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Differentiating perceptions of intimate partner violence in Nepal

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Abstract

Perception of domestic violence is a frequently used indicator of women's empowerment. It is, however, thought to be a binary variable, where women either justify wife beating or they do not. In the Nepal Demographic Health Survey, empowerment is 'high' if the woman answers no to one of five circumstances of wife beating. This study develops a Latent Class Analysis model to determine whether there are categories of women who endorsed some type of violence but not others. A more nuanced measure of perception of domestic violence would improve our understanding on women's empowerment.

Keywords

Demographic Health Survey; empowerment; intimate partner violence; Nepal; violence against women

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a problem that poses a significant threat to the health, safety, well-being, and status of women across the globe (Ellsberg et al., 2008). In a multi-country study, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005) found that 15%–49% of women had been physically and/or sexually victimized by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. The consequences of IPV for the individual range from physical injury (Campbell, 2002), to mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress and depression (Campbell, 2002; Lafta, 2008), to death (WHO, 2012). The pervasiveness of IPV in developing countries is a major impediment to economic and social development (Chin, 2012). According to a report by the United Nations Population Fund, IPV is rampant and socially acceptable in many Nepali households (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Nepal, 2007). Despite decades-long campaigns against IPV, gender-based violence in Nepal ranks among the worst in Asia (*IRIN Asia*, 2008).

However, progress has been made. As awareness of the problem of IPV grows and international human rights groups pressure the state to address the problem, a shift among

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individual perceptions of what is often viewed as a private family matter has taken place (UNFPA Nepal, 2007). Understanding women's empowerment through their perceptions of the acceptability of IPV has emerged as one way to capture these shifts in norms. Building off the work of development scholars such as Sen and Nussbaum, Pandey et al. (2011) conceptualize women's empowerment as the capability to exercise full potential and realize maximum functioning in ways that were formerly denied to them (p. 4). This tenet is central to addressing and eradicating the problem of IPV and shapes the framework for these study aims.

This study used Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data from Nepal to examine the heterogeneity of levels of empowerment among women, by analyzing their responses to a series of questions about IPV. The goal is to understand how scores from this index, which purportedly measures a woman's level of empowerment, correspond with other measures of empowerment such as wealth, education, and place of residence.

Background

IPV in Nepal and women's perceptions

IPV – or often, the fear of such violence – plays a key role in perpetuating women's subordinate social position by controlling and circumscribing their capacity for independence and autonomy. Equally troubling is the internalization of these norms by women, who assist in maintaining the status quo by participating in violence themselves, as in the case of mothers-in-law who beat or abuse new wives (Doyal, 1995), to use an example from India. This disempowered state, especially in the context of patriarchal societies with very strict gender roles, disables women from 'at least imagining the possibility of having chosen differently ... through the emergence of a critical consciousness' (Kabeer, 1994: 441).

Despite the prevalence of IPV in Nepal, relatively few studies have examined women's reactions and perceptions of the problem. In 2012, the Nepali government released a report revealing that nearly half of all women (48%) had experienced IPV at some point in their lives, with a quarter having been abused within the year prior to taking the survey (Hawkes et al., 2013). Both female and male respondents to the survey identified root causes of the problem as patriarchal social norms and widespread gender inequality, which is particularly apparent in education and economic disparities (Hawkes et al., 2013). A focus on women's perceptions of IPV may have significant implications for policy and practice, especially campaigns against gender-based violence.

Women's empowerment

Empowerment has been described by Kabeer (1999) as 'a process of change inescapably bound up with "disempowerment"' – that is, to be empowered one must have been formerly lacking in power (p. 441). Empowerment is a process that involves both internal and external loci of control: acquiring the ability to make choices that affect one's life implies that there is both a psychological element of fulfillment and simultaneously the existence of options from which to choose (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1985). Scholars have concluded that

empowerment itself is composed of three interrelated dimensions which include resources (pre-conditions), agency (process), and achievement (outcomes) (Kabeer, 1999; Nussbaum, 1999).

Resources and agency—Available resources do not necessarily imply access to or control over those resources (Nussbaum, 1999). Therefore, measures of women's empowerment often ask questions about both, such as (1) Is she able to find employment? and (2) Does she have control over the earnings from the employment? The first question taps into the construct of resource availability and access, while the second examines control over those resources. Kishor (1997) defines women's empowerment as control over key aspects of their lives: control over resources, for example, earnings and expenditures; control in terms of self-reliance, for example, whether women are able to support themselves without a husband; control as decision-making, for example, who in the household has the final say on making decisions about a variety of issues; and control as 'choice', for example, the ability to choose one's spouse or being consulted in the choice of marriage partner. Implicit in all of these areas is agency – agency to make decisions, agency in the political and public realms of society, agency within the home as defined by the presence or absence of male violence, and so forth.

In Nepal, agency has been operationalized by Morgan and Niraula (1995) as decisions over what food to buy, whether the woman will work outside the home, and the number of children to have. (In India, Jejeebhoy and Cook (1997) add to this list jewelry purchases, child discipline, course of action if a child falls ill, and children's schooling.) There is much cultural variation in definitions of agency because there are undoubtedly different levels of significance, or consequences for women's lives, depending on a multitude of factors across and among cultures. Such factors may be socio-demographic – where they live, how old they are, what ethnic or religious group they belong to, how educated they are – and the significance of the question being asked, that is, whether the woman has agency to choose her spouse versus whether she may choose what to cook for dinner. Furthermore, Kabeer (1999) notes that few cultures operate with starkly dichotomous power distributions so severe that men make every decision and women make none. It is more likely that a hierarchy of sorts exists, where key areas of decision-making are reserved for men in their role as heads of households, and other areas are assigned to women based on their role within the household (daughter, mother, wife, grandmother, married or single, child or adult, etc.).

Achievement—Achievement is the outcome of empowerment which is believed to indicate the progress women have made toward stated development goals – gender parity in access to health care or the number of female political representatives. Rates of IPV are also used as yardsticks of women's achievements and strides toward equality. However, IPV can be an unreliable indicator of empowerment because, as has been shown in several examples from around the world, greater gains in the realms of education, economics, and health are not necessarily associated with a widespread reduction in IPV (Koenig et al., 2003).

Perceptions of IPV measure

This particular study examines the internal locus of control – women’s perceptions of IPV (termed ‘justification of wife beating’) as a way of gauging empowerment. Understanding how women conceptualize their situation – their experience of violence and their perceptions of IPV’s acceptability – is the crux of this measure.

Development scholars believe that the empowerment of women is essential to understanding and overcoming IPV. Many population-based surveys and data banks use women’s empowerment as a proxy indicator for women’s status, measuring empowerment in part by collecting information on women’s attitudes about childrearing, contraceptive use, education, and IPV. This article is concerned with one such measure, heretofore called the Perceptions of IPV index in the DHS. This widely used proxy indicator of empowerment is a list of five questions asked of women regarding whether they endorse IPV – or ‘wife beating’ – in certain situations. Understanding how women conceptualize their situation – their experience of violence and their perceptions of IPV’s acceptability (or inevitability) – is the crux of this measure and what the DHS indicator is attempting to uncover.

Methods

Demographic and health surveys

Women’s perceptions of IPV were examined using the 2006 Nepal DHS. The DHS is a population-based survey that employs a variety of methods including biomarkers, Geographic Information Systems, and orally administered questionnaires to collect information on health, education, and income (N = 10,793). The stated purpose of the DHS is to gather in-depth information on the life courses of people throughout the world, with a special focus on collecting the types of data that lead to a better understanding of differentials in access to education and resources. Since 1994, the DHS has included women’s modules that ask female heads of household directly about their participation in household decisions, attitudes toward IPV (or ‘wife beating’) by spouses, opinions on whether or not women can refuse sex from a spouse, and hurdles faced by women seeking their own health care.

Latent Class Analysis

Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is a person-centered statistical method of identifying unmeasured class membership among individuals using observed variables. Analyses were conducted using MPLUS 6.11 software (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2011). This method was used because it is an appropriate way of categorizing people based on their behaviors, perceptions, symptoms, or other types of observations. Predictive models generated by LCA can help calculate whether and why a person belongs to a particular group or ‘class’ and may thus be used to help explore the consequences of such a class membership. This analysis works by attempting to detect the presence of latent classes, creating patterns of association in the responses. Respondents are classified into groups according to their maximum likelihood class membership. For example, women who answered ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Is wife beating justified when the woman argues with her husband?’ and ‘no’ to the question, ‘Is wife beating justified if the woman burns the food for cooking?’ may

belong to a specific class of similar respondents. Analyzing each class built around the respondents' similar attitudes or perceptions is thus the purpose of LCA.

Description of variables

Perceptions of IPV measure—This five-question index (see Figure 1) asks the female head of household yes or no questions about her opinions on 'wife beating', or as phrased in this article, IPV. This is used as a proxy for women's empowerment by computing a score from responses to items in the index. Affirmative responses to the questions regarding justification of IPV thus translate to a low level of empowerment. This dependent variable was used as the basis for inquiry into women's empowerment, rather than a binary, categorical score which may not fully capture the range of responses and therefore states of empowerment that women may experience.

Household wealth—Household wealth is an index developed by the DHS team. This index was constructed by using the household asset data that were collected in the survey such as items ranging from bicycles and cars to livestock and land owned. It also included household characteristics such as source of drinking water, sanitation facilities, and types of material used for flooring and walls. Using principal component analysis, each asset was assigned a factor score, which were summed and given to the households. The sample was divided into five quintiles ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) (MOHP, New ERA, and Macro International, 2007).

Education—The variable 'years of education' was used, which provides the number of years of formal education completed, as reported by the respondent. The baseline of this variable is 'no education' or zero years of education.

Rural/urban residency—This variable is the de facto place of residence, classified as urban or rural depending on where the respondent was interviewed. The 'place of residence' variable was created based upon whether the cluster or sample point number was defined as urban or rural (DHS III Recode Manual, 2008).

Results

Model fit

A variety of LCA models with three-, four-, and five-model solutions were built and run to determine which model fits the DHS data best. The Akaike information criteria (AIC) and chi-squares for model comparison were used to determine goodness of fit. The Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test, another test of model fit which works through a null hypothesis of no difference between two classes under comparison, was also used to assess model fit. As shown in Table 1, the four-class solution was the best fit according to all these measures. The AIC was lower in the four-class solution than both the three- and five-class models, and chi-square comparing the four-class solution to each of the others was non-significant. Meanwhile, the Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test was significant, further suggesting the four-class solution was the best fit for the data.

Classification of individuals

Table 2 shows how many individuals fell into a particular latent class along with the percentage of the overall population (e.g. total numbers of women who responded to the Perceptions of IPV Index). These numbers were based on the estimated model. The first class was characterized as the ‘very tolerant’ class, meaning these women justified wife beating in all or almost all instances. The ‘very tolerant’ class was a small percentage of the overall population. The largest group of women had ZERO tolerance for wife beating. That is, of the women surveyed, nearly 84% did not justify wife beating in any circumstance. Two classes justified violence in some instances but not others. Class 3 women were tolerant of violence in cases where the wife argued with her husband or went out without his permission. (Note that ‘going out without permission’ could include a range of behaviors which were not specified further in the DHS; therefore, this is left to the individual interpretation of the respondent and may differ widely among respondents.) The women in Class 4 justified wife beating in both of those above instances and also included ‘child neglect’ in the list of acceptable situations for violent reprisal.

Tables 2 and 3 show the probability of belonging to a certain class based on a ‘yes’ response to the questions from the index. Women who answered ‘yes’ to most of the items in the index are overwhelmingly likely to belong to Class 1 and women who answered ‘no’ to most questions are just as likely to belong to Class 2. Classes 3 and 4 are slightly convoluted with mixed answers of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to different questions in the index.

Chi-square tests of association were used to further examine several indicators that have been empirically or theoretically linked to women’s empowerment (Hindin et al., 2008; Stith et al., 2004). These three factors were household wealth, education, and rural/urban residency. Tests of association were conducted to predict whether these characteristics were likely to be shared by women in the same class of respondents to the Perceptions of IPV measure.

Household wealth—There was a general trend toward declining membership in classes that justified wife beating in all or some circumstances as household wealth increased. The graph in Figure 2 shows the three classes in which women justified wife beating in all or some circumstances. Women belonging to the ‘very tolerant’ class, so named because these respondents most often answered ‘yes’ to questions in the index, showed the most dramatic decrease in numbers as household wealth increased. This suggests that women in wealthier households tended not to justify wife beating in most or any circumstances.

Education—Figure 3 shows the likelihood of belonging to Classes 1, 3, and 4 (the classes in which women responded ‘yes’ to all or some combination of the questions in the index) based on years of formal education the respondent received. Although the relationship between the two is not linear, the same general trend toward declining class membership in classes justifying wife beating as education level increased was present.

Rural/urban residency—Class membership in one of the groups justifying IPV was not associated with rural or urban residency (see Figure 4).

Discussion

The four distinct categories for justification of ‘wife beating’ provide a nuanced picture of empowerment among women in Nepal. Rather than a discrete change from disempowerment to empowerment, the analysis suggests different domains of empowerment. In all of the four classes, burning food and refusing sex were ranked the lowest whereas a higher proportion justified IPV for neglecting children. This suggests that IPV and empowerment occur within the context of social norms surrounding particular events.

Perhaps because women’s responses to the Perceptions of IPV Index defied categorization (other than a resounding majority who did not justify wife beating in any circumstance), the conclusions that may be drawn from the comparison of the Perceptions of IPV Index with other factors indicating empowerment or lack thereof are mixed. There is a general and empirically supported expectation that views on IPV shift as women’s education level or household income increased, yet there was not a clear trajectory in this direction. The most surprising finding was the lack of difference between justification of IPV and residency; rural residence did not appear to have an effect on ‘tolerant’ or ‘very tolerant’ group membership. Because rural Nepali women face different challenges than urban residents with regard to formal education access, healthcare access, and economic opportunities and may be more socially conservative (or married into families who are socially conservative) than women in cities, the authors believed this might impact their internalized norms about the acceptability of IPV and that rural women would be more likely to belong to a ‘tolerant’ or ‘very tolerant’ class. Yet, group membership was similar across rural and urban respondents, and a comparison of IPV rates between rural and urban groups in another study found that the opposite was true: poor, urban women were the most likely to report physical IPV (34%) than were women in the general population (20%; Oshiro et al., 2011).

The factors that have been associated with IPV in Nepal are also those frequently cited as indicators of low female empowerment: poverty (and more specifically, women’s economic dependence on their male partner), gender norms tacitly accepting of violence against women or women’s second-class status, fertility problems or the lack of sons, and alcohol abuse by the husband (Oshiro et al., 2011; Puri et al., 2010). It is not altogether clear why household wealth and education – two indicators of women’s social status that are generally thought of as protective factors against IPV (Bangdiwala et al., 2004) – were not significant predictors of class membership in this study. One explanation may be that these aggregate measures did not adequately capture women’s financial status within their families, and our study did not compare women’s education relative to their husband’s. Therefore, it may have been difficult to ascertain a meaningful effect of these indicators on women’s perceptions of IPV. Another explanation is simply that the majority of women in Nepal do not feel that IPV is justified under any circumstances – or at least under the circumstances included in the index.

The DHS index has been used in a variety of other countries and settings both similar and dissimilar to Nepal to gauge women’s empowerment. Women were more likely than men to agree that IPV was unacceptable in rural Bangladesh, although several women from this qualitative study said that their opinion did not matter (Schuler et al., 2012). Substantial

minorities of Zimbabwean women condoned marital violence under the circumstances described in the Perceptions of IPV index (Hollander, 2003). In Cambodia, women with less education than their husband and those who had many children were most likely to experience IPV and to hold attitudes accepting of it (Yount and Carrera, 2006). Generally, when women are asked about the acceptability of IPV, worldwide surveys have found that approximately one-third of women do feel that IPV is justified in some cases (World Values Survey Wave 6 2010–2014, 2015). Yet it is unclear what mechanism of empowerment, as defined elsewhere and reviewed in the ‘Background’ section of this article to include constructs such as agency, achievement, and access to or control over resources, is being measured by questions asking whether wife beating is justified when the food is overcooked. Following this thread of logic, scores from the Perceptions of IPV index mean that women who believe that physical repercussions for burning dinner are acceptable have internalized social norms condoning violence against women and are thus ‘disempowered’. This is a problematic assumption to make, especially considering the variety of cultural contexts in which these same five questions are asked, the dual nature of empowerment as an internal and external state of being, and because women in any relationship do not have control over whether they are beaten.

The vast majority of Nepali women did not feel that IPV was justified under any circumstances, which by the DHS’ own Perceptions of IPV measure means that these women are ‘empowered’ to a certain degree. While these findings are encouraging, it is notable that 80% of rural Nepali women reported experiences with ongoing violence according to recent DHS data (Hawkes et al., 2013), over half of married women aged 15–24 years had experienced sexual violence within marriage (Puri et al., 2010), and over one-third of urban women had been victimized by IPV during their lifetime (Oshiro et al., 2011). These data indicate that violence against women is a systemic problem in Nepal and points to the need for multilevel efforts, domestically and internationally, to address this problem and the myriad individual, familial, and societal consequences stemming from IPV.

Conclusion

It is apparent in these data that Nepali women justify IPV differently, and to simplify these differences using a categorical measure may lead to biased results. From a theoretical perspective, the use of binary variables to measure a concept as multifaceted as empowerment cannot fully capture the perceptions of Nepali women. A finer gradation of ‘empowerment’ may exist among women who tolerate some forms of IPV and not others. Understanding these gradations may assist scholars and aid workers in the creation of a measure that takes into account the evolving nature of ‘empowerment’, perhaps conceptualizing states of empowerment along a spectrum, inside of a switch from ‘low’ to ‘high’ empowerment. Additionally, because the answers reflect different perceptions among classes of women, it is likely that perceptions of IPV are influenced by factors other than those examined here. Further exploring the differences between groups may reveal cultural, social, or attitudinal distinctions between women that are not encapsulated by the current measure. When discussing matters as sensitive as IPV, it is also preferable to use a culturally relevant tool that describes the phenomenon using the terms, definitions, and conceptual grasp that the respondents would use. This may point to the construction of additional or

different measures for various countries or regions of the country that are different with regard to ethnicity and religion. It is worth noting here that the Perceptions of IPV measure discussed in this article is used in most developing countries whose populations are vastly different from Nepal. This uniform approach likely simplifies the matter, further diluting the respondents' answers and leading to murky conclusions about who is 'empowered' and who is not. It is the view of these authors that such an approach must be avoided, as otherwise erroneous statements about women's development may be widespread. The construction of scales that more accurately tap the constructs of empowerment as it is defined may not have much to do at all with perceptions of IPV. It is especially important that women's empowerment, or lack thereof according to their perceptions of IPV, is not used to explain the high rates of violence against women in many parts of the world – the cause of wife beating, after all, is men who beat their wives, not women who are 'disempowered'. These tools must also be culturally relevant, as measures tapping into empowerment constructs for Kenyan women may not accurately gauge empowerment in Nepal.

These findings also reinforce the need to conceptualize empowerment as a gradual process rather than a switch from disempowerment to empowerment. Women may be situated in a spectrum ranging from little or no empowerment to full empowerment, so the focus must be to move women forward along this spectrum, according to their capabilities and the forms of resources to which they have access and control. The acknowledgment of empowerment as a spectrum counters the assumption that women who responded affirmatively to some of the questions in the Perceptions of IPV measure are disempowered. Future scholarship on women's empowerment should clearly define what aspects of this admittedly unwieldy concept they are measuring (i.e. individual feelings of empowerment or objective information on educational attainment?). The creation of measures that build from the substantial body of existing theoretical scholarship on empowerment is one way to improve understanding of the mechanisms that empower women internally and externally. Practitioners and policymakers can then focus on building these capacities, which may vary among different groups or classes of women as suggested by this analysis.

Limitations

Data set used for this is not current (2006). There is a newer DHS data set published in 2012 that does not use the Perceptions of IPV Measure to gauge whether or not women are empowered. However, categorical indices of women's empowerment continue to be used (Ghuman et al., 2006; Green, 2008). Therefore, findings in this regard are a relevant addition to the evolving discussion on the nuanced nature of women's empowerment, particularly for countries such as Nepal where focused energies on elevating women's status on various key indicators of development are a concern of the World Bank, the United Nations, and other intergovernmental agencies.

Implications

Nepali women's perceptions of IPV as unjustified under any circumstance are belied by the widespread nature of the problem. This incongruence and the unfortunate reality it represents have numerous implications for social work practice, policy, and research. Previous research on IPV and women's empowerment in Asia has suggested that

multifaceted strategies at the individual, family, community, and societal levels should be deployed simultaneously to address these problems (Ali et al., 2012). From a practice perspective, prevention and intervention strategies addressing violence against women and, more generally, family violence must be widely implemented while accounting for regional, religious, and ethnic variance. Previous studies in Nepal have suggested that the acceptability of violence against women coupled with the social stigma of such violence prevents many women from accessing help (Puri et al., 2010). IPV has been found to occur alongside other forms of family and domestic violence in other settings, such as violence against daughters-in-law by mothers (Segal, 1999), child abuse and neglect (Allendorf, 2007; Campbell, 2002), and in the case of many young Nepali wives, sexual violence (Puri et al., 2010). Addressing IPV also means addressing these problems at all levels of the social ecology.

The psychological distress that many women experience as a result of IPV is often profound and may be lifelong if untreated. Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicide are all associated with women's experiences of IPV worldwide (Campbell, 2002; Jewkes, 2002). Nepali women, especially rural residents and those with limited resources, are unlikely to seek help for these issues at all due to victim-blaming attitudes and social stigma about mental health treatment generally (Clarke et al., 2014). A recent report declared that the leading cause of death among Nepali women is suicide (Karki, 2011), of which IPV is a risk factor (Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Expanding women's access to mental health treatment and support for women experiencing IPV, offered in Westernized and traditional healing settings, is of paramount concern for social workers addressing violence against women in Nepal.

Governmental strategies are another avenue to address the widespread problem of IPV as well as promote women's empowerment by increasing opportunities for agency, achievement (educational opportunities, labor market participation), and access to resources (again, market place activities and increasing financial independence). The international community must advocate for and support the Nepali government to first adopt a strong, no-tolerance stance against IPV. Physical and sexual assault may technically be against the law in Nepal, but these laws often go unenforced (*IRIN Asia*, 2008), limiting women's recourses for justice and freeing abusive men to continue doing as they please. Legal reforms that punish men for abusing their wives in tandem with advocacy strategies that facilitate women's access to legal counsel and protect her against violent reprisal are immediate actions to take. Improving healthcare access and increasing education and employment opportunities for both sexes are additional ways that may shift social norms condoning IPV while also targeting poverty and disenfranchisement.

This study's findings as well as other small-scale bodies of scholarship reporting on IPV in Nepal point to several avenues for future research. Given the high prevalence of sexual violence experienced by many young married women (Puri et al., 2010), future DHS measures should incorporate culturally specific questions about marital rape and other acts of sexual violence rather than asking only about physical IPV. Asking about psychological or emotional violence, while admittedly a murkier construct to measure, warrants future study as studies suggest that psychological distress and suicide among Nepali women are

high (Karki, 2011). Although this study did not include male perceptions of IPV or account for generational differences in the justification of wife beating, other scholars may find these topics fruitful areas for exploration, particularly using a large dataset such as the DHS.

Overall, this study's findings point to the need for researchers studying women's empowerment in Nepal and other developing countries to tighten their definitions and measurement of this construct. The incongruence between women's self-reported 'empowered' state (as indicated by their rejection of IPV under any circumstance) and their obviously 'disempowered' state (as indicated by the high levels of IPV against them) is likely a fault of the measure. Re-examining the widespread use of the Perceptions of IPV index, its questions, and the cultural context in which these same five questions are asked is warranted. The development of new measures that separate internal from external loci of control or include additional indicators for empowerment could be more effective at understanding and ultimately increasing women's empowerment. Future scholars must thus simultaneously consider the individual, household, community, and national factors that point to agency, achievement, and access – in addition to objective measures of violence rates and epidemiology – when analyzing and making claims about Nepali women's empowerment.

A final takeaway message from this study's findings implicates male violence against women. Regardless of how empowerment is measured or what women think about 'wife beating', male-perpetuated IPV is about men and their choices rather than women's. It is important to understand women's empowerment so that culturally appropriate supports can be put in place that will give women a voice and a chance to succeed. Yet, a focus on women's empowerment should not ignore men's culpability in perpetuating violence and to a larger extent maintaining the power structures that reinforce women's lack of agency, achievement, and access/control over resources in the first place. Prevention and intervention strategies for IPV are likely to fail unless men are directly involved or the focus of such strategies. Efforts to increase women's empowerment should therefore make addressing men's violence against women a key priority.

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1. "Wife beating justified if the woman burns the food for cooking."
2. "Wife beating justified if the woman goes out without informing the husband."
3. "Wife beating justified if the woman neglects the children."
4. "Wife beating justified if the woman refuses sex from her husband."
5. "Wife beating justified if the woman argues with her husband."

Figure 1. Perceptions of IPV index¹

¹The Perceptions of IPV index contains five questions to which the respondent answers simply yes or no. Empowerment is understood to be 'high' if the respondent answers NO to all questions and 'low' if she answers YES to all of them.

Figure 2. Household wealth and class membership*

*Only Classes 1, 3, and 4 are shown. Class 2, the largest class, is not included in this graph because its size would offset the scale, as the probability of belonging to Class 2 is always higher than the probability that a respondent will belong to one of the other classes. Class 2 is what we term 'zero tolerance' because these respondents (nearly 80% of women surveyed) did not justify wife beating in any circumstance.

Figure 3. Education and class membership

X axis: numbers of years of formal education; Y axis: percent of overall respondents grouped by class.

Figure 4. Rural/urban residency and class membership

Table 1

Model comparison of three- and four-class solutions.

	Three class	Four class	
Chi-square	49.57	9.8	
df	13	7	
p value	0	0.19	
AIC	23,188	23,160	
<i>Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin</i>			
Value (2 times value diff.)	−11,577.215	(39.896)	
Difference in the number of parameters	6		
Mean	8.812	<u><i>LRT test</i></u>	
SD	8.555	Value	39.192
p value	0.011	p value	0.011

SD: standard deviation; AIC: Akaike information criteria; LRT: likelihood ratio test.

Table 2

Classification of individuals.

Class	No. of individuals	Total percentage
1	215	1.9
2	8990	83.4
3	701	6.5
4	878	8.1

Table 3

Probability of class membership.

Item	Class 1: 'very tolerant'	Class 2: 'zero tolerance'	Class 3: 'semi-tolerant'	Class 4: 'semi-tolerant'
Goes out without informing spouse	0.84	0.009	0.69	0.30
Neglects children	0.98	0.092	1	0.60
Argues	0.96	0.004	0.41	0.32
Refuses sex	0.79	0.001	0.01	0.11
Burns food	0.70	0.001	0.04	0.14