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Domestic Violence Against Men in Tanzania: A Case of Husbands Being Battered by Their Wives

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Abstract

Domestic violence, the violence of intimate partners in households, is one of the most precarious forms of violence in the world. While most studies have concentrated on violence against women and children, this study grapples with violence against men in the midst of patriarchal hegemonic cultural contexts. By the use of Scott's theory of Hidden Transcripts and Arts of Resistance and focused group discussion as a method, the article argues that battering of husbands by their wives is women's art of resistance to hegemonic patriarchal cultural worldviews attempting to regain power over their husbands. Results from focus group discussions indicate that some of the causes of wives battering their husbands in households include: women being economically more powerful than their husbands, secrets surrounding the relationship of husbands and their wives in the households, differences in educational levels between couples, defense for ordained ministry for ordained ministers and extra-marital engagements of husbands. The article suggests that the church should recognize the existence of males being battered by their beloved wives and deal with them accordingly. Battered husbands should be encouraged to come forward for legal steps to be taken against offenders; and education should be provided to society regarding the effects of men battering and domestic violence in general.

Keywords: Domestic violence; Husband battering; Hidden transcripts; Arts of resistance; Focus group discussions

1. Introduction

When we speak about the concept of "gender," we can hardly avoid the dichotomy existing between gender equality and gender inequality. We cannot avoid speaking about the relationship between the two important pillars of society: men and women. Srivastava (2016:1193) calls these pillars of society "the two wheels of a chariot" because they depend on each other in order for the household to move and society to emerge. According to Sida (2015:6), "Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society." Sida's statement depicts a society whose construction of gender favors both sexes in the various aspects of society. Sida (2015:6) further states: "The opposite of this [gender equality]—gender inequality, unequal power relations and discrimination based on gender—is the root of gender-based violence." What the Sida cements here is that the imbalance in the construction of gender in social relations between the two sexes (male and female) is the source of violence between them.

What then is Gender-based Violence (GBV)? According to Sida (2015:6), GBV is "Any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or a girl, man or boy and that have a negative impact on the physical, sexual or

psychological health, development or identity of the person." According to Sida's definition, the main causes of GBV are two: the gender of a person, and the power relation existing between the relating genders. It means that if there is no balance in power between the female and the male gender in the time of relationship, GBV is likely to happen.

This article concentrates on the GBV of intimate partners in households. According to Dienye & Gbeneol (Gbeneol, 2009:333), "The term *intimate partner violence* (IPV) is often used synonymously, other terms have included *wife beating*, *wife battering*, *man beating*, *husband battering*, *relationship violence*, *domestic abuse*, *spousal abuse*, and *family violence* with some legal jurisdictions having specific definitions." (Italics is in original) The concept of domestic violence or abuse is more common in academic discourse than the other terms used to express intimate partner violence. And as Srivastava (2016:1153) says, "Domestic violence is more dangerous than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war, and malaria. It cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth, and geography (...)."

However, there has been a change in world policies in favor of women than men regarding dealing with this issue. Sarantakos (1999:231–232) has succinctly echoed this fact saying that the shift in policies has led to a *feminization of*

spouse abuse and of domestic violence in general, and to the *invisibility of husband abuse*. This was accompanied by a marked shift of relevant policies from a pro-husband to a pro-wife position, a bias in favor of abused wives and against abused husbands (who are being ignored and disbelieved), and a new philosophy that equates spouse abuse (and domestic violence in general) with wife abuse, where husbands are the primary perpetrators and wives the primary victims (...).

With Sarantakos's statement, we strongly concur with Butovskaya (2012:29) that "According to the growing number of studies based on surveys of family conflicts, women are as physically aggressive, or even more aggressive, than men." In that case, the feminization of spouse abuse and the invisibility of husband abuse is the deprivation of human rights to one of the genders.

Despite the fact that domestic GBV against women has been well-known and documented widely, hence its feminization (see for example, Alesina et al., 2021; Anyuor, 2012; Baloyi, 2013; Hilde, 2015; Osei-Tutu & Ampadu, 2017; Siegel, 1996; Smuts, 1992; Tran et al., 2016), it is currently coming into public view (see for example, Gathogo, 2014; Thobejane et al., 2018; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019). Zabala (2016) asserts that, in public view, the man is considered as the most violent person in the homes; however, women have been great perpetrators of violence against their counterpart spouses. Zabala (2016:1153) writes:

When many of us hear the words 'domestic violence,' we automatically assume the victim would be a woman and the attacker would be a man. After all, men are traditionally viewed as the more aggressive of the two sexes, and the victims of most domestic abuse situations are indeed women. But a surprising number of domestic violence episodes do involve women as the aggressors, creating a new category of the victim known as the battered husband. An abused husband suffers the same emotional, verbal and physical abuse as a battered wife, but is less likely to report these crimes to authorities" (cf. Butovskaya, 2012:28–29).

Zabala's statement indicates that men pass through various life ordeals alleged to be caused by their wives.

From a biblical perspective, after reading Genesis 39, Stiebert (2019) concludes that the text suggests women being perpetrators of violence against men in time immemorial. Referring to the current situation of rape culture in the American context, Stiebert (2019:107) writes: "Maybe this story [of Joseph and Potiphar's wife] highlights the important truth that males, too, can be victims of sexual abuse. Maybe this story demonstrates that women can also be aggressors, perpetrators of gendered violence and abuse. Both are valid." This conclusion is what this article defends as being the case in most African and the world's contexts. Even most obdurate husbands pass through a number of ordeals alleged to be perpetrated by women.

Deshpande (2019:247) reports on a situation in India according to the research conducted: "In a study conducted by My Nation along with Save Family Foundation (Delhi) on domestic violence against men, between April 2005 and March 2006, 1,650 men were interviewed and their personal cases looked into. The study concluded that Indian women were the most abusive and dominating." Therefore, the previously hidden victimization of men surrounded by a lack of public view is currently becoming more open and documented worldwide.

Despite the fact that greater declarations such as the Beijing Declaration for Action (1995), have greatly concentrated on women, there is a growing literature that shows that men also face acute violence from women, especially female spouses, that require public attention (Gathogo, 2014; Thobejane & Luthada, 2019). Therefore, this article examines domestic violence executed by women against men. Srivastava (2016:1193) defines clearly what entails domestic violence against men: "Domestic violence against men deals with domestic violence experienced by men or boys in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating, or within a family." Srivastava (2016:1193) further states:

Domestic violence is more dangerous than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war, and malaria. It cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth, and geography (...). No country or community is untouched by violence. Each year, more than 1.6 million people worldwide lose their lives to violence. (...). Victims of domestic violence are often married men. The incidence of home-based violence against men is high though it is unreported. Violence is unacceptable and no men deserve to be beaten, sexually abused, or made to suffer emotionally.

The article focuses on husbands' battering done by their wives in the homes. By the use of the political theory of "hidden transcripts and arts of resistance" proposed by James C. Scott and focused group discussions as a method for collecting research information, the article argues that battering of husbands by their wives is women's art of resistance to hegemonic patriarchal cultural worldviews attempting to regain power over their husbands. In the following sections, the article presents and discusses some literature to establish the reasons for women battering their husbands.

2. Why Domestic Violence Against Men?

We learn from Scott's theory of the Hidden Transcripts that all resistances are about power relations between the two groups—those who dominate and those who are dominated. Similarly, all domestic abuses are surrounded by the aspect of power and control. The abuser wants to control the partner (Mligo, 2020:206–209). George (1994:145) clearly notes: "The fact is that women are capable of performing instrumental acts of aggression against their partners. (...) women's aggression toward men, as well as men's toward women, can be attributed to their need to dominate, possess, or from the feeling of insecurity."

Following George's statement, one can note that most women who batter their husbands are breadwinners in the household and ascend to power over their husbands through the ability to provide. They control their husbands by using their material power. In that case, possession of material wealth and the ability to provide for the household becomes a weapon for resistance to domination in patriarchal households. Through women's use of this material weapon, most culturally silenced men suffer attacks from their wives for years without the ability to take a step against their perpetrators.

Another weapon is the taboo surrounding most Africans and the world societies at large that a man cannot be battered by his wife; and if battered, he should not openly confess as such Gathogo (2014:43). As Gathogo (2015:4) further notes: battering men "would not only annoy the living but the ancestors and the unborn – all of whom were considered as members of the extended family and society at large and such an abomination would be treated as a taboo." Quoting Straus and Gelles, George (1994:143) states: "Violence by wives has not been an object of public concern. There has been no publicity, and no funds have been invested in ameliorating this problem because *it has not been defined as a problem* (...)" (Italics is in original; cf. Sarantakos, 1999:232–233; Srivastava, 2016:1193; Vernon, 2017:2). What George says in the above statement is that the various societies' lackadaisical stance on male battering as not being a problem has caused a lack of proper attention. In most societies, various stereotypes have been constructed providing credibility for a woman as being the victim of violence, not the man. This provision of credibility to women has led most men not to report their abasement for fear of being considered the perpetrators of violence. Hence, the male-to-female violence has greater social acceptance than female-to-male violence and erroneously considering any violence as being male-to-female as George (1994:145) testifies: "If a man is attacked by his wife and decides to call the police, he is the one who is likely to be arrested (...)." He is likely to be arrested because society considers him as the perpetrator of violence and not his wife despite the fact that he is the victim of violence from his wife. The feminization of domestic abuse has led to blinding society from viewing the other side of the coin—the invisible abuse of husbands—through believing the lies provided by women whenever they perpetrate the abuses.

As Potipher's wife in Genesis 39 lied when did not succeed in her plan, contemporary women lie before instruments of authority when their plans of abashing men succeed or fail. Stiebert (2019:108) convincingly states regarding the relevance of Potipher's wife to contemporary female perpetration of violence against men: "Unfortunately, too, the myth of false rape allegation being widespread persists, even in the absence of any indication that such is actually common. The myth that women regularly accuse men falsely of rape—because they were sexually rejected, because they did not find sex enjoyable, or because they regret sex—is common right up until present times (...)."

In principle, men have been abandoned from society's view as being victims of domestic abuses perpetrated by women. Zabala (2016:1154) further elaborates the above notion of society view on the relationship between men and their counterpart women thus:

Society has a major influence on male victims of domestic abuse in that men were traditionally privileged at the expense of women (...). Men were viewed as the breadwinner who would enforce and maintain control in the household, whereas women took the role of nurturer. These stereotypical views are installed in society and reflected repeatedly by the media so people are reluctant to believe women could perpetrate violence as men are the dominant sex.

However, despite the reluctance to believe, yet "Women perpetrators commit intimate terrorism and [some] men have reported being slapped, pushed, kick, grabbed, punched, choked, stabbed, and physical attacks in the groin area (...)" (Vernon, 2017:5).

Surprisingly, Gathogo's (2014:59–60, 2015:3) reports indicate that, from his interviews, it was obvious that men battering was more rampant among Christian families than Muslim families. Muslim women hardly battered their husbands. In Christian marriages, Gathogo (2014:50) documents the following as being some of the reasons for wives battering their husbands:

(...) reckless use of alcohol (...) mainly by men, (...) failure to provide for the family, (...) unfaithfulness in marriage (popularly called *mipango ya kando*) (...) general poverty (...) denial of conjugal rights by a drunkard or busy spouse, marriage to older women who underrate younger spouses, insults to women, retaliation against men who keep on beating their wives, parental interference especially on both sides, poor upbringing, general disagreement over matters of sexuality, children, money/and wealth (...) [and] when a sexually promiscuous man infects a faithful woman with sexually transmitted disease (...).

Looking at all the above-mentioned reasons, we note an abhorrence of a woman directed upon her spouse for a particular issue. The woman lacks tolerance and becomes violent as a weapon of resistance. The hidden transcript becomes vivid in the public as she retaliates for the deeds done to her by her husband.

3. Husband Battering in East Africa

Basing on the taboo stated in the above paragraph, male battering by their wives has been rarely reported openly as if it does not exist. However, evidence indicates that most men are heavily battered and threatened of being battered by their wives in the homes. For example, the Standard Newspaper reports that there existed rampant unreported cases of men being battered by their wives in Nyanza Province in the lake zone of Kenya. Due to being surrounded by secrecy, several cases have remained unreported. The Standard also reports the words of Chief Otieno Kabisae saying that "he has heard of a number of cases, but handling them has been complicated since men do not report to his office for action to be taken"

(Anyuor, 2012:par. 3). Chief Kabisae further reports that some among the women showed arrogance to their husbands threatening to beat them in public, calling them with their first names contrary to cultural traditions of the areas. The Chief avers: "Some call their husbands 'dogs' and even threaten to 'crush' them in public: such men do nothing, they remain silent. They don't come to us to report such cases officially so that we follow them up" (Anyuor, 2012:par. 5). According to this Newspaper, children in houses where husbands are battered by their wives, despite lacking adequate love from their parents, are not free to interact with their parents for fear that whatever interaction they do may lead to fights between parents. In such cases where parents quarrel and battering happens, especially to the father of the household, children are put into tension both emotionally and psychologically.

Moreover, in Kenya, more issues of male battering by their wives have been reported by Gathogo (2014, 2015). Reporting about the situation in the Central province of Kenya, Gathogo (2014:44) quotes Njoka as saying: "Central province is the worst place because women are in the habit of beating up their men. We are here to give women their 'red card' that such behavior has to come to an end (...). Men should be respected as family heads, but in Central Kenya, they have been reduced to the role of fathering children before they are damped" (cf. Gathogo, 2015:1). Njoka's reported statement came out after his analysis that "in Central Region of Kenya, by February 2012, there were 460,000 cases of domestic abuse. Of these, 150,000 had reported undergoing emotional abuse while 300,000 cases had been physically assaulted. 300,000 men were battered by their spouses making the region the worst place in the country for men in wedlock" (Gathogo, 2014:45, 2015:2).

Why is there a fear among men to report cases of their battering to relevant authorities for substantive steps to be taken against their violent wives? Thobejane and Luthada (2019:17) provide us with the possible reason:

The fear of reporting to the relevant authorities is further compounded by the fact that in most communities in Africa, it is an abomination to see a man crying after being beaten by a woman. In such scenarios, the 'crying man' would lose status due to cultural barriers and the stigma attached to it. Others feel guilty for being irresponsible to their families, hence the silence amidst battering.

Again, the concept of taboo discussed in the above subsection emerges. A man is not supposed to make big claims when battered by his wife in order to preserve the status of his manhood.

Despite the cultural taboo discussed, Gathogo (2014:51) lists some other causes for their reluctance to report to public facilities for actions against their female perpetrators:

(...) cultural reasons; religious leadership that advises the couple to 'seek the face of God' rather than 'washing dirty linen' in public; parents fear of embarrassment; male ego; close friends

who prefer to downplay the magnitude of the problem; fear of being laughed at; fear of the taboo or/and anathema associated with the cultural dictates of the African societies; fear of divorce in cases where the man relies on the 'rich' woman for his daily upkeep; and the embarrassment that goes with shame and exposure of being seen as a 'weak man' – in a culturally sophisticated society (cf. Gathogo, 2015:3–4).

All these reasons exacerbate the culture of silence upon abused men and cement the condemnation of any abuse in the household as being caused by the male spouse.

While there are highly reported cases of female perpetrators of violence to their husbands in Kenya, there are some reports of this kind in other countries of East Africa. In Tanzania, studies have been conducted mainly focusing on the link between domestic violence and household economic status of intimate partners (Laisser et al., 2011), wife-battering among pastoralist ethnic groups and its effects (Butovskaya, 2012), attitudes towards wife-beating (Joseph & Msenda, 2020) while others concentrating on factors leading to intimate sexual, emotional and physical violence and scanty literature that report about women as perpetrators of violence (Blideman, 2010; Kazaura et al., 2016; Rugira, 2015; Vyas & Jansen, 2018). However, most of the surveyed literature hardly focus on women as perpetrators of violence against their husbands and hardly concentrate on husband battering in particular. This lack of literature on women's violence against husbands in Tanzania does not mean that such aggression is not committed. Kazaura *et al.* (2016:4), for example, reports rightly that

Although literature on physical violence perpetrated by women towards men is scanty, in urban Tanzania, the reported prevalence among ever-married women age 15–49 who report that they have initiated physical violence against their current or most recent husband was 2% (overall and in rural areas). This rate is less than one-third of the current study (7%). Another lower rate (4%) was reported in Rwanda. However, higher rates (21%) of female perpetration to physical violence against a partner have been reported in South Africa (21%), Ghana (16 %) and Uganda (41%). In any case, there is a possibility of underreporting of the incidents of violence directed towards men because culturally women may not admit that they themselves initiated violence.

What Kazaura *et al.* imply in their quotation is that the lower reporting has done regarding women as perpetrators of violence against their husbands hardly mean that their prevalence is low. It is possible that their violence is high but rarely reported due to the taboo attached by society regarding women's violence against men. We can, therefore, conclude this part by the words of Masibo (2021):

Even though there have been so many hues and cries about domestic violence against

women across the globe, domestic violence against men is a reality and [...] occurs virtually in every society in varying degrees. Naturally, men are stronger than women, but that does not necessarily make it easier for them to have their way all the time thus undergoing abuse more often than we think. The problem is that the man who suffers domestic violence is first of all assumed to be the aggressor even if he has bruises all over him and is rarely given a listening ear. The various advocacy and sensitization is more or less in favour of women victims, thereby leaving the men victims to suffer in silence.

Since both men and women face intimate partner violence in the homes causing severe discordance between them, there is a necessity for recognition of the possible violence of both as being a problem in African societies and the world at large. The laws about violence should be geared toward solving the violence perpetrated by both sides not only those perpetrated by men against women as has been mostly the case. Deshpande (2019:248) clearly elaborates:

Men also are physically and mentally harassed by their spouses and in-laws. Hence, their problems must be recognized as social and public health issues, and appropriate strategies and interventions should be implemented. They too need help in crisis and family violence, especially by a spouse. Even the laws and legislation must include domestic violence against men as a punishable offense.

The following section presents and discusses the perceptions of symposium participants on husband battering in Tanzania according to the symposium about “Gender Issues” for Christian Education leaders and theological college tutors of the Moravian Church in Tanzania conducted in Mbeya Tanzania from 19 September 2020 to 20 September 2020 at Teofilo Kisanji University.

4. Theoretical Perspective

James C. Scott is an American political scientist who endeavored to explain the fugitive political conduct of subordinate groups. In his prolonged study of Malay peasants in rice farms, Scott discovered the extraordinary relationship between the poor powerless peasants and the powerful landowning elites and officials. Instead of holding open public protests and rebels against the powerful landowners, the poor peasants embraced a different way of resisting the wills of their landowners that seemed safer to them.

Scott (1992) developed a theory of “Hidden Transcripts” in his book *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. In this book, he purports that since the relation between poor powerless peasants and powerful elite landowners is a relation of domination, it is also characterized by passive resistance. The power used by the elites to extract products from the poor peasants caused friction between the two groups. The friction that emerged made each group orient itself in a way that favors its own side. In this orientation,

three important transcripts (discourses) appear; the transcript of the dominated group, the transcript of the dominating group, and the official or public transcript. The first two transcripts (that of the dominated and that of the dominating groups) are hidden transcripts. A hidden transcript of the powerless, Scott (1992:4–5) says, is a “discourse that takes place ‘offstage,’ beyond direct observation by power holders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.”

Why hold a hidden transcript? In response to this question, Scott (1992:14) avers that the hidden transcript has two main characteristics that can hardly relate to the public transcript: “First, the hidden transcript is specific to a given social site and to a particular set of social actors.” This characteristic means that a transcript intended for nominated groups to speak and practice issues that worth their status and can hardly be mixed with that of the dominating group and so as the transcript of the dominating group. “A second and vital aspect of the hidden transcript that has not been sufficiently emphasized,” Scott (1992:14) says, “is that it does not contain only speech acts but a whole range of practices. Thus, for many peasants, activities such as poaching, pilfering, clandestine tax evasion, and intentionally shabby work for landlords are part and parcel of the hidden transcript.” “For dominant elites,” Scott (1992:14) continues, “hidden transcript practices might include clandestine luxury and privilege, surreptitious use of hired thugs, bribery, and tempering with land titles.” According to Scott, the transcripts of both parties hardly resemble the public transcript and each part keeps it offstage for its own consumption. According to Scott, the transcript of the dominated peasants includes aspects that the dominated were not willing to disclose to the dominating group. It included issues that the dominated talked behind the official story, behind the public transcript. The way they are treated and strategies to resist the existing terrible situation was within their private discussions in the absence of the dominating group. These discussions and strategies of resistance held in the absence of the dominating group formed the hidden transcript of the dominated group.

Scott further states that the dominating group has its own strategies of maximizing profits by the use of power upon the dominated group of peasants. The discussions they hold about how to manipulate the dominated group in the absence of the dominated group form what is called the hidden transcript of the dominating group. The two hidden transcripts are performances behind what is called Official or public transcript. The public transcript includes discussions which each of the two groups would like to hear and practices which each would like to see. Therefore, the public transcript describes “the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate” (Scott, 1992:6).

Scott’s theory of Hidden Transcripts and Arts of Resistance is a well-constructed observation because it illuminates us about a situation existing between workers and dominating supervisors in working situations. It tells us that, in political arenas, there is no smooth interaction between those who lead and those who are led that is without fugitive behaviors. However, Scott’s theory hardly moves beyond the political sphere. In that case, the theory would be more explicit if it touched some issues beyond the political scope. Despite this shortcoming, Scott’s theory commands possible

applications in other disciplines and situations. This article uses Scott's theory as a perspective to interpret and understand the relationship between married couples in a situation of gender-based domestic violence. Women's resistance to domination is not passive; rather, it moves beyond being passive to being active, from non-violent to violent resistance.

5. Methodological Perspectives

A symposium of the Moravian church leaders, heads of theological colleges was conducted on 19-20 September at Teofilo Kisanji University focusing on the topic of gender issues. The study is based on the interpretivist paradigm using the qualitative approach and focus group discussion as to its method. Two focus group discussions were formulated and facilitated to discuss the issue of women battering their husbands. Each group had a chairperson and a secretary. The facilitator posed questions for discussion. Each group discussed the question separately and the secretary noted the proceedings for their discussion in each question. The facilitator's duty was to keep time, resolve some issues emanating from the discussion process. Finally, each group presented their proceedings for each question and all members of the workshop discussed and contributed to what was presented. The group was requested to add the inputs provided in the discussion to their discussion. Finally, the corrected materials were presented to the facilitator as the findings of the study. The findings were analyzed qualitatively to obtain themes. The themes obtained are presented and discussed in the following section.

6. Husband Battering in Tanzania: A Case of the Moravian Church in Tanzania

The group of leaders who gathered for a symposium unanimously accepted that there was husband battering taking place in their areas but had various opinions regarding husband battering in Tanzania, especially in the Moravian church where they came from. One among participants said: *"There are various ways of battering. It is not only physical battering that is used by women to batter their husbands. I can humiliate my husband to the maximum if I want to do so without touching his body."* The *Jamii Forum* blog also reports similar information that in Tanzania women lead in battering their husbands, especially in regions of Dar es Salaam, Lindi and Zanzibar (Mpayukaji, 2012). Until 2016, Tanzania was also recognized as having women battering their husbands. The Millardayo.com website reported that Iringa was the region leading in having husbands battered by their wives until 2017. The major reasons for women battering their husbands in Iringa, and Tanzania as a whole, were alcoholism and love-related jealousy (Ayo, 2017).

Basing on the reports on authorities, men have been reporting that women have reported that women are battering them. In the Tanzanian Newspaper called *Mwananchi*, it is reported that the Ward Executive Officer Likunja Hassan Abdallah of one of the Wards in Lindi Region said that most of the cases that were sent to his office were those concerning the complaints of men being battered by their wives. The main causative agent was the custom of women being heads of the family embraced by most tribes of Lindi Region (TV-E, 2019). These reports indicate that husband battering is ubiquitous in Tanzania. As will be noted

on the themes below on husband battering, the perception of the group of participants in the symposium did not distinguish between physical, psychological, or mental torture of wives against their husbands. Whatever done against husbands was considered as battering. The following are some of the themes as regards the causes of husband battering by their husbands according to the group of participants in the symposium.

6.1. Battering Due to Economic Depravity of Husbands

Economic depravity of husbands meant having little or less economic well-being as compared to their wives. The group reported that there are some wives who deal with small-scale businesses of selling tomatoes, small kiosks, bans, used clothes (*mitumba*), etc., making them have money. The economic position they have made them despise their husbands as being useless. Some women insulted their husbands and others physically battered them.

The major problem of women, according to the group, is their dislike that their money will be known and used by their husbands. Most women hardly disclosed the money they earn from the small businesses they did. When their husbands inquired to know about it, conflict arose between them and their wives leading to physical and psychological violence by their wives. In a conversation with one of the group members during the symposium, she said: *"The major problem with most women is that we do not like our money to be known and used by anyone, including our husbands. Even when we have sold items in our businesses, we would not prefer that our husbands know what we have earned and how we have used what we earned."* The woman further stated that some women built even houses in town for hiring people without the knowledge of their husbands. Some enhanced development at their home places (to the relatives of the wife) through building expensive houses, and supporting activities there without the knowledge of their husbands. Observed carefully, these statements show that men suffered from both physical and psychological battering from their wives. Wives had hidden transcripts from what they earned without the knowledge of their husbands.

6.2. Secrecy on Issues That Would Be Made Open Between Spouses

Group members discussed the issue of how couples related regarding issues that required openness between couples in marital life. Members of the symposium noted that joining VICOBA groups were some of the causes for husband battering because of secrets surrounding them. Most women joined the VICOBA without involving their husbands. After joining, they borrowed some money for various activities without the knowledge of their husbands while putting houses they built with their husbands as pawns (*rehani*). When they failed to pay the debt, the VICOBA people sold houses leaving their ignorant husbands stranded. In doing that, they humiliated their husbands psychologically inflicting psychological battering. The hidden transcripts of their wives led to the humiliation of husbands when such transcripts became apparent through the pawns which their wives were not able to fulfill.

Other wives battered husbands when husbands misused money obtained from selling coffee. Symposium members,

especially from Mbozi District in Songwe Region, stated that the coffee harvesting period is the unhappy period of the year for their region. In this period, most husbands, after obtaining money from selling coffee, abandoned their families and spent the money with other women apart from official wives. In retaliation, official wives stole coffee from their husbands' farms and sold it accumulating money. When husbands were bankrupt, they decided to return home. After arrival, official wives started humiliating their husbands through bad languages, even battering them.

In the above paragraph, the battering of men has a hidden transcript for women. They battered them due to irresponsibility to their families; they abandoned them during the time of plenty of money from coffee and came back to their official wives during the time of bankruptcy. At this time, their wives saw them as useless and without hope because of financial inability.

A similar occasion of family abandonment was reported in Bunda District, Mara Region. Okello (2017) reported in *Mtanzania*, an online magazine of 27 July 2017, about reasons for men in Bunda District to abscond their families. Here, it was not the plenty of money they had from earnings; rather, it was due to the way their wives perturbed them. According to the District Commissioner of Bunda for that time, Lydia Bupilipili, battering husbands was the main cause among the other causes. Bupilipili said that, according to her research in the District (Bunda), despite complaints of women claiming to be humiliated and abandoned by their husbands, yet they (women) were the main instigators of the acts. She also confessed that most causes sent to her office regarding women abandonment concerned women battering their husbands. In her own words, as reported by Okello, Bupilipili said: "I was just hearing that there are women battering their husbands, I have realized this act here at Bunda. There are women abandoned by their husbands leaving children with them because they humiliate their husbands, even by battering them" (Okello, 2017; Paul, 2019).

6.3. Difference in Educational Status Between Couples

Some group members voiced that difference in education was one of the sources of husband battering, especially when the wife was more educated than the husband. One among the group members provided an example as saying:

One young man with primary education got married to a lady with primary education. After observing that she could be developed academically, the young man decided to send his wife to secondary school for her to acquire secondary education. When that woman arrived in secondary school, she saw other men whom she thought were more suitable for her than her husband. She started seeing her husband, who sent her to school, as being not of her size. When she returned home, she started humiliating her husband with acute languages, battering him, and telling him openly that he was no longer of her size. She did that in order that the husband could divorce her.

This example indicates that most women in Tanzania become aggressive to their husbands as they become educated. Educational levels provide them arrogance; they start seeing their husbands as inferior and even hardly care about the efforts of their husbands to educate them. In the group, several examples were provided of young men who endeavored to educate their fiancées in order for them to have better education when they marry each other, yet they ended in frustration as their fiancées betrayed them. Therefore, one can conclude that most women become unreliable partners as they advance in educational statuses, whether facilitated by their husbands or struggled for their own.

6.4. Defense of Ordained Ministry for Ordained Ministers

Symposium members discussed the status of male pastors and other church ministers in relation to their wives. They agreed that husband battering was rampant even in Christian homes, especially homes where alcohol was used. However, they pointed out that male humiliation was not limited to Christian homes; they also extended to male pastors whose wives hardly cared about the work of their husbands. The main reason for husband psychological abuse and battering among male pastors was the fact that pastors could not divorce them in defense of their ministry. The group explained that male pastors tolerated the battering and psychological abuses infringed by their wives in fear of losing their status as males and the fear that they might lose their pastoral job or lower the status of their ministry should they complain to the bishops or other human rights organs. More examples were provided by the symposium members of pastors' wives who cheated their husbands (male pastors) and when asked about their behavior, they ended in humiliating them with words and even battering them.

6.5. Extra-Marital Engagement

Symposium members confessed that in their areas extra-marital engagement of husbands was one of the main causes of conflict between husbands and wives in the homes. When the husband was married to several wives, the wives entered into the competition to one another, each requiring more favors from the husband. Sometimes, women abused themselves, and other times they could abuse their husband. One of the symposium members provided an example that happened at her place. She said:

In my home place, a certain man was married to four wives. However, the man had no good relationships with all of them; the women had good communication and a good relation among themselves that gave them a sense of solidarity against their husband. He was strong enough to batter the three wives – the second third and fourth. However, he was not strong enough to batter the first wife. Whenever the man battered any of the three wives, he was also battered by the first wife. The first wife warned the man not to exercise his masculinity to his wives because he did not get married to them in order to use them as instruments.

This example indicates that women, especially the first wife were not satisfied to see the younger wives are being humiliated. She used her power to revenge on their behalf. Women in this home had their common hidden transcript against the abusive acts of their husband.

7. Conclusion

In the discussion of this paper, we have noted that violence against men has not left any place. There has been evidence of the existence of violence in the world as a whole, in Africa, in East Africa, and in Tanzania in particular. As pointed out above, Iringa Region was the leading region for wives to batter their husbands by the year 2017 (Ayo, 2017). It hoped that this habit is currently ubiquitous within the other regions of Tanzania.

Moreover, there has been husband battering in both religious and secular spheres of human life as reported in the themes from the symposium of church leaders discussed above. The question is what should be done in order to make the world a better place to live, especially for male victims who suffer from the abuse of their wives, who in turn claim to be abused? This question calls for the clear and appropriate role of society and the church in particular. Hence, the continuing violence between the two genders, especially the battering of husbands by their wives indicates that there are some issues that the church requires to address in order to mitigate the anguishes of the existing situation.

I suggest that the church and society first recognize the existence of husband battering in a society where male spouses remain silent in defense of their masculinity. Sarantakos (1999:245) clarifies this point stating that the long existent of the notion that husbands are the ones who abuse their wives while forgetting that wives also abuse their husbands has greatly led to the unnecessary suffering of husbands from the abusive wives. Abusive wives take this notion as an advantage against their husbands. Their silence has led to their sufferings remain without being addressed because they were not considered to exist. Sarantakos (1999) says: "The notion that domestic violence is a one-way traffic from the diabolic husband to the angelic wife, and that husband abuse simply does not exist, is an aberration, or is just an act of self-defense, is just a poor excuse for wife-to-husband assault and requires serious reconsideration." Hence, this recognition, to my view, will be a step forward towards addressing the issue in churches and society at large.

Second, churches should encourage men to come forward and tell human rights authorities when battered by their wives. They should not remain silent when battered! There has been an example from Lindi where the Ward Executive Office reported cases of husband battering being reported to his office. There are also examples of cases being reported to the District Officer in Bunda District of Mara Region and Lindi Region (Okello, 2017; TV-E, 2019). These are encouraging steps for the emancipation of men against the anguishes from their beloved wives.

Third, education is one of the most important tools for any controversial situation. Churches require creating awareness among women about the importance and role of husbands and wives within households. Since the household is the first foundation for the church of God, both male and

female couples have to be educated on their role towards marriage and children. It is through knowledge that husband and wife battering will be mitigated both in religious and secular realms.

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