



Cheers to the family

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND ALCOHOL

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Men, Masculinities and the Bottle

WINE, CACHAÇA, RUM, WEISSBIER, WARIGI. Whatever its form, alcohol is both a part of human social life, a source of pleasure and, in some forms, as deeply imbedded in local culture as any other part of gastronomy. But the abuse of alcohol is, unfortunately, too often the domain of men, and too often seen as part of what it is to be defined as a »real man« in much of the world. We know that globally men make up the majority of alcohol consumers. And we know that alcohol use is too often associated with a litany of men's behaviors: driving dangerously, unsafe sex, violence against other men and boys, and violence against women and girls. Global sample survey research we have carried out has shown that men and boys who buy into or believe in a set of inequitable norms or beliefs about what it means to be men, are more likely to drink and drink in excess.

For some men, drinking excessively is a license to act in extreme forms: defending their »honor« no matter what it takes, using force or coercion to acquire sex and using violence against partners and children. For other men – stuck in stoic views that »real men« can't show emotions – it is the only space or time when they show their true feelings. The crying or overly expressive drunk is often a man stuck in an emotional straightjacket, unable to achieve meaningful human connection in other moments – except when he drinks excessively. In some parts of the world, a boy becomes a man when he has his first sexual encounter and gets drunk (sometimes at the same time).

But excessive drinking is both a cause of some of the worst behavior of men (and women) as

well as a consequence of the conditions some men face. For men working in inhumane conditions, men who migrate for work and spend most of their time away from home, or men who face un- or underemployment and feel shame, drinking is a solace. A recent survey we carried out in India found that men who reported they were ashamed to face their family or stressed because they did not have enough income were more than twice as likely to drink heavily as men who did not report stress. For men unable to maintain relationships and unable to achieve a sense of self-respect as »working men« the bar or the shabeen is sometimes the only place men say they find companionship or friends who do not judge them for not having work.

The solutions are not easy. Control of alcohol sales (both hours and places) and public education have shown some evidence of making a difference. In addition to these, nothing beats a good conversation, talking to boys and men, gently and frequently – explaining that manhood does not have to be stoic, drunken and reckless, telling them, in other words, that drinking excessively does not make you a man.



Gary Barker

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MALAWI:

Chaos in my head

During all of Hendelina's time as a married woman, her husband Daniel drank. With intoxication came violence. Even when the family was starving the drinking continued. Today, Daniel has stopped abusing his wife and he wants to talk about what happened, in order to try to understand.

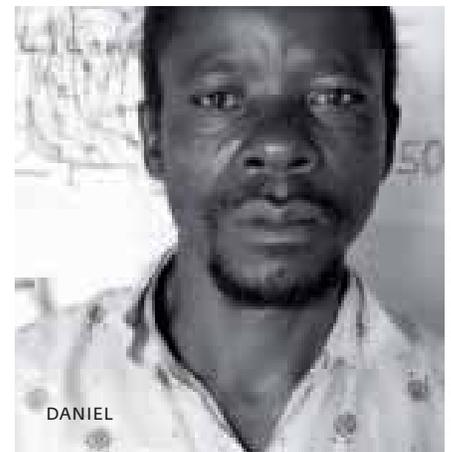
TAKE A JOURNEY INTO the Malawi countryside; in the middle of nowhere, the thick forest of corn and tobacco plants suddenly opens, and a village with simple brick houses stands out sharply against the red soil. This is the home of the Kenenga Victim Centre, a shelter for abused women. The centre is a collaboration between the police and the traditional chiefs of the Mtema area. You can find Hendelina Daniel here. She is a bit over 30 years old and has lived with her husband Daniel since they married, 14 years ago. Even

then he had started drinking the locally brewed beer.

»Because Daniel had been drunk so often our family couldn't develop and the violence just got worse and worse,« says Hendelina.

Hendelina always tried to talk with him about the lack of money when he was sober, but he never answered her questions. Instead, he left and went to the local pub. Later, when he came home, he attacked her and started to hit her.

»Once, he came after me with a knife



and cut up my face right under my left eye. The children were watching.»

She points to the scar that remains as a memory of that evening.

»At the beginning of the 21st century, large parts of Malawi were hit by famine and we were so short of food that the children's bellies got all swollen up, but Daniel still didn't stop drinking. He didn't stop hitting me either,« says Hendelina.

Her husband Daniel suddenly appears with a policeman – he very much wants to tell the story too. When looking back at all the years he was abusing Hendelina, there is one event in particular that hurts to think about.

»My wife had just had a baby. Despite that, I went home to her after a night at



PHOTO: TRIGVE BØLSTAD, PHOENIX



Why he became violent from drinking, he cannot really explain.

the pub and hit her so badly that she finally had to leave the house running with our three-month-old baby in her arms.»

Daniel started drinking early – he started when he finished school and he then continued to use more and more alcohol every year. Why he became violent from drinking, he cannot really explain:

»It kind of becomes chaos in my head and I start to misunderstand things that people say to me. Even when my wife talks politely to me, I find her rude,« says Daniel.

Daniel still hasn't stopped drinking completely.

»But he doesn't hit me any longer,« says Hendelina. »The turning point came when I decided to leave him. Although I saw a

risk that he would become so angry that he would beat me until I died, I still dared to tell it to him straight to his face. But he didn't react the way I thought he would. Instead, he became afraid. At about the same time we heard about the victim support unit and decided that we should go there.«

»The counselling there helped Daniel stop hitting me and now we live a pretty normal life,« says Hendelina. Four years ago they had one more child – a daughter. In gratitude for the help they received from The Gender Based Violence Committee, they decided to name her 'Gender'. ◀

The text is a partly revised version of the radio documentary »Alkoholmisär på export« (»Alcohol distress on export«) by Jörgen Huitfeldt and Anders Holmberg from Sveriges Radio, which was made during the Spring of 2009.

Abuse of affection

»It was unbearable being home when he yelled and hit the children and me«, says Sarojini in Sri Lanka. »It kind of turns into chaos in the head when I drink«, says Daniel in Malawi. Where there is violence, there is also often alcohol: outside the bar or pub, but also in the family where the man has become drunk on the locally brewed beer.

TEXT: HELENA KARLSSON

IT IS TOO SIMPLISTIC to say that alcohol automatically leads to violence, or that violence in society grows in proportion to increases in alcohol consumption. Nonetheless, a definite connection exists between alcohol and violence. The complexity of these connections results from, among other things, culture and social expectations.

Drinking patterns vary across nations, regions and cultures. In some regions such as Northern Europe, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa binge drinking is common. Binge drinking is the pattern associated with the most risk, including substantial harm inflicted on persons other than the drinker.

In general, all over the world women drink less or much less than men. They drink less on each occasion, and they consume alcohol less frequently.



This pattern, however, varies greatly among countries. For example, in Bangladesh three out of one thousand women drink; in Sweden four out of five women do.

Women's drinking patterns are influenced by tradition, by norms and stigma, and by the fact that women bear children and have the main responsibility for raising them. Old patterns are changing, however, and an increasing number of women now consume alcohol.

Globalisation has also influenced alcohol consumption patterns, as abstainer and low-consumption populations have become new target markets for the alcohol industry. Young people and women represent promising expansion markets for the industry.

Socio-anthropologic studies have established that alcohol consumers react differently to intoxication. According to one explanation, people in different cultures have »learned« to react in different ways when drinking. Regardless of the country, alcohol use leads to a kind of »tunnel vision,« where the drinker may misinterpret signals and sensory impressions from his surroundings. The mental barriers that prevent violence when sober disappear.

The international research project GENACIS studies gender, culture and alcohol. Costa Rica is one of the developing countries covered by the project and intimate partner violence is a growing problem there, including an increasing number of murders of women. Research evidence from the project suggests that violence is more common among those



Regardless of the country, alcohol use leads to a kind of »tunnel vision,« where the drinker may misinterpret signals and sensory impressions from his surroundings.



If the father in the family spends the family's money on beer and liquor, he jeopardizes the whole family's financial situation.

who drink than among non-drinkers. According to GENACIS studies in Uganda, three quarters of men routinely argue with their partners after they have been drinking alcohol.

Swedish psychotherapist Stefan Lindberg has worked for many years with children who have witnessed violence at home:

»It is very common for the men I meet to blame alcohol. They think that drinking will somehow release them from responsibility. But my message is that »you are still responsible for violence and other acts while you are drunk.« It is also inappropriate for them to try to the blame the woman for having provoked them, or the child for not behaving properly.«

Men use violence more than women. In a study carried out by the Friends of Women Foundation in Thailand, researchers identified a belief that a man »owns« his wife and thus has the right to beat her. Additionally, they found that men believe that »real men« are supposed to drink. The Thai study revealed that as many as 70 to 80 per cent of the drinking men had been beating their wives or children.

Clearly, women are affected by violence. According to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), one third of all women have been subjected to violence during their lifetime and most of this violence takes place in intimate partner relationships. A WHO survey (2005) in ten countries found that more than half of the women in Bangladesh, Peru and Tanzania had been abused or raped by their partners. In Ethiopia the rate of abuse ran as high as 71 per cent. Only in Japan was the rate below 20 per cent.

A lack of appropriate legislation and the fear of stigmatisation deter women from seeking help. Fortunately, many countries have begun introducing laws that punish intimate partner violence.

Studies from different parts of the world conclude that high levels of alcohol consumption increase the risk of violence. Drinking at such high levels may also lead to many problems that, in turn, can become a breeding ground for violence.



For example, if the father in the family spends the family's money on beer and liquor, he jeopardizes the whole family's financial situation. For those who already live in poverty, the consequences can be devastating.

»My husband is a drunk«, says Wezi Manza from Malawi, when interviewed for a radio documentary. »We have been married for eight years and every time he is drunk he hits me.«

In Malawi, a litre of the locally produced beer, Chibuko, costs little more than half a dollar. Many



PHOTO: SEAN SPRAGUE, PHOENIX

men become drunk and lose their appetite when drinking it. At home, however, the family suffers without money for food. And Wezi Manza is not alone. Alcohol problems and poverty are strongly connected.

But even in countries with good welfare systems, heavy drinking can lead to major problems in the family. Parental care for children may break down and the relationship between the adults may deteriorate into tension and mistrust. Increased stress in the family increases the risk of violence.

The partner who is the victim of violence, most often the woman, may start using alcohol as a way to self-medicate and endure the situation. A study from Iceland found that somewhat more than one-fifth of abused women also drank alcohol – as a way to cope. In many cultures however, a strong taboo against drinking by women exists, and this may cause even more shame for the violence-exposed woman. Being drunk is a risk factor for becoming a victim, whether walking home from the pub or being beaten at home.

Children are a special concern. Sometimes they receive beatings because a parent may believe such treatment to be a normal part of raising children. Or parents may think that the child has provoked the violence in some way. Beliefs about corporal punishment for children vary among counties and cultures. Undeniably, however, a person who is often drunk is more likely to inflict violence on his own family than someone who remains sober most of the time. In addition to the direct violence experienced by children, the violence they witness between their parents can be even more psychologically devastating for them.

Psychotherapist Stefan Lindberg observes: »Your own pain you can, somehow, keep under control. It can almost be worse to see your mother being abused. The parents are the people who are supposed to care for the child. What can then be worse than your father beating up your mother?«

For such children, the connection between violence and alcohol may return again later in life. Children who witness violence or threats of violence are at a higher risk of becoming substance abusers.

The link between alcohol and the violation of children may also occur even before birth. If a mother drinks during sensitive periods of her pregnancy, her drinking increases the risk that the child will develop *fetal alcohol syndrome* (FAS) or other fetal damage. Drinking during pregnancy is related to a broad range of neurologic and brain disorders that can lead to a number of personal and social problems later in life. ◀



Children often witness violence between their parents.

BELARUS:

Too many children to save

In Belarus the abuse of alcohol is a serious and substantial problem, often leading to intra-family violence. Those tragedies account for one of the reasons why children fare so badly and why, in fact, so many end up in foster care.

TEXT: ULRICA ÖBERG

IN 2008, ANNUAL consumption of alcohol totaled 12.4 litres of pure alcohol per person and that amount has increased each year since. Naturally, increased drinking has also affected the situation in the family. According to data from the office of the public prosecutor, 65 per cent of all crimes that take place in the home are committed by people who are intoxicated by alcohol.

Children are often the victims of alcohol-fueled violence. The emergency orphanage in the Zavodskoj district of Minsk has 35 places, but in April 2009 as many as 47 children aged 4–17 were housed there. According to Anna Gramovitj, head of the orphanage, 83 per cent of children taken into custody come from families with alcohol problems. The situation is similar at other institutions.

In today's Belarus, some 10,000 children grow up in institutions and slightly more than 20,000 have been placed with



PHOTO: EKATERINA KOVROVA

foster families because they cannot live with their biological families. Ninety per cent of those children are social orphans, whose parents are alive but incapable of providing for their children. When it comes to children taken into protective custody, widespread societal alcoholism is the most frequent underlying problem.

According to official figures, there are slightly fewer than 180,000 persons registered as alcoholics in Belarus. However, the NGO «Center of Confidence, Hope, and Recovery,» which offers self-help groups for people with alcohol problems, estimates that the number is actually ten times higher. ◀

The forgotten dimension

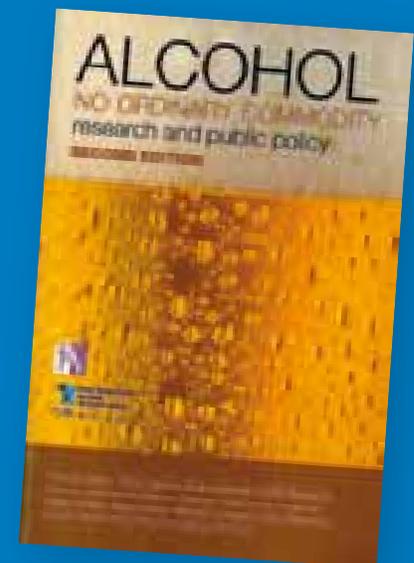
Social harm is the ‘forgotten dimension’ of the alcohol problem. This is one of many challenging statements in the book *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity*, which has now come in a second and updated edition, seven years after the groundbreaking first edition was published.

ONE OF THE CHAPTERS of the book describes social harm related to alcohol consumption. It is argued that social harm is the ‘forgotten dimension’ of the alcohol problems, as most attention is normally given to the harm inflicted on the drinker himself or herself: »It is worth noting that in contrast to the majority of the health-related impacts of alcohol, many of the social harms are borne by someone other than the drinker.«

Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity is a guide to how to understand alcohol-related harm and how such harm most effectively can be prevented by various types of interventions. A new and updated version of the book was published in 2010. Also this edition has been written by an international group of 15 renowned alcohol researchers under the leadership of Professor Thomas Babor.

The authors of the book have reviewed existing research on the relationship between alcohol consumption and violence and conclude as follows: »Individual as well as population-level studies indicate a causal relationship between alcohol consumption and violence. The strength of the relationship seems to be culturally dependent. Patterns of drinking, especially drinking to intoxication, seem to play an important role in causing violence. Violence against intimate partners is strongly associated with the amount of alcohol consumed.«

At an individual level a number of studies indicate a linear relationship between consumption level of alcohol and risk of involvement in violent incidents. A large number of studies have demonstrated a significantly increased risk of involvement in violence among alcohol abusers/ heavy drinkers, while several studies have



also shown that heavy drinkers are more likely to be the victims of violence.

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated increased risk of violent events with increasing frequency of intoxication. The association seems to be stronger with intoxication frequency than with consumption level.

A few studies have found an increase in rates of reported (non-fatal) violence at a population level when per-capita consumption has increased. Homicide rates have also been found to increase with rising per-capita consumption. ◀

More alcohol – more violence

On a societal level there is a crystal clear connection between the amounts of alcohol consumed and the level of violence in the community; the connection also exists on an individual level, says Ingeborg Rossow, a Norwegian researcher who has studied alcohol and violence for a long time.

TEXT: PIERRE ANDERSSON

»THERE IS A LONG LIST of studies showing a connection between alcohol and violence. The connections are most evident at the societal level, where it becomes very clear that increased alcohol consumption gives rise to an increase in violent crime.«

Ingeborg Rossow is Research director at The Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research (Statens institutt for rusmiddelforskning, SIRUS). She has been an alcohol researcher since the early 1990s. Much of her recent work has been on the connection between alcohol and violence. She is also one of the co-authors of the report Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity.

The connection between alcohol and violence exists on several levels. Ingeborg Rossow refers to what she terms 'aggregated results', which show the patterns and connections that exist in society as a whole.

»It is important, especially when discussing which political direction to take, to see these connections and problems on an overall community level. At this level,



it is a simple equation; more alcohol in society generates more violence in society.«

On an individual level, however, the links are often more complex.

»Some experimental studies have been carried out documenting how people behave at different levels of intoxication. These studies point in the same direction, but also show more complicated patterns. Here you can see that people often become more aggressive the more alcohol they drink, but that there is often something

else in the situation that triggers the violence.«

The same studies also show that those who have a tendency to become aggressive and violent when sober are also the ones most affected by drinking.

»There is also a difference between men and women. Drunken men are violent significantly more often than drunken women. I have no good answer as to why this is so.«

Long-term studies on a societal level show that alcohol related political decisions and measures can have a significant impact on the development of violent criminality. Political decisions might include changes to how and where alcohol is sold, opening hours and the number of outlets permitted to sell alcohol. How the authorities carry out their regulatory task can also have a big impact.

»One concrete example of how the situation has been changed in a positive direction can be seen in Stockholm, Sweden. There, the STAD-project (Stockholm Prevents Alcohol and Drug Problems) managed to significantly reduce the number of violent crimes by, for example, educating inn and pub staff in order to reduce serving to already intoxicated patrons, while also increasing inspections and supervision.«

An evaluation of the STAD-project shows that violence has gone down by around 30 per cent in the trial area compared to areas where the same efforts had not been carried out.

»An example in the reverse direction can be seen in Reykjavik, Iceland,« says Ingeborg Rossow. At the end of the 1990s Reykjavik decided to remove the restrictions for how late the pubs were allowed to serve alcohol.

The thought being the restrictions would eliminate the problems that

emerged when all pubs had the same closing time.

»The change had exactly the opposite effect. Instead, they had a sharp increase in both reported crimes of violence and in the number of new admissions to hospital casualty wards.«

An interesting study from Brazil looked at possible effects on alcohol-related violence when the bars' hours of operation were reduced. In the city of Diadema, close to São Paulo, a policy was introduced in July 2002, restricting the sale of alcohol and prohibiting on-premises alcohol sales after 11:00 pm. This restriction of drinking hours led to a decrease of almost nine murders a month. Assaults against women also decreased, but the researchers concluded this effect was not significant when looking at underlying trends.

Another example comes from the old Soviet Union, where for a few years in the mid-80s, a number of efforts were carried out aimed at limiting binge drinking and the nationwide damage caused by alcohol: The price of vodka was raised significantly while the number of sales outlets was reduced.

»In just a few years, the number of cases of manslaughter among the male part of the population went down by 40 per cent.«

The links between alcohol consumption and violence vary when comparing countries and cultures. How strong the connection is, is related to how you drink.

»In cultures where intoxication rarely occurs, for instance in large parts of Southern Europe, there is still a connection between total alcohol consumption and the level of violence, however not as strong as in Northern Europe where binge drinking is significantly more common.« ◀

Three connections between alcohol and violence

1. AMONG THE VIOLATORS

»Intoxication often leads to conflicts and aggression. There are several theories about why this is the case. One reasonable assumption is that our cognitive functions change when we drink – simply, it becomes more difficult to interpret social situations, more difficult to read people's faces and easier to end up in misunderstandings. It is also easier to get mentally stuck in a single track, and the combination of these two facts can lead to conflict. Violence and aggression become the paths of least resistance.«

2. AMONG THE VICTIMS

»The victims of this aggressiveness are often intoxicated too. This makes them more vulnerable as it becomes more difficult to see and understand threatening situations and to get away from them in time.«

3. AMONG THE SPECTATORS

»The other participants in a social context do not intervene to interrupt threatening or violent situations in the same way when they are intoxicated.«

All three of these levels have significance for how alcohol and violence are linked on a societal level.”

THAILAND:

Dialogue about violence

Jadeth Chaowilai, leader of Friends of Women Foundation (FOW) in Thailand, has seen how violent men have managed to change their behaviour – by simply talking to each other.

THE FRIENDS OF WOMEN Foundation works with women's networks all over the country. In 2002, the Foundation carried out a study through its networks to look at alcohol as a factor in domestic violence. The study found that 70–80% of men who drink alcohol also use violence, such as abuse and rape, against their wives and their children.

What is the role of alcohol in gender-based violence and in domestic violence?

»The violence has its root in the idea that the man owns the woman and has the right to hit her,« says Jadeth Chaowilai. Drinking alcohol means that you are seen as a real man. But, violence within the family in Asian cultures is an internal matter – for the family only. Making it known publicly brings shame on the family and no one from outside the family interferes.

How is it possible to stop alcohol-related violence?

»In 2004, based on the previous study, the FOW started the programme »Stop



PHOTO: CLANPO/CONDEC

Drink Stop Violence to Women and Children« in the four areas where the survey was carried out. After going through counselling, men who previously drank became »Stop Drink« leaders and helped to create support groups. In Amnajaroon in the northeast, 100 men stopped drinking, out of a total population of 250 families. As a result, 30 women reported an end to the violence that had been a part of their relationships up to that point.«

»In Pa-Toh, Thasea and Koh-Keo in southern Thailand too, men who had previously been drinking have become »Stop Drink« leaders and now hold talks and discussions about alcohol and fam-

ily violence. In Pa-Toh, 40 men have formed the »Coffee Table Committee,« where they discuss violence and how to heal the family again.

The offered counselling is directed towards the whole family. It assists the man to see and realise how alcohol makes him violent. Family members get encouragement to reject the victim role. They receive support while they in turn support the man in his efforts to stop drinking. All four areas have reported a reduction in violence since the men stopped drinking. In Amnajaroon today, only five percent of the men drink. ◀

LATIN AMERICA:

Mucho Macho

In Mexico, every second woman has suffered violence at the hands of her partner. Two thirds of the cases involve alcohol. In Costa Rica, the risk of being exposed to violence increases ten times for a woman who lives with a heavy-drinking man. Alcohol and machista constitute violence in Latin America.

LATIN AMERICAN MEN drink large amounts of alcohol when they drink. According to researchers there, the expectations surrounding drinking, drinking patterns and the drinking culture are gender-related and specifically tied to male and female gender roles. Violence in Latin American society and families and alcohol consumption patterns are strongly intertwined with a masculinity characterised by a will to dominate. »Machismo as an ideology exaggerates the differences between men and women, emphasizing male moral, economic and social superiority over women ... (and defining) masculine identity in terms of dominance and aggression« (Ellsberg 2000).

Back to Mexico. Here, the women, half of whom do not drink, are expected to take responsibility for other family members when they drink and for the consequences. Such actions are an expression of the marianismo. Women are not expected to drink at all. A woman who drinks so much that she harms herself, risks being shunned by society.

As a result of the stigma associated with drinking, women's alcohol problems grow secretly over long periods of time, reducing the possibility of escaping a violent relationship. Nonetheless, studies carried out in Mexico show that women who are given an opportunity to increase their income, through direct grants or through micro loans, experience less violence than before receiving the additional income. Their change in situation includes reduced drinking by their spouse. (Angelucci 2007). In other words, dependent relationships seem to increase the risk of being exposed to violence.

Evidence from Argentina also reflects a strong connection between alcohol and violence in close relationships. In the Argentinean culture, men often use alcohol as an excuse when abusing a partner. Studies in other Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua, Brazil and Peru, all confirm increased risks of violence when the male partner has been drinking.



PHOTO: PIETRO GENINI, PHOENIX

When alcohol-related violence enters the home, family members pay a high price. Indeed, entire nations must pay. For example, some estimates assess the loss of production due to family violence at 1.6% per cent of GNP in Nicaragua and more than 2% in Chile (Graham 2008). The

Inter-American Development Bank estimates that [countries in that region?] spent 2% of GNP to address the effects of domestic violence (Graham 2008). The Inter-American Development Bank estimates that 2% of GNP in Latin America is spent to address the effects of domestic violence (Graham 2008).

Globally, women, in general, drink less alcohol than men. The risk of being exposed to violence is, however, higher for both women and men whenever they are intoxicated. This reality strongly suggests that corporate alcohol-marketing strategies, which aim to increase alcohol consumption among women, are at odds with public health policies to protect women's health. ◀

Power out of balance

Men's violence against women is almost always about power. Although alcohol is frequently a contributing factor, stopping such violence requires more profound changes in the relationships between men and women.

TEXT: PIERRE ANDERSSON

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, whether in the form of beating and kicking, threats and intimidation or rape exists everywhere. Violent men live everywhere, in all countries, in cities, in the countryside. They populate all levels of society. Their violence causes more than physical injury: It ruins families, destroys the ability to love, and it spreads pain and self-contempt among its victims.

Often, alcohol is a part of the picture. Under its influence, the user's inhibitions relax, possibly leading to a loss of judgement and mindless aggression. Alcohol becomes a kind of tool – a key or a triggering factor – that opens the door to violence.

Data from the Malawian Demographic Health Survey (Chakwana, 2005) indicate

that domestic violence is a serious problem in the country. The statistics show that about one in three women in Malawi has experienced physical violence after the age of 15, and that women whose husbands consume alcohol frequently are much more likely to report violence than women whose husbands do not drink. Norwegian researcher Stine Hellum Braathen reported in a quantitative study that alcohol use is frequently linked to three types of abuse: physical, economic and sexual. In a similar study in Sri Lanka, the women themselves pointed out the connection between men's drinking and their violence (Baklien and Samarasinghe).

Alcohol, however, is not the sole problem when it comes to intimate partner



Almost without exception, we live in a patriarchy where the cultural, social, judicial and political norms give men a superior position over women.

violence. Some sober men hit and many drunken men are quite peaceful.

Violent acts against women by their men are, basically, a matter of power; they spring from the macho myth and from gender roles that clash with reality. Violence arises from a distorted view of the relationship between man and woman and from stereotyped ideas about how our lives together should look.

Violence against women and children is rooted both within the individual and within the structures of the societies in which we live.

Almost without exception, we live in a patriarchy where the cultural, social, judicial and political norms give men a superior position over women.

For the individual, expectations from the fears and suppressed feelings of the surrounding world contribute to a distorted form of dominant masculinity. To be perceived as not being enough of a man is a big source of insecurity.

»My husband and I are both well-educated and belong to the upper middle-class in Dhaka,« says a woman in an online forum for gender equality discussions run by the UN. »Despite the fact that we both come from well-educated families where women's education is encouraged, I can see that my success is a source of worry to my husband. I must not, under any circumstances, surpass him. This insecurity, I believe, exists in many cultures.«

In the report, »Elimination of Violence against Women,« James Lang, a researcher and consultant on gender issues, writes that »Violence and being a man seem to go hand in hand. As do violence and seeking and retaining power. But that is not to say violence is a natural condition for men, or a natural part of being a man. Nor is it to say that all men are in positions of power. Men are taught to use violence, and at times are encouraged to use it. Violence is culturally and politically sanctioned, both implicitly and explicitly in different ways.«

In the same discussion forum as above, we find a statement from a man who lives at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan:

»Before my wedding night my grandmother came to me and said, 'You must hit your wife tonight, or else she will never respect you.' But, in my heart, I never wanted to hit her.«

Intimate partner violence is almost always about consolidating or introducing an inequality in the relationship – a power imbalance. Violence becomes a way to create and maintain an image of how the relationship should be – an image that has its roots in distorted gender roles and in societal norms that govern how men and women should be and act.

When men all over the world are asked what it means to be a man, the answers often include: strength, to be the bread-

winner, protector, leader and decision maker. With remarkable frequency, those responses suggest, that in the worst case, a man must be prepared to resort to violence in order to live up to his role.

Surveys show that violent husbands and fathers often feel like failures. In their own eyes, or in the eyes of others, they haven't managed to live up to their manly role. That feeling of degradation gives rise to violence.

Efforts to end violence against women must engage men in questioning or challenging their violent versions of manhood. This will involve both political mobilisation and intense discussions about the macho myth and the injustice of imposed stereotypical gender roles. In many places around the world, this process has already begun.

South Africa has a programme called »Men as partners.« That effort clearly depicts how gender inequality leads to violence and the spread of HIV. As a result, organizers look to the »basics« and work with participants' ingrained attitudes and roles.

Evaluations reveal that the programme has had a positive impact. Other apparent findings show clearly that teenagers and young men are significantly more open to change and to new ways of thinking than are their parents. New images of what it means to be men and women lead to a reduction of violence. ◀

SRI LANKA:

The men stopped drinking

Sarojini Wirasingham knows what it feels like when the family's money goes to liquor and the man instills fear in the whole family. But Sarojini also knows that it is possible to make a change. The organisation ADIC's method has improved the situation for everyone in the family.

»MY NAME IS Sarojini Wirasingham and I live in the Aroca Division at the tea plantation Clarendon, in the Nuwara Eliya region. 1,515 people live here, 416 of them work at the plantation. A female tea

picker earns 260 rupees a day (just over US\$2.2).

I have worked at the plantation since I was 14 years old, so now I have worked for 25 years. I have three children. One

of them works and the other two are in school. My husband is »kankany« (foreman) at the plantation. He has been drinking alcohol for the past 15 years. He used to drink every day – he thought it helped against tiredness and against the body pain he had. He probably spent about 150 rupees per day on spirits.

That was almost half his salary so he had no money for his family. When it was payday and whenever he could get payment in advance, he drank more than normal – so much that he ended up in debt. He used to yell out on the road and ended up in fights. When he came home he hit me. It was unbearable being home when he yelled and hit the children and me – it was complete chaos and we lived in fear. The children's schooling didn't work well, as it wasn't quiet enough for them to do their homework.

Since ADIC started working at the plantation, my husband has reduced his drinking. He does not drink every day anymore – only occasionally. He has realised how much damage he has

Violence a part of daily life

THE MAN HITS YOU and it just seems to be a part of daily life for the women working at tea plantations. Research in Sri Lanka confirms that almost every woman knows someone who is being abused by her husband, or has heard about it happening either at home or at work. The abuse might include sexual assaults such as rape within the marriage,

or non-sexual violence such as hitting or verbal abuse and harassment.

Since 1997, when it launched a first, successful, programme at the Hapugastenne tea plantation, ADIC, (Alcohol and Drug Information Centre) has played a key role in the reduction of alcohol consumption at tea plantations in Sri Lanka.



PHOTO: FORUM SRI LANKA

SAROJINI WIRASINGHAM

caused and tries to avoid drinking. He has also understood that it was a myth that alcohol helps against his body pain. He doesn't argue out on the road and he doesn't fight at home anymore. Now he contributes to the household with money and likes being at home. He even helps the children with their homework and the children thrive. We have no debts anymore and try to save up a little bit of money.

This change was thanks to ADIC's work – especially thanks to them walking from house to house talking about alcohol. The way they involve everyone and the changes that have taken place at the plantation led many other men to do the same as my husband and to stop drinking. ADIC has helped us count how much money we spend on alcohol and how the money can be used in a better way. Even our children are involved. ◀



He has realised how much harm he has caused and tries to avoid drinking.

UNIFEM says NO to violence

Violence against women and girls is high on the agenda of the United Nations. If alcohol was recognized as one major driving force the efforts would be more successful.

IN 2008 SECRETARY-GENERAL Ban Ki-Moon launched the campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women. He called on the world: »We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government.« In 2006 UNIFEM, the women's fund at the United Nations, had appointed Nicole Kidman as ambassador to promote awareness on how women's rights are infringed with a particular focus on violence.

UNIFEM argues that violence against women, with its pandemic proportions,

is probably the most pervasive rights violation of today. In some countries up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men during their lifetime, most often from husbands or intimate partners. UNIFEM also argues that development and a just society can only be achieved if discrimination and violence against women can be eliminated.

UNIFEM works in the following thematic areas:

- **ENHANCING** women's economic security and rights,
- **ENDING VIOLENCE** against women,
- **REDUCING** the prevalence of aids and aids among women and girls, and
- **ADVANCING** gender justice in democratic governance in stable and fragile states

ALTHOUGH ALCOHOL is not a salient feature in UNIFEM documents it is reported and referred to in various contexts where violence is in focus. It has been reported as one factor fueling violence in Congo. In a UNIFEM supported project in an indigenous community in Ecuador, one sanction on men abusing women is a total alcohol ban for two months. Another report from Kazakhstan states that 42 percent of



women report that alcohol was the main factor attributing to their abuse.

UNIFEM has been successful in focusing on violence against women with its campaign *Say NO*. It is hoped that the *Say NO* campaign, which highlights to a greater extent the relationship of alcohol abuse to violence against women, will find support and result in comprehensive research on intimate partner violence. This campaign would also call on governments and civil society to include strategies on alcohol in their efforts to eliminate violence against women. ◀

One Man Can!

Men can mobilize to change themselves and harmful images of masculinity. Men can be a part of the solution! This is the core idea of the global NGO network MenEngage. The network invites organisations and individuals who are working with men to come together to share experiences.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN organization Sonke Gender Justice Network is one of the founding members of MenEngage. Since it was established in 2006, Sonke has developed a broad variety of strategies and programs to involve men in changing men, in particular the harmful aspect of the prevailing image of masculinity. Masculinity, as many seem to understand it, is not only harmful to women, it is also a danger to men themselves, said Regis Mtutu, representing Sonke at a FORUM



PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

seminar in Malawi. Mtutu emphasized how harmful male behaviour contributes to the «twin epidemics» of gender-based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Regis Mtutu said that many men oppose gender-based violence, but they do not know what to do when they witness it in their communities. They are afraid of being labelled weak or not a real man. In our programs we challenge this attitude and the behaviour of the participants. We show them positive alternatives. We train them to handle situations where they witness violence. And we train them in starting to care for others. When we meet with men in the communities we create a space where they can air their thoughts and worries. Our experience reveals that men are more ready to discuss and change behaviour than most people tend to believe, said Mtutu.

ACCORDING TO MenEngage, positive manhood is defined:

- **BY BUILDING** relationships based on respect and equality,
- **BY SPEAKING** out against violence in your society,
- **BY HAVING** the strength to ask for help,
- **BY SHARED-DECISION** making and shared power, and
- **BY HOW MUCH** you are able to respect the diversity and rights of those around you.

Since its foundation in 2004, MenEngage has developed into a network of around 400 NGOs from all corners of the world. We invite all NGOs who agree with the core principles of the network to join with us. ◀

More information:
www.menengage.org



What can we do?

Daniel knows it. Sarojini knows. Jadeth knows it too. They know that change is possible – that intimate partner violence can be stopped; but only if the underlying role of alcohol is first recognised and addressed.

TEXT: HELENA KARLSSON

THE FRIENDS OF WOMEN Foundation in Thailand has achieved many rare accomplishments tackling alcohol's role in violence toward women. In its four pilot projects the Foundation has demonstrated that reducing alcohol consumption leads to a reduction in violence towards women and children. The Foundation's successes in reducing alcohol-related intimate partner violence occur in a research field that is virtually empty. But the tools needed to 'get at' alcohol-related violence are available – by combining methods to reduce violence with measures to reduce alcohol consumption and the damage it causes. Simply speaking: improving public health is a means of preventing intimate partner violence.



For example, funds for the treatment of addicts on a large scale do not exist in the developing world.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified several measures that have proven effective to reduce alcohol-related harm. They include:

- **ADDRESSING THE AVAILABILITY** of alcohol; Age limits for drinking; limits on hours and days of sale; licensing and limiting the type of retail establishments that can sell alcoholic beverages.
- **USING TAXATION** to influence the price of alcohol.
- **IMPLEMENTING SCREENING** and brief interventions that involve asking questions about alcohol consumption of everyone that visits; for instance, initiating this practice in a health clinic has proven to be an efficient way to reduce drinking.

• **PROVIDING TREATMENT** to people addicted to alcohol. Treatment is most effective when supported by sound policies and health systems and integrated within a broader preventive strategy. The efficacy of these methods has been tested mostly in high-income countries and they may not necessarily work as effectively in other countries. Many countries may lack the resources to implement them. For example, funds for the treatment of addicts on a large scale do not exist in the developing world. However, given the strength of the evidence base in the developed world, it is likely that alcohol control policies would lead to reductions in both alcohol consumption and alcohol-related violence in those countries as well.

However, conditions vary widely in different countries and health care workers in poor countries already work with a minimum of resources and often impossibly heavy workloads. Preventing alcohol-related violence in low-income countries will, according to the WHO, require methods specifically adapted to the conditions in those countries.

THE UNITED NATIONS Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched a Virtual Knowledge Centre

Drinking patterns

DRINKING PATTERNS look different all over the world. In some places such as: Northern Europe, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa *binge drinking* is common. *Binge drinking* is the pattern associated with the most risk. Generally speaking, all over the world, women drink less or much less, than men do – they drink a lesser amount when they drink, and they drink less often. In a country like Bangladesh, three out of one thousand women drink; in Sweden, four out of five women drink.

Women's drinking patterns are dictated by tradition, by norms and stigma, and by the fact that women give birth and have the main responsibility for raising children. Old patterns are changing, however, and an increasing number of women are becoming alcohol consumers.

Globalisation has an impact in the area of alcohol too and groups with no history of alcohol consumption or low consumption are especially interesting target groups for the alcohol industry. (WHO)

to End Violence against Women and Girls. It offers a step-by-step programming guide with lots of examples of how to address problems related to violence. UNIFEM and ActionAid together have published »*Together We Must! End Violence against Women and Girls and HIV & AIDS*« (2009). This publication profiles ten organizations that are working on innovative strategies to address the intertwined pandemics of



PHOTO: IOST-HVO-RØRESENS INTERNATIONELLA INSTITUT

violence against women and girls and HIV & AIDS. It provides lessons learned and highlights key elements to consider when tackling the intersection of those problems.

MenEngage is an alliance of non-governmental organizations that seek to involve men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote the health and well-being of women, men and children. One of the issues addressed by the alliance concerns »Men and Ending Gender-Based Violence.« MenEngage members exchange ideas, produce joint statements and carry out joint advocacy activities.

More men are becoming engaged in reducing gender based violence. On 24 November 2009 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a Network

of Men Leaders to end violence against women. The Network is part of the »UNITE to End Violence against Women« campaign that Mr. Ban launched in 2008. This new initiative brings together current and former politicians, activists, religious and community figures to highlight the global pandemic. Members of the Network include archbishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa, Spain's prime minister José Zapatero, Italy's foreign minister Franco Fattini, Brazilian author Paulo Coelho, former president of Chile Ricardo Lagos, Gary Barker of the International Centre for Research on Women, and Knut Storberget, Norwegian Minister of Justice and the Police, among other notable men leaders from around the world. ◀



More men are engaged in reducing Gender based violence.



In theory, the freedoms, rights, and obligations of women equal those of men, but they are too often denied, limited, or completely overlooked.

A rights-based approach

Violations of human rights are twice as serious when affecting women since it very often also affects children. It is important that the protection of human rights as well as the work against discrimination against women are respected by everyone.

ANY WORK AIMED at stopping and preventing intimate partner violence must be based on the Human Rights declarations. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 states that: »All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.« It affirms that no one should be exposed to humiliating treatment or punishment. Nonetheless, the general tools for human rights are not powerful

enough to eliminate gender-based discrimination and protect women's human rights. In theory, the freedoms, rights, and obligations of women equal those of men, but they are too often denied, limited, or completely overlooked.

In 1979 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). That convention concludes that the traditional family and societal roles of men and women must change if full gender equality is to be reached.

By 2009, 186 countries, or 90% of the total, potential signatories, have ratified the CEDAW, making it one of the most popular of all Human Rights conventions; second only to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

States have a responsibility to protect all of their citizens' human rights. Women need to be aware of their rights. Men, women, boys and girls require, among other things, education about how to show each other respect. Perhaps the most important recommendation is the call for all the world's governments to ratify and apply the existing convention: CEDAW.

Intimate partner violence does not exist in isolation, nor affect only women.

Children in countries all over the world are senselessly beaten or, more often, they witness violence between the adults who are supposed to provide them with security. That situation is itself a violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989. The convention provides that »the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.« The 193 countries that have ratified the convention also agreed to »...ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being«, and will »take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.«

We still have a long way to go to ensure that these rights are fulfilled. But the conventions underlying those rights are available to support the aspirations of states, organisations, women and men who want to exercise them. They should be viewed as vital tools to enable political change, as well as change on a personal level. ◀

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As well as interviews with the people who appear in the articles.

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY IOGT INTERNATIONAL:

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY FORUT:

Three papers by Diyanath Samarasinghe, professor at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Alcohol and poverty: some connections

Unrecorded alcohol

Reducing alcohol harm: things we can do

WE LIVE IN a world where violence too frequently permeates the family home. Studies from around the world reveal that no society is immune from intimate partner violence. Alcohol plays a significant role in those tragic events, breeding violence from the combination of intoxication with ill-conceived images of masculinity and repressive social norms. This complex problem must be addressed from numerous perspectives. Working together we can eliminate family violence.



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