2000; Sackett and Saunders, 1999).

For the purpose of analysis, DVAW was classified into four major categories: physical violence, emotional/psychological violence, rape and sexual violence, forced marriage and early marriage. These different forms/types of DVAW will be discussed in detail in the next few sections.

#### ***Physical violence***

The most common form of abuse against women by men is physical violence. Most women are attacked by men who are familiar to them, such as family members (Dobash *et al.*, 1992; Riggs *et al.*, 2000). Such behaviour includes 'pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, kicking, biting, choking, burning, and the use of weapons, or other acts that result in injury or death' (Jordan, 2004). Hanmer and Stanko (1985) found in the UK that in almost 90% of cases, abuse



starts with slapping which gradually increases over time and becomes more frequent and severe.

Heise and Ellsberg (1999) stated that between 10% and 52% of women internationally declare to have been physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. The proportion of women exposed to physical violence (according to UN official figures, 2010) in their lifetime ranges from 12% in the Chinese SAR of Hong Kong and 13% in Azerbaijan to 48% or more in Australia and Mozambique, and 51% and 59% respectively in the Czech Republic and Zambia (UN, 2010:132). Over a tenth of women have suffered abuse in 2010 in Costa Rica, the Republic of Moldova (UN, 2010:132). All the statistics point to the fact that a significant number of women have been physically abused at least once in their lifetime, whether by their intimate partners or by other men.

### ***Emotional violence***

Emotional violence, sometimes-referred to as psychological violence, manifests itself in various forms, which comprise aspects such as belittling, unfair criticism, looking down upon the victim, lies and deception (Abrahams *et al.*, 2006). Other aspects include name-calling, socially excluding the individual, dominating behaviour, threatening to harm both oneself and others, and blaming the victim, including continuous verbal abuse, harassment, unnecessary possessiveness, keeping the victim away from their friends and family and denying economic resources and damage to property (Thoburn *et al.*, 2000). Domestic violence in its emotional form remains the most persistent form of abuse; however, this is not easily identifiable as there are no visible signs. Thoburn *et al.* (2000) stated that abusive relationships commence with

emotional abuse. Physical abuse follows this. Emotional abuse can be as damaging as physical abuse and should be taken seriously, as it is often a precursor to more serious assault.

Emotional abuse has received less attention from researchers than physical or sexual abuse, and hence there have been fewer attempts to define it. It has been argued that physical and psychological conditions should be considered separately (Thoburn *et al.*, 2000). The consequences of physical violence are bodily whereas physical and psychological abuse cause mental and sometimes physical ill health. This affects both male and female victims, and have important implications for intervention and prevention efforts (Coker *et al.*, 2002).

### ***Sexual violence***

Sexual domestic violence refers to acts of a sexual nature, which take place within the confines of an intimate or family relationship (Dobash and Dobash, 1980). Sexual violence like all forms of DVAW aimed at control women in the family (Arledge, 2008). Sexual abuse in marriage is not always considered as illegal, and until the late 1970s, most nations did not consider it as a crime (Russel, 1990). This abuse can be extended to include; forcing someone to be involved in sexual acts against their wishes, denying women the right to refuse protected or unprotected sex, which risks women being exposed to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and exposing a woman to materials of a sexual nature without her consent (Dobash and Dobash, 1980). A World Health Organization study in 11 countries found that the percentage of women who had been subjected to sexual violence by an intimate partner ranged from 6% in Japan to 59% in Ethiopia (WHO, 2004). Tjaden and Thoennes (2000: 13) stated that ‘study of 930 women in San Francisco found that 8% were survivors of marital rape, and a study of 323 ever

married/cohabited women in Boston found that 10% were survivors of wife or partner rape'. Tjaden and Thoennes argue that the rates of intimate partner violence vary significantly among women of diverse racial backgrounds. However, significant number of crimes are never reported (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). Victims of sexual abuse can suffer serious health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases in women, and stomach problems or constant pain. Closely related to physical problems are emotional struggles, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Sorenson, 1997).

### ***Forced marriage and early marriage***

Forced marriage occurs when one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage or consent is extracted under duress, which comprises both emotional and physical pressure (Home Office, 2005). For the Department Of Health (DOH) and the FCO, domestic violence and forced marriage are linked and frequently perpetuate child abuse. Forced marriage is regarded as being a kind of domestic violence which often becomes a causal factor for domestic violence after marriage (FCO and DOH, 2003). Most cases involve girls and women aged between 13 and 30, although there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15% of victims are male (Home Office, 2005:3). Home Office in '*A Choice by Right 2000*' stated that the difference between forced and arranged marriage is consent: a marriage should not be conducted without the valid consent of both parties, whereas duress is invariably a factor involved in forced marriages (Home Office, 2006:6). The Court of Appeal has ruled that the test of duress for these purposes is simply 'whether the mind of the applicant (the victim) has in fact been overborne, howsoever that was caused' (Home Office, 2006: 7). According to the Home Office report (2006:11), duress is classed as stemming 'from emotional pressure,

exerted by close family members and the extended family, to more extreme cases, which can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape and in some cases murder<sup>2</sup>.

Feminists claim that forced marriage goes against human rights, and its impact is highly gendered as it affects young women excessively (Siddiqui, 2002). With regard to ethnicity, the available data produced by the UK Forced Marriage Unit shows that forced marriage is common in most South Asian communities (FCO and DOH, 2003). There is a belief that forced marriage is commonly practiced in Muslim communities, which fuels feelings of 'Islamophobia' in the UK. Ethnic communities have become suspicious of the government's interest in this matter, regarding such concerns as an indirect threat towards arranged marriages. This suggests that there is a need for culturally sensitive community initiatives to raise the awareness of the issue of forced marriage and prevent abuse (Samad and Eade, 2003:36).

Early marriage<sup>2</sup> is common worldwide, especially in the Middle East and Africa. Young girls are often forced into the marriage and therefore, into sexual relations, causing reduced attendance at school and health risks, including exposure to HIV/AIDS (UNICEF and IRC, 2001). There is little official data on very early marriage (under age 15). Studies carried out indicate that in parts of East and West Africa for example, marriage at age 7 or 8 is not

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<sup>2</sup> Most nations have declared 18 as the legal minimum age to enter into marriage.

uncommon whilst in parts of northern Nigeria, the average age of marriage is 11 years (UNICEF and Innocenti Research Centre, 2001:7).

It is important to recognise all forms and types of DVAW in order to understand how the effects of DVAW and what strategies could be helpful in combatting all forms of DVAW on all fronts.

#### **2.4 Effects of Domestic Violence against Women**

DVAW has a significant effect on women in terms of the actual violence experienced (Mooney, 2000; Koss *et al.*, 1991). Victims of DVAW are at risk of psychological and behavioural problems including depression, alcohol abuse, anxiety, suicidal behaviour and reproductive health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and sexual dysfunction (Koss *et al.*, 1991; Tollestrup *et al.*, 1999; Campbell, 1997; Fergusson *et al.*, 1996; Herman, 1992). The American Psychiatric Association (1994) conducted a study focused on the traumatising aspects of violence and trauma symptoms exhibited by battered women. It theorised that many women who have suffered violence, suffer from a complex traumatic syndrome, which comprises additional symptoms, such as depression, anxiety, idealization of the perpetrator, and dissociation, due to the chronic nature of the trauma (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

Herman (1992) described the dynamics of the abusive situation. Whilst suggesting that women survivors suffer from changes in personality, which leave them vulnerable to repeated harm. She argues that the perpetrator typically gains control over the woman's body through deprivation of sleep, food, or shelter. According to Herman, this dynamic greatly diminishes

the woman's ability to initiate action. The woman's traumatic reaction to the physical and psychological abuse can be the mechanism through which many aspects of the battered woman's functioning may become impaired. Herman (1992) argues that strong social support can protect women's functioning in traumatic situations and that a history of abuse from childhood may make women more psychologically vulnerable.

Intimate partner violence is one of the most common causes of injury in women (Rand, 1997). In the USA, 11–30% of all injured women the mechanisms of injury and relationship to the perpetrator had been recorded had been abused (Rand, 1997: 38). Abused women were more likely to have been injured in the head, face, neck, thorax, breasts, and abdomen than women injured in other ways (Grisso *et al.*, 1999: 341). In two large case-control studies of women in U.S. Accident and Emergency Departments, a higher proportion of women who had been battered in the past year (12–17%) visited accident and emergency departments compared with women with acute trauma from abuse (2–3%), suggesting a need for universal rather than incident-based screening in emergency-care settings (Kyriacou *et al.*, 1999:341). Although most women suffered violence in the USA, stated that they had been injured as a result of such abuse, less than half said that they had sought health care specifically for those injuries (Bachman and Saltzman, 1995). A poor or inappropriate response from the police or other help-seeking agencies is also considered to add to the impact of the violence. Furthermore, domestic violence is seen as occurring 'within an emotional bond, which gives it all the more hurtful poignancy' (Mooney, 2000: 120).

## 2.5 Extent of DVAW and Under-reported Incidents

DVAW is one of the most systematic and prevalent human rights abuses in the world (Kline, 2005) which harms families, impoverishes communities and reinforces other forms of inequality and violence throughout society (Walby, 2005). According to (Khan, 2006), domestic violence is prevalent throughout society, Muslims being no exception. There are cultural expectations and pressure placed on women not to complain about physical or sexual abuse in some communities. For instance, studies have shown that Pakistani women of Muslim origin in London are expected to succeed in their marriages with failure leading to 'dishonour' for both them and their families (Choudry, 1996:1). Some women have resisted, others have fled, and others have sought to keep the peace by capitulating to their husbands' demands (Ellsberg and Gottemoeller, 1999).

Within the UK, the most comprehensive survey is the British Crime Survey BCS (Walby and Allen, 2004). Following analysis, 13% of women and 9% of men were found to have been subjected to at least one incident of domestic violence in 2003 (Walby and Allen, 2004), with women shown to be the most victimised after consideration of the most heavily abused. This study was based on the frequency of attacks, together with the forms of violence and the severity of injury. Moreover, when health issues were considered, women were twice as likely to be injured, and three times as likely to report living in fear than men (Mirrlees-Black, 1999). Walby and Allen found there are considerable variations in the risk of DVAW dependent upon marital status. For example, domestic violence is found to be highest amongst women who have separated from the perpetrator (Walby and Allen, 2004:85). According to the 2008/09 British Crime Survey, risk of DVAW was significantly higher for women (0.6%) than for men

(0.2%). Around one in three (31%) violent incidents against women constituted DV, compared with 5% of incidents against men. Figures from the BCS give a more complete picture of violence carried out by partners or family members. The higher risk of DVAW was also evident in figures derived from the 2008/09 BCS. Based on the 2008/09 survey, 6% of women aged 16-59 were victims of DV in the past year compared with 4% of men. Prevalence of any DV has decreased for men but not for women between the 2007/08 and 2008/09 BCS, although prevalence of any domestic abuse for both men and women is lower compared with the 2004/05 (Home Office, 2009).

Stanko (2000) established that in the UK, the police received a call from a member of the public every minute asking for assistance against domestic violence. The police thus receive an estimated 1,300 calls each day or over 570,000 calls each year (Stanko, 2000:3). She determined (in 2001) that most feared not being believed. This was the most important factor as regards deciding whether to report domestic violence and victims, who mostly comprise women, sometimes view the individual offending against them as powerful and immune to outside intervention (Stanko, 2001). Some victims may feel no one would be able to deal with the perpetrator and to disclose the abuse would only put them at greater risk (Gill, 2004:4). For the same reason, many victims are also often too frightened to press charges (Gill, 2004). Statistics were unclear on DVAW as regards ethnic minority women. Available national statistics do not show the extent of domestic violence in relation to women from different ethnic backgrounds (Conway, 2004).

National prevalence surveys in the USA. showed generally very high rates of intimate DVAW, indicating a widespread international social problem (Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). Since



1980, more than 50 population-based surveys on DVAW have been conducted in various parts of the world (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002: 1233) and the results show that between 10% and 50% of women who have ever had partners have been hit or otherwise physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives. Moreover, between 3% and 52% of women had reported physical violence in the previous year.

Global and national data are very scarce and without reliable data; global estimates for the different types of abuse are difficult to make (Krug *et al.*, 2002). Domestic violence continues not to be reported and police records of DVAW offer only limited data. Women are frequently prevented from seeking help due to denial and fear of social stigma. In numerous surveys, for example, 22% to almost 70% of abused women said that until the interview they had never told anyone about their abuse (Heise *et al.*, 1999:7). Bright (2000) stated that there are as many as 35,000 cases of domestic violence each month, most of which are unreported. This under-reporting within certain communities may be compounded by additional stigmas and an unwillingness to acknowledge the problem (Bright, 2000). The high level of underreporting of domestic violence is due to a number of factors, which need in-depth understanding of the contexts in which DVAW takes place (Hall and Wright, 2003). For example, for many ethnic minority women, shame as a societal control mechanism appears to have a powerful impact on the acknowledgement and reporting of violence. Gill (2004) found male honour could be a contributory factor in the under-reporting of domestic violence. Walby and Allen (2004:102) revealed that significant minorities of women did not report domestic violence to the police because they feared further violence and that the situation would get worse as a result of police involvement, or fearing that nothing would result from police investigation. Mama (1996)

found that even after the eviction of their violent partner many women still felt unprotected and believed they were in even greater danger since the perpetrator would feel more vindictive towards them (Mama, 1996:116). Upson and Gray (2004:73) found that of 2,708,000 violent incidents reported in the UK, domestic violence contributed 16%. Findings regarding the prevalence of physical and sexual violence by intimate partners vary greatly between studies. This variation can be attributed not only to the differences in the levels of violence between settings, but also to differences in research methods, definitions of violence, sampling techniques (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002), interviewer training and skills, and cultural differences that affect respondents' willingness to reveal intimate experiences (Watts and Zimmerman, 2002: 236).

## **2.6 Law, Policy and Domestic Violence against Women**

In this section, international laws as well as the UK laws surrounding DVAW will be examined to ascertain how law protects, targets, and prosecutes culprits in circumstances where the perpetrator is a male member of the family.

“DVAW is relevant to all human rights, including the right to non-discrimination, equal protection of the law and equality before the law; the right not to be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to life; the right to equality in the family; the right to health; the right to just and favourable conditions of work; and the right to liberty and security of the person” (Rights of Women, 2011: 12).

Given the ubiquity of DVAW, the issue has slowly gained visibility on the international agenda (Simister, 2012). There are number of theoretical and practical reasons for this. Firstly,

the public/private distinction, which has been the focus of feminist analysis, has had particular significance in the development of international law (Stubbs, 1994). International law assumes, and reinforces, a number of dichotomies between public and private spheres of action (Stubbs, 1994), including the distinction drawn between international concerns and those within the domestic jurisdiction of the state. Secondly, despite increasing evidence of DVAW, its true extent has remained hidden (Stubbs, 1994). Third, on a practical level, the initiatives for international discussion on gender-based violence derive mostly from women's groups and organisations and not from official representatives of states. (Stubbs, 1994:14-15).

Under international law, DVAW is recognised as a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights (UN, 2007). States' obligations to respect, protect, fulfil and promote human rights include the responsibility to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish all forms of DVAW and provide effective remedies to victims (UN, 2007).

At the international level, human rights treaties set out a series of rights that are critical in the protection of women from violence. These include (UN, 2007: 6):

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>3</sup>
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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<sup>3</sup> The main object and purpose of CEDAW is to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to secure the full advancement and development of women and substantive equality between women and men (Rights of Women, 2011).

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The critical point at which DVAW was recognised as a human rights issue was in 1993, when the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights led the effort to place women's human rights on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna (Johnson, 2008: 4) (Johnson, 2008). In the 1960s and 1970s, the United Nations adopted new strategies governing women's political rights as well as conventions on women's rights in marriage. Since then, a range of bodies, offices and agencies within the United Nations including: the World Health Organisation (WHO); the United Nation Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC); have been actively engaged in conducting research and implementing programmes to combat gender-based violence (UNIFEM, 2003). The recognition that DVAW is a violation of their human rights is considered a significant turning point, in the fight to end violence and respond to the needs of victims.

Theoretically, the UK criminal law applies equally to domestic violence as it does to violence by strangers. According to Smith (1989) whilst the law deals with all forms of assault, from common assault to murder, the four sections which frequently apply to domestic violence are: common assault (Smith, 1989), assault occasioning actual bodily harm; malicious wounding

(Smith, 1989) and grievous bodily harm (Smith, 1989). The British Crime Surveys (1996) also apply legal definitions in the classification and counting of crimes.

The UK has a comprehensive domestic human rights and equality law as well as strong mechanisms for promoting and enforcing the law (Rights of Women, 2011). However, often the protection offered is insufficient, sometimes the law and policy does not always correspond with recommendations from experts (Rights of Women, 2011). Matczak *et al.* (2011) stated that in spite of the fact that domestic violence has a potential impact on children, English legislation regarding the protection of children witnessing domestic abuse has been relatively slow to develop and the major legislation regarding children does not explicitly acknowledge the risks and practical problems faced by women and children experiencing domestic violence. Cook (2014) stated that it has been well-documented that there is a justice gap and that the failure to convict can create a profound sense of harm for abused women. Whilst highly important measures have been set out in the UK ‘Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act’ (2004) it does not contain the Government’s proposals on domestic violence proposals introduced in the ‘Safety and Justice<sup>4</sup>’ (2003) (Hague, 2005). Nor does ‘The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act’ (2004) include the breach of an occupation order as criminal (Harne, 2008). The Act does not offer solutions as regards the situation of victims who kill perpetrators or migrant women in terms of the availability of legal defence and the expectations of all parties (mainly NGOs) are not fulfilled by the Act which includes

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<sup>4</sup> The Consultation document Safety and Justice issued by the Home Office in June 2003 sought responses from organisations and individuals with an interest in the social problem of domestic violence.

a funding commitment for national domestic violence helplines, internet services and refuge services (Hague, 2005). An early evaluation was carried out into the implementation of this Act (Hester *et al.*, 2008). This showed that, as regards the implementation of its provisions, only limited progress was made and that there was a reduction in the use of non-molestation orders. There is also lack of enforcement of law in the UK, despite a fairly strong legal framework. For instance, police and other criminal justice personnel tend to regard marital rape as less serious and traumatic than other forms of rape, although it is more likely to involve injury and often, use of weapons (Barnish, 2004). Lack of concern about the issue is reflected in the absence of specific monitoring, evaluation and research relating to partner/ex-partner sexual assault (Barnish, 2004:77). According to Harwin and Barron (2000), policies in relation to domestic violence had little impact on tackling this issue. In 2013, the Home Secretary commissioned HMIC to conduct an inspection (HMIC, 2014) and it was found that despite considerable improvements in the service, the overall police response to victims of domestic abuse insufficient. In too many forces there are weaknesses in the service provided to victims; some of these are serious and this means that victims are put at unnecessary risk identified an urgent need to improve the police response to victims of domestic abuse (HMIC, 2014). The extent of domestic abuse remains high, in Northumbria alone there were 27,275 incidents of domestic violence between April 2012 and March 2013, and more than 53,000 incidents across the Northeast. Two women are killed on average each week in the UK because of domestic violence and an estimated 57,900 women and children across England and Wales have been assessed by police and other agencies as at risk of homicide or serious harm from partners or former partners (Laville, 214:14).

## 2.7 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to provide a review of the literature on the set of factors involved in restricting, increasing, or moderating DVAW. A brief outline of the definitions of domestic violence, as well as the extent of the problem was undertaken. The international dimension of this phenomenon was analysed whilst particular attention was made to DVAW. This chapter discussed the ways in which DVAW is defined, different meanings and interpretations of DVAW and it also explored various types of violence committed against women. The discussion was developed by providing some of the studies conducted with regard to domestic DVAW.

Twenty years ago, DVAW was not considered an issue worthy of international attention or concern. Victims suffered in silence, with little public recognition of their plight. This began to change in the 1990s as women's groups organised locally and internationally to demand attention to the physical, psychological, and economic abuse of women. Gradually, DVAW has come to be recognised as a legitimate human rights issue and as a significant threat to women's health and well-being. This chapter also discussed DVAW from legal perspectives. Laws and policies can provide a basis for a coordinated and comprehensive approach to DVAW, aiming to protect women from abuse in the family. Laws and policies can assist in aiding change people attitudes and behaviours in the long term.

The next chapter will carry on the discussion, concentrating on women's status and the subject of DVAW in Arab societies of the MENA region as well as in migration contexts.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Domestic Violence in North Africa and the Middle East and Migration Contexts**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses domestic violence against women (DVAW) in Arab societies of the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries. In particular, it focuses on women's status, which would assist in understanding peoples' attitudes to domestic violence against women (DVAW). The chapter explores the dynamics of family structure in Arab societies and how this shapes peoples' attitudes towards DVAW. The MENA countries are predominantly Muslim therefore, focusing on religion (Islam) and its influence on the way the family functions assists understanding of peoples' attitudes to DVAW.

Feminist scholars as noted have argued that domestic violence against women is rooted in broader systems of gender stratification and discrimination. The nature of the patriarchal system and gender order in Arabic/Muslim communities are discussed (see Chapter 1) to understand how it creates gender differences, which define the position of men and women. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the MENA region. It will also provide a summary of studies of DVAW in the MENA region, as well as discussion of the status of Libyan women and violence against them. The last section of the chapter includes a discussion of the issue of DVAW amongst migrant communities.



### **3.2 Arab Countries of the MENA Region**

This section of the chapter provides a brief overview of the MENA region Arab countries and includes information on demography, culture, law, religion, education and gender disparities in the region.

#### ***An overview of the MENA region***

There is no standard definition of the 'Middle East'. The British coined the term in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to refer to the Persian Gulf region (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007) and by 1950, the term encompassed Cyprus, Egypt and Turkey as well as Iran and the Western Asian Arab states. The area covered includes 22 countries in Western Asia and North Africa (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007). The boundaries are not defined only by religious, ethnic or related socio-economic characteristics, rather by the geography of MENA; this includes the non-Arab countries, Iran and Turkey. North Africa, Western Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula form the three general sub regions of MENA. These sub regions do not correspond exactly to the United Nations regions with the same names (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007). The Western Asian countries are culturally and religiously diverse. While Arabs are overwhelmingly Muslim in most of the region, there are exceptions. About one-fourth of Lebanon's population is made up of Arab Christians. *Sunni* Muslims are the majority in the region, with *Shia* Muslims a majority in Iran and Iraq (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007).

Gender inequality is present in economic, political and social spheres, therefore most Muslim societies are considered as patriarchal societies (Moghadam, 2004). There are certain aspects of the '*Sharia*' (Islamic) law, which are widely understood and misinterpreted, in a manner,

which supports and maintains gender inequality and women's subordination. According to Hill and King (1993), traditional Arab cultural views and social norms of the region maintain women's roles primarily as mothers and homemakers. Public and private life has been shaped by Arab culture which dates back thousands of years, by Islam, by *Ottoman* (Turkish) rule, by European invasions and influences and by Christian missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Moreover, political and religious movements, as well as natural resources, have shaped the modern Middle East. A considerable section of the region was part of the Roman and then the Byzantine empires until the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, when Islam was introduced. Islam eventually forged a common cultural and religious bond throughout the region (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007).

### **3.2.1 Education and Gender Disparity in the MENA Region**

Access to education varies widely for both boys and girls in Arab countries. For example, 98% of primary school age children attend school in Tunisia, however in Saudi Arabia the percentage of children attending primary school drops to 57% (UNISCO, 2008: 8). Likewise it is more common for boys to attend primary school than girls in most countries, 44% of girls as opposed to 76% of boys in Yemen, for example, whilst in some countries—2% points in Tunisia and three in Algeria there is little difference. In some countries, (Bahrain, UAE, Qatar) the girls actually outnumber the boys in primary schools (Ottaway, 2004: 5).

The region's economic and cultural diversity is reflected on its education systems and attitudes toward employment. According to 1995–2004 estimates, some 57 million adults still lack

basic literacy skills in the Arab states, more than two-thirds of whom are women (UNESCO, 2008).

Gender disparities often favour boys, in MENA countries about two-thirds of the Arab states had achieved gender parity in primary education by 2005 or were close to achieving it, compared with 35% in secondary education, while parity in tertiary education was observed in none of the countries (UNESCO, 2008). In twelve out of the seventeen countries with data, more women than men were in tertiary education in 2005. In Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, for example, women make up more than two-thirds of students in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2008).

Reducing the educational gender gap does not automatically translate into equality between women and men. The overall situation demonstrates that gender equality in the education sector remains elusive in the MENA countries with sexual violence and insecure school environments affecting the self-esteem, participation and retention of girls. Gender disparities may have been reduced in the region, but they have not been eliminated. Only Jordan and Qatar had achieved the gender parity goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in both primary and secondary education by 2005. Gender disparities become more discernible in higher levels of education. By 2005, approximately two-thirds of Arab states had achieved gender parity in primary education, or were close to achieving it, compared with 35% in secondary education, whilst no Arab country enjoyed parity in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2008:7).

### **3.2.2 Women's Participation in the Workforce in the MENA Region**

In the MENA region, female labour force participation appears to be exceptionally low, although it is growing. The levels of Muslim women's participation in the paid labour force are best explained by a particular economy's development strategy and consequent need for female labour, rather than by, for example, religious ideology or cultural beliefs in male breadwinner/female-homemaker roles. In the MENA region oil-boom years prior to the mid-1980s, the oil-centred economies did not require female labour in order to develop. Thus, oil-rich nations such as Saudi Arabia had few women in paid employment. By contrast, Muslim countries, which sought to develop through labour-intensive industrial production, such as Tunisia, have a high female labour force participation similar to countries outside the region (UNESCO, 2008). Overall, women's share of the total labour force has increased in the last 26 years. In countries such as Algeria, Libya, Oman, Kuwait, and Tunisia, for example, the female share of the total labour force increased at least 3% between 2000 and 2005. However, by contrast, in Morocco and Djibouti, the percentage of women in the total labour force decreased by 1% (Livani, 2007:4).

Salary gaps and differential access to particular occupations and political representation are evidence of continuing gender inequality. The region is characterised overall by high levels of unemployment. ILO (2013) reported that as a result of the Arab Spring, economic growth in North Africa turned negative in 2011, in some countries and was a near-collapse of economic activity in Libya, and deceleration of growth in all countries in the region except Morocco. The ILO, (2010) correspondingly reported that, in the Middle East, the nominal number of unemployed women was higher than that of the corresponding increase in male

unemployment. The female unemployment rate increased from 14.4-15.0% between 2007 and 2009 whilst the male rate remained constant at 7.7%” (ILO, 2010:6). Women’s participation in the labour force has gradually increased across the region but remains very low compared with other regions (Rishmawi and Morris, 2007). The following quotation indicates the reasons behind women’s lack of contribution in labour force in MENA countries:

In developed countries, a portion of the employment gap can be attributed to the fact that some women freely choose to stay at home because they can afford to not enter the labour market or prefer to tend to the household. Yet in some lesser-developed regions of the world, remaining outside of the labour force is not a choice for the majority of women but an obligation; it is likely that women would opt to work in these regions if it became socially acceptable to do so. This of course does not mean that these women remain at home doing nothing; most are heavily engaged in household activities. Regardless, because most female household work continues to be classified as non-economic activity, women who are thus occupied are classified as outside of the labour force (ILO, 2010:4).

In nearly all MENA countries, however, women today are better represented in the labour force and play a more prominent role in the workplace than was the case earlier this decade (Kelly and Breslin, 2010). The growing number of working women appears to be the result of increased literacy and educational opportunities, slowly changing cultural attitudes, and in some countries, government policies aimed at reducing dependence on foreign labour (Kelly and Breslin, 2010).

Globalisation in the past quarter century, particularly that of the increasing international integration of markets in the global capitalist economy, is a fundamental factor in the evolving role of women in Muslim societies, and elsewhere. Globalisation has brought increased economic and job insecurity, together with the need for more than one breadwinner in a family. At the same time, in many national economies, globalization has reduced the proportion of

formal sector employment, which had already been beyond the reach of many Muslim women. Globalization has also prompted the withdrawal of the state from service provision, thereby increasing women's family burdens (Djavad, 2010). The effect of globalization on most Arab Muslim women has often resulted in increased hardship, however, at the same time, many women have reported an enhanced sense of empowerment on account of their extended public role and earnings.

### **3.2.3 Family, Gender and Islam in the MENA Region**

In this section, the structure and centrality of the family are discussed in depth. The role and status of women within the family in MENA countries is considered, together with gender divisions within the household. The patriarchal system of male domination of Arab society is discussed in Chapter 1 with particular reference to the role and importance of Islam in shaping and constructing gender divisions, gender roles and women's status in the Muslim societies of the region are discussed in detail in this chapter.

#### ***Family structure and function in the MENA Region***

This section includes a discussion on the structure and dynamics of family life in the MENA region, with particular reference to the Arab and traditional Islamic beliefs in women's subordination or/and male superiority. Domestic violence is closely linked to the nature and structure of the family, hence it is important to include family in the discussion and consider it as a significant unit of analysis in the research into DVAW.

In spite of socioeconomic changes that have occurred over the past few decades, the family is still viewed as a highly important social institution whose unity and cohesiveness should be

maintained (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000). The family constitutes the social institution through which persons and groups inherit their religious, social class, and cultural identities. It also provides security and support in times of stress (An-Naim, 2002). There are six characteristics of Middle Eastern families: (1) extended, (2) patrilineal, (3) patrilocal, (4) patriarchal, (5) endogamous, and (6) occasionally polygamous (Haj-Yahia, 2000b).

It is difficult in reality; however, to identify one model that typifies all Arab families (Barakat, 1993). In this connection, it is important to consider the family's religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian, Druze), place of residence (urban, rural, Bedouin localities, refugee camps), occupation of family members (agriculture, industry, services, for example), national affiliation and educational levels of the husband and wife. In addition, it is important to consider the family's social environment and its exposure to Western society and culture (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000). The Arab family still plays an important economic role in supplementing assistance received from formal services. In this respect, every family member is usually considered responsible for the behaviour and the living conditions of other members (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000). This commitment often leads people to forego personal aspirations, needs, and desires in exchange for the family's wellbeing, and maintenance of the family's reputation and honour. This is especially true of mothers, whose own happiness is meant to be determined by their children's happiness and growth, and both parents and offspring are expected to be totally committed to the well-being and unity of the family. Therefore, the success or failure of a woman's marriage reflects not only her own failure or success, but also the success or failure of her family of origin. As such, her personal marital problems are of concern also to her father, brothers, and sisters (Haj-Yahia, 2000a).

***Marriage and divorce in Arab-Muslim families***

Marriage, as a social institution, is essentially a civil contract and rests on the same footing as other contracts. Its validity depends on the capacity of the contracting parties, which according to Islamic law, consists of having attained majority *bulugh* (adulthood). Mutual consent and public declaration of the marriage contract are its essentials (Ahmed, 1992). The law does not insist on any particular form in which this contract is entered into or any specific religious ceremony. There are different traditional forms prevalent amongst Muslims in different parts of the world, however, it is considered advisable to conform to them. As far as *Sharia* (Islamic law) is concerned (Baden, 1992), the validity of the marriage depends on the proposition on one side (*ijab*) and acceptance (*qubul*) on the other. This offer and the acceptance can take place directly between the parties, or through an agent (*Wakil*). In a traditional Muslim marriage the bride's consent is procured through her representative. Normally there are at least two witnesses to this matrimonial contract, entered into at a family ceremony (Baden, 1992). There is also a dowry (*mahr*), a sum of money promised by the groom before marriage, which he pays to the wife, and which is for her sole and exclusive use and benefit. This dowry is an important part of the scheme, but it is not essential for the legality of the marriage that its amount be pre-fixed. As such, its absence would not render the marriage invalid, although customarily a husband is expected to pay it (Ahmed, 1992).

Although marriage is primarily a relationship between the spouses, in reality it also builds a relationship between two families and beyond. That is why other members of the family, particularly the parents of the spouses, play such a strong role within it. Consent of the bride and the bridegroom is essential (Baden, 1992). Marriage is a social necessity because, through



marriage, families are established. Furthermore, in Islam, marriage is the only legitimate or '*halal*' way to indulge in sexual intimacy between a man and a woman (Ahmed, 1992). Marriage is seen as an outlet for sexual needs and regulates the sexuality of women (Ahmed, 1992). Afshar (1998) pointed out that marriage in Islam could be considered to be a 'commercial transaction' in which the woman rents or sells her sexual services to her husband. Some defined it as '*pay or sale, which results in the transfer of an absolute proprietary*' (Coulson 1964). This means that what is exchanged is not the goods but the exchanging of sexual services. It is important to note that in Islamic marriage, female sexuality is believed to be a tradable commodity, however not the woman herself (Haeri, 1989). The woman 'rents' her sexual organ to her husband and in return, receives a price i.e. a '*mahr*' (dowry), which is to be documented in the marriage contract and is also entitled to maintenance i.e. '*nfagheh*'. Meanwhile, the Islamic concept of a contract offers some freedom within fixed variations of contracts, which can be understood as conditions mutually agreed upon between the people involved in the contract. The woman has the right to demand some options at the time of contracting her marriage, as long as these options do not contradict marital requirements (Afshar, 1998). Women for instance, can ask for certain stipulations, (apart from the *mahr*): for instance they can demand that their future house has certain features or that they will be given a certain amount as monthly stipend. A woman can also refuse to move away from her town (Al-Hibri, 1997).

Minimum ages of marriage are identified in the Muslim family laws of most Arab states; where they are lacking, procedural rules identify similar ages for the registration of marriage by a state official. The ages vary throughout the region; several set higher minimum ages of

marriage for males than for females. A general pattern in women's rights advocacy is to seek to raise the minimum age of capacity for marriage to the age of legal majority, which is usually identified separately in the particular country's civil code. The age of 18 is often the target age (Welchman, 2007).

Additionally, polygamy exists in MENA countries as the Quran permits men to take up to four wives, although men should not practice polygamy unless they can be sure of treating wives fairly (Baden, 1992). Islamic Family Law addresses the possibility of polygamy with some variations. This seems to be the case in the majority of Muslim countries. Turkey and Tunisia and the Druze Sect in Lebanon, prohibit polygamy completely (Nasution, 2008). However, concern with the application of laws and its effect on social life is still debated amongst scholars. Some scholars believe polygamy to have a positive effect, whilst others disagree. *Hanafi* law, at least in theory, gives women the right to stipulate clauses in the marriage contract that restrict a man's right to practice polygyny (Baden, 1992). Although nowadays polygamy in most Arab societies is in decline and is not practiced widely in MENA countries, it does exist. For instance, 8%–13% of all Kuwaiti marriages were polygamous and in some of the Gulf countries, rates were higher (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2006:6). Interestingly, an increase in polygamous marriages was observed in Egypt in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Nosseir, 2003).

With regard to divorce, family arbitration is resorted to before final dissolution. This is laid down in the Quran and in the <sup>5</sup> 'Sunnah'. If this fails, then steps are taken for the dissolution of the marriage. There are three forms of dissolution: divorce by the husband 'talaq', separation sought by the wife 'khuLa' and dissolution of the marriage by a court of an arbiter. Detailed laws and by-laws have been laid down by the Quran and the 'Sunnah' in respect of these and they have been codified in the 'Fiqh' literature to regulate different aspects of marriage and family life (Ahmed, 1992). However, in North Africa divorce by the husband is extremely common.

Islamic law gives the husband the unilateral right to divorce his wife for any reason (or for no reason) simply by declaring his repudiation of her three times 'talaq' <sup>6</sup> and his maintenance obligations after divorce are then extremely minimal. On the other hand, the wife is generally entitled to divorce her husband only in a Court of Law, where he is made subject to a charge for payment of maintenance. In some schools of Islamic law, the husband's failure ultimately to provide this support (no matter what his reason) is not sufficient grounds for divorce and thus she is left with no avenue for escape (King, 2009).

Although Islam allows divorce, it is generally viewed as an undesirable but necessary means of ending marriages in which conflict between the spouses is such that continuing the

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<sup>5</sup> *Sunni* Islam is sometimes referred to as the orthodox version of the religion. It comes from the term *Sunnah*, which refers to the sayings and actions of the prophet Mohamed that are recorded in *hadiths* (collections of narrations regarding the prophet).

<sup>6</sup> (A husband says to his wife 'you are divorced')

relationship would defeat the purpose of marriage (Al-Hibri, 1997). In most cases, repudiation is revocable until the wife completes a period of *idda*<sup>7</sup>. During *idda* the wife is prohibited from marrying another man. If the divorce is revocable, the husband may resume marital relations with the wife without her consent. *Idda*'s main purpose is to determine whether the wife is pregnant, thereby avoiding questions of paternity. It also serves as a period in which spouses may be reconciled and the wife can be brought back into marriage (Al-Hibri, 1997).

Divorce in MENA countries is an issue. In Syria in 1975, and in Tunisia in 1956, for instance, divorce became an issue for the court. In Egypt in 1920 and 1929, a divorced woman could apply for alimony due by her ex-husband and for child custody. In Tunisia in 1956 and in Egypt in 2000, divorce became a right held by both sexes. The divorce rates for Egypt and Libya during the past quarter of a century have shown steady declines, whilst Tunisia has experienced minor changes. One way of explaining this, is in terms of the prevalence and durability of the family institution in the region, as well as the reluctance to allow globalisation or Westernisation to enter the domain of values and private or family behaviour (An-Naim, 2002). Another observation in this regard is that the decline in the divorce rate is accompanied by the evolution of Arab legislation on family matters, particularly those pertaining to women's rights (An-Naim, 2002). Men's right to divorce has, unilaterally, become more restricted. Polygamy was restricted in Syria in 1975, and denied in Tunisia in 1956, whereby it became a justifiable reason for an Egyptian wife to ask for divorce (Baden, 1992).

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<sup>7</sup> The *idda* is a waiting period (3 months, in divorce) a wife must observe after her marriage is terminated by divorce or the death of her husband. In death of the husband the *idda* period months and 10 days. If a woman was pregnant, the waiting period is until she gives birth.

### **3.2.4 Women's Legal Position and Rights in MENA Region**

In this section, attention is paid to women's status in law as well as their socio-political position, with an emphasis on 'Sharia' and civil law. The economic status of women is of particular interest, as the researcher believes that this is central to understanding the position and rights of women within the MENA countries. These include employment, property and property rights and livelihoods. The tension between political Islam and modern secular law will be evaluated.

It is observed that women's lower status than that enjoyed by men in Arab society is manifested in their relative absence or lower levels of participation in employment, education and politics. Many think women's position in Arab society is a direct outcome of the faith, which is followed by the majority in these countries, whilst others have attributed it to patriarchy, which is present in almost all societies of the globe regardless of culture or belief. Patriarchy remains one of the greatest challenges facing women in Arab-Muslim societies who aspire to break boundaries and achieve their freedom by means of education and employment. It is interesting to note; however, that religion and culture reinforce patriarchy and that many men have used these social tools as a means to control women's labour, will and rights. This chapter thus, particularly includes a discussion on how women's status in Arab-Muslim society is shaped by a system of values and beliefs, that of 'patriarchal gender order', which supports men's control and dominance over women, in almost all areas of life (An-Naim, 2002).

The Arab/North African family has long been described as a patriarchal unit and it has been noted that Muslim family laws have served to reinforce patriarchal gender relations and women's subordinate position within the family. Patriarchy is multi-faceted. Arab-Muslim patriarchy is space-based and takes the family, as its particular abode. Whilst mainstream Western patriarchies are more public and based on the ideal image of a woman, Arab-Muslim patriarchy is more private in nature (Joseph, 1996a).

In many MENA countries, there are double (or several) systems of law, which may present contradictions as regards the status of women and their rights (Baden, 1992). The constitutions of all Arab countries except Lebanon recognise the '*Sharia*' (Islamic Law). In most countries, this law is in clear disagreement with the principle of equality between men and women and the ban on gender discrimination; both these provisions are also to be found in almost all Arab constitutions (Glasse, 1989). Traditional *Sharia*'s law differentiates people in accordance with their sex, status and religion, therefore, women and men, Muslims and non-Muslims all enjoy different levels of legal status, the dominant and privileged legal position being reserved for the free Muslim man. Women have fewer rights, particularly with reference to marriage, divorce and inheritance. Islamic law gives women the right to own and dispose of property, but women inherit less property than men<sup>8</sup>. Non-Muslim widows cannot inherit from Muslim husbands. Like '*Sharia*'s law in general, from which it is derived, Muslim family law distinguishes principally between women and men and between Muslims and non-Muslims (Würth, 2004). Muslim Family Law, known as the Personal Status Code in North Africa and

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<sup>8</sup> For instance a daughter has half her brother's portion.

the Levant, is a social policy whose political significance and consequences for women's economic participation are specific to the countries of the MENA region. This law acts as a code that governs marriage, divorce, maintenance, paternity, and custody (An-Naim, 2002).

In many Muslim states, the substance of family law, and its actual implementation, differ in ways that somewhat mitigate the gender imbalance of the law. Women are able, and sometimes officially encouraged, to exploit rules and loopholes to circumvent discriminatory provisions in the law. Women can, for example, write clauses into marriage contracts which make taking another wife grounds for divorce and post-divorce division of marital assets (Moghadam, 2005).

The term '*rentier state*' (Charrad 2000) is most frequently applied to states which are rich in high value natural resources such as petroleum, for example, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Libya. However, the theory of the '*rentier state*' is a complex mixture of associated ideas relating to patterns of development and the nature of states in economies dominated by external revenues, particularly oil revenues. Whilst the concept of the '*rentier state*' applies to MENA states in terms of gender, i.e. '*neo-patriarchal states*' (as stated by Sharabi, 1988), is another label for the several state types in the Middle East. Religion is bound to the authority of power in the *neo-patriarchal state*, unlike liberal or social democratic societies and the family, rather than the individual, constitutes the universal building block of the national community. The *neo-patriarchal state* and the patriarchal family reflect and reinforce each other (Charrad, 2000).

Most states have sought the apparently contradictory goals of economic development and strengthening of the male-dominated, patriarchal family. The latter objective is often a bargain

struck with conservative social elements, such as religious leaders or traditional local communities. The Nasser period in Egypt, for example, has often been described as ‘state feminist’ (Hatem, 2000), but Botman (1999) showed that in spite of Nasser-sponsored state feminism which allowed women unprecedented access to education and employment, the regime would not address family law. Patriarchal gender relations and the distinction between the public and private spheres were reinforced and the religious establishment was allowed control over a key societal institution (Cherifati-Merabtine, 1995).

Women’s rights activists who focused on the reform of family law in the 1990s did so because of the contradiction between personal achievements and aspirations and the legal restrictions placed on them by family law. Although Muslim family law gives women certain rights, such as ‘*mahr*’ the dowry, (see above), whilst this practice was initially meant to provide a form of social insurance for the wife in the event of divorce or widowhood, in the modern era it symbolises women’s economic dependence. Legal statutes assert that men owe wives material support or maintenance ‘*nafaqa*’ and they cannot be commanded to contribute to the family income. This legal requirement, too, may have been appropriate in early Islamic history, but in the modern era, it has functioned to perpetuate the patriarchal gender contract. It may also help to explain the age and marital-specific patterns of female labour force participation. *Sharia’s* law and its common interpretation do not support women against violence as it supports ‘correcting’ women with force in particular situations.

The next section discusses debate on DVAW in the MENA countries; it will shed light on the nature of DVAW in MENA countries.



### **3.3 Violence against Women in the Middle East and North African Countries**

In this section, the awareness or lack of awareness of the concept of DVAW within the family is discussed. Islamic perspectives relating to DVAW in particular and women's rights in general are explored. Domestic violence is often normalised within the culture of Muslim societies therefore attention is paid to cultural norms. The common perceptions of DVAW and its prevalence in the MENA countries are discussed, together with the causes of domestic violence. The final part of this section includes a discussion about the mechanism of support for the victims of DVAW in the MENA countries, examining the existing policies and procedures (if any) which protect and support victims and considers local initiatives and self-help groups and networks which support victims of abuse.

As stated above, DVAW in most of the MENA region is considered a private matter, which should be settled within families. It is justifiably viewed as a way of 'correcting' the misconduct of a woman by a man (El-Zanaty *et al.*, 1996). The main problematic issue in relation to DVAW is its occurrence is under-reported. Women are often pressurised by their families not to report the incident to authorities if they want their husbands to continue to support them materially (Kadiri, 2001) and some men use divorce as a tool to threaten their wives if they opt to speak out about violence. Divorce is often viewed as shameful for women in many Muslim societies around the world, including Arab societies. Kadiri (2001) argues that women are often either too afraid or ashamed to share their experiences of DVAW with others and in particular with the authorities. Haj-Yahia (1998b) carried out a study which examined attitudes and beliefs to wife-beating amongst Palestinian women, and found 80% of

the men and women in his study indicated that wife abuse does not justify reporting the husband to the legal authorities (Haj –Yahia, 1998b:43).

It is important to mention that, in spite of the recent increase in public and professional interest in DVAW in Arab society, there is a serious lack of empirical research on different dimensions of the problem in these societies. Likewise relatively little has been written about the importance of socio-cultural sensitivity in interventions with abused and battered women in Arab society (Boy and Kulczyck, 2008; Hatem, 2000). The author of this study conducted an extensive literature review in Arabic and in English, which revealed that there is relatively little information on the subject of DVAW in MENA countries. This is partly due to the fact that there are no reliable and uniform methods of reporting DVAW (Hatem, 2000). Official estimates of the prevalence of DVAW in some Arab countries are, therefore, unreliable and the reported rates of such issue are very low (Kulwicki, 2000).

Although research on DVAW is rare, in some MENA countries there are indications, which expose the myth that DVAW affects only a small proportion of women. In Egypt, for example, the prevalence of DVAW is 33% (Ammar, 2006: 34) and is mostly physical, but both psychological and sexual abuse also exists. The Egyptian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) of 1995 (El-Zanaty *et al.*, 1996), conducted amongst a national random sample of 14,779 women, indicated that one out of three Egyptian women who have been married has been beaten at least once since marriage and one third of them were abused during pregnancy (Douki *et al.*, 2003:165). In addition, in Egypt, DVAW is discussed by El Saadawi (1980), Zenie-Ziegler (1988) and Lane and Meleis (1991), who observe that DVAW may be at its greatest in the early years of marriage. El Saadawi (1980) recorded that; women, who give

birth to a girl, particularly if they do not already have a boy, may be beaten. El Saadawi (1980) and Zenie-Zigler (1988) discussed the phenomenon of honour-killing- the murder of a woman because she is suspected of having engaged in illicit sexual relations. The loss of a woman's virginity is seen as a shame, which can only be wiped out in blood. El Saadawi (1980) stated that if she is not murdered, the woman may well be ostracised by her community, even if she has been raped. El Saadawi also noted the widespread sexual abuse of girls by male family members in Egypt. Furthermore, within the North African family structure, the rule is to 'correct' children with the aim of 'bringing them up and educating' them. Consequently, it is considered natural to beat or slap children and women with the aim of 'correcting' them (Sadiqi, 2008).

In 1993, in the emergency unit of Ibn Rushd Hospital in Morocco, 1.506 cases of DVAW were registered, indicating a mean occurrence of 4 cases per day. Most of these acts of aggression were committed by a family member (usually the husband) (Douki *et al.*, 2003:166). In Tunisia, a 1997 survey carried out amongst 500 women who were attending a primary care unit, showed that 34% of them reported having been beaten by their husbands or another family member at least once (Douki *et al.*, 2003:165). In Syria, 26% of married women have reported at least three instances of abuse during the year, whilst *weekly* battering occurred for 3.3% of married women (Maziak and Asfar, 2003).

Haj –Yahia (2002) conducted a study into the beliefs of 356 Jordanian women on the subject of DVAW. The participants demonstrated a strong tendency to justify DVAW and expressed their beliefs that women benefit from violence against them, and blamed women for violence. Furthermore, the participants expressed clear opposition to formal assistance for battered

women from governmental agencies. The results also revealed that whilst women showed a weak tendency to blame violent husbands for wife abuse, the prevailing belief was that violent men should not be punished for their behaviour.

Within MENA countries, studies increasingly highlight the types of DVAW and the manner in which women are confined to their socio-cultural reproduction roles by means of violent acts of discipline (Lloyd, 2006). A 2005 study in Egypt explored the influences of women's education, marital resources and constraints, and exposure to norms about women's family roles on their views about DVAW amongst 5,450 participants. Half of the participants justified DVAW. Women from rural areas, who were exposed to domestic violence, justified such acts more frequently. Dependant wives, whose husbands had more schooling, were blood relatives, and were co-resident, more often justified such acts. In settings where women tended to marry at an older age, women justified such acts less often (Yount, 2009). The risk factors associated with DVAW include age of the wife, economic status of the family, wealth and the wife's education (Ammar, 2006). In addition, rural women were found to be somewhat more at risk of abuse in both Egyptian and Syrian studies (El-Zanaty, 1996). In Syria, it was found that women aged 15-19 were most likely to have suffered abuse (Maziak and Asfar, 2003). Two small-scale studies conducted in southern Iraq and in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan revealed that some men believed that a husband had the right to beat his wife if she disobeyed him (Amowitz *et al.*, 2004; Khawaja, 2004). In a study of 230 men and women in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 30% of males indicated that they had abused female members of the families, and 41% of the total sample said female members of their families were victims of physical violence (Almosaed, 2004:132).

Additionally, Tizro (2012) investigated the local conditions and factors leading to domestic violence in Iran. She established that half of the men in her sample admitted that they used physical violence as a means to control their wives. Moreover, almost all of them acknowledged that they used psychological and economic violence to restrict and punish their wives. Men used the gender `difference` discourse to justify the way in which they viewed women. In their opinion, women are, by nature, less logical and rational and more emotional and unsettled (Tizro, 2012).

Haj-Yahia (1998, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2003) conducted several studies on attitudes to wife abuse in various Arab societies and noted a general tendency to justify wife abuse in certain circumstances (e.g. infidelity, challenging the husband's manhood, or disobedience) as well as a general tendency to perceive the wife and the husband as *both* being responsible for wife abuse. Haj-Yahia (2002) argues that, in general, there is great awareness of wife abuse and the different types of abuse, mainly that of physical and psychological abuse. In addition, there was also a strong tendency to consider DVAW as family issue rather than a social and legal problem.

### **3.3.1 The Role of Arabic/Muslim Families in Relation to DVAW**

As mentioned, DVAW is considered to be a family matter in MENA countries, and the family is part of the Islamic social order (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004). Families made serious efforts to maintain their reputations, especially, that of the reputation of female members, therefore, they preferred to keep their problems to themselves, even at the expense of the well-being of other family members. Thus, abused women may receive temporary protection, shelter, and support

from their natal families if they experienced violence (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Haj-Yahia, (2000) stated that the family would not provide the protection if women were beaten because they did not fulfil traditional expectations as a wives and mothers. These include obedience and submission to the husband, acceptance of almost sole responsibility for satisfying the children's needs, renunciation of personal ambitions for the sake of the husband and offspring, maintaining the family's reputation, strengthening family solidarity and loyalty, and, above all, faithfulness to one's partner at all levels—particularly sexual fidelity (Barakat, 1993, Haj-Yahia, 2000).

Clearly, this discourse influences various dimensions of family life, such as decision making, rearing children, spousal relations, resolving conflicts in the family and between partners, leisure activities, visits, and mutual support within the extended family, etc. While it is assumed that the families of abused Arab women will provide them with shelter and protection, the family often states that this support will only be given for a limited time (Barakat, 1993). Consequently, notwithstanding the temporary relief provided by the family in terms of support and protection, the resulting pressure may exacerbate the wife's fear, anxiety, frustration, helplessness, and weakness generated by her husband's violent behaviour (Dutton, 1994, Haj-Yahia, 1998). In some cases, family pressure on women to return to the husband may reinforce helplessness, lack of confidence in her ability to stop the violence and lack of confidence in her relatives' sincere desire and ability to support her (Hattar *et al.*, 2003).

### **3.3.2 State, Law and Domestic Violence against Women**

This section concerns the law in relation to DVAW in MENA countries. The aim is to examine why the rate of women accessing and approaching the justice systems remains low. Most women have a little knowledge about the legal system in relation to DVAW, which will be discussed later in this section. Some cultural factors will also be included in the following discussion. Moreover, this section will discuss different types of support available to women i.e. victims of DVAW in the MENA countries.

Most MENA countries do not have legislation in place to protect women from domestic violence. In the last decade, however, there has been a growing focus on the necessity for realms to implement comprehensive laws to end domestic violence in particular and gender-based violence in general. However, victims of DVAW are not well protected by the law or society. Women often have difficulty providing evidence of domestic violence, as they usually lack witnesses and their word is not given much weight by the authorities (Charrad, 2010).

Women's ability to obtain justice is also weak due to their lack of education and degree of legal literacy. In most Arab countries a woman's testimony is worth only half that of a man's in certain areas of the law and society requires that women first seek mediation through the family before turning to courts, where in any case they encounter the patriarchal leanings of many male judges (Kelly and Breslin, 2010). The state may directly or indirectly monitor domestic violence through its own mechanisms. Studies have shown that state building in the Maghreb has been based on family regulation (Charrad 2010). The state's grip on the family is channelled through the regulation of marriage registration and the laws which differ

according to the society concerned (Sadiqi, 2008). In addition, states devise laws regulating women's reproductive rights as well as family disintegration- divorce and death. In brief, the family is not an enclave in its relationship with the state, rather the relationship between the two resides in the fine line between the private and public space (Charrad, 2010). MENA countries are still exceptional in their array of laws, practices and customs that pose major obstacles to the protection of women and the punishment of abusers.

The trend to reject the legal approach towards DVAW as a crime is relevant to the socio-cultural context of Arab society. This might reflect the fear that acknowledging DVAW as a problem that justifies intervention of welfare and legal services will break through the boundaries of the family, ruin the family's good reputation and, thereby, damage the cultural, social, economic, educational, political and religious status of all family members not to mention breaking up the family through separation, imprisonment or divorce (Sadiqi, 2008).

The next section includes discussion of different types of support available to women in the MENA countries.

### **3.3.3 Support Mechanisms for Abused Women**

Women in the MENA countries rarely report violence carried out against them as mentioned above. According to Somach and Abou-Zeid (2009) "due to a lack of legal protections and restrictions on social services, female victims of violence generally have limited options for assistance in the Middle East and North Africa" (Somach and Abou-Zeid, 2009: 32) . For instance in a study of 100 abused women in Egypt, only 13 women went to the police, even when cases were brought. And an estimated 44% of these were withdrawn within a few days



after the report being filed, according to another study (Somach and Abou-Zeid, 2009:24). Women stay in abusive relationships because of challenges posed by Egyptian law, such as an unequal divorce system, consequences such as men's non-payment of alimony and child support, and precarious housing and custody rights (Somach and Abou-Zeid, 2009). In Egypt, the law does not contain articles specifically related to honour killings (Hassan, 2009), however, Article 17 of the Egyptian Penal Code grants judges discretionary authority to reduce the original sentence by two degrees below that mandated by law in the name of leniency (Hassan, 2009). While the Article applies to all crimes without distinction, judges often consider the mitigating circumstances in passing sentence for honour crimes, such as that the accused was under psychological pressure, the victim violated the prevailing social values, or the accused removed the 'shame' caused by the victim to her family. Thus, the specific use of Article 17 in honour crimes creates the impression that such crimes are somehow permissible or less important than other forms of assault and murder (Hassan, 2009).

On the other hand, many countries in the region have very active women's organisations and charities run by, and addressing, the needs of women. Women's groups have largely focused on improving women's social welfare and legal reform. These groups seek full participation of women in the workforce and to enable women to occupy leadership and decision-making positions, in both the public and private sectors (Rishmawi and Morris, 2007). They are also working to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination. Very active women's' groups exist in Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen, but in other countries the numbers are far fewer. In Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states, female reformers are targeted and harassed both by state authorities and traditionalists.

Movements against domestic violence and support for victims has steadily increased in many MENA countries. For instance, in Bahrain local NGOs provide shelter, free legal advice and rehabilitation services for victims (Loewentha, 2009). One successful partnership between the USA.-based NGO Vital Voices, the Bahraini company Smart Coaching and Research Centre, and the U.S. State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) promotes civil society's participation in the fight against domestic violence and trains people in advocacy and volunteerism. *KAFA*, which means 'ENOUGH' (enough DVAW) a Beirut, Lebanon-based NGO, provides a full range of services to sufferers of DVAW. By means of its established network of providers, the organization connects women to legal services, shelter, vocational training and therapy (Loewentha, 2009).

In Jordan, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) was established in 2001. The NCFA conducted a survey to determine the effectiveness of systems put in place to fight domestic violence and to determine gaps in services available to Jordanian women and propose improvements (Abu-Ghazaleh, 2008). NCFA's efforts to generate a national definition of DVAW, and to streamline efforts to combat violence (Abu-Ghazaleh, 2008). Many gender-focused CSOs (civil society organisations) place emphasis on amending family laws and penal codes relating to marriage, divorce, nationality, inheritance, DVAW and punishment for 'honour crimes' (Rishmawi and Morris, 2007). Many CSOs provide legal services and counselling and support income-generation activities. Some also run shelters for women who are subjected to violence (Rishmawi and Morris, 2007).

The next section concentrates on Libyan women's status, and the issue of DVAW within Libya.

### **3.4 Status and Position of Women in Libya/Domestic Violence against Women**

This section will provide a brief overview of Libya and on women's general status and position, including some information on women's economic position in Libya. The researcher will attempt to explore the extent and scope of DVAW in Libya and particular attention will be paid to women's status in law as well as to their political position in the country.

#### ***An overview of Libya***

In order to comprehend the context of this study, it is important to discuss the country's background. Libya shares a common language, religion, cultural values, and other social values with other Arab countries. Its area is approximately 1.8 million square kilometres (700,000 sq mi), in the Maghreb regime, and it has a population of approximately six million (The World Factbook, 2012). The population consist almost entirely of Sunni Muslims.

#### **3.4.1 Women's General Status and Position in Libya**

Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2006) stated that the legal rights of Libyan women are better than those of some Arab countries. Until very recently, women in Libya had been encouraged to participate in the workforce and to exercise their economic rights. Women also made academic gains, attending universities in greater numbers. The 1969 Constitutional Proclamation granted women total equality. Article 1 of Law No. 20 of 1991 asserts that the citizens of Libya, both male and female, are free and equal in respect of their rights, and that these rights may not be violated. But in reality women still find themselves at a disadvantage and the participation of women in decision making has remained low (HRW, 2006).

Libya is among those countries, which have signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1989, although they reserved some items that do not comply with the *Sharia's* laws (HRW, 2006). In June 2004, Libya was the first country in the Arab region to ratify the Optional Protocol <sup>9</sup>(OP) to CEDAW (Pargeter, 2010)<sup>10</sup>.

Libyan women are among the most educated women in the Arab world, according to reports issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which noted that more than half of the graduates of Libyan universities are women (HRW, 2006). However, only a quarter of women in Libya were in the labour market. Entering the workforce in Libya (especially for rural and less-educated women) remains difficult (Abdul-Latif, 2013). According to HRW (2008), the previous government [under Col Gadhafi] routinely violated women and girls' human rights, including violations of due process, freedom of movement, personal dignity, and privacy. It is also a fact that, as in other countries, a woman exposed to injustice will not

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<sup>9</sup> The Optional Protocol (OP) is a separate treaty that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999 and entered into force on 22nd December 2000. It was introduced after many years of pressure by the international women's movement to address the lack of a complaints mechanism for rights enshrined in the CEDAW Convention.

<sup>10</sup> The OP contains two procedures: (1) A communications procedure allows individual women, or groups of women, to submit claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention to the Committee. The Protocol establishes that in order for individual communications to be admitted for consideration by the Committee, a number of criteria must be met, including those domestic remedies must have been exhausted. (2) The Protocol also creates an inquiry procedure enabling the Committee to initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights. In either case, States must be Party to the Convention and the Protocol. The Protocol includes an "opt-out clause", allowing States upon ratification or accession to declare that they do not accept the inquiry procedure (Hayes, 2010: 14-15).

resort to the judiciary, due to fear of scandal. Recourse to the judiciary or the police is considered a shameful act and a social scandal (Pargeter, 2010).

*Sharia's* law governs inheritance, marriage, divorce, and the right to own property (Act No. 10 of 1984) also regulate divorce in Libya and provide that, after divorce, the custody of the children go to the father and 'tutelage'<sup>11</sup> to the mother. If a couple divorces by agreement, the wife takes custody (Pargeter, 2010). The roles of men and women in marriage are established in Law No. 10 of 1984, which proscribes different rights based on gender. The husband is granted the right to his wife's "concern with his comfort and his psychological and sensory repose," and she is also tasked with the "supervision of the conjugal house and organization and maintenance of its affairs." The wife is not granted reciprocity on these issues, but she is entitled to financial maintenance from her husband, control over her private wealth, and the right to be free from mental or physical violence. Women are legally empowered to negotiate their marriage rights, but their ability to do so in practice is often curtailed by cultural norms (Pargeter, 2010).

Although both husbands and wives can initiate divorce proceedings, in cases of divorce by the wife, she will be obligated to pay compensation and to relinquish all other rights in accordance with Articles 39, 51 and 71 of Act No. 10 of 1984 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1, Para. 17.1). Libya's legislation has shown a somewhat contrary trend in regard to judicial '*khula*'<sup>12</sup>. The

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<sup>11</sup>In Libyan law, the tutelage goes to a woman when she gets divorced, she keeps her children, for the boy until he becomes an adult, and for the girl until she gets married (as stated in Law No. 10 of 1984, Act No 62)

<sup>12</sup>Divorce at the instigation of the wife, when she pays to get divorced. Amongst the forms of divorce, one of the frequently used methods by which women terminate marriage is that of '*khula*'. This is a Sharia process whereby,

1972 law included a text on judicial *khula* that was at the time unprecedented in Arab laws. Under Article 48 of Law No. 10 of 1984, Libyan women have the right to *khula*, a process that allows the wife to divorce her husband on other grounds, provided she is willing to give up financial rights including her dowry and maintenance (Pargeter, 2010).

Polygamy is allowed for men in Libya if the first wife gives her consent or there is a ‘need’ to take a second wife on health or social grounds. In a patriarchal society such as Libya, in spite of the consent provisions in the law, in practice it is unlikely that a wife can freely object to her husband taking an additional wife (CEDAW/C/LIB/1, Para. 14.1).

Libyan women’s problems lie in two areas; first, traditional social culture that devalues women; secondly, practices of discrimination against women in spite of the existence of some laws that protect and preserve their rights. Although women and men have an equal right of recourse to the law and an equal right to pursue legal proceedings, and although an adult woman is generally recognised as a full person before the court, women continue to find themselves at a disadvantage due to cultural traditions. The relationship between men and women remains that of continuing uncertainty, especially in the streets and at places of work or study especially in the post-conflict Libya (Shaban, 2013). In spite of what has been achieved for women in Libya, the absence of a culture that respects women and a lack of

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if the woman desires a separation for any reason and the husband will not pronounce a divorce, the wife offers to pay back some property, mostly the dowry that the husband paid her during marriage. This form of divorce affords women an opportunity to terminate an unsatisfactory marriage without much difficulty. However, Sharia does not oblige the husband to provide any maintenance for the upkeep of the wife following this kind of divorce, but her rights to custody or to custody allowances are not affected.

awareness of their needs, as well as the absence of serious implementation of the law, means that most of these rights do not exist in practice.

An independent women's rights movement might be more successful in gaining credibility amongst the public, but the authorities under the Gaddafi regime did not permit any genuinely independent organizations or political groups to exist (Pargeter, 2010). There were a number of women's organizations in Libya, which purported to be independent, but which were linked to the state. Thus, their efforts to promote women's emancipation was limited. According to Abdul-Latif (2013) recently in the post-revolutionary space there is enthusiasm among the plethora of women's groups springing up across, there is a need to ensure they maximise their impact.

### **3.4.2 The Issue of Domestic Violence against Women in Libya**

Women in Libya are as likely as women from any other country in the region, to experience domestic violence. At its core, the dynamics and effects of abuse are similar for women around the world. Similar themes include embarrassment, isolation, fear, or reluctance to involve outsiders. Although the prevalence of DVAW is likely to be high, DVAW as elsewhere is perceived as a 'family' matter and usually unreported and hidden by victims (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Few studies have been carried out<sup>13</sup>, and there is little detailed information regarding the extent of DVAW, however, it reportedly remains a problem (HRW, 2006). Abuse within the family

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<sup>13</sup> There is a study on mental health and wife abuse in Libya, this is a thesis submitted for the degree of PhD at Bristol University 2014. I tried to read and cite this thesis in my research but this is not available to the public I tried to contact Bristol University Library in late May 2014; I was informed that this thesis was not on the Library catalogue. More recently on December the thesis was available on the Library catalogue but not for the public.

is rarely discussed publicly. According to HRW (2006), Libyan law forbids domestic violence, but there is no reliable information on the penalties for punishment. Libya has no laws governing domestic violence, and laws regarding sexual violence are inadequate (HRW, 2006). The law criminalizes sexual harassment and rape but does not address spousal rape (Home Office, 2014). The law is illogical, Article 17 of Law No. 10 of 1984 states that husbands should not cause physical or mental harm to their wives, however, Article 63 of the penal code stipulates that evidence of injury is needed to prove assault. The law provides no enforcement mechanisms, however, and therefore is not effective in combating the problem of domestic violence (Home Office, 2014). The government prosecutes only the most violent rape cases, and judges have the authority to propose marriage between the rapist and the victim as a “social remedy” to the crime. According to HRW (2014), Libya’s laws continue to discriminate against women, effectively authorising DVAW in cases of alleged adultery.

As stated above, there are a lack of studies and resources about gender violence in Libya. Alteer’s (1997) exploratory study however, attempted to ascertain the reasons for domestic violence as well as its impact. Alteer interviewed 55 women who had experienced domestic violence. In his study, all victims of domestic/intimate violence were housewives. Women with higher levels of education and older women were less likely to experience violence. Those with ‘better’, more spacious housing were less likely to experience violence; however, women in high-income households experienced more violence than others within Alteer’s sample. Another study was carried out by Alkkly (2005); she drew attention to the fact that domestic violence is the most common context of VAW amongst Libyan women. She emphasised that domestic violence is a difficult field for data collection in Libya, as most cases



are not reported to the police. Sexual violence particularly is viewed (Awaz, 2010) as shameful, women often feel too ashamed to report it. Family responses to sexual violence are to blame the victims, and concentrate on restoring 'lost' family honour, creating an environment in which rape can occur with impunity (Awaz, 2010).

Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2006) on a report was based on interviews conducted in Tripoli and Benghazi in 2005 stated that there is a widespread denial that DVAW exists in Libya, and lack of adequate laws and services, leaving victims of violence without an effective remedy and deters reporting of rape. Instead, the government detains dozens of victims, particularly rape victims, in "social rehabilitation" facilities. Many are denied the opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention (HRW, 2006). HRW (2006) further stated that rape victims themselves risk prosecution for adultery or fornication if they attempt to press charges. Police officers are not trained to handle cases of VAW, and no women's shelters exist. The rigid social norms governing women and participation in society and their status in families undermine the legal reforms (HRW, 2006). The findings of the Libya Status of Women Survey (Abdul-Latif, 2013) on opinions and attitudes toward domestic violence indicate a relatively high level of acceptance of domestic violence in Libyan society by women and men, but men to a higher extent. The results also indicate a relatively high level of acceptance of domestic violence in Libyan society.

Lack of economic recourse as well as legal contradiction [See above] was given by HRW as the reason for DVAW, in that women who are subject to economic vulnerability are more likely to experience domestic violence than other women (HRW, 2008). The majority of Libyan communities are patriarchal societies dominated by the image of the man as the income

earner and the woman as the housewife. The Research Centre for Libyan Women's Studies (RCLW, 2008). Women are limited in their opportunities to escape violence on account of their low incomes and financial dependency on men and the lack of job security increases their exposure to violence significantly (HRW, 2008). RCLW (2008) indicated that these are amongst a wide range of problems, which influence Libyan women's capacity to make an economic contribution, thereby exacerbating the problem of DVAW.

In the next section, I will discuss the issue of DVAW with reference to studies of migration. There exist only a small number of studies of Arab migrants (including Libyan migrants) in the West, and very few studies of attitudes toward DVAW among them. For this reason, the following section discusses studies of DVAW and migrant populations from different world regions, and to a variety of Western countries.

### **3.5 DVAW and Studies of Migration**

This section discusses the issue of DVAW among migrant communities. It begins by presenting studies which have been conducted on this topic. It then discusses theoretical and general issues related to ethnic boundaries and gender, as well as general points related to migration and living in a new society. Lastly, it discusses factors that are seen to exacerbate the situation of DVAW in contexts of migration.

#### **3.5.1 Studies on DVAW in the Context of Migration**

In the context of migration, attitudes to DVAW has been little studied (Akpinar, 2003; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002; Gill and Sharma 2007). This applies particularly to Arab migrants in the UK. However, a few studies were found which were conducted by Abu-Ras

(2003, 2007). In her first study (2003), Abu-Ras examines factors associated with barriers to service utilisation by the victims of partner abuse among Arab migrant women in the USA. She found that Arab migrant women in the USA have special needs regarding to DVAW, and that their use of available services is affected by personal, family, social, and cultural factors. Abu-Ras's (2007) study was aiming to examine the relationship between cultural beliefs and the utilization of services among Arab migrant women in the USA. Abu-Ras (2007: 1002), also confirmed that 'very little focus has been on the issue of DVAW in relation to Arab migrant women in the USA'. Abu-Ras (2007) interviewed 86 Arab immigrant women from the Dearborn area Michigan (USA). She found that each participant women reported being the victim of *at least* one violent act. She also found that abused Arab migrant women with more traditional beliefs and attitudes toward women and DV are less likely to take advantage of formal services to address partner abuse.

Given the lack of information related to DVAW among Libyan and Arab communities in the UK and West, this section examines general studies on DVAW among migrants in Western context. Other studies have been conducted among Asian migrant groups in Canada and USA. For instance, Ahmad *et al.* (2004) conducted a study on patriarchal beliefs and perceptions of abuse among South Asian migrant women in Canada. A number of other studies were conducted among Asian migrant groups in USA (Richardson *et al.*, 2002; Ayyub, 2000; Raj and Silverman, 2002; Midlarsky *et al.*, 2006). Another study measured the prevalence of DVWA among Chinese-Americans in the US (Yick, 2001). Kim and Sung's (2000) study conducted among Korean-American families. Other studies have been conducted among Japanese women in the USA by Yoshihama (1999); among Indian and Pakistani migrant

women in the USA (Adam and Schewe, 2007). These studies reported that DVAW is a serious problem and its prevalence rates may vary among the different Asian migrant populations. The studies among Asian migrants in the US have revealed that physical violence is the most common form of DVAW (Adam and Schewe, 2007; Raj and Silverman, 2002). Sexual abuse was less often reported than physical among various migrant groups (Abraham, 1999; Davila and Brackley, 1999; Thapa-Oli *et al.*, 2009; Adam and Schewe, 2007; Yick and Agbayani, 1997). According to Siddiqui *et al.* (2008) most migrant women are less likely to acknowledge sexual assault by an intimate partner as a form of abuse, due to feelings of shame and guilt. Verbal and emotional abuse were reported as common form of abuse in a study conducted among Nepali migrant women in the US (Thapa-Oli *et al.*, 2009). Asian and Latina abused women in the USA cite absolute male control of family decision-making as constituting emotional abuse (Bui and Morash, 1999; Morash *et al.*, 2000). Verbal and emotional abuse was cited as the main form of abuse when it occurred in the presence of others (Morash *et al.*, 2000).

### **3.5.2 Theoretical and General Issues: Ethnic Boundaries and Gender**

Migration is a `gendered and gendering` process in the sense that males and females enter into migration with different chances and migration also introduces new arrangements in gender relations (Abadan-Unat, 1977; Akpinar, 1998). Women migrants face new and different situations in new settings. Differences in values, customs, languages, and food habits at the new destination may create problems of adjustment among migrants (Akpinar, 2003). In some cases, women migrants face discrimination on the bases of class, ethnicity, and legal status, which intersect with gender discrimination. In the migration context, members of

ethnic communities who hold conservative patriarchal values will turn inwards and continue exerting pressure on women by holding onto patriarchal values that are remnants of a rural/feudal culture. It is generally agreed that migration is a process which can simultaneously bring gains and losses for migrant women as well as men (Abadan-Unat, 1977; Akpınar, 1998; Erman, 2001; Kibria, 1994). Ethnic community and ethnic family values are challenged in the context of foreign cultures (Akpınar, 1988). Patriarchal beliefs do not disappear but may persist for a long time among migrant communities, despite the new 'patriarchal' bargain in the context of migration (Kibria, 1994, Kandiyoti, 1988). Patterns of subordination - e.g. class, age, and ethnicity - intersect in women's experience of DVAW. Intersectional subordination need not be intentionally produced; in fact, it is frequently the consequence of the imposition of one burden that interacts with pre-existing vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment (Perilla, 1999). Culturally bound, traditional gender roles have been cited as facilitating abuse of women in migrant populations (Bui and Morash, 1999; Perilla, 1999; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000). For example, findings from studies of Asian and Middle Eastern migrant communities indicate that both men and women feel that if women do not stay within their prescribed roles, it is culturally acceptable for men to 'discipline' them using physical abuse (Huisman, 1996; Kulwicki and Miller, 1999; Song, 1996). Gender roles among migrant communities not only serve as a justification for abuse, but also increase women's vulnerability to abuse by keeping them isolated, subservient to male partners, and self-sacrificing to community and family (Bui and Morash, 1999; George and Rahangdale, 1999). In addition, roles placing family responsibility on females and economic responsibility on males (George and Rahangdale, 1999; Morash *et al.*,

2000) reduce options for women's separation from an abusive spouse and maintain male economic control in relationships. Traditional gender roles also promote male sexual prowess and dominance (Abraham, 1998; Morash *et al.*, 2000), increasing women's risk for male partner infidelity and rape. Ahmad *et al.* (2004) studied the relationship between South Asian migrant women's patriarchal beliefs and their perception of abuse in Canada using vignettes or hypothetical cases. More than half of women in their sample endorsed patriarchal beliefs and did not believe the woman in the vignette was a domestic violence victim, even though the vignette clearly indicated this. Patriarchy results in large differences in gender roles and power relationships (MacKinnon, 1983) and can serve to sanction male domination over women, including DV in many societies such as those in South Asian (Adam and Schewe, 2007; Ahmad *et al.*, 2004). Patriarchal beliefs among migrant women may influence cultural values or observational learning of the negative consequences that can result from disagreeing with social norms. This is perhaps especially likely in their home countries (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004).

Migration presents a potential identity crisis for people 'on the move' (Alund, 1997). Identities, are produced in specific historical and institutional sites and are the product of the marking of difference, 'through the relation to the 'Other', to what they are, what they lack, the constitutive outside' (Hall and du Gay, 1996:4). In addition, identities are increasingly fragmented and fractured –constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. The experience and effects of migration are important in shaping and reshaping identities. Identities in turn are multi-faceted, negotiated, situational (Benmayor and Skotnes, 1994) and increasingly fragmented and fractured (Hall and du Gay,

1996). As migrant women perform their economic roles in a foreign country, they may experience change in their identities, their personhood and in their relationships. They display struggles on a regular basis to create new material possibilities and meanings in their lives (Barber, 2000; Gibson *et al.*, 2001) and ways of resisting, coping and forging identities to sustain them through the migration journey and eventual return home. The multiple and new identities in turn, explain why return becomes elusive and ambivalent for many of the women migrants. While they may appear to be diligently responding to the expected gender roles of altruistic mother and dutiful daughter, they also make choices affecting control over their lives, thus combining family or parental obligation with their own interests, goals and ambitions (Barber, 2000; Tacoli, 1999).

While migrant men usually work in groups in work such as construction or plantation labour, migrant women more commonly go into individualised work environments such as domestic services where there is less chance of social support. Thus, domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable groups of women workers. Domestic workers often face exploitative situations, especially in terms of pay, long hours of work, poor working conditions and accommodation. Since domestic work is generally not legally regulated, the terms and conditions of work are often unilaterally established by the employer. As the employee is extremely dependent on the employer, in most of cases, abuse is less visible. In societies where the establishment and maintenance of hierarchy is achieved through marriage, women are seen as carriers of group identity (Goddard, 1987). Women are valued as mothers and guardians of the group, so they are the bearers of values based on self-sacrifice, generosity, and devotion. Motherhood is crucial for women to achieve full status, but more important

than that is their being chaste (Abu-Odeh, 2000). Migrants bring their cultural legacies with them and although the process of acculturation certainly can dilute cultural norms, beliefs and attitudes over time, the deeply-engrained values related to shame and honour in Arab and South Asian cultures can be seen even in second and third generation Muslim migrants. Women coming from highly patriarchal cultures where they have limited rights may not even recognise behaviours that constitute abuse simply because they may be prevalent or condoned in their native culture (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004).

Migration is not merely an economic or political process but is also a socio-cultural and is mediated by gendered and kinship ideologies, institutions and practices (Donato *et al.*, 2006; Mahler and Pessar 2006). The boundary of the ethnic group is often dependent on gender and there is a reliance on gender attributes for specifying ethnic identity; much of ethnic culture is organized around rules relating to sexuality, marriage and the family, and a true member will perform these roles properly. Communal boundaries often use differences in the way women are socially constructed as markers (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). In migration contexts (Muslim) men as `husbands` are completely responsible for their wives. For Muslim migrants responsibility of `control` is shifted to husbands, which in practice means a lack of community or wider family involvement. When a woman `misbehaves`, challenging her husband's authority, her parents and her natal family are not present and so held responsible (Baker *et al.*, 1999). In Western societies, the male/husband in each migrant's family was the support of other men (i.e. in an extended family) and thereby becomes the sole representative to maintain control of women's sexuality, and his personal privilege becomes more explicit (Baker *et al.*, 1999). This shift of the control from collective to individual men, `control and



shame' remain two significant interrelated dimensions of the honour/shame code. Women's increased independence and the increased acceptance of women's human rights can put men into a potentially 'shameful' position. Thus, individual men may resort to DVAW to protect the family and their own honour (Baker *et al.*, 1999).

DVAW is maintained because of culture, social context, and laws that often uphold male control of female partners in 'home' countries. Migrant women's vulnerability to DV may increase due to living within two often conflicting cultures and a context in which they may be isolated and viewed as 'other' (Raj and Silverman, 2002; Morash *et al.*, 2000). Migration can create situations where violent practices associated with the harmful traditions of a particular group are imported into the host society. For instance, men may resort to violence to uphold their role as the dominant family head; if they are poor or unemployed, they may feel powerless. They also have failed to live up to a culturally defined role of breadwinner, or when they believe themselves to be less successful than their spouse in integrating into a new professional or social life (Akpınar, 1988; Erman, 2001; Kibria, 1994). Keeping control of 'their space' by controlling 'their women' can compensate for feelings of powerlessness for some migrant men. As ideologies change, behaviours may also change, and migrant women may no longer be willing to conform to certain traditional gender-based norms. This may result in increased male efforts to control women, including violence; research with both Asians and Latinos in the USA demonstrates that male-perpetrated DVAW is more common in couples where men hold more traditional gender roles than do their wives (Bui and Morash, 1999; Morash *et al.*, 2000; Rhee, 1997; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000). In addition to gender

role ideology, whether abuse is accepted in migrants' culture also increases the likelihood of DVAW perpetration (Heise *et al.*, 1999; Silverman and Williamson, 1997).

### **3.5.3 Factors Contributing to DVAW among Migrant Women**

Various factors have been found to be associated with DVAW among migrant women; some of these factors include language barriers, uncertain legal status, migration laws, availability and accessibility to resources and economic support (Chow, 1989; Dutton *et al.*, 2000; George and Rahangdale, 1999). Migrant women may not report or seek help because culturally, DVAW is seen to be a family issue (Jang *et al.*, 1991). The primary help and support offered for abused migrant women comes mainly from female family and friends within their communities (Dutton *et al.*, 2000). However, women in migrant communities often ignore the abuse (Bui and Morash, 1999; Dutton *et al.*, 2000; George and Rahangdale, 1999; Haile-Mariam and Smith, 1999; Huisman, 1996; Morash *et al.*, 2000; Perilla, 1999; Supriya, 2002).

On the other hand, migrant women are often geographically distant from their families and friends (Bauer *et al.*, 2000; Huisman, 1996; Morash *et al.*, 2000). Although some South Asian migrant women in the UK do not have their own family close by, they might live with or close to their husband's family due to cultural dictates and economic necessity (Bauer *et al.*, 2000; Huisman, 1996; Morash *et al.*). This might provide support for DVAW but also would increase the likelihood of abuse from the extended family members (Huisman, 1996; Mehotra, 1999; Morash *et al.*, 2000; Supriya, 2002). Migrant women may be almost wholly dependent on their husbands as their main link to the world outside their homes (Crenshaw, 1991). These women are vulnerable to DVAW because many of them depend on their

husbands for information regarding their legal status (Mehrotra, 1999). A woman's emotional dependence on her husband is also more apparent when she lacks family and other support systems and finds herself lonely in an unfamiliar country. These situations give men increased power and control over wives which can escalate to abuse (Crenshaw, 1991). Men who attempt to isolate their spouse or partner, neglect them by disregarding their wishes, and decline to communicate with them may also be more likely to abuse them (Abraham 2000; Mehrotra, 1999). Mahapatra (2012) stated that South Asian women in the USA can be isolated from the larger community due to domestic and work obligations leaving them little time for socialisation or engagement in community activities. They may also experience discrimination from mainstream groups in society. These conditions add to isolation and may restrict abused women from ending the violence to which they have been subjected (Abraham, 2000).

Language barriers present another structural problem that often limits opportunities for non-English-speaking women to take advantage of existing support services (Crenshaw, 1991). Such barriers not only limit access to information about shelters, but also limit access to the security shelters can provide (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw (1991) stated that some shelters turn non-English-speaking women away for lack of bilingual personnel and resources. Some studies show that abused migrant women are less likely than non-migrant abused women to seek both informal and formal support for DVAW (Dutton *et al.*, 2000; Kulwicki and Miller, 1999; Perilla, 1999; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000). Although responses from family and community are often problematic, many abused women fear that seeking formal support by disclosing abuse to service agencies or the justice system will result in criticism of their

culture or country of origin (Dasgupta, 2000; George and Rahangdale, 1999; Haile-Mariam and Smith, 1999; Jang *et al.*, 1991). Abused migrant women might be unaware of services available and laws that may protect them from abuse as there may be few laws against DVAW in their countries of origin - as in most Arab countries (Bauer *et al.*, 2000; Huisman, 1996; Kulwicki and Miller, 1999; Perilla, 1999). Women in countries in which there are no laws against DVAW are often able to rely on religious, traditional, and societal institutions for protection; they may be at a loss as to whom they can turn for help in the new locations (Dutton *et al.*, 2000; Haile- Marium and Smith, 1999). Perilla (1999) also suggested that Latin American migrant women in USA do not turn to agencies for help because “agency” means shelter or other support to leave their partner; culturally, this may not be viewed as an acceptable option for the woman. Few Arab migrant women in USA sought mental health help for DVAW. Abu-Ras (2007) stated that because of their “traditional” attitudes, Arab abused women are more likely to be targets of domestic violence and less likely to use available services to deal with DVAW.

Factors such as religion and culture are very important in the understanding of DVAW in migration contexts, these factors contribute significantly to people’s perceptions and attitudes towards DVAW (Abu-Ras, 2007; Haj-Yahia, 1998, 2000). Attitudes toward DVAW however, vary across different cultural groups and communities in any one country and from one culture to another. Arab migrant women have been found to have similar attitudes as Arab women living in Middle Eastern countries (Haj-Yahia, 1998, 2000, 2002), rejecting intervention by authorities and seeking help instead from relatives or local religious leaders. Among Arabs, as with many migrant communities traditional values regarding marital and sex-role

expectations and cultural and religious beliefs influence women's attitudes to DVAW (Raj and Silverman, 2002; Sakalh, 2001). Abu-Ras (2003) stated that culture was found to be the most common type of barrier for Arab migrants in USA; she argued that Arab attitudes toward female behaviour focus on the concepts of shame and honour. A woman can bring shame to her family in many ways, including having premarital sex, flirting, asking for divorce, challenging men's authority, criticizing her husband, and dressing provocatively. These behaviours are perceived to belittle the family honour, which is (as discussed) vested in female sexual purity and subordination to male dominance (Abu-Ras, 2003). Many Arab women remain in abusive marriages rather than face the consequences of seeking help, which may actually precipitate further violence and would be seen as 'dishonourable' (Adelman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003). Moreover, because divorced Arab migrant women have little socioeconomic power, they may suffer the loss of financial support and custody of their children, as well as possible social isolation and blackmail or stalking by former husbands (Abu-Ras, 2003; Adelman and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2002).

In sum, migration could create situations where DVAW appears as a complex phenomenon, with various factors that intersect with each other. Findings from the studies mentioned above highlighted some of these factors for instance, sociocultural and structural factors such as language, gender roles, financial resources, social support, and availability of culturally competent help. In addition, cultural factors likely to increase the vulnerability of women to DVAW include gender roles and societal acceptance of abuse.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the status of women in the MENA region as well as in Libya. It also briefly reviewed studies of DVAW in contexts of migration. In the MENA region, women face discriminatory laws, policies, norms and beliefs that affect their development and progress. Women's participation in education and employment is low within the whole region, because of women's unequal and subordinate status in comparison to that of men. Only a few decades ago, illiteracy rates were quite high for women in many MENA countries and women rarely worked outside the home. The patriarchal system in the MENA countries is resilient and permeates society at many levels, not only in the family.

In MENA countries, most incidents of DVAW are hidden and not reported. This is regarded as a private matter rather than a social problem. The mechanisms of dealing with violence are not effective, due to religious, legal and cultural factors which maintain and support men's dominance and control over women. Most MENA countries, including Libya, do not have legislation in place to protect women from domestic violence. The typical religious interpretations and understanding of Islamic scriptures allows men to 'correct' women when this is 'required'. Women rarely contact authorities to register a complaint due to fear of divorce, which brings shame down upon them and their families. In addition, women face discrimination by the judiciary due to social attitudes and prevailing cultural values. Many women who face violence feel trapped, incapacitated and helpless. They have to continue living in the same hostile environment, due to socio-cultural and religious pressures.

In the context of migration, specific factors make the experiences of migrant women of DVAW unique to the rest of the population; migrant women's experiences interact in powerful ways with broader factors, such as class, race, language barriers, isolation, economic changes, legal status, and ethnicity.

In the next chapter, the discussion will centre on the methodology chosen for this study and the rationale behind methodological choices.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology and Methods**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the methodological approaches within this study and discusses why particular research methods were selected. The procedures regarding how the research design was shaped will be described, in addition to the considerations which influenced the process and methods of data collection and analysis.

I employed `triangulation`, using two data collection techniques: a questionnaire survey with 175 women and men and semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals. In this research, my viewpoint was influenced by feminist methodology; thus, this chapter first will discuss this as well as the epistemological approach employed. It will also discuss quantitative methods with respect to the use of questionnaires, followed by a discussion of the qualitative/semi-structured interviews conducted. The chapter concludes with a discussion of different techniques used for the data analysis.

#### **4.2 Interpretive Epistemological Approach**

Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated, in other words `what it means to know`. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that epistemology asks the question -what is the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known? This research applies an interpretive epistemological



approach. Interpretive research is especially helpful when the questions being examined are explanatory in nature. Interpretive methodology is directed at understanding phenomena from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit (Creswell, 2009). The interpretive perspective has the potential to understand reality as it is perceived and experienced by people and organizations, rather than as perceived only by the social scientist. It can also pick up patterns and configurations of social phenomena that might well elude the positivist working with a discrete and limited set of variables from an appropriate "scientific distance". Its power to explore at a deeper level and use insight provides an alternative perspective to the positivist emphasis on predicting empirical relationships (Creswell, 2009). The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism, which is based on real world phenomena. Knowledge and meaningful reality are constructed within and out of interactions between humans and their world and are developed and transmitted in a social context (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, the social world can only be understood from the viewpoint of individuals who are participating in it (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Interpretivism aims to bring into consciousness hidden social forces and structures (Crotty, 1998). Walsham (1995) argues that reality is an inter-subjective construction of the shared human cognitive apparatus and subjective idealism referred to the idea that each person constructs his own reality. Subjectivity is an essential concept of the interpretive approach (Gephart, 1999). Element one of subjectivity in social research focuses on the meaning that people 'give' to their environment, and not the environment itself (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In order to make sense of the social world, the researcher needs to understand the meanings that form and are formed by interactive social

behaviour. Human action is given meaning by interpretive frameworks. Within an interpretive framework, the researcher tries to make sense of what s/he is researching (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

I take the view that reality is constructed in collaboration with the participants' perceptions to DVAW and that construct meanings in relation to the topic. This has implications for the methodology of my research as I do not see knowledge as a fixed but as an ongoing activity, and social reality is constructed through interaction with others and so the observer's exchanges with the observed and the wider outcomes of these exchanges through these connections, represent a vital element in this form of research. Researchers unusually emphasise differences between qualitative and quantitative methods. Some argue that the qualitative and quantitative methods are fundamentally different in the assumptions that they make about what we are able to know and how we can know them. According to Bryman (2008), the epistemological positions in which the two methods are grounded constitute irresponsible views about how social reality should be studied. However, I believe that this does not have to be the case and both methods despite their ontological and epistemological differences could be reconciled, and combined within a single project. Bryman (2008) supports this claim by acknowledging that the relationship between ontology and epistemology is not deterministic and fixed in practice. Since the topic of my research was relatively under researched, in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of DVAW among Libyan migrants, it was necessary to use a mixed method approach. Using this approach enables the researcher to explore different aspects of a broad research question or tackling a research question from a number of different perspectives. Utilising a variety of

methodological approaches does not mean the researcher has privileged a particular way of looking at the social world. In order to encourage different voices to be heard I believed that the use of multiple methods was a necessity.

My study is also concerned with exploring different views on DVAW in the context of patriarchal social systems. Feminist methodology would explain gender relations and women's status in the society. Throughout the research process, feminists are therefore able to use scholarship for women and in doing so they explicitly acknowledge the subjectivity and political nature inherent in all research. The next section discusses feminist methodology further.

### **4.3 Feminist Approaches**

The theoretical framework for this research was based upon a feminist perspective, as discussed in Chapter One. The legacies of feminist perspectives for research into DVAW are significant (Roberts, 1981), as it permits one to include an analysis of the role of gender and power in patriarchal systems, such as those underpinning DVAW in Libyan communities. Methodology comprises a 'theory and analysis' of how research should be conducted. It includes accounts of how the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines (Harding, 1987:3). From a feminist perspective, traditional theories have been applied in ways which make it difficult to comprehend women's participation in social life, or to understand men's activities

Feminist research studies the social conditions of women (Stanley and Wise, 1993), and seeks to explore people's taken-for-granted sexist practices and the gender-blindness of community

practices which have often displaced and silenced women (Jasinski, 2001). Harding (1987) stated that feminist research rejects traditional research methods, focusing on methods that build on and from women's experiences, setting women's everyday experiences at the centre of research concerns. Employing feminist methods transcends traditional methods, assumes researcher reflexivity and can provide women with a unique opportunity for undertaking research (Reinharz, 1992). These feminist perspectives on DVAW are central to this study's theoretical basis. Feminist research methods may be able to produce more comprehensive data than that achieved by means of traditional methods (Parr, 1998) by expanding the scope of questions asked and changing the nature of the research process.

Feminist research takes a critical view of the idea of objectivity, detachment and hierarchy (Oakley, 1981). It also questions the conventional unidirectional approach, in which there is no reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the researched (or respondents). Feminist methodology rejects the separation of the research and the researched as well as the implied notion that such a separation produces more valid results (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Feminist researchers are equally critical of the use of interviewing practices which are based on a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched, and are thought to undermine the feminist principle of the interrelationship of women with one another (Oakley, 1981). In-depth interviews are often held to be a better option for various reasons, including their encouragement of subjectivity and intensive dialogue between equals, which are seen as intrinsic features of the analysis of gendered experiences.

A variety of methods can be employed to meet the requirements of the feminist paradigm (Lather, 1988). Feminist researchers can nonetheless, employ a qualitative or quantitative

methodology, although they usually adjust the latter to meet the requirements of feminist paradigms since feminism is, amongst other things, "a form of attention, a lens that brings into focus particular questions" (Blair and Holland, 1985: 394). Quantitative methodology has furthered feminists' perspective on rape and has been used to identify attitudes about rape (e.g. Read and Miller, 1993) for instance, examining the prevalence of unreported rape against women by their husbands (e.g. Painter and Farrington, 1998). Gelsthorpe and Morris (1990) argue that quantitative methods can prove useful in producing background data.

In sum, feminists utilise scholarship for explicitly acknowledge the subjectivity and political nature inherent in all research. At the same time, the ethics of transporting women's private experiences into the public arena form a fundamental issue of concern for feminist academics.

#### **4.4 Methodological Approach Developed in the Research**

This study aims to explore attitudes towards violence against Libyan women, as well as how these vary by factors such as age, gender, educational level, former place of residence and the length of stay in the UK. Given the fact that there is a lack of information on the topic of domestic violence against Libyan women, this study was exploratory as well as explanatory. Btoush and Haj-Yahia (2008) argued that exploratory studies are useful in areas where knowledge is limited in order to build a database for use in designing future studies.

The methodological approach to this research was guided by the quantitative-qualitative debate (a mixed methods approach) or 'triangulation' of data (Denzin, 1978, 1989) and by an awareness of feminism, as noted. I collected primary data, based on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews within the UK, with people of Libyan origin. Mixed method research

assists in linking the divisions between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004; Dahlberg *et.al*, 2010). Using ‘triangulation’ of data is a way of enhancing reliability (Maxwell and Loomis, 2003). Smith also stated that ‘methodologists have long advocated the use of multiple measures as a way of enhancing the reliability and validity of social variables’ (1994: 113).

#### **4.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection Techniques**

Feminist research, as noted, does not reject quantitative studies, as this type of analysis can be valuable in providing direction towards further studies. Most use of survey analysis is to make possible to collect data from large samples of individuals (Aliaga and Gunderson, 2000). Quantitative methodologies test theory deductively from existing knowledge, by means of developing hypothesised relationships and proposed outcomes for study (Duffy, 1987). These methods can provide information about the relationship between the variables under investigation, in order to enable prediction and control over future outcomes. This approach aims to control or eliminate extraneous variables within the internal structure of the study. The data produced can also be assessed by standardised testing (Duffy, 1987).

I decided to conduct a survey to provide socio-demographic data to help comprehend the possible social factors that contribute to attitudes towards DVAW among Libyan migrants. Quantitative methods are appropriate for looking at causality, and which assist this research as regards exploration and understanding of the roots of DVAW amongst Libyan women (Murray, 2003; Best and Khan, 1989). Quantitative data, however, may not provide a full understanding of the nature of DVAW, as surveys sometimes do not offer a suitable picture,

nor a totality of the individual's response to the incidents (Walklate, 1992: 290). Qualitative data can for example, enable examination of the coping and resistance strategies employed by women in response to violence. Jupp (1988) notices that qualitative data can also assist with the interpretation of quantitative data.

#### **4.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection Techniques**

I also conducted semi-structured interviews, to investigate the complexity of DVAW by exploring the participants' understandings of the nature, meanings and interpretations that could surround attitudes towards DVAW. Semi-structured interviews can provide more detailed information, in which is available through social surveys (Boyce and Neale, 2006). When researching attitudes towards DVAW, participants cannot be viewed separately from multiple influences, which have constructed their reality, such as culture, personal values, beliefs, social, economic, and political contexts (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002).

Exploring Libyan women's views about DVAW allowed me to ascertain some of the contexts of experiences, which I did not intend initially to question women about. In addition, it allowed me to understand more deeply the influence of different factors such as religion or educational level on Libyan participants' views about DVAW. Semi-structured interviews assist in discussing subjects in depth. Qualitative research provides a unique tool for studying what lies behind or underpins a decision, attitude, behaviour or other phenomena (Jayaratne, 1983). It also allows for associations to occur in people's thinking or acting and their meanings to be identified (Ritchie, 2003: 28), at least for a small number of people. Ellsberg and Heise (2005:55) declared that:

Qualitative results allow you to understand the nuances and details of complex social phenomena from the respondents' point of view. Although you cannot say your findings are true for everyone, you can reveal multiple layers of meaning for a particular group of people. This level of understanding is particularly important when studying human behaviour and trying to discern how it interacts with people's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. Most research objectives are best achieved through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

The next section of the chapter addresses the ethical and practical considerations in researching a sensitive topic such as violence.

#### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

This section discusses the main ethical considerations addressed prior to commencing data collection. Ethics are described as being 'general principles of what one ought to do' (Robson, 2002: 66). They are often discussed in relation to 'transgressions', i.e. whether there is harm to participants, whether there is a lack of informed consent, whether there is invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved (Bryman, 2008).

Researching DVAW is similar to researching other sensitive topics. There are issues of confidentiality, problems of disclosure, and the need to ensure adequate and informed consent to take part in the research. In 1991, the Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) presented a set of International Guidelines for Ethical Review of Epidemiological Studies. These guidelines apply the basic ethical principles of biomedical research involving human subjects to the field of epidemiology: respect for persons, no maleficence (minimizing harm), beneficence (maximizing benefits) and justice (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). Therefore, research on violence with full respect to ethical and safety considerations and appropriate care and resources were applied to this end.



My research proposal was subjected to review by the Departmental and Faculty University Ethics Committees at Manchester Metropolitan University. Ethical approval was gained prior to embarking on fieldwork (see Appendix 2 for Approval Letter).

The code<sup>14</sup> of ethics defined by WHO (2001) on researching domestic violence against women was followed during the research process. The WHO's guidelines were based on the experiences of the International Research Network on Violence Against Women (IRNDVAW) and were designed to inform the WHO Multi-country Study about Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women (WHO, 2001). The recommendations were designed to ensure the safety of respondents and research teams. They stress issues such as protection of informants' confidentiality and measures to reduce potential distress. They also state that researchers and donors have an ethical obligation to help ensure that their findings are properly interpreted and used to advance policy and intervention development. In order to ensure confidentiality for my research, no names were written on the interview schedule. Instead, numbers were printed on questionnaires to distinguish between the interviewees. The consent form sheet was kept separate from the rest of the interview pack and saved in a locker.

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<sup>14</sup> The summary of main concerns and aims of the WHO code of ethics for research on violence against women is given below:

- The safety of respondents and the research team is paramount, and should guide all project decisions.
- Protecting confidentiality is essential to ensure both women's safety and data quality.
- The study design must include actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants by the research.
- The researcher should be well informed in order to be able to refer women requesting assistance to available local services and sources of support.
- Researchers and donors have an ethical obligation to help ensure that their findings are properly interpreted and used to advance policy and intervention development.
- Violence questions should only be incorporated into surveys designed for other purposes when ethical and methodological requirements can be met

I followed these guidelines and the code of ethics to avoid any harm either to myself or to the participants. I would argue that these ethical guidelines are critical, not only for protecting the safety of respondents and researchers, but also to ensure data quality. To limit possible harm and to maximize possible benefit, only one person was interviewed per household. Participants were told that they could end the interview at any time or omit any question they did not wish to answer.

All the participants gave explicit consent (see Appendix 3 for consent form) to taking part in an individual interview and this was undertaken by means of research agreements between the participants and the researcher. The consent forms provided information regarding the nature of the research. The participants were given opportunities to raise additional questions regarding the research or the researcher before giving consent. The issue of confidentiality was also addressed in the research agreements. Prior to the interview, the participants were alerted that as part of the consent process that the researcher could have to disclose information in the first (e.g. to my supervisors or the relevant authorities) if a study participant reported being either a victim of violence or an abuser while in the UK.

During fieldwork however, the consent letters proved somewhat problematic. Some women did not wish to write their names and raised questions about their confidentiality. I explained to them that their consent to be interviewed was required and they had to be advised of relevant issues, such as their right to withdraw whenever they wished or their right to anonymity. They were also reassured that the form would be kept separately with no real names written in the thesis. An example of the problems encountered in the course was a woman who was interviewed, then requested a consent form a day after which she duly signed

and returned. However, as I did not also possess a signed consent form for the semi-structured interviews it was necessary to cancel her interview.

Most interviewees rejected the use of the tape recorder. One woman reported that she had not asked her husband's permission to record the interview. In Libyan culture, a woman's voice should not be heard in public; therefore, some Libyans could not accept that the women's voice should be recorded. Therefore, no tape recorder was used, as most of the respondents in the sample did not feel comfortable being audiotaped. This meant I took notes during the interview where possible. However, due to the sensitivities of time and sometimes of place, and as note-taking can interrupt the natural flow of a conversation, when notes could not be taken during the interview, they were written down as soon as possible afterwards. Another potential ethical issue concerned discussion of experiences of violence. Women were not asked directly about their personal experiences of domestic violence, but some were pleased to present their experiences. The conversational and easy atmosphere of the semi-structured interviews encouraged women to openly tell me about their personal experience without having to be asked about these directly. It should be mentioned, women in the sample who were divorced, openly discussed their experience of physical and emotional abuse. *Most* of them mentioned experiences of physical abuse and a small number of women talked about sexual violence. (See Chapter 7 for discussion).

I also interviewed seven men within the qualitative sample, but did not ask male interviewees about their own experiences or behaviour. Rather, I concentrated on obtaining their opinions about DVAW. I conducted the semi-structured interviews with men in a public places (e.g. cafes) and I identified a number of options of secure places for conducting interviews which

are conducive for both the participants and myself. I also scheduled the semi-structured interviews during the daytime or before dusk wherever possible as I was interviewing during the winter. A major problem which I found hard to overcome, was to find sufficient time to meet men. I did not face this problem when I interviewed women, as most of women did not have any objection for meeting during the daytime; however, as they were working or studying in the UK some men could not meet before finishing work during the day. For my own safety, information regarding the venue of the interviews and time were shared with a colleague or my supervisors or friends in the UK. Throughout the interviews, I carried a personal mobile phone and safety alarm in order to deal with any uncalled-for situations. At the end of the interview, informants were debriefed, assured of the confidentiality of responses and space allowed them for any further comments they had, including on the interview process itself.

Having discussed the ethical issues which applied to both types of research methods, the following section discuss the conduct of the survey, followed by discussion of the semi-structured interview sample.

#### **4.6 Fieldwork for the Questionnaire**

In the following sub-sections, I discuss the fieldwork for the quantitative data collection, this includes designed the survey, the pilot study and sampling.

##### ***The questionnaire design and pilot study***

In this section, I discuss the questionnaire design and the pilot work for the survey aspect of

this research. Owing to the exploratory nature of the study, the quantitative data analysis procedure was crucial in order to develop a broad and comprehensive views on DVAW based on a fairly large number of people. This also mainly assist to measure participants' general approach to DVAW and to assess any associations of participants' attitudes to DVAW with their socio-demographic profiles. The questionnaire was constructed in English and translated into Arabic and interviews were carried out in Arabic (see Appendix 5 for the questionnaire in Arabic). The questionnaire employed was carefully framed in accordance with the research aims and objectives, particularly in the light of the difficulties involved in defining and measuring DVAW. The questionnaire was developed specifically for this study, based on previous literature. Some parts of the questionnaire were adopted and modified from another studies, some of which had been conducted in the Arabic language. These included Haj-Yahia (2000), Al-Riyami *et al.* (2004), El-Zanaty and Way (2005) Choi and Edleson (1996) and Dhaher *et al.* (2009).

Initially, the aims and objectives of my research were examined according to the theoretical and empirical literature. Followed by understanding of the issue of DVAW through literature search. Based on the statements/questions for the questionnaire was generated. In this step, content (from literature/theoretical framework) was transformed into statements/questions. In addition, a link between the objectives of the study and its translation into content is established, for instance asking about the terminology of DVAW in terms to achieve the aim notably to understand how Libyan migrant people perceive different forms of DVAW. Using mainly closed-ended questions as well as some open-ended questions. The questionnaire was

pilot tested with 48 people. It was essential to assess the situation beforehand and correct any errors in order that no additional time was consumed in the subsequent fieldwork.

### ***The pilot study***

After receiving formal approval from the MMU Research Ethics Committee, I commenced the fieldwork with a pilot study. This consisted of distributing 48 questionnaires, to a sample was drawn initially from the members of the Libyan Women's Association in Manchester and I subsequently took part in the programme and activities organised by the Libyan community in Manchester. This was attended by women as well as men and 30 questionnaires were administered to the Libyan male and female participants in the programme. An additional 18 questionnaires were also presented to 18 Libyan postgraduate students at MMU and at Salford University. Overall, 56% of the respondents to the pilot were men and 44% were women. Approximately half (48%) were in the age category 41-50 years. I used SPSS statistical software to enter and analyse the pilot data, and initial analysis of the data confirmed that the measuring instrument (i.e. the questionnaire) was appropriate for the study. The pilot study generated valuable insights; consequently, some changes to the questionnaire were made. In general, I was satisfied to some extent with the questionnaires, but some issues with the measuring instrument were identified, hence changes were made. The first issue was concerned the educational level of the sample \_ the majority of the participants in the pilot study were highly educated. This meant I need to consider this in my survey sample. I avoided oversampling of high-educated people and I attempted to obtain a wider social spread (see the section below) for the actual sample. The second issue was assessing social class; the entire pilot sample considered themselves middle-class. Although I thought that some

participants are working-class, but my pilot study produced a different picture, as I did not identify as working-class people from the pilot sample. Therefore, I had to include another two questions asking about factors that made participants see themselves as 'members' of specific class. I also included an additional question to evaluate the family income of the participants. Although I interpreted social class in economic terms and divided socio-economic class according to income; however, the issue of class further appeared in the research sample (see later discussion).

Based on the outcome of the pilot study, the number of open questions was also reduced, and some of the items were reworded. Only one participant in the pilot responded to all of the questions, including the open question. Therefore, the open questions were reformulated as several closed questions. This pilot sample was not included in the research sample as I had altered some questions in the questionnaire.

### ***Establishing validity and reliability***

Validity is the amount of systematic or built-in error in measurement (Norland, 1990). Validity refers to whether researchers actually measured what they wish to measure, including whether the participants understood the questions well and clearly. The pilot study assisted in measuring the validity of the questionnaire. 'Face validity' was also established- whether at face value, the questions appear to be measuring the construct. In my survey (particularly in Arabic translated form), obvious, direct and explicit questions were asked. This is largely a "common-sense" assessment, but also relies on knowledge of the way people respond to survey questions and common pitfalls in questionnaire design. 'Content validity' was

established, considering that all important aspects of the construct were covered. Clear definitions of the concept and its components were provided. For instance, the participants were informed that this study concerned the topic of domestic violence, perpetrated by any member in the family.

Reliability was also established using the pilot study. Data collected from the pilot study was analysed using SPSS, which provided two key types of tests: “correlation matrix” the total correlations was greater than 0.5 and “*Cronbach's alpha*” which is the most common measure of internal consistency or ‘reliability’. A reliability coefficient was for all the statements measured together .70 or higher which was considered to be acceptable reliability. I also performed these tests again for the research sample, see Justifications for Using Statistical Analysis Tools section.

Based on the results of the pilot study the final version of the questionnaire included 34 closed questions (see Appendix 4 for the questionnaire). A letter describing the goals of the study and that the study concerned ‘domestic violence’ accompanied the questionnaire form. The letter confirmed that the identity and responses of all participants would remain confidential and that the data would be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first contained questions regarding socio-demographics and background characteristics of the sample, as these are essential aspect of any survey. Providing socio-demographic data would assist understand possible societal-level factors contributing to tendencies in DVAW, this would also enable cross-tabulation and comparison of subgroups to see how responses varied between the groups. The socio-demographic questions concerned: gender, age, participants and partners educational levels, marital status and how



long they had been married, number of children, occupation, former place of residence, social class status and the family's average income, and length of stay in the UK. The second section included the approach towards the topic of DVAW. Respondents were asked to evaluate the extent of their agreement or disagreement to different statements in accordance with the following themes:

*Definition of DVAW:* This aspect included questions on definitions of forms of DVAW perpetrated by men (including husbands, ex-husbands, brothers and fathers or any other male family members). In accordance with the literature; a scale was created consisting of 5 statements or sub-questions asking about the following behaviours: mental cruelty including verbal abuse; acts such as depriving women of money and clothes; being threatened with force or violence; physical violence or assaults and sexual violence. This section also attempted to obtain participants' views on specific behaviours would be perceived as DVAW. This was done by adapting the scale developed by Choi and Edleson (1996), this scale was also used by Haj-Yahia (2000). This scale measures the extent to which the participants define different types of behaviour as abusive or violent. A last item on forced marriage as a type of DVAW was added. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed each different type of behaviour was abusive and violent (see Appendix 4).

*Perceptions of different factors and causes of DVAW:* The survey included 14 statements that directly or indirectly identified causes of DVAW; these statements were developed on the basis of the literature review (e.g. Dobash and Dobash, 1977, 1998, 2000; Wilson, Daly and Daniele, 1995; Barnish, 2004; Crawford and Symons, 2001; Bandura, 1973; Cunningham *et*

*al.*, 2004; Clark and Lewis 1977). The intent was that the responses would enable understanding perceptions of this sample concerning why men use DVAW in Libyan families.

*Justifications for DVAW:* As in other surveys (El-Zanaty and Way, 2006; Hindin, 2003), justifications for DVAW were assessed in situations that varied in severity, using different statements or sub-questions. These situations included: if a woman goes out without telling the man; neglecting the children; arguing with the husband; disobeying him or his parents; lying to the husband; being sexually unfaithful, failing to meet the expectations of their husbands. This scale was also adapted and conducted in Arabic by Dhaher *et al.* (2009) to measure attitudes toward wife abuse among Palestinian women.

*Views on the incidence of DVAW:* Three questions were developed to understand participants' perceptions of the prevalence of DVAW within Libyan communities. Studies on sensitive issues such as DVAW in Libyan community demand considerable care and sensitivity, therefore the questions were constructed to avoid asking the participants directly about their own experience of DVAW. Instead, the questions were indirect for instance, participants were asked if they know any woman suffered from DVAW amongst Libyan communities.

*Views on the differences between the culture of the British and Libyan society in terms of DVAW:* To measure the participants' perception of how the culture of the British and Libyan society differ, two questions were developed. The first asked about the differences between the UK and Libyan culture in terms of DVAW. The second asked whether Libyan people's views had altered in the UK in terms of DVAW or gender more widely.

*Views on DVAW in Libya:* Nine statements were developed in order to measure participants' views on DVAW *within* Libya in order to compare and link this to the differences between the UK and Libyan society. Some of these questions concentrated on the law and legal context of DVAW, other asked about the status of Libyan women and whether this would improve in the future.

### ***The survey sample***

The original aim of this research was to interview people in Libya and to use a stratified sample (see Introduction). Due to the situation of armed conflict in Libya in 2011, this turned out not to be feasible and the initial research plan was altered so that the study was carried out within the UK with Libyan-origin people. The principal aim of the full survey was to distribute between 150-200 questionnaires; this included 100-130 to be administered to women and 50-70 to men. The sample was stratified into these variables: age, marital status, educational level, occupation and class (see Appendix 7 for the target sample).

The sample for the purpose of the study was selected solely from members of the Libyan community who were actually resident in the UK and were holding either temporary or permanent residence status. I made contact at a number of venues, as discussed and, in the main, the sample was a snowball sample. I administered the questionnaires personally in the course of visiting various places in the UK to meet the following groups:

***Libyan Women's Association in Manchester:*** The first group I contacted for data collection was the Libyan Women's Association (LWA)<sup>15</sup>. I initially made contact with key informants in the LWA who assisted me with this research in 2011. Two meetings were attended to initiate contact with potential informants for the interviews and to request that women complete the questionnaires. The first meeting in July 2011 was on a Sunday in the British Muslim Heritage Centre, during the Libyan uprisings. I was invited by LWA to a party celebrating Eid in October 2012, where I distributed the questionnaires and asked some women to be in the interview sample. This event was held for women only in the Didsbury Mosque, with more than 150 Libyan women attending; 35 forms were distributed to women and 30 completed forms had been returned. Twelve women were asked to be in the semi-structured interviews sample, of whom two refused.

***Libyan weekend schools in Manchester:*** The questionnaire was also distributed to teachers and students' parents attending Libyan weekend schools in south Manchester.<sup>16</sup>After

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<sup>15</sup> LWA is a non-government support group based in Manchester, comprising Libyan women living in the UK. It was established in 2003 and in 2007 was incorporated into the UK Refugee Communities Association based on its excellent work in providing refugees support. The LWA aims to support Libyan refugee women by providing social support and seeking to ensure that women refugees are treated with respect. The LWA makes links with other women's and refugee associations; it provides a community centre as well as offering various kinds of advice to migrant women. Membership in the LWA is open to all Libyan or Libyan-origin women through payment of a small subscription. Members of the LWA come from different social classes; however, as Libya is relatively homogeneous in religious and ethnic terms, this is reflected in the organisation's membership. The LWA meets periodically, approximately every week or two in Manchester. LWA activities include cultural activities such as musical performances, dancing and gatherings (e.g. to celebrate Eid); educational programmes (e.g. on gender equality) and voluntary and fundraising activities.

<sup>16</sup> Children from most Libyan families in Manchester (i.e. from different classes and backgrounds) are sent usually to such schools on Saturday and Sunday, whilst attending British schools during the week. The purpose of such schooling is to learn or refresh Arabic language skills, to cover some of the Libyan school curriculum and to maintain links with the home country. There are three such schools in Manchester; one is privately run and two are linked to the Libyan Embassy, children are sent to the school closest to their houses.

consulting organisers of the weekend schools, I distributed 50 questionnaires to parents and staff at the Libyan weekend school in Manchester; 20 questionnaires were given to women teachers at Libyan schools in Manchester and 30 questionnaires were handed out to students' parents whilst they were waiting for their children. Some parents were interested in the topic and returned the form, whilst approximately 13 did not. Twenty women teachers who were participating in the study, were also asked to read and complete the questionnaire. Most of the teachers were helpful and expressed their interest in the topic.

***Libyan postgraduate students in the UK:*** I also contacted postgraduate students at Salford and Manchester Metropolitan University to obtain wider access to Libyan people they knew, or their spouses in the UK. Twenty eight Libyan students from different departments at these universities were contacted and asked to complete the questionnaire. In order to avoid a disproportionate number of PhD and Master's Degree holders in the sample, some students were asked not to complete the form themselves, rather the form was to be completed by their partners if they were less-educated. In addition, electronic copies of 15 questionnaires were emailed to a group of Libyan students in Bradford and York, and they returned them to me via email or post.

***Didsbury Mosque:*** I also visited Didsbury Mosque in order to meet Libyan people and took part in some events. In this way, I was introduced to another group of Libyan women in Manchester. It was possible for me to contact Libyans after prayers and I distributed 10 forms to women and asked 5 men to complete the forms. Men were allowed to complete the forms on their own which they then returned to me, whilst I remained with women respondents in the women's section of the mosque.

***Other groups in Manchester:*** Libyan women in various occupational roles in Manchester were contacted, e.g. a shop assistant, a paid domestic worker, a children's carer and hairdressers. This resulted in a wide-ranging sample of the contacts and acquaintances of women approached for the survey. Some were selected for semi-structured interviews. Most women were introduced by other women whom I had encountered in the above mentioned groups i.e. using a snowball sample.

***The sample in Leeds:*** I also have acquaintances in Leeds and I travelled there to make contact with Libyan people. I distributed and collected 27 questionnaires in Leeds, whilst additional forms were returned to me by post. This sample was mainly from Libyan students and their partners. Once again, in order to avoid a disproportionate number of higher degree holders in the sample, some students were asked not to complete the form themselves, rather the forms were completed by their partners. Some students, however, were not post-graduates and, as they were simply taking English language courses, they took part in the study. The next sections look at the procedures surrounding the conduct of the semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.7 Fieldwork for the Semi-structured Interviews**

In the following sub-sections I discuss the fieldwork for the qualitative data collection.

##### ***Semi-structured interview design and pilot study***

I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Oakley, 1981) with 20 individuals; 13 women and 7 men. It was assumed that exploration of the attitudes of men towards DVAW would increase understanding of the issues highlighted with women. I first drew up a plan which included identifying who would be involved in the semi-structured interviews and to

ensure that the research followed international and national ethical research standards (Boyce and Neale, 2006). Before starting the interview process, an interview guide was developed (see Appendix 5 for Interview Checklist). The questions focused on thematic areas, such as the concept of DVAW; attitudes towards DVAW in Libyan communities; and the influences of migration on attitudes towards DVAW. It was believed that these themes would prompt an understanding of DVAW in terms of cultural differentiation. The questions were structured in such a way to allow the interview process to flow naturally through the various themes. A number of additional questions or prompts were also used, dependant on the answer given by an interviewee to a specific question, such as ‘Would you like to say a little more?’ or ‘Could you expand on that point?’

Two face-to-face pilot semi-structured interviews were first conducted. The purpose of the pilot interview was to collate information about the research subject before settling on a somewhat more structured approach to semi-structured interviews (Fielding and Thomas 2008). One informant was a woman connected to the LWA whilst the other informant was contacted through a relative. This allowed me to adjust questions and think about appropriate terms and different ways of posing the questions.

### ***Semi-structured interview sample***

This section presents an overview of the participants in the qualitative part of this study. The sample was stratified by social class/occupation, age and marital status and selected from Libyan people resident in the UK, including both those settled permanently and temporarily resident. My research aims guided me to select my participants from all areas of life using

snowball technique which was proved to be highly efficient as a number of people helped me in locating a sample. The sample was drawn (similarly to the above sample) from members of the LWA in Manchester; postgraduate students, doctors, also those involved in charities, housewives, single and divorced women, and women from different social and economic backgrounds. My contact with the LWA allowed me to gain access to interview some women in this group. A further three participants were also identified and contacted in person. This method of snowball sampling involved my identifying members of the population of interest. The method is useful when it is difficult to identify individuals in the population (Robson, 2002: 265). However, one limitation of the method is that a sample could be defined by the pre-existing relationships of participants within the sample group (Downes and Rock, 2011).

Additionally, being a Libyan helped me to interview people with different backgrounds in the UK. Through my friends and my contacts, I was able to obtain access to middle-class and working-class women who were either housewives or working in shops or in childcare. Participants were asked to identify other members of the target sample. Through the universities I obtained access to middle -class and some upper-class women. Apart from two participants (who were highly-educated, professional) the remainder were less-educated.

Analysis of personal details revealed variations in the ages, education, and length of time spent in the UK and marital status. It is interesting to note that some of the participants considered themselves to be middle-class even though they did not work in the UK. Because they came from wealthy families, they did not consider themselves to be working-class. One woman stated that they brought money from back home to the UK.



***Overview of the women in the qualitative sample***

The age of the thirteen women who participated in the study ranged from 31-54 with the mean and median age being 41 years. All lived in Manchester. Seven women were married, five were divorced and one was single. The majority of married and divorced women had migrated to the UK soon after marriage in order to join their husbands, who were studying, working or were asylum seekers in the UK and were, in the main, permanent residents. One woman, however, came to the UK for educational purposes and was residing temporarily in the UK as she received funding from the Libyan government. In addition, a divorced woman had arrived with her children in the UK as an asylum seeker herself and she was permanently resident. In terms of educational background, five women graduated from secondary school and six women had a Bachelor's degree. Two women had only primary school level education. Two women had been in the UK for two years, whilst five women had lived in the UK for 9-12 years and six women had been in the UK for 17-24 years. All the women in this study wore the *hijab*, the traditional head cover worn by Muslim women. One woman wore the *niqab*, the face covering which leaves only the eyes visible.

***Overview of the men in qualitative sample***

I made use of friends' connections to find the male participants. The male participants were recommended by either friends or colleagues or by their wives (some of whom were students at MMU and Salford University). Initial contact was made with some participants who then suggested other individuals who could be willing to participate in the study.

At the time the interviews were carried out, men aged between 33-49 years of age, with the mean and median age being 39 years. Three men had finished high school level prior to migrating, two men had gained a Master's degree and one had attained a PhD. Three of the seven men were single, whilst four were married. Two men resided temporarily in the UK and five were permanent residents. Five participants were from the middle class in Libya, whilst one man considered himself to be upper class as a result of owning a business and possessing a large house in the UK and in Libya. Only one man considered himself to be working-class. Once the interviewee gave their consent, the interview was conducted, making use of active listening, patience, and flexibility to improve the quality of the interview experience.

### ***Conducting the semi-structured interviews***

The semi-structured interviews took place over a period of six months between October 2012 and April 2013. All the interviews were conducted in the respondents' and my first language, Arabic. The interview commenced with thanking the participants for their time, introducing myself then advising the interviewee about the research. Oakley (1981: 33) stated that the interviewer should introduce herself as though beginning a conversation. I presented the participants with information about the interview and allowed them to ask questions, informing them that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. This was followed by asking them to sign the consent form. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently conducted at convenient dates, times and places. The interview setting can have a significant impact on the manner in which the interviews are conducted. The semi-structured interviews

with women took place in many venues some were in women's houses, and some at the university, some were in a mosque. Interviews with men, as noted, were all conducted in a public place, three interviews with men were conducted at MMU campus, and two were conducted at Didsbury mosque. The other two were in coffee shops.

The semi-structured interviews lasted, on average, one and a half hours each, with individual interviews ranging from around 45 minutes to three hours. At the end of each interview the informants were debriefed and each participant asked if there was anything else they would like to say.

#### **4.8 The Insider/Outsider Issue**

Brush (1990) argued that the most important factor in producing accurate data on DVAW through interviews, is the quality of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee and, in particular, the ability of the interviewer to infuse a sense of 'trust, safety and intimacy' into the interviewing relationship is important (Brush, 1990: 56-57). At the start of each interview, I reminded the women, as a Libyan woman myself, that I was not there to judge their lifestyles or their husbands. I explained that the objective was for them to describe their own perspectives of DVAW, and I assured them that there would be no consequences on my future association with them following what was said in the interview.

As a Libyan, I am familiar with the norms and values of research participants and have a good understanding of the ways in which the Libyan culture inhibits women. Being a Libyan woman conducting research into DVAW made me an 'insider' researcher and enriched the study. My position as an insider gave me an opportunity to develop a relationship of trust with

the women in order to explore and understand their experiences and views regarding violence. They freely discussed their experiences with me that may have posed difficulties for a researcher of a different ethnicity or nationality. Also, no compensation was offered, rather my status as a researcher was explained. Ribbens (1989) and Merriam *et al.* (2001) described that some factors, such as culture, class, social status, race, age, can play a major role in facilitating the relationship between researchers and the participants. However, Oakley (1981) stated that to be successful at interviewing, the interviewer should be friendly but not too friendly. Most respondents trusted and were open with me as they were usually acquainted with them through someone they knew.

My position as an insider allowed me an initial degree of familiarity that actually also presented me with some difficulties in collecting data during the interviews. Although, I am Libyan I do not wear *hijab*, and I interviewed men and women who had different views on the *hijab* and as noted all women interviewed wore *hijab*, or the *niqab*. I dressed culturally appropriate, this helped me to gain the interviewees' trust. Nonetheless, I did not experience any major difficulties to fieldwork, and was pleased to gain good levels of co-operation. My personal background and connections played a large part in tackling any difficulties during data collection.

The next section will address issues emerged in the stage of data analysis and writing up.

#### **4.9 Process of Qualitative Data Analysis**

There are several methods for qualitative data analysis, in order to organize the data in a way that would draw meaning according to specific criteria, reducing it to a more manageable

form, displaying it in a form to help analysis, and interpreting it (Polit and Beck, 2006). The approach of analysing for the qualitative/semi-structured interviews in my research was thematic analysis. For Braun and Clarke (2006: 6) thematic analysis “is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data”. The benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Through this flexibility, thematic analysis allows for rich, detailed and complex description of the data (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). Thematic analysis consisted of a process of coding, clustering or subsuming particulars into the general, and confirming (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In order to access the participants’ interpretation of their attitudes towards DVAW, I translated all the interviews notes to English, which was difficult and time-consuming task, offering a vast amount of data. I saved the interview notes in files on a personal computer for confidentiality. I used pseudonyms instead of real names to distinguish between respondents and mainly to observe the codes of confidentiality. I decided not to use a computer software package for analysis such as Nvivo, because the software is very limited, also, it is less useful in order to gain in-depth understanding of the data. Therefore, I decided to analyse the semi-structured interviews on MS Word. This was expanded by writing initial notes in the left hand margins of the interviews notice, initial thoughts, and comments. I identified the common themes extracted from the interviews and analysis. Analytic induction and constant comparison strategies were carried out by systematic examination of similarities between different groups (such as women’s and men’s definitions of VAW) in order to develop concepts or ideas (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Exploring the differences in men’s and the women’s accounts required a particular focus, and these differences are explored in the remainder of the thesis.

Analysis was performed in two main stages involved. The first required the coding of the data, and the second involved making sense of the evidence through descriptive or explanatory accounts (Miles and Huberman, 1994). There are no standard rules about how to code the data and researchers differ on how to derive codes, when to start and stop coding and the level of detail they want. Some researchers develop codes that closely match the ideas or language found in the textual data. They want to avoid imposing words or concepts that might prevent them from seeing their data in a new way. Others borrow terms from the social science literature that represent more abstract concepts important to their field (Ulin *et al.*, 2002).

Two types of codes were used: descriptive codes that identified contextual aspects of participants' personal situation such as relationship parameters (gender, age, educational level, and time spent in the UK) and process codes that were reflective of participants' responses to the questions regarding the topic. Process codes were not generated earlier although some codes were suggested by the question that had been asked during the interview.

In seeking patterns and relationships in the data, the concern was to seek relationships between various themes that have been identified, and to relate participants' views and ideas to socio-demographic characteristics such as age or gender. I searched for differences in experience and different views and perceptions of DVAW that existed among the sample. When I started coding semi-structured interviews, certain patterns emerged from participants' responses. These include physical violence, emotional violence, verbal abuse, violence in the family of origin, experience of different types of violence and men as dominant and women as submissive, DVAW as a family matter, controlling females sexuality etc. It appeared that

many factors contributed in relation to these patterns and these factors led me to notice different attitudes towards DVAW among the participants in the same sample of Libyans in the UK. When I looked at the data several times and read it in Arabic prior to translation into English, it became clear that the factors of importance for the participants varied. Gender made a crucial difference to some themes. In exploring interviews, I noticed key differences between men and women in relation to their attitudes to and perceptions of DVAW. When these differences were examined, it was apparent that there were also other interconnecting factors. With regard to some themes, in some instances the participants' attitudes differed in relation to their level of education, educational level was more important than the length of residence in the UK. I therefore, sought to establish differences between the group of men and women linked to their levels of education. In order to simplify the analysis, the sample was divided into two groups: '*less-educated*' and '*well/highly-educated*', as outlined previously<sup>17</sup>.

On the other hand, one methodological issue in particular, participants' social class background emerged in the analysis of semi-structured interviews. The issue of class position was highly problematic, so much so that I did not take this variable into consideration in the analysis [this was in both the survey and semi-structured interviews]. In response to

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<sup>17</sup> Children between the ages of 6 and 15 in Libya attend primary school and then attend secondary school for three additional years (15 to 18 year olds). Pre-university schooling is divided into three sections: primary, preparatory and secondary. The first nine years of education in Libya are compulsory and are known as basic education. They consist of six years of primary school and the first three years of secondary school. Primary education covers six years divided into a four-year period and a two-year period, and secondary education covers six to seven years divided into a three-year cycle (compulsory) and a three to four-year intermediate cycle. (The source: the British Council) <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-skills-for-employability-libyan-country-education-system.htm>

questions<sup>18</sup> about class position, some people's perceptions of social class did not accord with common understandings and some participants found it is difficult objectively to state their class. Almost all said they were 'middle-class'. Because of their migration to Britain, a substantial number of people as they had to undertake low-paid work, found themselves in a lower social class but continued to consider themselves as being of the same class as had been the case in Libya. Other participants declared themselves to be 'middle-class' although their yearly income was less than £10,000 and they had not attained a higher education qualification. In addition, some women misunderstood the term 'working-class' believing that, this referred to being in employment. Cultural differences were also noted in the way in which language was used. In Arabic the term used in for this, is '*lower-class*' and so is somewhat stigmatising. Overall, most of the participants in this sample tended to consider themselves middle-class, usually as they mentioned they were from 'good' or 'wealthy' families in Libya and were supported to some degree by their families. Since informants did not differentiate themselves by class, it was not possible to include class as a variable in the analysis.

Drawing and verifying conclusions, included identifying patterns and themes, exploring what they mean, clustering things into categories, and making sure conclusions are acceptable and make sense (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This was done by reading through each interview several times. If a theme or pattern was recognised in more than two, it was noted down on the next to the specific excerpt that referred to it, as well as on a separate blank document.

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<sup>18</sup> What social class would you say you belong to? And 'On what basis what makes you a 'member' of this class?



This blank document would eventually have a list of all the themes that were identified. The themes and sub-themes were then categorised and organized. This process involved many revisions and feedback from my supervisors. Finally, the themes were organised by major themes and sub-themes, keeping the initial research questions in mind. This step helped to guide the analysis chapters which displays the results and discusses these categories in detail. It also helped to link the themes to the research questions.

The participants' accounts were the co-product of the participant and the researcher, with the participant having the main role in highlighting and stressing the main themes in responses to the research questions. Themes were written up using all the codes and categories within each theme with quotes to produce descriptive accounts. Using direct quotes from the interview data strengthened the face validity and credibility of the findings and demonstrated the integrity and competence of the results (Patton, 1990). This was followed by a final stage: interpretation to provide associations between findings, explanations, and the nature of DVAW. This also would ensure the strength of the data analysis. Quality measures were undertaken to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings from the interviews and the survey. I selected the common themes; however, I did not ignore some of the specific cases. Some of these common topics emerged as a result of the questions I asked each participant and others came about as a result of quantitative data analysis. To help manage the data, the thematic analysis was informed using a framework of triangulation method. I linked the findings of the survey and the matching themes that emerged from the interviews to triangulate the different types of data within the conceptual framework of my thesis. Data that informed the categories were charted in a table for each participant to provide an overview of

the data gained in each interview. This allowed me to focus on each case and to link participants' accounts in the semi-structured interview with the survey sample. This also allowed me to look across all participants' accounts to compare their views in order to summarise these into an outline of data. This also allowed the data to be analysed and explored by comparison between the quantitative and qualitative sample. The themes which emerged from the interviews matched those in the survey. The methodological reason for this, was that both the semi-structured interview guide and the survey questions were built on the same themes, seeking to approach the research aims and objectives.

Having discussed the processes of the analysis of semi-structured interviews, the next section now proceeds to the quantitative analysis. It commences with an exploration of the statistical analysis used in the quantitative/survey methods.

#### **4.10 Justifications for Using Statistical Analysis Tools**

This section explains the various methodologies which were incorporated in the analysis of the survey. Data from the completed questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS (version 19.0 for Windows).

The three main techniques used for the analysis were: descriptive statistical analysis, cross-tabulation matrices and regression and multi-regression analysis. In addition, reliability and correlational techniques were applied to investigate the consistency of each multiple scale and to examine the association between all the indices to be created later on. However, I carried out many other tests; I initially attempted to perform T-tests in order to compare groups (e.g. age, gender, educational level). However, after testing for normality and equality for

variances it became clear that I could not satisfy the key assumption required for performing T-tests. Hence, the alternative was a non-parametric test [Mann-Whitney test], which was carried out. The Mann-Whitney test was performed to test selected groups, in order to compare the key dependent variables. The results indicated that most of the groups compared differed with a small effect size; therefore, I did not concentrate on these, as there was a lack of statistical significance.

Prior to performing different techniques of analysis, it was necessary to identify the independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables which were important for understanding DVAW in this sample, were: gender, age, educational level, length of residence in the UK, marital status, and whether the respondents came from a small town or a large city in Libya. The dependent variables discussed in the thesis were selected from the items on the questionnaire. These related to definitions of DVAW, beliefs about causes of DVAW, justifications for DVAW and the impact of migration on attitudes towards DVAW. It is important to note that the above variables were re-coded to smaller categories excluding gender (as `gender` only contained the category `male-female`). Likert scales were re-coded into two categories: `agree` and `disagree` whilst the category `neither agree nor disagree` was re-coded as missing. Many scales in this survey are Likert scales, where the statement which the respondent is asked to evaluate according to any kind of subjective or objective criteria; generally the level of agreement or disagreement is measured.

It was also necessary to create composite scales or *indices* which compressed sub-questions into one single section, in order to identify factors which could influence attitudes towards DVAW. The questionnaire included multiple items for measuring key concepts, including

multiple-item scales on 'Definition of violence', 'Behaviour considered to be DVAW', 'Economic and social elements of DVAW', 'Educational and cultural reasons for violence', and 'Justifications for DVAW'. Each index was changed into a single variable from a group of sub-questions. The indices were created for items/sub-questions by first investigating the consistency of each multiple scale item through the use of *reliability* analysis. A composite measure was created by replacing the scale with the mean of its components and the resulting indices were used in the descriptive analysis, cross tabulations, and to perform multiple regression analysis.

*Cronbach's alpha* is the most common measure of internal consistency or 'reliability'; that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It provides an overall reliability coefficient for a set of variables (e.g. questions). This measure most commonly used when data have multiple 'Likert questions' in a survey which form a scale and when it is to be determined if the scale is reliable. Performing reliability analysis using SPSS provided the value for *Cronbach's alpha*. This provided an overall reliability coefficient for the set of the sub-questions in the questionnaire; values of 0.7-0.8 are usually regarded as satisfactory.

The scale used for 'definition of DVAW' in my survey included five items or questions <sup>19</sup> which yielded a *Cronbach's alpha* of .772, which indicated a high level of internal

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<sup>19</sup> Five sub-question/ items were included in the index 'Definitions of DVAW' are:

- i. DVAW includes mental cruelty including verbal abuse.
- ii. DVAW includes deprived of money, and clothing.
- iii. DVAW includes being threatened with force or violence, even though no actual physical violence occurs.
- iv. DVAW includes physical violence that results in actual bodily harm.
- v. DVAW includes sexual violence.

consistency for this scale in the sample. A composite 'index of definition of DVAW' was created by replacing all the individual questions with the mean score of all the individual questions by computing variables using the SPSS dataset. The scale/index of '*Behaviour considered to be DVAW*' was created from nine questions<sup>20</sup>. The *Cronbach's alpha* for the nine items was .847, suggesting that the items had a high internal consistency. The index was then created using the same method discussed above. The scale/index of '*Economic reasons for DVAW*' included six sub-questions<sup>21</sup> with a *Cronbach's alpha* of .744, which indicated a high level of internal consistency in the scale. A scale measuring '*Educational and cultural reasons for DVAW*' included four items<sup>22</sup> with a *Cronbach's alpha* of .654, which suggested that the items had slightly low internal consistency, and an index was created. Finally, the

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<sup>20</sup> Nine sub-question/ items were included in the index 'Behaviours considered to be DVAW': These are:

- i. The husband denies his wife access to household money.
- ii. The husband forbids the wife to leave the house alone.
- iii. The husband shouts at the wife.
- iv. The husband curses the wife.
- v. The husband pulls or pushes his wife.
- vi. The husband slaps the wife.
- vii. The husband punches his wife.
- viii. The husband breaks things in the house.
- ix. Forced marriage is a type of DVAW.

<sup>21</sup> Six sub-question/ items were included in the index 'Economic reasons for DVAW' these are:

- i. Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.
- ii. Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victim of domestic violence.
- iii. Women depending on men for food, shelter and other material things are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.
- iv. Unemployed men tend to get frustrated and depressed, which leads to domestic violence.
- v. The lack of resources (e.g. house, money etc.) increases DVAW
- vi. Situations where women do not wish to work or do not give their earning to men can cause DVAW

<sup>22</sup> Four sub-question/ items were included in the index 'Educational and cultural reasons for DVAW' these are:

- i. Lack of education of women is a cause of violence against them.
- ii. Misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use DVAW in order to correct women.
- iii. Low educational level of men leads to domestic violence.
- iv. The high level of women's education can lead to violence against them.

scale measuring *'Justifications for using DVAW'* included a nine items scale with a *Cronbach's alpha* of .799. Subsequently, the index was created.

Further analyses were performed to examine the association between *all* the indices created to understand whether there existed any association between them. The associations were performed using Pearson's correlation<sup>23</sup>. The analyses undertaken using SPSS indicated a significant association between the indices. For example, the index of *'Behaviour considered to be DVAW'* and index of *'Definition of DVAW'* were strongly related to one another ( $r=.573$ ,  $R^2 = 32.8$ ) suggesting that 32.8% of variability in the definition of DVAW can be explained as behaviour considered to be DVAW. In other words, the two indices have a similar variance or spread. (See Figures 4.1 and Table 4.1)

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<sup>23</sup>The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. It is referred to as Pearson's correlation or as the correlation coefficient. If the relationship between the variables is not linear, then the correlation coefficient does not adequately represent the strength of the relationship between the variables. The symbol for Pearson's correlation is 'r'. Pearson's r can range from -1 to 1. An r of -1 indicates a perfect negative linear relationship between variables, an r of 0 indicates no linear relationship between variables, and an r of 1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship between variables. *For example, when r is .561, this means there is a positive correlation between two indices* (Power and Xie, 2008).

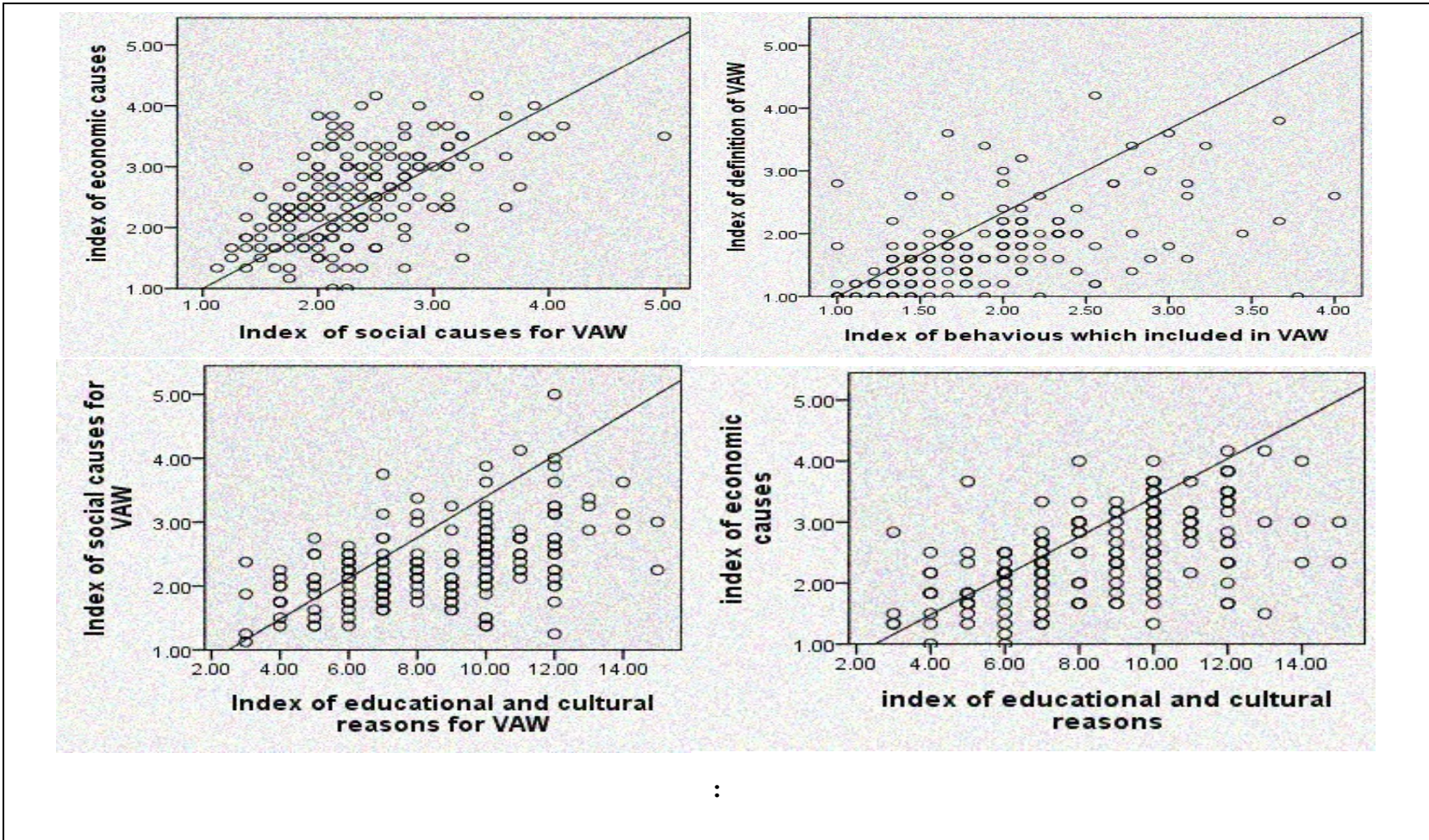


Figure 4. 2 Correlation of Indices

**Table 4. 1**  
**Correlations of the indices**

		Index of economic causes for DVAW	Index of definition of DVAW	Index of behaviours which included in the term `domestic violence`	Index of educational and cultural reasons
Index of economic causes for DVAW	Pearson Correlation	1	.256**	.248**	.561**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.001	.000
	N	175	175	174	175
Index of definition of DVAW	Pearson Correlation	.256**	1	.573**	.269**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001		.000	.000
	N	175	175	174	175
Index of behaviours which are included in the term `domestic violence`	Pearson Correlation	.248**	.573**	1	.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		.000
	N	174	174	174	174
Index of educational and cultural reasons for DVAW	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.269**	.333**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001	0.001	
	N	175	175	174	175

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



After undertaking the reliability analysis tests, which indicated that the items in the questionnaire were related to one another, creation of the overall indices of the repeatability or internal consistency of the scale as a whole was performed. The survey data were then analysed.

Three types of statistical analyses were performed to assess the study's results, comprising: (a) descriptive statistical analysis; (b) Cross-tabulation matrices and Chi-square tests; (c) regression and multi-regression analyses. Firstly, the descriptive statistics were calculated. The data was analysed using the 'frequencies procedure' for describing many types of variables. The frequencies procedures were calculated to reflect the relative frequency of attitudes towards DVAW reported by the women and men in the sample. Categorical variables<sup>24</sup> (Information that can be sorted into categories) were expressed as frequencies and percentages. The frequency distribution of each variable was assessed and presented by the gender of the respondents, then compared with their educational levels. The frequency distributions of the categories reflected in the responses to each statement for the questions are presented in the results. In addition, I presented the frequency distribution of the participants' responses to the statements comprised together in the '*indices*' (see later discussion).

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<sup>24</sup>Categorical variables record a response as a set of categories. These variables have values that describe a 'quality' or 'characteristic' of a data unit, such as 'what type' or 'which category'. Such variables are further described as: Nominal, Ordinal, and Interval. Nominal variables have categories that have no natural order to them. Ordinal variables, on the other hand, do have a natural order. Examples of these could be pesticide levels: high, medium, and low or an injury scale: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Caution should be used with some tests designed for ordinal variables because they may assume equal 'distance' between the levels. Such distances may be hard to actually quantify. The last type is the interval variable and it is, as the name implies, created from intervals on a continuous scale (Power and Xi, 2008).

Secondly, cross-tabulation analyses were conducted. Associations of attitudes towards DVAW with socio-demographic variables were examined. Relationships between variables were presented in tables. The data were initially analysed using a Chi-Square tests<sup>25</sup> to examine the associations between two categorical variables. This tested the relationship between each factor of attitudes towards DVAW and the socio-demographic characteristics. For Chi-Square tests, the critical level for statistical significance was at the 5% level. If the result was considerably higher than that, then the hypothesis was rejected. It would, in such a case, be concluded that there was no relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. These derive from the part of the SPSS output labelled '*sig*'<sup>26</sup>. The *p-value* is a number that ranges between 0 and 1. The *p-value* is the probability of obtaining the result, assuming that the two groups compared are the same. Generally, if the *p-value* is less than 0.05, the difference observed is considered statistically significant.

Additionally in this part of the analysis, the *indices* were re-coded into three categories: 'agreement with the statements', 'neutral' and 'disagreement'. Further hypotheses were tested to explore the relationship between gender and the indices<sup>27</sup>(as discussed above). Variables, that of 'education, length of residence in the UK, original place of residence in Libya, age,

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<sup>25</sup>The chi-square statistical test studies the relationship between two categorical variables. The association between two categorical variables is assessed by creating a table of all the possible combinations of responses of the two different variables (Power and Xi, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Usually, interest is in whether this value is above or below ' $p < .05$ '. The *p-value* is a number that ranges between 0 and 1. The *p-value* is the probability of getting the result, assuming that the two groups compared are the same. Generally, if the *p-value* is less than 0.05, the difference observed is considered statistically significant.

<sup>27</sup> The indices are: 'Behaviours which are included in the term domestic violence', 'Definitions of DVAW', 'economic reasons for DVAW', 'Educational reasons for DVAW' and 'Justifications for DVAW'.

marital status and having children` were introduced as controls to explore their impact upon the bivariate relationships for gender as independent variable and each of these indices were used in order to examine whether there were differences between males and females, linked with their level of education, their age for instance.

Third, after conducting the Chi square analyses, it was necessary to extend the analysis beyond single measures of a variable. Regression and multiple regression<sup>28</sup> analysis was conducted for each of the DVAW indices, to examine the extent to which the independent variables/socio-demographic characteristics predicted attitudes towards and perception of DVAW. Multiple regression allows additional factors to be entered separately into the analysis and the effect of each can be estimated. It is valuable for quantifying the impact of various simultaneous influences upon a single dependent variable. Because of omitted variables bias with simple regression, multiple regression is often essential even when the investigator is only interested in the effects of one of the independent variables (Sykes, 1993). Several other studies of DVAW have conducted regression and multiple regression analyses to determine the extent to which the aforementioned dependent-criterion variables can be predicted by socio-demographic characteristics (Haj-Yahia, 1995, 1998, 2000; Straus, 1990; Straus *et.al*, 1996).

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<sup>28</sup>Multiple regression is a flexible method of data analysis that may be appropriate whenever a quantitative variable (the dependent variable) is to be examined in relationship to any other factors (expressed as independent or predictor variables). Relationships may be nonlinear, independent variables may be quantitative or qualitative, and one can examine the effects of a single variable or multiple variables with or without the effects of other variables taken into account (Cohen *et al.*, 2003).

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the research methods and methodological issues, including the considerations that influenced the design and implementation of the research. It has attempted to justify and to reflect upon the research methodology. It also explored factors that influenced the choices and decisions I made during the stages of fieldwork and analysis of data.

Feminist methodology as used in this research has been advanced as a legitimate research model (Roberts, 1981). It considers gender to be a basic organising principle, which deeply shapes the situations of lives. Feminism can be seen as a form of attention, a lens that brings into focus particular questions about gender and how it affects our lives (Blair and Holland, 1985: 394).

This study employs a mixed method approach to achieve the aims of the research. The use of questionnaires offered a practical means of obtaining data from 175 participants, providing a quantitative perspective in an otherwise interpretive study. The semi-structured interviews allowed for exploration of questionnaire findings and further encouraged the participants to express personal experiences.

The following chapters discuss the analysis of data from this research project.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Understanding Domestic Violence against Women: Definitions and Terminology**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I start presenting the findings of the research. The main topic discussed concerns respondents' opinions regarding definitions of domestic violence against women (DVAW), as well as perceptions about different types of DVAW. As discussed in Chapter 4, themes emerged from the interviews matched those in the survey. The methodological reason for this was that both the survey questions and semi-structured interviews schedule were comparable. This chapter is structured in two parts. The first presents the results of the data analysis arising from the survey/questionnaire distributed and administered to 175 Libyan migrants. The second discusses men's and women's definitions of DVAW from the semi-structured interviews carried out with 20 informants. Before beginning this discussion, the chapter begins by introducing the demographic characteristics of the survey participants.

#### **5.2 Quantitative Analysis: Socio-demographic Summary of the Survey Respondents**

One of the research objectives was to assess any associations of participants' attitude toward DVAW with their socio-demographic profiles. Presenting the socio-demographic profile of the sample also provides descriptive statistics on the survey respondents. Therefore, the first part of the survey consisted of questions about the respondents' demographic and background characteristics. Initially, summaries of all the demographic variables were produced,

generating a range of information regarding the participants' characteristics. Since most of the variables were 'categorical variables', these variables were summarised by the number and percentage in each category. Table 5.1 below summarises the demographic details of the 175 people in the sample by number and percentage and disaggregated by genders.

**Table 5. 1**  
**Summary of the survey's respondents characteristics divided by gender**

Socio-demographic information		Gender				Total	
		Men		Women		Frequency	%
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Marital Status	Single	20	29.9%	45	41.7%	65	37.1%
	Married	46	68.7%	56	51.9%	102	58.3%
	Divorced	1	1.5%	4	3.7%	5	2.9%
	Widow	0	.0%	3	2.8%	3	1.7%
Place of residence in Libya	Large cities	31	46.3%	57	52.8%	88	50.3%
	Small towns	36	53.7%	51	47.2%	87	49.7%
Educational background	No formal education	0	.0%	1	.9%	1	0.6%
	Primary school	0	.0%	2	1.9%	2	1.1%
	Secondary school	17	25.4%	61	56.4%	78	44.8%
	Bachelors	9	13.4%	32	29.6%	41	23.1%
	MA	31	46.3%	8	7.4%	39	22.3%
	PhD	10	14.9%	4	3.7%	14	8.0%
Age	20-30 years	9	13.4%	39	36.1%	48	27.4%
	31-40 years	26	38.8%	36	33.3%	62	35.4%
	41-50 years	24	35.8%	28	25.9%	52	29.7%
	51-60 years	8	11.9%	4	3.7%	12	6.9%
	60 +years	0	.0%	1	.9%	1	.6%
Length of residence in the UK	Less than one year	1	1.5%	4	3.8%	5	2.9%
	1-5 years	23	34.3%	34	32.1%	57	32.9%
	6-10years	18	26.9%	23	21.7%	41	23.7%
	11-15 years	5	7.5%	21	19.8%	26	15.0%
	16-20 years	19	28.4%	21	19.8%	40	23.1%
	21-25 years	1	1.5%	2	1.9%	3	1.7%
	25+ years	0	.0%	1	.9%	1	.6%

Total Male: (n=67) 38.3% Total Female: (n=108) 61.7% Total= 175  
There were missing data in the category 'Length of residence in UK' as 2 participants did not answer the question.

Approximately 38% of the sample were male (n = 67) and 62% were female (n = 108). Overall, approximately 38% of the sample were single, 58% were married, 3% were divorced, and a small minority (2%) of the sample (mainly female) were widowed (see Table 5.1). Additionally, approximately 50% of the sample came from large cities in Libya (e.g. Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata) and an equal percentage came from small towns (e.g. Zawiya, Ajdabiya, Derna, Gharyan, Msallata).

In terms of educational levels, 2 people had no formal education; 1% of participants (4 people) had only completed primary school, and 44% of the sample had only completed secondary school. Of the rest of the sample 23% of participants possessed Bachelor's degrees, approximately 22% had completed Masters Degrees, and approximately 8% held PhDs. Thus, over half of the sample (approximately 53%), had a high level of education, the educational levels for men being higher than those for women. However, we need to be aware that the percentage of men and women in this sample who had obtained higher qualifications is unusual compared with percentage of people with Bachelor's in Libya<sup>29</sup>. One of the reasons is that those participants had migrated to the UK to study. Most of the participants were aged under 55 years, with approximately 65% of the respondents aged between 31–50. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to over 51 years. Approximately 27% were aged between 20–30; 35% were aged between 31–40; 30% were aged between 41–50; and 8% were over 51 years of age. Table 5.1 shows also that approximately 60% of the participants had been in

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<sup>29</sup> According to the Libyan census report (2006), 14.3% of Libyan women and 15.66 % of Libyan men obtained 'higher' levels of qualification i.e. ranging from post 16 to university level.

the UK for 1–10 years, and just over 40% of the sample had lived in the UK for 11 years and longer. And, 59% of men and 68% of women in the sample were not in paid work in the UK. As mentioned above, categorical variables were constructed with regard to the number and percentage in each category. For purposes of analysis, variables such as age or education were re-coded to form a smaller number of categories. A number of the categorical variables (such as for age) contained a rather large number of categories whilst for other variables, there was a relatively small number in each category. Therefore, to increase the strength of the statistical tests, similar categories were combined together for the purposes of the statistical analyses. For instance, the age categories were re-coded to contain two categories: less than 40 years and 40 years of age and above. Marital status was re-coded to yield two categories: `married` and `single`. The category `single` contains never married, widowed and divorced people as there were small numbers in each category. Educational level was also re-coded into two categories: `Bachelor`s degree/university level and above`, and `less than degree level.`

Having outlined the quantitative sample`s socio-demographic profile, the discussion now proceeds to discuss the analysis of the data constructed on attitudes/perceptions of DVAW amongst the survey sample. In particular, the discussion will focus on definitions of DVAW. In order to explore Libyan migrants` attitudes towards DVAW, it was necessary first to understand their definitions of DVAW and its forms. In the next section, the results are presented to reflect differences between men and women and their educational levels, which turned out to be an important factor in constructing participants` attitudes towards DVAW. Other variables that have a statistically significant relationship are also presented.



### 5.2.1 Quantitative Analysis: Definition of Domestic Violence against Women

The initial themes in the survey concern definitions of DVAW. This section relates to the definitions of DVAW provided by the participants, indicating which behaviours would be considered to be abusive or violent. In order to approach definitions of DVAW, participants in the quantitative sample were asked to respond to sub-questions about specific behaviours that might be covered by the term 'domestic violence'. In English, I use the term DVAW, and in Arabic العنف العائلي . The Arabic term in the survey means and refers to DVAW (see the definitions section in Chapter 2). The frequency results of the responses to these questions are presented in Table 5.2 below.

One of the research objectives was to assess any associations of participants' attitude toward DVAW with their socio-demographic profiles. Presenting the socio-demographic profile of the sample also provides descriptive statistics on the survey respondents.

**Table 5. 2**  
**Definition of domestic violence against women**

Definition of domestic violence against women	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
DVAW includes mental cruelty including verbal abuse.	90.2%	93.3%	9.8%	6.7%
DVAW includes depriving women of money, and clothing.	78.8%	88.0%	21.2%	12.0%
DVAW includes being threatened with force or violence, even though no actual physical violence occurs.	93.8%	98.0%	6.3%	2.0%
DVAW includes physical violence that results in actual bodily harm.	95.5%	97.2%	4.5%	2.8%
DVAW includes sexual violence.	88.7%	97.1%	11.3%	2.9%

Five forms of behaviours that could be seen to constitute DVAW were presented in survey questions. These included verbal abuse, economic abuse, the threat of using violence, physical violence, and sexual violence. The vast majority of the participants agreed that DVAW includes physical violence resulting in actual bodily harm. This included 96% of men and 97% of women. The results in Table 5.2 above show that there were some differences between men and women's responses to the question regarding the definition of DVAW, however. For example, 97% of women and 89% of men agreed that DVAW includes sexual violence. Also 88% of women and 79% of men agreed that DVAW includes economic deprivation.

I discuss here the results from cross-tabulations,<sup>30</sup> which were carried out to test the respondents' gender, and educational levels together compare with the index<sup>31</sup> 'Definition of DVAW'. It was not possible to present the results of cross-tabulation for all the socio-demographic variables due to lack of space. Educational level is chosen here because it appeared to be an important factor within this study in both quantitative and qualitative parts

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<sup>30</sup> Cross-tabulation analysis, is used to analyse categorical (nominal measurement scale) data. A cross-tabulation is a two (or more) dimensional table that records the number (frequency) of respondents that have the specific characteristics described in the cells of the table, providing a wealth of information about the relationship between the variables.

<sup>31</sup> It was also necessary to create composite scales or indices, which compressed sub-questions into one single section. The five sub-question/ items were included in the index 'Definitions of DVAW' are:

- i. DVAW includes mental cruelty including verbal abuse.
- ii. DVAW includes deprived of money, and clothing.
- iii. DVAW includes being threatened with force or violence, even though no actual physical violence occurs.
- iv. DVAW includes physical violence that results in actual bodily harm.
- v. DVAW includes sexual violence.

of this research. As discussed previously (see Chapter 4), this index had proved to be reliable with a *Cronbach's alpha* of .772, which indicated a high level of internal consistency for this scale. In Table 5.3 below, the differences between women and men's responses linked to their levels of education are presented, carrying out the cross-tabulation matrix.

The results indicate that educational level affected how participants perceived DVAW, as 85% of well-educated respondents agreed with the index. Women with higher educational levels (approximately 91%) were more likely to perceive violence as including verbal abuse, economic control, being threatened, and physical and sexual violence. Whereas about 80% of well-educated men agreed with the index. Approximately 78% of all 'less-educated' participants agreed with the index of '*Definition of DVAW*'; however, less-educated women showed a strong tendency to agree with all the statements than did less-educated men. For instance, approximately 81% of less-educated women agreed that DVAW includes being deprived of money and clothing, whereas only 65% of 'less-educated men' agreed with all the statements in the index of '*Definition of DVAW*'. Gender and education level were important factors within this survey and this is taken up in discussion in later chapter.

**Table 5.3**

**Cross- tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index 'Definition of DVAW'**

				Definition of DVAW includes verbal, economic, being threatened, physical abuse, and sexual violence.			
Educational level				Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Below degree level	Gender	male	Count	11	3	3	17
			% within gender	64.7%	17.6%	17.6%	100.0%
	female	Count	52	9	3	64	
		% within gender	81.3%	14.1%	4.7%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	63	12	6	81	
		% within gender	77.8%	14.8%	7.4%	100.0%	
BA degree and above	Gender	male	Count	40	8	2	50
			% within gender	80.0%	16.0%	4.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	40	4	0	44	
		% within gender	90.9%	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	80	12	2	94	
		% within gender	85.1%	12.8%	2.1%	100.0%	
Total	Gender of respondent	male	Count	51	11	5	67
			% within gender	76.1%	16.4%	7.5%	100.0%
	female	Count	92	13	3	108	
		% within gender	85.2%	12.0%	2.8%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	143	24	8	175	
		% within gender	81.7%	13.7%	4.6%	100.0%	

The present section provides the results of Chi Square tests carried out to examine if there were relationships between the independent and dependent variables. This analysis (see Chapter 4) was used to establish if there were significant statistical associations between each sub-question of the definitions of DVAW as 'dependent variables', with each of the socio-demographic/independent variables. Some of the independent variables did not link statistically with any of the sub-questions of the definitions of DVAW, these were: the length of time spent in the UK, marital status, employment status, and having children or not. The results of tests that turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 5.4 (next page). The findings show that in this sample, highly-educated participants were more likely to agree that violence includes 'mental cruelty and verbal abuse' than were less-educated participants. There was also a statistical relationship between age and this statement, ( $\chi^2=5.484$  and  $p<.019$ ): respondents aged under 40 were more likely to agree that DVAW includes mental cruelty, including verbal abuse, suggesting a broader definition of DVAW.

The former place of residence in Libya was linked to the statement 'DVAW includes depriving women of money and clothing' ( $\chi^2 = 5.226$ ,  $p<.022$ ). Participants in this sample who came from large cities were more likely to agree this statement than were participants who came from small towns. A statistical association was found between gender and the statement 'DVAW includes sexual violence'. Women were more likely than men to agree that DVAW includes sexual abuse. Age also linked to this statement. Participants aged under 40 years also tended to agree with the statement that 'DVAW includes sexual abuse' more than those who were aged over 40 year, suggesting generational changes in attitudes.

**Table 5.4**  
**Chi Square analysis for definitions of DVAW and socio-demographic variables**

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) *	Sig<0.05	Phi**	Odds Ratio**	****Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
DVAW includes mental cruelty including verbal abuse.	Educational level	10.698	.030	-.220	.142	.030	.661
	Age	5.484	.019	-.182	.122	.016	.965
DVAW includes depriving women of money and clothing	Residence in Libya	5.226	.022	-.185	.327	.121	.881
DVAW includes sexual violence	Gender	4.695	.030	-.169	.238	.059	.958
	Age	6.307	.012	-.196	.604	.531	.686

\*= Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) is a measure of standard deviation and its value shows the deviations between observed and theoretical frequencies in the sample. The chi-square test enables the researcher to determine whether an observed pattern of frequencies in a crosstabs table corresponds to or fits an 'expected' pattern.

\*\*= Phi coefficient also referred to as the 'mean square contingency coefficient' is a measure of association for two binary variables. Phi is a measure that adjusts the chi square statistic by the sample size.

\*\*\* = Odds Ratio is a measure of association between an exposure and an outcome. The Odds ratio represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure.

\*\*\*\*The 95% confidence interval (CI) is used to estimate the precision of the Odds ratio. A large CI indicates a low level of precision of the Odds ratio, whereas a small CI indicates a higher precision of the Odds ratio.

Next, I discuss the results of Chi square tests performed to investigate whether there was any association between the dependent variable the index '*Definitions of DVAW*' with each socio-demographic/independent variable. No significant statistical association was found between gender and this index. When I controlled for the former place of residence in Libya with gender, there was; however, linkage between those who came from large cities ( $\chi^2 = 7.215$ ,  $p < .027$ ). That is, women in the sample who came from large cities in Libya agreed more than the other groups in the sample with the index '*Definitions of DVAW*'. With regard to the

relationship between gender and the index of *'Definition of DVAW'*, the introduction of age also resulted in a significant statistical relationship. However, this only applied to those under 40 years of age. Thus, women who were aged less than 40 years were more likely to agree with the index of *'Definition of DVAW'* than were men or women aged over 40.

I next discuss the results of the multi-regression analysis. As discussed in Chapter 4, the term *multiple-regression* refers to the case in which one quantitative dependent variable is predicted by more than one quantitative or qualitative independent variables (Judd and McClelland, 1989). The SPSS data set was used to compute multi-regression analysis, examining the extent to which the independent variables (socio-demographic variables) predicted the definition of DVAW the index of *'Definition of DVAW'*. These characteristics were entered as the first block of predictors in the regression and multiple regression formulas for each index. I was interested to find out how the value of the dependent variable (index of *'Definition of DVAW'*) change when any of the independent variables varied, while the other independent variables were held constant. The results of multi-regression analysis, provide the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = .157, p < .001$ ) which indicates that 15.7% of the variability<sup>32</sup> regarding the definition of DVAW, can be attributed to the set of independent variables which appear in Table 5.5. These included the following independent variables: gender, place of residence, age, educational level, and marital status. With regard to possible

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<sup>32</sup>Variability refers to how "spread out" a group of scores is, and the extent to which data points in a statistical distribution or data set diverge from the average or mean value. Variability also refers to the extent to which these data points differ from each other. There are four commonly used measures of variability: range, mean, variance and standard deviation. Variability can also be defined in terms of how close the scores in the distribution are to the middle of the distribution.

predictor variables, the most important were gender ( $p < .001$ ) and whether the participants had worked in Libya ( $p < .002$ ). The output from the regression procedure is given in Table 5.5 below.

**Table 5.5**  
**Multi- Regression analysis for definitions of domestic violence against women**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	2.223	.429		5.185	.000
	Gender of respondent	-.395	.107	-.300	-3.677	.000
	Place of residence in Libya	-.109	.099	-.085	-1.101	.272
	Did you work in Libya?	.373	.121	.276	3.082	.002
	Are you working in the UK?	-.100	.096	-.078	-1.045	.298
	Do you have any children?	.039	.163	.030	.236	.814
	Age	-.199	.115	-.150	-1.727	.086
	Length of residence in UK	.028	.098	.022	.290	.772
	Educational level	-.170	.112	-.132	-1.524	.130
	Marital status	.080	.155	.062	.519	.605
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> .157		<i>F</i> . 3.363		<i>Sig</i> .001a		

The results reveal that 15.7% of the variance in the participants' belief that these behaviours should be included in the term DVAW can be attributed to the participants' socio-demographic characteristics. According to the results, only the 'gender' variable and 'participants' previous employment status in Libya' variable were important factors, as those two variables were (*Sig.* on less than 0.05, were the remaining variables were greater than 0.05 or not significant). This indicated that women show a greater tendency than men to believe that these behaviours should be included in the term DVAW. This table gives an *F-test* to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this *p-value* (*Sig*



.001), it is. A number of studies on DVAW conducted in various Arab societies have also carried out multi regression test (e.g. Haj Yhia, 1998, 1998a, 2002, 2003, 2006). For instance, Haj Yhia (2003) found that the variance in Arab men’s tendency to blame women for violence was significantly accounted by their age and level of education.

### 5.2.2 Quantitative Analysis: Behaviours Considered to be Domestic Violence

With respect to the definitions of DVAW, participants in the survey sample were asked another question to rate their agreement or disagreement towards specific behaviours (See Table 5.6 below) which could be included as DVAW. The results indicates that many participants did not consider `a husband forbidding his wife to leave the house alone` to be violence against her. Only 57% agreed that this would be considered to be violence, as Table 5.6 below indicates.

**Table 5.6**  
**Behaviours that are considered to be covered by the term `domestic violence`**

Behaviours which considered to be covered by the term “domestic violence	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
The husband denies his wife access to household money.	72.0%	86.8%	28.0%	13.2%
The husband forbids his wife to leave the house alone.	62.5%	78.7%	37.5%	21.3%
The husband shouts at his wife.	84.6%	92.2%	15.4%	7.8%
The husband curses his wife.	93.4%	96.2%	6.6%	3.8%
The husband pulls or pushes his wife.	94.0%	96.2%	6.0%	3.8%
The husband slaps his wife.	96.9%	99.1%	3.1%	.9%
The husband punches his wife.	96.9%	97.2%	3.1%	2.8%
The husband breaks things in the house.	93.0%	91.1%	7.0%	8.9%
Forced marriage is a type of DVAW.	89.7%	93.5%	10.3%	6.5%

When considering whether denying money to the wife to be violence, 66% of the sample believed that the husband denying his wife access to household money was DVAW. The great

majority of the sample, approximately 95% agreed that if the husband shouts at his wife, curses her, pulls or pushes her, punches her, or breaks things in the house, these behaviours should be considered to be DVAW. In addition, 79% of the sample agreed that forced marriage is a type of DVAW. These results are displayed in Table 5.6 above.

I now present the results of cross-tabulation for two variables: gender of the respondents and their educational levels together with the index of *'Behaviours which are considered to be DVAW'*. The results in Table 5.7 below indicate that women in general (approximately 74%) were somewhat more likely than men (64%) to agree that a range of behaviours can be violence: the husband denying his wife access to household money, forbidding her to leave the house alone, shouting at her, cursing her, pulling or pushing her, slapping her, punching her, breaking things in the house, and forced marriage. Still, Table 5.7 also indicates that 72% of less-educated women agreed that the above-mentioned behaviours were DVAW, but that only 47% of less-educated men agreed with all of the statements computed in the index. Well-educated women (77%) showed a higher tendency to agree more than did well-educated men (69%).

Nevertheless, the results using Chi-square tests indicate that the socio-demographic factors/or independent variables did not relate significantly with the index of *'Behaviours considered to be DVAW'* as a dependent variable. There was also no relationship between gender and the index of behaviours considered violence.

**Table 5.7**  
**Cross- tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with index `Behaviours which are considered to be DVAW`**

Educational level			Behaviours which considered to be covered by the term “domestic violence”				
			Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total	
Below degree level	Gender	male	Count	8	7	2	17
			%	47.1%	41.2%	11.8%	100.0%
		female	Count	46	14	4	64
			%	71.9%	21.9%	6.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	54	21	6	81
			%	66.7%	25.9%	7.4%	100.0%
BA degree and above	Gender	male	Count	34	12	3	49
			%	69.4%	24.5%	6.1%	100.0%
		female	Count	34	8	2	44
			%	77.3%	18.2%	4.5%	100.0%
	Total		Count	68	20	5	93
			%	73.1%	21.5%	5.4%	100.0%
Total	Gender of respondent	male	Count	42	19	5	66
			%	63.6%	28.8%	7.6%	100.0%
		female	Count	80	22	6	108
			%	74.1%	20.4%	5.6%	100.0%
	Total		Count	122	41	11	174
			%	70.1%	23.6%	6.3%	100%

The findings in Table 5.8 below show that 11.6% of the variance in the index of *'Behaviours considered to be DVAW'* can be attributed to all of the variables that were entered into the regression equation. The ( $R^2 = .116$ ) which suggests that only 11.6% of variability is explained by this model. Of possible predictor variables, the most important was that of the gender of the respondents ( $p < .002$ ). Thus, women's definitions of DVAW is different from men's, as women's definitions tended to be broader. The other socio-demographic factors were not statistically significant as can be seen in Table 5.8 below.

**Table 5.8**  
**Regression analysis for behaviours considered to be covered by the term domestic violence**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	2.321	.644		3.605	.000
	Gender of respondent	-.344	.112	-.275	-3.074	.002
	Age	-.129	.070	-.197	-1.846	.067
	Length of residence in UK	-.085	.097	-.070	-.878	.381
	Former place of residence in Libya	.053	.037	.113	1.428	.155
	Educational level	-.040	.046	-.084	-.875	.383
	Did you work in Libya?	.033	.283	.026	.117	.907
	Are you working in the UK?	.010	.046	.047	.220	.826
	Marital status	-.089	.097	-.074	-.919	.359
	Do you have children?	.168	.110	.170	1.533	.127

$R^2$ . 116       $F$ . 2.104       $Sig$ . .027<sup>a</sup>

***Discussion based on quantitative analysis of definition of DVAW***

The findings revealed that there were few differences between men and women with regard to this question/scale linked with their levels of education. Women with high educational levels are more likely to perceive violence as including verbal abuse, economic control, being threatened, and physical and sexual violence. In several other studies, educational level was found to be inversely proportionally to DVAW (Ackerson *et al.*, 2008; Vyas and Watts, 2009). Thus, women's educational level appeared to be the most influential factor affecting how they perceived DVAW. This is also relevant to understand how it interacts with other factors, and education's effects on women's perceptions of DVAW. Women with high educational levels are more likely to have a broad definition of violence. The influence of gender appeared to be important in shaping attitudes towards DVAW in this sample. The findings indicated significant differences between men and women and how they perceived DVAW. According to multi-regression analysis, gender was a consistent predictor of whether more violence-supportive views were held. In examining the definitions of DVAW, the results did not show any significant association between attitudes towards DVAW and the factor 'length of residence in the UK'. This contradicted my initial assumption and expectation that this factor would have an important influence on the migrants' perceptions of DVAW (see Chapter 9). It was clear that behaviour patterns that involve physical abuse were perceived to a much greater extent as DVAW than were behaviours that do not involve physical abuse. For the behaviours such as: 'the husband curses his wife'; 'the husband pulls or pushes his wife'; 'the husband slaps his wife', a majority of the respondents believed that these behaviours are violence. But there was also a clear tendency to express that some behaviours could not be

DVAW, from some participants' perspectives. Notably, many participants did not consider forbidding a woman to leave the house alone to be violence. As 66% of the sample agreed that a husband denying his wife access to household money was a behaviour considered to be DVAW; this reflects the expectation that women in Libyan communities have a right to financial support, but, should respect and obey men in the family. This is also an indicator that some men perhaps tend to normalise such acts. More men in this sample disagreed that DVAW includes sexual violence, which might link to Islamic perspectives that it is a woman's duty to submit sexually to her husband.

Having discussed the definitions of DVAW based on the results from the survey, the following section will continue discussing definitions of DVAW, presenting the results from the qualitative sample.

### **5.3 Qualitative Analysis: Definitions of Domestic Violence against Women**

The first dimension of the participants' perspectives in understanding perceptions of DVAW in the Libyan communities concerns definitions. Participants were asked the following question *'How would you define DVAW and what does the term DVAW mean to you?'* Analysis of the responses revealed that most definitions given, referred to acts which are classified in literature as verbal, emotional, and physical abuse (Bograd, 1990; DeKeseredy and Hinch, 1991; Buzawa, and Buzawa, 2002; Astbury and Cabral, 2000).

The majority of respondents declared that DVAW included both physical and emotional abuse whilst others drew attention to other dimensions of violence, which included material deprivation and not allowing wives to have access to education or be able to undertake work

outside the home. As one of the aims of this study was to investigate DVAW from the viewpoints of women and of men, this section will now discuss what the male participants perceived as DVAW.

### **5.3.1 Men in the Sample: Understandings of Domestic Violence against Women**

In exploring interviews, I noticed key differences between men and women in relation to their attitudes to DVAW. Most women in the sample discussed different aspects of DVAW more enthusiastically, and believed this topic to be more relevant to them than did men. By contrast, men in the sample spoke less about DVAW compared with women. Whilst men approached the topic more in general terms, women's viewpoints were more specific and detailed as they believed the topic applied to themselves and their lives. Some of the men interviewed (particularly those with low levels of education) felt uncomfortable at times talking about DVAW. I noticed that some men frequently sought to change the subject during interviews in spite of the fact that some were very aware of the issue. As a researcher, I was unable to ask them directly why they felt reluctant at times to talk about this. However, my personal familiarity with the culture and customs of the Libyan people allowed me to understand that they considered talking about this as a matter for women and not for men. Some men in the sample with higher levels of education; however, had knowledge of the topic of DVAW and could talk about this issue. The fact that some have knowledge about DVAW, did not necessarily mean; however, that they supported women's rights or policies against DVAW. Some men simply mentioned types of violence briefly when they declared what DVAW meant to them whilst others avoided the question, said little and moved quickly on to another topic, or else changed the subject. This particularly applied especially to those with lower

levels of education. However, other men considered DVAW to be a range of male behaviour that women found to be abusive, and which arose from men's position of power in society. For example, Ali was less-educated and aged 37 was married and had been in the UK for 17 years. On the first occasion, that I asked Ali what DVAW meant to him, he commenced talking about women's situation in general and about the role of Libyan women in the family. In order to acquire a deeper understanding, of his viewpoint and to clarify it for him as well, I once again asked Ali what came into his mind when I referred to the term 'DVAW'. His response was:

*DVAW can be verbal or psychological violence, not just physical violence. And physical violence varies; sometimes could be a light or simple hit and sometimes could be severe, and could leave and markings on the face or the arms. In general, any behaviour to force a wife to do anything against her will is violence (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

Ali perceived violence to be more emotional than physical abuse within marriage and explained that verbal abuse meant insulting language; he went on to add that emotional abuse referred to any action in which aggressive or insulting behaviour takes place against women for being female. Nevertheless, when I asked him about violence in the family of origin, where the abuser is the father, brother or another family member (e.g. uncle), he stated that women usually do not complain about this in Libyan communities and this was a family issue. It should not be a matter for public discussion Ali said, (see Chapter 7 for discussions of justifications for DVAW). According to Haj-Yahia (2005), some men tend to perceive DVAW as a personal issue that should be kept within the family, and they oppose any involvement of outside bodies.



Samir was another less-educated male in this sample, who was single and had been in the UK for four years. He perceived DVAW to be a kind of power struggle between men and women. He believed men's position in the family to be powerful and, that they saw themselves as possessing right to control women. Samir said:

*Violence is the use of the power to control other people in general, and DVAW occurs when women have less power therefore men use their strength to control women (Samir, single, aged 34 years).*

Samir explained that men control women economically and emotionally, and in his opinion, Libyan men used physical violence less than other types of violence. However, he also justified violence, stating that women needed men and, because of this need, men acquired the right to control women. In his opinion, some men used their strength at home when they lost their tempers. He thought that some women provoked men, leading to violence against them. Therefore, based on this perception, it could be argued that some men held negative attitudes concerning DVAW and that gender itself could be a significant predictor of justifying DVAW and this supported by the quantitative data analysis (as discussed above).

The level of understanding of DVAW varied amongst different groups of men in this research. Some well-educated male participants considered DVAW to be a serious crime. An example was Ibrahim, a well-educated man who had lived in the UK for more than thirty years. Ibrahim stated:

*DVAW is a serious crime and should be treated as crime. Each man makes a choice to use violence and consequently must take responsibility for that action... Women should go to police and police should help them. This how abused men get the punishment for their actions (Ibrahim, married, aged 49 years).*

Ibrahim; however, was the only man in the small semi-structured interview sample who considered DVAW to be a criminal act, resulting from men's own beliefs and actions. He believed that DVAW was due to the absence of laws to protect women from abuse. In his opinion Libyan law did not ensure women's rights and protect them when they were abused, he further said even if the law was in existence, it might not be enforced. This exploitation of men's position in society, has given men the right to control and beat women, as well as authority within the family. Under a patriarchal system, men control women and this encourages men to feel stronger through committing violence.

As stated previously, male participants' knowledge of DVAW did not necessarily mean that they supported women's rights. For instance, Hamdi, another highly-educated male, was more aware of the issue of DVAW, and could discuss this in detail. He perceived violence to be a gender-related issue and that depriving women of access to education was a factor behind DVAW. However, he also believed that women themselves were the cause of their own subordination, that the culture of Libyan society had an impact on women, making them too weak to make their decisions about their own lives. Hamdi defined DVAW as:

*Depriving women of education is violence. Depriving her from work and independence is violence...the strongest types of violence is to look to women as an object... (Hamdi, single, aged 33 years).*

The qualitative analysis revealed that in spite of some men's awareness of DVAW and its consequences, DVAW was not recognised as a serious social problem. Rather it was seen as a personal and family issue (Smith, 1989). Some men in this sample stated that DVAW is an act that is undertaken only by the husband. Akram, for example, (36 years old, single with a lower level of education) declared:

*DVAW is physical harm and beating by the husband. It is violence from the specific man (the husband) and not in the family of origin (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

Dobash and Dobash (1978) argued that women are seen as legitimate targets within heterosexual relationships and feminists have long known that the greatest risk comes from those with whom they are intimate. Akram, for instance, perceived DVAW to be violence in the private sphere (especially in marriage) as well as at state level. According to him, women in the family did not usually object to the violence perpetrated by brothers and fathers, as women could not do anything about it and they would report it. In Akram's opinion, this violence was not necessarily a problem in Libyan communities, and he justified this by saying that males in the family, such as the father or brother, beat women for understandable reasons. He added:

*In our culture, the brother can beat his sister if she makes a mistake and he most definitely will beat anyone who tries to hurt her (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

This type of response clearly reflected the tendency of some Libyan men to believe that women in the family should be under their control as they are responsible for the family honour. It is likewise, seen as men's responsibility to protect women.

Most male participants stated that Libyan culture gives men the right to control women; when society considers violence to be acceptable, women should accept this and consider it to be a normal aspect of their lives. Ali (married, 37 years old and less-educated) stated:

*As Libyan, we believe a wife should obey her husband so when she does not, he can beat her. A father and the brother can beat his daughter or sister because some women are needed to be corrected, especially if she made mistakes related to family honour. ... (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

In general, many men in this sample believed that, in Libyan communities men perceived their power and privileges, which should be accepted by women. Men expected women in their families to respect them and to obey their rules and requests.

### **5.3.2 Women in the Sample: Understandings of Violence against Women**

For the 13 women taking part in semi-structured interviews, DVAW was seen as part of gender discrimination and male domination. Some of the women mentioned physical and sexual violence, and some linked DVAW to the deprivation of women's rights. Other women stated a necessity to differentiate between DVAW in cultures such as Libya and the UK, as many acts would be considered DVAW in the UK would not be in Libya (see discussion in Chapter 9). All women wanted to talk about DVAW, however, the 'more' and 'less' educated women in this sample responded quite differently to the questions about the definition of DVAW. This clear difference by women's educational level, allowed me to divide perceptions of DVAW into two broad categories: a) DVAW as male domination, and b) physical, sexual violence and emotional violence as a family matter. These two categories are outlined in Table 5.9 below.

**Table 5.9**  
**Women in the qualitative sample: Understanding of domestic violence against women linked to their educational level**

The meaning of DVAW	Pseudonym	Educational level
<i>Male domination and gender inequality.</i> <i>Lack of understanding of women`s rights.</i> <i>Any violence at home or outside home.</i> <i>The use of the power by men to control women.</i>	Ibtesam	BA
	Thuria	BA
	Aisha	BA
	Salma	BA
	Hanan	BA
	Fatima	BA
<i>DVAW is mainly a family matter.</i> <i>Insulting women and beating women inside house.</i> <i>Physical violence at home that should be sorted out at home.</i> <i>Any type of violence that is a part of women`s lives.</i>	Nasreen	Secondary school
	Huda	Secondary school
	Najah	Secondary school
	Karima	Secondary school
	Basma	Secondary school
	Mayada	Primary school
	Faiza	Primary school

Thus, less-educated women perceived DVAW to include both physical and emotional abuse but often saw as a family issue, whilst well-educated women drew attention to gender hierarchical orders that led men to use power to control women. In general, women who participated in this study considered DVAW to be a widespread phenomenon in Libyan context, some mentioning Libyan society (within Libya) or the Libyan community in the UK. Women believed that domestic violence exists in Libyan communities and verbal and emotional abuse was very common in the sample (see Chapter7). The rates of violence for less and more highly-educated women in the sample were almost equal, but there was a difference in their perceptions and attitudes towards DVAW.

Some well-educated women in the sample who had spent a long time in the UK mentioned that DVAW in Libyan communities remains one of the most under-reported issues. In Libya,

patriarchal ideology provides a cultural framework which, (as stated by feminists) underpins women's subordination (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Kelly 1988; Mooney 1993; Abrahams 1994). The patriarchal system appeared, in the views of the sample, to provide a general context for DVAW (as supported by relevant references in Chapter 3 of this thesis). For instance, Thuria, a divorced and well-educated woman, aged 46 years who had been in the UK for a long time, stated that:

*DVAW means that the relationship is based on inequality; men/husbands have the power, while women are submissive (often the wife as she is weak). Women are exposed to beating, as they are females facing a society, which orders them not to go out and get on buses, and sometimes they want that, so some of the men resort to beating women (Thuria, divorced, aged 46 years).*

Thuria's perspective held that DVAW involved lack of understanding of women's rights. She mentioned that her ex-husband was well-educated but was older than her, and had not allowed her to work or to go out on her own, she refused to accept this, which led him to be violent. She made it clear that women should speak out about violence and stop treating this as a family matter. Similarly, Salma, another woman with a high level of education commented on the lack of understanding of women's rights in Libyan society. Salma's account echoed this attitude:

*DVAW is any action, which harms or cause suffering or indignity to women. Violence at the home is the situation when men control women because they are in a patriarchal society, this society gave the right to control women and deal with them as second class within the society. This is the case not only for women in Libya. It is also Libyan women who live in the UK, as they live with same men who do not have enough knowledge about women's rights (Salma, married, aged 45 years).*

Aisha, another well-educated woman in the sample, talked about sexual harassment in terms of her understanding of DVAW:

*DVAW is insulting and beating women inside house or outside the house, for instance harassment in the street is violence. Rape is also violence and is a very danger as type of DVAW. This rape could be from a family member not just a stranger and women do not speak about this (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

In addition, insulting and controlling women was found to be a very effective way of emotional harm. Hanan is a married well-educated woman, aged 48 years, believed that physical violence is 'deliberately hurting or injuring a woman'. She said that women in Libyan communities suffer from emotional violence, and women accepted this as part of their lives. She mentioned that men's control of women has complex roots in Libyan communities and the male-dominated underdeveloped patriarchal society determines the main institution of the family. This seems to support Galtung's (1996) view that gender inequality is the outcome of the interconnection of direct, structural and cultural violence. This unequal power distribution leads to unequal life opportunities.

Some less-educated women also perceived violence as a part of women's lives, tending to see this violence as a family issue. They believed that women are socialised to accept and tolerate domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences. Other women in this research with low educational levels perceived DVAW as physical violence and the use of physical strength by men, but again, thought this should be kept within the family. According to Najah (female, 36 years of age, married and resident in the UK for many years) DVAW was physical violence at home by any family member. Najah said:

*DVAW is insulting and beating women in the house. This includes hitting, kicking, and hair pulling, beating with objects, throwing and shaking and can cause pain, cuts, and bruising, broken bones and sometimes even death. For Libyan women it is a shameful to speak out about it and women will be blamed themselves. Therefore, women should try to keep and sort it out in the family. Women should understand and respect their society. I am completely against DVAW, but this*

*problem should be treated differently in Muslim societies (Najah, married, aged 48 years).*

Najah came to the UK with her family before she got married. She did not attend school in England and had completed only secondary school in Libya. She also added that her father was a strict Muslim and he would not allow the girls to go to British schools although schooling was allowed for her brothers. Najah did not perceive *sexism* in her family as inequality or DVAW. She justified it by saying that, on account of her father's wish to follow Islamic rules in his way, he did not have any other options to ensure that English culture would not influence the girls.

Karima, another married woman aged 38 years, also with a low educational level, added:

*Insults, verbal abuse, dominating the whole life of the wife, preventing her from completing her education, and doing unwanted things (sexually) to satisfy the husband is violence and all of these types of DVAW Libya women suffer from in Libya or in the UK. Women feel it is shameful to talk about this therefore they keep silent and they do not even inform their family about what they face from the husband (Karima, married, aged 38 years).*

Karima was aware of different views on the subject of DVAW and said that DVAW occurs between individuals and that they can stop it.

Having discussed the definitions of DVAW and how it was perceived by the participants, the next section concerns perceptions of the types of DVAW amongst the sample studied.

### **5.3.3 Perceptions of Different Types of DVAW**

The participants were asked the following question: *'Can you think of any types of DVAW and which types would you say are the most common amongst Libyans'*? The analysis of qualitative data show that the most common patterns of domestic violence included emotional



violence such as verbal abuse and negligence. Other forms of DVAW such as economic violence, forced marriage and early marriage also existed in Libyan communities. Several participants talked about other forms of violence, including not allowing women to leave the house, to have access to education, marrying a second wife (hence, neglecting the first one). Based on informants' accounts, there were different types of violence, which were mentioned by participants. What they considered types of domestic violence was divided into five categories, which are outlined in Table 5.10 below.

**Table 5.10**  
**The most common form of domestic violence against women within Libyan communities**

Types of DVAW	Actions mentioned by the participants	Women	Men	Total
Emotionally abusive acts	Cruelty, verbal abuse, shouting at female members in the family, forbidding a woman from going out, calling women names, forcing women to keep their voices quiet, threatening, cheating, ignorance of women's rights and the legal legitimacy, negligence, asking wife to leave house	9	4	13
Economic violence	Prevented from finishing study, prevented from work, controlling women's salary, refusing to spend money on the house and family upkeep	7	4	11
Physical violence	Beating, slapping, pushing, kicking, or assault including use of guns	3	1	4
Sexual violence	Unwanted sex, forced sex, sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment	3	2	5
Forced and early marriage	Forced and early marriage, existence of a huge gap in age between the couples. Marrying without knowing each other.	3	2	5

The findings show that the participants considered emotional violence to be most common type of DVAW. Verbal abuse was mentioned particularly frequently. Economic violence received the second most frequent mention, with (general) physical violence mentioned third most often, sexual violence mentioned fourth. Forced and early marriages occupied the last place. However, according to participants' perceptions, forced and early marriage were not

considered very much to be DVAW and its occurrence is rare currently in Libyan communities. In general, six women and three men interviewed considered physical violence and sexual abuse to be the most common type of violence occurring in Libyan communities. The following quotation is an example from this research. Salma (45 years old, married, and had lived in the UK for 12 years) said:

*There are many types of violence. Starting from verbal violence and insulting then preventing women from going out then beating. Physical violence could be without harm, some cases came to the office where I used to work in Libya and the harm was visible on faces or on hands. I knew a case of a woman her husband abused her. She had a severe injury by her husband, she was asking for divorce, and she got it. The problem is that some women after a time they go back to their house without any case, or withdrawing the case from the lawyer (Salma, married, aged 45 years).*

Some men in the sample also listed acts defined in the literature as emotional and economic abuse (Straus *et al.*, 1996). These were referred to more frequently than acts of sexual or physical abuse. Ahmed well-educated and aged 43, stated that:

*Domestic violence includes physical assault, cruelty, verbal abuse, rape, and sexual assault of women. Therefore, any behaviour accused insulting women is violence, such as forcing women to keep their voices quiet, preventing her from finishing her study, or from work, shouting at her, forcing her in having sex. Then the normal type of violence is by beating. Moreover, a woman has to do everything for him at home; he would not help her even during weekends. I think most of Libyan women suffer from all types of violence. Violence in Libya is a problem but we do not talk about it (Ahmed, married, aged 43 years).*

Ahmed was well-educated, had lived in the UK for five years and had completed his PhD in the UK. He was in support of women's rights, and held constructive beliefs regarding DVAW. Ahmed criticised the traditional cultural norms in which women are presumed to be passive, however, admitted in the interview that his wife, who has a BA degree, worked neither in the UK nor in Libya. She looked after the children, as he held down a full-time job and he can

provide for his family. This contradiction apply also to other participants. Although many male and female participants said they believed that preventing women from work was one type of violence, when men were asked if their wives worked, most said they did not (apart from one whose wife works a part time in a Libyan school in the UK). This contradiction could be due to men themselves, or would be related to women`s own decisions. Some women do not work after marriage within Libya communities, as waged work is viewed as affecting their ability to bring up their children. Most women in the semi-structured interview sample said that they did not work in Libya and this was their own decision, as they wanted to prioritise motherhood.

### ***Early and Forced Marriage***

Forced and early marriage are also considered a form of domestic violence within the literature (e.g. Siddiqui, 2002; Samad and Eade, 2003). Early and forced marriages were amongst the other types of violence discussed by the participants. Some of the participants considered both to be violent actions against women and girls whilst others did not perceive either to be DVAW. In Libya as a rule, marriage is believed to be of greater importance than education or employment as, according to traditional norms, marriage is the standard whereby a woman`s success can be measured (Pargeter, 2010). Therefore, early marriage was not seen as a problem

in Libyan communities<sup>33</sup> according to some participants. Nonetheless, some did believe it to be DVAW. For example, Aisha stated that:

*A woman`s body is not ready yet for that and she needs to finish her study which I think she cannot do when she is married. Forced marriage also is violence. This still exists in Libya and I know a family in the UK forced their girl to get married just to ensure she got a chance to be married. They prefer a girl to live a miserable life rather than to reach her 30s without marriage (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Aisha was aware of the impact of early marriage on girls' health. In addition, she believed that this was still a problem and she mentioned that many Libyan girls in the UK were married at an early age. Aisha added:

*I saw many cases suffering from violence because they got married very early and usually women when they got married early they did not finish their studies, so she just stay without work. Some girls got marry when they are 15years; she is still a child and cannot understand her husband, which leads to violent relationship... (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Saeed also saw forced marriage and early marriage as one type of DVAW. He said:

*Early marriage is DVAW, and some people do it by cheating the law, they change the girl`s age to make her in this kind of marriage. It is violence especially when there is a gap between the couples` ages. Some 16 year old girls got married with men 40 years or older. This really violence and the girl also forced to get married without finishing her study (Saeed, married, aged 41 years).*

By contrast, other participants did not consider early and forced marriage as DVAW. One male in the sample saw this as a problem that no longer exists in some large cities in Libya such as Tripoli. He explained that social and cultural attitudes were being influenced by

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<sup>33</sup> Most marriages in Libya are arranged through family and friends. The law does specify a minimum age of marriage for either sex. According to Article 6 of Law No. 10 (1984) the minimum age of marriage is 20, although younger people can marry if a court and the woman's guardian give their permission.

growing access to the media, which was leading people to choice marriages, although arranged marriages still existed. Many men choose the woman they want to marry. Hamdi stated that:

*Forced marriage is violence and still common in rural areas in Libya, but not in Tripoli recently, because most of the girls get married with their consent. Delaying the age of marriage could be a problem more than early marriage in Libya. I do not think early marriage is violence; my mother and all her sisters got married when they were 15 or 16, they were happy and never complained (Hamdi, single, aged 33 years).*

Salma, one of the women interviewed did not perceive early marriage as a form of DVAW. She and her sister were married at an early age, Salma got married when she was 15 years old and still at secondary school. She believed that if a woman was able to bear the responsibility, there was no problem regarding the marriage and mentioned that one of her friends in the UK had permitted her 17 years daughter to marry. The girl did not continue her studies, but she was not forced to marry. Some considered the girl to be young, but Salma believed it is acceptable to get marry in this age.

Fatima was another woman who also did not perceive early marriage to be DVAW, but did regard forced marriage to be. She said:

*I believe that early marriage is not violence, and now in Libyan communities is not very common. In my time (30 years ago), we tended to get marry earlier than now. Forced marriage is still common in rural towns or villages in Libya. In Islam, it is not allowed to force a girl to marry. It is clear parents have to ask the girl for her consent when she is getting married (Fatima, aged 54 years, married).*

Fatima believed that Libyan women issue is the delay of marriage. Women over the age of 30 are generally considered to be past the acceptable age for marriage in Libya. There are many reasons for the delay of marriage, for example the fact that some women have chosen to complete their education. Also many men in Libya tend to marry when they are older, because

they must be able to financially support a wife. Many Libyan men have low salaries and there are limited employment opportunities: as a result, many men, especially those from low-income families, do not achieve the requisite level of stability until they are in their 30s (Pargeter, 2010). In Libya, women are legally<sup>34</sup> empowered to negotiate their marriages, but their ability to do so in practice is reduced by cultural norms. For example, cultural norms and traditions dictate that a woman should obtain the consent of her father or male guardian before she marries. Based on the participants' accounts, it could be said that early marriage is generally seen as less serious and less prevalent than other forms of violence within the sample. Thus, this is a tendency to normalise early marriage (Haj-Yahia, 2005; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Sakalh, 2001).

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter attempted to develop understanding of how participants defined aspects of DVAW. The first part of this chapter presented the findings regarding to definitions of DVAW from the survey sample and tried to link these with socio-demographic profiles. The survey findings indicated that nearly all (82%) of the sample considered manifestations of domestic violence (verbal abuse, economic abuse, threat of using violence, physical violence, and sexual violence) to constitute 'domestic violence'. There were few differences between men and women with regard to the index comprising definition of DVAW.<sup>35</sup> Women with

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<sup>34</sup>Article 8 of Law No. 10 of (1984) states that a guardian "may not compel a young man or young woman to marry against his or her will."

<sup>35</sup>Which contain: 'verbal abuse, economic abuse, threat of using violence, physical violence, and sexual violence'.

high educational levels were more likely to perceive violence as including verbal abuse, economic control, being threatened, and physical and sexual violence. In addition, women who came from large cities in Libya and those who were aged under 40 years concurred more than did other groups, that the items in the scale mentioned above should be considered domestic violence. There was no relationship between the length of residence in the UK and how the participants defined DVAW.

The second part of this chapter discussed some of the results of the semi-structured interviews, focusing on how the participants perceived different aspects of DVAW. Women talked more about DVAW and in depth about all types of violence; however women did differ to some extent amongst themselves in how they perceived DVAW. Educational level was the most important in differences among women affecting how they perceived DVAW. In addition, some less-educated men tended to be less aware of DVAW. Educational levels matter as regards opinions and attitudes towards DVAW at least for the semi-structured interviews.

Some women mentioned that DVAW included both physical and emotional abuse whilst others drew attention to other dimensions of violence including material deprivation, sexual abuse and not allowing wives to have access to education or work outside the home. Some less-educated women perceived violence to be solely a 'family issue'. Men in the semi-structured interviews tended to downplay discussion of types of DVAW and spoke of this very briefly. Some men with low levels of education in this sample tended to perceive DVAW as a personal issue. Likewise, early and forced marriage were considered by some participants to be less serious and less prevalent types of DVAW than other forms of violence.

The next chapter will turn to discussion to different perceptions of Libyan migrants of the causes of DVAW, and how DVAW was justified by some respondents.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Domestic Violence against Women among Libyan Migrants in the UK: Perceptions of Causes and Justifications**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses three interlinked themes: perceptions of the causes of DVAW; justifications for violence; and the role-played by interpretation of religion in any justifications. It is based both on survey findings and data from semi-structured interviews. The first of the three sections discusses reasons given for DVAW, analysing first results from the questionnaire survey and then the semi-structured interviews. ‘Reasons’ are classified as a) economic rationales; b) socialisation of perpetrators; c) educational and cultural causes and d) ‘social factors’. The second section examines justifications given for DVAW within the sample, drawing again on quantitative and qualitative data. The third, short section discusses how cultural interpretations of Islam sometimes influence attitudes to DVAW.

#### **6.2 Quantitative Analysis of Perception of Causes of Domestic Violence against Women**

This section focuses on Libyan migrants’ beliefs and perception concerning the causes of DVAW in the survey sample. It is divided into four parts, discussing different potential causes. These comprise: a) Economic reasons for DVAW; b) Socialisation factors in DVAW; c) Educational and cultural causes of DVAW; and d) Social/general causes of DVAW. The next section presents the findings concerning the economic cause of DVAW.

### 6.2.1 Economic Reasons for Domestic Violence against Women

A set of sub-questions were asked regarding the participants' perceptions of possible economic reasons for DVAW. These are presented in Table 6.1 below:

**Table 6.1**  
**Economic causes of domestic violence against women**

Economic causes of domestic violence against women	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence	28.3%	64.7%	71.7%	35.3%
Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victims of domestic violence	35.6%	58.2%	64.4%	41.8%
Women depending on men for food, shelter and other material things are more likely to experience DVAW	33.3%	64.6%	66.7%	35.4%
Unemployed men tend to get frustrated and depressed, which leads to domestic violence	94.7%	89.5%	5.3%	10.5%
Lack of resources (e.g. house, money etc.) increases DVAW	87.1%	79.6%	12.9%	20.4%
Situations where women do not voluntarily give away their earning to men can cause DVAW	83.6%	85.6%	16.4%	14.4%

The results in Table 6.1 above indicates that women in the sample agreed more than men that 'Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence'; a high percentage of men disagreed with this statement. In addition to this, more men disagreed that 'Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victims of domestic violence'. Only 36% of men and 58% of women agreed that 'women who depend on men financially were likely to become victims of domestic violence'. A high percentage of the sample (80%) agreed that 'unemployment of men' could be an important factor in terms of causing DVAW. Lack of material resources (e.g. housing, money etc.) was also perceived to be important in increasing the likelihood of DVAW, as 75% of respondents agreed with this statement. Furthermore, it was found that 74% of respondents agreed that

`the situations where women do not voluntarily give away their earnings to men can cause domestic violence`. The results also show that `lack of resources as well as who controlled the resources in the family—particularly woman’s earnings—was perceived as one of the factors that could lead to DVAW`.

Next, I discuss the results from cross-tabulations which were carried out to test the respondents’ gender and educational levels together, compared with the index of `*Economic elements for DVAW*`. This index as discussed in Chapter 4, included six sub-questions.<sup>36</sup> The results indicate that overall, 31% of all respondents agreed with the questions in the index and a high percentage of the participants (47%) were `neutral` towards this index. Approximately 38% of women and only 19% of men agreed with the index of `*Economic causes of DVAW*`. Out of all respondents, 25% of highly-educated participants agreed with this index, whilst more than half (approximately 54%) were `neutral`. Approximately 34% of highly-educated women and only 18% of highly-educated men agreed with the index of `*Economic causes of DVAW*`. However, approximately 59% of highly-educated women and 50% of highly-educated men chose the answer `neutral` with regard to the index. Overall, 30% of `less-educated` participants agreed with the index of `*Economic causes of DVAW*`, and 38% of less-educated women and 19% of less-educated men.

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<sup>36</sup> Six sub-question/ items were included in the index `*Economic reasons for DVAW*`. These are:

- i. Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.
- ii. Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victim of domestic violence.
- iii. Women depending on men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.
- iv. Unemployed men tend to get frustrated and depressed, which leads to domestic violence.
- v. The lack of resources (e.g. house, money etc.) increases DVAW.
- vi. Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earning to men can cause DVAW.

**Table 6.2**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index `Economic causes of DVAW`**

Education level			Index of Economic causes of DVAW			Total	
			Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Below degree level	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	4	8	5	17
			%	23.5%	47.1%	29.4%	100.0%
		Female	Count	26	23	15	64
			%	40.6%	35.9%	23.4%	100.0%
	Total		Count	30	31	20	81
			%	37.0%	38.3%	24.7%	100.0%
Degree and above	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	9	25	16	50
			%	18.0%	50.0%	32.0%	100.0%
		Female	Count	15	26	3	44
			%	34.1%	59.1%	6.8%	100.0%
	Total		Count	24	51	19	94
			%	25.5%	54.3%	20.2%	100.0%
Total	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	13	33	21	67
			%	19.4%	49.3%	31.3%	100.0%
		Female	Count	41	49	18	108
			%	38.0%	45.4%	16.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	54	82	39	175
			%	30.9%	46.9%	22.3%	100.0%

**Table 6.3**  
**Chi Square analysis for economic reasons for domestic violence against women**

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig $P<0.05$	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence	Gender	14.578	0.000	.358	.4.654	2.066	10.482
	Educational level	7.934	0.005	.264	2.957	1.378	6.345
Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victim of domestic violence.	Gender	5.895	0.015	.218	2.527	1.186	5.384
	Former place of residence in Libya	3.912	0.048	-.178	.487	.238	.997
Women depending on men for food, shelter and other material things are more likely to become victims of domestic violence	Gender	13.195	0.000	.308	3.655	1.792	7.456
Lack of resources (e.g. housing, money etc.) increases DVAW	Educational level	7.164	0.007	-.212	.318	.134	.756
	Past experience of work in Libya	4.363	.037	-.165	.419	.183	.962
Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earning to men can cause DVAW	Educational level	6.905	0.09	-.213	.279	.103	.755
	Former place of residence in Libya	6.905	0.009	.213	.279	.103	.755

The current section presents the results of Chi Square tests carried out to examine if there existed significant statistical associations between 'each sub-question' of the economic elements of DVAW as 'dependent variables', with all the 'socio-demographic/independent' variables. Some of the independent variables did not link statistically with any of the sub-question of the definitions of DVAW. These were: the length of time spent in the UK, marital status and age. The results of tests that turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 6.3 above. The results indicate that there was a statistically significant relationship between 'gender' and several statements concerning economic causes for violence. For instance, with regard to the statement 'women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence' ( $p < 0.05$ ), men were more likely than women to disagree with the statement. There was also a statistically significant relationship between gender and the statement 'women depending on men for food, shelter and other material things are more likely to become victims of domestic violence'. Gender was also associated with the statement 'women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victim of domestic violence', as men in this sample were more likely to disagree with the statement.

Educational level seemed to be an important independent variable; as well-educated participants agreed more than less-educated with the following statements:

- Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.
- Lack of resources (e.g. housing, money etc.) increases the likelihood of domestic violence.
- Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earnings to men can cause DVAW.

There was also a statistically significant relationship between participants' original place of residence in Libya and the statement 'Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earnings to men can cause DVAW'. The Odds Ratio 3.579 CI (1.325 \_\_ 9.665) indicates that the participants who used to live in large cities were 3.58 times more likely to agree with the statement 'women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence'. Table 6.3 above displays these results. Next, I will discuss further analyses based on Chi Square tests, which were conducted to measure the relationship between the 'index of *Economic reasons for DVAW*' as dependent variable and the socio-demographic/independent variables. The results indicated that there was a link<sup>37</sup> between gender and the scale/index of *Economic reasons for DVAW* since more females (38%) agreed with the index of *Economic reasons for DVAW* than did males (21%), ( $x^2 = 8.747 p < 0.05$ ).

The discussion here will explain the multi-regression analysis performed to examine the extent to which the independent variables predicted economic reasons for DVAW. As mentioned previously, multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which the variance in the index of *Economic causes of DVAW* is explained by the participants' socio-demographic characteristics. The data in Table 6.4 below indicates that 11.2% of the variance in *Economic causes of DVAW* can be attributed to the independent

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<sup>37</sup> When education was included as a control variable, however, the relationship disappeared for those who were less-educated. When place of residence was introduced as a control variable, the relationship between gender and the index of *Economic reasons for DVAW* did not apply to those from small cities. In addition, once the variable 'having children or not' was used as a control variable, the significant relationship between gender and the index of *Economic reasons for DVAW* only applied to women with children.

variables: age, gender, educational level, place of residence and marital status, which were entered into the multiple regression equation.

**Table 6.4**  
**Multi- Regression analysis for economic reasons for domestic violence against women**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	2.160	.499		4.325	.000
	Gender of respondent	-.383	.125	-.256	-3.058	.003
	Place of residence in Libya	.211	.115	.145	1.842	.067
	Did you work in Libya?	.156	.141	.101	1.105	.271
	Are you working in the UK?	-.032	.112	-.022	-.284	.777
	Do you have any children?	.253	.190	.173	1.331	.185
	Age	-.116	.135	-.077	-.863	.389
	Length of residence in UK	.050	.114	.034	.438	.662
	Educational level	.057	.130	.039	.438	.662
	Marital status	.167	.180	.113	.926	.356

*R*<sup>2</sup>.112      *F*. 2.287      *Sig*.019a

The results in Table 6.4 above show that  $R^2$ .112, revealing that 11.2 % of the variability is explained by the index, or how "spread out" the group of scores is, and the extent to which data points within a statistical distribution or data set, diverge from the average or mean value. Variability also shows the extent to which these data points differ from each other. The participants' perceptions of the economic elements of DVAW can be significantly attributed to the participants' socio-demographic characteristics. Of these, 'gender' was the most significant variable ( $p < .003$ ). This statistically indicated that women show a greater tendency than men to believe that these economic elements help to cause DVAW. This table gives an *F*-test to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. According to this *p*-value (*Sig* .019), it is significant and gender was the most significant factor.



### **6.2.2 Social Learned /Psychological Causes**

This section presents the results of analysis of socialisation factors in DVAW. Witnessing domestic violence has been emphasised as one of the risk factors for DVAW (Schissel, 2000). Investigating the participants' perceptions of one the causes of DVAW was undertaken by asking the participants to rate their agreement with the following statement: 'Boys who witness fathers' violence towards their mothers were more likely to be violent when they grow up'. The survey findings show that approximately 80% of participants (78% female and 84% male) agreed that socialisation factors could contribute to DVAW. Only 12% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

I discuss here the results from cross-tabulations which were carried out to test the respondents' gender and educational levels together compare with the statement: 'Boys who witness fathers' violence towards their mothers were more likely to be violent when they grow up'. The results in Table 6.5 below indicate that 90% of highly-educated men and 91% of highly-educated women agreed with the statement, indicating that participants' educational levels was an influential factor in understanding that socialisation could contribute to DVAW. The results also indicate that 69% of less-educated women agreed with the statement compared with approximately 65% of less-educated men.

**Table 6.5**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index 'Socialisation factors for DVAW'**

Educational level			Do you agree that Boys who witness fathers' violence towards their mothers were more likely to be violent when they grow up?			Total	
			Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Below degree level	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	11	2	4	17
			%	64.7%	11.8%	23.5%	100.0%
		Female	Count	44	5	15	64
			%	68.8%	7.8%	23.4%	100.0%
	Total		Count	55	7	19	81
			%	67.9%	8.6%	23.5%	100.0%
Degree and above	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	45	4	1	50
			%	90.0%	8.0%	2.0%	100.0%
		Female	Count	40	3	1	44
			%	90.9%	6.8%	2.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	85	7	2	94
			%	90.4%	7.4%	2.1%	100.0%
Total	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	56	6	5	67
			%	83.6%	9.0%	7.5%	100.0%
		Female	Count	84	8	16	108
			%	77.8%	7.4%	14.8%	100.0%
	Total		Count	140	14	21	175
			%	80.0%	8.0%	12.0%	100.0%

This section discusses the results of Chi Square tests carried out to examine if there were associations between the statement: 'Boys who witnessing violence were more likely to be violent' as 'dependent variables', with each of the socio-demographic/independent variables. Some of the independent variables did not link statistically with this statement, these were: the length of residence in the UK and gender. The results of Chi Square test that turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 6.6.

**Table 6.6**  
**Chi Square analysis for socialisation factors for domestic violence against women**

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig <0.05	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
Boys who witness their fathers' violence towards their mothers are more likely to be violent when they grow up.	Past experiences of work	11.889	.001	.272	5.000	1.879	13.303
	Have children	8.884	.003	.235	4.524	1.569	13.05
	Age	5.984	.014	-.193	.229	.064	.0813
	Educational level	19.226	.000	-.364	.068	.015	.304
	Marital status	6.580	.010	-.202	.292	.112	.779

The results reveal that there was a significant association between age as a dependent variable with socialisation factor in DVAW. Specifically, participants who were aged over 40 tended to agree that boys who witness violence are more likely to be violent when they grow up,  $p < .014$ . There was a significant statistical relationship between marital status and the above statement ( $\chi^2 = 6.580$ ,  $P < .010$ ). There also existed a significant statistical association between the independent variable 'past experiences of work in Libya' and the socialisation factor in DVAW ( $\chi^2 = 11.889$ ,  $P < .001$ ). Participants who worked in Libya were more likely to agree with the statement, than those who had been unemployed in Libya.

### 6.2.3 Educational and Cultural Causes of DVAW

Another set of sub-questions was asked regarding the participants' perceptions of possible educational or cultural reasons for DVAW. These sub-questions included: 'lack of education of women is a cause of violence against them', 'misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use DVAW in order to correct women helps cause violence'. 'The low educational level of men leads to domestic violence', and 'women who are highly-educated are more likely to suffer violence against them'.

Table 6.7 below shows men and women response to these questions in percentages.

**Table 6.7**  
**Educational and cultural causes for domestic violence against women**

Educational and cultural causes for DVAW	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Lack of education of women is a cause of domestic violence.	28.4%	38.9%	52.2%	28.7%
Misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use DVAW in order to correct women.	52.2%	58.3%	38.8%	25.9%
Low educational level of men leads to domestic violence.	61.2%	52.8%	23.9%	30.6%
Women who are highly-educated are more likely to suffer domestic violence.	37.3%	40.7%	38.8%	33.3%

The results in Table 6.7 above show that 56% of all respondents agreed that misinterpretation of Muslim religious texts is a cause of DVAW. The response was almost equal between men and women. The results also indicate that approximately 61% of men agreed that a low educational level in men leads to domestic violence, but only 28% of men agreed that lack of education of women is a cause of violence against them. Approximately 39% of women agreed that women's lack of education could lead to violence, and approximately 53% of

women agreed that a low educational level in men could lead to domestic violence. On the other hand, around one third of both sexes agreed that women who are highly-educated are more likely to suffer violence, while 35% disagreed.

I now discuss the results from cross-tabulations, which were carried out to test the respondents' gender and educational levels together, compared with the index<sup>38</sup> *'Educational and cultural causes of DVAW'*. As discussed in Chapter 4 scale measuring *'Educational and cultural causes of DVAW'* included four items. Table 6.8 below shows that approximately 58% of men and 71% of women 'agreed' with the overall index of *'Educational and cultural causes of DVAW'*. Thus, women showed a higher tendency to agree than did men with the index. Educational level was important in shaping the participants' agreement. For instance, 60% of highly-educated men and 79% of highly-educated women agreed with all the educational and cultural reasons given for DVAW. This percentage was higher than for less-educated men and for all men in the sample. (See Table 6.8 below).

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<sup>38</sup> Four sub-question/ items were included in the index *'Educational and cultural reasons for DVAW'* these are:

- v. Lack of education of women is a cause of DVAW.
- vi. Misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use DVAW in order to correct women.
- vii. Low educational level of men leads to domestic violence.
- viii. The high level of women's education can lead to violence against them.

**Table 6.8**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with the index 'Education and cultural causes for DVAW'**

Educational level				Education and cultural causes for DVAW			Total
				Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Below degree	Gender of respondent	male	Count	9	7	1	17
			%	52.9%	41.2%	5.9%	100.0%
		female	Count	42	19	3	64
			%	65.6%	29.7%	4.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	51	26	4	81
			%	63.0%	32.1%	4.9%	100.0%
BA degree and above	Gender of respondent	male	Count	30	17	3	50
			%	60.0%	34.0%	6.0%	100.0%
		female	Count	35	8	1	44
			%	79.5%	18.2%	2.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	65	25	4	94
			%	69.1%	26.6%	4.3%	100.0%
Total	Gender of respondent	male	Count	39	24	4	67
			%	58.2%	35.8%	6.0%	100.0%
		female	Count	77	27	4	108
			%	71.3%	25.0%	3.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	116	51	8	175
			%	66.3%	29.1%	4.6%	100.0%

I discuss in this section the results of Chi Square tests performed to examine if there was any statistical association between each sub-question as dependent variable with all socio-demographic factors/independent variables. Only marital status was not a significant factor and the demographic factors that turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 6.9 below. The results of Chi Square tests indicate that residence in Libya was a significant independent variable in relation to `educational reasons given for DVAW`. For example, those people who used to live in urban localities were 2.67 times more likely than their counterparts living in rural areas or small towns to agree with the statement regarding misinterpretation of religious texts, in which men are given rights to use domestic DVAW in order to `correct` them ( $\chi^2=8.022$ ,  $p<.005$ ). The Odds Ratio 2.671, CI (1.342 \_\_5.318).

There was also a moderate relationship between the original place of residence in Libya and the statement `low level of education for men could lead to DVAW`. ( $\chi^2=8.840$ ,  $p<.005$ ). The Odds Ratio 2.750 CI (1.340 \_\_5.642) indicates that participants who used to live in large cities were 2.75 times more likely to agree with this statement. An association was noted between the original place of residence in Libya and the view that `a high level of women's education can lead to DVAW`. ( $\chi^2=7.383$ ,  $p<.007$ ). The Odds Ratio 2.638 CI (1.301 \_\_5.347) indicates that those who lived in large Libyan cities were 2.64 times more likely to agree with the statement.

An association existed between the statement `Low educational levels of men lead to domestic violence` and the independent variables: educational level, age, past experiences of work in Libya and having children. Gender was linked to the statement `Lack of education of women is a cause of violence against them` ( $\chi^2=10.845$ ,  $p<.028$ ).

**Table 6.9**  
**Chi Square analysis for educational reasons for domestic violence against women**

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig <0.05	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
Lack of education of women is a cause of domestic violence against them.	Gender	10.849	.028	-.221	.401	.194	.828
Misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use DVAW in order to correct women.	Place of residence in Libya	8.022	.005	.230	2.671	1.342	5.318
Low educational level of men leads to domestic violence.	Place of residence in Libya	7.840	.005	.231	2.750	1.340	5.642
	Past experiences of work in Libya	6.454	.011	.210	2.478	1.220	5.033
	Having/not having children	10.811	.001	.271	3.242	1.587	6.623
	Educational level	6.593	.010	-.212	.400	.198	.812
	Age	5.901	.015	-.200	.386	.177	.832
The high level of women's education can lead to domestic violence.	Place of residence in Libya	7.383	.007	.237	2.638	1.301	5.347
	Education level	4.519	.034	-.186	.469	.232	.947
	Working in the UK	3.930	.047	-.173	.496	.247	.996



I discuss here the multi regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to develop a model for predicting the index of *‘Educational and cultural causes of DVAW’* from the socio-demographic factors/or independent variables. Basic descriptive statistics and regression coefficients are shown in Table 6.10 below.

**Table 6.10**  
**Multi- Regression analysis for educational and cultural reasons for domestic violence against women**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.775	1.864		3.634	.000
Gender of respondent	-.559	.467	-.100	-1.197	.233
Place of residence in Libya	1.057	.429	.194	2.467	.015
Did you work in Libya?	.111	.526	.019	.211	.833
Are you working in UK?	-.769	.418	-.141	-1.842	.067
Do you have any children?	1.331	.709	.244	1.878	.062
Age	-.327	.502	-.058	-.651	.516
Length of residence in UK	.235	.425	.042	.554	.581
Educational level	-.175	.486	-.032	-.360	.720
Marital status	.435	.673	.079	.646	.519
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> . 114		<i>F</i> . 2.325	<i>Sig</i> .017a		

The results of multi regression indicated that; 11.4% ( $R^2$ . 114,  $p < .017$ ), of the variance in the index of *‘Educational and cultural causes of DVAW’* can be attributed to the variables that appear in the table: gender, place of residence in Libya, experience of work (past and current), having children, age, length of residence in UK, educational level, and marital status. Only the place of residence in Libya predictors had significant ( $p < .015$ ) partial effects in the full model. This indicates that participants who came from large cities are more likely than those who came from small towns to believe that the DVAW attributed to the educational and

cultural reasons were mentioned in the index. The remaining predictor variables were not significant ( $p > .05$ ) for the index.

#### 6.2.4 Social/general Causes of Domestic Violence against Women

The participants in the study were asked about their agreement or disagreement with the questions classified as `social causes of DVAW`. I did not create an index/scale for these sub-questions as reliability analysis provided a *Cronbach's alpha* of .174, which indicated a low level of internal consistency for this scale. The sub-questions `social causes of DVAW` can be seen in Table 6.11 below.

**Table 6.11**  
**Social and general causes of domestic violence against women**

Social and general causes of domestic violence against women	Agree (%)		Neutral (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Drug and alcohol dependence can lead to domestic violence.	80.6%	57.7%	17.9%	34.6%	1.5%	7.7%
The inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to DVAW.	24.6%	25.5%	49.2%	45.9%	26.2%	28.6%
Tolerance of DVAW leads to its recurrence.	40.3%	47.1%	41.8%	28.4%	17.9%	24.5%

Men showed a higher tendency than women to agree that the factors included in `social causes of DVAW` perhaps contribute to DVAW. Participants in this sample considered `drug and alcohol abuse` as a major factor leading to DVAW, the frequency analysis indicating that 81% of men and 57% of women agreed that drug and alcohol abuse can lead to DVAW. Approximately 25% of men and women participants agreed that `inherent inequality between males and females in society is a contributing factor leading to violence`. Additionally, 40% of men in the sample and 47% of women agreed that tolerance of violence leads to its recurrence.

The results from cross-tabulations carried out to test the respondents' gender, and educational levels together compared with each of the three questions are discussed in this section. Educational level was important in shaping the respondents' attitudes towards 'social causes for DVAW' e.g. drug and alcohol dependence, gender inequality and tolerance of DVAW in society. Table 6.12 below shows that approximately 77% of highly-educated respondents (67% of women and 86% of men) agreed that drug and alcohol dependence could lead to domestic violence. On the other hand, whilst around 51% of less-educated women agreed with this, and 65% of less-educated men did so. Only 29% of well-educated respondents agreed that gender inequality in society is a factor in causing DVAW, and about 46% 'were neutral'. Of less-educated respondents, approximately 18% of less-educated women and 25% of less-educated men agreed that gender inequality in society is a reason for DVAW. Approximately half (52%) of highly-educated respondents agreed that tolerance of violence leads to its recurrence. Well-educated women (60%) agreed more than well-educated men (44%). Less-educated women (approximately 38%) also agreed with the statement more than less-educated men (approximately 29%).

**Table 6.12**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with social and general causes for DVAW**

Educational level				Drugs and alcohol dependence can lead to domestic violence.			The inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to DVAW.			Tolerance of DVAW leads to its recurrence.		
				Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Below degree	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	11	6	0	4	9	3	5	9	3
			%	64.7%	35.3%	0.0%	25.0%	56.3%	18.8%	29.4%	52.9%	17.6%
	Female	Count	31	23	7	10	25	19	23	14	23	
		%	50.8%	37.7%	11.5%	18.5%	46.3%	35.2%	38.3%	23.3%	38.3%	
	Total	Count	42	29	7	14	34	22	28	23	26	
		%	53.8%	37.2%	9.0%	20.0%	48.6%	31.4%	36.4%	29.9%	33.8%	
BA degree and above	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	43	6	1	12	23	14	22	19	9
			%	86.0%	12.0%	2.0%	24.5%	46.9%	28.6%	44.0%	38.0%	18.0%
	Female	Count	29	13	1	15	20	9	25	15	2	
		%	67.4%	30.2%	2.3%	34.1%	45.5%	20.5%	59.5%	35.7%	4.8%	
	Total	Count	72	19	2	27	43	23	47	34	11	
		%	77.4%	20.4%	2.2%	29.0%	46.2%	24.7%	51.1%	37.0%	12.0%	
Total	Gender of respondent	Male	Count	54	12	1	16	32	17	27	28	12
			%	80.6%	17.9%	1.5%	24.6%	49.2%	26.2%	40.3%	41.8%	17.9%
	Female	Count	60	36	8	25	45	28	48	29	25	
		%	57.7%	34.6%	7.7%	25.5%	45.9%	28.6%	47.1%	28.4%	24.5%	
	Total	Count	114	48	9	41	77	45	75	57	37	
		%	66.7%	28.1%	5.3%	25.2%	47.2%	27.6%	44.4%	33.7%	21.9%	

I discuss now the results of Chi Square analysis that were conducted to measure the relationship between each of the three sub-questions in 'social reasons for DVAW' as dependent variable with socio-demographic profiles. These results are presented in Table 6.13 (next page). The analyses indicated a significant association between the statement, 'drug and alcohol dependence can lead to domestic violence' and two independent variables, gender and previous employment status in Libya. The findings reveal also statistically significant associations between the statement 'the inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to violence' and the following independent variables: level of education, previous residence in Libya, previous working status in Libya and having/not having children.

There was also an association between gender and the statement 'toleration of domestic violence against women leads to its recurrence'. The Odds Ratio 6.071 show that females are over 6 times more likely than males to agree that 'the tolerance of violence leads to more violence'. Education appears to be another significant independent variable. The results in Table 6.13 below indicate that the educational level relates to this statement; respondents with high educational levels agreed more than less-educated respondents. Likewise, there was a link between the original place of residence in Libya and the statement, concerning 'tolerance of violence' ( $\chi^2 = 9.685, p < 0.004$ ). The Odds Ratio 5.417 CI (1.7041\_\_7.214) shows that participants who had lived in large cities were 5.41 times more likely to agree that toleration of violence leads to more violence than did participants who had lived in small towns.

**Table 6.13**  
**Chi Square analysis for social reasons for domestic violence against women**

Dependent variables	Dependent variables	Chi Square $\chi^2$	Sig <0.05	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
Drug and alcohol dependence can lead to domestic violence.	Gender	4.026	.045	.155	1.063	1.012	1.115
	Past experiences of work in Libya	7.000	.008	.204	10.882	1.239	95.548
The inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to DVAW.	Gender	6.915	.009	.215	3.703	1.332	10.294
	Educational level	19.227	.000	-.358	.127	.046	.353
	Residence in Libya	11.685	.001	.218	4.375	1.814	10.552
	Past experiences of work in Libya	26.854	.000	.423	8.800	3.574	12.668
	Having children	7.017	.008	.216	2.992	1.302	6.875
Toleration of DVAW leads to its recurrence.	Past experiences of work in Libya	28.571	.000	.435	17.376	4.749	63.576
	Gender	6.854	.009	.213	6.071	1.347	27.359
	Educational level	17.314	.000	-.339	.074	.016	.334
	Residence in Libya	9.685	.004	.253	5.417	1.704	17.214
	Having children	4.017	.028	.178	.3.033	1.086	8.474
	Age	7.114	.008	-.218	.160	.035	.719

- ***Discussion based on quantitative analysis of causes of DVAW***

The results obtained from the quantitative sample suggested that some individual, societal, cultural, educational, and economic factors are seen as important in explaining the incidence of DVAW in this sample. In terms of economic factors in DVAW, the participants in this study showed a lower tendency to agree with some factors. For example, only 26% of the respondents agreed that women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victims of domestic violence. Neither did they consider women who depend on men for food, shelter and other material goods to be more likely to become victims of domestic violence. However, approximately 80% of participants in this sample agreed that unemployment is one of the factors which causes DVAW. The second economic factor seen to increase the likelihood of domestic violence is lack of resources (e.g. housing, money etc.). More than two thirds of the sample agreed with the statement; 'Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earnings to men can cause domestic violence'. A high percentage of respondents believed also that drug and alcohol dependence could lead to domestic violence. These findings support other studies (e.g. Agarwal and Panda 2007) who argue that economic resources play an important role in domestic violence.

Gender was an important factor in shaping the respondents' beliefs about the causes of DVAW as more females than males agreed with the index of '*Economic causes of violence*', and women with a high educational level agreed more than other groups. Females from large cities agreed with the economic causes of violence compared to those from small towns. With

regard to the `social causes of DVAW`, men showed a greater tendency than women to concur with these factors.

The results also indicated that highly-educated participants, married participants and those who were aged over 40 year tended to agree that boys who witness their father's violence towards their mothers are more likely to be violent when they grow up. Prior experience of work in Libya was also important, as participants who had worked in Libya showed a higher tendency to agree than those who had not worked in Libya. Educational and cultural reasons for DVAW were influenced by the variables: education level, age, gender, former place of residence, having children and previous employment status. However, gender was an important factor as more females than males agreed with most of factors discussed above, perhaps contribute and influence the incidence of domestic violence. This might indicate that men more likely legitimise the patriarchal order system as it provides them with power in the family and in the community, the patriarchal system also works in their interests.

Having discussed the participants' perceptions of causes for DVAW based on the survey findings, the following section will carry on discussing possible causes for DVAW, presenting the results from the semi-structured interviews.

### **6.3 Qualitative Analysis of Causes of DVAW**

The participants in the qualitative study explained DVAW in terms of a power struggle and practice of gender segregation in causing DVAW. All of the participants in the qualitative sample of 20 people, old or young, educated or less-educated, female or male, employed or unemployed reported that DVAW was part of a systematic attempt to maintain male



dominance within the household and in society. According to their accounts, it could be suggested that DVAW was because of a patriarchal system.

During the course of the interviews, some women talked about experience of domestic violence. In doing so, they sometimes offered opinions about causes of DVAW (see Chapter 7 for discussion of experiences of DVAW). Accordingly, domestic violence occurs for many reasons; some women interviewed mentioned that, men sometimes beat their wives to force them out of home without paying alimony/whatever rights they have in law in Libya. Women might be severely beaten by their husbands in an attempt to coerce them to disregard these rights. In some cases, they found it is difficult to obtain their rights, and to keep on living with their husbands.

In discussing the reasons for violence in Libya communities, Aisha, was divorced with three children, aged 52 years with a very high level of education, and she talked about her own experience. Aisha's testimony was instructive. She believed that men wanted to control women economically. This was not limited to a particular behaviour, but ranged from forbidding them to work or controlling their salary if they did work. Aisha added:

*I think when a woman does not work and does not have a good opportunity to get a job, this means she will rely on her husband and as a result she accepts her situation (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

According to Aisha's account, men in Libyan communities feel they can control women because women are dependents on them economically. Even where a woman does work; however, the man is considered responsible for the family's expenses and he wishes to control his wife if she does work. Aisha was well aware of the patriarchal nature of Libyan society,

as she was educated and had lived and worked for a long time in the UK. She had also been involved in many activities in Libya and the UK to help abused Libyan women during the war against Gaddafi in Libya, which expanded her knowledge about DVAW. She mentioned that, in Libyan communities, men have the right to do anything but for women `everything is forbidden` as patriarchy asserts that men are superior, and women are second class. Social and learning theories tend to explain domestic violence by referring to the child's upbringing, a series of learned associations within a specific social context. Therefore, Aisha used this explanation to interpret why her ex-husband, even though well-educated, was violent. In addition, when there exists a lack of household resources and a man does not work, he may feel he is weak, so he uses his physical strength to beat his wife and to control her. Aisha added:

*As my ex-husband brought up in a violent atmosphere and he would think that this normal to deal with women in this way. He wanted to control me. My problem with my ex-husband was in this level. He was controlling my salary as well. I kept working and gave him my money he considered it as his money, he loves money more than anything else. He was a doctor and well-educated but he treated me as an object, he did not care about our relationship, his priority was money (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Aisha's explanation for DVAW also echoed by other participants when I asked them about the reasons for DVAW. The following present some responses that exemplify some women participants' in the study beliefs that women in Libyan communities live in a patriarchal society and that violence is learnt within the family:

*Some men witnessed violence in their childhood against a female member in the family, so they think it is the normal way to deal with women. The father beats his daughter if she made something wrong... (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

*When the father is violent, his sons will learn from him to be violent. A big part of upbringing where the son is always considered inside the family better than the daughter, and has advantages which the daughter has not (Karima, married, aged 38 years).*

The above statements indicate that these participants explained violence through social and learning theories (Caesar, 1985, 1988; Widom, 1989). Witnessing and experiencing violence often affects children, because ‘marital violence is highly correlated with parent-child aggression’ (Carr and Vandusen 2002: 635). A wide range of studies have found that there is ‘a significant relationship in men witnessing violence against their mother and later abusing a partner themselves’ (Heise 1998: 267).

### ***Alcohol and Drug Abuse***

Alcohol and drug abuse was one of the factors discussed in the semi-structured interviews as these factors sometimes contribute to violent behaviour. Drug abuse and drinking alcohol were an important factor and often led to violent relationships, according to some informants. Harmful use of alcohol has been strongly associated with the perpetration of DVAW in a number of studies (e.g. Abrahams *et al.*, 2006; Dalal *et al.*, 2009; Flake, 2005; Spak *et al.*, 2000; Prescott *et al.*, 2000; Miller *et al.*, 1989, 1990, 1993; Helzer and Pryzbeck 1988; Helzer *et al.*, 1991; Downs *et al.*, 1993).

The participants mentioned in the semi-structured interviews that alcohol and drug abuse could be one of the facts contributing to DVAW in Libyan communities. The results from the survey supported this as it indicated that a high percentage (80% of men and 57% of women) of the sample agreed that alcohol and drug abuse would increase DVAW, as discussed above.

Some men in the sample mentioned the association between alcohol and drug addiction and DVAW. Ibrahim married, aged 49 years and well-educated, stated:

*I saw many cases where men beat women, (a daughter) when she disobeys her father. Also in many cases, alcohol was the main reason for this violence. I can remember one of our neighbours who beat his wife continuously when he was drunk (Ibrahim, married, aged 49 years).*

Popular thinking in Libyan communities, on the subject of domestic violence pictures a violent incident to be a result of alcohol and drug dependence because alcohol is forbidden in Islam. When women who discussed their experiences of violence were asked if their abuser was alcoholic or drug dependent, however, none of the women reported that their husbands were alcoholic dependent or abused drugs. This indicate that alcohol and drug abuse, while real causes of violence, can also be perceived to as an `easy` explanation. Alcohol is used as an excuse for DVAW by minimising of individual men's responsibility for their own behaviour. Some respondents think about the causes of violence in the context of individual problems, relationships, and families, not as a problem with roots in the society or culture.

#### **6.4 Justifications for Domestic Violence against Women**

The next sections present the results of data analysis arising both from the survey sample and semi-structured interviews, focusing on justifications for DVAW. The discussion begins with exploring the results from the quantitative analysis.

##### **6.4.1 Justifications for Domestic Violence against Women in the Quantitative Sample**

This section presents the results of data analysis arising from the survey concerning justifications for DVAW. Understanding the extent to which Libyan migrants in the sample

justified DVAW was necessary to explain perpetration, victimisation, and responses to violence. A set of sub-questions were presented to participants to elicit which circumstances were seen as potential justifications for violence (See Table 6.14 below).

**Table 6.14**  
**Justifications for domestic violence against women**

Men are justified in using DVAW in the following incidence	Agree (%)		Disagree (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
If a wife goes out without telling her husband	49.0%	46.3%	51.0%	53.7%
If she neglects the children in his view	71.4%	55.7%	28.6%	44.3%
If she argues with him	42.5%	32.1%	57.5%	67.9%
If she disobeys him	67.4%	58.0%	32.6%	42.0%
If she disobeys his parents	56.1%	33.3%	43.9%	66.7%
If a wife lies to her husband	59.6%	64.9%	40.4%	35.1%
If a wife were sexually unfaithful	78.8%	76.4%	21.2%	23.6%

There was a tendency to justify DVAW by both men and women in this sample. Table 6.14 above displays the results for justifications for DVAW. A large perceptions the sample agreed physical violence by men towards women was justified when she is perceived as sexually unfaithful. Approximately 79% of men and 76% of women agreed with use of physical violence in this situation. Interestingly, women in this sample tended in some cases to justify DVAW more than men. For example, approximately 64% of women participants agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife if she lied to him, whereas only 60% of men agreed with this statement. Men in this sample tended to justify DVAW more than women in most instances, however. For example, 71% of men agreed that a husband could justifiably beat his wife if she neglected her children, whereas only 56% of women agreed with this and 67% of men agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife if she disobeyed him, whereas

only 58% of women concurred. The results also indicate that approximately half of the sample (49% of men and 46% of women) agreed that if a woman went out without telling her husband, he would be justified in beating her.

I discuss now the results of Chi Square tests performed to examine if there was any statistical ascension between each sub-question with each socio-demographic factors variable. The factors that turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 6.15 below.

**Table 6.15**  
**Chi Square analysis for justifications for DVAW**

Dependent variables; Violence is justified if:	Independent variables	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig<0.05	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
If a wife disobeys the husband's parents	Gender	5.750	0.016	.220	2.556	1.176	5.552
If a wife lies to her husband	Educational level	7.354	0.007	.239	2.765	1.313	5.823
If she neglects children	Age	7.734	0.005	-.244	.328	.147	.732

The results reveal that several socio-demographic characteristics correlate moderately with several statements concerning justifications for DVAW. For example, there was a moderate relationship between gender and justification for violence if the woman disobeys the husband's parents ( $\chi^2=5.750$  and  $p<0.015$ ). The Odds Ratio 2.556, CI (1.176\_\_5.552) shows that men in this sample were 2.56 times more likely to justify using violence against a woman if she disobeyed her husband's parents. Educational level was linked to justification for DVAW in some cases. For instance for the item 'if the wife lies to her husband' ( $\chi^2 =7.354$  and  $p<.007$ ) the results show that participants with education below degree level are 2.76

more likely to agree with this statement compared with those who hold a university degree and above, Odds Ratio= 2.765 IC (1.313\_\_5.823).

Having discussed the results from the quantitative data, the next section will discuss justifications for DVAW from the qualitative sample.

### **6.5 Justifications for DVAW in Qualitative Sample**

In order to understand to what extent DVAW was justified by the participants, I asked them the following two questions: a) *'When does a woman deserve to be beaten by a man in the household'?* b) *'Who takes responsibility for domestic violence against women; a man or a woman'?* The responses to these questions presented contradictions as regards participants' attitudes towards DVAW. These were not limited to men; some women also tended to justify DVAW under various circumstances. In Libya, as in most Arab countries, [as supported by the relevant references in Chapter 3], the most common family model is the extended family<sup>39</sup> with a male dominated structure. Men usually assume the right to control women, therefore, it can be suggested that the patriarchal structures and gender orders within Libyan families could be sources of attitudes, which create a tendency to justify DVAW. Most participants said that women do not deserve violence if they behave 'properly' in accordance with cultural and Islamic values. The participants believed that guardians should not beat their children, and fathers and brothers had no right to beat women in the natal family. However, a

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<sup>39</sup> The family remains the main system of Libyan context. Despite an increasing trend towards the nuclear family, the extended family remains very important for Libyan. Individuals must always be careful to uphold the honour of the extended family, as any transgression will reflect badly on the whole kin group. However, it is currently rare for three or more generations to live together in the same household. A more common pattern for families to live in proximity to one another in the same neighbourhood or apartment block (Barakat, 1993).

percentage qualified this and contradicted themselves in later parts of the interview. Further analysis revealed that DVAW was justified by both some men and women.

### **6.5.1 Justifications for Domestic Violence by Men**

In this study, initially all of the seven men interviewed said they believed that DVAW was unacceptable and that men have no right to use violence; however, a number later qualified this, contradicting themselves and sometimes justified DVAW. Previous studies have found that men usually attempt to justify DVAW by appealing to religion (Macey, 1999), patriarchal beliefs (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Haj-yahia, 2002; Flood and Pease, 2009; Simister and Mehta, 2010), and cultural stereotypes (Fabiano et al., 2003; Mullaney, 2007). In terms of using physical violence, only one highly-educated male did not justify any type of violence, believing that men should be blamed for violence. Four men out of the seven tended to justify using physical violence; three were less-educated and only one was well-educated. Another man did not have a clear attitude as he said he 'Could not decide/ was unsure'. Justifications given were in terms of family honour, or women not following Islamic rules of clear especially not wearing the *hijab*. Some men did not directly admit that they were in favour of controlling women; however, there was a strong tendency to justify verbal abuse and emotional abuse by men in the sample. Five men (two well-educated and three less-educated) believed it was normal to control women and that emotional violence was acceptable.

I next discuss the patterns of responses which emerged from the male participants' responses. These mentioned use of physical violence if a women's behaviour was outside of cultural



norms, using emotional and verbal abuse, and blaming women as being at fault for the violence perpetrated against them.

***Justifications for physical violence to control women***

As mentioned above, whilst all of the men in this sample initially said that DVAW was unacceptable, some men nevertheless, tended to justify it. Later in the interviews some believed that DVAW is a 'family issue' and should not be discussed outside the family [see Chapter 5] whilst others considered the subject of DVAW not relevant to them. This assumption may mean that the attitude of some men towards DVAW was due to its normalisation (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Some tended to justify DVAW in certain circumstances and to blame women for violence. For example, Ali (married and aged 37, with a low educational level, living in the UK for 17 years) whilst considering DVAW not to be acceptable, also said that a woman should sort out any conflict with her husband by discussing it with a family member. Ali said:

*Whatever happened you cannot beat women; violence is not a solution for anything. There always should be another way to solve the problems. Firstly should be understanding and discussion between the couples, then there is another way; like in the UK, you could go to the social worker and solve the problems. But in Libya we do not have a good system for social work so they can speak to a family member or a friend to help in the problem (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

When asked another question: '*if women`s behaviour was not in line with Libyan culture, should those women be beaten`?* Inappropriate behaviour as regards Libyan cultural norms, was considered to include inappropriate dress (mentioned by 3 men), or women going out without permission. Ali's response to this was different from his first statement. He

emphasised that DVAW is unacceptable; however, he also said that the father and the brother of the family should take responsibility for the family's reputation and should 'keep an eye' on the women. The men have to be 'men' in the family and in this case if they did not take action when a woman made a 'mistake' [infringing a social/cultural norm and failure to meet the social expectations of the female role such as housework, obedience or compliance], she would be likely to repeat the 'mistake'. This kind of contradiction appeared to be the case with several participants, who, on occasion, found or cited cases where DVAW could be justified. For instance, Ali added:

*Yes, I said women do not deserve violence. But some girls, their behaviour is culturally inappropriate so the father can correct them. When a woman does not wear Islamic hijab, someone in her family should be strict with her. Because in this country if the girl is not brought up in an Islamic way, she would not be a good Muslim (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

Ali limited interpretation of Islamic rules to Islamic rules of dress; however, none of the sample mentioned the practice of Islam. For Ali the main issue where he perceived women to be out of Islamic lines was not wearing the *hijab*. It should be noted that all of the men interviewed mentioned early in the interviews that they had never beaten any women in the family. However, contradictory attitudes appeared when they discussed other themes. For instance, Samir (single and less-educated) justified DVAW as a means of controlling women. He stated that:

*Some women need to be beaten by men, when a woman only wants to talk and spends money; the man has to be strong to make her as he wants. Otherwise, he will lose the control in his own place 'home' (Samir, single, aged 34 years).*

As discussed in more detail in earlier chapters, in Libyan communities, men traditionally have the right to control women. Consequently, many men interviewed showed a tendency to

justify DVAW. Haj-Yahia (1998, 2002, and 2003) conducted studies in several Arab societies and found that men who espouse patriarchal ideology showed a strong tendency to justify DVAW and to blame women for violence. Justifications were given usually in terms of family honour and women being economically dependent on men as well as in terms of traditional culture. In traditional culture, responsibility for safeguarding the family honour be entrusted to men (Moghadam, 1992). Some men (and women) in this sample mentioned that men's right to beat women in the family when their behaviours were perceived as being culturally inappropriate derived from traditional culture and not from Islam; however, women's failure to meet traditional cultural behavioural requirements was evoked as another justification for DVAW.

Some men in this study believed that women could bring shame upon the family; therefore, women should be watched carefully and punished for inappropriate behaviour. This also strengthened the probability of women being beaten, suppressed and controlled. Even women with high qualifications could be prevented from work and from engaging with men outside the family and this was sometimes the case even when the financial status of the man was limited and he was unable to meet all the economic requirements of the family. Work outside the house was considered shameful, the duty of women being to rear and care for their children, and to serve their husbands.

### ***Justifications for emotional and verbal abuse***

I had assumed that justification for DVAW would change with levels of education among men in the sample and, indeed, educated men tended to perceive or to say they perceived

violence as a malicious act. However, very few men interviewed believed that a man should be held responsible for violent behaviour towards women in the family. By means of careful wording, some men tried to justify DVAW. In the course of the interviews, men used language which could conceal the violence or downplay its visibility and magnitude. For example, some men said they considered beating women to be violence but that raising their voice or reprimanding women was not violence. Some interviewed men blamed women for the violence against them. They claimed that women sometimes lose the ability to understand their husbands, which leads a woman to argue with her husband or she was behaving not as well as culturally expected (for example going out without her husband's permission). For instance, Hamdi was a single with a high level of education. He emphasised that physical domestic violence is unacceptable. He believed that a man does not have the right to punish his wife or any family member even when they commit serious 'mistakes', such as going out without his permission or wearing clothes 'inappropriate' for Muslim women. He first said:

*No one deserves violence, women or men. Even when her behaviour is inappropriate she does not deserve to be beaten. And the man does not deserve to live and experience hard times in his house. The home is place for relaxing and resting. I know some people say women should be under your control to avoid any problem, but I personally do not believe in that (Hamdi, single, 33 aged years).*

The findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed deep complexities and sometimes contradictions in some well-educated men's attitudes towards DVAW. Initially, in the semi-structured interviews, all well-educated men said they considered DVAW unacceptable; however, at the same time, the views they expressed later in the interviews differed from their original statements. For instance, some argued in favour of control and coercion, whilst others

made a distinction as regards the meaning of DVAW itself. For instance, some of the men in the sample did not perceive verbal abuse as DVAW, when justifying violence. It was observed that some of the respondents were justifying DVAW in terms of the type of abuse. Hamdi's account indicated that men had no right to commit '*physical violence*' against women under any circumstances; from his point of view this was unacceptable. According to Hamdi; however, using verbal abuse is culturally acceptable and would not harm the relationship, although he also said that this was DVAW earlier in the interview. He also mentioned that emotional violence and verbal abuse in the family '*would not hurt*' and he believed that the man has the right to feel he '*owned*' his house. Several men in the sample held this attitude Ahmed (43 years, with a very high educational level) presented DVAW as unacceptable and considered using DVAW would '*insult*' the man himself. On the other hand, he also, placed the blame and responsibility on women. Ahmed said:

*Women should be careful, and they have to follow the social rules. For instance, she does not need to go out without her husband's permission, if that was the agreement between them and women should follow and respect the social norms... Why she raises the man's anger (Ahmed, married, aged 43 years).*

It can be suggested that some educated respondents tried to deny and justify violence by placing the blame and responsibility onto women. Some respondents also considered verbal abuse not to be violence at all but rather a '*necessity of the situation created by women*'. Saeed, another male interviewee, (41 years, married and highly-educated) also showed a tendency to justify DVAW. He declared that emotional violence and verbal abuse in the family '*would not harm anyone*'. Saeed said:

*Some women are very demanding; they would not understand that a man sometimes faces difficulties outside the house. Women face these kind of problems*

*when they choose the wrong time to ask men. Yes in a situation women are blamed for violence, I would not blame the man even if he beats her if she argues with her husband who spent the whole day working for his family (Saeed, married, aged 41 years).*

The understanding of marital relationships was based upon beliefs about ownership and women's financial dependence, which further legitimised a man's power. Marriage was a validation of this belief and created a symbol of possession. It was noticeable also that some participants initially denied DVAW, but when it came to real-life situations, they converted to monitoring, control, coercion, and violence if a woman crossed the limits set by her husband. This tendency was not limited to men with low levels of education in the sample; some men with high educational levels also justified violence.

### **6.5.2 Justifications for Domestic Violence by Women**

Although the level of justification for violence by men was higher than by women, women also tended to justify DVAW. In some women, low levels of education attributed to cultural and religious beliefs could be a main factor in this justification. Justification for DVAW and attitudes about gender may vary due to religious practice (Peek *et al.*, 1991). Yount (2009) determined in an Egyptian study, that ever-married women of reproductive age often justified DVAW. Women frequently justified such violence in instances of the wife's disobedience or violation of expected domestic roles, especially going out without telling the husband or neglecting the children. Khawaja *et al.* (2008) explored the factors associated with acceptance of DVAW amongst men and women in twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Khawaja *et al.* (2008) in their study's findings showed that the majority of men (60%) and women (62%) believed that wife beating was justified in at least one of the eight hypothetical marital

situations presented to them. Three major patterns of response emerged in justification for DVAW by women. These responses can be classified as follows: a) Justifying using verbal and emotional abuse, b) using physical violence as a strategy to control women, and c) control over women's sexuality (for example having extramarital relationships) especially if women's behaviour is outside of cultural and religious norms (see next section).

### ***Justifications for physical violence***

The main differences between men's and women's attitudes were in terms of 'using physical violence as a strategy to control women'. As mentioned above, some men stated that using physical violence was perhaps an acceptable way of dealing with women, but none of the women in the sample agreed that women deserved violence in 'everyday life'. In everyday life, or normal situations (such as if a woman went out without telling the man in the family, argued with him, disobeyed him, didn't do domestic work to the required or hoped for-standard) none of the women considered physical violence to be acceptable. All of the women interviewed said in such cases women did not deserve violence and men had no right to beat them. The assumption in this case is that these women were defending themselves and refused to be in situations where men might abuse them. However, some legitimated men in using physical violence to 'correct' women who made serious 'mistakes' such as going out with men and having sex out of marriage, or being sexually unfaithful.

Asked whether women 'deserved violence', all of the women in the sample answered in the first instance that women do not deserve violence. Considerable numbers of women in the sample also believed that violence is a last resort to settle disputes. Hanan (married, aged 48

years with and well-educated) for instance, believed that there is no right for men to use violence to control women, but she also believed that men acquire this right and women have to `follow the rules`. She stated that:

*It is not natural for women to suffer from violence... I lived in an environment that refuses to give women their freedom. Women were very afraid of their father and could not contradict his opinion. Even my brothers were very afraid of him and no one could be late coming back home after ten o'clock. But we can't do anything against this control, we should just obey men and try live with peace of mind (Hanan, married, aged 48).*

Salma was another well-educated woman who believed that no right exists for men to beat women. She said that women are not objects to be beaten and that even just raising a hand is not acceptable. From her point of view, there are `other things`, which are more difficult than beating (i.e. threatening violence) which are emotional abuse. Salma specified that:

*Culture gives the right to men to beat women. For a woman it might be a normal or common thing, she may be beaten since she was a child by her father or brother. When a woman experiences violence from her [natal] family, it is considered as a kind of training, and then the husband's turn comes to beat her (Salma, married, aged 45 years).*

Some women in the sample mentioned that the rules of Islam in terms of DVAW do not justify DVAW. For instance, Fatima (married aged 54, high level of education) believed that men have no right to beat women and that cultural and traditional values were more responsible for violence rather than religion. Fatima stated that:

*A man has no right to beat women, and women do not deserve violence. It is forbidden in Islam. Even what is mentioned in the holy Quran is not the severe beating but men understand it wrongly. The explanation of the verse<sup>40</sup> is clear*

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<sup>40</sup> Fatima mentioned the Qur'anic *Surah*/verse about men and women which is the most often misunderstood or misused by both Muslims and non-Muslims, verse (34 of *Surah*/verse *An-Nisa*). The English translation of this verse: "Men are (meant to be righteous and kind) guardians of women because God has favoured some more



*and frank where it does not refer to beating a woman and harming her, but to make her feel the anger. It is for limited provisions, giving up prayer and for her own interest and not the benefit of man. A woman is not a weak person but a partner. And this is confirmed by everything, for instance: whether religion as Islam, custom or traditions, it is not for a man to assault his wife (Fatima, married, aged 54 years).*

Faiza who was divorced (aged 42 years with low education level), mentioned the role of culture that gives the men the right to behave as they like whilst women were accountable and were required to accept their violent husbands rather than obtain a divorce and be stigmatised by the society. She said that men might manipulate religious instruction to justify their violent behaviour. Hence, instead of taking care of women, men tended to control them, restricting their lives. She indicated that:

*A woman does not deserve violence whatever the reasons are. If a woman acted irresponsibly, she should be retained with honour or allowed to leave with grace as stated in the Islamic rules. And it is not natural for women to suffer from violence but the social norms accept that a man controls a woman leading to consider violence as normal. Islam does not urge that, people manipulate religion as they want to control woman; thus, men always change religion for their own purpose and use it to suppress woman (Faiza, divorced, aged 42 years).*

Faiza cited the Islamic rules in terms of divorce; the divorce is permitted in Islam as a last resort if it is not possible to continue a marriage. There are certain steps, which need to be taken to ensure that all options are exhausted and both (the wife and husband) are treated with respect and justice. Faiza discussed the role of culture that gives freedom to men to behave as

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*than others and because they (i.e. men) spend out of their wealth. (In their turn) righteous women are (meant to be) devoted and to guard what God has (willed to be) guarded even though out of sight (of the husband). As for those (women) on whose part you fear ill-will and nasty conduct, admonish them (first), (next) leave them alone in their beds (and last) beat or separate them (from you). But if they obey you, then seek nothing against them. Behold, God is most high and great. (4:34). [Discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis]*

they wish. Many women in the sample believed that it is the control men imposed upon women and that men might manipulate religious instructions.

***Justifications for verbal and emotional abuse***

The partial acceptance of violence was not restricted to men; some women also accepted and justified DVAW. It was stated by some that, where violence was imposed on women, the women themselves remained to blame, either directly or indirectly. Several women interviewees blamed women themselves for violence they suffered. The findings indicate that although a substantial number of women interviewed believed that there is no excuse for a man to beat a woman, they also showed a tendency to justify using emotional abuse in some instances. The strongest justifications were cases in which the women or girls were perceived as not following Islamic rules, especially young women who do not wear 'proper' *hijab*.

Several women framed their understanding of DVAW as the result of women's lack of obedience, or not doing what they were told by men. Most of the less-educated women believed that women should obey men in the family to avoid any conflict, so tended to justify DVAW. An example from the sample is Karima, a less-educated women. Karima believed that a woman should be obedient, since their husbands work and support them financially. She said:

*We cannot accept violence as a part of the relationship. However, when men's temper is bad because of the stress out at work, we have to accept this reality. He is her husband and she should do what he says. She should do her duty and show some respect (Karima, married, aged 38 years).*

Huda (married with little education) also blamed women for violence against them. She said:

*Sometimes women themselves cause violence. If the husband was angry she should not argue with him and she shouldn't raise her voice. Some women do not understand their husbands and this is a reason for violence (Huda, married, aged 34 years).*

Karima and Huda believed that women can avoid violence, they said women should not argue with their husbands. Moreover, women can live with verbal abuse. Some women in the sample mentioned they suffered from this abuse, but they had learnt how to cope with it and accepted it as a part of their husbands' personalities. Libyan culture encourages women to be 'patient', and women may be able to avoid conflict with men by not being challenging (Al-Sadawi, 1977; Morsy, 1993). Women believed that it was against their culture to be strong and was *unfeminine*, they should use their femininity to avoid any conflict in the family.

Some women tended also to blame other women for violence against them (over half of informants, or 7 out of 13) said women should be 'careful' and should obey their husbands and they should understand the pressures men face in life. When explaining the reasons for domestic violence, some women also said that the situation itself makes the man lose his temper and become violent. This indicated a tendency to justify violence.

### ***Justifications for physical violence to control women's sexuality***

A key element of the common DVAW framework includes the nature of what types of behaviour were defined as violent as well as which lay behind violence. For example, most women justified verbal abuse and emotional violence more often than they justified physical violence, however, some women considered that physical violence was acceptable in particular circumstances; for example, when a woman was sexually unfaithful. Of the thirteen

women interviewed, eight (61%) responded 'yes' when they were asked '*If a woman was sexually unfaithful, does she deserve to be beaten*'?

Women in the sample thus showed a high tendency to justify violence when a woman was sexually unfaithful, or had sex outside of marriage. This could be due to legal and religious factors (as Islam forbids sex out of marriage/ *Zina*<sup>41</sup>). Unmarried women are not supposed to be sexually intimate before marriage. Some women in the sample believed that controlling women's sexuality is necessary in order to 'purify' society. Control over female sexuality is also perceived as a necessity in traditional culture since the protection of family honour/reputation is rooted in women's sexual behaviours.

However, several women in this sample justified using violence against 'unfaithful' women who had sex outside marriage. Of the 13 women interviewed, 8 said unfaithful women and women who have sex out of marriage deserve to be beaten. Five of these were less-educated and were 3 well-educated. Some women interviewed distanced themselves strongly from other women who had sex out of marriage. There was a strict opinion about this. For instance, Fatima, although she was in favour of women's rights and was against using violence, showed an extreme attitude about women who were sexually unfaithful, Fatima said:

*This kind of women who cannot control themselves deserve beating, this kind of woman deserves killing (Fatima, married, aged 54 years).*

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<sup>41</sup> *Zina* is defined by Islamic Law as unlawful sexual intercourse, i.e. intercourse between individuals who are not married to one another. This encompasses extramarital sex and premarital sex.

Fatima's response justified honour killing. I did not ask the participants about honour killing, as this type of violence, like other social practices (such as FGM), are not considered to be a major phenomenon for Libyan women (UNICEF, 2011). UNICEF (2011) stated that the rate of honour killing is not high in Libya, but the penal code allows for a reduced sentence for a man who kills his wife or female relative who is caught in the act of unlawful sexual relations.

The participants have relatively strict and hierarchical ideas about how women should behave and how they should present themselves as 'reserved' and modest Muslim women. Many women find DVAW at least a partly acceptable response, and tend to assign blame to the victim/survivor rather than the perpetrator. This is similar to responses in many cases of rape, where the women victims are blamed, for instance walking on their own late at night, or the way they were dressed.

Wearing *hijab* was mentioned many times by the women participants as a way of showing how strong their faith was. They believed that wearing *hijab* was in women's best interests and it is their duty to wear it. Some women believed that they had to be strict with their daughters and ensure they wear 'decent clothing' which should not reveal any parts of their body. Some women also showed a strong tendency to distance themselves from women who transgressed sexually, possibly to emphasise their own 'purity'. They believed that their own behaviour conformed to moral/ social norms, and that if women behaved according to the social norms, they would avoid violence from men.

Having discussed the justifications for DVAW by the qualitative sample, the discussion now addresses perceptions of DVAW with links to wider social norms (Islamic perspective).

## 6.6 Islam and Domestic Violence against Women

The subject of women in Islam is extremely controversial (Haj-Yahia, 2008). Barlas and Majid (2002) argued, Islamic law has been misunderstood and misapplied, and the Quran's spirit has been misrepresented. Therefore, Islam cannot necessarily be blamed directly for DVAW, but it could be linked to the way in which it has been interpreted by certain cultural and political groups. Douki *et al.* (2003) declared that DVAW is a result of culture rather than of religion. Common religious misinterpretations have further legitimized these feelings. The major challenge to Libyan communities is the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islamic teachings and their influence on Libyan cultural norms, which has been neglected as the most common justification for DVAW and gender inequality.

The ex-husbands of two women in this sample Mayada and Nasreen, were strict Muslims, therefore, it could be said in this regard there was a relationship between misrepresentation of Islamic texts and DVAW. It should also be said that Muslim men may be more conservative in the application of Islamic religion. Haj-Yahia (2000) argues that Islam elevates the status of men compared with the status of women and demands women to be submissive to their husbands. Libyan social and cultural norms, which have been influenced by Islamic beliefs and traditions, contribute to the demarcation of gender roles and male–female relations. Many men and women in the sample, however, drew attention in the study to the profound role of misinterpretation of Islam in terms of DVAW. Akram a single man, aged 36 stated that:

*Some people use Islam to justify that. They believe that women should obey men, so if she made any mistake he can beat her. And this completely wrong. Islam is about mercy and good relationship between any couple not about violence (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

Nasreen also mentioned in the semi-structured interview that her husband was a strict Muslim, but she said he had not practiced Islam in a good way rather; he had used the religion to gain power and to shield his personal complexes. She declared that:

*Lack of awareness, for example, not knowing the religion very well. The “Hadith” (sayings of the Prophet) Prophet Muhammad discouraged wife-abuse: “The most perfect believers are the best in conduct. And the best of you are those who are best to their wives”. However, there is no one to protect the rights of woman in society as Islam specified. My husband was unaware of women’s rights and he did not show a good manner towards them. He just had the appearance of Islam I wish he was a good Muslim (Nasreen, divorced, aged 38 years).*

Faiza and Nasreen both felt that there were customs and traditions according to which the man is the master and dominant party, whilst the woman did all the housework in accordance with the customs, traditions and norms in Libya. In addition, they believed that, if a man applied religion in the correct manner, women would not suffer from violence.

Some men in the sample mentioned Islamic interpretations in relation to DVAW. For instance, Ibrahim, 49 years of age, had been in the UK for many years and was not a strict Muslim. He was married to an Englishwoman and his views about violence in Islam were more positive.

Ibrahim said:

*Violence is not part of our religion, it is a cultural aspect. Women could be kicked, slapped, beaten or sexually abused when husbands were dissatisfied by their cooking or cleaning, or when the woman failed to bear a child, or had given birth to a girl instead of a boy. Did Islam say that? No one can say Islam is the cause for these actions... (Ibrahim, married, aged 49 years).*

Ibrahim’s response indicated that he was aware that the famous Qur’anic verse (Verse 4:34) contained a meaning which could allow a husband to beat his wife in some circumstances; however, he believed that this verse had been misinterpreted. According to Douki *et al.* (2003)

one of the factors linked to the acceptance of violence is that of religious practice which considers DVAW, like child-battering, to be a duty for the husband and father. Men assume responsibilities for maintaining the family structure by whatever means they feel are justified, including violence (Douki *et al.*, 2003). However, DVAW acceptance cannot be attributed to religion but to the misuse of religion, whereby religion is used to rationalise and give authority in order to allow men to control women. Many participants in this research believed that DVAW in Libyan communities could be attributed to misinterpretation of Islam and also to patriarchal ideologies which have historical and social roots in Libyan culture.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the attitudes of the participants towards DVAW, by exploring perceptions of different causes and examining how DVAW was justified by the quantitative and qualitative data.

With regard to participants' beliefs regarding the possible causes of DVAW, the survey findings suggested that individual, societal, cultural, educational, and economic elements are important in explaining people's beliefs about the incidence of domestic violence among Libyan women, whether in Libya or in the UK. The participants in this study showed a lower tendency to agree with some economic factors that could lead to DVAW. For example, only 26% of the respondents agreed that women who continue to demand money from men are likely to become victims of domestic violence. The majority (approximately 80%), agreed that unemployment (among men) is one of the factors for DVAW. Also more than two thirds of the sample agreed that women who would not give their earnings to husbands might suffer



domestic violence. Gender was important here, as more females than males agreed that economic elements were contributing factors as regards domestic violence, and women with a high educational level concurred more than the other groups.

In this study, a number of people justified DVAW. Although most of the participants emphasised that men have no right to use DVAW for any reason whatsoever, contradictory attitudes appeared, indicating that in many circumstances, DVAW may be regarded as justifiable. This occurred amongst both men and women in the sample. The survey pointed to certain instances in which Libyan migrants tend to justify DVAW. The strongest justifications for DVAW were cases in which a woman was perceived as being 'sexually unfaithful', or 'If she neglects the children'. Men tended to justify DVAW more than women.

The semi-structured interviews indicate the level or strength of justification for violence was different between men and women in the sample. For some men, low educational levels was linked to a tendency to justify the use of physical and verbal DVAW. Some men believed that DVAW is a family issue and should not be discussed outside. The strongest justifications for DVAW were for emotional and verbal abuse, with several men believing that emotional and verbal abuse is normal. Some men also tended to blame women themselves, for violence. Very few men believed that a man should be held responsible for violent behaviour towards women in the family. Some men also sought to justify DVAW or used language which could conceal the violence or downplay its visibility and magnitude. For example, some men said that beating was not violence. Thus, their discourse indicated that they felt that such actions were not 'violence' and should not be viewed as such.

Women, in contrast, did not display any tendency to justify using physical violence in everyday life situations; however, more than half of the women – particularly those with less education – in the sample justified physical violence against girls or women, when they behaved against community and religious sexual norms. Several women interviewees blamed women for the violence they suffered, as Libyan women `culturally` are expected to be patient and tolerant. Several women framed their understanding of DVAW as being the result of women's lack of obedience to men and most of the less-educated women believed that women should obey men in the family to avoid any conflict. Thus, less-educated women tended to justify DVAW.

The next chapter will discuss the experiences of DVAW and perceptions of the prevalence of DVAW based on the quantitative survey and the semi-structured interviews.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Perceptions of the Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women in Libyan Communities**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The concern of this chapter is to explore the experiences and prevalence of domestic violence against women (DVAW) within this sample of Libyan migrants. The chapter discusses three topics. The first concerns perceptions about the prevalence of DVAW, taken from the quantitative data as well as from semi-structured interviews. The second topic deals with direct experiences of violence. During the semi-structured interviews, women sometimes discussed their own experiences of violence, although they were not asked about these directly. Their testimonies sometimes allowed relating of experience to women's understandings of DVAW. Thirdly, the chapter discusses opinions about why women stay in violent relationships, drawing mainly on data from the semi-structured interviews.

The following section turns to discussion of perceptions and views on the prevalence of domestic violence against Libyan women.

#### **7.2 Quantitative Analysis of Perceptions of the Prevalence of DVAW**

Neither women nor men were asked directly about their own experiences of violence in the survey due to the sensitivity of this topic. Therefore, I concentrated on obtaining their opinions and views about the occurrence of DVAW within Libyan communities. In order to address

perceptions of the incidence and the prevalence of DVAW in the sample, participants were asked three questions (See Table 7.1 below for questions).

**Table 7.1**  
**Perceptions of the prevalence and occurrence of DVAW**

Perceptions of the prevalence and occurrence of DVAW	Yes (%)		No (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Do you think Libyan women suffer from DVAW?	89.6%	91.7%	10.4%	8.3%
Do you think that the level of DVAW has increased recently in Libya communities?	79.1%	72.2%	20.9%	27.8%
Has any woman in your family/friend suffered from domestic violence?	44.8%	63.9%	55.2%	36.1%
Total =175				

To begin with, I discuss the frequency results of the responses to these questions. The findings in Table 7.1 above reveal that a very high percentage (approximately 91%) of respondents agreed that Libyan women suffer from violence, with little difference in responses from men and women. Interestingly, 79% of men supposed that the level of DVAW has increased recently in Libya communities and this was slightly greater than the percentage of women; at 72%. More than half of the respondents in this sample, 'knew a woman in the family or a friend who suffered from domestic violence'. This was comprised of almost two thirds of women participants (64%) although only 45% of men said they knew of such an instance.

I discuss here the results from cross-tabulations which was carried out to test the respondents' gender and educational levels together compared with each question discussed above. In Table 7.2 (next page) the findings presented show women and men's responses associated with their educational levels. The results show that more than the half of respondents 'knew a woman who suffered domestic violence'. Women with high educational level tended to

agree with this more than men: 73% of highly-educated women knew a woman who suffered from violence, compared with only 40% of highly-educated men. Approximately 58% of less-educated women and 59% of less-educated men said they knew of such incidences. A high percentage of participants thought that Libyan women suffer from domestic violence, regardless of education (93% of highly-educated respondents and 89% of less-educated participants). Approximately 92% of highly-educated men and approximately 93% of highly-educated women believed that Libyan women suffer from DVAW.

In addition, in response to the question whether the participants thought that the level of DVAW had increased recently (in 2012) in Libya communities, more than 70% of less-educated participants and approximately 79% of highly-educated participants thought that the level of DVAW had increased. Approximately 69% of less-educated women believed this, compared with 77% of highly-educated men.

**Table 7.2**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender and educational level of respondent compared with prevalence and occurrence of DVAW**

Educational level			Has any woman in your family/friend suffered from domestic violence?			Do you think Libyan women suffer from DVAW?			Do you think that the level of DVAW has increased recently in Libyan communities?			
			Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Below degree level	Gender	male	Count	10	7	17	14	3	17	13	4	17
			%	58.8%	41.2%	100%	82.4%	17.6%	100%	76.5%	23.5%	100%
	female	Count	37	27	64	58	6	64	44	20	64	
		%	57.8%	42.2%	100%	90.6%	9.4%	100%	68.8%	31.3%	100%	
	Total		Count	47	34	81	72	9	81	57	24	81
			%	58.0%	42.0%	100%	88.9%	11.1%	100%	70.4%	29.6%	100%
BA degree and above	Gender	male	Count	20	30	50	46	4	50	40	10	50
			%	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	92.0%	8.0%	100%	80.0%	20.0%	100%
	female	Count	32	12	44	41	3	44	34	10	44	
		%	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%	93.2%	6.8%	100%	77.3%	22.7%	100%	
	Total		Count	52	42	94	87	7	94	74	20	94
			%	55.3%	44.7%	100.0%	92.6%	7.4%	100%	78.7%	21.3%	100%

I carried out Chi Square tests to establish whether there were significant statistical associations between each of the three questions discussed above, as 'dependent variables', with all the socio-demographic variables. None of the independent variables (e.g. age, gender, educational level, the length of time spent in the UK, marital status, employment status, and having children or not) associated statistically with the questions: 'Do you believe that Libyan women suffer from violence?' 'Do you think that the level of DVAW has increased recently in Libya communities'. However, the results of Chi Square tests indicated that in this sample there was an association between 'knowing a woman in the family suffers from violence' as a dependent variable and 'gender' as independent variable ( $\chi^2 = 6.148, P < .013$ ).

#### ***Discussion based on quantitative analysis***

In exploring men's and women's perceptions of the nature of extent of domestic violence in Libyan communities, the survey showed that the participants were well aware of the occurrence and existence of DVAW. According to respondents to the survey, DVAW is widespread in Libyan communities in the UK. The vast majority of the respondents believed that women in Libyan communities suffer from different forms of domestic violence. Furthermore, more than half of the sample said they knew a woman who suffered from violence. There was a difference between men's and women's responses to the question regarding 'do you know of a woman in the family who suffered from domestic violence'. More women than men said they knew a woman in the family or a friend who suffered from domestic violence.

## 7.1 Qualitative Analysis of Perceptions of the Prevalence of DVAW

In the semi-structured interviews, I asked women interviewed a few questions related to different forms of DVAW existing in Libyan communities; some women spoke mainly about their *own* experiences of emotional abuse, and divorced women talked about experiences of physical abuse. In this section, I first discuss women's experiences of emotional and verbal abuse, followed by discussion of their experiences of physical violence. Then I will present men's views on the prevalence of DVAW.

### 7.2.1 Women's Experiences of Emotional and Verbal Abuse

Most respondents in this research included emotional violence in their description of the most common types of violence carried out on women by male members of their families. Emotional or verbal violence accounted for about 75% of DVAW mentioned in the semi-structured interviews. Some women felt that it was the worst form of abuse in their experience. McWilliams and McKiernan (1993) similarly noted that women who had escaped DVAW found that recovering from emotional violence was one of the most difficult tasks they faced. Walker (1979) stated that most women in her sample described verbal abuse as their worst experience. Stark (2009), argues that emotional abuse is the most prevalent form of DVAW, as it underpins both physical and sexual abuse and the most hidden form of abuse.

The number of women who stated that they had suffered from violence increased when the spread of different types of violence were discussed, as violence does not need to have been physical, it could have been emotional or verbal. The most common experience was that the man accusing his wife of disrespect by shouting loudly or ignoring her. Even some married



women who did not mention the occurrence of physical and sexual violence in their lives had experienced this. Emotional violence towards women also included imprisonment at home, forced isolation and deprivation, and a ban on talking to (or seeing) friends and relatives. Many women in this study reported such instances. Several married women felt lonely and this could be a common factor in the UK for migrants, especially after the first year of marriage. Many migrant Libyan women did not work and could not speak English; therefore, they faced limitations in going out or spending time outside the home. In Libyan communities; however, some women referred to the fact that people do not speak out about this and they considered verbal abuse to be normal in women's lives. The following comment was made by Basma, who aged 44 years, married and with a low educational level:

*My husband does not beat me up, but he treats me harshly, he does not feel friendliness and kindness. I also get problems from his family as they interfere a lot and control my life in Libya (Basma, married, aged 44 years).*

Hanan another married women and well-educated, added:

*I have not experienced physical violence from my husband. But he always shouts at us... I know many women who are severely beaten or emotionally abused by their husbands. I know a Libyan woman who is my friend in the UK. She is very young and her husband does not allow her to go out anywhere. Moreover, she cannot open the curtains at her house. Her husband is very religious and he forced her to wear the veil (Hanan, married, aged 48 years).*

Several women had also suffered from verbal abuse from childhood. Huda (married aged 34 years, less-educated and had been in the UK for two years) believed that verbal abuse was worse than physical abuse. According to her, verbal abuse is very prevalent within Libyan families. She mentioned that gender barriers in society were reflected in violence, where strict rules to control women apply. She stated that:

*Verbal abuse is common even between brothers and sisters in Libyan families. In my family, my father was not violent against us at all. Nevertheless, I had many barriers. I could not go out by myself. We had strict rules, though I was working and driving but if I were late for 5 minutes means my brothers would shout at me and I used to avoid seeing them for 2 days after that, to stop their anger (Huda, married, aged 34 years).*

Women might face this form of violence from their fathers, brothers, mothers and even older sisters on frequent basis, and then from their husbands after getting married. The findings are consistent with previous research, which established that women who experience physical violence in their original family may grow up with the belief that domestic violence is a normal practice within unions and subsequently expect it to occur within marriage (Coker *et al.*, 2000).

### **7.2.2 Women's Experiences of Physical Violence**

The focus will now turn to a discussion of women's personal experiences of physical abuse; the focus moved from the ideological to the diversity of women's experiences. Women in this study were more open than men in talking about physical violence, even if they did not state that they experience it themselves. Women tended more often to give details about a friend or relative who suffered violence either in Libya or in the UK. Some women in the course of the interview discussed their own experiences of physical abuse, whether this was in the UK or in Libya prior to migration. Five out of the 13 women in the qualitative sample said they had been subjected to physical abuse. Some women had this experience in Libya and some said they faced violence in the UK. Those women had also experienced many types of abuse including control over their earnings from work, and emotional violence. Table 7.3 below presents the characteristics of women who said they had experienced physical violence.

**Table 7.3**  
**Experiences of domestic violence against divorced women in the sample**

Cases	Type of violence	The cause of violence	Where the violence took place	Demographics of informants			
				Educational level		Length of residence in UK	
				*Abused woman	**The abuser	Abused woman	The abuser
Nasreen	Physical and sexual violence and emotional violence	The husband`s personality and having a difference of opinion. The <i>misuse</i> of the religion	In Libya and UK	Secondary school	Primary school	12	8
Faiza	Physical and emotional violence	The husband wanted to marry another woman	In the UK	Primary school	BA	9	15
Mayada	Emotional violence and physical violence	Financial reasons, the husband`s personality also misuse of the religion	In Libya and UK she experienced emotional violence	Primary school	BA	12	Never been
Thuria	Physical and emotional violence	The husband`s family interfered	In the UK	BA	Secondary school	18	25
Aisha	Physical violence; economic and emotional violence	Economic reasons and control	In the UK	BA	BA	21	21
Note: all of these women are divorced. *Abused women= the case participant, **the abuser= her ex-husband (in all cases).							

Of the thirteen women who were interviewed, five divorced women said they had been victims of physical violence by their ex-partners. This number increased, however, when different types of violence were mentioned as discussed previously. It is still important to bear in mind that topics related to DVAW, including beliefs about it, are sensitive issues in traditional and conservative contexts such as Libyan society. Hence, social norms may have continued to have an influence on the responses of the participants when discussing violence and so violence may have been under-reported.

Women had different attitudes when they talked about their experiences of abuse. Some women were more open and forthcoming than others, some wanted to enter into more explicit conversation than others did, and some were more reticent and/or secretive. The women, who gave accounts of experiencing physical violence, stated that they had often been slapped, kicked, punched, or hit. Divorced women were more open than married women in talking about their experiences of domestic violence and all (divorced women) admitted that they had experienced emotional abuse and physical violence. A small number of women also talked about sexual violence. Most of the divorced sample participants said they had experienced repeated and long-term violence.

Women with low educational levels, according to previous studies (Yllö and Straus, 1990) are more likely to experience violence. Faiza a 42-year-old divorced woman was less-educated and reflected on her own experience, as she was divorced and admitted that she had experienced violence. She mentioned that the reason for her to ask for a divorce was that her husband wanted to marry another woman. She had an argument with him after she discovered

that he had an affair with another woman and he beat her. Faiza had suffered from emotional violence for a long time, even though physical violence had not been common. Her ex-husband beat her once however, when he asked to marry another women and she refused.

An example in this study was Nasreen, a divorced female with a child, less-educated and 38 years of age. Nasreen's ex-husband was also less-educated and from a working-class background [according to Nasreen]. Nasreen was a British resident and she had experienced violence in Libya and in the UK. She got divorced according to *Sharia law*<sup>42</sup> with the help of her brother in Libya, and sought help from a source available in the UK (See discussion in Chapter 8). Nasreen stated:

*I had experienced violence with my ex-husband. I had a very bad experience. I lived with him in poverty in a very small house because he was wanted by the government in Syria before we came to the UK. I went with him without thinking of the circumstances. He was extremely religious and nothing was allowed from his point of view. No telephone, no internet, a pretext that it is forbidden in Islam. Even the talk on the phone and internet he was controlling it "because it's forbidden" and he was opening it for one hour to make calls to my family, after that he locked it with a key. I experienced beatings from my ex-husband as his father did to his mother. I had a problem in my eye because of the beating. I was insulted by his family and he refused to stand beside me or help me, instead he asked me to leave the house. He was completely biased towards his parents. I experienced violence of all kinds through my marital life. He was insulting me and preventing me from going out, he also tried to beat me more than one time in the street... After that, I went back to Libya. For two years, where I was treated as a servant at his parents' house. I saw him 3 or 4 time a year. Last time, he tried to prevent me from going back to Britain and taking my children. I had experienced sexual violence. This is another abuse I had to live with the whole time I lived with him (Nasreen, divorced, aged 38 years).*

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<sup>42</sup> The English courts cannot pronounce Islamic divorces. Muslims must apply to a *Sharia* council to obtain a *Sharia* divorce.

MacKinnon (1982) explains how men can establish their power and control over women using sexual force. In the semi-structured interviews, only Nasreen reported experiences of sexual violence, though some participants mentioned its occurrence more generally. This could be partly due to the difficulties in conveying and discussing matters relating to sexuality and partly due to attitudes to sexual submission and seeing sexuality as shameful. However, because of cultural sensitivities, it was difficult for the researcher (being female) to discuss questions related to sexual violence. Therefore, these were avoided in the interviews, especially with men. Nasreen was the only woman in this study who explicitly mentioned sexual violence in her relationship with her ex-husband. Other women interviewed, who talked about their experiences, did not report any forced sexual contact. The sensitivities around these discussions mean that the occurrence of sexual violence could have been greater than actually discussed. Another woman 'Aisha' said that sexual violence occurs in many cases, but she did not say whether that applied to her also. Aisha said:

*Sexual violence frequently occurs. Sex between the couples can be become as rape. The husband forces his wife to have sex without any enjoyment this is really DVAW, we should talk about it and stop deal with this matter like it is not there, meanwhile it is a real issue. It could be violence itself or as consequence could lead to violence (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Mayada was another woman who was abused physically and emotionally by her ex-husband. Both Mayada and Nasreen's ex-husbands considered themselves strict Muslims. Mayada was 45 years old and had a low educational level. She had not worked in Libya or in the UK, and lived in the UK with her four children. Mayada's husband was well-educated but he had never worked and the family suffered from financial hardship all the time. Her husband was in prison for a long time as he was politically opposed to the previous political regime in Libya. Mayada

was the only woman in the qualitative sample who wore the *niqab* (veil)<sup>43</sup>, and she considered it a necessity for Muslim women and not an imposition on them. She commenced wearing the veil upon marriage as her ex-husband was a strict Muslim, and she continued to wear it after they got divorced. On the other hand, Nasreen used to wear the veil because her ex-husband forced her to do, but has not worn it recently.

Mayada told me of her experiences without being asked to do so. In the interview she was very open and emotional. Experiences of violence affected her intensely and affected her dealings with people and her rearing of her children. She also lost confidence in men completely as she generalised the experience she had. She found it was extremely difficult to build self-esteem and was afraid that she could not help her children and protect them especially one of them, who was a disabled girl. She determined that what was happening to her might affect her daughter, however could not explain that to the daughter, as the abuser was the father. She indicated that:

*Violence destroyed and influenced me completely. I suffered from depression for three years and was going to see the psychotherapist, which was a result of violence I experienced. I also lost the ability to focus and to study. My relationship with my husband has affected my mental health, I became sadder and I forget everything, I tried to do some English language studies but I could not concentrate and forget everything. Until now, I cannot concentrate because my mind is bothered by the number of problems I had experienced. He does not even hesitate to insult my disabled daughter severely. When he argues with me, he accuses me of lack of understanding and listening (Mayada, divorced, 45 years).*

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<sup>43</sup>Most of the Libyan women in Libya or in the UK wear *hijab* that covers just the head. The most visible form of *hijab* is the head covering. However, the 'veil' or *niqab* is a cloth which covers the face as a part of sartorial *hijab*. The *niqab* is less worn by Libyan women, as not many women wear it.

Mayada stated that her husband had a very difficult personality. He held extremist religious views and was psychologically unstable and precarious, according to her. She called him from Britain on an almost daily basis but he was always complaining about her and suspecting everything around him and had no trust in her. This led to her feeling her life was hellish. When he was set free from prison after the revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> of February (2011) in Libya, the husband fabricated a problem with her, asked her to come back to Libya to him, and did not pay attention to the children. She travelled with him from one place into another and bore all kinds of suffering and injustice. He depended on donations. She said:

*I lived in houses were unsuitable for humans. He deprived me of all my rights as a human and always was mocking everything I had done (Mayada, divorced, 45 years).*

Mayada's ex-husband divorced her twice<sup>44</sup> whilst he was in prison in Libya. The first time was when he asked her to call her brother. She refused to give him the number because her brother did not want to communicate with the husband for security reasons. The second time was when he asked her for a large amount of money, £5000 but she did not have it. The last time she asked him to divorce her and the procedures were still continuing. She came alone to Britain with her children and requested political asylum from the British government. The government helped her and provided her with a house and shelter. Because of the daughter's disability, she has been given a house and nationality. The husband asked her to leave the UK to return to Libya, when she refused; he insulted her and ended the call. She said that she was very quiet with him and did not raise her voice. She regretted that she did not leave him right

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<sup>44</sup>Only one divorce has given. Divorce occurs when the husband says to the wife: 'I divorce you'.



from the beginning and had wasted her life waiting for him to return. However, later in the interview she said her family did not support her when she was severely beaten by her husband. She was subject to violence more than once and even when they lived in different countries, she was subject to psychological and emotional violence and insults. She drew attention to the fact that her ex-husband was brought up the way he was because of his family; all of his family members had to obey these norms, where women Mayada said had no voice, no respect, importance, or value.

Previous studies have shown that women's acceptance of violence is associated with patriarchal culture, their low level of education, women's employment, duration of marriage, and their level of involvement in household decision making (Haj-Yahia 1998a; Hindin, 2003; Jewkes *et al.*, 2002; Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005; Rani *et al.*, 2004). The relationship between educational level and DVAW is complex. The qualitative findings in this research indicate that there was a link between perceptions of DVAW and women's educational levels. More educated women tended to be aware of DVAW, and talked more and in depth about different types of violence than women who were less-educated within this sample. Education empowers women by allowing them to gain more self-esteem, extensive social networks, and better capacity to use information and resources (WHO, 2005). However, the high educational level of women (who considered themselves to be middle-class) did not restrict violence. Some women with high educational levels experienced violence: approximately 50% of them suffered one of the types of violence (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological) by males within their families. In some cases, women in the sample who become more educated and empowered also faced a *greater* risk of violence as their male partners try to regain control.

Therefore, a high educational level of the victim does not limit their exposure to violence. For instance, Aisha had experienced domestic violence and was open when talked about her experience. She said:

*I had experienced violence and I contacted the police. This was in the UK, he slapped and kicked me. He beat me many times when I did not allow him to take over my money then he started to become violent with me. We had arguments many times before I got divorced and all of these arguments resulted in him beating me. This occurred in the presence of my children (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Aisha's ex-husband had an equivalent education level to her, but he still used violence to gain power within their relationship.

### **7.2.3 Men's Perceptions of the Occurrence of Physical Violence**

As stated previously, DVAW was seen to be a result of a patriarchal system by almost all of the participants in this sample. However, men's attitudes towards the use of DVAW were completely different to women's. In order to ensure that this study focused on women and men's perceptions of DVAW, men were also asked about the use and prevalence of DVAW. In addition, in an attempt to report and reflect on men's views regarding DVAW, they were asked whether they knew any women who had suffered such violence. With regard to whether the men interviewed had beaten their partners or any women in the family, most of the men participating in this study stated that they had ever hit a woman in the family, and did not use physical violence as a means to control women. Table 7.4 below shows the seven male respondents' stated views about the use of DVAW.

**Table 7.4**  
**Men's a perceptions of the occurrence of DVAW within qualitative sample**

Demographics of informants				Using physical violence against any women in the family	Knowing any women suffer from violence
Pseudonym	Age	Educational level	Length of residence in UK in years		
Hamdi	33	MA	7	No	Yes
Samir	34	Secondary school	4	No	Yes
Akram	36	Secondary school	8	No	Yes
Ali	37	Secondary school	17	No	Yes
Saeed	41	BA	2	No	Yes
Ahmed	43	PhD	5	No	Yes
Ibrahim	49	BA	33	No	Yes

Men in the semi-structured interviews did not talk about physical violence in much detail. They mentioned physical violence very briefly and some mentioned it as an issue which took place in the private sphere. Whilst all of the men said that they would not hit a woman, almost all of the men in the sample, regardless of different backgrounds and different levels of education, acknowledged that they 'knew a close relative' who had experienced violence. All also said that they knew a male friend or acquaintance who had hit or beaten a woman. However, male participants did not provide much information about the women they knew who suffered from violence. The following comments show that some men believed that women in Libyan communities suffer from all types of domestic violence.

*Women suffer from violence even in the natal family. Her brother can beat her up and the culture gives him this right. My father used to beat us all not just the girls but that was expected within Libyan social norms. Not like in the UK when the children brought up in a society refuses any types of violence against them. My sister suffered from violence, her husband was very bad with her, he did not work and my sister is a teacher. He did not show any respect to her or her family, at the end she got divorced and she is happy now without him. She lives with her two children in my father's house (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

*Libyan women suffer from all types of violence. However, violence is seen as a private issue. I know a close relative who beat his wife very badly, and she left him not because of that but she left when he got married another women. This friend has a PhD degree and is a staff member at the university. This is was in*

*Libya. Here in the UK most of the men never change, they still deal with women like in the past (Ahmed, married, 43 years).*

*I know a Libyan man he beats his daughter because she wears inappropriate clothes for a Muslim girls (like jeans and short tops). I know he beat her very badly. Once he has beaten her until she was injured, he broke her hand. In addition, this happened here in the UK (Akram, single, 36 years).*

*I cannot remember any severe physical violence for any women in my family, but most of them suffer from verbal and emotional abuse. Three of my sister graduated from university but none of them works, because their husbands do not want them to work. In addition, no one sees this as DVAW as long as the husband could afford to support them financially (Saeed, married, aged 41 years).*

The above statements were made by some men in the sample who acknowledged knowing a woman who suffered from domestic violence. Even when men were aware of what they initially perceived as domestic violence and mentioned family members who had experienced acts of domestic violence; however, they in some cases justified this abuse. For instance, when Akram (a single, aged 33 years and less-educated) mentioned a case of violence he knew, he also justified violence as a necessity when women do not wear appropriate Muslim clothing. He believed that women should be 'corrected' when they do not follow the Islamic rules. This perception was also stated by Ali; another less-educated male. Ali (married and aged 37 years) also justified DVAW and said that men had rights of authority and control over women. Hence, as mentioned previously, some men with lower levels of education in this study were more likely to endorse beliefs regarding DVAW and to justify it. There was support by less-educated men, regardless of the amount of time, they had spent in the UK, for the interpretation of domestic violence being a means for men to express themselves and achieve dominance.

Highly-educated men like less-educated men in this sample did not give much information with regard to types of violence during the interviews. For example, Ahmed, (married, aged 43, with a very high level of education) showed interest in the topic and was knowledgeable about the subject in general. However, when I asked him *'could you give details about the abused women experience such as how many times they have abused or the type of beating they had?'* his response was to talk about DVAW and the experience in general terms.

Saeed, also had a high level of education, was aged 41 years, married and had been in the UK for two years. He was one of those men who were knowledgeable about DVAW; however, neither did he offer much information about the women he knew who had suffered physical violence. When asked if he was aware of any Libyan suffering from violence in the UK, his response was negative. He simply said that he had not been long in the UK was not very involved in the Libyan community in the UK. Additionally, men might tend to forget incidences of violence, which occurred to women they knew as the experience happened a long time ago. It could also be that some abused women considered beating to be a normal part of marriage, or because women's experiences were frequently ignored or misunderstood by men as women rarely reported violence or spoke about it. Kelly (1988) discussed the under-reporting of abuse as being due either to forgetfulness, or minimisation, both of which are linked to a lack of definitions. Both of these may be used as coping strategies.

### **7.3 Factors Preventing Women from Leaving a Violent Relationship**

A theme that emerged in the study concerned why women may remain within violent relationships. Since a number of different terms have been used to identify acts of DVAW

and various abusers, it should be mentioned that the term `violent relationship` was applied to identify cases of DVAW within marriage (Walklate, 2013), rather than (for instance) from brother to sister or father to daughter. Women in Libyan communities are not expected to leave the family home until they get married and being abused by the father or the brother is not seen as justification for leaving home.

The unequal distribution of control and management of economic resources has an effect on women in abusive relationships. Men's control over financial resources is sometimes used as a form of abuse in itself, forcing women to live in a position of economic dependence, and the lack of financial independence blocks women from leaving violent relationships (Agarwal and Panda, 2007). One of the most common questions women face is, `Why do women stay in abusive relationships?' Which perhaps implies that the women were at fault. Hoff (1990) found that cultural values about `the family`, the economic reality of women's lives, and the threat of violence on leaving all serve to trap women in violent situations.

The participants discussed their opinions about what makes women stay in a violent relationship. They gave various responses, reflecting the complexity of issues. Some believed that women who are battered stay with violent husbands, because of social pressure. Women in Libya are not necessarily free to leave their husbands at any time; they have social barriers and their family responsibilities and they themselves sometimes refuse to lose their marriages. Marriage is more important than work for many women and satisfies social norms. Some women felt that being in a violent relationship was better than being without marriage at all and this reflected the importance society places on marriage for women. The social message to women is that their own self-worth is defined by their success at maintaining marriage,

even if it is violent and at great personal cost (Greene and Chadwick, 1991). Consequently, ending such a relationship is not easy. Likewise, some abused women hope that the husband might change; they just need to be patient. In the discussion below, a number of instances are cited where some women in the sample used tradition and religion in order to justify their unwillingness to leave violent men, thereby making it acceptable to stay in such a relationship.

Fatima, a married women aged 54 with high level of education; was rather traditional in her opinion about women and marriage. She came to the UK with her husband more than 20 years ago. She worked in the UK in Arabic schools and stated that she and her husband both believed that women were equal to men. Fatima constantly talked euphemistically in her interview. She also mentioned the *Hadith* (the Prophet Mohamed's sayings) many times as she reflected on how deeply her faith in Islam<sup>45</sup> affected her and she also strictly observed Islamic practices. From her point of view women stay in the relationship for many reasons:

*It is difficult for women to leave. I think there are many reasons, from my point of view the most important thing is the children. I think women think of their children more than they think about themselves. Also when she does not work she thinks she will be lost. And as the story goes (Aphorism) 'hell with husband rather than heaven with father'. Or 'better a shadow of a man than a wall'<sup>46</sup> (Fatima, married, aged 54 years).*

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<sup>45</sup> All of the respondents in this study were Muslim (Mainly all Libyans adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam). Although I did not ask the interviewees directly how strictly, they observed Islamic practices this often emerged during discussions.

<sup>46</sup> [This means it is better to be married rather than be a single]

Fatima mentioned the importance of marriage in Libyan society by citing aphorisms, which reflected the importance of marriage and family as historically rooted in Arab society (See also Barakat, 1993).

Furthermore, in Libyan culture, as in the culture of most Arabic societies, some people believe that, if a woman gets divorced society will not accept her and she will not have the opportunity to get married again. An example from the sample was Thuria, a divorced women aged 46. Although she was well-educated, she believed that if women leave their abusers, they would remain unmarried. They will be divorced and society rejects that. When a woman gets a divorce, she may not marry again, as men are more likely to wish for young girls who have not been married before. Thuria stated that, when she got divorced, she was still in her 30s with five children, and no one wanted to marry her as she was divorced and had so many children. She said:

*I think women believe that is their destiny and nothing will happen if she left this relationship. If a woman believes like this, she would not change at all. This is in personal level, because many women cannot be a leader for change. If the women is strong enough they won't stay in the sake for the children or for the family. They would not care about anything. Some women make justifications just to stay. I knew I would remain unmarried... there is no man would accept marrying a divorced women with five children. If a woman is exposed to being beaten by her husband, everybody stands against her. Even my parents when I was in back home told me that this is my house and this my life. They advised me to be patient and bear the violence. They said here is no justification for leaving the marital house. All the time they say; if my husband divorced me, no other man would look at me and marry me again (Thuria, divorced, aged 46 years).*

Thuria was not the only woman who believed that women would remain unmarried when they got divorced; other divorced women in the sample mentioned that they had been “patient” and tolerant with their ex-husbands for two main reasons; the first was for the sake of their



children. The second as mentioned, was the stereotype of the divorced woman being 'a failure'. Cultural expectations may also inhibit women from leaving their abusers, as it would bring 'shame' upon the victim and the family. Strict gender-role expectations may lead women to believe that they do not have the right to disobey their husbands and that once a woman is married she must stay and tolerate the abuse, which legitimises violence. Mayada, another divorced women in the sample, (45 years, low level of education) said that she had tried to avoid divorce for a long time. She said Islam emphasises that women have to obey their husband and adjust to their expectations, so she was patient and was content. However, after migration and being economically independent, with some encouragement from the family she asked her ex-husband for a divorce. She said:

*The first time when I stayed with him my concern was my children; I am a Muslim and should offer my husband his rights. The first right was staying at home, it was my responsibility to keep my family together, I was hoping he might change. However, after I got my own house in the UK and the help I got for my daughter I realised I have to stop this. It does not matter if I stayed unmarried because I got from life all what I want. My children are now everything in my life and I do not care about men more (Mayada, divorced, aged 45 years).*

Mayada equated staying within a violent relationship and obeying her husband as a way as being faithful to Islamic rules. Cultural scripts of the religious doctrines may encourage women to try to resolve the struggles of their relationship, as divorce is seen as unacceptable under religious and cultural values. However, often women wanted to point out that there was no conflict between being a devout Muslim and leaving their abuser and that religion and tradition should not be confused. Nevertheless, for some women, their spirituality may hinder their abilities to leave. Another example from the sample was Basma, a married middle-aged woman with little formal education. Basma explained that women should be persevering and

try to change their husbands if they can, she strongly believed that divorce is a stigma and is the final option in Islamic perspective. Basma admitted she faces emotional violence and she revealed why she could not leave her husband. She said:

*I can manage myself financially, also my children. But I have a family who would not accept that, no woman in my family get divorced. And if every woman whose husband shouted at her left him; no women would remain married (Basma, married, aged 44 years).*

Shame or guilt about violence or abuse itself may represent another reason why abused women do not gain adequate social support. This may indirectly influence their inability to leave their abusers (Levendosky *et al.*, 2004). This shame may come from a lack of public awareness about the causes and effects of domestic violence (Matthews, 2004, Tumer, 2002, Sullivan, 1994). For example, in terms of social norms and the dominance of the family, Hanan a married woman (aged 48 years, high educational level) specified that:

*Many women are unable to leave their abusers. Once he hits her, he will always hit repeatedly her. Each time it gets worse. She has to leave before she dies. I am personally strictly opposed to any form of violence against any member of any relationship and do not accept to be in this relationship. Some abused women stay with their abusers they think this is for their children, when actually they are hurting them when they stay. Children learn what they see, they become violent. In addition, women think he will change and she does not want to face her family if she get divorced (Hanan, married, aged 48 years).*

Often divorced women, who said that they had experienced domestic violence at the hands of their husbands, felt that women do not leave a violent relationship because of their own failings. They declared that some women are weak in a society which believes that it is shameful for woman to revolt against the reality in which she lives and indicates a personality defect. Some women believed that this was their reality and destiny, and they have accepted that, consequently they could not change their lives. Nasreen (divorced and less-educated,

aged 38 years) linked this to women's lack of economic independence and reliance on men.

Nasreen explained that:

*Firstly, I was afraid from my family and from the society and how they will look at me. I knew I will be blamed for being divorced and this what happened, my mother was the first person against me getting a divorce. Our society refuses talk about violence, it is a taboo. Secondly, I did not work at that time and I could not leave him as I depended on him completely.... Women in Libya generally are weak and because of that, they continue to tolerate domestic violence and stay in violent relationships (Nasreen, divorced, aged 38 years).*

Nasreen stayed in a violent relationship for more than eight years; she said that it was hard for her to leave as she did not have any family support after migration and she was not financially independent. Women who have limited support from friends, family, or their communities may find it more difficult to leave abusive relationships (Sullivan et.al, 1994). Bowker (1983) mentioned that women who have received help and support from family and friends declared it as being very important in allowing them to leave their abusers. Close friends and family can provide emotional support in stressful times, and can also provide safe places for women and children to stay, store belongings, and be available to assist abused women in rebuilding their lives after leaving an abuser (Bowker, 1983). Nasreen mentioned that she did not have sufficient educational qualifications and fluency in English to obtain a job in the UK: her husband did not allow her to learn English or to leave home alone. Educational qualifications and fluency in English were important in influencing women's opportunities to work in the UK and to be independent. Most of the Libyan women who had come to the UK for the sake of marriage could not speak English and only one women of the 23 women interviewed could speak fluent English. Thus, these women could not gain self-esteem, as Nassren stated. These results are similar to the hypothesis proposed by Hotaling

(1988), arguing that abused women tend to assign responsibility to the `situation`, since directly blaming partners would not let them justify why they continue to stay living with an abusive partner.

Some men in the sample stated their thoughts and beliefs on this theme. Most agreed that there is a fear of a society that rejects divorced women because the idea that divorce will destroy the family institution. Ahmed, a married and well-educated man, aged 43, believed that women accepted violence as they were afraid of the social stigma and that they will be blamed for being unsuccessful in the relationship. He specified that:

*Some women stay because they believe that most people in our society will blame them for the violence. I think they are forced to stay because they can't afford financially to live by themselves. Many women put up with domestic violence for years. Sometimes it is because they feel it is normal, or they excuse it because of other problems such as alcohol or relationship problems. Moreover, they just stay because they do not feel it a problematic at all. She herself gives men the right to beat her and agrees about that when she just keeps silent (Ahmed, married, aged 43 years).*

For Ibrahim (a married male aged 49 years and with high educational level) the way in which women were brought up made them weak, obedient, and very reliant on men. He emphasised that women hide DVAW in the first place and keep it secret, and it is not accepted that women leave the abuser. Ibrahim stated that:

*Unfortunately, many women hide violence they suffer. The parents of some women do not claim the rights of their daughter, who are battered or behaves towards continuous insult received. Women need a man to protect them, not to beat them as they have less power than them. Most of whom were brought up and grown up in an environment, which demeans women. In this environment girls arise where they have seen women they know (grandmother to her mother, her sisters) are beaten with or without cause. So when their husbands beat them would they object or protest?! (Ibrahim, married, aged 49 years).*

The most important factor cited by most of the men in the sample as a reason for staying in violent relationships was having children. In Libya, according to the law, the mother has custody of daughters until they marry and of sons until they reach puberty. A father must provide financial support to his children unless they have private assets. Although the law favours granting custody to mothers, traditional norms in Libya favour the father; judges tend to use their discretion to enforce the latter, especially if the mother is not Libyan (Pargeter, 2010).

Salber and Taliaferro argues that abusive husbands might use the children to force their wives into staying in the relationship. The abuser may threaten to harm the children, take them away, or physically hurt the children in front of their mother in order to maintain control. The male participants mentioned economic dependence could be strengthened by the presence of children. Together, these were a crucial reason for staying in a violent relationship. If women were more independent and had their own basic salary, it would bring positive results as regards their quality of life, and that of their families. This could help to protect them from abuse and all forms of violence.

Bomstein (2006) pointed out that it is important to realise that the links between economic dependence and abuse are bi-directional. High economic dependence may lead some women to tolerate physical abuse, but repeated abuse may also lead to economic dependence. Generally, men in the sample believed that women should stay at home to raise children. Women usually do not go out to work, and Libyans generally do not speak of the right to work, travel, or divorce. Women do not have the right to claim the rights and self-sufficiency offered to them (Pargeter, 2010). The economic dimension involved in DVAW may also be

supported by the marital dependency theory, which argued that employed women are less economically dependent on their partners and are therefore, less likely to tolerate abuse (Kalmuss and Straus, 1990).

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the results from both the survey sample and the semi-structured interviews, to explore indications about the prevalence of DVAW amongst Libyan migrants. The survey showed that the perceptions of a particular group of participants indicated that DVAW is a widespread phenomenon within Libyan communities. The qualitative analysis offers the conclusion that different forms of DVAW, mainly emotional and verbal abuse, are common in Libyan communities. It was also indicated that physical violence was not frequently mentioned. The results of the semi-structured interviews indicated that five out of 13 women interviewed said they were subjected to physical abuse: these were divorced women. Nearly all the divorced women in the semi-structured interview sample said they had been victims of physical violence by their ex-partner, and they had experienced violence in both Libya and in the UK. According to the US Department of Justice (1998), women who are divorced or separated are 14 times more likely to report being the victim of violence by a spouse or ex-spouse. Separated and divorced women make up 10% of American women, yet they report 75% of intimate partner violence (US Department of Justice, 1998). McCue (2008) mentioned that women who are separated or divorced are more likely to report violence from their partner, when in fact it was likely to have occurred while they were married as well.

As this remains a sensitive subject, married women may not have wished to reveal that they had experienced violence for various reasons; they may have considered the experience too intimate an issue to reveal or discuss with a relative stranger, or may have felt embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty about the situation. It is to be noted, however, that almost all of the participants, from different backgrounds and different levels of education, acknowledged that they `knew a woman` who had experienced violence. In these instances, women may or may not have been referring to themselves indirectly. This also supports the results from the survey, as mentioned above (Lincoln and Denzin, 2003).

The qualitative analysis also explored the factors preventing women from leaving a violent relationship. Such factors included social pressure; women facing social barriers and family responsibilities; worries about their children, financial hardship and community disapproval.

The final data analysis chapter turns to discussion of the influence of migration on attitudes towards DVAW.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Migration and Attitudes towards Domestic Violence against Women**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the issues of domestic violence against women (DVAW) relating to immigration of Libyan families to the UK. It discusses how migration might have influenced their attitudes towards DVAW, exploring which factors related to migration could impact attitudes to DVAW, based on experiences of residence in different countries. The quantitative and qualitative sample responses with regard to the impact of migration on the participants will be discussed. Respondents' views and perceptions of DVAW within Libya itself will be discussed, based on the quantitative analysis. Later discussion of qualitative data will provide a comparison of DVAW in both Libya and the UK.

#### **8.2 Quantitative Analysis of the Influences of Migration on Views about DVAW**

This section discusses the findings from the survey regarding to the impact of migration. The participants in the survey sample were asked two questions regarding their experience of residence in the UK and how this might affect their attitudes towards DVAW. These questions were: 'What is the difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in dealing with women and the topic of DVAW'? And 'Do you think that the culture of British society has made a difference for Libyan men in dealing with women?' The participants' answers varied; the results are presented in Table 8.1 below.



**Table 8.1**  
**The difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW**

The difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW	Yes (%)		No (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Do you think there is a difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW?	70.1%	68.5%	28.4%	31.5%
Do you think that the culture of British society has made difference to Libyan men's attitudes towards women?	52.2%	61.1%	47.8%	38.9%
The responses Don't know were re-coded as missing data				

The findings in Table 8.1 above show that approximately 69% of the sample believed that there was a difference between the culture of British society and Libyan in terms of DVAW. Men showed a greater tendency than women did to agree, around 70% of men believing this, as did approximately 62% of women. By contrast, 28% of men and 31% of women did not concur with this statement. More than half of the sample believed that British culture has influenced men's attitudes; however, more women believed this (61%), than did men (52% of men) this meant that nearly half of men felt attitudes had not altered in Britain.

I will discuss here the results from cross-tabulation of answers to the above questions compared with the respondents' gender and educational levels. The results in Table 8.2 below illustrate that approximately 75% of highly-educated participants thought that the culture of British society was different to that of Libya in terms of DVAW and approximately 63% of less-educated participants thought this. Nearly 80% of highly-educated women and 70% of highly-educated men felt that there was a difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW. Nonetheless, less-educated men tended to believe this more than less-educated women, as approximately 71% of them concurred, whereas approximately 61% of less-educated women believed this.

In terms of questioning whether the culture of British society has made difference to Libyan men's attitudes towards women; the findings show that a high percentage (approximately 62%) of less-educated participants said that staying in the UK had influenced men's attitudes towards DVAW. Whilst 36% of less-educated participants responded 'no' to the question. Less-educated women tended to believe, more than less-educated men, that British culture has influenced male attitudes towards DVAW, since 53% of less-educated women answered 'yes' and only 52% of less-educated men answered 'yes'.

On the other hand, the results indicated that approximately half (52%) of highly-educated participants said, the UK had influenced men's attitudes towards DVAW. This was equal for well-educated women and men (See Table 8.2 below).

The results of Chi Square tests ( $\chi^2 = 24.245$  and  $p = .019$ ) indicate that there was a statistically significant association between level of education and the statement: 'the culture of British society is different from that of Libya in terms of DVAW'. Educational level was also linked to the statement 'staying in the UK had impacted on views about DVAW', ( $\chi^2 = 24.045$  and  $p = .020$ ). The results from the Chi square tests, however, indicate that there was no significant association between other socio-demographic factors with the two sub-questions mentioned above.

**Table 8.2**  
**Cross-tabulation: Gender of respondent and educational level compared with the influences of migration**

Educational level				Is there a different between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW?			Has staying in the UK affected men views about DVAW?		
				Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
<b>Below degree level</b>	Gender	male	Count	12	5	17	9	8	17
			%	70.6%	29.4%	100%	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	female	Count	39	25	64	43	21	64	
		%	60.9%	39.1%	100%	67.2%	32.8%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	51	30	81	52	29	81	
		%	63.0%	37.0%	100%	64.2%	35.8%	100.0%	
<b>BA degree and above</b>	Gender	male	Count	35	14	50	26	24	50
			%	70.0%	28.0%	100%	52.0%	48.0%	100.0%
	female	Count	35	9	44	23	21	44	
		%	79.5%	20.5%	100%	52.3%	47.7%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	70	23	94	49	45	94	
		%	74.5%	24.5%	100%	52.1%	47.9%	100.0%	
<b>Total</b>	Gender	male	Count	47	19	67	35	32	67
			%	70.0%	28.4%	100%	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
	female	Count	74	34	100	66	42	108	
		%	68.5%	31.5%	100%	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%	
	Total	Count	121	53	175	101	74	175	
		%	69.1%	30.3%	100%	57.7%	42.3%	100.0%	

***Discussion of the quantitative analysis***

The main topic discussed in this section was the influence of migration on Libyans and how views about women and gender relations might have altered in the UK. The results obtained from the survey illustrated that a high percentage of the sample believed that there were differences between the culture of British and Libyan society regarding men's dealings with women in the private sphere. There existed some differences between men and women's views in this regard. Men, more than women, said that there were substantial differences between Libyan and the British culture in terms of DVAW. Nonetheless, in response to another question about whether culture in the UK had an impact on Libyan men's attitudes, the results of the survey indicated that women agreed more than men that life in the UK had impacted Libyan men in dealing with women. In addition, about half of men in the sample did not agree about this.

The survey asked respondents how long they had lived in the UK. As discussed previously, the results obtained from the survey did not show any significant association between attitudes towards DVAW with the socio-demographic variable 'length of residence in the UK'. This contradicted the initial assumption and expectation that this variable would have [statistically] an important influence on the migrant participants' perception of DVAW. The tests carried out did not reveal any statically significant association between this variable and any of the sub-questions or the indices created. Nevertheless, women and men's views and accounts provided some indications that this variable or factor would perhaps have an important influence on perceptions about DVAW

The analysis of the semi-structured interviewed below will continue discussion of these issues.

### **8.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Influences of Migration on Views about DVAW**

The participants were asked whether their experiences of living in the UK had changed in terms of their opinions on the subject of domestic violence and women's status. Different and contradictory responses emerged. The participants' responses were divided, on the one hand, most of the participants (14 of 20) admitted that the culture in the UK had had a clear impact on them, and their attitudes had changed. They stated that living in another environment could help to expand knowledge about violence. On the other hand, several of the participants felt that life in the UK had not made any difference to them. Tables 8.3 and 8.4 below show that there is a clear difference between men and women's responses to this/these questions in the semi-structured interviews. Four out of seven men said that life in Britain had not changed their views about DVAW, however, only two out of 13 (or 20%) of women said that their views had not altered. This is a large difference and notable even within a small sample.

**Table 8.3**  
**Women's perceptions of whether life in UK had altered views about DVAW**

Demographics of informants				Opinion about whether life in UK has altered views about DVAW
Pseudonym	Age	Educational level	Length of stay in UK (years)	
Ibtesam	31	BA	2	No, at all.
Nasreen	38	Secondary school	12	Yes a lot
Faiza	42	Primary school	9	Yes it has changed
Mayada	45	Primary school	12	No, it has not
Thuria	46	BA	18	Has changed and influenced her.
Aisha	52	BA	21	Yes it has changed
Huda	34	Secondary school	2	Yes it has
Najah	36	Secondary school	20	Yes it has
Karima	38	Secondary school	17	Yes, and Libyans' mentality has changed here
Basma	44	Secondary school	11	Yes it has, but she thinks that it did not influence the Libyan men
Salma	45	BA	12	Yes, but she thinks Libyan men's mentality here still the same nothing changed
Hanan	48	BA	24	Yes a lot
Fatima	54	BA	20	Yes it has.

**Table 8.4**  
**Men's perceptions of whether life in UK had altered views about DVAW**

Demographics of informants				Opinion about whether life in UK has altered views about DVAW
Pseudonym	Age	Educational level	Length of stay in UK in years	
Hamdi	33	MA	7	Yes, it has changed.
Samir	34	secondary school	4	He did not think the British culture would change him
Akram	36	secondary school	8	Yes in some aspects
Ali	37	secondary school	17	Yes, it has changed a lot.
Saeed	41	BA	2	No it has not
Ahmed	43	PhD	5	No, it has not
Ibrahim	49	BA	33	No it has not

Lengthy residence in the UK could be one of the factors that made some men feel that life in the UK had altered their views about DVAW. Most of the men who felt that life in the UK had not changed them had been in Britain for fewer than 5 years, apart from Ibrahim. Ibrahim had been in the UK for more than 33 years; however, he said that the UK culture did not influence his opinions about DVAW. He said:

*The culture of the British society did not influence my attitudes. I lived in a good family, my father dealt with women with respect. I never looked at women as less important; I believed women are equal with men. But I think in Libya although the constitution provides for the rights guaranteed by Islam for women, there is still low status of women, similar to the historical place during previous eras ... (Ibrahim, married, aged 49).*

Staying in the UK had not influenced Ibrahim's regarding DVAW. He said he would be violent with a woman in any case. Ibrahim, married to an Englishwoman, understood the difference between Libyan and British culture from different angles, including how the law is set out and enforced in the UK. He was aware of how women could obtain their rights in the UK. However, Ibrahim's awareness itself could have been influenced by having spent a long time in the UK. Therefore, it could be suggested that, although some men in this research denied that they had changed their attitudes regarding DVAW, the attitudes which emerged in the interviews could indicate the opposite to what they suggested.

Ahmed's response was similar to that of Ibrahim's. Ahmed (married, aged 43 years, of a high educational level) believed that British culture had not affected him and he stated that he had always hold positive attitudes towards women and encouraged them to obtain their rights. He said:

*Because throughout the whole of my life I never hit my wife and I believe that women should be the same as the man. She should study and work (Ahmed, married, aged 43 years).*

Ahmed had resided for a shorter period of time in the UK than Ibrahim, for only five years, however his high level of education could have influenced his attitudes towards DVAW more than the length of time he had been resident in the UK.

DVAW is not connected with specific cultures or societies [as discussed in Chapter 3]. Some of the participants believed that in Libyan society people should understand DVAW, learn from British culture and use the Western experience in terms of the law and women's rights to tackle violence within Libyan society. Interestingly, some men with low education levels interviewed admitted that British culture had affected them. For instance, Ali (married; less-educated) had lived for 17 years in the UK. He admitted that he has changed his attitudes towards women. Ali explained:

*I never hit my wife and I believe that women should be equal to men. They have the right to work to go out and no one has right beat them. But I do not think that all men living here, have changed. I know many of my friends in the UK do not allow their wives to go out even to pick up the children from school (Ali, married, aged 37 years).*

The culture of the UK has therefore made an impact on some Libyan men in the sample. They felt that men in the UK dealt with women differently. Some men believed that women should obtain their social rights and should not be beaten by anyone or for any reason. Although some men in the sample admitted that they have changed their attitudes towards DVAW, they still opposed reporting violence as they believed support from the family should be enough to protect abused women.

There was a difference between men and women's responses to the impact of British culture on attitudes in terms of DVAW. As mentioned previously, just two out of 13 women said that life in Britain had not changed their views. The finding indicated that there were reasons, which might account for the different responses. For some participants, the length of stay in the UK was a factor. For instance, as regards Ibtesam (single and aged 31 years, high educational level) that was the case. She said that the culture of Britain had not changed her



attitudes towards DVAW, as she came to the UK recently, and did not know much about women and domestic violence in the UK. She said:

*I have been in this country for just two years and I cannot understand this culture in such a short time. And of course it would not affect me and my thinking also my lifestyle in general (Ibtesam, single, aged 31 years).*

Among the Libyan community in the UK, traditional values regarding marriage, sex-role expectations, and cultural and religious beliefs influence women's attitudes towards DVAW and their help-seeking behaviour. According to Davis, *et al.* (2001) cultural differences were reported as being one of the most frequently mentioned barriers faced by immigrants in domestic violence situations. In this regard, it can be suggested that some variables were linked to the culture and religion. Although some women in the sample acknowledged that women enjoyed more rights in the West, some religious women did not want their own societies to adopt Western values. For example, Mayada (aged 45 years, less-educated and living in the UK for 12 years) said that the culture of the UK had not changed her, because she adhered strictly to the Islamic religious ethos and wanted to raise her children in strict Islamic ways. She initially refused to change her ideas and did not want the culture of British society to influence her. She stated that:

*The culture of the English society did not change my views concerning the subject of violence and I refuse to change my children or myself. However, my children did not go to an English school; instead, they go to an Arabic school because I do not want to change their customs and habits as a result of being different from others (Mayada, divorced, aged 45 years).*

Mayada associated only with Muslim people who followed Islamic practices strictly. However, although Mayada could not speak English, she contacted the government to gain asylum seeker status, as well as the local council for financial assistance as she did not work.

Mayada also sought emotional support from her GP since she had suffered from depression for a long time. This was a result of emotional violence she faced from her ex-husband, and the pressure of raising her children on her own in the UK. Language barrier impact migrant women, as they do not know their legal options or rights, and if they do manage to call someone for help; there is a chance that no one will be able to understand them (Huisman, 1996; Mehotra, 1999; Morash *et al.*, 2000; Supriya, 1996). Mayada mentioned that she always needed an interpreter when she contacted the Council, or the staff at her daughter's school. She tried to learn some English to cope in the UK but she did not manage to attain a satisfactory level, due to her emotional condition and the limited time she had. Mayada who had isolated from her family and had little social interaction in the UK, had to know her rights, and she did practice them as a British resident. She depended on herself when her children were young and wanted to keep to traditional/religious Libyan norms, but she had to go to the local council and the GP to seek help for her disabled daughter. Thus, she has been proactive, not 'traditional', when in need of assistance for her family, and she wanted to find explanations and to express her suffering. She was aware of the role of health care professionals in the UK, in helping her address her feelings.

In order to cope with the violence, women may apply various strategies, and some of them seek help from the host country's formal care-providing institutions (Abu-Ras, 2003). Abused migrant women may hold different opinions on the circumstances in which they believe it is acceptable for their spouses to enact physical or emotional violence against them. Migrant victims of violence may experience additional difficulties, which may be compounded by language, culture and environmental differences, leaving them feeling isolated and vulnerable

(McCue, 2008; Matthews, 2004). These women use the services available to them in part because their help-seeking behaviour differs from that of the host culture (Abu-Ras, 2003).

It can be suggested that some Libyan migrant women in this sample were more likely to report violence than women in Libya. Some of the women in this sample had depended on the law in the UK when they obtained their divorces. A larger proportion of women reported seeking help from at least one of the resources available in the UK, including those women faced with barriers such as lack of language skills. Many migrant women have insufficient knowledge of the language spoken in the host country. This may affect their ability to seek help, and their knowledge of local laws and services designed especially for victims of domestic abuse. Limited knowledge of the language of the country of residence may also hinder effective communication with law enforcement agents and court personnel, especially because interpreters are rarely readily available. Consequently, inability to communicate with court personnel can make the process of seeking help from the legal system even more difficult for migrant victims of domestic violence. Abu-Ras (2003) also indicated that immigrant women in the area she studied (Detroit/USA) often could not speak English, which is a major barrier to accessing help. She also mentioned that this conforms with cultural norms which may include a reluctance to access social and health services for problems considered personal or family based (Abu-Ras, 2003). Some men may isolate women by limiting their contact with family and prohibiting friendships, or prevent them from working. They might limit their immigrant partners' ability to function by not allowing them to learn the language of the host country, thereby increasing women's dependence on these men. Furthermore, some husbands demean women because of their lack of, (or limited), language skills, and their lower levels

of acculturation, education, or work skills. Such behaviour fosters women's insecurities about their ability to function in the new society without their spouses (Raj and Silverman, 2002).

Several women in this sample said that the UK's culture had influenced their attitudes towards DVAW. For example, Aisha (a divorced, well-educated woman, aged 52 years) who had been in the UK for 21 years, admitted that UK culture had had a great impact on her, not just in her perceptions and attitudes, but also on her experience, in that she could contact the police and change her life. She stated that:

*I worked in Libya and I am working here. I can see how the law is useful to protect women. I told you if I were in Libya, I would not go to the police or the court. Nevertheless, because I am here I went to the police when my ex-husband did beat me, and I requested divorce, I got divorced in the UK. Staying here in this country helped me a lot, I had the strength to stop the violence I faced for more than 16 years (Aisha, divorced, aged 52 years).*

Aisha was the only woman in the sample who could speak fluent English and the only woman who worked in a full-time paid job in the UK workforce. Going to the police to complain about domestic violence was not culturally acceptable for women in Libya nor was it so amongst the Libyan community in the UK. Going to the police was a hard decision to take for Aisha. She mentioned during the interview, that she would have not been able to take this decision if she had been in Libya.

Although many men in the sample showed a tendency to support women and women's rights, some men with low educational levels considered abused women seeking help from the police as unacceptable. Akram (single, aged 36 and who had been in the UK for 8 years) considered the idea of women going to the police to report violence as a sign that Libyan women had been affected by British culture. From his perspective, contacting the police is not a Libyan

norm. Akram contradicted himself, as earlier in the interview he had said that his attitudes had been changed by British culture. He said:

*Women should not contact police when they are in a violent relationship. Libyan women cannot contact police; women should speak to their father or brother to help them before contacting the police. It is stigma and scandal for women to go to the police and it means the end of the marriage. Libyan women do in the UK as they change their values, they become like English, they forget their own their family (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

Akram was drawing attention to the cultural differences between Libyan society and that of the UK. In his opinion, women must act according to expectations comparable with Libyan society. Libyan woman cannot live independently and not be as freely able as women in the UK to contact any sort of authority to gain help. Women should, he thought seek support from a man in the family such as a brother or father.

Because of the complex picture of the social reality of gender relations in Libya, in which the social norms and the authority is continuously challenged by modernity and popular culture, it is not acceptable, in this culture for women to contact the police. Some Libyan men still exhibit contradictions in relation to going to police to report violence. Although they believed they had become westernised and they believed in equality and women's rights, when it came to reporting violence by contacting the police and the court, they thought and acted traditionally. Abu-Ras (2003) indicated that some migrant women resist intervention by police, social welfare agencies and other government agencies in issues involving domestic violence. The feelings of shame of Arab women and their families with regard to family breakup and divorce forces them to keep such problems private, effectively blocking efforts by service providers to offer help in relation to domestic violence.

Although some women did not obtain their divorces in the UK, they could obtain benefits after divorce. An example was Nasreen, who talked about how staying in the UK had affected her. After she got divorced, her family asked her to give custody of her son to her ex-husband (the father). Just after the divorce was finalised, Nasreen was isolated with her husband and she wore the *niqab* as her ex-husband forced her to wear it. She was not able to speak English and did not know how to contact the police in the UK. Nasreen slowly became aware of how to live on her own in the UK. She learnt that in the UK whatever, a person's gender, religion or colour may be, he/she is regarded as a human being, with rights and duties and she has to accept this. With the help of her friend, she was able to protect herself and her son by contacting the police in the UK (Nasreen attained British resident status after her ex-husband received asylum seeker status). Nasreen said that she contacted the police in the UK to protect herself and her son, as her ex-husband tried to force her to remain in Libya not to return to the UK even though she had, by then, become a British resident.

Some married women in the sample also admitted that staying in the UK affected their attitudes to life from many angles. For instance, Hanan was a 48-year-old well-educated married woman, and had been in the UK for 24 years. Hanan's friends advised her to contact a lawyer to obtain a divorce due to the emotional abuse she suffered. Hanan admitted that:

*My views have changed and life in the UK influenced me. I thought of divorce but I also thought of my children, who will bring those children up. I am here only for my children. However, the problem is that my husband was not influenced by the culture of British society. He refuses to change, his life is bound up with his Libyan friends and being in Libya a lot made him pure traditional Libyan. My older daughter is prohibited from anything, even telephoning in order not to deviate, according to him (Hanan, married, aged 48 years).*

Like Hanan, Basma, another married woman in the sample, stressed that UK culture had changed her attitudes towards domestic violence, but that her husband had not changed even slightly. However, Basma was not highly-educated and the time she had lived in Britain was less than Hanan's. She stated that:

*Yes, I changed because of this culture a lot, for example. I do not beat my children not because I am afraid of the law but I believe it is not a good way to bring them up. I learned that women could speak out and say no to violence; also I start to feel the need for good law in Libya to protect women from violence. But my husband has not changed at all, he deals with us as any typical Libyan man. I know he does not mind me to go out or drive. But he is very strict with the girls, he shouts at them. And he still believes boys have the right to do everything but girls should be secluded and should not allowed to go out their own (Basma, married, aged 44 years).*

When Libyan families migrate to other countries, they may try to retain their values and norms. As in their home country, husbands may continue to expect a subservient role after migration. Restrictive and passive gender roles may more likely be transmitted and adhered to by the families with a lower level of education or conservative orientations (Abraham 1998); therefore, many men could not change their attitudes towards women even if they spent a long time in the UK. As was mentioned by some women in the sample, even if they changed their views about gender roles, their husbands refused to change. It was noticeable that some migrants reserved their original family values and norms although they had spent a long time in the UK (see Chapter 9 for discussion).

In next section, the views on DVAW in Libya will be discussed based on the quantitative analysis. Later discussion of qualitative data will proved an evaluation of DVAW in both Libya and the UK.

#### 8.4 Quantitative Analysis Views on DVAW in Libya: Laws, Policies towards DVAW, and Social Changes in Libya

This section discusses perceptions of the issue of DVAW within Libya itself based on the quantitative analysis, for instance, awareness of laws and policies and social changes in Libyan society. It was stated in Chapter 3 that no law in Libya exists to address gender violence. Participants in the survey sample were asked a set of sub-questions about these issues (see Table 8.5 for these sub-questions). The participants' responses to this for this scale are presented in Table 8.5 below. An index/scale for 'laws, policies towards DVAW, and of social changes in Libya' including the sub-questions could not be created; a *Cronbach's alpha* of 0.406, indicated a low level of internal consistency for this scale.

**Table 8.5**  
**Laws, policies towards DVAW, and social changes in Libya**

Laws, policies towards DVAW, and social changes in Libya	Yes (%)		No (%)		Sometimes (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Are you aware of any law against domestic violence in Libya?	17.9	10.2	82.1	89.8	0.0	0.0
Would you encourage Libyan women to speak out about violence against them?	79.1	68.5	20.9	31.5	0.0	0.0
Do you think Libyan women should fight for their rights?	82.1	81.5	17.9	18.5	0.0	0.0
Do you think laws passed to safeguard women's rights are sufficient in Libya?	22.4	26.9	77.7	73.1	6.0	2.8
Do you think that status of Libyan women will improve in the future?	59.7	61.1	40.3	38.9	3.0	0.0
Do you feel that any changes in Libyan law are required to enable society to deal with DVAW more effectively?	77.6	77.8	7.5	10.2	14.9	12.0
Do you think that the manner of DVAW has changed recently in Libya due to women's education or employment and growing awareness of women's rights?	46.3	47.2	32.8	30.6	20.9	22.2
Would you encourage women to go to the police in Libya?	32.8	49.1	40.3	29.6	26.9	21.3
Would you encourage women to go to a lawyer in Libya?	44.8	63.9	31.3	18.5	23.9	17.6

For this question 'are you aware of any law against domestic violence in Libya', the results in Table 8.5 above revealed that 87% of the participants in the sample were aware there was



no law to deal with domestic violence in Libya. Only 13% of the sample answered affirmatively. Moreover, 75% of the participants said they did not think that the laws passed to safeguard women's rights were sufficient in Libya and approximately 78% of respondents believed that Libyan law should be changed to enable society to deal with DVAW more effectively.

In response to the question whether Libyan women in Libya should speak out about violence, 73% of participants said 'Yes', whereas 27% of the sample answered 'No'. Approximately 33% of men and 47% of women would encourage women to go to the police in Libya to report they were abused, whilst about half of women and 45% of men would encourage women to go to a lawyer in Libya. The vast majority of the respondents (approximately 82%) believed Libyan women should fight for their rights. In addition, 61% of the sample thought that the status of Libyan women would improve in the future (following the fall of the Gaddafi government). The results show that approximately 47% of men and women in the sample did not think that the level of violence towards women has changed recently in Libya due to women's education or employment and growing awareness of women's rights.

I discuss next the results of Chi square tests, which were performed to determine if there was any significant statistical association between the socio-demographic variables with each of sub-questions discussed above. The independent variable 'length of time spent in the UK' did not show any significant association with any of these sub-questions. The results which turned out to be statistically significant are presented in Table 8.6 below.

**Table 8.6**  
**Chi Square analysis for Laws, policies towards DVAW, and social changes in Libya and socio-demographic variables**

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Sig<0 .05	Phi	Odds Ratio	Confidence Interval 95%	
						Lower	Upper
Do you think Libyan women should fight for their rights?	Age	5.674	0.017	-.180	.329	.127	.848
Would you encourage Libyan women to speak out about violence against them?	Former place of residence	7.603	0.006	.208	2.61	1.306	5.247
	Educational level	3.861	0.049	-.149	.512	.261	1.003
Are you aware of any law against domestic violence in Libya?	Educational level	8.892	0.003	-.225	.205	.067	.631
Would you encourage women to go to a lawyer in Libya?	Gender	6.390	0.041	-.198	.414	.196	.874
Do you feel that any changes in Libyan law are required?	Former place of residence	8.007	0.018	.190	3.800	1.166	12.318
Do you think the laws passed to safeguard women's rights are sufficient in Libya?	Age	6.602	0.037	.194	1.960	.906	4.240

The results of Chi Square show that there was a significant statistical association between age and the statement 'women should fight for their rights', ( $\chi^2 = 5.674$  and  $p < 0.017$ ). Participants who were aged under 40 were more likely to believe that women should fight for their rights compared to those aged 40 years and above.

The results also illustrate that original place of residence in Libya was linked statistically to the statement 'women should be encouraged to speak out about violence against them', ( $\chi^2 = 7.603$ ,  $p < .006$ ). Participants who lived in large cities in Libya were more likely to encourage women to speak out, compared with those living in small towns. The educational level was also linked to this statement ( $\chi^2 = 3.861$ ,  $p < .049$ ), indicating that highly-educated participants more likely to agree that women should speak out.

There was a significant association between participants' educational level and the existence awareness of the law in Libya ( $\chi^2 = 8.892$ ,  $p < .003$ ). Participants with a university degree and above were more likely than less-educated participants to be aware of lack of a law against domestic violence in Libya. There was a significant relationship between gender and the statement 'should encourage women to speak out about violence against them' ( $\chi^2 = 6.390$ ,  $p < .041$ ). Females tended to agree that 'women should be encouraged to speak out about DVAW' more than did males.

The original place of residence in Libya was also linked to the statement 'changes in the Libyan law are required to enable society to deal with wife abuse more effectively' ( $\chi^2 = 8.007$ ,  $p < .018$ ). The Odds Ratio 3.800 IC (1.166\_\_12.318) shows that the participants who used to live in large cities were 3.8 times more likely than those who came from small towns to believe that changes in the Libyan law are required. The finding of the Chi square analysis presented in Table 8.4 above also show that there was a relationship between age and 'thinking that the laws passed to safeguard women's rights are sufficient in Libya' ( $\chi^2 = 6.602$ ,  $p < .037$ ). Participants who aged less than 40 years agreed more than other group.

### **8.5 Qualitative Analysis: Comparison of DVAW in Libya and the UK**

This section mainly discusses the views of participants in the semi-structured interview sample, about the differences between the culture of British and Libyan in terms of DVAW, and women's status. Three main points will be discussed: law, family support, and the impact of media.

### 8.5.1 Views on Women's Legal Position and Rights

The participants were asked about the difference between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of DVAW. Overall, in semi-structured interviews all the interviewees said that life in the UK was very different from life in Libya. This expectation was based upon their experience of living in the UK. The difference between these cultures was attributed to many factors such as women's rights, different laws, speaking out about DVAW, and support from the state and social work departments. Some of the participants had lived in Britain for a long time [with the mean being nearly 14 years, *SD* 8.156]; thus, they knew about the British system and understood women's rights to speak freely about violence. This had become less of a taboo or something that should be kept hidden.

Some women in the semi-structured interview sample described their lives in the UK as being less problematic than in Libya. Participants identified that men and women treated each other differently from at home. Some women believed that DVAW is dealt within the UK without the intervention of the extended family; therefore, the experience of such a problem differs from experience of DVAW in Libya. For instance, Huda (married, aged 34 years with a low level of education) had been in the UK for two years when I interviewed her. She was with her husband who was a PhD student. She stated that in the UK she lives without the stress caused by her husband's family. She had to live upstairs in her husband's family house in Libya and to share every meal with them. She did not experience any privacy when she was living in Libya, but in the UK, she felt she lives her own life. Huda's life was surrounded by family back at home. Living a new life in the UK has ambiguities. On the one hand, she is

free in her life and has her own space. On the other hand, she mentioned that she in Britain felt lonely all the time. Huda said:

*In the UK there are no problems created by other people, and no one interferes in my own life. Whatever happened between my husband and me no one would interfere. People here live quietly, peacefully and there is no interference. In Libya always there was interference in my life. The problems between us become more complicated by the interference of his family, as they lived nearby (Huda, married, aged 34 years).*

Fatima, another participant said that there is a difference between women in Muslim countries and women in British society in general. Libyan women do not have freedom and independence. She stated that:

*As Muslims, we have our own rules. Muslim women hide their beauty from strangers and women should dress modestly, not like Western women. This would keep women safer, by being wearing the 'hijab'. Women should safeguard themselves in the public from the eyes of men by not attracting them. In the UK there are many things considered as violence like early marriage, the right to have sex out of marriage. But in Libya as a Muslim nation these behaviours would not be considered as violence in terms of the culture and social moralities (Fatima, married, aged 54 years).*

In terms of DVAW, most of the participants mentioned the authority of the law in the UK. For instance, Ibrahim (married, aged 49 years and with high educational level), had been in the UK for more than 33 years. He suggested that the main difference in the UK compared to Libya was that women speak out about domestic violence. Ibrahim mentioned that woman could go straight away to the police if her partner beats her up. Even children here are advised if their parents treat them badly they can contact police for help and the police are seen as playing a positive role in protecting them. However, in Libya this never happens. Men completely control their children as well as their wives. Patriarchal culture gives the man the

right to control women and children (Monsoor, 1999) so beating them is not regarded as a problem. Ibrahim added:

*In the UK, it is completely different from Libya, starting from the woman's position and how much freedom they have. The law protects women here and essentially, it protects everyone and ensures the rights for everyone. Violence something is not hidden here women go simply to police and talk about it, then a woman has a place to go, and she will share with the man everything. Also the government helps women and offers them good social services, but in Libya it is shameful to speak about violence and women do not have much freedom like women in the West (Ibrahim, married, aged 49 years).*

Ahmed, who had been in the UK for five years (and who has a high educational level) was also aware of the importance of the law in the UK. He stated that:

*In the UK, violence is considered as a social problem. The system is very good in the UK in term of dealing with DVAW. Women in general are treated respectfully. In addition, the law is enforced, the role of family is less important. People here leave family home at 18 so their family never cares about them. Nevertheless, in Libya the family plays very important role in life. There is no law against violence in Libya, neither good strategies nor plan to tackle this problem in Libya... (Ahmed, married, aged 43 years).*

With regard to the time the participants had been resident in the UK and their educational levels, it could be suggested from the above accounts that educated men in the sample were more aware of the variation between cultures in terms of DVAW, regardless of how long they had resided in the UK. For instance, Ahmed had not spent much time in the UK but was well-educated and could speak about this issue.

Most of the participants, although from different backgrounds and educational levels and resident for different amounts of time in the UK, mentioned that there is no clear law about DVAW in Libya, nor were there any shelters for abused women. However, a few such as Basma (44 years, low level of education) believed that law against violence existed in Libya

and was covered in criminal law. Women interviewed believed that this was a very important policy issue. A number of legal change is necessary in order to halt violence. Aisha, one of the well-educated women in the sample, stated that:

*There is no law about DVAW in Libya. All that we have comes under the personal law, which concern the provisions regarding marriage and divorce. I know now there are nongovernmental women's rights groups in Libya, they try to do something for Libyan women and they start to speak about this issue... (Aisha divorced, aged 52 years).*

Ibtesam, a lawyer, single and aged 31 years, explained that in Libya when couples have a quarrel, they initially go to a 'wise'<sup>47</sup> person to resolve it. By using arbitration mechanisms, they try to avoid involving the police in their problems. Ibtesam talked about her experiences of working as a lawyer in Libya, and she mentioned many cases of abused women who came to them. She stated that women in Libya do not go to police or to a lawyers except as a last resort. Not many cases of DVAW were referred to the courts. This related to people's perceptions of the judicial system in terms of matters of shame and honour. Referral to the courts is perceived to be disgrace for the woman and the family's reputation. Ibtesam said that domestic violence cases rarely reach the courts. She added that physical violence in Libya is addressed under criminal law. She explained:

*For DVAW in particular, it should be noticed that there is no law by itself that specialised covering DVAW. Through my work in the field of law, I took notice of some cases of domestic violence and often the perpetrator was the husband or some of the relatives. As they live in a conservative society, it was very rare to find complaints against the perpetrator in order to preserve privacy. If it happens, it is immediately discontinued and ends with some agreements between the couples, but never goes to the court. In Libyan law, DVAW is not classified*

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<sup>47</sup> The main support for abused women is the family, usually the 'wise' person is the parents of the couples (the father), or the woman's elder brothers.

*according to the DVAW law itself but according to the civil law and criminal law. It is classified as law dealing with simple harm or serious harm according to the violence experienced. Women usually do not complain against the perpetrator. If they do complain, the defendant is usually not a family member... (Ibtesam, single, aged 31 years).*

Most of the participants emphasised that the UK had enacted comprehensive laws specific to DVAW. Rather optimistically they believed that violence remedies exist in the UK. They on the other hand, emphasised that women in Libya have support from their own families, as there is no specific law to protect women rights. Family intervention plays an important role in Libya more than civil law.

### **8.5.2 Family Support/Services for Abused Women in Libya**

Most of the participants in the semi-structured interviews had lived a long time in Libya, and all of the sample were the first generation migrants. Out of the 20 participants 13 had spent more than ten years in the UK, nevertheless, most mentioned that they were 'part of Libyan society' more than Britain. Therefore, their views could partly illuminate the problem of domestic violence in Libya.

The privacy and hidden nature of domestic violence was a significant impediment to identifying how widespread this phenomenon is in Libyan societies. In addition, Libyan media and scientific research institutions have not discussed the subject of domestic violence to any degree: it is marginal in their research programmes. Most of the research carried out in the field from a sociological perspective dealt with DVAW from the representations angle and marital violence in relation to the social transformations and changes in gender roles between men and women.



Thus, all of the participants in this qualitative sample believed that the support for abused women in Libya comes mainly from the family. Both men and women in this sample perceived DVAW as a 'family' issue (as discussed in Chapter 5) and any support for abused women comes only from parents and family. Some men with low educational levels thought that DVAW should continue to be kept within the family and that family support would reduce the rate and prevalence of DVAW. For example, Akram (aged 36 and single, of low educational level), mentioned that abused women could find support within the family. This support could play an important role in protecting women, and women should not 'break the rules', one of these rules which was not to go to the police. The following was Akram's account:

*There is support from family and friends. Abused women do not go to the court or to the police. The family and friends interfere to solve the problem... In Libya, police is not effective even in solving the intractable crime problems; so, what it could do concerning women. Going to the police is not a solution for women as it is considered to be shameful for them. I am against women contacting police, even in Britain because such incident will be remembered by the children as a bad experience concerning their father. Also the man will not forget that his wife called police and the result of going to police is definitely divorce... She has to take into consideration her parents and her children. Calling the police may not be the ideal solution so a woman should be patient and try to solve her problems inside the house then she has to change man in a suitable manner (Akram, single, aged 36 years).*

By contrast, Nasreen (divorced women and less-educated, aged 38 years) believed that support from the family was often absent. Nasreen said:

*There is not enough support for abused women, even the family sometimes refuses to help abused women. They just do not want their daughter to be a divorced woman, so they do not do anything for her. In addition, some people believe that it is a right for the husband to beat his wife if she did something wrong. They believe Islam gives them this right, therefore the family do not want to break the rules (Nasreen, divorced, aged 38 years).*

Some well-educated men in the sample stated that addressing this problem in a traditional society such as Libya is a challenge. Some men felt that the most effective way to fight violence requires abused women to speak out about the abuse. For instance, Ahmed a well-educated man believed that keeping DVAW hidden was the main impediment to tackling it. He felt that hiding violence allows men to continue with the abuse, leading to an increase in the rate of violence amongst Libyan women. Ahmed mentioned the need to tackle this problem, before it gets worse and leads to serious injury or death of women. Ahmed noted the difficulty in finding a solution for a problem and believed that women should speak out in public about DVAW. Women and men both have a responsibility to stop it. Men also have a crucial role to play and the government should work to change women's position and help them to gain their rights. He also added that the Ministry of Social Affairs in Libya should offer training for social and psychological specialists to work with female victims. Ahmed said:

*The support from the family may be available for abused women. Abused women can seek support from family or friends and the quality of the support they receive sometimes is helpful and sometimes is not, but the government does not do anything for women. If women do not speak out about violence and keep looking at it as a family issue, the government would not involve any law or organisation to protect women from violence (Ahmed, married, aged 43years).*

The role of the family in relation to DVAW was an important factor for the majority of the participants. Families might influence experiences of violence, directly or indirectly. This emerges from some culturally rooted norms in Libyan society. The roles of the family may have altered with migration yet the family continue to seek to live by the same codes as in Libya, although the main type of the family [for Libyans] in the UK is the nuclear family.

## 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how migration may have influenced attitudes towards DVAW. It has addressed the issue of DVAW with regard to immigration of Libyan families to the UK. Most participants believed that life in the UK was different from that of life in Libya. In addition, there was a difference in the law adopted and enforced in the UK. Most of the participants emphasised that the UK had enacted comprehensive laws specific to DVAW, which provide various types of remedy. The participants emphasised that women in Libya have some support from their own families, but there is no specific law which protects women's rights, and no social work offices exist go to, to discuss their problems. Educated men in the sample and those who had resided a long time in the UK were more aware of differences between the cultures and legal systems in terms of DVAW.

A few of the participants –mainly men- mentioned that their attitudes towards DVAW had not altered. Women's testimonies indicated that migrant women were more likely to report violence than women in Libya, and some women in this sample had accessed UK law when they obtained their divorces. Although other women in this sample did not obtain a divorce in the UK itself, they also sought help and obtained benefits from the UK after their divorces. A larger proportion of women reported seeking help from one of the sources available in the UK, including those women who were subject to barriers such as lack of language skills.

The next chapter summarises and analyses the main findings from this research.

## **Chapter 9 Discussion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings of the thesis within the context of literature and the theoretical framework. The data presented here was generated both from the survey and from semi-structured interviews, which formed the research basis of the thesis. I begin the chapter with a discussion of the primary factors that influenced Libyan migrants' attitudes towards DVAW. Following this, a discussion of the key findings will be presented; this will incorporate the theoretical framework based on Connell's model of 'gender regimes/orders', applying this to the Arab/Libyan migrant community. The final section will discuss the influence of migration and the persistence of patriarchal relations.

### **9.2 Factors Influencing Attitudes towards Domestic Violence against Women**

The survey explored migration patterns with a particular emphasis on how various individual characteristics, (gender, age, education, former place of residence, marital status, length of residence in the UK, etc.), might shape these attitudes to gender relations and DVAW. Chi Square tests were carried out to discover if there were significant statistical associations between the independent and dependent variables. This analysis revealed that some independent variables did *not* link statistically with most of the questions presented in the survey. These included marital status, employment status, and having children or not. The survey also indicated that the length of time that participants had spent in the UK did not link statistically with any of these questions, indicating that this variable did not necessarily

influence attitudes towards DVAW. This theme will be further explored in the final section. The variables `former place of residence in Libya` and `age` occasionally proved to relate significantly to several sub-questions in the survey. For instance, respondents aged under 40 were more likely to agree to a broader definition of DVAW. The former place of residence in Libya was linked to the statement `DVAW includes depriving women of money and clothing`. Participants in this sample who came from large cities were more likely to agree that `DVAW includes deprivation of money` in comparison to participants who came from small towns or villages. They were also more likely to agree with the statement: `women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence`. These findings might offer an indication that there was a difference between attitudes to DVAW between urban and rural people.

However, gender and educational level were the primary variables of importance in this survey. These were also of importance in the qualitative analysis. In addition, results from multi-regression analysis showed that `gender` was the most important factor in predicting attitudes towards DVAW. In the following sections, I discuss the influence of gender and education on attitudes towards DVAW within this sample. Gender was a consistent predictor of whether more “violence-supportive” views were held. For instance, according to the survey findings, almost all (82%) of the sample considered behaviours such as verbal abuse, economic abuse, threat of using violence, physical violence, and sexual violence to constitute `domestic violence`. The vast majority (96-97% of men and women) agreed that DVAW includes physical violence resulting in actual bodily harm. There were differences between men’s and women’s perceptions of DVAW: in general, women showed a greater tendency to

agree that the range of behaviours mentioned should be seen as domestic violence. However, there was a further difference between women and men's responses when linked with their levels of education. Women with high educational levels were more likely to perceive violence as including the behaviours mentioned above. Consistent with previous research, men in this study were more likely than women to endorse beliefs regarding both rape and spousal physical violence that blame the victim. For instance, the findings of Madhabika *et al.* (2003) demonstrate that both gender and nationality are important influences on an individual's attitudes toward violence against women. The findings from this survey indicated significant differences between the attitudes of men and women across most, although, not all measures. For example, women agreed more than men that a wide range of behaviours could be considered as domestic violence, including: the husband denying his wife access to household money; forbidding her to leave the house alone; shouting or cursing at her; slapping or punching her; breaking things in the house, and forced marriage. There was a relationship between gender and statements considered as economic reasons for violence. For instance, for the index '*Economic causes of DVAW*', more females agreed with all questions in this index. Women also agreed more than men with questions in the index '*Educational and cultural elements for DVAW*' (See Chapter 6).

Gender differences in attitudes toward violence have also been widely documented in other studies (Rani and Bonu, 2009; Markowitz, 2001; Antai and Antai, 2008; Khawaja *et al.*, 2008; Lawoko, 2006; Lawoko, 2008; Haj-Yahia, 2002, 2003; 2005; Anderson, 1997). These studies confirmed that men are more likely than women to agree with myths and beliefs that are supportive of DVAW. The studies further state that men are more likely to victim-blame, to

minimise harms associated with physical and sexual assault, or not to see behaviours constituting DVAW to be inappropriate or damaging to women. Anderson (1997) confirmed that men are more likely to hold negative views of women and to justify DVAW. This is also further evidenced in several studies that have been conducted in other regions including the Middle East (Kalof and Wade, 1995; Markowitz, 2001). Dobash *et al.* (2000) also found in a UK study that there were statistically significant differences in men's and women's reporting of violence, highlighting how men and women often attach different meanings to the same violent episode, with partners often disagreeing about why the violence happened, and even whether the violence occurred at all. DVAW was justified by men more than women in this sample in several circumstances. For example, the quantitative analysis revealed that approximately 71% of men agreed that a husband could justifiably beat his wife if she neglected her children, whereas only 56% of women agreed. Additionally, 67% of men but 58% of women agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife if she disobeyed him. The qualitative analysis also revealed that men showed a tendency to justify verbal and emotional abuse more than women. However, it is important to note that the impacts of gender and educational levels were complex and overlapped with other factors within this sample.

As noted, the percentage of men and women in the survey sample with higher qualifications was unusually large when compared with the percentage of people with undergraduate degrees in Libya. Education should provide women with more resources to escape from men's control and is therefore likely to empower them through obtaining better employment, hence, gaining financial independence. In a study by Araji and Carlson (2001) of Jordanian university students, it was reported that a father's occupational status and a mother's

education significantly influenced students' attitudes towards DVAW. Students whose mothers were well-educated perceived DVAW as a very serious problem. The results from this survey indicated that educational level was linked with some statements such as: 'Tolerance of violence leads to more violence'; 'The inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to violence' and 'Boys who witness their father's violence towards their mothers are more likely to be violent'. Well-educated women in the semi-structured interviews spoke more about DVAW and in greater depth about all types of violence. This suggests that the more educated that women become, the more likely they will have an increased awareness of DVAW.

However, education does not itself protect women from violence. Some women in the semi-structured interview sample who were more educated and empowered also faced a greater risk of violence as their husbands tried to regain control by controlling their salaries. Therefore, in my study, women's high educational levels did not limit their exposure to violence in practice. In this instance, educational level was only important in relation to the building and shaping of the participants' *attitudes*, as men remained dominant within marriages. Ackerson *et al.* (2008) similarly, found that Indian women with a higher level of education compared to that of their partner were *more* likely to experience physical violence. Xu *et al.* (2005) found a similar relationship between relative educational attainment between partners and any type of violence in China. These studies support the findings from the semi-structured interviews in this research, as some women in this sample have more education than their male partner.



In the following sections, I will situate the research findings in relation to the theoretical framework of Connell's concept of gender regimes.

### **9.3 An Analysis of Gender Regimes/Orders within UK Libyan Communities**

This study's findings indicated the continuation of existing gender orders for Libyan migrants in this sample. Gender relations in Libyan communities are organised and constrained by societal gender structures. Connell's model of gender order comprises: gender power relations (control, authority); production relations (the cycle of production and reproduction); emotional relations or *cathexis* (marriage and sexuality, family systems); and symbolic relations (e.g. cultural and religious). These structures are the key features of any gender regime or gender order (Connell 1987, 2002) as discussed in Chapter One. This is adopted here for the analysis in order to understand the intersecting key relations and structures that shape experiences and attitudes towards DVAW within this sample.

#### ***Domestic violence as an aspect of gendered power and control***

This study supports the feminist viewpoint that DVAW draws upon household and wider power and control. Gendered power relations in Libyan communities are structured by the premise of male domination in 'society' or the public sphere as well as within the household.

Wider, macro-level issues include institutions such as the law and legislation. The political structure of Libya has an important impact on women's social position. Libya at the time of fieldwork (2012/2013) was in a fragile post-conflict situation and remains so. Male authority exists in the state and the military; the Libyan state is masculine in terms of personnel; laws

also uphold male authority and female subordination, and there is lack of criminalisation of domestic violence. According to Fhelboom (2014), DVAW was not of interest to the Gaddafi regime and more recently after the revolution, domestic violence is still considered to be a taboo subject. Laws pertaining to DVAW during the Gaddafi era (which remain unchanged in post-conflict Libya) were generally not in favour of gender equality. According to Human Rights Watch (2013), during the Gaddafi regime era, on the rare occasion that DVAW was addressed, it was addressed in discriminatory ways. More specifically, within Libyan law, Article 375 under the penal code authorises, seems to invite DVAW by declaring explicitly that a man who "merely" beats his wife, daughter, sister or mother who is caught in the act of unlawful intercourse shall not be punished" (HRW, 2013:27). Shaban (2013) found that post-conflict Libyan society is a highly militarised as well as an increasingly male dominant society. In the context of the ongoing conflict, political instability, state of lawlessness and weakened institutions, DVAW receives little attention. Shaban's study revealed that women experienced increased levels of fear and insecurity in post-conflict Libya, and that women are increasingly fearful of abduction by militias or men in possession of weapons (Shaban, 2013). Lack of provision for abused women is also partly due to the state and lack of traditional NGOs. Prior to this, NGOs and organisational gatherings were generally prohibited during the time of the regime. Challenges facing the development of gender-equitable state-building include the spread of armed factions, the spread of weaponry and of militarised action, resulting in a continued absence of sufficient order and in frequent armed conflict within Libya. Langhi (2014) stated that the electoral law for the Constitutional Assembly in Libya was a serious setback to progress in achieving an inclusive constitutional drafting process.

Most significantly, the new law allocates only six seats for women, meaning that they will be drastically underrepresented in the new Constitutional Assembly. The decision represents a setback for gender equality in post-revolutionary Libya. There was evidence in this study of perceptions of men controlling most sites of organised coercion and surveillance in society e.g. the military and police and judiciary and perpetrating much DVAW.

Within this research, the qualitative analysis indicated that Libyan law was assumed by the participants to be gender-biased and that it may continue gender discrimination, being a product of a culture with oppressive gender ideology. Women's subordination to men is strengthened through the legal sphere. In this study, most participants also mentioned lack of existence of law in Libya in dealing with domestic violence. The participants stated that Libyan law did not ensure women's rights or protect them when they were abused. Even if such laws were in existence, they felt that it could not be enforced in real life. As regime-era laws related to women remain unchanged, it is useful to consider the observations of the CEDAW committee in 2009. In its 2009 observations of Libya's application of CEDAW, the Committee noted that: "according to women's rights groups, survivors of sexual and domestic violence have limited recourse to effective remedies in Libya" (HRW, 2013:26). To be precise, only one law during the Gadaffi era, and during the present, relates to domestic violence. Law No.10 of 1984 states that a woman "has the right to expect her husband to refrain from causing her physical or psychological harm". With no enforcement mechanisms, the law has proved to be ineffective (HRW, 2013). This exploitation of men's position in wider society, and lack of law against DVAW were seen as giving men the right to control women.

The household or micro-level of power and control, are influenced by the patriarchal extended family and lineages in Libya. Patriarchal rules were widely mentioned by the sample. Many men in this sample held the view that in Libyan society men perceive that their power and privileges should be 'respected' by women, and that men may use violence to gain or retain their dominant status and power. Therefore, men expect women in the family to obey their rules and requests. Haj-Yahia (2000) argues that in Arab society, from a young age, boys learn to be strong and dominant, whereas girls learn to be submissive. According to Pillay (2001), social constructions of male superiority and female inferiority within societies are key to understanding what leads men to commit violence against women. These internalised social constructions of male and female lead to a justification of DVAW (predominantly by men) and hence to the objectification of women and the weakening of their status. It is also of some significance to note that such powerful social constructions have resulted in some women accepting patriarchal traditions. It is common for victims of DVAW to believe that the violence was 'justified'. In the case of female genital mutilation for example, it is women that carry out the act of mutilation on young girls and who strongly endorse the practice. Therefore, it could be argued that in cases such as this, a power structure can be described, whereby women are the teachers and maintainers of patriarchal traditions which serve the interests of men. Men in Libyan communities and Arab society in general have been socially conditioned to believe in their own superiority. Previous studies have also shown that strict gender norms and patriarchal belief systems have an impact on the attitudes towards DVAW (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004).

The idea of men as heads of families, and women as dependents underpins male access to authority and control over women. The control of women continued to be part of men's power within Libyan migrant households, emphasising male responsibility for the family's reputation, with women being the main source of [and threat to] family honour. Moghadam (1992) specified that according to traditional culture, responsibility for safeguarding family honour is entrusted to men, to the woman's family of procreation, and to the extended family. Hence, there was a tendency to justify DVAW in my study as a means of controlling women and ensuring the family honour. This justification was also by women. Women in the semi-structured interviews showed a high tendency to justify violence if women's behaviour is outside of cultural and religious norms (for example having extramarital sexual relationships). As mentioned previously, some women internalise patriarchal traditions and norms to such a degree that it ultimately leads to a justification of their oppression.

Within households, wives have little influence over important household decision-making, as men control the household income and property (see next section). However, women will sometimes make decisions regarding matters related to the private sphere. Women share with men decisions related to daily household expenditure and visits with family or relatives, children's education and their marriages. However, men are believed to have the 'final word' over the acceptance or the refusal to finalise marriage and marriage remains invalid without the consent of the female's guardian - usually her father or else the eldest brother. Men in Libyan communities also have the authority and power to restrict women's movements. According to the survey findings, about half of men and women respondents agreed that DVAW was justifiable if a woman went out without telling her husband/partner. Also

approximately 38% of men and 21% of women did not perceive the husband forbidding his wife to leave the house alone to be domestic violence. This indicated that Libyan women required their husbands' permission for everything: some women prior to agreeing to participate in the sample said they needed their husbands' permission to participate in this study. This indicates that women's compliance in itself is another source in persistence of patriarchy in migrants' families.

In this study, DVAW was perceived to be a form of power struggle and male domination, given men's stronger position within the family. Many migrants perceived men's use of physical, emotional, and economic violence, in to control women, to be normal. Cavanagh *et al.* (2001) and Bograd (1990) argue that men often deny and/or minimise their use of violence, and that men are less likely to accept responsibility for their own actions than are violent women. There was also a wide belief that women are socialised to accept and tolerate domestic violence and to remain silent about violent experiences. Women in the family cannot object to the violence perpetrated by brothers and fathers, as there is nowhere to report this abuse.

### ***Sexual division of labour/production relations in Libyan communities***

The core principle of the sexual division of labour in Libyan/Arabic culture, is that women are often 'inside' the household doing domestic work and men 'outside' the household in employment. The data here indicates that the division of roles between men and women are extremely clear. Women's prime roles are as wives and mothers, preferably not working, and outside the household. These aspects denote the essential elements of a patriarchal system,

which institutionalises women's structured economic dependence on men. As noted above, many wives do not leave the home without male permission.

In Libya, men maintain their power by control over all property rights such as land, resources and income. According to legal systems, which are mainly influenced by *Sharia* law; women do inherit, but they inherit less than men. Some women might not obtain their inheritance, and offer it voluntarily to their brothers, as an insurance for future livelihoods, should they need to return to their father's or brother's household in case of divorce or widowhood (see Kabeer, 2011). It is not uncommon in Libyan society for some women to remain in violent or unhappy marriages due to economic dependence, the stigma of divorce or not wanting to be an economic 'burden' on their own family. Most women are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of economic prosperity since they usually do not have regular income and lack property ownership. However, most Libyan migrants do not own property in the UK either. Men maintain their power in this case mainly by controlling income within the household. Men have the final say in important household decision-making, as they control household income. For instance, savings and investment decisions are mainly male spheres, as men are responsible for the household financial expenses. The evidence from this study revealed that some women migrants with degrees or higher-educational levels, in order to satisfy cultural and social norms, remain or take on the role of full-time housewives. Some women in the sample stated that they did not work in Libya and that this was their own decision, due to choosing to take care of their children. This was perhaps due to the emphasis on a wife's primary role as the carer of the children.

The survey conducted also indicated that only 33% of men but 65% of women in the survey sample agreed that women's dependence on men for food, shelter and other material objects means that they are more likely to become victims of domestic violence. Most men's responses indicated they were against women's employment and empowerment, due to the belief that men must be able to ensure the necessities for the family and that women's primary role was in reproduction and mothering. The results here differ from the findings of other some studies. For example, Kudat's (1982) research among Turkish migrant women in Germany, found that Turkish migrant women often made enormous efforts to participate in both areas so as to not upset the delicate balance of power at home. Kudat's (1982) stated that many entered the labour force for the first time in Germany, and notably, many Turkish migrant women migrated alone and were later followed by their husbands.

Libyan migrant women may not be able to access paid work in the UK even if they are educated in any case, so lack of employment could also be influenced by the labour market. Educational qualifications and fluency in English were important in influencing women's opportunities to work in the UK and to be independent. Nah (1993) stated that when lacking host-country language skills, most migrants are only able to find jobs in the lower echelons of the economy. Most of the Libyan women who had come to the UK for the sake of marriage could not speak English, and some of their husbands prevented them from learning the language in order to assert control over them. This was the case for one informant in this study (see Chapter 7). For instance, in my survey sample, 68% of women were not in the paid workforce in the UK. About 17% of women worked as teachers, mainly in Libyan or Arab schools. The number of women teachers I have in this sample however was large, since I was



able to contact participants through Libyan weekend schools. However, teaching is considered an acceptable job for women in Libyan culture, due to their being limited mixing between the sexes in the school environment. This would differ from a corporate environment for example where interaction with men in the workplace would be more prominent. According to the Libyan Census Report (2006), 67% of Libyan women who were in paid work in Libya worked as teachers or in the education sector, compared with 16% of Libyan men. Libyan society tends to view work for women as only a financial necessity rather than as a chance for self-fulfilment. This was evident in this study, where some women who worked part-time in Arabic or Libyan schools preferred not to work. Even where some men did allow wives to work due to financial necessity, they often asserted the right to control the women's salaries. The findings from the survey showed that a high percentage of the participants (84% of men and 85% of women) agreed that situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earnings to men could also cause DVAW. The results from the semi-structured interviews further supported this, and some abused women in the sample stated that the main reason for their experience of DV was economic or financial. Financial dependence was also one of the reasons cited by some women who felt they could not leave their abusers. The economic reality of women's lives and the threat of violence on leaving, all serve to trap some women in violent situations.

### ***Emotional relations/ cathexis in Libyan communities***

The idea of *cathexis* (Connell, 2002) describes how women's sexuality emotions and attachments are linked to other social concerns, such as those related to 'impurity' and 'immorality', as well as compulsory heterosexuality (Wingood and DiClemente, 2000) and

forms of masculinity and femininity. Libyan culture emphasises the importance of female deference; of female chastity; acceptance of less-controlled male sexuality; and sexuality only in marriage but compulsory within marriage. Control of women's sexuality is seen as necessary in order to 'purify' society. The findings are in line by the argument of Baker *et al.* (1999) who mentioned that, traditionally in Middle-Eastern cultures, women's sexuality is controlled collectively by the family. For example, when a woman 'misbehaves', or challenges her husband's authority, first of all her parents and her natal family are held responsible. In Western nations this control is shifted to her husband, which in practice means a lack of community involvement. Marriage gives men the right to control wives who should submit sexually to their husbands (Barakat, 1993; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Sharabi, 1988). Several other studies documented situations where men have used the woman's migrant condition to reinforce their control and abusive strategies, and it was found that husbands expect wives to accept a submissive and subordinate role in marriage (Erez, 2000; Jang *et al.*, 1991; Mama, 1993, 1996; Nayaran, 1995). According to Abraham (2000), for South Asian migrants in the USA, marriage is seen as an essential institution that expresses the status of women, regardless of class or religion. Within the marriage institution, patriarchal control is exercised; men dominate and stress many rights and privileges in their positions as husband (Abraham, 2000). Additionally, women are expected to be obedient (Dasgupta and Warrier, 1996; Raj and Silverman, 2002).

Some women in my sample appeared to believe that remaining in a violent relationship was preferable to being unmarried/divorced, reflecting the importance society places on marriage for women. In Libyan/Arab culture, divorced women may be stigmatised, in the sense that

society will not accept the woman and that the woman will not have the opportunity to remarry. Cultural expectations may also inhibit women from leaving their abusers, due to it bringing 'shame' upon the victim and the family. Strict gender-role expectations may lead women to believe that they do not have the right to disobey their husbands and that once a woman is married, that she must stay and tolerate the abuse. This results in the legitimisation of violence.

This study found that, some men disagreed with the notion that DVAW included sexual violence. This could be linked to interpretations of Islam that hold that it is a woman's duty to satisfy the sexual needs of her husband. It was also of interest, as aforementioned, that women in this study showed a strong tendency to justify DVAW, if a woman were to be sexually unfaithful, or to have had sex outside of marriage. This could be due to religious factors, as Islam forbids sex outside marriage, and unmarried women and men are prohibited from being sexually intimate before marriage. In the traditional (lineage-based) culture of Libya, the protection of family honour/reputation is rooted in women's sexuality. Some women also showed a tendency to distance themselves from other women who transgressed sexually, possibly to emphasise their own 'purity'. These women believed that their own behaviour conformed to moral/ social norms, and therefore if women behaved according to the social norms, then they would ultimately avoid violence. In some cases, women had been prohibited by their husbands from socialising with women who have not conformed to cultural/religious/social norms concerning sexuality.

The family plays an important role in affecting the structure of emotional relations or attachment of individuals. For example, social learning theory and family systems theory

provided an avenue in conceptualising DVAW and the importance of role models in shaping the behaviour of individuals in the family (1990; Black, 1999; Bandura and Walters, 1963; Chodorow, 1978). When children observe their parents behaving violently (physically and emotionally) toward other family members and/or experiencing abuse themselves, it is possible that they may adopt the same behaviour (Kalmuss, 1984; Straus, Gelles *et al.*, 1980). The results of this study provide further support for this argument. The qualitative and quantitative analysis provided some support for social learning theory and family systems arguments (Bandura and Walters, 1963; Bandura, 1977; Black, 1999. See also Chapter 1). In the course of the interviews as well as in the survey, many participants said that men who were brought up in violent families become violent and that their experience in childhood might influence their patterns of behaviour towards women. Some participants attributed domestic violence to situational factors such as the difficult economic context, problems at work, or stressful situations in everyday life. These results are similar to the hypothesis proposed by Hotaling (1988), arguing that abused women tend to assign responsibility to the `situation`, since directly blaming partners would not allow them justify why they continue to stay living with an abusive partner. The imbalances that exist at a social level in patriarchal societies are mainly learnt through socialisation: socialisation thus assisted in the learning of culturally defined gender roles where children then observe their `gender roles`.

Wider family interference is also important with regards to gender relations. This was mentioned by some women who lived with their husbands' families, with some women mentioning that they still faced interference from the husbands' relatives. However, for those living in nuclear families in the UK, participants believed that domestic violence took place

without the intervention of the extended family. Donnelly (1989) observed that among Hmong refugees in the USA, marital conflicts are resolved within the traditional clan structure, and it is acceptable to seek help from the American legal system only if this fails.

Emotional relations in Libyan families are often based upon control as well as affection. In Libyan families, there is an acceptance of the use of emotional and (sometimes) physical violence towards children or women as a kind of discipline. Many women in this study had suffered from emotional abuse from childhood, from their fathers or brothers. After marriage, husbands may continue such violence. Emotional or verbal violence accounted for about 75% of DVAW mentioned in the semi-structured interviews. It was also indicated that physical violence was infrequently mentioned. A study conducted among Nepal migrant women in the USA also found that a majority of the participants reported being subjected to various forms of emotional and verbal abuse (Thapa-oli, *et al.*, 2009). Other studies among Asian migrants in the USA however, revealed that physical violence was the most common form of violence (Adam and Schewe, 2007; Raj and Silverman, 2002). Within the present study, physical violence was mentioned less frequently. The results of the semi-structured interviews however, revealed that five out of the women interviewed (mainly divorced), stated that they had been subjected to physical abuse, both in Libya and in the UK. As this remains a sensitive subject, some women do not wish to elaborate. Some married women may also have chosen not to reveal that they had experienced violence for various reasons. They may have considered the experience too intimate an issue to reveal or discuss with others or they may have felt embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty about the situation. It is to be noted, however, that almost all of the participants, from different backgrounds and different levels of education,

acknowledged that they `knew a woman` who had experienced violence. In these instances, women may or may not have been referring to themselves indirectly. This is also supports the results from the survey, as mentioned above.

Another aspect of emotional relations is women's attachment to their children. Having children is central to most women's lives and this was one of the factors that contributed to preventing women from leaving a violent relationship. Women who lack support from friends, family, or their communities may find it more difficult to leave abusive relationships (Sullivan *et al*, 1994). Bowker (1983) mentioned that women who have received help and support from family and friends, mentioned it as being very important in allowing them to leave their abusers. Close friends and family can provide emotional support in stressful times, and can also provide safe places for women and children to stay, store belongings, and be available to assist abused women in rebuilding their lives after leaving an abuser (Bowker, 1983).

### ***Symbolic relations in Libyan communities***

The symbolic meanings of gender and gender-based violence for Libyan migrants in this sample were influenced more by Libyan than British culture. Libyan or Arab social and cultural norms contribute to segregation of gender roles and of male–female relations.

The major challenge to Libyan communities is the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islamic teachings and their influence on Libyan cultural norms. The most common justification for DVAW and gender inequality were religious. Some of the participants in this study drew attention to the profound role of misinterpretation of Islam in terms of DVAW.

Further, some women said their ex-husbands were strict Muslims and had not practiced Islam in a beneficial way. Rather, they misinterpreted the religion to gain power and control. Such men, attributed abuse to customs and traditions according to which the man is the master.

It was found that many participants in this study limited interpretation of Islamic `rules` to women`s dress and appearance. Wearing *hijab* was also mentioned by participants as a way of showing how strong their faith was. *Hijab* was regarded as protective, and women who dress less modestly are viewed as more likely to attract men sexually. They believed that wearing the *hijab* was in women`s best interests and that it is their duty to cover their hair and bodies. Some women believed that they had to be strict with their daughters and ensure that they wear `decent` or non-revealing clothing. *Hijab* was endorsed culturally more than as a result of Islam, with the emphasis being on Islam as culture and tradition more than as normative religious ideal (Predelli, 2004). The strongest justifications for DVAW given by many participants in this research were cases in which the women were perceived as not following Islamic stipulations in life, especially in the case of young girls who do not wear `proper` head-coverings.

The discussion of gender regimes/orders within Libyan communities, has offered the conclusion that gender orders have not altered substantially within the sample of migrants studied. The model presented is of an ideal of male authority-which is the reality for many, although probably not all men. However, since virtually all women are disadvantaged legally and in other ways, there is a case that nearly all women are subordinate in Libya, even if women`s positions vary in some respects (e.g. by social class or education).

The argument here is not that all Libyan migrant men are products of a patriarchal culture whereby they practice violence on a daily basis and was that not all women are victims. Within Libyan communities, 'hegemonic masculinity' can vary, creating multiple masculinities. Connell (1995) applied the concept of hegemonic masculinity to study the relations between men and women as well as between classes of men. The male ideal that stands out as the 'hegemonic' masculinity in much of in Libya refers to a man who can provide economically for their families, who also commands family and community respect, exerts control over his family; demonstrates heterosexuality (i.e. a real man is married and has children and possibly more than one wife) and piousness. Other aspects of hegemonic masculinity conform more to that in the West: e.g. demonstrating physical strength, and respect from other men. There was a contradiction evident in the testimony of a number of men in this sample concerning attitudes to DVAW. For instance, most men did not directly admit that they were in favour of controlling women and almost all men in this sample initially said that committing physical abuse against women was unacceptable. Men in this sample indicated that males had no right to commit 'physical violence' against women under any circumstances. Nevertheless, contradictions appeared later in the testimony of several men participants, who, on occasion, found or cited cases where DVAW could be justified. When it came to real-life situations, they converted to monitoring, control, coercion, and violence if a woman crossed the 'limits' set by her husband. These findings could be considered as simple evidence of the operation of Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic masculinity - the assumption that men's power and control of women was a normal aspect of heterosexual male behaviour and an acceptable practise within marriage. Consideration of how individual people can uphold dominant



discourses and understandings about the accepted way to behave, finds support in this research. Many men reproduced the 'rules' regarding intimate relationships and the performance of gendered roles. There exists pressure on many men to conform to a hegemonic standard of male power and control of women, alongside their awareness that physical violence against women is unacceptable. Although some men in this study were against DVAW, the conceptualisation of normal masculinity is evident here in the assumption of male power. Connell's (1995) perspective on hegemonic masculinity locates those men as subject to powerful expectations of normal male behaviour which are underpinned by patriarchal ideals of male supremacy and control of women.

There were indications that the patriarchal system continues among this sample despite long residence in the West. The next section discusses this key finding further.

#### **9.4 Migration and the Persistence of Patriarchy among Migrant Communities**

Unequal and patriarchal gender regimes in Libyan families appear to be reproduced successfully, despite people living in a new country and within a different system. The results from the survey as noted, did not show any statistically significant association between attitudes towards DVAW and the factor 'length of residence in the UK'. This contradicted my initial assumption and expectation that long residence in Britain would have an important influence on the migrants' perceptions of DVAW. The survey findings indicated that more than half of the sample believed that British culture has influenced men's attitudes; however, more women (61%) believed this than did men (52%). This meant that nearly half the men felt attitudes had not altered in Britain. The participants in the survey sample believed that

there were differences between the culture of British and Libyan society regarding men's dealings with women and gender relations. The results from the survey also showed that 87% of the participants in the sample were aware there was no law to deal with domestic violence in Libya. Furthermore, the participants' testimonies indicated that long residence in the UK could have an impact on Libyans with regard to DVAW. Whilst a few of the participants – mainly men – mentioned that their attitudes towards DVAW had not altered, several women in this sample declared that British culture *had* influenced them. In addition, women's testimonies in this sample indicated that migrant women were more likely to report violence than women in Libya, and some women in this sample had accessed UK law when they obtained their divorces. However, a deeper analysis of the findings indicated that persistence of patriarchy existed among this sample and migration might not substantially affect views on women's subordination and gender equality. Other studies (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Kibria, 1990, Kandiyoti, 1988) revealed that patriarchal beliefs and traditional gendered roles do not disappear but may persist for a long time among migrant communities, despite the new 'patriarchal' bargain in the context of migration. These traditional gendered roles may be even more strongly maintained or emphasised within the migrant community as a way of ensuring cultural continuity (Abraham, 1995; Dasgupta and Warrier, 1996). In the case of Libyan migrants, cultural traditions and therefore patriarchal traditions remain powerful, despite migration. More interestingly, such patriarchal held beliefs tend to be observed by the British-born sons and daughters of Libyan migrants.

In Libyan society, the family is defined as the patrilineal extended family, which may dominate the smaller nuclear family. Libyan migrant families are mostly nuclear, and it was

noticeable that there was a number of divorced women who chose to bring up their children on their own in the UK. However, the patriarchal structure and lifestyle in the family is still affected by Libyan social values. Libyan migrant families may try to retain values and norms, as in the home country. Husbands continue to expect a subservient role after migration, in that they believe that men should have authority and control over women (as discussed above). Ahmad *et al.* (2004) also observed that there is a higher incidence of DVAW in migrant with stronger patriarchal beliefs systems.

In my research, the semi-structured interviews indicated that the attitudes of a sample of Libyan migrants, despite living in a new context, often reflected ongoing gender inequalities, influenced to a great extent by patriarchal systems of power and control within Libya itself. For example, there was a widespread perception among the participants that DVAW should remain a 'family issue'. Women themselves may appear to be 'maintainers' of the patriarchal system, as noted. For instance, in this sample, some less-educated women perceived DVAW to be a normal part of women's lives and many perceived DVAW to be a 'family' issue only. Within the semi-structured interviews, men with low levels of education were particularly likely to perceive DVAW as an issue that should be kept within the family generally tended to downplay discussions of types of DVAW. According to a small group of well-educated men in the semi-structured interviews, DVAW represented behaviour arising from men's position of power. Haj-Yahia (2005) in a study on the subject of Jordanian attitudes towards wife abuse, also determined that DVAW in Arab communities was frequently viewed as a family rather than a social or legal problem. Support for these findings comes from Pleck's (1983) study among American migrants. Pleck observed that abused migrant women may

avoid contacting formal helping agencies as they believed that formal interference (from the police for instance) with what is supposed to be a `family matter` may challenge the traditional authority in the family. This reinforces the acceptability of DVAW through the belief that it is a private matter. This concept is exacerbated in the case of migrants when it is reflected in laws that may allow justification for DVAW (Bui and Morash, 1999; Merry, 1990, 2009). Other studies found that migrant women prefer to talk with helping professionals from similar backgrounds, so as to eliminate the fear of being misunderstood or having to be cautious about explaining or defending cultural beliefs about family, gender roles and identities (Abraham, 2000).

Men in this sample were likely to say that their attitudes towards DVAW had not altered. Within this research and based on both quantitative and qualitative findings, I found that the length of stay in the UK had no major impact on the attitudes of the sample to DVAW. This was also reported in a previous study of Arab migrants, which showed that there was no association between length of stay and exposure to DVAW among Saudi migrants women to the UK (AI-Habib, 2011). Some studies have found that Arab migrant women have the same attitudes as Arab women who live in Middle Eastern countries (Haj-Yahia, 1998a, 1998b, 2000b, 2002). These studies stated that migrant women have the same attitudes in terms of rejecting intervention by authorities and seeking help instead from relatives or local religious leaders. Abu-Ras (2007) stated that Arab migrant women in USA who sought mental health help for partner abuse did not show any intention of contacting police or other specialised agencies for help. Menjivar and Salcido (2002), Perilla *et al.* (1994) and Vijay (1998) have

found that the culture of migrant women have brought with them will influence the way they respond to DVAW.

On the other hand, several women in the semi-structured interview sample said that the British culture had influenced their own attitudes towards DVAW. Divorced women's testimonies in this sample indicated that migrant women were more likely to report violence than were women in Libya, and some women had accessed UK law when they obtained divorces. A larger proportion of women reported seeking help from one of the sources available in the UK, including women who lacked English language skills. This indicated that there was awareness of the avenues of support that could be accessed by women experiencing DVAW and a number of abused women did seek help from the different sources of support available in the UK. Being in the UK has assisted and protected several women who took part in the study. Although, being in the UK was protective for several women, all of the participants in the qualitative sample believed that support and protection for abused women in Libya comes mainly from the family. Family is also a source of financial and emotional support, and some participants mentioned that they received financial assistance from their (wider) families in Libya. However, some other studies reported that women in migrant communities often ignore abuse (Bui and Morash, 1999; Chow, 1989; Dutton *et al.*, 2000; George and Rahangdale, 1999), since it may be viewed as acceptable. Abu-Ras (2007) also found in her study of Arab migrants in the USA, that abused Arab women are less likely than other to use available services to deal with DVAW, this because of their 'traditional' attitudes.

In studying Libyan communities, as noted, one must consider the context of religion. Islam constitutes the fundamental sociocultural and organisational background for most Libyan

people. Islam mainly emphasises the complementary attributes of gender, and dictates gender roles and relations accordingly (Stowasser, 1993). The community relations of Libyan migrants are also of much importance. Ahmad *et al.* (2004) stated that migrants bring their cultural legacies with them. Cultural, traditional gender roles have been cited as facilitating abuse of women in migrant populations (Bui and Morash, 1999; Perilla, 1999; Tran and Des Jardins, 2000). Ahmad *et al.* (2004) found that among South Asian migrant women in Canada, patriarchal beliefs may influence cultural values of the negative consequences that can result from disagreeing with social norms, and this perhaps likely in their home countries.

Libyan people usually establish close networks of mutual and emotional support with their fellow countrypersons. This gave them a sense of belonging needed by many as migrants living in a Western society. Most Libyan people choose to live in cities like Manchester where there are sizeable Arab and Libyan communities. Libyan people in these communities meet each other as neighbours, associates, acquaintances and develop friendships as they share the same language and culture mainly with other Arab people. Read (2003) found that Arab Muslim migrants in the USA often reside in areas settled by other Arab-origin people, where traditional gender roles and norms are sustained and reproduced.

Consequently, Libyan migrants may maintain social norms as a means of expressing their belonging and identity. It is worth mentioning that most Libyan migrants in the UK are first-generation and that many are in Britain as temporary residents. Although Libyan migrants may find themselves living in a less traditional society, the impact of their religion and country of origin nevertheless, shapes their attitudes to gender relations. It could thus be suggested that religion and social norms continue to play an important role in determining Libyans'

attitudes towards DVAW. Ties with the country of origin are important and intersect with religion to influence the participants' attitudes towards DVAW. The role of the wider family was also mentioned by many participants as being an important source for protection for abused women, and it was clear that the wider family still has an impact on Libyan migrants. Barakat (1993) argues that the family continues to be considered a central unit in Arab/Muslim societies. The family still plays an important role in supplementing assistance received from formal services in areas of support and protection for abused women would come mainly from this unit (Barakat, 1993; Haj-yahia 2000). Thus, it is a key element in persistence of patriarchal relation. Families/ communities may also turn 'inwards' for protection in new settings and patriarchal gendered roles may be strongly policed within the migrant families as a way of ensuring cultural continuity (Abraham, 1998; Dasgupta and Warrier, 1996).

## **9.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the key findings of this research and then located this within an analysis of gender orders and regimes. The quantitative aspect of research demonstrated how participants' attitudes to DVAW varied with socio-demographic factors, particularly gender, education and former place of residence. The key findings of my research could be established in two key aspects: persistence of patriarchy among migrant communities and that DVAW persists as a result of unequal gender relation in family and community.

The findings present clear indication that the attitudes of Libyan migrants towards DVAW are mostly built upon religious and traditional norms in Libyan society: gender inequality

helps set a frame for domestic violence and abuse. The existence of gender roles and norms within the household gives more power to men; these continue to shape gender relations within Libyan migrant families. Traditional and patriarchal attitudes appeared on different levels: for instance, perceiving DVAW as a family issue, the idea of family ‘honour’, or believing that the women’s main role is as a housewife doing domestic labour. This leads women to be economically dependent on men and in return to accept abuse, and provides men with economic means of control. This was prevalent for the migrant women in this sample, as they had fewer skills to work in the UK. They were often more isolated from any support or protection from their families, which may have been available for them prior to migration. The influence of cultural and structural factors such as language difficulties, lack of support systems, and feelings of isolation are also linked to many women’s experiences of and attitudes to DVAW. These factors intersect and may be exacerbated within the migrant context.

However, although there was a persistence of patriarchy, discussion of women’s experiences of DVAW (see Chapter 7) showed that a number of women do use the services available in the UK, and did seek help. They also spoke out about abuse and some reported such incidents. This indicated that Libyan migrant women are not passive victims. Nevertheless, female subordination appears to be a reality for most Libyan women despite living in the West.

The next and final chapter concludes this research and suggests some recommendations for future research.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### *Concluding thoughts*

This chapter concludes the thesis; it offers observations on the research process and suggests some directions for future research. The main purpose of this study was to understand and examine the structures of Libyan communities, and how women's social position(s) and perceptions of DVAW are shaped by patriarchal norms. The study aspires to add to knowledge on the topic of DVAW in context of gendered migration flows, particularly among Arab populations.

This study contributes to literature on the topic of intimate and domestic violence in general, and more specifically to literature about attitudes and perceptions of DVAW among migrants. I have attempted to link a feminist perspective on gender regimes and gender orders to a case study of Libyan migrants in the UK. My theoretical contribution is to point out that the existing migration literature particularly in the Arab contexts, needs to take into account the centrality of dynamics of gender power and gender relations as a main source of DVAW and women's subordination. Developing this research focus involved close analysis of the existing body of domestic violence literature; this in turn identified the importance of feminist theory and methods within existing scholarship. The findings here indicated how the structure of gender relations and unequal power relations between men and women in the household as well as in the public sphere, is a key source of women's subordination. In this regard, the concepts of gender regime and gender order provided tools to help us understand the realities of women's lives in the context of Arab/Libyan migrants.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the issue of domestic violence, but most have been conducted within Western societies. The literature review highlights the limited nature of research on domestic violence among Arab communities: the issue of domestic violence against Libyan women barely rates a mention within Libya itself, even though DVAW is a global social concern. Additionally, there is a serious lack of research on the subject of Libyan migrants in general and on the topic of DVAW in particular. Thus, very little is known about the experiences and perceptions of Libyan people with regard to domestic violence<sup>48</sup>: the subject has been an academic taboo and socio-cultural (including religious) influences have deterred researchers from pursuing this line of enquiry. This study thus has attempted to fill a gap in the literature.

This thesis contributes to understanding the phenomenon of domestic and intimate violence in its various forms in Libyan communities, from the point of view of both genders. The study has made progress in developing an understanding of Libyan migrants' views on DVAW, on household relations and in exploration of the extent of domestic violence. Thus, this study helps shed light on this population and how DVAW both, underpins and reflects deep-seated gender inequalities. It can also assist in practical terms: for instance understanding how women perceive and understand domestic abuse helps us to learn about whether and how they might seek help. It will enhance knowledge of women's experiences, attitudes and awareness among other migrant populations, and perhaps in the wider Arab world.

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<sup>48</sup>There is a study on mental health and wife abuse in Libya, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bristol University; however, this study is not publicly available yet (see Chapter 3).

The empirical research in this project employed 'triangulation' using two data collection techniques: The quantitative and qualitative approaches helped achieve the research objectives in establishing this population's attitudes to DVAW. Engaging with Libyan men and women also enabled a comparison of their views about and perceptions of DVAW. The findings offered information in the field of DVAW among Arab migrant women. For instance, some important background factors in the sample, such as gender, educational level and rural vs. urban residence in Libya, were the primary variables of importance in relation to attitudes to DVAW amongst this sample of migrants: future studies might test such variables.

The experience of gendered subordination is conditioned by a whole range of institutional practices embedded in the family as well as more widely. As this research has indicated, the root causes of DVAW are viewed as being due to patriarchal gender orders (Brownmiller, 1976; Butler, 1990; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Walby, 1986, 1997, 1990). Through the use of Connell's model, it was possible to suggest that the intersecting and overlapping facets of gender orders affects the way gender is organised within Libyan families. This gender hierarchy/ordered system has helped to create and to form women's subordination. Attitudes toward DVAW are shaped by long-life processes of gender socialisation and through patriarchal systems. In Libyan migrant families, a hierarchy of roles and authority is represented in the power of men over women and particularly husbands over wives. Many participants in this study perceived DVAW as reflecting the existing gendered power asymmetry, which devalues females. The evidence from the study points to a surprising degree of continuity of male domination and women's subordination in Libyan communities and households. Libyan communities in the UK to a large extent resemble that in Libyan

society in terms of social norms and beliefs. Gender relations and gender power are still male biased leading to 'patriarchal dividends' (Connell 2000). The findings indicated that migrants' views on the issue of DVAW reflected ongoing gender inequalities, influenced to a great extent by patriarchal systems of power and control within Libya. However, some changes were found in terms of women's strategies for dealing with abuse. For instance, some women in the study had contacted UK authorities and used the services available.

This study enhances the understanding about DVAW amongst migrant communities and further supports and extends the knowledge of ethnicity and gender power relations. Next limitations and areas for future research are highlighted.

### ***Limitations and reflections***

This thesis has achieved the objectives it set itself, notably to determine the attitudes towards DVAW of Libyan migrants in the UK, and to undertake of a comparison between women's and men's perceptions of DVAW, to study gender differences in attitudes. It is useful, nevertheless, to reflect on the thesis and consider its limitations. There were limitations in data collection within the thesis, which in retrospect, might have added to the study.

During the fieldwork, I was constantly aware of the sensitive nature of the topic of DVAW in the traditional context of Libyan communities. Although it would have been helpful to be able to ask women more directly about their experiences of violence, ethical considerations meant that this was not possible. However (see Chapter 7) some women did discuss experiences of violence without prompting. During the interviews, I had to reassure respondents that the information would be confidential and

anonymous. There were reasons for this, one being that I was funded by the Libyan government: the very fact that at the time of the fieldwork Libya was experiencing uprisings and violent social upheaval, might affected what people said. For instance, many people said simply that they did not know about women's legal rights in Libya.

Moreover, I was not able to collect the data systematically because of the changes that were taking place in Libya and as a result; this meant a change in the focus and direction of my initial proposal. The absence of a reliable sampling frame or a database outlining and providing comprehensive information on demographics of the Libyan community in the UK, meant that the sample could not be stratified in any systematic way. As discussed in Chapter 4, the sample was a snowball sample and I used personal contacts and networks to get access to Libyan people in Manchester and Leeds.

Snowball sampling perhaps created another limitation in my study in that the chosen sample may be biased because of inclusion of a high percentage of highly-educated participants. This may have had an effect on their responses to the survey and the semi-structured interviews. This bias may have affected attitudes in the sample, as the accounts were derived from relatively empowered and educated participants who might find it easier to 'negotiate' within the household.

### ***Recommendations for future research***

Feminist methodology was utilised for this research because of its focus on women and to ensure their experiences and attitudes were seen as central. This included ensuring that the research should be of benefit to women as much as possible (Stanley and Wise, 1990). The findings of this research facilitate some recommendations to be considered for future policy and practice. The viewpoints of Libyan migrants who participated in

this study have provided a basis for the development of support and interventions for Libyan and other Arab women who experience domestic violence.

A basic measure would be to improve Libyan migrants' understandings of domestic violence. Women who are experiencing DVAW should be aware of, and have access to, medical and legal services in the UK. The survey findings on the opinions and attitudes toward DVAW are of concern, as these indicate a relatively high level of justification for domestic violence within Libyan communities by both women and men. This shows the need to raise awareness about women's rights with regard to safety and security in the household; whether amongst Libyan migrants or within Libya.

Within Libya itself, the enactment of laws which protect women from any type of violence, should be ensured. Strict implementation of any laws would be imperative for decreasing DVAW in the country. The Libyan justice system should aim to prevent further DVAW, facilitate recovery and ensure access to justice for abused women. In Libya, there is a need for services which offer mental health support, shelter and crisis centre provision, not only in the context of building on the physical infrastructure of these support services, but also regarding the ways in which these services are best utilised. These actions would help to reinforce social norms in order to change people attitudes towards DVAW. However, in order to achieve this, a massive cultural shift is required which will only be possible if people are made aware of causes and consequences of gender-based violence and women's rights in general basis.

Studies on the specific aspect of perceptions of DVAW as a 'private' matter are needed, as statistics on DVAW are very difficult to find. Further research is needed in order to develop a deeper understanding of DVAW and the ways in which the lives of Libyan

women could be improved in the UK as well as in Libya through recognition of DVAW as a matter for the state and public sphere.

The thesis has outlined the prevalence of a particular form of hegemonic masculinity among Libyan migrants. This sees male roles as primarily ones of provision for wives and children; control and domination within the household; and sometimes assuming a strongly dominant or coercive role. This is not, of course, the only possible form of masculinity in Libya or among migrants. The development of alternative and more egalitarian forms of masculinity would be important in changing the balance of power in gender relations. Thus, research on hegemonic and alternative masculinities within Libyan and Arab communities would be of great benefit.

There are number of key areas worthy of further research and evaluation in context of UK migration. These include a thorough cataloguing of the barriers to, and gaps in legal and other support services for abused women of Arab origin. Future research could further expand this work by looking in more depth at social class aspects. Class structures and gender divisions may intersect and interact within the migration experience, and experiences of DVAW may vary within different settings. Such a study would enhance knowledge of migration and intimate violence, taking into account differences and similarities between the experiences of different groupings of Libyan migrants. A comparative study of domestic violence within Libya also could assist in outlining links between views and experiences of migrants and those remaining 'at home'.

This research on which this thesis was based, has contributed to a base of empirical knowledge on a population that has been little-studied previously with regard to the

topic of DVAW. It is hoped that this understanding will enhance knowledge of women's experiences, attitudes and awareness among other migrant populations.

*Finally*, it is hoped that the understandings and suggestions offered in this thesis, will further both academic work and activist interventions against gender violence in Libya itself and in migrant communities.



## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Application for Ethical Approval

Appendix 2: The Approval Letter from the Ethics Committee

Appendix 3: The consent form

Appendix 3A: The Consent Form (Arabic translation)

Appendix 4: The Questionnaire

Appendix 5: Questionnaire (Arabic translation)

Appendix 6: The Semi-structured Interview Checklist

Appendix 7: Target Quantitative Sample of Libyan Migrants in the UK

Appendix 8: Demographic Information for Survey Respondents, Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

## **Appendix 1: Application for Ethical Approval**

**Application Number**.....

**Date**.....



**MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**  
FACULTY OF HLSS

### **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL**

#### **Introduction**

All university activity must be reviewed for ethical approval. In particular, all undergraduate, postgraduate and staff research work, projects and taught programmes must obtain approval from their Faculty Academic Ethics committee (or delegated Departmental Ethics Committee).

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

The form should be completed legibly (preferably typed) and, so far as possible, in a way which would enable a layperson to understand the aims and methods of the research. Every relevant section should be completed. Applicants should also include a copy of any proposed advert, information sheet, consent form and, if relevant, any questionnaire being used. The Principal Investigator should sign the application form. Supporting documents, together with one copy of the full protocol should be sent to the Administrator of the appropriate Faculty Academic Ethics Committee.

**Your application will require external ethical approval by an NHS Research Ethics Committee if your research involves staff, patients or premises of the NHS (see guidance notes)**

### **Work with children and vulnerable adults**

You will be required to have a Criminal Disclosure, if your work involves children or vulnerable adults.

**The Faculty Academic Ethics Committee meets every (insert period) and will respond as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will operate a process of expedited review. Applications that require approval by an NHS Research Ethics Committee or a Criminal Disclosure will take longer - perhaps 3 months.**

## **1. DETAILS OF APPLICANT (S)**

### **1.1 Principal Investigator: (Member of staff or student responsible for work)**

**Name, qualifications, post held, tel. no, e-mail**

**Name:** Suaad M Elabani

**ID No** 10977716 International Student

**Qualifications:** MA in Sociology

**Post held:** MMU PhD Student/ I am also a Member of staff at Department of Sociology, Alfatah University (from September 2011, named University of Tripoli).

**Address:** PO Box 3601381

**Tel:** +218 (22) 605 441

**Fax:** +218 (22) 605 460

Tripoli, Libya.

**E-mail:** [suaad\\_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:suaad_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk) / [SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@stu.mmu.ac.uk)

### **1.2 Co-Workers and their role in the project: (e.g. students, external collaborators, etc.)**

Colleagues in the department of Sociology in Tripoli would assist if requested.

### **1.3 University Department/Research Institute/Other Unit:**

Sociology Department \_ HLSS \_ MMU

## **2. DETAILS OF THE PROJECT**

### **2.1 Title:**

`Perceptions and Attitudes of Libyan Migrants in the UK to Violence against Libyan Women`

### **2.2 Description of Project: (please outline the background and the purpose of the research project, 250 words max.).**

Violence against Women (DVAW), or gender-based violence, is a worldwide phenomenon. It can take place regardless of class, nationality, race, religion and socio-economic development (World Health Organization, 2005). This study will be of an exploratory nature. With regard to the topic of domestic violence, it aims to understand how cultural, religious and social factors interact within a sample of Libyan people in the UK as well as in Libya itself (if possible, given the changing situation in Libya). There are very few studies of DVAW in Libya; therefore, this research will constitute one of the first substantial studies of the topic.

### **2.3 Describe what type of study this is (e.g. qualitative or quantitative; also indicate how the data will be collected and analysed). Additional sheets may be attached.**

The study will collect primary data, based on questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The questionnaire will cover topics such as definitions and conceptions of domestic/ intimate violence: awareness of the issue, attitudes about DVAW and beliefs about its causes. The original intent in this research was to interview women and men in Libya, using a stratified sample. Due to the recent situation of armed conflict, the research will initially be carried out within the UK with Libyan/Libyan-origin women and men.

The initial sample will be 75-100 women and 50 men. As much as possible, the sample will be stratified by social class/occupation, age and marriage status. If the situation within Libya alters in the medium term, then a sample of women within Libya will also be obtained, to make 150 in total. This would provide a useful basis on which to compare views of people residing within and outside the country. In case research in Libya is not feasible, then a larger sample within the UK will be obtained.

The questionnaire will be distributed to the following groups/people, with whom I have established some contact: e.g. women teachers working schools in Manchester: one private and one state-backed. (Libyan people often send their children to these schools, which operate on weekends to learn Arabic and to be updated on the school curriculum in Libya, in case they need to take examinations later on.). Parents of children attending the schools; Postgraduate students at Salford and other universities in the region and beyond; Contacts made at programmes and activities organised by the Libyan community in Manchester and in other cities: e.g. to raise money to support resistance, which attended by women as well as men; an Association of Libyan Women that meets weekly (organised by a Libyan woman doctor with an interest in women's welfare); Current, individual contacts with Libyan women: e.g. a woman lawyer working on child custody issues; a caterer; a beautician, shop workers, and a snowball sample of contacts and acquaintances of those already contacted for the survey or for interviews. Much of the sample is likely to live in the NW region; however, I also have contacts in Leeds and London and will try to extend the snowball sample regionally. By combining different venues and ways that Libyan people can be contacted, I intend to find as broad a sample as possible of Libyan women and men. Although it is likely that many in the sample will be middle-class, as many less advantaged people as possible will be included.

The semi-structured interviews; 20-25 women will be interviewed in Manchester. The sample will be drawn initially from the members of the Libyan Women's Association in Manchester. The researcher has already made contacts with key informants who have assured her that they will assist her with this research, indeed they are very much interested in her research as to this date there is very little known about this topic in Libya. The membership of this association include professional women such as teachers, postgraduate students, doctors, also those involved in charities, housewives, single, and divorced, and women from different social and economic backgrounds. Further informants may be obtained through snowball sampling. The Libyan Women's Association is in any case, not the only or main source of the sample for this study, as noted in my RD1 statement (approved August, 2011). Other sources for the sample will include:

a) Teachers and parents of children attending Libyan weekend schools in Manchester. Children from most Libyan families from different classes and backgrounds are sent to

such schools on Saturday and Sunday, whilst attending British schools during the week. The purposes of such schooling are to learn or refresh language skills in Arabic; to cover some of the Libyan school curriculum and also to keep up links with the home country. There are three weekend Libyan schools in Manchester; one is privately run and two are linked with the Libyan Embassy. People tend to send their children to the school closest to their homes.

b) Postgraduate students at Salford University, MMU and the University of Manchester and other universities in the region; (e.g. Leeds). I also have contacts in London, should a larger sample of women be needed.

d) Contacts with Libyan women in Manchester in various occupational roles (e.g. shop assistants; domestic workers, health workers, hairdressers);

e) Networks of contacts will be expanded through snowball sampling in order to build a larger sample.

### **2.3 Are you going to use a questionnaire?**

**YES,** (A copy is attached)

### **2.4 Start Date / Duration of project:**

October 2011

### **2.5 Location of where the project and data collection will take place:**

In the UK (Manchester and Leeds).

In Libya: Tripoli, and a rural area in the south of Libya (If the situation within Libya alters in the medium term).

### **2.6 Nature/Source of funding**

I am in receipt of a scholarship. I am Libyan student and the Cultural Affairs Department at the Libyan Embassy in London is responsible for my tuition fees and I receive a monthly allowance to cover my living and my accommodation expenses.

Although the Government of Libya (now the National Transitional Council) funds my scholarship, there exists no contract or expectation which obliges sharing of outcomes,

data or the process of research, either with the Government of Libya/the National Transitional Council or the University of Tripoli. This was the case in the past and remains so. The only concern of the National Transitional Council and Government of Libya relation to this research is to ensure that the research is finished within the specific time frame for which funding has been provided. Therefore, respondents and interviewees' personal information will not be disclosed to or shared with anyone, including my employer the University of Tripoli (formerly, Al-Fateh University).

**2.7 Are there any regulatory requirements?**

**NO**

If yes, please give details, e.g. from relevant professional bodies

**3. DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS**

**3.1 How many?**

75 women and 50 men. (For the questionnaire)

+ 20-25 women and 10 men for semi-structured interviews.

**3.2 Age:**

20-55 years.

**3.3 Sex:**

Both genders

**3.4 How will they be recruited?**

(Attach a copy of any proposed advertisement)

The respondents will be recruited from University students, members of the Libyan Women Association, the Libyan community in Manchester and London, as well as through snowball sampling.

**3.5 Status of participants:** (e.g. students, public, colleagues, children, hospital patients, prisoners, including young offenders, participants with mental illness or learning difficulties).

Postgraduate students, professional people, including teachers, doctors, nurses, care workers. Other participants will include housewives, service workers etc.

**3.6 Inclusion and exclusion from the project:** (indicate the criteria to be applied).

Children, older people, people with mental and physical illness.

**3.7 Payment to volunteers:** (indicate any sums to be paid to volunteers).

No payment will be offered.

**3.8 Study information:**

Have you provided a study information sheet for the participants?

Yes, (A copy is attached.)

**3.9 Consent:**

(A written consent form for the study participants MUST be provided in all cases, unless the research is a questionnaire.)

Have you produced a written consent form for the participants to sign for your records?

Yes, (A copy is attached.)

#### **4. RISKS AND HAZARDS**

Please respond to the following questions if applicable

**4.1 Are there any risks to the researcher and/or participants?**

(Give details of the procedures and processes to be undertaken, e.g., if the researcher is a lone-worker.)



## Appendices

- The main aim of this research is to understand the attitudes and perception of Libyan people, both men and women, about domestic violence. The sample will include men and women who are aged between 20-55 years.
- Interviews will be conducted in a public places, such as in schools, universities, library, or at some other public place, that any risk of the interviewer is minimised. The researcher will identify a number of options of secure places for conducting interviews, which are conducive for both the interviewees and the interviewer. Interviews will be scheduled during the daytime or before dusk wherever possible.
- Information regarding the venue of the interviews and time will be shared with a friend, colleague or my supervisors or friends in the UK. Throughout the interviews, the researcher will carry a personal mobile phone and safety alarm in order to deal with any uncalled-for situations.
- The researcher does not intend to ask women directly about their personal experiences of domestic violence. Nevertheless, she is aware of her duty to report to concerned authorities about any violent incident or crime committed by the interviewee or against the interviewee that has taken place or will take place within the UK. Prior to the interview, the participants will be alerted as part of the consent process that the researcher will have to disclose information, if a study participant reports being either a victim or an abuser.
- The researcher is aware of UK law requiring researchers to break the confidence of a participant, in case they disclose having committed or being about to commit a crime. Therefore, in the consent form, the following statement will be added:

‘I respect what you say as confidential, but I must let you know that if you tell me you or a member of your family is at risk within the UK, I am obliged to report this. In the first instance, I would consult my supervisors about the relevant authorities.’
- The researcher does not intend to ask male interviewees about their own experiences. Rather, she will concentrate on obtaining their opinions about domestic violence against women (DVAW).

While interviewing men, if the researcher senses or observes that the discussion is becoming heated, she would change the subject in order to discuss a less sensitive topic or else would terminate the interview. The importance of personal safety in the interview process is clearly understood.

#### **4.2 State precautions to minimise the risks and possible adverse events:**

As has been stated in the proposal, this research aims to explore the attitudes of Libyans to domestic violence, not the actual experience of it, therefore this would minimise any psychological discomfort to individuals taking part in this study. Direct questions about people's experiences will not be broached.

The project will adhere to the recommendations of the Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers (Social Research Association). The Principal Investigator is aware of the safety issues which need to be considered in the design and conduct of social research in the field. She is also aware of his responsibility in instructing any co-workers about the precautions necessary to minimise any potential risk in the interview situation, and safety issues and guidelines about precautions will feature in her induction.

Both the Principal Investigator and any co-worker will already have obtained prior information about the characteristics of selected respondents, before the interviews take place. The Principle Investigator will work during the day and remain in regular contact with the supervisor or research office during the period when interviews are to be conducted and will give details of her whereabouts before interviews are conducted.

#### **Issues of sensitivity or security that might arise:**

As stated earlier, major steps will be taken to ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and minimizing discomfort. One issue which needs further attention is related to respondent sensitivity and security. The researcher has undertaken a risk analysis and believes that the potential risks are negligible, since the aims and objectives of this study is to explore the "attitudes and perceptions" of respondents towards domestic violence, and not the personal experience of domestic violence and state violence. The researcher will not ask women directly about their personal experiences about domestic violence. The data will be collected solely on their opinions and ideas about the subject of domestic violence, and

their perceptions of this phenomenon in the society, with an emphasis on a moral and ethical standards in research, in terms of confidentiality, privacy and security for the participants in the sample. Moreover, the nature of the topic is not so sensitive among Libyans as to put the respondents or the researcher at risk.

**4.3 What discomfort (physical or psychological) danger or interference with normal activities might be suffered by the researcher and/or participant(s)? State precautions which will be taken to minimise them:**

Based on the researcher's initial risk assessment, it is unlikely there will be psychological or physical harm associated with this research.

At the end of the interview, I will debrief informants, assuring them of the confidentiality of responses and allowing them space for any further comments they have, including on the interview process itself.

In case of any discomfort on the part of respondents, I will advise and help them to locate agencies such as Rape Crisis Centres, Muslim [or other] women's advice centres, shelters and /or counselling services, as appropriate.

**5. PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED AND HOW YOU INTEND TO ADDRESS THESE:**

There are ethical implications in relation to the research's use of oral evidence, and ethical procedures will be strictly adhered to. Both researchers are fully aware of the fieldwork's ethical implications/responsibilities and will behave professionally and ethically in conducting it, respecting sensitive issues/data. We will give full consideration to: intellectual property rights; confidentiality of information and anonymity, where appropriate, of respondents; transparency of purpose, methods and results; possible uses of the research, and any risk involved

**6. SAFEGUARDS /PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE**

**6.1 Confidentiality:**

a. How long will the recordings be retained and how will they be stored?

b. How will they be destroyed at the end of the project?

c. What further use, if any, do you intend to make of the recordings?

- In order to ensure confidentiality, no names will be written on the interview schedule. Instead, numbers will be printed on questionnaires to distinguish between the interviewees. The consent form sheet will be kept separate from the rest of the interview pack and will be saved in a locker, which will be accessible only by the interviewer. Three years after completion of the PhD, all identifying information consent forms will be destroyed, if not required any more.
- The interview notes will be transcribed and saved in files on a personal computer. Specific codes will be used instead of names to distinguish/identify between respondents and computer files. These computer files will be password-protected at all times and will not be accessible by anyone other than myself. Only the research supervisors will be able to see this information. These computer files will be kept for five years after completion of the PhD.
- Dissemination of the research findings will take place in several ways.
  - A copy of the completed thesis will be handed to Tripoli University, as is required after PhD completion;
  - Conference and seminar papers will be presented at relevant academic and NGO venues;
  - Further publications such as book chapters or journal articles will hopefully be forthcoming.

In all these cases, real names of individuals will not be mentioned and any potential identifying details would be omitted. Much data will be presented in aggregate in any case. Where quotations from individuals are cited, pseudonyms will be used.

## **6.2 Human Tissue Act:**

The Human Tissue Act came into force in November 2004, and requires appropriate consent for, and regulates the removal, storage and use of all human tissue.

a. Does your project involve taking tissue samples, e.g., blood, urine, hair, etc., from human subjects? NO

b. Will this be discarded when the project is terminated? /N/A

If NO – Explain how the samples will be placed into a tissue bank under the Human Tissue Act regulations:

**6.3 Insurance:**

The University holds insurance policies that will cover claims for negligence arising from the conduct of the University’s normal business, which includes research carried out by staff and by undergraduate and postgraduate students as part of their courses. This does **not** extend to clinical negligence. There are no arrangements to provide indemnity and/or compensation in the event of claims for non-negligent harm.

Will the proposed project result in you undertaking any activity that would not be considered as normal University business? If so, please detail below:

NO

**6.4 Notification of Adverse Events (e.g., negative reaction, counsellor, etc):**

(Indicate precautions taken to avoid adverse reactions.)

Please state the processes/procedures in place to respond to possible adverse reactions.

I will locate agencies such as Shelters, Rape Crisis Centres, Muslim women’s advice centres, and counselling services that refer women/people to in case of need.

In the case of clinical research, you will need to abide by specific guidance. This may include notification to GP and ethics committee. **Please seek guidance for up to date advice**, e.g., see the NRES website at <http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/>

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

DATE:

.....

.....

SIGNATURE OF FACULTY ACADEMIC ETHICS

DATE:

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

.....

.....

## **APPENDIX**

### **Checklist of attachments needed:**

1. Participant consent form
2. Participant information sheet
3. Full protocol
4. Advertising details
5. Insurance notification forms
6. NHS forms (where appropriate)
7. Other evidence of ethical approval (e.g., another University Ethics Committee approval)

### **Reference cited:**

World Health Organisation (2001) Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Violence against Women, Geneva: World Health Organisation.

## Appendix 2: The Approval Letter from the Ethics Committee

Faculty of Humanities, Law and Social Sciences

Dr Susie Jacobs  
Department of Sociology

5 March 2012

Dear Dr Jacobs,

**Application for Ethical Approval: Suaad M ELABANI**

I am pleased to inform you that, following Suaad's amendment of her consent form, the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee has approved the application.

I would be grateful if you could inform the other member(s) of the supervisory team.

Yours sincerely

*K Walthall*

Katherine Walthall  
Research Group Officer

Tel: +44 (0)161 247 6673  
Email: [k.walthall@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:k.walthall@mmu.ac.uk)  
Research and Enterprise Office  
Room 212 Geoffrey Manton Building



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

Geoffrey Manton Building  
Rosamond Street West  
Off Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M15 6LL  
United Kingdom

Website  
<http://www2.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/>

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cc. Departmental Research Degrees Co-ordinator  
HLSS Research Degrees Administrator  
Applicant

### Appendix 3: The Consent Form

#### Consent Form for semi-structured interviews

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Libyan student at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). I am conducting a study about attitudes to domestic violence among Libyan migrants in the UK. This is to explore women's and men's perceptions of domestic violence towards women and to ascertain men's and women's ideas about the extent, nature and reasons for domestic/intimate violence. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD in the Sociology department at MMU, under the supervision of Drs: Susie Jacobs, Kathryn Chadwick, and Shoba Arun. All data collected in this research will be held securely. Real names or identifying information of respondents will not be used in the write-up. Instead, fictitious names will be used to identify the interviewees. My work itself is for research only and no one else will have access to any information that I obtain, except myself and my project supervisors. You can stop the interview at any time, and can choose to have your data withdrawn at a later date. I hope that you will be able to talk to me as your opinions are valued.

I respect what you say as confidential, but I must let you know that if you tell me you or a member of your family is at risk within the UK, I am obliged to report this. In the first instance, I would consult my supervisors about the relevant authorities.

Please sign below to give consent that you agree to participate in this research.

Print Name .....

Signature: ..... Date.....

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed; your time is much appreciated. At any point during the interview, if you feel uncomfortable or think the discussion goes on too long, please feel free to stop or to ask to discontinue the interview.

Thank you,  
Suaad M Elabani  
Department of Sociology



### Appendix 3A: The Consent Form (Arabic translation)

#### نموذج الموافقة على إجراء المقابلة

أنا طالبة لبيبة أدرس بجامعة مانشستر متروبوليتان (MMU) ، اقوم حالياً بدراسة حول موضوع العنف العائلي ضد المرأة اللببية بغرض الحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في علم الاجتماع تحت اشراف كل من :

د. سوزي جاكوبس

د. كاترين شادويك

د. شوبا أرون

إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو جمع البيانات ذات العلاقة بموضوع العنف العائلي ضد المرأة في المجتمع اللببي لمعرفة الموقف المجتمعي من ظاهرة العنف العائلي ضد المرأة والوعي بها كظاهرة يفترض انتشارها داخل المجتمع اللببي ومحاولة الوقوف عند الاسباب الكامنة احتمالاً في انتشارها ، وهذه البيانات ستستخدم فقط لغرض البحث العلمي ، كما أنه لن يتم تحديد هوية المبحوث ، هذا فضلاً على أن استجابتكم سوف تستخدم فقط في الاغراض الاكاديمية . كما أن المعلومات ستكون حصراً للدراسة العلمية وسيتم اتباع مبدأ السرية التامة . يمكنك إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت ويمكنك أيضاً الانسحاب في أي وقت ترغب من المقابلة . أرجو ان تكون قادراً على الحديث معي . أن مشاركتكم تسهم في فهم أشكالية العنف العائلي ضد المرأة والوعي بها ووضع تصور للحد منها في المجتمع.

إن مبدأ السرية مكفول ومحفوظ بالكامل ، ولكن إن تنامي إلى علمي أنك أو أحد أفراد أسرتك في خطر داخل المملكة المتحدة ، فأني سأقوم بالتحدث عن مشكلتك إلى الأستاذ المشرف لتقديم المشورة بهذا الخصوص .

برجاء التوقيع أدناه لتأكيد موافقتك على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

التوقيع .....

الأسم .....

التاريخ .....

لكم جزيل الشكر والتقدير

الباحثة : سعاد محمد العباني

## Appendix 4: The Questionnaire



Manchester Metropolitan University  
Sociology Department

PhD Research Questionnaire

Perceptions and Attitudes of Libyan Migrants in the UK to Domestic Violence against Women

Researcher

Suaad. M. Elabani

[Suaad\\_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Suaad_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk)

[SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK](mailto:SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK)

## Appendices

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I am a Libyan student at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). I am conducting a study about attitudes to domestic violence among Libyan migrants in the UK. This is to explore women and men's perceptions of domestic violence towards women and to ascertain men and women's ideas about the extent, nature and reasons for domestic/intimate violence. I am conducting this research to obtain a PhD in the Sociology department at Manchester Metropolitan University, under the supervision of Drs. Susie Jacobs, Kathryn Chadwick and Shoba Arun.

I hope that you are able to respond to my questionnaire. All data collected in this survey will be held securely. No names or identifying information will be used in the write-up. My work itself is for research only and no one else will have access to any information that I obtain. You can choose to have your data withdrawn at a later date.

Please read the questions carefully and answer by ticking the appropriate letter or writing in blank spaces. If you require clarification in answering any of the questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for help.

Thank you very much for taking part in this study. I appreciate your taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

**Thank you.**

Suaad M. Elaban

Questionnaire no: .....

Date: .....

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Note: Please tick the correct answer if required inside the parenthesis ( )

**Socio-demographic Information**

**(1) Gender:**

- Female ( )
- Male ( )

**(2) What is your age?**

- 20-30 ( )
- 31- 40 ( )
- 41- 50 ( )
- 51 -60 ( )
- above 60 ( )

**(3) Former residence, where did you live in Libya? .....**

**(4) How long have you been in the UK?**

- Less than one year
- 1-5
- 6- 10
- 11 - 15
- 16 - 20
- 21 - 25
- More than 25 years

**(5) Place of residence:** Where do you live in the UK? .....

**(6) Educational background:** please specify the highest level of education you have acquired:

- No formal education ( )
- Primary school ( )
- Secondary school ( )
- High school ( )
- Bachelors ( )
- Masters ( )
- PhD ( )
- Any other, please specify .....

**(7) Did you work in Libya?**

- Yes ( )
- No( )

**(8) If yes, what was your job?.....**

**(9) Are you working?**

- Yes ( )
- No( )

**(10) If yes, what is your job?.....**

**(11) Marital status**

- Single ( )
- Married ( )
- Divorced ( )
- Widow ( )

Appendices

*If you are single, please go to question number (21)*

(12) Do you have any children?

- Yes ( )
- No( )

(13) If yes, please describe their gender/sex in the table given below:

	Total no of children	No of male child/children	No of female child/children
Child/Children			

(14) How old were you when you got married?.....

(15) How long you have been married?.....

(16) Does your husband (your wife) work?

- Yes( )
- No( )

(17) If yes, what is his (her) job? .....

(18) What is your husband's (your wife) age?

- 20- 30 ( )
- 31-40( )
- 41 -50 ( )
- 51 - 60( )
- above 60 ( )

(19) How old was your husband (your wife) when he (she) got married? .....

(20) Number of marriages:

- once ( )
- twice ( )
- three times ( )
- four times or more( )

(21)What social class would you say you belong to?

- upper class( )
- middle-class ( )
- working-class( )
- other/unemployed( )
- not relevant to me( )

(22) On what basis, what makes you a 'member' of this class?

- Income( )
- education( )
- family status ( )
- property ownership( )
- lack of ownership ( )
- other( )

(23) Would you mind indicating which band your family income?

- below £10.000 pa
- £10,000-£20,000 pa
- £20,000 - £30,000 pa
- £30,000 - £40,000 pa
- More than £40,000 pa

**Definition of Domestic Violence against Women**

(24) Which of the following types of behaviour occurring between a husband and wife would you consider to be covered by the term 'domestic violence'? For each statement, please specify the extent of your agreement or disagreement

Definition of Domestic violence against women	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Domestic violence against women includes mental cruelty including verbal abuse.					
b) Domestic violence against women includes deprived of money and clothes					
c) Domestic violence against women includes being threatened with force or violence, even though no actual physical violence occurs.					
d) Domestic violence against women includes physical violence that results in actual bodily harm.					
e) Violence against women includes sexual violence.					

(25) To what extent do you define each of the following behaviours as domestic violence against women? For each statement, please specify the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

Behaviours considered as domestic violence against women	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
a) The husband denies his wife access to household money.					
b) The husband forbids his wife to go out of the house alone.					
c) The husband shouts at his wife.					
d) The husband curses his wife.					
e) The husband pulls or pushes his wife.					
f) The husband slaps his wife.					
g) The husband punches his wife.					
h) The husband breaks things in the house.					
i) Forced marriage is a type of violence against women.					

**Beliefs about causes of domestic violence against women.**

(26) **Economic factors:** To what extent do you think economic factors cause domestic violence against women? For each statement, please specify the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

Economic causes of domestic violence against women	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Women who earn more than men are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.					
b) Women who keep on demanding money from men are likely to become victim of domestic violence.					
c) Women depending on men for food, shelter and other material things are more likely to become victims of domestic violence.					
d) Unemployed men tend to get frustrated and depressed, which lead to domestic violence.					
e) The lack of resources (e.g. house, money etc) increases the likelihood of domestic violence.					
f) Situations where women do not wish to work or do not voluntarily give away their earning to men can cause domestic violence.					

**(27) Socialisation/individuals and cultural factors causes: To what extent do you think social factors cause domestic violence against women?** For each statement, please specify the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

Social causes of domestic violence against women	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Drug and alcohol dependence can lead to domestic violence					
b) Boys who witness their fathers' violence towards their mothers are more likely to be violent when they grow up					
c) The inherent inequality between male and female in society leads to domestic violence					
d) Tolerance of domestic violence against women leads to its recurrence.					
e) Lack of education of women is a cause of domestic violence .					
f) Misinterpretation of religious texts in which men have rights to use domestic violence in order to correct women					
g) Low educational level of men leads to domestic violence					
h) The high level of women's education can lead to domestic violence					

**Views on the incidences of domestic violence e against women:**

**(28) Do you think women suffer from domestic violence in Libyan communities?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )
- Sometimes ( )

**(29) Do you think that the level of domestic violence towards women has increased recently in Libya?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )
- I do not know ( )

**(30) Has any woman in your family /friend suffered from domestic violence?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )
- I do not know ( )

**Views on the differences between the culture of the British and Libyan society in terms of domestic violence:**

**(31) Do you think there is a different between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of domestic violence against women?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )
- I do not know ( )

**(32) Do you think that the culture of British society has made difference on Libyan men in dealing with women?**

- Yes ( )
- No ( )
- I do not know ( )

**Justifications for domestic violence against women and blaming women for domestic violence**

(33) In your opinion, are men justified in using violence against women in the following incidences: For each statement, please specify the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

Justifying domestic violence against women	Strongly agree	agree	Neither agree nor disagree	disagree	Strongly disagree
a) If a wife goes out without telling her husband?					
b) If she neglects the children in his view?					
c) If she argues with him?					
d) If she disobeys him?					
e) If she disobeys his parents?					
f) If she lies to her husband she deserves violence against her					
g) If she were sexually unfaithful					
h) If she fail to meet the expectations of their husbands deserve violence against them					

**Perceptions of domestic violence against women in Libya:**

(34) For each statement, please choose the answer.

Domestic violence against women in Libya	Yes	No
a) Are you aware of any law against domestic violence in Libya?		
b) Would you encourage Libyan women to speak out about domestic violence?		
c) Do you think women should fight for their rights?		

Domestic violence against women in Libya	Yes	No	Somet imes
d) Do you think the laws passed to safeguard women's rights are sufficient in Libya?			
e) Do you think that status of Libyan women in will improve in the future?			
f) Do you feel that any changes in Libyan law are required to enable society to deal with domestic violence more effectively?			
g) Would you encourage women to go to the police in Libya?			
h) Would you encourage women to go to a lawyer in Libya?			
i) Do you think that the manner of domestic violence towards women has changed recently in Libya due to women's education or employment and growing awareness of women's rights?			



## Appendix 5: The Questionnaire (Arabic translation)



Manchester Metropolitan University

جامعة مانشستر متروبوليتان

قسم علم الاجتماع

إستمارة استبيان

الاتجاهات جنماعية نحو ظاهرة العنف العائلي ضد المرأة الليبية

(دراسة ميدانية تحليلية بناء على آراء عينة من الأفراد الليبيين في المملكة المتحدة)

الباحثة

سعاد محمد العباني

[Suaad\\_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Suaad_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk)

[SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK](mailto:SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK)

**الأخ الكريم / الأخت الكريمة:**

أنا طالبة ليبية أدرس بجامعة مانشستر متروبوليتان (MMU) ، اقوم حالياً بدراسة حول موضوع العنف العائلي ضد المرأة الليبية داخل اطار العائلة ، بغرض الحصول على درجة الدكتوراة في علم الاجتماع تحت اشراف كل من :

د. سوزي جاكوبس

د. كاترين شادويك

د. شوبا أرون

برجاء مطالعة محتويات هذه الاستمارة والأجابة عن الأسئلة الواردة فيها خدمةً للبحث العلمي . أن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو جمع البيانات ذات العلاقة بموضوع العنف العائلي ضد المرأة في المجتمع الليبي لمعرفة الموقف المجتمعي من ظاهرة العنف ضد المرأة والوعي بها كظاهرة يفترض انتشارها داخل المجتمع الليبي ومحاولة الوقوف عند الاسباب الكامنة احتمالاً في انتشارها ، وهذه البيانات ستستخدم فقط لغرض البحث العلمي ، كما أن هذا الاستبيان لن يحدد هوية المبحوث ، هذا فضلاً على أن استجابتكم سوف لن تستخدم في غير الاغراض الاكاديمية .

**العنف العائلي** هو محور البحث في هذه الدراسة. ويقصد به أي سلوك عنيف يمارسه الرجل ضد المرأة داخل اطار العائلة . قد يكون من قبل الزوج أو الأخ أو الأب .

شكراً لحسن تعاونكم.

سعاد محمد العياني

رقم الاستمارة:.....  
التاريخ:.....

**يرجاء اختيار الإجابة أو الفقرة أو كتابة الإجابة المناسبة على الأسئلة التالية:**  
**أولاً : البيانات الأولية ( وصف مفردات العينة)**

1. الجنس :  
 ذكر  
 أنثى
2. كم تبلغ من العمر؟  
 20 - 30  
 31 - 40  
 41 - 50  
 51 - 60  
 أكثر من 60
3. مكان الإقامة السابق في ليبيا ، يرجى ذكره .....
4. كم مر على وجودك في المملكة المتحدة  
 أقل من سنة  
 1 - 5  
 5 - 10  
 10 - 15  
 15 - 20  
 20 - 25  
 أكثر من 25 سنة
5. مكان السكن حالياً ( بالمملكة المتحدة ) ، يرجى ذكره .....
6. المؤهل العلمي :  
 لا يوجد تعليم رسمي  
 تعليم ابتدائي  
 تعليم اعدادي  
 تعليم ثانوي او متوسط  
 تعليم جامعي أو معهد عالي  
 ماجستير  
 دكتوراة  
 اخر ، يرجى ذكره .....
7. هل كنت تعمل في ليبيا ؟  
 نعم  
 لا
8. اذا كانت الاجابة عن السؤال السابق نعم ، ماهو العمل الذي تقوم به ؟يرجى التحديد .....
9. هل تعمل حالياً ؟  
 نعم  
 لا
10. اذا كانت الاجابة عن السؤال السابق نعم ، ماهو العمل الذي تقوم به حالياً ؟يرجى التحديد.....
11. الحالة الاجتماعية:  
 أعزب  
 متزوج  
 مطلق  
 ارمل

**إذا كنت اعزب يرجاء الاتفال الي السؤال رقم (21)**

12. هل لديك اطفال؟  
 نعم  
 لا

13. إذا كانت اجابة السؤال السابق نعم يرجى تحديد عدد الابناء وجنسهم وفق الجدول التالي:


14. كم كان عمرك عند زواجك الحالي؟.....

15. كم عدد سنوات زواجك الحالي؟.....

16. هل يعمل زوجك ( زوجتك ) حالياً؟  
 نعم  
 لا

17. إذا كانت الاجابة عن السؤال السابق نعم، ما هي وظيفته ( وظيفتها )؟يرجى ذكرها .....

18. كم يبلغ زوجك ( زوجتك ) من العمر؟  
 20-30  
 31-40  
 41-50  
 51-60  
 أكثر من 60

19. كم كان عمر زوجك ( زوجتك ) عند الزواج؟ برجاا كتابة عدد السنوات .....

20. عدد مرات الزواج:  
 مرة واحدة  
 مرتان  
 ثلاث مرات  
 اربع مرات او اكثر

21. ما هي الطبقة الاجتماعية التي تعتقد انك تنتمي اليها:  
 الطبقة العالية  
 الطبقة المتوسطة  
 الطبقة العاملة  
 اخري , عاطل عن العمل  
 افضل عدم الاجابة

22. ما هو الاساس الذي جعلك تختار الطبقة الاجتماعية التي تنتمي اليها؟ برجاا الاختيار  
 مستوى الدخل  
 المستوى التعليمي  
 مركز العائلة  
 العقار الذي تملك  
 اخري

23. برجاا تحديد دخلك العائلة السنوي  
 اقل £10,000  
 £10,000 – £20,000  
 £20,000 - £30,000  
 £30,000 - £40,000  
 اكثر من £40,000

## Appendices

ثانياً: البيانات المتعلقة باهداف ادراسة ( متغيرات البحث )

مفهوم العنف العائلي ضد المرأة

24. أي من السلوكيات التالية التي تحدث بين الرجل والمرأة داخل اطار العائلة يمكن القول بانها عنف ضد المرأة؟  
عن كل سلوك يرجى اختيار درجة الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع كل بيان من الجدول التالي:

أرفض بشدة	ارفض	غير موافق ولا أوافق	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	مفهوم العنف العائلي ضد المرأة
					العنف العائلي ضد المرأة هو الاعتداء العاطفي والنفسي عليها ويشمل الاعتداء اللفظي
					العنف العائلي ضد المرأة هو حرمانها من الحاجات الاقتصادية والمادية
					العنف العائلي ضد المرأة هو التهديد مع القوة والقسوة دون أن يحدث ضرب مباشر للمرأة
					العنف العائلي ضد المرأة هو العنف الجسدي بالضرب الذي يحدث عنه إلقاء أذى جسدي
					العنف العائلي ضد المرأة يشمل العنف الجنسي

25. الى اى مدى تعتبر السلوكيات التالية عنف عائلي ضد المرأة، عن كل متغير يرجى اختيار درجة الاتفاق أو

الاختلاف مع كل بيان من الجدول التالي

أرفض بشدة	ارفض	غير موافق ولا أوافق	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	المتغير
					رفض الزوج إعطاء المال لزوجته لمصاريف البيت
					منع الزوج خروج زوجته من المنزل بمفردها
					الصراخ في وجه الزوجة
					توجيه الشتائم للزوجة
					دفع الزوج لزوجته
					صفع الزوج لزوجته
					توجيه اللكمات او الركلات للزوجة
					تحطيم الزوج لاغراض المنزل
					الزواج القسري نوع من انواع العنف ضد المرأة

المعتقدات ووجهات النظر حول اسباب العنف العائلي ضد المرأة

26. الأسباب الاقتصادية: الى اى مدى تعتبر الاسباب التالية اسباب اقتصادية للعنف العائلي ضد المرأة، عن كل

متغير يرجى اختيار درجة الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع كل بيان من الجدول التالي:

أرفض بشدة	ارفض	غير موافق ولا أوافق	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	العوامل الاقتصادية للعنف العائلي ضد المرأة
					عندما يكون مرتب المرأة أعلى من مرتب الرجل قد يؤدي للعنف ضدها
					المرأة المتطلبة للمال من الرجل قد تكون ضحية العنف العائلي
					اعتماد النساء على الرجال مادياً من الاسباب الاقتصادية للعنف العائلي
					الرجال العاطلين عن العمل و نتيجة لشعورهم بالاحباط واليأس أكثر ميلاً لاستخدام العنف داخل المنزل
					عدم وجود الموارد المادية مثل البيت والمال يزيد من احتمال العنف العائلي ضد المرأة
					عندما تجبر المرأة على العمل وتعطي مرتبها قسراً للزوج من أسباب العنف العائلي

27. الأسباب الاجتماعية للعنف العائلي ضد المرأة: عن كل متغير يرجى اختيار درجة الاتفاق أو الاختلاف مع كل

بيان من الجدول التالي:

أرفض بشدة	ارفض	غير موافق ولا رافض	أوافق بشدة	العوامل الاجتماعية للعنف العائلي ضد المرأة
				الادمان على الكحول والمخدرات يؤدي الى العنف العائلي ضد المرأة
				الابناء الذين يشهدون العنف ضد امهاتهم من قبل ابائهم اكثر ميلا لممارسة للعنف العائلي عندما يكبرون
				الموروث الثقافي الذي يسهم في تأصل الفروق النوعية بين الجنسين تؤدي الى زيادة معدلات العنف العائلي ضد المرأة
				تسامح المرأة مع العنف العائلي وقبول السلوك العنيف يؤدي الى تكراره
				عدم إتمام المرأة لتعليمها يزيد من العنف ضدها داخل اطار العائلة
				سوء تفسير النصوص الدينية التي تؤكد حق الرجل في ضرب زوجته يزيد من معدلات العنف العائلي
				تدني مستوى تعليم الرجل يؤدي الى العنف المنزلي
				عندما يكون مستوى تعليم المرأة اعلى من الزوج يؤدي لزيادة احتمال تعرضها للعنف العائلي

مؤشرات حول انتشار العنف

28. هل تعتقد ان المرأة الليبية تتعرض لأنواع كثيرة من العنف العائلي ؟

- نعم  
 لا  
 في بعض الاحيان

29. هل تعتقد ان معدلات العنف العائلي ضد المرأة الليبية قد ازدادت في الالونة الاخيرة ؟

- نعم  
 لا  
 لا اعرف

30. هل تعرف أي امرأة تتعرض للعنف العائلي من المحيطين بك؟

- نعم  
 لا  
 لا اعرف

الفرق بين المجتمع الليبي والمجتمع البريطاني استنادا على موضوع العنف العائلي ضد المرأة

31. هل يختلف العنف العائلي ضد المرأة ببريطانيا عنه في ليبيا من حيث معدلات حدوثه وأنواعه والوعي بخطورته؟

- نعم  
 لا

32. هل تعتقد ان ثقافة المجتمع البريطاني أثرت علي الرجل الليبي من حيث تعامله مع المرأة؟

- نعم  
 لا  
 لا ادري

تبرير العنف العائلي ضد المرأة ولوم النساء على السلوك العنيف ضدهن داخل اطار العائلة:

33. هل تبرر استخدام الرجل للسلوك العنيف في الحالات التالية؟ عن كل فقرة حدد مدى اتفاقك او اختلافك مع كل

متغير حسب الجدول التالي:

مؤشرات حول اشكالية العنف العائلي ضد المرأة في ليبيا

34. برجاء اختيار الاجابة المناسبة عن كل فقرة من الاتي:

لا اعرف	لا	نعم	المواقف حول المرأة في ليبيا والعنف العائلي
			هل تعرف اي قانون يتعلق بمكافحة العنف العائلي ضد المرأة في ليبيا؟
			هل تشجع المرأة على التصريح بانها تتعرض لاي شكل من أشكال العنف العائلي في ليبيا؟
			هل تعتقد ان المرأة يجب ان تكافح من أجل حقوقها؟
			هل تعتقد بانه تم إصدار قوانين لحماية المرأة بما فيه الكفاية في ليبيا؟
			هل تعتقد بان وضع المرأة سيتحسن في المستقبل في ليبيا؟
			هل ترى أن هناك حاجة لتغيرات جوهرية في القوانين لتمكين المجتمع من التعامل مع العنف العائلي في ليبيا
			هل تشجع النساء المعنفات داخل العائلة بالذهاب الى الشرطة في ليبيا؟
			هل تشجع النساء المعنفات داخل العائلة بالذهاب الى محامي في ليبيا؟
			هل تعتقد أن مستوى وطريقة العنف ضد المرأة قد تغيرت في الاونة الاخيرة في ليبيا؟

35. هل ترغب في اضافة أي تعليق ؟

شكرا لتعاونكم معنا



## **Appendix 6: Interview Checklist - Semi-Structured Interviews**



**Manchester Metropolitan University  
Sociology Department**

### **Interview Schedule**

**PhD Research**

**Perceptions of and Attitudes of Libyan migrants towards Domestic  
Violence against Women**

**Researcher**

**Suaad. M. Elabani**

**[Suaad\\_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Suaad_alba2th@yahoo.co.uk)**

**[SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK](mailto:SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@STU.MMU.CO.UK)**

Interviewee No: .....

Date: .....

---

**Introduction**

Introduce myself and my topic to the interviewee and ask them to read the consent form carefully and sign it. After agreeing and the discussion of consent issues I will start the interview.

**A. Socio-demographic information**

1. Could you tell about yourself? Your age? Your former residence, where did you live in Libya? What is your place of birth and where do you live in UK?
2. Could you tell me about your education? Where did you go to school? What level of education did you have?
3. Could you tell me about your occupation and work? What work did you do in Libya? And here in the UK?
4. Could you tell me about your marital status and your family, your family income and your social class?

**B. Definition of domestic violence against women:**

5. How would you define domestic violence against women?
6. Can you think of any types of domestic violence against women? Which types would you say are the most common in society today?
7. Do you consider early marriage and forced marriage as domestic violence against women? And why?

**C. Beliefs about causes of domestic violence against women**

8. In your opinion, what are the possible economic, cultural, educational and social factors that could cause domestic violence against women?

**D. Attitudes towards domestic violence against women**

9. Many women whose husbands are violent against them do not leave the relationship. What do you think prevents them from doing this?
  10. What is the different between the culture of British society and Libyan society in terms of domestic violence against women?
  11. Have your views about domestic violence against women changed since living in the UK or have they stayed the same?

**E. Justifying domestic violence against women and blaming women for domestic violence**

12. When do you think a woman deserves domestic violence?

## Appendices

13. In your relationship(s) with your husband (wife) or in your family, have you ever experienced domestic violence?

14. Have any women in your family or friends suffered from domestic violence and witch type of violence she had experienced? Could you give any details of the type of violence and the situation more generally?

### **F. Violence against women in Libya**

15. Do you know of any laws against domestic violence in Libya?

16. Do you think there is enough support available for each stage of a violent relationship?

17. Do you think there is enough media coverage of violence against women in Libya and in the UK? And how do you think media coverage of violence against women affects public opinion?

### **Would you like to add anything?**

If you have any further comments regarding the interview process, or if you want to share any other information with me that you think I should know, you are most welcome to do so.

At the end of the interview, I debrief informants, assuring them of the confidentiality of responses and allowing them space for any further comments they have, including on the interview process itself. Also thanking them for their co-operation.

Suaad M Elabani

Dept. of Sociology, MMU

Email; [SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@mmu.co.uk](mailto:SUAAD-M.A.ELABANI@mmu.co.uk)

[Suaad\\_alba2th@yahoo.com.uk](mailto:Suaad_alba2th@yahoo.com.uk)

## Appendix 7: Target quantitative Sample of Libyan Migrants in the UK

**Target sample of Libyan migrants in UK linked to age**

Gender	Age			total
	20-30 years	31-50 years	+50	
Women	30	40	30	100
Men	15	25	10	50

**Target sample of Libyan migrants in UK linked to marital status**

Marital status	Single	Married	divorced	Widowed	Total
Women	35	40	15	10	100
Men	15	20	8	7	50

**Target sample of Libyan migrants in UK linked to educational level**

Education	PhD and Master	BA	Less than BA	Total
Women	10	40	50	100
Men	5	20	25	50

**Target sample of Libyan migrants in UK linked to occupation and class**

Occupation/ class	Upper class	Middle class/professional	Lower class	middle class	Working class (and unemployed)	Total
Women	15	40	30		15	100
Men	10	15	15		10	50

**Appendix 8: Demographic Information for survey respondents Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11**

**Table 1  
Age of respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	20-30	48	27.4	27.4
	31-40	62	35.4	35.4
	41-50	52	29.7	29.7
	51-60	12	6.9	6.9
	more than 60	1	.6	.6
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 2  
Gender of respondent**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	male	67	38.3	38.3
	female	108	61.7	61.7
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 3  
Marital status of respondent**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	single	65	37.1	37.1
	married	102	58.3	58.3
	divorced	5	2.9	2.9
	widow	3	1.7	1.7
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 4  
Do you have any children?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	yes	94	53.7	53.7
	no	81	46.3	46.3
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 5**  
**Place of residence in Libya**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid large cities	88	50.3	50.3
small cities	87	49.7	49.7
Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 6**  
**Educational background of respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid no formal education	1	.6	.6
primary school	2	1.1	1.1
secondary school	30	17.1	17.1
high school	48	27.4	27.4
bachelor	41	23.4	23.4
masters	39	22.3	22.3
PhD	14	8.0	8.0
Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 7**  
**The length of residency in UK**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid less than one year	5	2.9	2.9
1-5 year	57	32.6	32.9
6-10year	41	23.4	23.7
11-15 year	26	14.9	15.0
16-20 year	40	22.9	23.1
21-25 year	3	1.7	1.7
more than 25 years	1	.6	.6
Total	173	98.9	100.0
Missing -1	2	1.1	
Total	175	100.0	

**Table 8**  
**Did you work in Libya?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid yes	114	65.1	65.1
no	61	34.9	34.9
Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 9**  
**The participants` job in Libya**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	professional	36	20.6	20.6
	managerial	26	14.9	14.9
	teacher	35	20.0	20.0
	catering sector	5	2.9	2.9
	doctor	11	6.3	6.3
	other	1	.6	.6
	not in payment job	61	34.9	34.9
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 10**  
**Are you working in the UK?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	yes	59	33.7	33.7
	no	116	66.3	66.3
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 11**  
**The participants job in UK**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Managerial	2	1.1	1.1
	Teacher	20	11.4	11.4
	Food sector	6	3.4	3.4
	Doctor	9	5.1	5.1
	Driver	6	3.4	3.4
	Other	16	9.1	9.1
	Not in a payment job	113	64.6	64.6
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 12**  
**Participants social class**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	upper class	14	8.0	8.0
	middle-class	126	72.0	72.0
	working-class	5	2.9	2.9
	other/unemployed	19	10.9	10.9
	not relevant to me	11	6.3	6.3
	Total	175	100.0	100.0

**Table 13**  
**On what basis, what makes you a 'member' of this class?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	Income	17	9.7	9.7	9.7
	education	34	19.4	19.4	29.1
	family status	63	36.0	36.0	65.1
	property ownership	14	8.0	8.0	73.1
	lack of ownership	7	4.0	4.0	77.1
	other	40	22.9	22.9	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

**Table 14**  
**Family income**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	below £10,000 pa	57	32.6	33.3	33.3
	£10,000-£20,000 pa	61	34.9	35.7	69.0
	£21,000 - £30,000 pa	38	21.7	22.2	91.2
	£31,000 - £40,000 pa	10	5.7	5.8	97.1
	More than £40,000 pa	5	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	171	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.3		
Total		175	100.0		

**Table 14**  
**Gender of respondent and Kind of their job in the UK**

		Kind of job in UK							
		Professional I	Managerial	Teacher	Food sector	Doctor	Driver	Other	Not working
Male	Count	1	0	2	6	8	6	4	40
	%	1.5	0.0	3.0	9.0	11.9	9.0	6.0	59.7
Female	Count	2	2	18	0	0	0	12	74
	%	1.9	1.9	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	68.5
	Count	3	2	20	6	8	6	16	114
	%	1.7	1.1	11.4	3.4	4.6	3.4	9.1	65.1



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