

Need of belonging, Mexican men's normative socialization, and machismo as the root of couple problems, the role of alcohol use, and intimate partner violence

Necesidad de apego, socializaci3n normativa masculina mexicana y machismo como raĪz de los problemas de pareja, el papel del consumo de alcohol y la violencia de pareja

Necessidade de pertencimento, socializa33o normativa dos homens mexicanos e machismo como raĪz dos problemas do casal, papel do uso de 3lcool e viol3ncia entre parceiros ĩntimos



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Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación es conocer y poder describir la etiología y los mecanismos que mantienen la asociación entre el consumo de alcohol y la violencia perpetrada por hombres mexicanos en contra de sus parejas femeninas. Se realizó un estudio exploratorio cualitativo mediante la técnica de grupos focales, en el que participaron 14 hombres reclutados a través de una campaña de marketing en redes sociales, todos con antecedentes de ejercicio de violencia de pareja y consumo de alcohol (evaluados mediante el AUDIT y un cuestionario semiestructurado). El análisis de datos se hizo de forma manual, con base en la teoría fundamentada, y fue sometido a tres tipos de triangulación. De acuerdo con los resultados, la etiología de la asociación entre el consumo de alcohol y la violencia de pareja es la inadecuada satisfacción de la necesidad de vínculo (apego), impuesta por la socialización normativa de ser hombre, culturalmente conocida como machismo; asociación que se mantiene principalmente por la desregulación emocional, la falta de habilidades de convivencia en pareja y el mal manejo de la economía familiar. Los resultados ponen sobre la mesa un hecho conocido, pero poco tomado en cuenta: tanto el consumo de alcohol como el ejercicio de la violencia están fuertemente influenciados por la cultura, lo que vuelve necesaria la investigación del fenómeno enfatizando las peculiaridades de la población bajo estudio. Estos resultados pueden considerarse un indicador de los componentes necesarios para desarrollar una intervención que atienda ambas variables, en población mexicana

Resumo

O objetivo desta investigação é compreender e descrever a etiologia e os mecanismos que mantêm a associação entre o consumo de álcool e a violência perpetrada por homens mexicanos contra as suas parceiras. Foi realizado um estudo exploratório qualitativo, recorrendo a grupos focais, com a participação de 14 homens recrutados por meio de uma campanha de marketing nas redes sociais, todos com antecedentes de violência nas relações de intimidade e consumo de álcool (avaliado através do AUDIT e de um questionário semiestructurado). A análise dos dados foi feita manualmente, com base na teoria fundamentada, e foi submetida a três tipos de triangulação. Conforme os resultados, a etiologia da associação entre o consumo de álcool e a violência entre parceiros íntimos é a incorreta satisfação da necessidade de vinculação (apego), imposta pela socialização normativa do ser homem, culturalmente conhecida como machismo; uma associação que se mantém principalmente pela desregulação emocional, pela falta de competências de coabitação nos casais e pela má gestão das finanças familiares. Os resultados trazem à colação um dado conhecido, mas pouco considerado: tanto o consumo de álcool como o exercício da violência são fortemente influenciados pela cultura, o que torna necessário investigar o fenômeno, enfatizando as particularidades da população em estudo. Estes resultados podem ser considerados um indicador dos componentes necessários para desenvolver uma intervenção que aborde ambas as variáveis na população Mexicana

Abstract

This research aims to understand and describe the etiology and mechanisms that maintain the association between alcohol consumption and violence perpetrated by Mexican men against their female partners. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted using the focus group technique, with the participation of 14 men recruited through a marketing campaign in social networks, all with a history of intimate partner violence and alcohol consumption (assessed using the AUDIT and a semi-structured questionnaire). The data analysis was done manually, based on grounded theory, and subjected to three triangulation types. According to the results, the etiology of the association between alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence is the inadequate satisfaction of the need for bonding (attachment), imposed by the normative socialization of being a man, culturally known as machismo; an association that is maintained mainly by emotional dysregulation, lack of cohabitation skills in couples and poor management of the family economy. The results bring to the table a well-known, but little-considered fact: both alcohol consumption and the exercise of violence are strongly influenced by culture, which makes it necessary to investigate the phenomenon, emphasizing the peculiarities of the population under study. These results can be considered an indicator of the components necessary to develop an intervention that addresses both variables in the Mexican population

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Introduction

Harmful alcohol consumption is associated with various social problems such as intimate partner violence (Davis et al., 2021; Easton et al., 2018; Kraanen et al., 2013, 2014; Mbilinyi et al., 2011; McCrady et al., 2016; Oberleitner et al., 2013; Stuart et al., 2013), defined as any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm (Bott et al., 2019). Globally, seven of every ten women have experienced intimate partner violence (Soleymani et al., 2018), and approximately eight of every ten of the generators of this violence have carried it out under the influence of alcohol (Stewart et al., 2014). In North America, women whose partners drink are more likely to be battered than those whose partners do not (Davis et al., 2021; Thompson & Kingree, 2006); men tend to be eight to 11 times more abusive against their partner on days in which they are drinking (Fals-Stewart, 2003). In the United States of America, England, and Wales, about 40% of female victims of intimate partner violence report that their partner had been drinking before the episode of violence. In South Africa, 65% of women said that their partners always or most of the time consumed alcohol before raping them; similar figures were found in India, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. In Australia, 36% of intimate partner homicides were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the murder, a figure of 10.5% for Russia (Krug et al., 2002).

In Mexico, according to the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH), about 43.9% of women reported intimate partner violence, and of this, 16.2% have suffered severe violence (**National Institute of Statistics and Geography [INEGI], 2017**). In 2003, according to data from the National Survey of Partner Violence in Users of Public Health Services in Mexico (**Rico et al., 2003**), the percentage of women who were battered by partners who drink daily was 40%, a figure that decreased as consumption decreased, falling to 13% of those whose partners did not consume alcohol; it is estimated that the risk of violence was three times higher when man consumed daily (**Natera et al., 2011**). In the State of Mexico, where the current study was conducted, women whose partners consume alcohol occasionally are fifty times more prone to suffer intimate partner violence than those whose partners do not drink, data that increases to seventy times for those whose partners drink frequently (**Jaen-Cortés et al., 2015**). Thus, both internationally and specifically in Mexico, it is likely that a high percentage of the most serious episodes of intimate partner violence (male-female directionality) occur under the influence of alcohol (**Boira & Jodrá, 2010; Scott et al., 2015; Walker, 2015**).

In response to this problem, several psychological treatment interventions have been developed for men who commit intimate partner violence with disappointing results (**Babcock et al., 2004; Chovanec, 2009; Day et al., 2009; Echeburúa, 2013; Eckhardt et al., 2006; Gondolf, 2011; Klein & Schermer, 2015; Neighbors et al., 2008; Smedslund et al., 2007; Tollefson & Phillips, 2015; Velonis et al., 2020**). One possible reason for this may be the lack of attention given to the joint treatment of alcohol consumption and partner violence. This is unfortunate given that it has been estimated that about two-thirds of the participants in interventions for intimate partner violence consume alcohol in a harmful way (**Boira & Jodrá, 2010; Echeburúa et al., 2009**) and 42% are dependent (**Stuart et al., 2013**); moreover, half of these men cite alcohol as a contributing factor to their violent behavior (**Murphy et al., 2018; Oberleitner et al., 2013; Satyanarayana et al., 2016**), and the exacerbation of it (**Oberleitner et al., 2013**).

Regarding the etiology of the association between violence and drinking, one of the principal proposals includes three models: (a) proximal effects of the substance (alcohol causes violence); (b) indirect effects (drinking damages the relationship, causing conflicts that end in violence); and (c) spurious (a third variable is responsible for both alcohol consumption and intimate partner violence) (**Babcock & Iyican, 2022; Babcock & Potthoff, 2021; Davis et al., 2021; Leonard & Quigley, 1999**); which is related to structural and social context conditions such as economic and education level, occupation (**Babcock & Iyican, 2022; Babcock & Potthoff, 2021; Gómez Acosta, 2014**), idiosyncrasy (machismo) (**Rojas & Morales, 2020**) which dictates how the normative gender socialization should be conducted, and country legislation. Most evidence favors the proximal effects model, hypothesizing that alcohol use causes disinhibition and failure to evaluate behavior, increasing the likelihood of committing violent acts against a partner; thus, when a partner consumes alcohol, problems, tension, and stressors increase, commonly leading to violence, and the belief that alcohol consumption incites violence encourages this behavior and its justification (**Babcock & Iyican, 2022; Babcock & Potthoff, 2021; Balagopal et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2021; Krug et al., 2002; Lindley et al., 2021; Perrotte & Zamboanga, 2021; Stefanile et al., 2021**). In contrast, in another study investigators found after conducting in-depth interviews with 20 Indian men generators of intimate partner violence and severe alcohol consumption, and their wives, that in both groups there was poor anger management, lack of assertiveness, as well as poor negotiation and conflict resolution skills (**Satyanarayana et al., 2016**); which agrees with the spurious model rather than the proximal model. Perhaps it is that these third variables damage the relationship, culminating in violence.

Hence, the importance of establishing an etiological understanding that considers the specific characteristics of the population within their cultural context. Thus, the objective of this research is to explore through an analysis based on grounded theory: (a) the variables that Mexican men who exercise intimate partner violence and consume alcohol, place as the cause of the problems in their relationship; (b) the existing association between their violent and drinking behavior; and (c) the etiology of this association, that is, the variable(s) that explain it. The purpose is to generate a substantive theory that will help to understand this phenomenon and open a field of opportunity for the design and development of new effective and efficient intervention programs aimed at this group of men.

Materials and Methods

Design

An exploratory study was conducted with a focus group design (**Bonilla-Jiménez & Escobar, 2017**); in which the systematic design of grounded theory (also known as theoretical sampling) was used to enable a rich understanding of the participant's life experiences, shown in a substantive theory. This theory emerges from the process of data collection and implies constant comparison of the incidents to create categories that can group all the concepts until they reach theoretical saturation, which happens when new properties of the theoretical categories no longer emerge and there is convincing and solid data to support them (**Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014; Páramo-Morales, 2015; Quezada, 2014**). The theory should be able to explain what happened in the past, predict what may happen in the future, and interpret what is happening in the present (**Quezada, 2014**). This study followed the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) checklist (**Tong et al., 2007**).

Participants

Recruitment of the participants began using social networks (**Bonilla-Jiménez & Escobar, 2017; Otzen & Manterola, 2017**). Fourteen adult Mexican men [average age of 44 (sd15)], from the State of Mexico, in Mexico participated in the study. They were all literate, heterosexual, with a couple of relationships of at least three years duration, expressed the intention to improve their relationship, had a history of partner violence in at least the six months before the study, were not in treatment for partner violence and/or anger management, and had a history of alcohol consumption of at least three years.

Data Collection

Once approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the graduate program in psychology, participants were contacted via social networks Facebook and WhatsApp, with a small-scale marketing campaign. The date and time for the In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and the Focus Groups (FG) were agreed upon by the men interested in participating. Nineteen IDIs were conducted to check eligibility criteria, 18 participants met the eligibility criteria and agreed to participate. The FGs were conducted to know perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about partner relationships, and to promote the reflections and the exchange of

ideas. Data collection included three FGs consisting of six, five, and three men each. Two participants from the first and second groups canceled before the session (due to work and physical or emotional health reasons). Both the groups and the interviews were conducted in face-to-face sessions, each IDI lasted an average of one hour, and each FG lasted an average of two and a half hours.

The IDIs and FGs were carried out in an open space adapted to the objective, following the instructions of the World Health Organization against COVID-19. The IDIs were used to determine eligibility: The Initial Interview Format (Echeverría et al., 2012), consisted of 34 items that inquired about the life history and personal history of alcohol use. This format was complemented with three questions about intimate partner violence (history, perceived severity, and frequency), and perceived life satisfaction. The Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) (Babor et al., 1989), adapted and validated in the Mexican population (Medina-Mora et al., 1998): identifies problematic alcohol use and assesses hazardous drinking, symptoms of dependence, and harmful drinking. It consists of eight questions with response options ranging from: Never (0) to Four or more times per week (4); from No (0) to Daily or almost daily (4); and a dichotomous option No (0) Yes (4). The internal consistency coefficient for the global scale is $\alpha=0.83$, for the frequency-quantity subscales $\alpha=0.82$, and for excessive use $\alpha=0.81$. To guide the focus groups, we used a structured interview guide that was developed and piloted with the target population and with a group of experts to ensure obtaining information on the study phenomenon (Table 1). Additionally, an evaluation form of the focus group was utilized, which consisted of a checklist of 11 items and an open-ended question, to evaluate the content and development of the focus groups.

Table 1.
Focus groups guide.

Type of question	Question
Opening question	1 What are the motives or reasons you must improve your relationship with your partner?
Transitional questions	2 What are the actions of you and your partner that cause fights between you?
	3 What problems do you have with your partner because of alcohol?
Key question	4 What do you think you have to do to improve your relationship with your partner?

To create a feeling of trust, all the IDIs and FGs were conducted by a psychologist trained in working with men and FGs, who was part of the research team and the first author of this manuscript. In the FGs an observer participated to evaluate the carrying out of the groups and to make field notes. The data collection was carried out until the data were saturated; data collection took place from September to November 2020.

Data Analysis

The FGs were audio recorded with each participant's permission and were transcribed by hand in Word. A hermeneutical unit was created and analyzed using *ATLAS.TI* version 8.0, but the hermeneutical unit did not reflect all the information, so a manual analysis was conducted by one coder following the method of grounded theory: open, axial, and selective encoding.

Open encoding. Incident identification: Transcriptions were analyzed by group, by topic, and by each participant, considering the frequency/repetition of each incident (an incident refers to any word and statement that reflects something linked with the study variables).

Coding of incidents. Incidents were grouped in a database, with a sheet for each, and the columns were named with codes that emerged from the incident identification. Once each question had codes, a second reading of the incidents was done, integrating them into the corresponding codes, all separated by participant. For incidents relevant to the phenomenon contained in different questions, another database was generated, in which the incidents were added to where they belonged. In addition, a new additional named code was generated (with a function like that of the miscellaneous category), in which the incidents were important to explain the context of the phenomenon (due to their frequency and relationship with other codes), but not relevant to any of the questions/topics, were grouped, separated by group and by participant and integrated into the same database. Generation of categories. A third exhaustive reading of the incidents was carried out, now grouped into codes to generate categories that could concisely group the codes with shared properties.

Axial encoding. Conditional/consequential analysis. To assign a concise role of participation to each of the categories present in the phenomenon, a conditional/consequential matrix was developed for each question. These matrixes allow us to identify the role of every category as a condition or consequence, and to understand the relationship between them.

Selective encoding. Identification of the central/nuclear category. Axial encoding allows us to recognize the nuclear category (principal condition), that best explains the phenomenon. In this study, the principal condition category reflects sexist behaviors and thoughts that are understood as machismo or chauvinism violence (although it was not the most frequent), from which derives the use of violence as a tool to maintain the position of power within the couple's relationship.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the ethics committee of the graduate program in psychology, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The participants were informed about the objectives of the study and its voluntary nature, as well as the anonymous and confidential treatment of their data. To guarantee that the data would be anonymous and confidential, all participants selected a pseudonym and participants were told that they could leave the study at any time. Before beginning, they provided signed informed consent, were asked permission to record the conversations, and were later given access to the study results. The guidelines established by the American Psychological Association and by the Mexican Psychologist's Code of Ethics were followed.

Rigor

It is important to clarify that the principal author had previous contact (weekly for three months) with two of the participants attending mutual aid groups, due to her role as an observer. This could affect the results because of social desirability and is a possible limitation of the study. However, to strengthen the results obtained with the first data analysis, different credibility strategies were used. Data triangulation was carried out with 10 participants of the FGs (also called return to participants), with two expert researchers (known as peer review), and between theories (Díaz, 2019).

Triangulation with participants was individual, by telephone (maximum duration of 45 minutes), and with the help of a guide. The participants agreed that the theory coincides with their experience, referring

to the link between relationship problems and sexist behaviors/thoughts, and the responsibility they acquire in executing the male "role", even outside their relationships, which reinforces the intergenerational quality of sexist or male chauvinism violence.

Triangulation with expert researchers included two researchers specialized in gender and masculinities, and autonomy and self-determination; in addition, the results were presented to a group of experts. The researchers' suggestions focused on: (a) A new proposed core category: gender violence, self-concept (meaning of being a man), and attachment/bonding, to describe what was behind the sexist behaviors and thoughts; (b) the importance of intrinsic motivation to change, to determine the role of this concept in future intervention programs; (c) the work from a gender approach, has a strong base; and (d) the renaming and regrouping of some categories, to clarify the concepts.

The findings after the triangulation process with participants and expert researchers were enriched with the triangulation of data that form theories, contrasting the information obtained in the analysis with that previously reported in the literature. The results were submitted to an exhaustive revision before its consideration to be integrated into the first substantive proposed theory.

Results

The total study sample consisted of 14 Mexican men; the most relevant clinical and sociodemographic characteristics of the participants can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Clinical and sociodemographic characteristics of participants.

Sociodemographic characteristics		
Age		44 (sd=15)
Academic level	Elementary school	6
	Middle school	5
	High school	2
	Bachelor's degree	1
Marital status	Married	6
	Cohabiting	8
Intimate partner violence characteristics		
Perceptions about intimate partner violence carried out	Really severe	7
	Severe	4
	A lot severe	1
	A little bit severe	1
	Not severe	1
Drinking characteristics		
Drinking level (AUDIT)	Without dependency	4
	Low dependency	2
	Moderate dependency	1
	High dependency	7

Sociodemographic characteristics		
Age		44 (sd=15)
Perceptions about the severity of drinking	A big problem	12
	A minor problem	1
	It is not a problem	1
History of treatment for alcohol use	Yes (AA)	4
	No	10
Reasons to participate in the focus group	To have a good partner relationship	7
	Family well-being (regain the family)	7

The analyses of the information resulted in one central/nuclear category with two subcategories: need of belonging (normative socialization of being a man and machismo), seen as the etiology (condition one) of partner problems. Plus, seven selective categories with eight subcategories are divided into three groups according to their situation or function as consequences or conditions. First, the behaviors that are a consequence of the etiology (consequence one, condition two): are emotional dysregulation (violence and negligence), alcohol consumption (health problems), lack of partner skills, and money misuse. In the second place, the results of these behaviors (consequence two, condition three): partner problems (erosion of bonds). In the end, the process of change (consequence three, condition four): search for reasons to change, and steps needed to change (decision-making and problem-solving, modification of drinking habits, emotion regulation skills, and social skills).

Etiology (condition one)

Need of belonging. Identified as a central/nuclear category that, in the case of Mexican men, is satisfied through their committed participation in the normative socialization process of being a man (NSPBM) that conjoint with machismo represents the etiology of problems in relating/bonding in a parsimonious manner.

Behaviors (consequence one; condition 2)

Emotional dysregulation (ED) includes irresponsibility regarding the care of one's own and other's emotions, freedom to make use of sexist violence/male chauvinism violence and negligence as strategies of pseudo-regulation of emotions, and the maintenance of power and control over established relationships and bonds (even when these are not effective).

Alcohol consumption (AC) refers to the man's right to consume alcohol as a reward for his effort and as a means that facilitates a space for social coexistence with his peers, in which he can be himself and in which he is appreciated and valued, but also involves various health problems which he must face alone.

Lack of relationship skills (LRS) involves the absence of skills to bond effectively with others in one's environment (particularly the partner), and the ease of justifying through belonging to a group of men the lack of these skills.

Money misuse (MM) implies the freedom that men must make use of their material resources as they choose, even if this means harming the quality of family life and reflects male privilege.

Results (consequence two; condition three)

Partner problems. Seen as a second consequence of the NSPBM and machismo, its result is the erosion of bonds which is represented by separation and/or divorce.

Change process (consequence three; condition four)

Search for reasons to change. Starts with the erosion of bonds, which implies separation and/or divorce. This process implies motivation

(intrinsic and extrinsic), and consists of four: gratitude to the partner, as the need to show gratitude for the help and the support provided over the years; the search for Individual and interpersonal well-being (partner and children); reparation of the damage to the partner and children, which implies the urgency to repair emotional damage caused to the family; and personal growth/development (self-knowledge), expressed as the wish to be a better person.

Steps needed to achieve change. Begin with decision-making and problem-solving (of all that was fractured by the behaviors dictated in the norms of socialization as a man). The next step concerns the modification of drinking habits (preferably abstinence), followed by a process of training in emotion regulation skills and partner relationship skills, which will pave the way towards the result (consequence 4), which is the construction of adaptive bonds (relationships), forged from a solid base, and which will allow the satisfaction of the existing need for belonging, security, and protection (attachment). Table 3 offers examples of participants' quotations to illustrate the categories.

Table 3.
Participant's quotations.

Etiology (condition 1)

Need of belonging: "I got married because I wanted a family and those things that come with it, but I screwed it up"; "I remember my childhood with my father hitting my mother, its story taught me that alcohol was something to feel better because it really I never had a family".

- Normative socialization of being a man: "I told her, you know, men have rights that women do not have"; I spent many years thinking that for the simple fact that I am a man, I could do anything, and the worst is that I taught it to my sons".
- Machismo (chauvinism violence): "I told her, Well, but, you don't need anything, you have a house, money, you have a telephone, internet, color television, you have your children, that is, you have everything, you don't need anything, and, now I don't stop drink I'm not asking you for anything"; "I told her that she had no reason to complain to me because she had no right to anything, the only one who had rights there was me".

Behaviors (consequence 1; condition 2)

Emotional dysregulation (violence): "I exploded in anger ..., I broke this, the windows of the house"; "I used terrorism".

- Negligence: "I never had time for her or my children"; "[She always told me] that I left them at home".

Alcohol consumption: "With alcohol, I can say that I don't remember a single time when we have not fought"; "[Alcohol] led me to distance myself from my family".

- Health problems: "Because of the alcohol I'm starting to have health problems"; "I know my cirrhosis is a consequence of my alcoholism".

Lack of partner skills: "You stop communicating with your partner"; "I have never been able to talk to her properly because I get angry".

Money misuse: "I would arrive and tell her that I did not have any money"; "I have not given them what they [my family] need, what they want because of the alcohol".

Results (consequence 2; condition 3)

Partner problems: "Alcohol led me to distrust my wife"; "Whenever I drank there was violence towards my wife, and after that, I drank more."

- Erosion of bonds: "My wife once told me that she was going to leave me"; "It hurt me, no, it hurt me that she already left my side."

Change process (consequence 3; condition 4)

Reasons to change: "I don't want to lose my family"; "If we [my wife and I] are fine, so are our children".

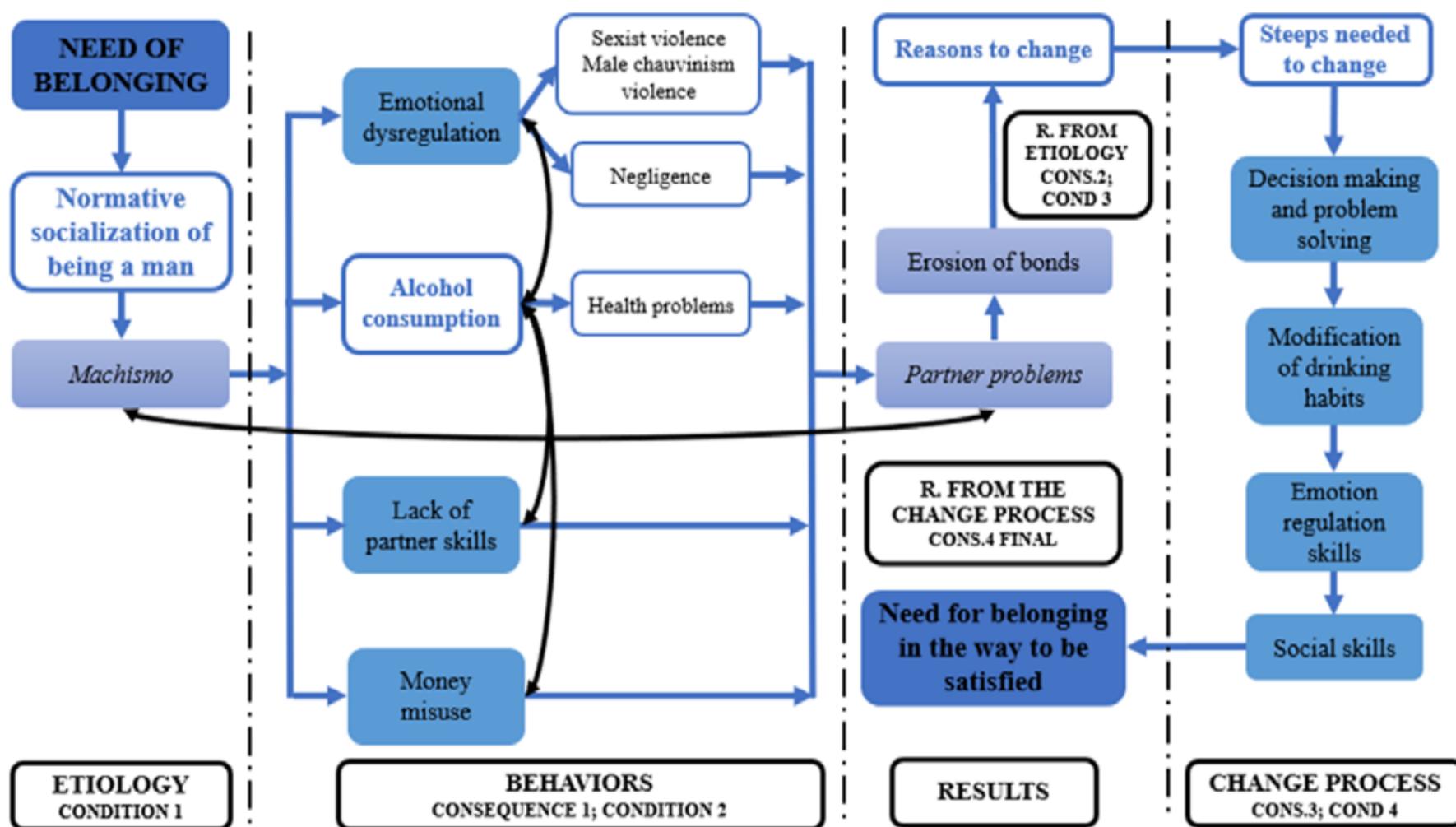
Steps needed to change

- Decision-making and problem-solving: "Not continue destroying my family"; "[To continue...] with my children, taking them for a walk, worrying about them".
- Modification of drinking habits: "Get alcohol out of my life"; "Realizing that alcohol was not doing me any good, that it hurt me for a long time, and that if I kept drinking, it was going to keep doing me harm".
- Emotion regulation skills: "To stop being violent"; "Learn to reduce anger".
- Social skills: "Communicating"; "Listening to my partner".

The theory derived from these categories explains that the male normative socialization process impedes the optimal satisfaction of the need for bonding, which results in the use of alcohol and violence toward partners as an ineffective path for the attempted attachment. The normative socialization of being a man is the origin of some couple problems. Alcohol consumption is a sexist behavior, arising from socially reinforced thinking about male entitlement, which facilitates the use of violence as a tool to maintain a position of power and control over others. In addition to this link between drinking and violence, there are other types of sexist behaviors, such as ineffective communication patterns, distrust and infidelity, lack of empathy, absence from home, lack of attention to the family, and misuse of money; these are derived from the privileged position of being a man, and result in a series of physical,

social, and emotional damages that can culminate in separation and/or divorce. This milestone gives rise in the man to a feeling of loneliness, vulnerability, and regret for past behavior, giving way to the intention to regain the family and initiate the process of change through the active search for help or support (clinical or religious). For the change to be effective, it is necessary to find and fix sources of intrinsic motivation (personal wellbeing) and extrinsic motivation (gratitude towards the partner, family wellbeing), which allow for starting the modification of drinking habits, a process supported by work of self-analysis and introspection, followed by the development of emotion regulation skills and social skills (family/partner coexistence), which might result in the recovery of the family and its wellbeing (see Figure 1 to get a visual explanation of it).

Figure 1. Diagram of the relationship established between the resulting categories.



Discussion

It is important to highlight that the results of this study are only applicable in Mexico (the context in which it was conducted), where the normative socialization of being a Mexican man imposed through machismo, is seen as the etiology of couple problems that result of the association between intimate partner violence and alcohol consumption.

According to the theory, every person is born with the need to form bonds that make him/her feel belonging, security, and protection (attachment), a need that Mexican men satisfy through their committed participation in the normative socialization process of being a man (NS-PBM). Paradoxically, this process represents the etiology of problems in relating/bonding in a parsimonious manner, because implies cognitive distortions related to sexist ideas and the legitimization of violence as a strategy for dealing with problems (Echeburúa et al., 2009; Rojas & Morales; 2020; Stefanile et al., 2021).

These distortions reflect chauvinistic violence, or machismo, which has four main tools: emotional dysregulation (ED), alcohol consumption (AC), lack of relationship skills (LRS), and money misuse (MM). NSPBM and machismo have been explained by other authors such as Eagly and Wood (1999, 2012), and Perrotte and Zamboanga (2021) as a social-gender role, which is assigned to men from birth and dictates the desired behavior; however, they do not clarify the specific characteristics of this role in each culture or social group. In this study, machismo is a code of behavior that includes peculiarities such as Sunday meetings to practice or watch soccer, accompanied by the excessive consumption of alcohol, which is not unique to Mexican men. Thus, it could be grouped within the theory of social role as a search for recreational spaces. Interestingly, while in other cultures it is usual for men to go to these recreation spaces without their families (Hernández, 2015), Mexicans usually do so in their company, exposing their children to the vicarious learning of maladaptive behaviors and in most cases, to violence.

Emotional dysregulation coincides with what has been raised by various authors and feminist models, regarding the role of poor emotional regulation and a history of early exposure to violence characterized

by guilt, shame, humiliation, and disempowerment (Celaya-Alston, 2000) as facilitators of the use of intimate partner violence (IPV), to dominate, control, devalue and disempower women (Babcock & Potthoff, 2021; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Grigorian et al., 2020; Klein & Schermer, 2015; Lee et al., 2020; Øverup et al., 2017; Pollard & Cantos, 2021; Soleymani et al., 2018; Stefanile et al., 2021), and it is used as a means of maintaining control and hierarchical power between genders (Dobash et al., 1992; García, 2015; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Ramírez, 2006; Valdez et al., 2006). IPV basis is patriarchy and below is the NSPBM, followed by the expectations of control and the triggering events that culminate in violence (García, 2015). In addition, it explains why IPV is expressed in a higher proportion in the male-female direction (Babcock & Potthoff, 2021; García-Moreno et al., 2013; Gondolf, 2011; Grigorian et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Mbilinyi et al., 2011; Pollard & Cantos, 2021; Tollefson & Phillips, 2015; Walker, 2015).

Alcohol consumption seen as a men's right coincides with what was reported by Ornelas et al., (2015), who said that Latino immigrants (mostly Mexicans) residing in the United States of America, generally drink on weekends as a reward for work effort made and mentioned that drinking helped them to reduce sadness and despair (translated into depression and anxiety), besides being an opportunity to relate to other men to feel stronger and more confident (Balagopal et al., 2022; Perrotte & Zamboanga, 2021). This may account for why alcohol consumption is more frequent and of greater quantity in men (Balagopal et al., 2022; Lindley et al., 2021; Villatoro et al., 2017), and why they go less frequently to the doctor and suffer more health problems (not only associated with drinking).

The lack of relationship skills refers to the inability to understand and empathize with the feelings and needs of the couple, which prevents establishing relationships in which both people feel loved, trusting, and secure. For its part, the misuse of money implies not paying attention to the economic needs of the family and diverting financial resources towards the exclusive benefit of the man, who allocates them mainly to the purchase of alcohol.

The four categories (results) coincide with what has been raised by various authors and allow us to add a fifth, F) Personal history/context, about disadvantageous contexts, genetic loads that predispose to violence, history of violence, family criticism, childhood education, pregnancy, the birth of a baby not of the expected sex, self-care and/or distorted thoughts (Celaya-Alston, 2000; Echeburúa, 2013; Echeburúa et al., 2009; Mbilinyi et al., 2011; Satyanarayana et al., 2016; Stewart et al., 2014; Tollefson & Phillips, 2015), and attachment and affection problems (Sygel et al., 2014), a category that fits with the spurious model too.

As a result of these behaviors coming from machismo, there appear partner problems. AC interacts with the other three results functioning at times as a condition and at other times as a result. Alcohol facilitates ED by provoking disinhibition and desfrontalization, which leads to IPV, and in turn, ED can result in AC as a (maladaptive) tool to deal with situations of ED. Like the other two categories, AC reduces the ability to relate/bond effectively because it impairs social skills; it also requires monetary investment, which impairs the economic quality of life of the family. Men may resort to drinking as a coping strategy when they have difficulties putting their social skills into practice and/or have problems related to their finances. AC reduces self-control, increasing couple problems and the frequency and intensity of IPV; then, when one partner consumes alcohol economic problems, those related to parenting, and infidelity grow, increasing tension and stressors that commonly lead to violent episodes, in addition, the belief that AC incites IPV encourages and justifies this behavior (Balagopal et al., 2022;

Mbilinyi et al., 2011; Perrotte & Zamboanga, 2021). This is consistent with the spurious model, on the relationship between AC and IPV; the third variable manifests itself as the NSPBM, which implies drinking and violence, but is not restricted to these, and includes LRS and MM. So, committed participation in the NSPBM implies machismo, expressed by ED, AC, LRS, and MM, which results in the erosion of the bonds that had been established.

Partner problems culminate in the erosion of bonds which implies separation and/or divorce marks the beginning of the change process, which starts with the establishment of the reasons for changing and introduces motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic). According to some authors (Easton et al., 2018; Soleymani et al., 2018), it is only one of the consequences experienced by men immersed in the NSPBM. The authors posit that among other outcomes are feelings of apathy, guilt, abandonment, work distraction, avoidance of children and close people, as well as violent behavior at work. In line with the current study, the point at which a man is forced by the request for divorce and/or separation to realize that the established bonds are eroded represents the key point at which he experiences separation anxiety (attachment, abrupt appearance of the need to bond), abandonment and fear.

Men who participated in this study discovered that the majority of their reasons to change were extrinsic, and understood the necessity to develop intrinsic reasons to step forward to change, this is in line with Ryan and Deci (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2008; Ryan, 1982; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008, 2020), who propose in their self-determination theory that intrinsic motivation is the main source of genuine change, understanding it as the natural inclination towards assimilation, achieving mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration, essential for cognitive and social development, which represent a main source of enjoyment and vitality as the main source of genuine change. Establishing a source of intrinsic motivation would help deal with the effect of abandonment and relapse, since people would be encouraged to change by themselves, given the advantages that change brings them, and not motivated by an external factor, which once it tends to be withdrawn, ends the motivation.

The second phase in the change process consists of taking the necessary steps to change or apply the change plan, which goes from being a purely cognitive phase to a behavioral one, to satisfy effectively, the need for belonging.

Limitations and future suggestions

While this study provides an innovative look into the experiences of adult males in a specific context in Mexico, the following limitations should be considered. First, the small sample size due to the tabu of partner violence limited the interest of men to talk about it and participate in this kind of research (Vargas-Huicochea et al., 2018). Second is the sample diversity, which is limited to males from a particular community; four men participate in Alcoholics Anonymous and thus have already acknowledged a need for change at least in drinking behavior. The female perspective, as receivers of intimate partner violence and as participants in the male socialization process was not evaluated and could shed further light upon the proposed substantive theory. Another limitation is the global pandemic context in which the study was conducted, In mid-2020, the Pan American Health Organization ([PAHO], 2020) warned that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we could estimate that the figures for violence would increase, an estimate

that was fulfilled, then, according to data from ENDIREH 2021 (INEGI, 2022), of the total number of women who experienced partner violence in the period from October 2020 to October 2021 (20.7%), 15.4% perceived that the problems began or increased during the health emergency. In this line, it would have been important to evaluate the violence expressed in a broader past time.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have implications for public policy and the design of interventions to address the important social problem of intimate partner violence. To achieve this, we need the participation of both the health and the political systems, to finance and promote the development of new interventions that consider what is described here, the problems derived from the normative socialization of manhood; as well as the creation of public policies aimed at visualizing the importance of this phenomenon and its treatment.

With these results as a base, we propose suggestions for future research; the first is to increase the sample size to strengthen affirmations derived from the results that can be applied to the population. Second, to consider homogeneous samples that would allow us to confirm or reject this substantive theory, to describe the mechanisms involved in the association between drinking and intimate partner violence in other groups. Third, to reproduce this research using other grounded theory designs (emergent and constructivist), to obtain wide and accurate explanations. Overall, grounded theory is a useful tool for explaining complex and tabu phenomena. Finally, we recommend including the perspective of men's partners as an external data source to incorporate their participation in interventions and offer them tools to confront violence. It is important to highlight that in México, despite public policies and legislation to attend to intimate partner violence such as the general law of access for women to a life free of violence (**Ley General de Acceso a las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia [LGAMVLV], 2023**), women who are victims of violence often do not report it for fear of reprisals against them or their children; and this phenomenon is present too in other countries.

Conclusions

We sought to understand the underpinnings of the relationship between alcohol use and intimate partner violence in Mexican men. The need to belong is something innate in the human being, this need is so strong that it can lead us to uncertain paths to be satisfied, paths such as the normative socialization of being a man, that come at a cost to the individual, the family, and society. The result, beyond being the satisfaction of the need for attachment, is the erosion of bonds, a situation that in fortunate cases leads to motivation for change, but in other less fortunate cases, is the beginning of self-destruction.

Conclusions highlight the importance of studying masculinities and the men who socialize under their imposed norms, before thinking of developing intervention or treatment programs under certain theoretical models and their respective techniques, and of considering the work in context, avoiding the search for patterns that generalize, group and label men within immovable categories. If we think in terms of analysis and understanding of the phenomenon of machismo or male chauvinism violence (sexist behaviors and thoughts in Mexican culture) derived from the normative socialization imposed on masculinities, instead of thinking in terms of labeling and prejudging the men involved in this system, we may come closer to the construction of couple relationships free of violence.

The theory presented here shows categories of behavior that generally match other theories, but that, specifically, help to glimpse peculiarities that require attention and consideration when the objective is this phenomenon with this population.

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