Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi

Academic Journal of History and Idea

ISSN: 2148-2292 12 (2) 2025

> Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article Geliş tarihi |Received:22.12.2024 Kabul tarihi |Accepted:10.04.2025 Yayın tarihi |Published:25.04.2025

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Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info

Imen, C. & Imen, B. (2025). Criminal Protection from Violence Against Working Women in the Algerian Family Environment. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi, 12* (2), 481-493.

Criminal Protection from Violence Against Working Women in the Algerian Family Environment

Abstract

This study aims to demonstrate that violence against working women is a blatant violation of human rights, manifested in deliberate aggressive behaviors, whether physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual. This type of violence deprives women of their basic rights, especially within the family environment, and leads to severe consequences on all levels: social, economic, and health. Given the widespread nature of this phenomenon and its negative impact on individuals and society, we will address in this study the effectiveness of the available deterrent measures in Algerian legislation to protect working women from domestic violence.

Keywords: Working Woman, Violence, Family, Protection, Society

Cezayir Aile Ortamında Çalışan Kadınlara Yönelik Şiddete Karşı Cezai Koruma

Öz



Bu çalışma, çalışan kadınlara yönelik şiddetin, fîziksel, sözlü, psikolojik veya cinsel kasıtlı saldırgan davranışlarla kendini gösteren bariz bir insan hakları ihlali olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu şiddet türü, kadınları özellikle aile ortamında temel haklarından mahrum bırakmakta ve sosyal, ekonomik ve sağlık olmak üzere her düzeyde ciddi sonuçlara yol açmaktadır. Bu olgunun yaygın doğası ve bireyler ve toplum üzerindeki olumsuz etkisi göz önüne alındığında, bu çalışmada çalışan kadınları aile içi şiddetten korumak için Cezayir mevzuatındaki mevcut caydırıcı önlemlerin etkinliğini ele alacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çalışan Kadın, Şiddet, Aile, Koruma, Toplum

Introduction

The phenomenon of violence, especially violence against working women, is a blatant threat to religious, moral, and social values. This type of violence poses a grave danger as it affects the very fabric of society. Therefore, it has become essential for researchers in various fields to identify the forms of this violence, uncover its causes, and work on minimizing its negative effects. This is what we will clarify in this study. Violence against this category of women is considered a phenomenon that encompasses many legal and legislative definitions through which it is framed in a clear general context. It also has various different causes that contribute to its spread. Violence, in terminology, is against gentleness, and gentleness is good conduct leading to the beautiful, or it is moderation and kindness in dealing. Violence is the handling of matters with severity and harshness, so violence means: extreme and harsh treatment of others. It differs from assault, which is defined as injustice and exceeding limits and rights. However, we can say that violence is a form of assault if the assault is associated with severity and cruelty.

a. Significance of the study

Violence against working women constitutes a serious human rights violation, depriving them of fundamental freedoms and rights, as underscored in the abstract. This form of violence has significant social and economic consequences, impacting women's health, well-being, and their ability to contribute meaningfully to the economy. Furthermore, addressing this issue is crucial for achieving gender equality and empowering women in all spheres of life. The abstract rightly highlights the need to critically assess the effectiveness of existing legal frameworks in adequately addressing this critical challenge.

b. Aims

This study aims to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of existing Algerian laws in protecting working women from domestic violence. This includes identifying gaps and challenges in the current legal framework and its implementation, particularly in addressing the

specific needs of this vulnerable group. Furthermore, the study will explore potential solutions and policy recommendations to enhance the protection of working women from domestic violence within the family environment. Finally, raising awareness about the prevalence and impact of this issue on working women in Algeria is a crucial objective of this research.

c. Hypotheses

This study will investigate several key hypotheses. First, it is hypothesized that current Algerian legislation may not adequately address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of working women facing domestic violence. Secondly, the effective implementation of existing laws may be hindered by various factors, including limited resources, insufficient awareness among law enforcement personnel, and societal attitudes that condone or minimize domestic violence. Thirdly, the absence of specific legal provisions addressing sexual violence within marital relationships is hypothesized to limit the effectiveness of legal protection for working women. Finally, the study posits that effective prevention strategies, such as public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and comprehensive support services for victims, are crucial for reducing the incidence of domestic violence against working women.

d. Method

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach. It will commence with a comprehensive literature review encompassing relevant legal documents, academic literature, and international best practices in addressing domestic violence against working women. This will be followed by an in-depth legal analysis of Algerian laws related to domestic violence, with a specific focus on their applicability to working women. Where feasible, the study will incorporate case studies of domestic violence against working women in Algeria to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by victims and the effectiveness of legal responses. Furthermore, the research will involve conducting interviews with legal professionals, social workers, women's rights activists, and potentially working women themselves to gather diverse perspectives on the issue. Finally, the collected data will be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to identify key trends, patterns, and findings. This framework provides a foundation for your research. You can further refine these aims, hypotheses, and methods based on the specific scope and objectives of your study.

e. Research Question t

The main research question is: To what extent do current deterrent measures in Algerian legislation contribute to protecting working women from domestic violence, and how can this effectiveness be assessed in light of various social, cultural, and legal challenges?

*Sub-Issues

- -What are the gaps and challenges facing the implementation of these measures, and how do they affect the effectiveness of protecting working women?
- -What are the proposed alternatives to enhance the legal protection of working women from domestic violence, and how can they be integrated with the existing legal framework?
- -What is the role of civil and criminal legislation in protecting working women from domestic violence? Is it sufficient and proportionate to the nature of the crime?

1. The concept of violence against working women

Women naturally engage in work and activities, whether paid or not. A working woman is defined as "a woman who works outside the home and earns monetary compensation for her work, and she plays two essential roles in life: that of a housewife and that of an employee."

1.1. Definition of Violence Terminologically

Violence, terminologically, is against gentleness, and gentleness is the good adherence to what leads to beauty, or it is the moderation and kindness in matters. Violence is the handling of matters with severity and harshness, thus violence means: excess, severity, and harshness in dealing with others (Mohamed El-Bayoumi & Al-onf al-ossari, no date). It differs from assault, which is defined as injustice and exceeding limits and rights. However, we can say that violence is a form of assault when the assault is associated with severity and cruelty (Ibn Mandhour, no date).

1.2. Definition of the Working Woman

In the past, a woman's primary work was at home, involved in organizing and cleaning the house, as well as raising children without any financial compensation. However, today societies have evolved and advanced intellectually, allowing women to work outside the home in an institution, whether governmental or private, for which they receive financial payment. (Abdelfattah, 1984). For the Algerian working woman, new roles have been added as a result of her entry into the workforce, which has led to changes in the values and customs of society from traditional roles to new ones that have enabled her to overcome her marginal status. However, despite the advancement of the Algerian woman's situation, there are still those who oppose her working by subjecting her to psychological or physical violence (Amer & Ihab, 2014). Violence against women is defined as any violent act based on gender that results in or is likely to result in sexual, physical, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Anis, 2019). After reviewing various previous definitions of violence against women, it

becomes clear that they all agree on one essence: that violence against women is any negative behavior, whether material or moral, targeting women because they are women, resulting in psychological, physical, or sexual suffering. This comprehensive definition encompasses various dimensions addressed in previous definitions and brings us closer to understanding the reality of this complex phenomenon.

1.3. The international definition of violence against women

Some agreements, declarations, and other resolutions convened by the United Nations, such as Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 dated May 24, 1990, addressed that violence against women, whether in the family or in society, is a widespread phenomenon that transcends income, class, and culture boundaries, and must be met with urgent and effective measures to prevent its occurrence (Kharshaf, 2018). The World Health Organization has defined violence against women as "any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes significant harm or pain, whether physical, psychological, or sexual, perpetrated by those involved in that relationship" (Bin Ali & Daoudi, 2018, p. 323). The American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women defines violence against women as "any act or behavior based on gender that causes death or physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, whether in public or private life" (Al-Midani, 2017, p. 23). The document issued by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 also stated that violence against women "is any violence directed at a person because of their gender that is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts and coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Ben Yahya & Al-Meloud, 2018, p. 132). As for the Algerian legislator, it did not define violence against women; rather, it only attempted to establish punitive measures that criminalize any act that affects women, based on the concepts introduced by scholars as well as the principles of treaties and international covenants that protect women from domestic violence.

2. Causes of Domestic Violence Against Working Women

Domestic violence against working women is an aggressive behavior coming from a family member. It does not rely on the existence of a single cause for each form or manifestation of violence exercised against women. There is increasing research emphasizing that this violence is mainly due to several different reasons, especially the inequity in relationships between men and women in society. The main reasons for violence against working women can be mentioned as follows:

2.1. Economic Reasons

Such as poverty, where the pressure resulting from hardship and exhaustion reduces the father's ability to withstand any pressures from the wife and children, especially if the father is unemployed and the wife works. The working woman's income is one of the causes or the main reason for the emergence of violence within the family, as the wife may refrain from contributing to family expenses and helping the husband bear its burdens. The economic situation is important in triggering disputes between spouses in working-class families; the working woman may be pressured by her husband to contribute all her income, or he may seize it by force, leading to marital conflict. Thus, we find that economic imbalance within the family is a key factor in increasing violence against working women.

2.2. Psychological reasons

It is the loss of the abuser's ability to control their nerves and emotions, either as a natural reaction to a situation that has affected or harmed their feelings or as an inherent trait, due to the lack of patience and perseverance in facing even the simplest matters. The person inclined to violence against women believes that solving problems in this way earns him respect, but he does not realize that the result is the opposite: the woman does not respect him and eventually hates him after several instances of abuse. In the end, he is the only loser, as he cannot rid himself of his frustration or anger, which are the root of the problem.

2.3. Social and religious reasons

Religious values and social standards play a significant and important role in justifying violence. The values of honor and social status are defined by certain standards that sometimes use violence as a duty and an imperative. Individuals also learn about social hierarchies and the forms of esteem associated with them, which give the powerful more rights and arbitrary privileges than the weak in the family. For instance, the powerful figure in the family, like the father, enjoys all the rights and privileges that ensure the wife listens to him and obeys him, or else she faces severe harm.

3. Images of Violence Against Working Women and Its Consequences

The family is considered the cornerstone of building a strong society, which makes domestic violence in general and violence against women in particular, in all its forms, negatively affect the structure, safety, and security of the family. After previously clarifying the concept of domestic violence against women and its main causes, we will show in this section its images and the social, economic, and psychological consequences that result from it.

4. Forms of Violence Against Working Women

Domestic violence against women has various forms, shapes, and levels, starting with verbal violence such as insults and slurs, and reaching physical violence, which may manifest in the form of fights. It may escalate to its extreme forms, including murder through various means that lead to that.

4.1. Verbal or psychological violence

Verbal violence includes raising one's voice, mockery, and not addressing the woman directly, or threatening violence such as hitting or killing, as well as humiliation, like making the woman kneel before her husband. It also includes harassment, such as constant pressure on the woman to submit. Additionally, not involving her in decisions that concern her and her family, being absent from the home, preventing the woman from going to work, and monitoring all her movements inside and outside the house. All of these negative behaviors directed against women aim to humiliate them, undermine their freedom and independence, and marginalize them, as well as any actions that lead to a loss of self-confidence.

According to research, 56% of the sample stated that insults and curses are a form of violence that affects abused wives. The respondents agreed that their husbands often insult them and their families. Some reported that their husbands curse their deceased fathers, while others stated that their husbands undermine their dignity and devalue them in front of the neighbors. All participants agreed that insults, cursing, and humiliation are what harm them and diminish their value (Boualag, 2016/2017).

4.2. Physical Violence

It includes beating, throwing, pushing her violently, kicking, threatening with a weapon, burning, and strangling. Physical violence and bodily harm to women result in several symptoms or manifestations such as (bruises, burns, wounds, broken bones, tissue tears, concussions, miscarriages, partial loss of hearing and vision, dark circles around the eyes) and impact on internal organs such as the uterus, liver, and spleen. The results also indicated that violence against women is not only about beating, breaking, or insulting her, but it can also lead to murder by shooting, sharp objects, stabbing, slashing with a knife, burning with fire, electrocution, or strangulation (Zaghloul, 2001)

4.3. Sexual violence

Some scholars believe that sexual violence against women can be defined as "forcing a woman to engage in sexual acts that she does not wish to do or feels uncomfortable doing, or having sex against her will, without considering her health or psychological state, or forcing her to engage in deviant methods and practices. Accordingly, we conclude that sexual violence

is the use of force and coercion to perform acts of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, against women, such as rape and molestation." (Dhaif Allah, 2010, p. 132).

4.4. Economic violence

Includes the economic abuse of women through taking their money and seizing it, refusing to spend on them, denying their personal properties and resources, or working to diminish them, such as deprivation. This leads to marginalizing their roles and limiting their economic participation, resulting in numerous violations of their labor rights. This violence takes various forms, including preventing women from accessing economic resources, preventing them from using their economic resources and freely managing and preserving them, and exploiting their economic resources (Dhaif Allah, 2010).

5. The Effects of Domestic Violence on Working Women

The health of working women is the primary victim of violence and mistreatment from family members. It has an immediate impact accompanied by tangible and intangible long-term These negative effects them. can be divided into the following: on First: The Physical Effects of Violence Against Working Women. Studies and research conducted in the past two decades have documented the negative effects of domestic violence, revealing that abused women who have been subjected to physical violence suffer from a significantly lower level of physical and mental health compared to women who have not been subjected to mistreatment (Islahi & Ahmad, 2015). They are exposed to many chronic illnesses, including headaches, back and bone pain, digestive disorders, heart problems, and neurological diseases such as fainting and anxiety attacks. The injuries resulting from physical and sexual assaults vary in severity from mild bruises and fractures to chronic disabilities that require specialized medical treatment. Pregnant women who are subjected to persecution suffer from anemia, immunodeficiency, and emaciation, which in turn leads to poor nutrition for the fetus, putting its life at risk and making it prone to various diseases due to being underweight.

5.1. The psychological effects of violence against working women

The psychological effects of violence on working women vary greatly to the extent that they are difficult to enumerate. The human psyche is complex and reacts to trauma in different ways. However, we can highlight some of the most common effects that gradually accumulate, such as loss of self-confidence and self-respect, feelings of guilt, dependency, and humiliation, lack of safety and mental peace, mental health disorders, and loss of the ability to take initiative and make decisions. It is important to emphasize that these effects do not manifest all at once; rather, they may appear gradually and differ from one woman to another (Intissar, 2013).

5.2. The family effects of violence against working women

Domestic violence primarily contributes to family disintegration and instability, and conversely affects the overall productivity of individuals, not just the abused woman, by reducing their abilities to work and secure a livelihood (Avni, no date).

6. Legal Controls for Protecting Working Women from Domestic Violence

Despite the attempts of countries to establish laws regulating relationships among individuals in various political, social, and cultural fields, this legal regulation did not deter the human psyche; rather, it increased aggression and oppression compared to previous states. This necessitated the establishment of stringent controls to protect personal and shared interests among individuals, including women, for whom the Algerian legislator has provided penal protection, aligning with international agreements that prohibit all forms of violence and discrimination against them. These provisions are general and encompass traditional crimes, most of which did not take into account the specificity of their gender, as well as newly introduced crimes that include sexual violence, where the protection has aimed to consider the particularity of their social identity.

6.1. Suppression of Physical Violence Against Women Within the Family

Violence within the family environment takes several forms, the most important of which are sexual and physical violence, which are among the most serious issues that violate women's rights, and have recently worsened due to women's entry into the labor market. This necessitates the need to enhance protection for women from both forms of violence, by broadening the scope of protection from general legal texts that criminalize violence against individuals and addressing it in its various forms with specific legal provisions. This is what the Algerian legislator attempted to implement through Law No. 15-19, which amends and supplements the Penal Code, providing special protection for wives in particular, in line with the constitutional amendment of 2008 that stipulates the promotion of women's status in the family and society.

6.2. Protecting Working Women from Verbal and Psychological Violence

6.2.1. The Crime of Defamation, Insult, and Verbal Abuse

The crime of verbal violence is one of the intentional crimes that requires the legislator to establish criminal intent, meaning that the husband must be aware of what he is saying, as these words manifesting in insults, defamation, shouting, and cursing wound and diminish the woman's value and affect her psychological well-being, with the intention of achieving the resulting consequence. Regarding the proof of verbal and psychological violence, the legislator has not stipulated a specific means of proof; rather, it can be established by all available methods and means (Rawahana, 2016). This crime only occurs through repetition, meaning that if a

husband physically abuses his wife once, it does not count as a crime; however, if he abuses her more than once, then the crime is established. The penalty prescribed for the crime of verbal violence is evident from Article 266 bis 1 of the Penal Code, which stipulates imprisonment for one to three years. The judge has full authority to consider mitigating circumstances for the crime of verbal and psychological violence, but the legislator has provided an exception whereby the mitigating circumstances specified in Article 53 of the Penal Code do not apply if the victim is pregnant or disabled, or if the act is committed in the presence of minor daughters or under the threat of a weapon. Additionally, there are cases where forgiveness is granted for the crime of verbal and psychological violence; if forgiveness occurs before a final judgment, it terminates the criminal prosecution, but if forgiveness occurs after a final judgment, reconciliation does not take place.

6.2.2. Protection of the Working Woman from Economic Violence

The crime of economic violence by a husband against his wife is addressed in Article 330 bis of Law No. 15-19, which states that "anyone who exerts any form of coercion or intimidation on his wife to act regarding her property or financial resources shall be punished. The Algerian legislator has made pressure on the wife through coercion or intimidation, such as threats to act regarding her money, a crime punishable by law. Acting regarding the wife's property by pressuring her and without her consent is punishable, which is known as economic violence against the wife. The Algerian legislator considers this crime a misdemeanor and has determined a prison sentence ranging from 6 months to 2 years. The victim's forgiveness is also made a reason that can lead to the termination of criminal proceedings in order to preserve the continuity of the marital relationship and the cohesion of the family.

6.2.3. Protection of Working Women from Sexual Violence

The increasing rate of sexual assaults on women in various forms necessitates the adoption of a strict punitive policy to deter and combat these crimes. This has been established by the Algerian legislator in the recent amendment to the Penal Code 15-19. Where it attempted to establish laws that punish and protect women from crimes affecting their sexual sanctity in accordance with the nature of society and the prevailing system of values. In this section, we will clarify the most heinous of these crimes that women fall victim to within the family, represented by the crime of rape that affects women. (kanoun alokoubat 15-19). In Addition, Rape in its simplest form is the occurrence of the crime devoid of any aggravating circumstances stipulated in Article 336/1.

The Algerian legislator punishes the crime of rape in its simple form with a penalty of temporary imprisonment ranging from five to ten years, regardless of whether the perpetrator resorted to physical or moral coercion in committing the act with the woman, or used trickery, deceit, or surprise, or exploited a situation in which she was, such as being sick, insane, unconscious, or under the influence of drugs. If the act was carried out with the victim's consent and agreement (Fakhri & Al-Zoubi, 2009). Then there is no crime of rape. The threat or violence inflicted by the perpetrator on the victim is not considered an aggravating circumstance of the crime, nor is it regarded as an independent crime from rape; rather, it is considered an element of it. The perpetrator's act of holding the victim, beating her severely, forcibly removing her pants, despite her strong resistance, hitting her head, and inserting part of his penis into her vagina constitutes rape. 1-2 p15-16 (Fakhri & Al-Zoubi, 2009).

6.2.4. Protection of Working Women from Physical Violence

6.2.4.1. The Crime of Intentional Assault and Injury

According to Article 266 bis of Law No. 15-19, the penalty for physical violence against a wife is imprisonment from 1 to 3 years if the disability resulting from intentional assault and injury does not exceed 15 days. However, if this duration exceeds, the penalty is increased to imprisonment from 2 to 5 years (Mekki, 1999). If the beating and injury result in a permanent disability, the penalty increases to temporary imprisonment from 10 years to 20 years, as the description of the crime changes from a misdemeanor to a felony. If the physical violence leads to death without the intention of causing it, the penalty is life imprisonment. If the legislator has made the victim's forgiveness one of the reasons that lead to the cessation of criminal proceedings if the physical violence did not result in a permanent disability, this forgiveness reduces the penalty to temporary imprisonment from 5 to 10 years instead of temporary imprisonment from 10 to 20 years. As stated in Article 311 of the aforementioned Algerian Penal Code, if acts of violence result in the severance or amputation of a limb, deprivation of its use, total loss of vision or loss of one eye, or any other permanent disability, the perpetrator shall be punished with temporary imprisonment for a period of ten to twenty years. These are some examples of the disabilities that a battered woman may suffer.

Conclusion

Our study of protecting working women from domestic violence in all its forms reveals a critical gap in the current Algerian legal framework. Despite the significant step forward with Law No. 15-19, which criminalized various forms of domestic violence against women, including physical, economic, and psychological abuse, it notably lacks specific provisions explicitly criminalizing sexual marital violence against working women. This omission leaves

a crucial void in the protection of this vulnerable segment of society. While general legislation pertaining to women's rights offers some safeguards, the unique challenges faced by working women necessitate a more targeted and comprehensive approach to combat this pervasive issue. To enhance the legal protection of women from sexual violence, we propose several measures. First, the inclusion of an explicit provision that criminalizes sexual violence against the wife within Algerian Penal Law No. 15-19, along with the revision of certain articles, particularly Article 333 bis 3, to increase penalties for perpetrators and clarify criminal responsibility more accurately. Second, it is necessary to review the legal terminology used in this field to align with developments in legal jurisprudence, ensuring a precise understanding and application of legal provisions. Third, we believe that prioritizing judicial reconciliation in cases of domestic violence, while considering the victim's interests, may contribute to maintaining family stability. Finally, we emphasize the importance of providing pre-marital educational programs aimed at raising awareness of women's rights and spouses' duties, which contributes to preventing domestic violence and promoting family cohesion.

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