Chapter 6

Gender Violence Experiences of Urban Adult Indigenous Women: Case Study

M. Cruz Sánchez Gómez
University of Salamanca, Spain

Antonio V. Martín García
University of Salamanca, Spain

Ana María Pinto Llorente
University of Salamanca, Spain

Paula Andrea Fernández Dávila
Universidad de Tarapaca, Chile

Pamela Zapata Sepúlveda
Universidad de Tarapaca, Chile

ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with the problem of gender violence, especially in Chilean Aymara women. The aim of the study is to make a diagnosis of the indices and forms of domestic violence against women on the basis of gender in a sample of Aymara women from the urban area in the Arica and Parinacota Region (Chile). The chapter assumes the definition of intrafamiliar violence, according to the formulation adopted by Chilean legislation, as a complex and multi-determined phenomenon, which happens in the context of a culture and certain social relationships that support and make it possible. In this sense, it is one of the most dramatic manifestations of discrimination experienced by women because of their sexual condition. It is conceptualized as any form of physical, psychological-emotional, sexual, and/or economic abuse, which happens within the couple relationship, regardless of the legality of the bond. The chapter deals with the description of conditions and ways of life of the Aymara ethnic group, from

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socio-demographic, economic, and public health indicators that may be related to these women’s perceptions concerning their situation in view of the intrafamiliar violence phenomenon. The research is a quantitative and qualitative multimethod design. The qualitative side of this study consists of group discussions in which the object of the research is analyzed through an outline ad hoc. The quantitative side of the research consists of the application of two standardized scales of domestic violence (WASTT and ISA).

INTRODUCTION

The recently created ‘UN Women,’ an organization under the United Nations whose aim is to promote Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, recognizes that gender violence has become one of the issues for concern in many countries in recent years. The issue concerns not only the rejection of violence itself, but also the consequences it generates, because, among other things, it reduces women’s ability to participate in the public sphere, it has repercussions on health, and in short, it constitutes an attack against human dignity, the right to life, liberty, and personal security.

The study commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General about violence against women in 2006 reveals that at least eighty-nine states currently have some legislative dispositions that specifically address domestic violence, and sixty have specific laws addressing this form of violence. However, and despite the progresses carried out, this problem is spreading, as it is shown in the United Nations data. It is estimated that domestic violence and rape account for 5 percent of the total disease burden for women aged 15 to 44 in developing countries and 19 percent in developed countries (UN, 2005).

Our study deals with the problem of gender violence, specially the case of Chilean Aymara women. This kind of intrafamiliar violence, according to the conceptualization adopted by Chilean legislation, is conceptualized by the Chilean National Women’s Service as a complex and multi-determined phenomenon, which happens in the context of a culture and some social relationships that support and make it possible. In that sense, it is one of the most dramatic manifestations of discrimination experienced by women because of their sexual condition. It is conceptualized as any form of physical, psychological-emotional, sexual, and/or economic abuse, which happens in the couple relationship, regardless of the legality of the bond. These abusive practices are performed by a person with whom woman has or has had an intimate couple relationship—boyfriend/girlfriend, husband or couple—and with whom woman shares or has shared the same home. This study assumes this definition.

The chapter deals with the description of conditions and ways of life of the Aymara ethnic group, from socio-demographic, economic and public health indicators that may be related to these women’s perceptions about their situation in view of the intrafamiliar violence phenomenon.

BACKGROUND

The 15th Arica and Parinacota Region is one of the Chile’s 15 first order administrative divisions. It is situated at the northern extreme of Chile. It borders on the Republic of Peru to the north, I Tarapacá Region to the south, the Republic of Bolivia to the East and the Pacific Ocean to the west. It has an area of 16,800 km² and an estimated population of 189,600 inhabitants in 2006. The Region comprises the provinces of Arica and Parinacota and the capital is Arica City. The Arica and Parinacota Region emerged after being separated from the old Tarapacá Region, when Law 20,175 came into force on 8 October 2007.