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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE CULTURAL SPACE AND THE CUSTOMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the issue of domestic violence, both from the perspective of evaluation and from the perspective of developing intervention strategies, violence is a phenomenon of great interest at present, even if in many cultural models, especially traditional, is or has been long hidden or ignored. Family violence, with complex forms of manifestation, is established today in a social problem that captures the interest of both the population and the social and political actors invoked in developing and implementing long-term strategies that, if they cannot stop, at least they can provide prevention and intervention programs, adequate to the consequences of the phenomenon. Social insecurity, poverty, job instability, the impact of the media intervene with an undoubted vocation for cultivating aggressive models of social behavior. All this is correlated with the significant inertia of traditional models of family coexistence that polarize male power and control, favoring a relaxed attitude towards alcohol abuse, common in certain areas and socio-cultural environments, to which is added the influence of new sources of attraction and disruption of gender relations, drug addiction, value confusion and deviations of sexual and relational behavior is a fertile matrix for physical, psychological, moral, relational and economic abuse of a significant part of the population.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is considered a manifestation of the unequal power relations between men and women, a social mechanism through which women are forced to take a position of subordination, being the most widespread form of human rights violation. Studies in this field have highlighted the existence of this type of manifestation in any social category, race or nationality, constituting a common point of female experience different only by the type of violence, the possibility of women to seek and receive help, and cultural aspects with structures stronger or weaker patriarchy to which racism and economic exploitation are added. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) defines violence against women as "any act of violence that results in or may result in physical, sexual or mental harm, including such threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in public or private", Violence against women has been defined as "any act of gender-based

violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological trauma and suffering for women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty either in public or in private life" (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly, December, 1993). In terms of domestic violence, it can take various forms, more or less visible, such as physical, psychological, sexual, economic and social violence. (Intra) domestic violence is "any form of aggression, abuse or intimidation directed against a family member, a blood relative or other family members" (Correctional Service Canada, 1988, p.3). Domestic violence does not include, as stated by the Institute for Research and Crime Prevention (2000, p.6), only physical violence (murder, injury, hitting), but also sexual violence (marital rape), psychological violence (blackmail, denigration, humiliation, expulsion, abandonment, isolation), verbal violence (insult, threat) and economic violence (deprivation of means and vital goods). According to Romanian law 217 (2003), the definition of domestic violence is: "domestic violence is any physical or verbal action committed intentionally by a family member against another member of the same family that causes physical, mental,

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sexual or a material injury. Domestic violence also prevents women from exercising their fundamental rights and freedoms. For the purposes of the law, a family member means a spouse, close relative and persons who have established relationships similar to those between the spouses or between the parents and the child, proven on the basis of the social inquiry" (According to Council of Europe documents, Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe No. R (85) on domestic violence). The concept of "domestic violence" includes domestic violence (violence that occurs between partners, whether they are spouses or cohabitants, is also considered cases of violence against ex-spouse or conflict situations within consensual relationships) and violence against children, the elderly and other family members. As an alarm signal is the social acceptance, minimization or even sometimes denial of this phenomenon, stereotypes, false assumptions and myths are favorable frameworks to act for those who use violence.

Cultural knowledge and values, situations of social exclusion and marginalization are factors that influence violence against women. It requires the ability of people to operate and provide help taking into account several types of boundaries, both real and virtual, and to be competent in multicultural environments by learning new patterns of behavior and applying them appropriately in the necessary situations.

Domestic violence and its forms of manifestation: In the Romanian popular perception there is the mentality that the victimization of women must be overlooked "if the man beats you, you have to endure because where can you go? How to leave children without a father? What will people say? Where does the money for the children and the house come from?". In some areas, certain dogmas, customs, norms that give the man the right to "beat his wife" even work. To these social customs is added the female masochism of enduring physical violence, a contribution in this sense having the educational level of the man which being limited, the only form of his authority is violence. The conflicting model taken from the family of origin is perpetuated in the newly created family, sometimes leading to the weakening of the marital relationship and finally to divorce. Depending on the medical and social consequences, some researchers, including Iolanda Mitrofan (1996), mention two forms of aggression: chronic domestic violence and explosive domestic violence. Chronic domestic violence is, as mentioned, the result of traditional and educational attitudes, and the explosive is a behavior that cannot be kept under control, being detected by forensic control. Abuse of pregnant women can also be mentioned as a particular form of abuse. The determinants of violence during pregnancy (Gelles 1987) are:

- *sexual frustration;*
- *family transition, stress and fatigue;*
- *biochemical changes in the wife's body;*
- *prenatal child abuse;*
- *inability to defend the wife.*

Sexual frustration is caused by incorrect information about sexual life during pregnancy, being perceived as a period of abstinence. Some men may even feel a fear of future children, as if they could beat them, or take their place in the family - the myth of Cronus (Congdon 1970). Another cause of violence could be the *transition in the family, the stress and fatigue* determined by the existence of a previous pregnancy,

the status of parent being perceived in this case as a constraint - "another mouth to feed". Changing the daily routine of the husband and sometimes the wife can create a state of stress, leading to violence. Rapid change in family roles, poor financial means, lack of adequate housing are factors that can lead to conflicts during pregnancy. *Biochemical transformations in a woman's body*, "as if her head were attached to another body", can cause nervousness, irritability and can lead to conflicts. Violence against pregnant women was called "philicide" by Gelles (1987) and *considered prenatal abuse of the child*.

The wife's inability to defend herself as a result of the altered physical condition can be considered a favorable cause of the occurrence of violence. Violence can occur more frequently on weekends, end of the month, holidays, there is even a cyclicity of the phenomenon of violence associated with receiving a salary, due to alcohol consumption, the presence of the whole family together. Affective violence is more difficult to define because it cannot be quantified, research has identified six components of emotional abuse resulting from several situations.

Degradation, considered the first stage of decay, produces strong feelings of grief and shame and consists in repeating, emphasizing some insignificant aspects of the victim's behavior, imposing the values of the attacker. *Fear* is another component of emotional abuse and leads to a loss of self-confidence as a result of repeated attacks. *Depersonalization* is the transformations by the attacker of the woman into an object, without inner energy, will, resources, without needs or desires. Catherin Kirkwood (1992) described three types of depersonalization in women: "the requirement of the partner to change his physical appearance, the use of tranquilizers for manipulation and the possession of the partner by invading the intimate space". *Deprivation* is the third component and can be economic or social. Usually, deprivation of economic resources also leads to social deprivation. The result of social deprivation is isolation.

Overloading with responsibilities is a component of emotional abuse, subtle and more difficult to identify for the woman who lives it. Being burdened with tasks is a high expenditure of energy in the effort to maintain the marital relationship and family unity (Catherin Kirkwood 1992). *The deformation or distortion of reality* involves the inoculation of doubt in one's own perceptions of oneself or reality. Economic violence consists in the control of household resources, the lack of participation in family maintenance, the impediment of the partner to obtain a job and the sale of common or personal things by the partner. Relational violence against women consists in isolating from friends, seizing or invading the intimate space. Moral violence can take the form of adherence to a different system of moral values or the imposition of another religious system. The statistics registered in the first seven months of 2020 in Romania, 4856 provisional protection orders issued by the police according to the Law for preventing and combating domestic violence, targeting 5,040 perpetrators of violent acts in most cases men. Of these, 2293 were confirmed by prosecutors. Most provisional protection orders were issued in Bucharest-602, followed by Vaslui-232, Bra ov -202. In Romania, 800 people were killed in incidents of domestic violence between 2004-2011, finding that the legislation on domestic violence is not strictly applied (romania.europolibera.org/).

Violence against women in different cultures: There may also be violence in some cultures in the form of customs such as honor killings, sati, dowry crimes, forced marriages, sexual harassment, human trafficking or prostitution. Honor killings are defined by the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch as follows: "as acts of revenge, usually fatal, committed by male members of a family, against women in the same family, alleged to have brought dishonor to the whole families. A woman can be accused of this for many reasons, including: the refusal of an arranged marriage, she was the victim of a sexual assault, the desire for divorce, adultery or loss of virginity before marriage enough to be a threat to her life." Amnesty International adds: "In the case of honor, forgiveness is not possible. Women suspected of such deeds cannot defend themselves and family members have no choice but to remove the stain that has earned them honor by attacking the woman in question." (En.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women).

Sati or suttee it is the ancient Indian and Nepalese practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral pyre or burying her alive while she was in her husband's grave. This practice is associated with Hindu traditions. The name of this ritual is taken from the goddess Sati, Shiva's wife, who set herself on fire and burned in protest. Although the custom appeared frequently in India and Nepal, it also existed in other traditions in Russia, Vietnam and Fiji. According to custom, the Hindu Sati must be voluntary, seen as the true end of marriage. It was considered an act by which the woman consented to follow her husband into the afterlife, although there were numerous reports that women were forced to practice this Sati ritual, or were drugged, thrown into the fire, or tied before being placed on the pyre or in the grave. At one point, there was also social pressure on women to accept Sati, especially if they do not have children to ensure their existence, to support them. In the traditional society the widow did not have a social position being considered an obstacle, due to the lack of resources. Women did not remarry after the death of their husbands, even though they were very young, society expected these widows to commit suicide. Today, the Sati Prevention Act of India (1987) considers it illegal to coerce or encourage any Sati ritual. Forcing a person to commit such a ritual is punishable by death. However, cases of such Sati rituals, although few, were also recorded in 2000 and 2015 (greelane.com/ro/umanistic /istorie- i-cultur /uhat-is-sati-195389).

Dowry crimes the custom of endowing the bride is common in South Asia and especially in India, becoming a trigger for many forms of violence against women. Burning the bride, killing her at home by her husband or his family due to dissatisfaction with the dowry is a form of violence against women and seems to be one of the most common crimes in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. In India, in 2011 the National Crime Bureau reported 8,618 deaths due to these forms of manifestation, while unofficial data suggest that the number of such incidents is at least three times higher (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women). Forced marriages are marriages in which one or both parties are caught up in a marital relationship against their will. Forced marriage is distinct from arranged marriage, in which both parties agree on the arrangement of the parents finding a partner, and the difference between the parties involved may be less obvious. Forced marriages are common in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Habits such as buying the bride for

a fee and dowry, which is practiced in many parts of the world, contribute to this practice. A forced marriage is a form of settling a conflict between families by forcing a woman to enter another family. There is also the custom of kidnapping the bride that continues to exist in some Central Asian countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Caucasus or some countries in Africa, especially Ethiopia. A girl or a woman is abducted by the man who wants her as his wife and is often helped by his friends. The victim is often raped by the kidnapper, after which he can try to negotiate a wedding price with the village elders in order to legitimize the marriage (ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women). Sexual harassment refers to unwanted and insistent sexual advances, usually in the workplace or in cases where the consequences of a refusal can become very disadvantageous situations for the harassed victim. The abuser wants to dominate the victim and take advantage of the state of inferiority in which he is or is brought by various means, in order to obtain sexual benefits or advantages (when we talk about sexual harassment), immoral (the pleasure of harming someone) and/or materials (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women).

Trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution is "The recruitment, transport, transfer, accommodation or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over the persons concerned, carried out under threat or by use of force, by other forms of coercion, by abduction, by fraud, deception, abuse of power or taking advantage of a state of vulnerability or by offering or receiving money or other benefits in order to obtain the consent of one person who has control over another for the purpose of exploitation" (Directive 2011/36 / EU). In Europe, more than half of the victims of human trafficking are women sexually exploited. In 2012, 1,041 victims of human trafficking were registered in Romania, of which 526 were sexually exploited. Almost half of the trafficked women were minors (according to ANITP) (ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women). There are also forms of violence perpetuated by the state such as: violence caused by police forces or other authorities, rape and sexual slavery during military conflicts, forced sterilization and forced abortion, stoning and whipping, genital mutilation of women.

Violence caused by police forces or other authorities is a form of abuse when police officers use their power and assault victims or commit acts of sexual harassment. In these situations, victims (including women) feel much less able to report the violence to which they are exposed. The forms of abuse represented by frequent human rights violations committed by law enforcement and military personnel in many countries are correlated with reduced access to public health services and discriminatory practices among vulnerable groups, such as women or prostitutes. they are particularly prevalent in areas with a poorly represented rule of law and low professionalism and management of police and military personnel (ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women).

Rape and sexual slavery during military conflicts: War rapes are committed by soldiers or civilians during an armed conflict or during a military occupation, it differs from sexual assaults and rapes committed between troops during military service. This type of violence includes the situation in which women are forced into prostitution or sex slaves by the occupying power.

Forced sterilization and forced abortion: Are forms of violence against women. Such methods have been practiced in countries such as Uzbekistan and China (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women).

Stoning and whipping: By stoning (lynching/stoning) (in Latin *lapidatio*) is meant a death sentence in the most cruelest forms. The convict in these situations is killed by throwing stones. Despite protests from human rights organizations, this barbaric method that has been around for a long time is still applied in some Islamic countries in Africa, as well as in some Asian countries, such as Afghanistan and Iran. The sentence is generally given by a monarch or justice, the convict being buried to the pelvis or chest, the rest of the body being exposed to stones thrown by the crowd. This method of application applies to a higher percentage of women than men. The reason for the sentence may be punishment for extramarital affairs, witchcraft or theft. Whipping is the methodical act of hitting the human body. It is a judicial punishment in different countries for specific crimes, including sex outside of marriage. These punishments, in addition to being a form of violence in themselves, can discourage victims of rape from reporting abuse, as they may be punished (if they cannot prove that they were victims of rape or abuse) (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women).

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the procedure of "partial or total removal of the female external genitalia, or the creation of other lesions of the female genitalia for various reasons other than medical." According to a 2013 UNICEF report, 125 million women and girls in Africa and the Middle East have experienced FGM. The WHO states that "the procedure has no health benefits for girls and women" and "the procedures can cause severe bleeding and urinary problems, cysts, infections, infertility, as well as complications at birth with a higher risk of death of the newborn". FGM is internationally recognized as a violation of the rights of girls and women, a practice that reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and is an extreme form of discrimination against women. According to a UNICEF report, the countries where women are most exposed to genital mutilation are Somalia (with 98% of women affected), Guinea (96%), Djibouti (93%), Egypt (91%), Eritrea (89%), Mali (89%), Sierra Leone (88%), Sudan (88%), Gambia (76%), Burkina Faso (76%), Ethiopia (74%), Mauritania (69%), Liberia (66%) and Guinea-Bissau (50%). Women's genital mutilation is part of the local cultural rituals and customs of different communities or countries in Africa and the Middle East.

Rituals continue to be practiced in countries where these customs are prohibited by law. According to the Inter-African Committee, FGM is defined as a "harmful traditional practice". Due to globalization and immigration, FGM has spread beyond Africa and the Middle East to countries such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom (ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_against_women). The study of violence in different cultures was the common feature of violence against women, a first analysis of this phenomenon, led to the conclusion that there are no differences of class, ethnicity or nationality, but definitions of domestic violence would not be complete if it did not include specific forms of violence, as well as the consequences and particular effects on women from an ethnic and cultural perspective. In this sense, although patriarchal values may be widespread, women from various ethnic groups

may have particularities in terms of the type of violence experienced and their reaction in response to such violence. In analyzing violence against women from this perspective, it is essential to avoid perceptions that one culture the violence is more permissive than another. Sometimes violence is considered a normal part of culture, assuming it is "a cultural issue". But violence against women is not accepted in any culture and no culture can be an excuse for violence. Just as it is important not to accept "women's accusation", it is important to avoid "cultural accusation". Culture cannot be confused with patriarchy. Violence against women cannot be considered a cultural problem, but rather a mechanism of a patriarchal system that has the effect of violence.

protection personnel and creating specialized services It can be stated that violence can take various forms and can have various consequences in women's lives, depending on the socio-cultural context where it takes place. In this sense, it can be mentioned that there are peculiarities of Roma culture (among others social and cultural values, traditions and ways of defining gender identities), if we refer to ethnic groups in Romania, which have an influence how women experiences violence exercised over them. The spread of the phenomenon, the forms it can take, the impact on women's lives, the possibilities and abilities of women to cope and the social image related to violence are influenced by the social and cultural values of the community where violence occurs, for example in the Roma community. in our country, to these can be added the situation they experience, of social exclusion and marginalization in which the members of the community live. In the Roma culture of our country and the Republic of Moldova, violence against women is considered a complex and sensitive subject "Roma woman can only be considered a beautiful, passionate gypsy with a gypsy heart" but not an educated woman with a professional or social status, the environment being impregnated with strongly patriarchal customs and laws. Thus, negative stereotypes are combined with positive ones to form a distorted and somewhat discriminatory image of the Roma woman. By internalizing these stereotypes, frustrations arise that determine behaviors "according to the predictions made" of labeling in society. It can be said that in other cultures such as India, the issue of violence is the current sexual violence, along with physical violence with high rates especially in New Delhi which has been called the "Indian capital of rape" with more than 560 of known cases. American and Indian publications record numerous cases of rape, which has led the people of India to take to the streets and protest against the violation of women's rights in society. A family health report blames women for their physical violence, and a 2012 UNICEF report shows that 57% of boys and 53% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 believe their wife's beating is justified. The perpetuation of the pattern of intergenerational violence as a result of the rooting of the custom in society is also mentioned by some officials who emphasized this fact. To these are added the indifference of society, the presence of insults in public areas, the physical harassment of women who do not determine the positions of passers-by but indifference and even blaming the victim. As for the victims of rape, they are influenced and even pressured, as mentioned by some newspapers, to make compromises in the sense of giving up the accusations, and even a marriage can be possible with one of the aggressors. These compromise mediations are made by village elders and clan counselors to maintain peace between families and clans in the sense that the prospects of a girl's marriage are considered far more

important and serious than punishing a rapist. The causes that have been mentioned in maintaining domestic violence are: the status of women in a society that has a strong patriarchal character, the deficient protection system with few police officers and few women among them, the judiciary with a small number of judges (15 judges for one million people). To this are added the few convictions and drastic measures in such cases. During the pandemic, especially in the isolation period, there was an increase in domestic violence, with 2.3% more complaints from women abused by their life partner, according to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (ANES). Instead, it was observed that robbery and crime decreased during this period. Domestic violence increased during the quarantine period worldwide, not only in Romania. Activists against violence against women have pointed out that domestic violence has escalated in countries where quarantine has been imposed due to the corona virus pandemic, The Guardian said. The number of abuses has exploded in China, Italy, Spain and Brazil.

Regarding the current situation, it can be mentioned that women face daily the negative aspects of this pandemic of Corona virus, with the fear of death, carrying an extremely heavy burden. In the most common cases, women are more affected by unemployment, have more difficult access to medical care and often do not receive the economic or social help they desperately need. It can be mentioned that women need special support, but in many countries their precarious situation cannot be taken into account. In India, many women lost their jobs during the first wave of the pandemic. In March and April 2020 alone, more than 15 million women lost their jobs overnight, and already so poorly paid in this country. A similar situation has occurred in Latin America. The job losses, during the pandemic, increased with 44 percent in the case of women. It is often overlooked that, in the global trades, 70% of women work mainly in the care of the elderly and the sick, which puts them at increased risk of infection and disease with Covid-19 (romania.europalibera.org/).

Domestic violence research methodology: In order to highlight the dependence between the level of education and manifestation of violence, a research was conducted based on a quantitative analysis performed on 300 victims of domestic violence selected from a Mediation Center Iasi, Spiridon Hospital Iasi and Socola Hospital Iasi for a period of two years. The type of interview used was structured and focused on domestic violence. The sample used was homogeneous with victims from rural and urban areas. The results show that victims with a higher level of education turn to the medical staff in the hospital to obtain forensic certificates, required by the courts and do not resort - or go very rarely - to the centers of the protection institutions. Victims with a basic level of education are frequently required to go to the protection services. Similar differences in the results highlighted in *Table 1* were also reported in the research conducted by Gelles (1987) and Pagelow et al. (1981).

During World War II, the Japanese military set up military brothels in which girls and women were abused and forced to be sex slaves for soldiers (ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/violence_for_women). The research is limited to cases that are officially registered, a large number of cases remaining unknown. However, it can be stated that the level of diplomas influences women's decision to maintain an abusive

relationship, the level of education being associated with a professional status that gives them material independence.

Table 1. Level of education of victims of domestic violence

Level of education of the victims from hospitals							
higher level		medium level		elementary level		Total	
no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
20	13.4	124	83.2	5	3.4	149	100.00
Level of education of the victims from protection institutions							
higher level		medium level		elementary level		Total	
no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
1	0.7	41	39	109	72.2	151	100.00

The education level of the victims, range from elementary to higher, indicated as the category with maximum vulnerability women with secondary education (83.2%), followed by those with higher education (13.4%) in the case of selected victims from the hospital. The selected victims with elementary education in the protection institutions represented 72.2%. The high percentage of victims with higher education reveals, as mentioned, the fact that these women do not seek specialized social assistance, but seek medical help - issuing the legal medical certificate necessary for the court to justify the presence of aggression in the family. Domestic violence in the category of victims with higher education highlighted the fact that emotional abuse was most common in women in this category. The conclusions that emerge are that an increase in violence in the former communist countries is determined by a complex of factors, including the liberalization of the media, the general increase in freedom of movement through democratization, the sudden weakening of social control, access to means of aggression (weapons), as well as the considerable increase of material goods, identity markings (money, cars) that form control power centers. A decrease in violence could be achieved by changing the mentality of the population in a positive way, by education, by tightening sanctions for aggressors, completing the legal framework, specialized for training specialists in the field. Research needs to be focused on this phenomenon in order to become tools in the hands of decision makers.

Glossary of Abbreviations

ANITP-National Agency Against Trafficking in Human Beings
 ANES - National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
 FGM - Female genital mutilation
 UN -United Nations
 UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund
 WHO - World Health Organization

The education level of the victims, which ranged from

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