

History for Manuscript Number: IDS-2017-0099

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Correspondence History

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Mar 23, 2019	Editor Decision - Accept	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	3
Feb 23, 2019	PDF Built and Requires Approval	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	3
Feb 23, 2019	Author Submits Revision Confirmation	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	3
Feb 21, 2019	Author Revision First Reminder	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	2
Feb 09, 2019	Editor Decision - Conditional Accept	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	2
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Nov 22, 2018	Editor Decision - Conditional Accept	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	1
Sep 12, 2018	Author Returns Unsubmitted Paper Confirmation	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	1
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Sep 10, 2018	Author Notice - EM Technical Check failure	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	1
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Aug 24, 2018	PDF Built and Requires Approval	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	1
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Sep 03, 2018	Author Revision First Reminder	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	1
Aug 18, 2018	Author Revision First Reminder	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0
Jun 21, 2018	Author Notice - Due date for revision amended	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0
Jun 16, 2018	Author Revision First Reminder	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0
Jan 17, 2018	Editor Decision - Revise & Resubmit	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0
May 27, 2017	Author Submits New Manuscript Confirmation	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0
May 27, 2017	PDF Built and Requires Approval	Rika saraswati, Ph.D	0

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Date: May 27, 2017
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your PDF The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce has been built and requires approval

May 27, 2017

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

The PDF for your submission, "The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce" is ready for viewing.

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Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power Editorial Office
<http://ids.edmgr.com/>

Date: Jan 17, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: (Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power) A revise decision has been made on your submission

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099

The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

Thank you for submitting your manuscript entitled "The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce", to Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power. The article has now been reviewed by two expert referees and has been read by a member of the editorial team. The referees' and AE comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

As you will see, the reviewers were supportive of the potential significance of this article, but felt that substantial work is needed to bring it to a standard suitable for publication. We would therefore invite you to revise and resubmit the piece, addressing the issues raised in the very helpful reviewers' reports. In particular:

- 1) there should be a clearer focus and narrative/structure - R2 suggests focusing on one context only, rather than a comparison, but there are other suggestions for narrowing and strengthening the topic focus and argument
- 2) there should be engagement with a broader field of literature/theory - again, suggestions are made here. Please also make sure you fully discuss how you are understanding the key concept of 'shame'.
- 3) the methods need work to (i) make clear the comparative context and rationale for this, (ii) discuss sample size and make-up (iii) discuss access
- 4) the empirical data needs nuance, particularly around the discussion of intersectionality
- 5) there should be a stronger conclusion, making clear the contribution of the article to a broader field of scholarship

Resubmitting your manuscript does not guarantee eventual acceptance - we will send your revised paper back to the original referees for their advice. Please do ensure that the revisions you make do not increase the length of your paper beyond 8000 words.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of your manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer.

Please submit a list of changes or a rebuttal against each point which is being raised when you submit the revised manuscript.

Once you have revised your manuscript, click the following link:
<https://ids.editorialmanager.com/> and work through each stage of the submission process.

Please remember that all correspondence concerning this submission will only be sent to the nominated 'corresponding author' and not to any co-authors.

We hope that you will be willing to undertake this revision and look forward to receiving your paper by Jul 16, 2018.

Yours sincerely

Claire Alexander
Editor
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1: Although I am sympathetic to the goals of this piece, it requires some major revisions. Allow me to itemize the main issues:

- 1) It is unclear what the sample size is here, the method of selection, and in fact, the relevant identity characteristics other than a couple of the most gross categories. The reason for comparing Indonesia and Australia is not clear. The specific identities of the people interviewed are not described and neither is the interview method. The author considers age and religion most prominently, but ethnicity is completely missing! Given the complex, multi-ethnic landscape in Indonesia this is quite an oversight. And although religion is discussed, the significance of Islam and its changing character in the past two decades is not considered, despite the relevance for marriage and gender.
- 2) This article is significantly under-resourced with too much reliance on two sources: Saraswati and O'Shaughnessy. There is no attention to the larger literature on gender and identity in Indonesia. There is an extensive literature that includes attention to colonialism, marriage, kinship, domesticity, and so forth. The author should consult some of this. I would advise taking a look at the work of Julia Suryakusuma, Saskia Wieringa, Ward Keeler, and Saya Shiraishi, among others. Look particularly at Johan Lindquist on how "malu" is used to control domestic servants and others. Taking a look at the larger literature on harmony (rukun?) would also be advisable: Koentjaraningrat, Norma and John Sullivan, Patrick Guinness, or perhaps John Bowen on gotong royong.
- 3) The historical (and political) contours of shame (and is this on Java? Bali? Sumatra?) and harmony are not really addressed. Shame (untranslated here and so difficult to assess) is not the same everywhere, unless the author is making a more general argument about the effect of New Order governmentality across Indonesia. If that is the case, much more work needs to be done on what constitutes shame and how it is shaped. There is some scattered reference to the legal system but no overall conceptualization of how shame is mobilized to control women.
- 4) Intersectionality is not adequately theorized here. This approach could be interesting but it needs to reflect the nuances of identity in these

places. What about rural versus urban, for example? The notion of shame for a rural central Javanese farming family will be much different than that of middle-class Jakarta family. A clearer statement of what aspects of identity have been researched is needed along with some discussion of why the particular ones chosen make the most sense for understanding the intersectionality of shame in these particular contexts.

Reviewer #2: Reviewer comments

This is a very important topic and with some work this article will make a valuable contribution to knowledge. My main sense is that the article is trying to do too many things. I think it would be better to focus either on Indonesian women in Indonesia OR Australia. At the moment the comparison is not well developed and the information on Australia needs further nuance. I think also the author would do better to focus on either intersectionality OR shame as the key theoretical trope. If the author focuses on intersectionality, this theory needs its own paragraph and to be outlined in more detail. The article could then focus on unpacking the ways that women's age, gender, religion etc impact on their experiences of divorce. This would only be feasible if there were significant differences between the experiences of Christian and Muslim women for example. If the focus is on shame, much work needs to be done on unpacking this concept. What is it, how exactly does it shape experiences of divorce. I think every divorced women across the planet experiences shame when going through a divorce - what makes the Indonesia case interesting or different?

1. Title could be shorter and more direct.
2. "Studies on divorce and shame in Indonesia found that shame was used by Indonesian government ..." Better to use the active voice and be clear about meaning. For instance, what studies?
3. "It is believed ..." Believed by who?
4. "For example, in the New Order Era (Orde Baru, 1966-1998) shame was so constructed that female initiated divorce was regarded as shameful". Shame was used to make divorce shameful? This needs unpacking.
5. Needs clear sections. At the moment jumps from intersectionality to shame in one section.
6. Don't start new paragraph with 'Moreover'.
7. "O'Shaughnessy (2009, 89) argued that changes in the divorce record regarding reasons for divorce" - in Indonesia?
8. Give more details on methods. What is documentary research? Who were the women? Recruitment? Etc. We don't get a sense of who the women are or about their life stories. Was there a difference if the women lived in Australia compared to Indonesia?
9. "Saraswati (2014) argued that several women in the study had argued" - try to use a variety of words.

Can I suggest the following order as just one possibility:

1. Introduction where you outline your argument. Try to be specific in your argument.
2. Methods
3. Background - stuff on Indonesia
4. Section on divorce - history, legal status etc
5. Section on shame or intersectionality - incorporate wider theory and literature to establish rich understanding of this concept in both a global and local context
6. Show how shame/intersectionality impacts divorce for women [if the focus is domestic violence as catalyst will have to include discussion on that somewhere]
7. Conclusion.
8. More extensive reference list

AE: The article is interesting but needs more thorough consideration regarding the structure, methodology and focus of the research. The literature cited needs to be expanded and key concepts adequately explored. Comparative work across regions can be tricky, and if there is not enough space to do justice to both contexts, then focusing on the one is certainly worth considering . If the author wants to hold on both regional contexts, then we need a stronger justification as to why the comparative focus, what do we learn from it, why is it important etc etc.

Date: Jun 16, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your revision is due (IDS-2017-0099)

Jun 16, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099

The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

We are expecting the revision of IDS-2017-0099 by Jul 16, 2018.

If you require more time, please contact the journal office. If you are ready to submit your revision, then please go to <https://IDS.editorialmanager.com/> and submit the revision.

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Kind regards,

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Date: Jun 21, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Extension of your deadline to revise - IDS-2017-0099

Jun 21, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099
The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce
Dr Rika saraswati
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

Your manuscript revision due date has been amended.

Your paper is now due on Sep 17, 2018.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

With kind regards,

Hazel Burke
Journal Manager
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Date: Aug 18, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your revision is due (IDS-2017-0099)

Aug 18, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099

The Culture of "Shame" and The Intersection of Identity: Its influence to Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia and Australia in Making Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

We are expecting the revision of IDS-2017-0099 by Sep 17, 2018.

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Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

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Date: Aug 24, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your PDF Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce has been built and requires approval

Aug 24, 2018

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Date: Sep 03, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your revision is due (IDS-2017-0099R1)

Sep 03, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R1
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

We are expecting the revision of IDS-2017-0099R1 by Sep 17, 2018.

If you require more time, please contact the journal office. If you are ready to submit your revision, then please go to <https://IDS.editorialmanager.com/> and submit the revision.

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Kind regards,

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

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Date: Sep 04, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Submission Confirmation for IDS-2017-0099R1

Sep 04, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R1
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power has received your revised submission.

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Kind regards,

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Date: Sep 10, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your submission entitled Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce (IDS-2017-0099R1)

Sep 10, 2018

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

Your submission entitled "Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce" has been received by the journal, however, it is being returned to you for the following reason(s):

I just want to check that we are sending the correct version of your article when we send it out to our reviewers. Please could you log in to our system and go to the Attach Files page, then go to the list of all the files you've uploaded. Please could you remove any files that are from the old version (the ones uploaded in May). You should be left with three files: your latest version (anonymous version), your latest version (named version) and your table. Sorry for a bit of extra work! Do let me know if you need any help.

Please address the above issue(s) prior to resubmitting your manuscript. You will find your submission under 'Submissions Sent Back to Author' where you can edit the submission.

You may want to refer to our Instructions for authors for guidance on what to include in your submission, word length etc:
<https://tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=GIDE20>

Thank you for submitting your work to this journal.

Kind regards,

Hazel Burke
Journal Manager
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

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Date: Sep 12, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: IDS-2017-0099R1 Submission Received

Sep 12, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R1
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce

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Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power Editorial Office

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Subject: Your PDF Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce has been built and requires approval

Sep 12, 2018

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Date: Nov 22, 2018
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: (Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power) A revise decision has been made on your submission

Nov 22, 2018

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R1
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

The Editors have now completed their review of your article and would like to accept your paper for future publication in Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power.

The reviewers' reports are included below for your information.

Please could you submit a final version of your article, correctly prepared according to these instructions - http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/style/layout/style_guide.pdf

PLEASE NOTE: All the information requested in the Style Guide should be included in this final, named, version of your article. Only the actual file that you upload is transferred to the publishers for typesetting. So it is important that you include all author details (name/s, affiliation/s, contact details), abstract, keywords and acknowledgements.

Your revision is due by May 21, 2019.

To submit a revision, go to <https://ids.editorialmanager.com/> and log in as an Author. You will see a menu item called 'Submission Needing Revision'. You will find your submission record there.

Please ensure that ALL contact details, including your preferred postal address, are correct on your Editorial Manager Account. This information will be used by Routledge to post your hard copy of the journal in which your article appears.

Please be aware that all correspondence concerning this submission will only be sent to the nominated 'corresponding author' and not to any co-authors.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power and we look forward to receiving your final revision and working with you on bringing it to publication.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate in contacting the journal manager on the above email address.

Yours sincerely

Nasar Meer
Editor
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #3: Please This article is ready for publication. it is balanced and well argued. The methodology is fine and the analysis clear. it is coherent and consistent.

as a reviewer i have of course some caveats. i miss a historical perspective, particularly in line with the 2004 domestic violence law. has the law helped women report the violence they experienced?
has there been an increase in reporting after the law was introduced? an increase in divorce cases?
do the women interviewed know of the law etc etc etc
and how about the stswte court? and this new institution of the P2TP2A?
but this would have led to a different paper

a footnote might be added though to explain that in Indonesian the word for a divorcee is janda, the same as for widow, while the relevant additions, cetai, mati are hardly ever used. That is why the comparison with widows is significant. mention might also be made of the pornographic gaze with which particularly young janda are looked at, so the shame is not just government-produced but very much reinforced by the behaviour of neighbours and men in general

In compliance with data protection regulations, please contact the publication office if you would like to have your personal information removed from the database.

Date: Feb 06, 2019
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Your PDF Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce has been built and requires approval

Feb 06, 2019

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

The PDF for your submission, "Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce" is ready for viewing.

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Date: Feb 06, 2019
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" identities@manchester.ac.uk
Subject: Submission Confirmation for IDS-2017-0099R2

Feb 06, 2019

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R2
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power has received your revised submission.

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Kind regards,

Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

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Date: Feb 09, 2019
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" sps.identities@ed.ac.uk
Subject: (Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power) A revise decision has been made on your submission

Feb 09, 2019

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R2
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

The Editors have now completed their review of your article and would like to accept your paper for future publication in Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power.

Please note however that you must organise the paper in the standard Harvard citation style before we can proceed. Please could you submit a final version of your article, correctly prepared according to these instructions - http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/style/layout/style_guide.pdf

PLEASE NOTE: All the information requested in the Style Guide should be included in this final, named, version of your article. Only the actual file that you upload is transferred to the publishers for typesetting. So it is important that you include all author details (name/s, affiliation/s, contact details), abstract, keywords and acknowledgements.

Your revision is due by Mar 23, 2019.

To submit a revision, go to <https://www.editorialmanager.com/ids/> and log in as an Author. You will see a menu item called 'Submission Needing Revision'. You will find your submission record there.

Please ensure that ALL contact details, including your preferred postal address, are correct on your Editorial Manager Account. This information will be used by Routledge to post your hard copy of the journal in which your article appears.

Please be aware that all correspondence concerning this submission will only be sent to the nominated 'corresponding author' and not to any co-authors.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power and we look forward to receiving your final revision and working with you on bringing it to publication.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate in contacting the journal manager on the above email address.

Yours sincerely

Nasar Meer
Editor
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

In compliance with data protection regulations, please contact the publication office if you would like to have your personal information removed from the database.

Date: Feb 21, 2019
To: "Rika saraswati" rikasaraswati@unika.ac.id
From: "Identities" sps.identities@ed.ac.uk
Subject: Your revision is due (IDS-2017-0099R2)

Feb 21, 2019

Ref.: Ms. No. IDS-2017-0099R2
Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce
Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power

Dear Dr Rika saraswati

We are expecting the revision of IDS-2017-0099R2 by Mar 23, 2019.

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Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce

--Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	<p>Studies on divorce and shame in Indonesia have found that shame has been used by the Indonesian government to restrict divorce; however, this built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee. Although being a widow is also stigmatised by the public, this is to a lesser extent than for a divorced woman. Research has shown that the concept of shame has been one of the barriers that women face when considering disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence. In general, this concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women as it has been culturally and legally embedded in Indonesian society. Regardless of their identities, all respondents felt shame when they experienced domestic violence. The experiences of Indonesian women in responding to and making decisions dealing with domestic violence differ because their response depends on their needs and interests.</p>
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Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the Decision to Divorce

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Abstract

Studies on divorce and shame in Indonesia have found that shame has been used by the Indonesian government to restrict divorce; however, this built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee. Although being a widow is also stigmatised by the public, this is to a lesser extent than for a divorced woman. Research has shown that the concept of shame has been one of the barriers that women face when considering disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence. In general, this concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women as it has been culturally and legally embedded in Indonesian society. Regardless of their identities, all respondents felt shame when they experienced domestic violence. The experiences of Indonesian women in responding to and making decisions dealing with domestic violence differ because their response depends on their needs and interests.

Keywords: Shame, Identity, Indonesian Women, Domestic Violence, Divorce

1. Introduction

This paper will examine whether the culture of ‘shame’ has significant effects (or not) on the strategies, choices and decisions that Indonesian women make, particularly in domestic violence cases (Saraswati 2014, 523–542). Each Indonesian woman has a plurality of identity regarding her background (such as ethnicity, religion and religiosity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, age, disability, fertility or infertility, pregnancy, nationality). These identities can be a source of oppression or violence, and may affect the experience of domestic violence (its frequency, nature and degree of cultural acceptability) and a woman’s and her community’s response to it. The plurality of identities, according to anti-essentialist feminists, affects women’s experience of and their resistance to oppression or violence. It means that violence against women, including domestic violence, is not only caused by a patriarchal system but also comes from other factors such as ethnicity, religiosity, education, age, social statuses, degree of nationalism, and gender and sexual orientation (Denis 2001, 453, cited in Saraswati 2014, 13).

Women’s backgrounds have an important role in their understanding of *malu* or shame; however, there are broad cultural understandings that have also contributed to successive governments’ construction of the relevant legislation and regulation.

The role of *malu* or shame in relation to marriage breakdown (including violence and divorce) has in a sense been reinforced by the Indonesian government through the Marriage Act of 1974. Its provisions and wording can be used to gauge the cultural underpinnings operating at the time of its formation.

Indonesian feminists believe the 1974 Marriage Act to be gender biased, because it has constructed the male role as that of the ‘head of family’ while the role of the wife is that of ‘house wife’, a role generally subsidiary to the male, whose primacy appears to be asserted in the legislation despite the provision for ‘equality before the law’. Creating and maintaining the harmony of the marriage and within the family becomes the primary aim of the Act. Indeed, at least one researcher has referred to the ‘happy family’ [*keluarga sakinah*] as an Indonesian religious icon (Pranawati 2017, 32). Members of Indonesian couples are to observe this objective in their relationship. This is especially so for state officials regardless of their gender because they are representatives of the Indonesian government. Their responsibility to be exemplars is embedded in specific legislation and regulation. The responsibility for maintaining family harmony, however, seems to have been squarely placed on the wife’s shoulders because of the values traditionally assigned to the female gender, that is, those of ‘nurturing’ and ‘caring’. Hence the responsibility for failure to maintain marital or familial harmony will be attributed to the wife who may be described as an ‘unfaithful wife’, ‘undutiful housewife’ and/or ‘unloving mother’.

Research has indicated the importance of the concept of shame (Ha 1995; Lindquist 2004); however, it has rarely focused on domestic violence and an exploration of a woman’s decision to stay or leave a violent marriage, especially in Indonesia. According to Kate O’Shaughnessy (2009), when referring to Indonesian cases that deal with divorce, ‘shame’ is a multilayered concept ‘which encompasses both positive notions of proper behaviour and the negative emotions

associated with reduced status...[and] is, further shaped by factors such as gender, religion, geographic location and historical time period' (O'Shaughnessy 2009, 61), as well as by the State's interest. Those studies that do exist on divorce and shame found shame to have been used by the State to restrict divorce; however, this built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee (O'Shaughnessy 2009, 88).

The State has employed the concept in order to control the relationships between men and women both in the private and the public sphere, and included expectations of how women are supposed to behave. For example, in the New Order Era (*Orde Baru*, 1966–1998) shame was so constructed that female initiated divorce was regarded as shameful. This is despite the fact that such a divorce can only be initiated where the husband has failed to fulfil his responsibilities, yet the wife is made to feel 'shame' as if it is in fact her fault that he has abandoned her, or fails to maintain her and the children etc. This reflects embedded gender values regarding gender roles and the relations between a man and a woman (as a husband and a wife) within the family. Moreover, being a widow is also stigmatised by the public (though less so than a divorced wife) (O'Shaughnessy 2009, 88). Indeed the State even promoted the concept of the widow who devoted herself to the children rather than remarrying (70). The 'model wife' and 'model mother' of the 1970s to the 1990s did not divorce (69–70). Unsurprisingly, research has indicated that the concept of shame is one of the barriers that women face to disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence, and seeking divorce. As a consequence of their fear of shame,

they refuse to report the incidents of domestic violence to police or bring a case before the court; rather, they continue to keep silent, regarding the violence as a private or family matter and shameful for them and their families, and enduring ongoing abuse, pain and suffering as a result. This concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women since it has been culturally and legally embedded in the society.

2. Methods

The fieldwork to collect the data used in this paper was undertaken in Semarang, the capital city of the province of Central Java, Indonesia, in 2012. Semarang has a majority (Muslim) Javanese population, but other ethnicities (notably the Chinese) are well represented. Interviews were conducted with 14 women participants who had experienced or were experiencing domestic violence. They were from among domestic violence survivors who had joined a group operated under the supervision of a non-government organisation (NGO) that is concerned with women's issues, namely the Legal Resources Center – *untuk Keadilan Jender dan Hak Asasi Manusia* (LRC KJHAM). The participants came from a variety of social and educational backgrounds, ranging from not having completed primary school to holding an undergraduate qualification.

3. Background

The Marriage Act 1974 states that husband and wife are equal before the law; however, another provision of the Act states that husbands are the 'heads of

families’, and that wives are ‘housewives’. The statement that husbands are the heads of families is known and accepted throughout Indonesia and has everyday material effects. During the New Order Era, Indonesian authorities promulgated an ideal of the happy and harmonious family. The ideological base of the Indonesian nation-state is that it is built on the “foundation of the family”. The “foundation of the family” ideology presumed harmonious affective ties among family members; it assigned to each family member a different role in making the family work appropriately.

The concept of a husband as the ‘head of the family’ (*kepala keluarga*) and a wife as the ‘mother of household’ (*ibu rumah tangga*) is believed by Indonesian feminists to provide evidence that the Indonesian Marriage Act is a reflection of male and State domination of women. The Marriage Act places women and men ‘equal before the law’; however, this role division as outlined in the legislation has ‘led to a rigidity in the dichotomous association of men with the public sphere and women with the domestic sphere’ across Indonesia. Nurul Ilmi Idrus also notes that ‘in the socialisation the children, the father trains his son to be the head of the household and the mother plays the role of agent in the reproduction of gendered structured inequality’ (Idrus 2016, 297). Communities clearly still maintain gender biased thinking which is constructed structurally and culturally. The gender bias that has been embedded through religious teaching and norms within a family affects women’s thinking about their relationship with their husbands, especially in making a decision on whether to apply for divorce. Such values are not merely externally applied, they are internalised in the women

themselves, affecting their thinking and subsequent actions.

a. *Divorce in Indonesia*

Under the Marriage Act 1974, men as well as women are able to submit a petition to the court for a divorce, and both sexes are required to give ‘sufficient reasons’. The implementing regulation of the law gives examples of sufficient reasons. These are: adultery; compulsive drinking, drug taking, or gambling; desertion for two consecutive years; the spouse having a jail sentence greater than five years; endangerment of one spouse by the other; disease or handicap which prevent the carrying out of conjugal duties; and continuous arguments caused by irreconcilable differences. Then, if judges are convinced by one or several grounds of divorce presented by the applicant, they will grant the divorce. Based on the Marriage Act, either a wife or a husband can present as a litigant before the court.

Although some regulations have been provided that make divorce more complicated to obtain, data from various sources indicates that domestic violence has been a prevalent cause of marriage dissolution. For example, data reported by the State Ministry for Women’s Empowerment in 2001 revealed that 11.4 per cent of the total female population, or approximately 24 million women, said that they had experienced domestic violence which was ended by divorce (cited in Fadly 2018, 66–70). Data obtained from throughout Indonesia from the first level of the Religious Court in 2007 indicated that there were 124 079 petitions for divorce filed by women as applicant (*cerai gugat*) and 72 759 cases filed by men as

applicant (*cerai talak*) (cited in Fadly 2018, 75). In 2008, a study on access to and equality in the State Court and Religious Court found that women who filed for divorce in State Court and Religious Court were more than twice as numerous as men. That study also found that in terms of civil cases filed, divorce cases comprised 37 per cent of cases filed in the State Court, and 97 per cent of cases in the Religious Court (cited in Fadly 2018, 80). In 2017 in Semarang Religious Court, divorces initiated by the wife numbered 807 and those initiated by the husband numbered 427(cited in Fadly 2018, 85). The reasons for applying to divorce are various and are contained in the table below.

Table 1. The reason for divorce initiated by a husband (*cerai talak*) and a wife (*cerai gugat*)

b. *Shame in Indonesia*

Malu roughly means shame, embarrassment, shyness, or restraint and propriety (Goddard 19966, 432). The experience of *malu*, or of being identified as someone who should show *malu*, has become an organising principle for social action and the management of appearances.

Richard O'Connor describes shame as:

“a deep, pervasive experience of loathsomeness or disgust about who or what we are. Where guilt, hopefully, is about specific actions that may be put right or forgiven, shame is about our core

identity; the experience of seeing ourselves from another perspective, in the worst possible light; or of fearing that others see the secret self we keep hidden away and only remember when we are forced to.” (2009; see also Dossey 2005).

On the basis of O’Connor’s definition, guilt refers to specific experiences or specific action (for which one experiences ‘remorse’ or sorrow’). The experience of shame, however, deals with a person’s core identity, and feelings of worry or anxiety that others will see and know the innermost person which that a person would rather have remain unseen and unknown to the world. In contrast to guilt, it is not associated with a ‘forgivable act’ or an act for which satisfaction can be made in terms of restorative justice; rather, it is intrinsic to and concerned with the basic identity of the person.

In the context of divorce and domestic violence, *malu* becomes the emotional link between the failure of marriage and being a victim of domestic violence. This link suggests various forms of exchange that bind the individual to broader specific moral and social orders within a marriage relationship, most notably within the Indonesian nation.

Malu has a particular salience in many Indonesian societies. According to Goddard, there ‘is perhaps no better term than *malu* from which to begin a survey of traditional Malay culture through the prism of its emotional lexicon’(Goddard 1996, 432). It is therefore understandable that *malu* and its equivalents have received sustained ethnographic attention in Indonesia and Malaysia (Goddard

1996, 432). Most of the authors who have explored shame in the Indonesian cultural context would ‘agree that *malu* is a “moral affect” that positions the individual within a social order’ (Stodulka 2009, 335). According to Ward Keeler, the development of an understanding of the Javanese word *isin* or *malu* (and associated cultural practices) is crucial in the emotional (and some would argue moral) development of children and is closely connected with learning complicated correct linguistic and gestural forms associated with various behaviours and social status. He writes that ‘understanding the range of meanings of *isin* consists in understanding the full range of situations in which one’s dignity and status are on the line’ (Keller 1983, 159; see also Brenner 1996; Collins and Bahar 2000, Rosaldo 1993). Thus the concept of shame has a central place in Indonesian society in regard to a multitude of social situations, none more so perhaps than in family life and relations.

4. Shame and its influence on Indonesian women in making decisions dealing with domestic violence

Respondents in this paper have and manage different identities. I argue that their identities will influence the way these respondents manage the feeling of shame in dealing with domestic violence issues within their marital relationship, particularly in making a decision to apply for divorce (or not).

Table 2. Respondents’ identities

5. Domestic violence, divorce and employment

Respondents in the study that is the basis of this paper have a number of identities in terms of relationships. Among these are *ibu* (mother), wife (often understood as housewife in addition to other roles), and woman. These identities and roles had been misused or abused by their husbands when they committed violence against their wives. The husbands were able to use their power (physical and economic in particular) to control much of their wives' lives, and neglect their wives' rights in marriage and also as human beings with rights in so many regards equal to those of men. These abuses were common forms of the oppression of wives by their husbands. The husbands were able to call upon expectations generated by social norms (such as wifely obedience, and the marital home and relationship as a 'private' space) to support their behaviours while ignoring such norms in relation to their own behaviours (such as in regard to their failure to provide for their families and use of 'unacceptable levels' of violence against their spouses).

The response of the women in this study to such violence was initially to try to be patient, with an expectation that the husband would change his behaviour. As mothers and wives, these women had struggled to live in their abusive marriages because they thought of their children (would otherwise suffer from the stigma of a 'broken home' (as it was often termed in the West) and also in some instances from the material deprivation that might occur because of lower household income due to the absence of their fathers). The women also stayed because of the perceived importance of the need to maintain family harmony 'for

the sake of the children' as well as for the reputation of the broader family. Divorce was seen as a shame and disgrace for not only the individual woman involved in particular but also for her family. This perception persists and continues to influence women's behaviour.

Some of these respondents acknowledged that the identities of mother and wife had given them a pleasant social status. Their acknowledgment of this supports the idea of the power of State (and culture) to control women through a marriage relationship when the image of *ibu* stands as the highest possible achievement for a woman and the way to achieve greatest societal status and acceptance. The violence that occurred within these women's families was disruptive for the respondents; they were shocked and confused when faced with violence; and they felt massive shame that they had somehow not satisfactorily fulfilled what had been put forward as society's highest role for them. It was the women themselves who often bore the brunt of feelings of responsibility for the situation and therefore shame. While this may appear unreasonable on the surface, it is their role as woman/caregiver/peacemaker in the family, as the one generally (and disproportionately) regarded as responsible for 'family harmony' that gives rise to such feelings of shame. Their spouse's violence had brought them to complicated circumstances, and the need to decide whether to leave or to stay within the abusive marriage; the decision is not easy to make because of social, economic, legal and cultural considerations (Saraswati 2014, 524).

They argued that disclosing the state of their marriage to someone else was shameful. Great willpower and an ability to be willing to strive against their own

sense of shame and face possible adverse reactions in the people around them was needed to enable them disclose their marital situation, their husband's abusive behaviour, and their own suffering. As O'Connor notes, in instances of domestic violence and related legal cases, there was shame involved when respondents had to disclose the experience of being a victim of domestic violence. It involved not only fear of the partner's continued violent behaviour but fear of disclosure of the most private intimate relationship in their lives — that of husband and wife — to outside scrutiny, the public gaze and opprobrium, the last tending to accrue to the wife as the one regarded culturally as most largely responsible for maintaining familial harmony. Thus the wife suffers from fear and shame on multiple levels: fear of her husband, fear for her children, shame for having reached this point, shame for her self-perceived failure as wife and mother, shame for failing as a 'woman', even as a dutiful daughter or in terms of her own (or her family's) religious beliefs. In many cases, victims of domestic violence must give their statements to police and judges if their case is to proceed through the courts. Having such an acute sense of shame could be a reason for respondents failing to access the correct legal aid that could help and support them in confronting the violence (Saraswati 2014, 524). Accepting such aid is in itself a challenge and involves a review of one's situation through a different lens than that traditionally or culturally afforded a wife. It also requires the development of a new identity — that of a divorced woman (with or without children) and one who should not have to shoulder the blame for violence from a spouse or for a failed marriage. This is a huge task and one common to both women who had not worked before marriage

and those who had.

For respondents who already had a job before marrying their abusive husband, the presence of violence also had affected their identities as mother and wife because they too had had an expectation of a good family life for themselves and their children. Even when they were able to support their families, a feeling of shame still existed. Being independent financially, however, had made it easier for such women to make the decision to file for divorce, to access to legal aid, hire a lawyer and access the court in order to regain their rights—all of which issues—involve public spaces (Saraswati 2014, 525). This phenomenon of financial independence contributing to women's independence and power has also been observed by earlier anthropological research into the lives of Indonesian women. Anthropologists reported that, traditionally, many women have had considerable power, particularly economic power, within the family domain and in market trading (Brenner 1995; O'Shaunessy 2009). Several of the women in this study had tried to respond to the violence by reporting it to police and seeking legal aid. Some of respondents argued that they no longer felt shame when they reported the violence because they had already disclosed the marital violence to the many people they consulted for advice and assistance, and they hoped that the police, whom they approached as their last (and legal) course (and gateway to legal action), could cope with the violence professionally.

6. Domestic violence, divorce and education and occupation

In this study domestic violence was experienced by many women,

regardless of their level of education. The educational background of respondents varied but respondents' education was mostly distributed between upper elementary school and secondary school studies, with only a few having undertaken post-secondary studies. In this study, a husband's higher education level did not guarantee that the husband would treat his wife well. Several respondents in this study whose husbands had an education higher than their wives reported that their husbands had committed abuse and continued to do so. The higher education level, knowledge power that accompanied their education had been abused by those men to oppress their wives (Saraswati 2014, 437–442, 462–466).

Regardless of their educational identities, the respondents commonly felt shame when they were subjected to domestic violence. Those who were well-educated additionally felt that as educated people they should not have to experience domestic violence. This is partly a product of a general ignorance of the fact that abuse can happen in all levels of society. These respondents argued that the relationship between a man and a woman as husband and wife should be characterised by mutual respect. They were often shocked and ashamed to find that this was not the case in their own marriages and that, by way of contrast, they endured various degrees of spousal abuse. Although they felt ashamed however, their higher level of education in some cases significantly influenced their understanding of and immediate response to domestic violence. Nevertheless, given that their educational identities were blended with other identities and their inherent responsibilities (such as religious, parental and filial obligations), their

response was frequently delayed. More highly educated respondents, however, shared the same goal with their less educated 'sisters' to end the violence by accessing many resources which were provided by government and non-government organisations. Most of the respondents in this study were able to access resources and the justice system. Educated women in particular found it easier than uneducated women to access these services. A sense of solidarity was observed to develop among survivors of domestic violence who sought assistance and (in many instances) ultimately divorce. Whilst women argued that domestic violence was a source of shame, they did not deny it was or had been a part of their life, and they insisted that they were ready to help other victims who needed help and support (Saraswati 2014, 437–442, 462–466).

7. Domestic violence, divorce and age

The other particularly pertinent identity is age. The respondent's age has sometimes been used by other community members as an important reason for feeling greater shame and this has been a major contributor to the woman failing to leave a violent marriage relationship. Some respondents argued that their identity as an 'older person' was a factor in the response as were others' expectations. This was particularly the case in regard to a respondent (G.I.) (Saraswati 2014, 452–456) who was over 45 years of age (her experience was shared by R.B., and G.E.). In G.I.'s case, her age had been a reason supplied by other parties (such as children, neighbourhood administrator and police officers) for their failure to take action. While these parties already thought that it was a

shameful to disclose the spouse's inappropriate behaviour and extra-marital affairs to others, an additional factor was the women's more mature age, one at which it had become become inappropriate to file divorce or to report the husband to police despite the violence. Police and relatives or friends instead often advised such a respondent to reconcile, and to wait for the return of their husbands. Respondents R.B. and G.E. had husbands who had left them for other women some years earlier, and indeed never returned. The experiences of these respondents have demonstrated that the value of maintaining 'family harmony' and behaving as a 'faithful wife' continues to exist as cultural expectations within the community (Saraswati 2014, 398–402, 457–460).

These phenomena have shown that the understanding of the community members (especially in Indonesia) of domestic violence issues and the way to cope the issue, not only in private spaces but also in public spaces, were influenced by the value placed on family harmony, the principle of enduring marriage, and the need to avoid shame. The experience of Indonesian respondents has supported several studies on older women and domestic violence in which older women are observed to have been socialised with more traditional attitudes and values, particularly relating to gender roles, marriage, and family (Saraswati 2014, 554). Older women who had experience of domestic violence were taught to be submissive to their husbands and to silently accept all the things in their life. They were socialised with a keen sense of privacy about family matters and a strong loyalty to family and familial solidarity (Zink et al. 2003). Consequently, these values prevent them from discussing family problems with others,

particularly when domestic violence was viewed as a private family matter (and thus to be concealed from others). If domestic violence is discussed, the actual act of revelation in itself is considered shameful (Aronson, Thornewell, and Williams 1995). Respondents have long kept their ‘secret’ and struggled to live in harmony despite the violence which occurred for more than half of their married lives; some of them have even been living with their abusive husband between 20 and 30 years (Straka and Montminy 2006).

On the basis of their stories, it can be seen that a feeling of shame and a fear of being a ‘widow’ are the most frequent obstacles to responding to the violence appropriately (that is, in a manner that will reduce or eliminate the violence such as by filing for divorce) (Saraswati 2014, 41). The study’s evidence supported Kate O’Shaughnessy’s exploration of divorce and shame. She argued that shame was used by the State to restrict divorce; however, it built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee. ‘Shame’ was so constructed that female initiated divorce was regarded as shameful while a divorce initiated by a male is not accompanied by the same sense of shame for the husband. Although being a widow is also stigmatised by the public (though less so than a divorced wife), a divorced woman often refers to herself as a widow to reduce stigmatisation. Indonesian has specific terms for the women involved. The word *janda* refers to both widows and divorcees. However, it can be made more specific: *janda mati* (widow), *janda cerai* (divorcee) and *janda kembang* (young, beautiful divorcee with no children from the previous marriage). *Janda* have been stigmatised and suffered discrimination and disadvantage in pre colonial and

colonial times and in contemporary Indonesia. Many are economically and socially disadvantaged as they have dependent children and are no longer married. Marriage is almost universal in Indonesia, therefore not being married is 'odd'. However, the status and frequency of being 'odd' is distinctly gendered. Divorced men are very rare, and are never to be blamed for their 'broken homes'. Unlike janda, they are not the target of raunchy gossip and not viewed as a threat to other marriages. The community defames janda as immoral, and this judgment immorality is the core of the gendered stigma. Indeed, '[a] Any female deviation from normative, reproductive heterosexuality practised within marriage is strongly stigmatised in Indonesia. The stigma attacks the moral identity and worth of a woman, and makes it hard for her to establish herself as a respectable woman of good morals' (Parker and Creese 2016, 2; Akhmadi et al. 2010; see also Mahy et al. 2016).

Unsurprisingly too the concept of shame has been indicated as one of the barriers that women face in disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence. As maintaining harmony (that is, a happy as well as healthy home) is seen as primarily the role of the wife, it is she that often bears the greatest social stigma if separation and divorce occur. Consequently, women victims refuse to report violent incidents to police or bring the case before the court, and continue to keep silent, regarding the violence as a 'private' or 'family' matter and shameful for them and their families. This concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women, especially older women (as has been revealed in this study) since it has been culturally and legally embedded. As in

many countries, domestic violence and violence against women more generally are understood to be under-reported (Klaveren et al. 2010, 16). Indonesia is not unique in this regard; however, in countries where familial loyalty and family harmony are core cultural values and are upheld by the concept of shame, reporting may logically be even more depressed.

This study has also demonstrated that older Indonesian women still seemed to hold tight the values and norms of their traditional responsibility for ‘harmony’ within a family. They also maintain a discourse of conventional femininity as a woman and a wife within both the private and public spheres. The aim of marriage in the Indonesian community is not only to procreate, but also to build a ‘happy family’. It is also a form of responsibility to *Allah*/God (as can be traced through the definition of marriage in the Marriage Law 1974); therefore, when a marriage breaks down (regardless of the reasons) and divorce is inevitable, feelings of shame remains embedded in these women as the value of maintaining ‘harmony’ has been embedded culturally and religiously. Being a ‘widow’ as the consequence of divorce has also a negative image for divorced women (see comment by S.S (Saraswati 2014, 414) and N.A (430), thus reinforcing the ‘desirability’ of marriage.

8. Domestic violence, divorce and religion

Religion as one of women’s identities had a significant influence on several women respondents in this study in their responses to domestic violence, in their making a decision and in accessing a court regarding divorce. This study

involved interviewing abused women who shared their experiences with spiritual figures, such as priest, pastor, and imam or marriage counsellor. These women were often advised to work through the marriage relationship, and they were not provided with referrals to the justice system or social services. Further, while faith in *Allah*/God was the main source of strength for women, this could have two contradictory effects: it could help them to leave the relationship and begin to heal, or it could keep them in the abusive relationship because of a belief that violence was a ‘test’ from *Allah*/God or that they were not entitled to separate from or divorce their husbands.

Although there is no evidence that violence is more frequent or severe in families of faith, religious women are more vulnerable when they are abused. They are less likely to leave because of a belief that the abuser will change and many mainstream Catholics believe strongly in their promise made ‘before God’ to stay together as a couple ‘until death’ parts them. Consequently, some cling to a fantasy of change on the part of their spouse while others harbour notions of ‘working harder’ to ensure their marriage lasts. These phenomena occur due to beliefs which are commonly held and strongly reinforced by a religious ideology that sees women’s roles primarily as wife and homemaker, and subservient to the husband who is traditionally ‘head’ (*kepala* [Indonesian/Malay; *kephalē* [New Testament Greek] of the household in both Islamic and Christian families (see The *Qurān* [*Surah Al-Nissa* 4:34, *Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:228]; Holy Bible [*1 Corinthians* 11.3, *Ephesians* 5.24]). Males of both religious traditions can tend to emphasise elements that support their use (and abuse) of power while ignoring

injunctions contained in their respective Scriptures to be kind to and make adequate provision for their spouses (*Qurān* [*Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:187]), even mutually submissive (in the Christian Scriptures, that is, *Holy Bible* [*Ephesians* 5.21]). In this study, enduring abuse due to religious belief and feeling shame were experienced more frequently by some respondents, particularly those who confessed Catholicism rather than those of other religions. This may in part be to the allowance for divorce (however shameful), even divorce initiated by the wife under certain conditions, in Islamic practice, whereas Catholicism (unlike Protestantism), on the other hand, makes no provision for divorce (only for annulment and then under strict conditions) and even less for remarriage (annulment of previous marriage being a prerequisite for any subsequent marriage).

Table 2 above shows that Islam is the dominant religion among the respondents in this study. Nine of the eighteen respondents are Muslim; Christian and Catholic respondents number one and two respectively; and two respondents are Buddhist. Only two of the nine Muslim respondents explicitly declared themselves to be Muslim women who have a responsibility to discipline and advise their husbands (Saraswati 2014, 363–379 [case of M.I], 437–444 [case of I.N). A similar idea that a woman has the same role as a husband within a family in Islam (as present in some texts) has been emphasised by these two respondents. These are ideas that clearly refute the ideology of patriarchy (Saraswati 2014, 363–379, 437–444), but are not ones widely held, especially among older women or those more allied to neo-conservative teaching. For the Catholic respondents,

they had insisted that the Church's religious tenets on marriage had become their marriage guidance. They believe that a man and a woman are united by God in marriage, and despite the violence, the marriage must endure. They also hold that divorce itself is a cause of shame. Respondents ID and EL in this study, for instance, acknowledged the shame they felt about their marriage. The principle of the indissolubility of marriage, of being 'united by God and not [to be] separated by humans'(Saraswati 2014, 534; see also 462–466, 470–472), was frequently part of the advice given by priests to respondents. As a result, these respondents had struggled to stay in abusive marriage relationships in order to obey their religious principles. Nevertheless, a religious background was not the only reason for them to struggle and stay in these relationships. The experience of I.D., for instance, showed that she remained in an abusive marriage and did not disclose the violence to her parents because of the shame she felt as she had married to a man based on her own choice and not that of her parents.

In the early part of their marriages, most Catholic respondents (such as E.L., I.D.) held to the principle of the indissolubility of marriage. A glance at Table 2 (above) provides evidence of how long many were prepared to stay before they finally decided that they would leave. However, when the circumstances within their family continued getting worse or failed to improve (sometimes over many years), the women interviewed decided to move from the marital home; and, then, later decided to file for divorce. For other religious groups such as non-Catholic Christians (Protestants), the same principle was not revealed as explicitly. In their interviews, the non-Catholic Christian respondents never

mentioned the same principle as the Catholics; and, they never rejected the idea of divorce when violence occurred within a family. However, a feeling of shame remained for 'their' failure to keep their marriage. This 'self-blaming' was common to Catholics, Protestants and Muslim women interviewed and perhaps reflected the shame generated when their shared ideal for women in marriage had not been met.

The experiences of Buddhist respondents (V. and Y.) also demonstrated that divorce is not a readily accepted suggestion in spite of a saying in Buddhism that "Why live with one whom we do not like because it will only give more suffering?" (Saraswati 2014, 478–480). When V. experienced violence at her husband's hands, she had kept it to herself because she was ashamed to disclose it to her parents, but did later apply for divorce. For Y., although she confesses to be Buddhist and Confucian these religions had no significant influence upon her decision to leave the abusive marital relationship.; however, she too felt of shame when she experienced of domestic violence from her husband since he was regarded as a 'noble man'. That divorce affects more than the partners is illustrated by the fact that her mother, whose job was as a *bante* (a religious leader among Buddhists), felt deep disappointment and shame, and this feeling led her to resign from her position. The reason given was that she was so ashamed of being unable to save her daughter's marriage. This again demonstrates how the concept of shame is operating in the community, even where there is no formal Scriptural injunction to remain together as there is in Christianity (especially Catholic and conservative Christianity rather than liberal Protestantism) or in Islam where

divorce processes are also in place but culturally and religiously frowned upon.

9. Conclusion

The culture of shame remains as it has been embedded to Indonesian women as the part of their culture, and is supported by legislation. Regardless of their educational level, all respondents felt shame when they experienced domestic violence and disclosed their marriage situation to others. Having an occupation helped respondents to cope constructively with domestic violence issue by allowing them to access several resources in community. The women's religious identity also has a great influence in their making a decision whether to stay or to leave a marriage relationship that has descended into violence against them on the part of their spouse. The reason for remaining in a violent marriage for a long time was not only influenced by their holding a religious principle but also a feeling of shame. Feeling ashamed has a greater influence on older respondents than on younger respondents in their making a decision whether to apply for a divorce.

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**Shame and Indonesian Women Victims of Domestic Violence in Making the
Decision to Divorce**

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Abstract

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Studies on divorce and shame in Indonesia have found that shame has been used by the Indonesian government to restrict divorce; however, this built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee. Although being a widow is also stigmatised by the public, this is to a lesser extent than for a divorced woman. Research has shown that the concept of shame has been one of the barriers that women face when considering disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence. In general, this concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women as it has been culturally and legally embedded in Indonesian society. Regardless of their identities, all respondents felt shame when they experienced domestic violence. The experiences of Indonesian women in

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responding to and making decisions dealing with domestic violence differ because their response depends on their needs and interests.

Keywords: Shame, Identity, Indonesian Women, Domestic Violence, Divorce

1. Introduction

This paper will examine whether the culture of ‘shame’ has significant effects (or not) on the strategies, choices and decisions that Indonesian women make, particularly in domestic violence cases (Saraswati 2014, 523–542). Each Indonesian woman has a plurality of identity regarding her background (such as ethnicity, religion and religiosity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, age, disability, fertility or infertility, pregnancy, nationality). These identities can be a source of oppression or violence, and may affect the experience of domestic violence (its frequency, nature and degree of cultural acceptability) and a woman’s and her community’s response to it. The plurality of identities, according to anti-essentialist feminists, affects women’s experience of and their resistance to oppression or violence. It means that violence against women, including domestic violence, is not only caused by a patriarchal system but also comes from other factors such as ethnicity, religiosity, education, age, social statues, degree of nationalism, and gender and sexual orientation (Denis 2001, 453, cited in Saraswati 2014, 13).

Women’s backgrounds have an important role in their understanding of *malu* or shame; however, there are broad cultural understandings that have also

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3 contributed to successive governments' construction of the relevant legislation
4 and regulation.
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8 The role of *malu* or shame in relation to marriage breakdown (including
9 violence and divorce) has in a sense been reinforced by the Indonesian
10 government through the Marriage Act of 1974. Its provisions and wording can be
11 used to gauge the cultural underpinnings operating at the time of its formation.
12 Indonesian feminists believe the 1974 Marriage Act to be gender biased, because
13 it has constructed the male role as that of the 'head of family' while the role of the
14 wife is that of 'house wife', a role generally subsidiary to the male, whose
15 primacy appears to be asserted in the legislation despite the provision for 'equality
16 before the law'. Creating and maintaining the harmony of the marriage and within
17 the family becomes the primary aim of the Act. Indeed, at least one researcher has
18 referred to the 'happy family' [*keluarga sakinah*] as an Indonesian religious icon
19 (Pranawati 2017, 32). Members of Indonesian couples are to observe this
20 objective in their relationship. This is especially so for state officials regardless of
21 their gender because they are representatives of the Indonesian government. Their
22 responsibility to be exemplars is embedded in specific legislation and regulation.
23 The responsibility for maintaining family harmony, however, seems to have been
24 squarely placed on the wife's shoulders because of the values traditionally
25 assigned to the female gender, that is, those of 'nurturing' and 'caring'. Hence the
26 responsibility for failure to maintain marital or familial harmony will be attributed
27 to the wife who may be described as an 'unfaithful wife', 'undutiful housewife'
28 and/or 'unloving mother'.
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Research has indicated the importance of the concept of shame (Ha 1995; Lindquist 2004); however, it has rarely focused on domestic violence and an exploration of a woman's decision to stay or leave a violent marriage, especially in Indonesia. According to Kate O'Shaughnessy (2009), when referring to Indonesian cases that deal with divorce, 'shame' is a multilayered concept 'which encompasses both positive notions of proper behaviour and the negative emotions associated with reduced status...[and] is, further shaped by factors such as gender, religion, geographic location and historical time period' (O'Shaughnessy 2009, 61), as well as by the State's interest. Those studies that do exist on divorce and shame found shame to have been used by the State to restrict divorce; however, this built on existing negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee (O'Shaughnessy 2009, 88).

The State has employed the concept in order to control the relationships between men and women both in the private and the public sphere, and included expectations of how women are supposed to behave. For example, in the New Order Era (*Orde Baru*, 1966–1998) shame was so constructed that female initiated divorce was regarded as shameful. This is despite the fact that such a divorce can only be initiated where the husband has failed to fulfil his responsibilities, yet the wife is made to feel 'shame' as if it is in fact her fault that he has abandoned her, or fails to maintain her and the children etc. This reflects embedded gender values regarding gender roles and the relations between a man and a woman (as a husband and a wife) within the family. Moreover, being a widow is also stigmatised by the public (though less so than a divorced wife) (O'

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O'Shaughnessy 2009, 88). Indeed the State even promoted the concept of the widow who devoted herself to the children rather than remarrying (70). The 'model wife' and 'model mother' of the 1970s to the 1990s did not divorce (69–70). Unsurprisingly, research has indicated that the concept of shame is one of the barriers that women face to disclosing their marital problems, in this instance domestic violence, and seeking divorce. As a consequence of their fear of shame, they refuse to report the incidents of domestic violence to police or bring a case before the court; rather, they continue to keep silent, regarding the violence as a private or family matter and shameful for them and their families, and enduring ongoing abuse, pain and suffering as a result. This concept continues to exert influence on and within Indonesian women since it has been culturally and legally embedded in the society.

2. Methods

The fieldwork to collect the data used in this paper was undertaken in Semarang, the capital city of the province of Central Java, Indonesia, in 2012. Semarang has a majority (Muslim) Javanese population, but other ethnicities (notably the Chinese) are well represented. Interviews were conducted with 14 women participants who had experienced or were experiencing domestic violence. They were from among domestic violence survivors who had joined a group operated under the supervision of a non-government organisation (NGO) that is concerned with women's issues, namely the Legal Resources Center – *untuk Keadilan Jender dan Hak Asasi Manusia* (LRC KJHAM). The participants came

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3 from a variety of social and educational backgrounds, ranging from not having
4 completed primary school to holding an undergraduate qualification.
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10 **3. Background**

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13 The Marriage Act 1974 states that husband and wife are equal before the
14 law; however, another provision of the Act states that husbands are the ‘heads of
15 families’, and that wives are ‘housewives’. The statement that husbands are the
16 heads of families is known and accepted throughout Indonesia and has everyday
17 material effects. During the New Order Era, Indonesian authorities promulgated
18 an ideal of the happy and harmonious family. The ideological base of the
19 Indonesian nation-state is that it is built on the “foundation of the family”. The
20 “foundation of the family” ideology presumed harmonious affective ties among
21 family members; it assigned to each family member a different role in making the
22 family work appropriately.
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38 The concept of a husband as the ‘head of the family’ (*kepala keluarga*)
39 and a wife as the ‘mother of household’ (*ibu rumah tangga*) is believed by
40 Indonesian feminists to provide evidence that the Indonesian Marriage Act is a
41 reflection of male and State domination of women. The Marriage Act places
42 women and men ‘equal before the law’; however, this role division as outlined in
43 the legislation has ‘led to a rigidity in the dichotomous association of men with
44 the public sphere and women with the domestic sphere’ across Indonesia. Nurul
45 Iلمي Idrus also notes that ‘in the socialisation the children, the father trains his son
46 to be the head of the household and the mother plays the role of agent in the
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3 reproduction of gendered structured inequality' (Idrus 2016, 297). Communities
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5 clearly still maintain gender biased thinking which is constructed structurally and
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7 culturally. The gender bias that has been embedded through religious teaching and
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9 norms within a family affects women's thinking about their relationship with their
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11 husbands, especially in making a decision on whether to apply for divorce. Such
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13 values are not merely externally applied, they are internalised in the women
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15 themselves, affecting their thinking and subsequent actions.
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23 a. *Divorce in Indonesia*

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25 Under the Marriage Act 1974, men as well as women are able to submit a
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27 petition to the court for a divorce, and both sexes are required to give 'sufficient
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29 reasons'. The implementing regulation of the law gives examples of sufficient
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31 reasons. These are: adultery; compulsive drinking, drug taking, or gambling;
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33 desertion for two consecutive years; the spouse having a jail sentence greater than
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35 five years; endangerment of one spouse by the other; disease or handicap which
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37 prevent the carrying out of conjugal duties; and continuous arguments caused by
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39 irreconcilable differences. Then, if judges are convinced by one or several
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41 grounds of divorce presented by the applicant, they will grant the divorce. Based
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43 on the Marriage Act, either a wife or a husband can present as a litigant before the
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45 court.
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52 Although some regulations have been provided that make divorce more
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54 complicated to obtain, data from various sources indicates that domestic violence
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56 has been a prevalent cause of marriage dissolution. For example, data reported by
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the State Ministry for Women’s Empowerment in 2001 revealed that 11.4 per cent of the total female population, or approximately 24 million women, said that they had experienced domestic violence which was ended by divorce (cited in Fadly 2018, 66–70). Data obtained from throughout Indonesia from the first level of the Religious Court in 2007 indicated that there were 124 079 petitions for divorce filed by women as applicant (*cerai gugat*) and 72 759 cases filed by men as applicant (*cerai talak*) (cited in Fadly 2018, 75). In 2008, a study on access to and equality in the State Court and Religious Court found that women who filed for divorce in State Court and Religious Court were more than twice as numerous as men. That study also found that in terms of civil cases filed, divorce cases comprised 37 per cent of cases filed in the State Court, and 97 per cent of cases in the Religious Court (cited in Fadly 2018, 80). In 2017 in Semarang Religious Court, divorces initiated by the wife numbered 807 and those initiated by the husband numbered 427(cited in Fadly 2018, 85). The reasons for applying to divorce are various and are contained in the table below.

Table 1. The reason for divorce initiated by a husband (*cerai talak*) and a wife (*cerai gugat*)

No.	The reasons	<i>Cerai Talak</i>	<i>Cerai Gugat</i>
1.	Moral Crises	111	18
2.	Jealousy	87	28
3.	Mental Cruelty/violence	48	19
4.	Another Woman/Man	246	285
5.	Disharmony	63	84
6.	Unhealthy Polygamous	-	46
7.	Forced Marriage	-	76
8.	Economy	-	206
9.	No Responsibility	-	49
10.	Marriage Underage	-	56
11.	Physical Cruelty/Violence	-	101
Total		427	807

Source: Semarang Religious Court 2018 (Fadly 2018, 85)

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5 b. *Shame in Indonesia*
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7 *Malu* roughly means shame, embarrassment, shyness, or restraint and
8 propriety (Goddard 19966, 432). The experience of *malu*, or of being identified as
9 someone who should show *malu*, has become an organising principle for social
10 action and the management of appearances.
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19 Richard O'Connor describes shame as:
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24 “a deep, pervasive experience of loathsomeness or disgust about
25 who or what we are. Where guilt, hopefully, is about specific
26 actions that may be put right or forgiven, shame is about our core
27 identity; the experience of seeing ourselves from another
28 perspective, in the worst possible light; or of fearing that others see
29 the secret self we keep hidden away and only remember when we
30 are forced to.” (2009; see also Dossey 2005).
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44 On the basis of O'Connor's definition, guilt refers to specific experiences
45 or specific action (for which one experiences 'remorse' or sorrow'). The
46 experience of shame, however, deals with a person's core identity, and feelings of
47 worry or anxiety that others will see and know the innermost person which that a
48 person would rather have remain unseen and unknown to the world. In contrast to
49 guilt, it is not associated with a 'forgivable act' or an act for which satisfaction
50 can be made in terms of restorative justice; rather, it is intrinsic to and concerned
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4 with the basic identity of the person.
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6 In the context of divorce and domestic violence, *malu* becomes the
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8 emotional link between the failure of marriage and being a victim of domestic
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10 violence. This link suggests various forms of exchange that bind the individual to
11
12 broader specific moral and social orders within a marriage relationship, most
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14 notably within the Indonesian nation.
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18 *Malu* has a particular salience in many Indonesian societies. According to
19
20 Goddard, there 'is perhaps no better term than *malu* from which to begin a survey
21
22 of traditional Malay culture through the prism of its emotional lexicon'(Goddard
23
24 1996, 432). It is therefore understandable that *malu* and its equivalents have
25
26 received sustained ethnographic attention in Indonesia and Malaysia (Goddard
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28 1996, 432). Most of the authors who have explored shame in the Indonesian
29
30 cultural context would 'agree that *malu* is a "moral affect" that positions the
31
32 individual within a social order' (Stodulka 2009, 335). According to Ward Keeler,
33
34 the development of an understanding of the Javanese word *isin* or *malu* (and
35
36 associated cultural practices) is crucial in the emotional (and some would argue
37
38 moral) development of children and is closely connected with learning
39
40 complicated correct linguistic and gestural forms associated with various
41
42 behaviours and social status. He writes that 'understanding the range of meanings
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44 of *isin* consists in understanding the full range of situations in which one's dignity
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46 and status are on the line' (Keller 1983, 159; see also Brenner 1996; Collins and
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48 Bahar 2000, Rosaldo 1993). Thus the concept of shame has a central place in
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50 Indonesian society in regard to a multitude of social situations, none more so
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perhaps than in family life and relations.

4. Shame and its influence on Indonesian women in making decisions dealing with domestic violence

Respondents in this paper have and manage different identities. I argue that their identities will influence the way these respondents manage the feeling of shame in dealing with domestic violence issues within their marital relationship, particularly in making a decision to apply for divorce (or not).

Table 2. Respondents' identities

Participants and place of living	Age	Religion, education	Type of job	Type/s of abuse	Perpetrator	Duration
SS, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Muslim, senior high school	A worker in a private company	Psychological, physical and economic	Husband	From early marriage, for approx. 20 years
MR, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Muslim, senior high school	Bridal decorator	Psychological, physical and Economic	Second husband	From 3 years after marriage for approx. 15 years
GI, Semarang, Indonesia	47	Muslim, elementary school	Carrier in the traditional market	Psychological and physical	Husband	From early 20s after marriage for approx. 2 years
RB, Semarang, Indonesia	50	Muslim, senior high school	Small entrepreneur	Physical and economic	Husband	From early 29s after marriage for approx. 3 years
GE, Semarang, Indonesia	50	Muslim, elementary school	Park keeper	Physical, psychological and economic	Second husband	From early 2 years after marriage for approx. 30 years
MI, Semarang, Indonesia	48	Muslim, senior high school	House wife and volunteer in a women's crisis centre	Physical, psychological, sexual and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 27 years
PJ, Semarang, Indonesia	42	Muslim, senior high	House wife	Psychological, physical and	Husband	From early 20s after

		school		economic		marriage for approx. 2 years
IN, Semarang, Indonesia	34	Muslim, senior high school	Worker in a private company	Psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 7 years
FA, Semarang, Indonesia	43	Christian, junior high school	House wife	Physical, psychological, sexual and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 25 years
AN, Semarang, Indonesia	26	Muslim, senior high school	Dress maker	Psychological and economic	Husband	Before and after marriage for approx. 2 years
ID, Semarang, Indonesia	52	Catholic, undergraduate	Property entrepreneur	Physical, psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 20 years
EL, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Catholic, undergraduate	Retired pharmacist	Physical, psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 19 years
Y, Semarang, Indonesia	32	Buddhist, undergraduate	Small entrepreneur	Psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 9 years
V, Semarang, Indonesia	31	Buddhist, undergraduate	Food entrepreneur	Psychological and economical	Husband	Before and after marriage for approx. 10 years

Source: Saraswati 2014, 73–74 [Table 1.1]

5. Domestic violence, divorce and employment

Respondents in the study that is the basis of this paper have a number of identities in terms of relationships. Among these are *ibu* (mother), wife (often understood as housewife in addition to other roles), and woman. These identities and roles had been misused or abused by their husbands when they committed violence against their wives. The husbands were able to use their power (physical and economic in particular) to control much of their wives' lives, and neglect their wives' rights in marriage and also as human beings with rights in so many regards equal to those of men. These abuses were common forms of the oppression of

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wives by their husbands. The husbands were able to call upon expectations generated by social norms (such as wifely obedience, and the marital home and relationship as a ‘private’ space) to support their behaviours while ignoring such norms in relation to their own behaviours (such as in regard to their failure to provide for their families and use of ‘unacceptable levels’ of violence against their spouses).

The response of the women in this study to such violence was initially to try to be patient, with an expectation that the husband would change his behaviour. As mothers and wives, these women had struggled to live in their abusive marriages because they thought of their children (would otherwise suffer from the stigma of a ‘broken home’ (as it was often termed in the West) and also in some instances from the material deprivation that might occur because of lower household income due to the absence of their fathers). The women also stayed because of the perceived importance of the need to maintain family harmony ‘for the sake of the children’ as well as for the reputation of the broader family. Divorce was seen as a shame and disgrace for not only the individual woman involved in particular but also for her family. This perception persists and continues to influence women’s behaviour.

Some of these respondents acknowledged that the identities of mother and wife had given them a pleasant social status. Their acknowledgment of this supports the idea of the power of State (and culture) to control women through a marriage relationship when the image of *ibu* stands as the highest possible achievement for a woman and the way to achieve greatest societal status and

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3 acceptance. The violence that occurred within these women's families was
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5 disruptive for the respondents; they were shocked and confused when faced with
6
7 violence; and they felt massive shame that they had somehow not satisfactorily
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9 fulfilled what had been put forward as society's highest role for them. It was the
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11 women themselves who often bore the brunt of feelings of responsibility for the
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13 situation and therefore shame. While this may appear unreasonable on the surface,
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15 it is their role as woman/caregiver/peacemaker in the family, as the one generally
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17 (and disproportionately) regarded as responsible for 'family harmony' that gives
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19 rise to such feelings of shame. Their spouse's violence had brought them to
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21 complicated circumstances, and the need to decide whether to leave or to stay
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23 within the abusive marriage; the decision is not easy to make because of social,
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25 economic, legal and cultural considerations (Saraswati 2014, 524).
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33 They argued that disclosing the state of their marriage to someone else was
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35 shameful. Great willpower and an ability to be willing to strive against their own
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37 sense of shame and face possible adverse reactions in the people around them was
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39 needed to enable them disclose their marital situation, their husband's abusive
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41 behaviour, and their own suffering. As O'Connor notes, in instances of domestic
42
43 violence and related legal cases, there was shame involved when respondents had
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45 to disclose the experience of being a victim of domestic violence. It involved not
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47 only fear of the partner's continued violent behaviour but fear of disclosure of the
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49 most private intimate relationship in their lives — that of husband and wife — to
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51 outside scrutiny, the public gaze and opprobrium, the last tending to accrue to the
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53 wife as the one regarded culturally as most largely responsible for maintaining
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3 familial harmony. Thus the wife suffers from fear and shame on multiple levels:
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6 fear of her husband, fear for her children, shame for having reached this point,
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9 shame for her self-perceived failure as wife and mother, shame for failing as a
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11 ‘woman’, even as a dutiful daughter or in terms of her own (or her family’s)
12
13 religious beliefs. In many cases, victims of domestic violence must give their
14
15 statements to police and judges if their case is to proceed through the courts.
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17 Having such an acute sense of shame could be a reason for respondents failing to
18
19 access the correct legal aid that could help and support them in confronting the
20
21 violence (Saraswati 2014, 524). Accepting such aid is in itself a challenge and
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23 involves a review of one’s situation through a different lens than that traditionally
24
25 or culturally afforded a wife. It also requires the development of a new identity —
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27 that of a divorced woman (with or without children) and one who should not have
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29 to shoulder the blame for violence from a spouse or for a failed marriage. This is
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31 a huge task and one common to both women who had not worked before marriage
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33 and those who had.
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40 For respondents who already had a job before marrying their abusive
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42 husband, the presence of violence also had affected their identities as mother and
43
44 wife because they too had had an expectation of a good family life for themselves
45
46 and their children. Even when they were able to support their families, a feeling of
47
48 shame still existed. Being independent financially, however, had made it easier for
49
50 such women to make the decision to file for divorce, to access to legal aid, hire a
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52 lawyer and access the court in order to regain their rights—all of which
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54 issues—involve public spaces (Saraswati 2014, 525). This phenomenon of
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3 financial independence contributing to women's independence and power has also
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6 been observed by earlier anthropological research into the lives of Indonesian
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8 women. Anthropologists reported that, traditionally, many women have had
9
10 considerable power, particularly economic power, within the family domain and
11
12 in market trading (Brenner 1995; O'Shaunessy 2009). Several of the women in
13
14 this study had tried to respond to the violence by reporting it to police and seeking
15
16 legal aid. Some of respondents argued that they no longer felt shame when they
17
18 reported the violence because they had already disclosed the marital violence to
19
20 the many people they consulted for advice and assistance, and they hoped that the
21
22 police, whom they approached as their last (and legal) course (and gateway to
23
24 legal action), could cope with the violence professionally.
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33 **6. Domestic violence, divorce and education and occupation**

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35 In this study domestic violence was experienced by many women,
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37 regardless of their level of education. The educational background of respondents
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39 varied but respondents' education was mostly distributed between upper
40
41 elementary school and secondary school studies, with only a few having
42
43 undertaken post-secondary studies. In this study, a husband's higher education
44
45 level did not guarantee that the husband would treat his wife well. Several
46
47 respondents in this study whose husbands had an education higher than their
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49 wives reported that their husbands had committed abuse and continued to do so.
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51 The higher education level, knowledge power that accompanied their education
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53 had been abused by those men to oppress their wives (Saraswati 2014, 437–442,
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6 Regardless of their educational identities, the respondents commonly felt
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Regardless of their educational identities, the respondents commonly felt shame when they were subjected to domestic violence. Those who were well-educated additionally felt that as educated people they should not have to experience domestic violence. This is partly a product of a general ignorance of the fact that abuse can happen in all levels of society. These respondents argued that the relationship between a man and a woman as husband and wife should be characterised by mutual respect. They were often shocked and ashamed to find that this was not the case in their own marriages and that, by way of contrast, they endured various degrees of spousal abuse. Although they felt ashamed however, their higher level of education in some cases significantly influenced their understanding of and immediate response to domestic violence. Nevertheless, given that their educational identities were blended with other identities and their inherent responsibilities (such as religious, parental and filial obligations), their response was frequently delayed. More highly educated respondents, however, shared the same goal with their less educated ‘sisters’ to end the violence by accessing many resources which were provided by government and non-government organisations. Most of the respondents in this study were able to access resources and the justice system. Educated women in particular found it easier than uneducated women to access these services. A sense of solidarity was observed to develop among survivors of domestic violence who sought assistance and (in many instances) ultimately divorce. Whilst women argued that domestic violence was a source of shame, they did not deny it was or had been a part of

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3 their life, and they insisted that they were ready to help other victims who needed
4 help and support (Saraswati 2014, 437–442, 462–466).
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10 **7. Domestic violence, divorce and age**

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13 The other particularly pertinent identity is age. The respondent's age has
14 sometimes been used by other community members as an important reason for
15 feeling greater shame and this has been a major contributor to the woman failing
16 to leave a violent marriage relationship. Some respondents argued that their
17 identity as an 'older person' was a factor in the response as were others'
18 expectations. This was particularly the case in regard to a respondent (G.I.)
19 (Saraswati 2014, 452–456) who was over 45 years of age (her experience was
20 shared by R.B., and G.E.). In G.I.'s case, her age had been a reason supplied by
21 other parties (such as children, neighbourhood administrator and police officers)
22 for their failure to take action. While these parties already thought that it was a
23 shameful to disclose the spouse's inappropriate behaviour and extra-marital
24 affairs to others, an additional factor was the women's more mature age, one at
25 which it had become become inappropriate to file divorce or to report the husband
26 to police despite the violence. Police and relatives or friends instead often advised
27 such a respondent to reconcile, and to wait for the return of their husbands.
28 Respondents R.B. and G.E. had husbands who had left them for other women
29 some years earlier, and indeed never returned. The experiences of these
30 respondents have demonstrated that the value of maintaining 'family harmony'
31 and behaving as a 'faithful wife' continues to exist as cultural expectations within
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3 the community (Saraswati 2014, 398–402, 457–460).
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6 These phenomena have shown that the understanding of the community
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8 members (especially in Indonesia) of domestic violence issues and the way to
9
10 cope the issue, not only in private spaces but also in public spaces, were
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12 influenced by the value placed on family harmony, the principle of enduring
13
14 marriage, and the need to avoid shame. The experience of Indonesian respondents
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16 has supported several studies on older women and domestic violence in which
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18 older women are observed to have been socialised with more traditional attitudes
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20 and values, particularly relating to gender roles, marriage, and family (Saraswati
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22 2014, 554). Older women who had experience of domestic violence were taught
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24 to be submissive to their husbands and to silently accept all the things in their life.
25
26 They were socialised with a keen sense of privacy about family matters and a
27
28 strong loyalty to family and familial solidarity (Zink et al. 2003). Consequently,
29
30 these values prevent them from discussing family problems with others,
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32 particularly when domestic violence was viewed as a private family matter (and
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34 thus to be concealed from others). If domestic violence is discussed, the actual act
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36 of revelation in itself is considered shameful (Aronson, Thornewell, and Williams
37
38 1995). Respondents have long kept their ‘secret’ and struggled to live in harmony
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40 despite the violence which occurred for more than half of their married lives;
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42 some of them have even been living with their abusive husband between 20 and
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44 30 years (Straka and Montminy 2006).
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54 On the basis of their stories, it can be seen that a feeling of shame and a
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56 fear of being a ‘widow’ are the most frequent obstacles to responding to the
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4 violence appropriately (that is, in a manner that will reduce or eliminate the
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6 violence such as by filing for divorce) (Saraswati 2014, 41). The study's evidence
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8 supported Kate O'Shaughnessy's exploration of divorce and shame. She argued
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10 that shame was used by the State to restrict divorce; however, it built on existing
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12 negative cultural constructions of the female divorcee. 'Shame' was so
13
14 constructed that female initiated divorce was regarded as shameful while a divorce
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16 initiated by a male is not accompanied by the same sense of shame for the
17
18 husband. Although being a widow is also stigmatised by the public (though less so
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20 than a divorced wife), a divorced woman often refers to herself as a widow to
21
22 reduce stigmatisation. Indonesian has specific terms for the women involved. The
23
24 word janda refers to both widows and divorcees. However, it can be made more
25
26 specific: janda mati (widow), janda cerai (divorcee) and janda kembang (young,
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28 beautiful divorcee with no children from the previous marriage). Janda have been
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30 stigmatised and suffered discrimination and disadvantage in pre colonial and
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32 colonial times and in contemporary Indonesia. Many are economically and
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34 socially disadvantaged as they have dependent children and are no longer married.
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36 Marriage is almost universal in Indonesia, therefore not being married is 'odd'.
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38 However, the status and frequency of being 'odd' is distinctly gendered. Divorced
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40 men are very rare, and are never to be blamed for their 'broken homes'. Unlike
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42 janda, they are not the target of raunchy gossip and not viewed as a threat to other
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44 marriages. The community defames janda as immoral, and this judgment
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46 immorality is the core of the gendered stigma. Indeed, '[a] Any female deviation
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48 from normative, reproductive heterosexuality practised within marriage is
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4 strongly stigmatised in Indonesia. The stigma attacks the moral identity and worth
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6 of a woman, and makes it hard for her to establish herself as a respectable woman
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8 of good morals' (Parker and Creese 2016, 2; Akhmadi et al. 2010; see also Mahy
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10 et al. 2016).

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13 Unsurprisingly too the concept of shame has been indicated as one of the
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15 barriers that women face in disclosing their marital problems, in this instance
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17 domestic violence. As maintaining harmony (that is, a happy as well as healthy
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19 home) is seen as primarily the role of the wife, it is she that often bears the
20
21 greatest social stigma if separation and divorce occur. Consequently, women
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23 victims refuse to report violent incidents to police or bring the case before the
24
25 court, and continue to keep silent, regarding the violence as a 'private' or 'family'
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27 matter and shameful for them and their families. This concept continues to exert
28
29 influence on and within Indonesian women, especially older women (as has been
30
31 revealed in this study) since it has been culturally and legally embedded. As in
32
33 many countries, domestic violence and violence against women more generally
34
35 are understood to be under-reported (Klaveren et al. 2010, 16). Indonesia is not
36
37 unique in this regard; however, in countries where familial loyalty and family
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39 harmony are core cultural values and are upheld by the concept of shame,
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41 reporting may logically be even more depressed.
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50 This study has also demonstrated that older Indonesian women still
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52 seemed to hold tight the values and norms of their traditional responsibility for
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54 'harmony' within a family. They also maintain a discourse of conventional
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56 femininity as a woman and a wife within both the private and public spheres. The
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aim of marriage in the Indonesian community is not only to procreate, but also to build a ‘happy family’. It is also a form of responsibility to *Allah*/God (as can be traced through the definition of marriage in the Marriage Law 1974); therefore, when a marriage breaks down (regardless of the reasons) and divorce is inevitable, feelings of shame remains embedded in these women as the value of maintaining ‘harmony’ has been embedded culturally and religiously. Being a ‘widow’ as the consequence of divorce has also a negative image for divorced women (see comment by S.S (Saraswati 2014, 414) and N.A (430), thus reinforcing the ‘desirability’ of marriage.

8. Domestic violence, divorce and religion

Religion as one of women’s identities had a significant influence on several women respondents in this study in their responses to domestic violence, in their making a decision and in accessing a court regarding divorce. This study involved interviewing abused women who shared their experiences with spiritual figures, such as priest, pastor, and imam or marriage counsellor. These women were often advised to work through the marriage relationship, and they were not provided with referrals to the justice system or social services. Further, while faith in *Allah*/God was the main source of strength for women, this could have two contradictory effects: it could help them to leave the relationship and begin to heal, or it could keep them in the abusive relationship because of a belief that violence was a ‘test’ from *Allah*/God or that they were not entitled to separate from or divorce their husbands.

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Although there is no evidence that violence is more frequent or severe in families of faith, religious women are more vulnerable when they are abused. They are less likely to leave because of a belief that the abuser will change and many mainstream Catholics believe strongly in their promise made ‘before God’ to stay together as a couple ‘until death’ parts them. Consequently, some cling to a fantasy of change on the part of their spouse while others harbour notions of ‘working harder’ to ensure their marriage lasts. These phenomena occur due to beliefs which are commonly held and strongly reinforced by a religious ideology that sees women’s roles primarily as wife and homemaker, and subservient to the husband who is traditionally ‘head’ (*kepala* [Indonesian/Malay; *kephalē* [New Testament Greek] of the household in both Islamic and Christian families (see The *Qurān* [*Surah Al-Nissa* 4:34, *Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:228]; Holy Bible [*Corinthians* 11.3, *Ephesians* 5.24]). Males of both religious traditions can tend to emphasise elements that support their use (and abuse) of power while ignoring injunctions contained in their respective Scriptures to be kind to and make adequate provision for their spouses (*Qurān* [*Surah Al-Baqarah* 2:187]), even mutually submissive (in the Christian Scriptures, that is, *Holy Bible* [*Ephesians* 5.21]). In this study, enduring abuse due to religious belief and feeling shame were experienced more frequently by some respondents, particularly those who confessed Catholicism rather than those of other religions. This may in part be to the allowance for divorce (however shameful), even divorce initiated by the wife under certain conditions, in Islamic practice, whereas Catholicism (unlike Protestantism), on the other hand, makes no provision for divorce (only for

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3 annulment and then under strict conditions) and even less for remarriage
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6 (annulment of previous marriage being a prerequisite for any subsequent
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8 marriage).
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11 Table 2 above shows that Islam is the dominant religion among the
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13 respondents in this study. Nine of the eighteen respondents are Muslim; Christian
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15 and Catholic respondents number one and two respectively; and two respondents
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17 are Buddhist. Only two of the nine Muslim respondents explicitly declared
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19 themselves to be Muslim women who have a responsibility to discipline and
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21 advise their husbands (Saraswati 2014, 363–379 [case of M.I], 437–444 [case of
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23 I.N). A similar idea that a woman has the same role as a husband within a family
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25 in Islam (as present in some texts) has been emphasised by these two respondents.
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27 These are ideas that clearly refute the ideology of patriarchy (Saraswati 2014,
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29 363–379, 437–444), but are not ones widely held, especially among older women
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31 or those more allied to neo-conservative teaching. For the Catholic respondents,
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33 they had insisted that the Church’s religious tenets on marriage had become their
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35 marriage guidance. They believe that a man and a woman are united by God in
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37 marriage, and despite the violence, the marriage must endure. They also hold that
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39 divorce itself is a cause of shame. Respondents ID and EL in this study, for
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41 instance, acknowledged the shame they felt about their marriage. The principle of
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43 the indissolubility of marriage, of being ‘united by God and not [to be] separated
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45 by humans’(Saraswati 2014, 534; see also 462–466, 470–472), was frequently
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47 part of the advice given by priests to respondents. As a result, these respondents
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49 had struggled to stay in abusive marriage relationships in order to obey their
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3 religious principles. Nevertheless, a religious background was not the only reason
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5 for them to struggle and stay in these relationships. The experience of I.D., for
6
7 instance, showed that she remained in an abusive marriage and did not disclose
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9 the violence to her parents because of the shame she felt as she had married to a
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11 man based on her own choice and not that of her parents.
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16 In the early part of their marriages, most Catholic respondents (such as
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18 E.L., I.D.) held to the principle of the indissolubility of marriage. A glance at
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20 Table 2 (above) provides evidence of how long many were prepared to stay before
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22 they finally decided that they would leave. However, when the circumstances
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24 within their family continued getting worse or failed to improve (sometimes over
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26 many years), the women interviewed decided to move from the marital home;
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28 and, then, later decided to file for divorce. For other religious groups such as non-
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30 Catholic Christians (Protestants), the same principle was not revealed as
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32 explicitly. In their interviews, the non-Catholic Christian respondents never
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34 mentioned the same principle as the Catholics; and, they never rejected the idea of
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36 divorce when violence occurred within a family. However, a feeling of shame
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38 remained for ‘their’ failure to keep their marriage. This ‘self-blaming’ was
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40 common to Catholics, Protestants and Muslim women interviewed and perhaps
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42 reflected the shame generated when their shared ideal for women in marriage had
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44 not been met.
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52 The experiences of Buddhist respondents (V. and Y.) also demonstrated
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54 that divorce is not a readily accepted suggestion in spite of a saying in Buddhism
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56 that “Why live with one whom we do not like because it will only give more
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suffering?” (Saraswati 2014, 478–480). When V. experienced violence at her husband’s hands, she had kept it to herself because she was ashamed to disclose it to her parents, but did later apply for divorce. For Y., although she confesses to be Buddhist and Confucian these religions had no significant influence upon her decision to leave the abusive marital relationship.; however, she too felt of shame when she experienced of domestic violence from her husband since he was regarded as a ‘noble man’. That divorce affects more than the partners is illustrated by the fact that her mother, whose job was as a *bante* (a religious leader among Buddhists), felt deep disappointment and shame, and this feeling led her to resign from her position. The reason given was that she was so ashamed of being unable to save her daughter’s marriage. This again demonstrates how the concept of shame is operating in the community, even where there is no formal Scriptural injunction to remain together as there is in Christianity (especially Catholic and conservative Christianity rather than liberal Protestantism) or in Islam where divorce processes are also in place but culturally and religiously frowned upon.

9. Conclusion

The culture of shame remains as it has been embedded to Indonesian women as the part of their culture, and is supported by legislation. Regardless of their educational level, all respondents felt shame when they experienced domestic violence and disclosed their marriage situation to others. Having an occupation helped respondents to cope constructively with domestic violence issue by allowing them to access several resources in community. The women’s religious

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3 identity also has a great influence in their making a decision whether to stay or to
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6 leave a marriage relationship that has descended into violence against them on the
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8 part of their spouse. The reason for remaining in a violent marriage for a long time
9
10 was not only influenced by their holding a religious principle but also a feeling of
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12 shame. Feeling ashamed has a greater influence on older respondents than on
13
14 younger respondents in their making a decision whether to apply for a divorce.
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23
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26 reccomendation that assisted me to improve this paper.
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Table 1. The reason for divorce initiated by a husband (*cerai talak*) and a wife (*cerai gugat*)

No.	The reasons	<i>Cerai Talak</i>	<i>Cerai Gugat</i>
1.	Moral Crises	111	18
2.	Jealousy	87	28
3.	Mental Cruelty/violence	48	19
4.	Another Woman/Man	246	285
5.	Disharmony	63	84
6.	Unhealthy Polygamous	-	46
7.	Forced Marriage	-	76
8.	Economy	-	206
9.	No Responsibility	-	49
10.	Marriage Underage	-	56
11.	Physical Cruelty/Violence	-	101
Total		427	807

Source: Semarang Religious Court 2018 (Fadly 2018, 85)

Table 2. Respondents' identities

Participants and place of living	Age	Religion, education	Type of job	Type/s of abuse	Perpetrator	Duration
SS, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Muslim, senior high school	A worker in a private company	Psychological, physical and economic	Husband	From early marriage, for approx. 20 years
MR, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Muslim, senior high school	Bridal decorator	Psychological, physical and Economic	Second husband	From 3 years after marriage for approx. 15 years
GI, Semarang, Indonesia	47	Muslim, elementary school	Carrier in the traditional market	Psychological and physical	Husband	From early 20s after marriage for approx. 2 years
RB, Semarang, Indonesia	50	Muslim, senior high school	Small entrepreneur	Physical and economic	Husband	From early 29s after marriage for approx. 3 years
GE, Semarang, Indonesia	50	Muslim, elementary school	Park keeper	Physical, psychological and economic	Second husband	From early 2 years after marriage for approx. 30 years
MI, Semarang, Indonesia	48	Muslim, senior high school	House wife and volunteer in a women's crisis centre	Physical, psychological, sexual and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 27 years
PJ, Semarang, Indonesia	42	Muslim, senior high	House wife	Psychological, physical and	Husband	From early 20s after

		school		economic		marriage for approx. 2 years
IN, Semarang, Indonesia	34	Muslim, senior high school	Worker in a private company	Psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 7 years
FA, Semarang, Indonesia	43	Christian, junior high school	House wife	Physical, psychological, sexual and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 25 years
AN, Semarang, Indonesia	26	Muslim, senior high school	Dress maker	Psychological and economic	Husband	Before and after marriage for approx. 2 years
ID, Semarang, Indonesia	52	Catholic, undergraduate	Property entrepreneur	Physical, psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 20 years
EL, Semarang, Indonesia	44	Catholic, undergraduate	Retired pharmacist	Physical, psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 19 years
Y, Semarang, Indonesia	32	Buddhist, undergraduate	Small entrepreneur	Psychological and economic	Husband	From early marriage for approx. 9 years
V, Semarang, Indonesia	31	Buddhist, undergraduate	Food entrepreneur	Psychological and economical	Husband	Before and after marriage for approx. 10 years

Source: Saraswati 2014, 73–74 [Table 1.1]