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Partner Violence in Cambodia: Examining Tolerance and Incidence

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between experience of and tolerance for partner violence in Cambodia among ever-married women age 15-49. Controlling for socio-demographic variables, we compare the risk factors which make women more likely to (1) report experience(s) of partner violence and (2) report high tolerance for partner violence. Current research on domestic violence often highlights tolerance as an indication of the social environment and therefore a potential risk factor for incidence of domestic violence. Using data from the 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS), we employ logistic regression to explore risk factors for tolerance and experience of partner violence. Comparison of these two models illuminates the links between tolerance and incidence. We find that tolerance is significantly related to experience of violence. Additionally, we find that women's tolerance for domestic violence is generally predicted by women's social capital, whereas incidence is more clearly related to early life experiences and economic variables.

Introduction

Using Cambodia as a case study, this paper tests the hypothesis that there is a strong and positive relationship between tolerance for and incidence of partner violence. We first discuss how reported incidence of domestic violence and reported tolerance for wife-beating have been linked in the past. We then use logistic regression models to separately explore the predictors of high levels of tolerance and predictors of experience of partner violence among ever-married women in Cambodia. We find that high tolerance for wife beating is significantly related to incidence of violence. We also find, however, that the protective and risk factors for domestic violence are largely unrelated to the factors which influence high tolerance for spouse abuse. Socioeconomic characteristics of the individual woman and her household are most closely related to incidence of violence, while measures of women's empowerment most substantially affect tolerance for violence.

Domestic Violence in Global Context

Over the past few decades, the academic community has increasingly recognized domestic violence as an important site for scholarly research. During the 1990s, research on the area increased dramatically, and a great deal of knowledge on the correlates of domestic violence victimization and perpetration is now available (Johnson and Ferraro 2000). As many cross-cultural researchers have noted, original study of domestic violence was limited to the United States and other Western countries. More recently there has been increasing scholarly interest in the predictors and correlates of domestic violence in other countries.

In 2002, Watts and Zimmerman conducted a review of over 50 population-based surveys from around the world and found that estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence vary from

10-50%. These prevalence estimates are likely biased downward, as domestic violence is thought to be often underreported due to the intimate nature of the issue (Watts and Zimmerman 2002).

Numerous studies of domestic violence in individual countries have greatly contributed to our knowledge of both the prevalence and predictors of domestic violence, and make clear that domestic violence is a significant problem globally. Survey data from three provinces in South Africa indicate that the prevalence of domestic violence at some point for women is 24.6% (Jewkes et al 2002). In Bangladesh, 67% of women from six villages surveyed reported a history of domestic violence (Bates et al 2004), and 30% of men surveyed in Uttar Pradesh, India reported physically abusing their wives (Gerstein 2000). Fifty-two percent of women surveyed in Nicaragua report a lifetime experience of domestic violence (Ellsberg et al 2000), and in Russia, a more economically developed country than many of those considered in studies, 27% of married women in the sample had experienced domestic violence (Cubbins and Vannoy 2005).

Theoretical Framework

Our study follows the work of Heise (1998) and others who call for studying domestic violence on multiple levels. We consider the relative importance of both individual and household characteristics in determining both tolerance for and risk for experience of domestic violence. Incorporating information on individual's tolerance for domestic violence provides some insight into the social acceptability of domestic violence and the context in which violence can occur.

Heise (1998) introduced an ecological framework for studying domestic violence. Her model "conceptualizes violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among interpersonal, situational, and sociocultural factors." This model posits embedded levels of

causality: Personal history (such as witnessing or experiencing abuse as a child) is embedded within the microsystem (e.g. male dominance, high levels of male control within the family, marital conflict, use/abuse of alcohol), which is embedded within the exosystem (e.g. unemployment, low socioeconomic status, social isolation), which exists within the macrosystem (including acceptance of physical violence, rigid gender roles, and cultural norms that link masculinity to aggression and violence) (Heise 1998).

Several scholars have made use of the levels described in this model to make sense of the different factors associated with domestic violence (Ellsberg 2000, Naved and Persson 2005), and others have echoed the call for studies examining domestic violence at different levels. Krug et al (2002) emphasize the importance of considering 4 levels when theorizing about domestic violence: personal/biological issues, close relationships, such as family and friends, the community context, and the societal level. Such a framework offers an important organizing tool for examining the many potential factors involved in experience of violence, but it is difficult for any one study to assess the relative importance of each conceptual level of this framework. Our study contributes to the growing literature on domestic violence in developing countries by explicitly exploring the effects of personal/biological issues and close relationships. We also attempt to further unpack the community and social context through an analysis of the effects of individual tolerance of violence, including whether or not the predictors of tolerance for domestic violence also predict the experience of violence.

Much prior work also focuses on the importance of two general groups of important correlates of domestic violence, socioeconomic status and women's empowerment, which may include cultural norms regarding gender and violence. Many scholars theorize that socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and the number of children ever born may influence

domestic violence via their role in increasing stress (Martin et al 1999). Some note, however, that it may be important not only to look at absolute levels of socioeconomic status but also to look at levels of women's economic dependence within relationships (Yount 2005).

The second general group is more conceptually diffuse, and the measures used to capture the part that cultural norms and attitudes play in spousal abuse vary from study to study. Scholars have used individual measures of women's education, employment outside the home, church attendance, access to political institutions, norms of male dominance, and gender norms (Hindin and Adair 2002, Jewkes 2002, Koenig et al 2003). There is, of course, no precise dividing line between the two groups (for example, education may be thought of both as a measure of women's empowerment and an important determinant of socioeconomic status), but it is important that analyses of domestic violence that aim to be generalizable to a specific country context include measures of both dimensions.

In this analysis, we include variables that assess both of these dimensions of domestic violence. In addition, we specifically address the role of tolerance for violence. Tolerance may be thought of as part of the outermost circle in Heise's framework, the broadest context in which to examine domestic violence. As such, we would expect tolerance to predict incidence of violence. The relationship between social acceptability of violence and actual violence is unclear, and is likely to be indirect (Jewkes 2002). We therefore examine which measures shown to be associated with domestic violence in the past are linked to incidence of violence and which to tolerance. This will allow us to assess whether there is overlap between the two, or if one dimension better predicts incidence than tolerance or vice versa.

Individual Characteristics

Although recently scholars have paid more attention to community-level risk factors for violence, the majority of the literature to date concentrates on individual and household-level characteristics (Gage 2005). Though conflicting results continue to obscure the relationship between individual characteristics and violence against women, some factors have consistently been found to be associated with domestic violence. The most important of these appears to be a history of abuse in either of the spouses' past (Naved and Persson 2005, Koenig et al 2003, Jewkes et al 2002). Early life experiences such as witnessing or experiencing abuse during childhood are part of the respondent's background, as are such demographic variables as age. Studies have repeatedly shown increased risk for domestic violence among younger men and women (Bates et al 2004, Hindin and Adair 2002, Schuler et al 1996, Yount 2005). The presence of children is also important: though the direction of the relationship between domestic violence and fertility remains unclear, scholars have demonstrated that experience of violence is associated with higher numbers of children (Martin et al 1999, Palitto and O'Campo 2005). Some prior research also shows that age and tolerance for domestic violence are also inversely related (Hindin 2003), but Yount (2005) demonstrates that attitudes toward wife-beating do not vary between women of younger and older ages.

As indicated above, many researchers have noted the inverse relationship between household income or wealth and risk for domestic violence (Gerstein 2000, Koenig et al 2003, Yount 2005). Martin et al, in a 1999 study on domestic violence in India, confirmed that factors related to stress, including poverty and having multiple children, are indeed positively associated with experience of violence. Other important individual characteristics include education, employment, and decision-making ability (one popular measure of women's autonomy). The relationship between each of these variables and domestic violence is complex. While many

authors report a strong association between education and violence (Jewkes 2002, Jewkes et al 2002, Koenig et al 2003), this relationship changes at different levels of education. Numerous studies report that high levels of education are protective for women, but in some settings the relationship resembles an inverted U-shape, with women in the middle at the highest risk for domestic violence (Kishor and Johnson 2004, Jewkes 2002). Similarly, Yount and Carrera (2006) found in Cambodia that women with both more education and substantially (8-13 years) less than their husbands had substantially higher odds of experiencing physical or psychological abuse. These findings indicate may be interpreted in multiple ways. It may be that women who have some education but not enough to use it to mobilize resources may be at greater risk for violence due to violating norms regarding status consistency within marriage (Jewkes 2000), and it may also be that in some settings education has a protective effect *until it exceeds the woman's spouse's level of education*, at which point high education violate gender norms about male dominance (Yount and Carrera 2006).

There is less information available on the role of women's employment in domestic violence, but it too plays a complex role. In numerous settings, employment outside the home has been found to increase risk for violence (Kishor and Johnson 2004). In other settings, it is not the fact of employment but the relative contribution to household finances. In Bangladesh, women who contribute economically more than nominally are at increased risk of domestic violence (Bates et al 2004), while in the Philippines women who contribute more than 50% of the household budget have higher incidence of violence (Hindin and Adair 2002). Thus women's employment is a measure of empowerment that increases the risk for domestic violence, supporting the idea that transgressions of gender norms may be punished with physical abuse.

Decision-making power is another important measure of women's autonomy and status. Much as with education, the relationship is a complicated one. In a study of the Philippines, Hindin and Adair (2002) find that while the risk of violence is higher in households where men make most of the major decisions, it is also higher in households where women have disproportionate decision-making ability. The risk is lowest where decision-making is shared by both partners. This relationship also holds true for tolerance toward violence (Hindin 2003).

A final individual characteristic we will consider is tolerance for domestic violence. Kishor and Johnson (2004), in an analysis of domestic violence in nine countries, find that tolerance is positively related to incidence. Other studies have found tolerance to not be significantly associated with physical abuse (Gage 2005). These discrepancies demonstrate the likelihood that the relationship between tolerance and incidence is likely to be heavily influenced by context, and highlight the importance of further study of what exactly tolerance for domestic violence means when examining the phenomenon.

Domestic Violence in Cambodia

Cambodia is an interesting case in which to consider the problem of domestic violence for a number of reasons. The reign of terror of the Khmer Rouge, as well as a long history of invasion and war have made a deep impression on the country and its people (Yount and Carrera 2006). In such a setting, it is likely that domestic violence would be widespread, as a specific example of the generalized atmosphere of violence. In addition to historical violence, Cambodia is also one of the poorest Asian countries and its population among the unhealthiest in the region (Yount and Carrera 2006).

Observers have often claimed that women in Cambodia have comparatively high status compared to other contexts, but this assertion masks important areas of disempowerment.

Women do make up the majority (52%) of the labor force, but their employment is far more heavily concentrated in insecure sectors than is that of men. Women are particularly disadvantaged in education. By age 15, male school enrollment is 50% greater than female, and by age 18 rates of male enrollment are almost 3 times greater than female enrollment. Though it is growing, women's representation in government remains low (Beaufils 2001).

Twenty-five percent of households are headed by a woman, and there is a high level of matrilineal residence, which places women within family relationships and kin networks. Close ties to natal family may protect women from partner abuse, but family members may also be responsible for urging women to stay with or return to abusive partners (Bhuyan et al 2005, Mukuria et al 2005, Surtees 2003, Yount and Carrera 2006). Somewhat unexpectedly, Yount and Carrera's recent (2006) analysis of domestic violence in Cambodia does not demonstrate effects for the presence of natal kin, and they theorize that non-effects may be because available measures only assess the *presence* of family ties, not the *quality*. The role that kin play in violence in Cambodia remains an important site for research.

Scholarly research on domestic violence in Cambodia remains rare, though some recent analyses address some of the dimensions of violence in Cambodia and among Cambodians. Surtees (2003), in work based on examination of NGOs in Cambodia, finds that 15-25% of women are beaten that their husbands, and that violence is severe as well as widespread. Acceptance of violence is common, but the practice is not encouraged and there some mechanisms to prevent violence do exist. The author also briefly discusses the role of polygamous marriages, which have increased since the war in the 1970s. Among the most interesting findings is the fact that there is no association between education, income, or age and violence. This contradicts much of the literature on the correlates of partner violence.

Bhuyan et al (2005) examine violence among Cambodian immigrants, qualitatively studying immigrants in the Seattle, Washington area. Though this study may not be generalizable to non-migrant women remaining in Cambodia, it provides valuable insight into Cambodian women's thinking about domestic violence and its role in their lives. The authors discover that psychological violence, in addition to physical violence is widespread. They also find that cultural norms regarding appropriate demeanor for women, including patience and obeying one's husbands, may be linked to domestic violence within this community, though additional stressful factors related to immigrant status also play an important role.

Yount and Carrera's 2006 represents to our knowledge the only population-based examination of domestic violence in Cambodia, at least partially due to data deficiencies in the wake of Cambodia's history of turmoil. They find that a family history of violence is predictive of experiencing violence, that household standard of living is inversely associated with violence but not tolerance for violence, and that the relationship between education and violence is complicated, with women with slightly (0-7) years less than their husbands at lower risk than those with much (8-13 years) less or more. Overall, they conclude that both adverse early-life experience and economic dependence in a relationship play important roles in determining women's risk for domestic violence in adulthood.

Such research starts to uncover many of the mechanisms related to violence in the Cambodian context, but many questions remain. This paper contributes to this growing body of literature on violence in Cambodia as well as to the wider body of theory on domestic violence by examining which types of factors are associated with violence in Cambodia and exploring the relationships among risk factors for violence, tolerance for violence, and incidence of violence. The main purpose of this paper is to better understand the influence of social context on

incidence of and tolerance for domestic violence. The theoretical literature on domestic violence, prior empirical research, and the specific context of Cambodia inform the guiding hypotheses of this paper:

1. Early life experiences will be significant in predicting incidence of domestic violence
2. Factors related to economic insecurity will play a significant role in predicting incidence of domestic violence.
3. Quality of the marital relationship will be significant in predicting incidence of domestic violence
4. Increased tolerance for wife-beating will be related to an increased chance of incidence for domestic violence.

Data and Methods

Our data comes from the 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey, a nationally representative survey conducted in Cambodia on population and health issues. The collection process for the CDHS lasted from February to July 2000, and consists of a household questionnaire and women's questionnaire of 15,351 women age 15-49. A subset of women were selected for a women's status module which consisted of questions related to women's decision making ability,

One quarter of the households were selected for the women's status module. All ever-married women in the household were asked to complete the women's status module. In addition, one woman in each household selected for the women's status module was selected for a module on domestic violence(DV). Special training was provided to interviewers, emphasizing both rapport and confidentiality during the domestic violence interview process. If privacy could not be obtained, the module was skipped¹. Overall, a total of 2,403 interviews were completed using the domestic violence module. All of these women also completed the women's status module. In the DV module, spousal violence was measured using a modified conflict tactics

¹ 34 eligible women selected for interview with the module could not be interviewed due to security considerations.

scale (CTS) used by Strauss (1990) which has been found to be effective in measuring domestic violence and has the advantage of being easily adapted for use in different cultural situations (CDHS 2000).

Respondents were asked questions about a history of experiencing specific acts of violence by their spouses (either current or previous). If they responded “yes” to any of the actions, they were asked how many times in the previous 12 months they had experienced the same act. This manner of questioning has the advantage of not asking about violence or abuse in the abstract, but rather probing for specific acts.

Questions for physical abuse/sexual abuse are as follows:

Does/Did your (last) husband ever—

- a) Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?²
- b) Slap you or twist your arm?
- c) Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?
- d) Kick you or drag you?
- e) Try to strangle you or burn you?³
- f) Threaten you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon?
- g) Attack you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon?
- h) Physically force you to have sexual intercourse even when you did not want to?⁴
- i) Force you to perform types of other sexual acts you did not want to?

In addition, the DV module asked about emotional violence in the form of the following three questions:

Does/Did your last husband ever—

- a) Say or do something to humiliate you in front of others?
- b) Threaten you or someone close to you with harm?
- c) Swear at you?

In total, 18 percent of women reported experiencing some form of physical or sexual partner violence. 16 percent reported incidence(s) of less severe violence, four percent incidence(s) of

² Items a-d are termed “less severe violence”

³ Items e-g are termed “more severe violence”

⁴ Items h-i are termed “sexual violence”

severe violence, and four percent incidence(s) of sexual violence. There was some overlap between types of violence. Thirteen percent of women reported only one of the above forms, 4 percent reported two, and just over 1 percent reported all three. In addition, 18 percent of women experienced some form of emotional violence. Most women who reported experiences of physical or sexual violence also reported experiencing those acts of violence in the past 12 months (CDHS 2000). The women's status module also asked a variety of questions focused on tolerance for wife beating, prior to asking about experiences with domestic violence. Tolerance for wife beating was measured through a series of questions which ask women whether a husband is justified in beating his wife in five particular situations (reprinted in Table 1).

Table 1 and 2 about here

For the purposes of this study, those who responded “not sure” were coded as not being tolerant, making these slightly conservatively biased⁵. In total, 43 percent of women were tolerant of at least one situation of wife-beating. The highest number of women expressed tolerance for wife-beating when a woman neglects the children (31%), while the fewest expressed tolerance for beating when the food is late/not well-prepared or when a wife refuses her husband sex (15.7%, and 11.5% respectively). Interestingly, while high rates of women report acceptance for wife-beating in one or more situation, women also overwhelmingly agree that abuse should not be tolerated in order to keep the family together. Only eight percent of women in the sample agreed that abuse should be tolerate for the sake of the family even though many of these same women report that wife-beating is justified in one or more specific situation. For example, while 92% of women do not agree that a woman should tolerate abuse for the sake of her family, nearly 30 percent of these women would justify a husband beating his wife if she goes out without permission.

⁵ The scale reliability coefficient for these 5 items was .8061. (average interitem covariance .0708)

Table 3 about here

This underscores the contradictions inherent in woman's stated opinions about domestic violence and how little we understand of "tolerance" for violence and what this might mean. As a first step towards unpacking tolerance, our paper seeks to explore what relationship tolerance has with incidence of violence, and what might predict a woman's acceptance of and incidence of wife-beating.

Model

We employ a logistic regression model to determine variables predicting experience of abuse (Table 7) and high tolerance for wife beating (Table 8) among ever-married women age 15-49. In Table 7 we classify any woman who reports no incidence of physical or sexual abuse (as outlined above) as the reference category, compared to women who report one or more experiences of any of the above forms of violence. In Table 8, we compare women who express tolerance for one or more situations of wife-beating with a reference category of women who are not tolerant of any instance. We include a stepwise analysis which first includes only demographic characteristics, early life experience, and economic indicators. We then include variables measuring women's social capital and empowerment, and in the final model include variables assessing the quality of the partnership.

Independent Variables

The logistic model controls for basic demographic characteristics, early-life experiences, indicators of economic insecurity, indicators of women's social capital and indicators of the quality of the marital relationship. Unadjusted odds for both incidence and tolerance for violence were computed and those that were theoretically important or significant in predicting either tolerance or violence were retained for the multi-variate analysis. We include variables

which were significant in either model in order to compare and contrast the determinants of tolerance and incidence. Because of the cross-sectional nature of our data, we cannot empirically conclude causal direction from any relationships between independent and dependant variables in our model. While the economic status of a household is posited to increase the likelihood of experiencing violence, it is also possible that experiencing violence affects women's earning potential, leading to a decrease in household wealth. Similarly, while we suggest that being tolerant of wife-beating may increase a woman's vulnerability to violence, it is also possible that experiencing violence makes women more tolerant, as they adjust their worldview to fit experiences. It is likely that expressed tolerance and experience of violence are related through multiple causal paths working in different directions. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Heise (1998) we approach tolerance as an individual expression of social norms, which have been found to affect incidence of violence in other contexts. Through an analysis of factors related to expressed tolerance, we also begin to better understand the mechanisms through which tolerance and experience might be linked.

Table 4 about here

Basic demographic characteristics include dummy variables for residence in an *urban* area, and a continuous variable for *age*. Early life experience includes a measure of whether or not a woman *witnessed her father abuse her mother* during childhood. We include several measures of economic insecurity, including a continuous variable for *total number of children* ever-born, a dummy variable for *partner unemployment*, and a continuous constructed index of *household wealth*. The DHS household questionnaire does not ask questions regarding income

or expenditures. To attain a measure of a household's socio-economic status, we constructed a wealth index using the sum of fourteen household goods and resources (electricity, flush toilet or latrine connected to septic, radio, television, refrigerator, bicycle, scooter, car, wardrobe, loom, motor boat, non-motor boat, oxcart, phone).⁶ After adding one to the index total, we took the natural log of the composite to attain a robust wealth index scale in a process modeled after Bollen et al. (2002).

Measures of women's social capital include dummy variables for women who have *completed primary school*, who are have their *own wealth* (if the woman is the sole owner of either the land or the house), who have *relative earning power* (if the woman's earnings support over half of household income), who *work outside the home* (if the woman works at a job away from the home) and who *chose their own husband* (if the respondent chose her husband, either by herself or in addition to other family members).

To control for important aspects of the spousal relationship, we include a dummy variable for partner's drinking (coded 1 if the woman reports her partner is drunk very often). In order to control for high levels of spousal control, we constructed an index of control through a series of questions regarding how often a woman's spouse restricts her movement, limits contact with others, trusts her with money, and accuses her of unfaithfulness⁷. Because of the highly skewed distribution of spousal control, woman in the top decile of the distribution were coded as in relationships of *high spousal control*.

Variables which have been previously proven important in other cultural contexts such as participation in loan programs, parent's education, and religion were tested but not included for lack of significant bivariate relationships with the outcome variables. We include weights

⁶ Alpha = .718, inter-item covariance .0188

⁷ Alpha .78, average inter-item covariance .0365

and control for clustering effects, though these do not significantly affect the outcomes of the regression models.

Tables 5 and 6 about here

Tables 7 about here

Results and Findings

Among women in the DV sample, 437, or 18.24%, report experiencing some type of physical or sexual abuse by their partners. Individual risk factors for domestic violence largely mirror findings in research from other contexts. Tolerance of wife-beating is significantly related to the odds of abuse, (OR 1.43) indicating that women who are tolerant of wife beating have 43% greater odds of experiencing physical or sexual abuse. Age is significant and negatively correlated with abuse, indicating that younger married women are more at risk of experiencing violence than their older counterparts. Early life experiences of witnessing father's abuse is highly significant (OR 2.26). Women who witnessed their fathers abuse their mothers have over twice the odds of experiencing violence, net the effects of other variables. Household wealth is significant before taking aspects of relationship quality into account, however in the final model it becomes insignificant. However, partner's unemployment and total number of children born both remain highly significant (OR 2.85, 1.16). Women whose partners are unemployed have nearly three times higher odds of experiencing abuse, and for each child born a woman's odds of abuse increase by 16%.

Variables related to women's social capital are surprising in two respects. First, none of the co-variates capturing women's social capital were significantly related to incidence of violence, with the exception of the dummy variable indicating women who chose or participated in choosing their spouse. Neither woman's access to independent wealth, her work outside the

home, her relative earnings, nor her education are related to incidence of violence. Second, contrary to prior research in other cultural contexts (see Jejeebhoy and Cook 1997, Bloch and Rao 2002), Khmer women in chosen marriages have significantly *higher* odds of experiencing abuse with reference to their counterparts in arranged marriages (OR 1.75).

Factors related to the quality of the marital relationship are highly significant. Women who report that their partners get drunk very often have odds of experiencing abuse that are 4 times greater than their counterparts(OR 4.69), and women with highly controlling spouses have three times higher odds of experiencing abuse(3.44).

Overwhelmingly, the risk factors for partner violence follow economic arguments. Social capital variables such as education, employment, and choice in husband do not serve as protective factors against experience of abuse. Empowerment through having a choice in marriage partner actually acts as a risk factor for domestic violence, rather than as a protective factor. A high reported tolerance for violence is a significant risk factor predicting experience of violence. We now turn to an analysis of tolerance in order to better understand through what mechanisms tolerance affects violence.

Table 8 about here

Tolerance

Age has no effect on reporting tolerance for domestic violence. Living in an urban area is negatively related to tolerance (OR .67). Women who witnessed their fathers abuse their mothers have significantly higher odds of tolerating some form of wife-beating(OR 1.44). Importantly, none of the economic indicators are significantly related to tolerance. However, all of the indicators of women's social capital are significant. Women who earn a greater

percentage of the household income are significantly less likely to tolerate wife-beating, as are women who work outside the home. Women who have finished primary education are marginally less likely to tolerate abuse. Women with their own wealth have significantly lower odds of reporting high tolerance, and women who choose their own husband are also significantly less likely to tolerate wife-beating. The measures of relationship quality have no significant effect. These results indicate that tolerance, as a broad measure of social norms is affected by woman's social capital and demographics, as well as her early life experiences. However, tolerance is not related to economic wealth or insecurity at the household level.

Discussion

These results suggest that economic indicators and relationship factors such as alcoholism and spousal control have important predictive power in explaining incidence of violence. In contrast, the indicators of woman's social capital which we explored (both absolute and relative to her husband) had no protective effects on incidence of violence. These findings suggest that in Cambodia, household economic insecurity plays a greater role than women's social capital in terms of domestic violence.

Our results also indicate that while tolerance and violence may be related, they are not predicted by the same individual life experiences or characteristics. While experience of violence is predominately related to economic factors, and unrelated to women's social capital, tolerance has the inverse relationship.

Those variables often assumed to empower women, (having independent wealth, highly educated, living in urban areas, and working outside the home) are in fact significant in discouraging tolerance for domestic violence, yet they do not protect against acts of violence. Conversely, indicators of economic insecurity do not affect a woman's expressed tolerance for

domestic violence scenarios, but they greatly affect her likelihood of experiencing acts of violence. Likewise, the most important factors in reducing tolerance for violence have no effect (or an inverse effect in the case of marital choice) on reducing her likelihood of experiencing violence.

Interestingly, choosing one's own husband is significantly associated with *greater* odds of violence in Cambodia. Two hypotheses, both of which are informed by qualitative research might explain this intriguing association. First, while arranged marriages are still quite common, they are disproportionately prevalent among wealthier Khmer. Daughters in wealthier families have less ability to negotiate their own marriages and are often more obligated to submit to family arrangements which ensure the social status of marriage partners. Thus, this variable might be capturing another aspect of economic insecurity reflected in women who are not wealthy, and therefore have more choice to arrange their own marriage. Additionally, women with fewer living relatives or nearby relatives are less likely to have arranged marriages. Women with arranged marriages may have more extensive or stronger kin-networks than those who were allowed to choose their own spouses. While kin-networks and family involvement can be restricting or disempowering in traditionally patriarchal contexts, family involvement or presence may also be protective in terms of a woman's risk for domestic violence. An increasing risk for violence among women who choose their own marriage partner might be one way in which the effects of kin are significantly related to incidence of violence. Women with stronger kin support or living relatives are more likely to be in arranged marriages, and hence have lower odds of experiencing domestic violence. This is one explanation for the surprising non-effects of natal kin that Yount and Carrera (2006) describe in their analysis of domestic violence in

Cambodia. This finding is contrary to many studies done on partner violence, and merits further inquiry.

Conclusions

Any statistical analysis of such a complex issue as domestic violence necessarily simplifies experiences. This analysis also lacks an analysis of the community level variables which might be important in explaining some of the variation in incidence and tolerance. Nevertheless, this paper provides a means of more clearly differentiating tolerance for domestic violence and experience of partner violence. In addition, it raises important questions for Cambodia-specific future research, in particular why marriage choice is a risk factor for partner violence, and how tolerance might shape responses to domestic violence. It also raises questions for non-governmental organizations, women's groups and scholars on domestic violence across cultures. Domestic violence is a family act with implications at the community and society level. Much work aimed at preventing domestic violence has focused on decreasing social tolerance and acceptance in society, largely through programs aimed at empowering women. This paper argues that in Cambodia, a woman's incidence of partner abuse is not related to social capital or measures of women's empowerment, but significantly related to economic variables. This highlights the necessity of combining education and empowerment programs surrounding domestic violence with economic programs aimed at raising the standard of living within the family.

Table 1- Percent of women agreeing that wife beating is justified in the following situations:	
• if she neglects the children	31.4%
• if she goes out without telling him	29.4%
• if she argues with him	21.6%
• if food is late or not well-prepared	15.7%
• if she refuses to have sex with him.	11.5%
Source: CDHS 2000	

Table 2- Women's tolerance of wife-beating by number of scenarios		
Number of scenarios	Count	Percent
0	1,376	56.65
1	246	10.13
2	327	13.46
3	266	10.95
4	102	4.20
5	112	4.61
TOTAL	N=2429	100
Source: CDHS 2000		

Table 3: Differing expressions of tolerance			
	Husband is justified in beating his wife if she goes out without permission (%)		
Wife should tolerate being beaten to keep family together (%)			
	Disagree	Agrees	
Disagree	72.08	27.92	100
Agree	53.77	46.23	100

Table 4- Basic Characteristics of Model Variables		
		Percentage or Mean Value
Any tolerance	Dichotomous	43.35
Demographic		
Age	Continuous	34

Urban	Dichotomous	15.29
<i>Early Life Experiences</i>		
Father abused mother	Dichotomous	10.36
<i>Economic Insecurity</i>		
Household Index	Continuous	2.16
Total kids born	Continuous	3.897
Partner Unemployed	Dichotomous	3.69
<i>Women's Social Capital</i>		
Finished Primary Education	Dichotomous	15.57
Own wealth	Dichotomous	24.31
Earns over half the HH income	Dichotomous	24.34
Works outside the home	Dichotomous	76.85
Chose husband	Dichotomous	23.20
<i>Relationship Quality</i>		
Partner drunk very often	Dichotomous	12.99
Spousal control high	Dichotomous	10.66
Source: CDHS 2000		

Table 5- Unadjusted coefficients for logistic regression on incidence of violence

	Odds-Ratio	P	
Any tolerance	1.31	.036	*
<i>Demographic</i>			
Age	1.01	.173	
Urban	.933	.709	
<i>Early Life Experiences</i>			
Father abused mother	2.28	.000	***
<i>Economic Insecurity</i>			
Household Index	.691	.001	***
Total kids born	1.08	.000	***
Partner Unemployed	2.73	.000	***
<i>Women's Social Capital</i>			
Finished Primary Education	.653	.017	*
Own wealth	1.33	.076	+
Earns over half the HH income	1.10	.533	
Works outside the home	.958	.782	
Chose husband	1.75	.000	***

<i>Relationship Quality</i>			
Partner drunk very often	5.93	.000	***
Spousal control high	5.92	.000	***
Source: CDHS 2000- controlled for weighting and clustering			

Table 6- Unadjusted coefficients for logistic regression on any tolerance of violence			
	Odds-Ratio	P	
<i>Demographic</i>			
Age	1.00	.456	
Urban	.605	.002	**
<i>Early Life Experiences</i>			
Father abused mother	1.37	.036	*
<i>Economic Insecurity</i>			
Household Index	.903	.212	
Total kids born	1.02	.266	
Partner Unemployed	.844	.492	
<i>Women's Social Capital</i>			
Finished Primary Education	.627	.002	**
Own wealth	.756	.034	*
Earns over half the HH income	.851	.192	
Works outside the home	.778	.096	+
Chose husband	.791	.065	+
<i>Woman more educated</i>	1.01	.928	
<i>Relationship Quality</i>			
Partner drunk very often	1.02	.911	
Spousal control high	1.07	.639	
Source: CDHS 2000- controlled for weighting and clustering			

Table 7: Stepwise logistic regression predicting any incidence of partner abuse, 2000*									
	Model 1			Model 2			Full Model		
Tolerance	1.27	(.17)	+	1.39	(.20)	*	1.43	(.23)	*
<i>Demographics</i>									
Age	0.99	(.01)		0.98	(.01)	+	0.97	(.01)	**
Urban	1.16	(.23)		0.86	(.20)		0.74	(.21)	
<i>Life Experiences</i>									
Witnesses Parental Violence	2.27	(.43)	***	2.35	(.50)	***	2.26	(.55)	***
<i>Economic Insecurity</i>									
Household Wealth (logged)	0.69	(.08)	**	0.70	(.09)	**	0.81	(.11)	
Partner Unemployed	2.90	(.82)	***	2.83	(.89)	***	2.85	(.96)	**
Total number of children born	1.11	(.03)	***	1.16	(.04)	***	1.16	(.04)	***
<i>Women's Social Capital</i>									
Woman earns over half the household income				1.28	(.20)		1.29	(.23)	
Woman works outside the home				1.01	(.17)		1.06	(.19)	
Finished Primary Education				0.96	(.22)		1.01	(.24)	
Woman has own wealth				1.33	(.26)		1.19	(.26)	
Woman chose husband				2.03	(.32)	***	1.75	(.30)	***
<i>Relationship Quality</i>									
Partner gets drunk very often							4.70	(.85)	***
High spousal control							3.44	(.65)	***
	2345		1968				1964		
***=p<.001, **=p<.01, *=p<.05 Source: 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey * Those who have never have experienced an act of partner physical or sexual violence are compared to those who have not experienced physical or sexual violence. Results are presented as odds ratios with standard errors of odds ratios in parentheses. The sample is limited to ever-married women age 15-49.									

Table 8- Stepwise logistic regression predicting any tolerance for partner abuse, 2000*

	Model 1			Model 2			Full Model		
<i>Demographics</i>									
Age	1.00	(.01)		.99	(.01)		1.00	(.01)	
Urban	.64	(.11)	**	.68	(.13)	*	0.67	(.14)	*
<i>Life Experiences</i>									
Witnesses Parental Violence	1.41	(.22)	*	1.44	(.25)	*	1.45	(.26)	*
<i>Economic Insecurity</i>									
Household Wealth (logged)	.94	(.08)		.88	(.09)		0.88	(.09)	
Partner Unemployed	.86	(.21)		.827	(.22)		0.82	(.23)	
Total number of children born	1.01	(.03)		1.00	(.02)		0.99	(.02)	
<i>Women's Social Capital</i>									
Woman earns over half the household income				.73	(.09)	*	0.72	(.09)	**
Woman works outside the home				.66	(.10)	**	0.65	(.10)	**
Finished Primary Education				.73	(.13)	+	0.73	(.13)	+
Woman has own wealth				.70	(.10)	*	0.68	(.10)	**
Woman chose husband				.66	(.10)	**	0.65	(.09)	**
<i>Relationship Quality</i>									
Partner gets drunk very often							0.95	(.16)	
High spousal control							1.22	(.22)	
	2345		1968				1964		

***=p<.001, **=p<.01, *=p<.05

Source: 2000 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey

* Those who had never have report tolerance for one or more situations of wife-beating, compared with those who report being tolerant of none of the five scenarios. Results are presented as odds ratios with standard errors of odds ratios in parentheses. The sample is limited to ever-married women age 15-49.

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