

HERRAMIENTAS PARA PREVENIR LA VIOLENCIA DE GÉNERO: IMPLICACIONES DE UN REGISTRO DIARIO DE SITUACIONES DE DESIGUALDAD DE GÉNERO

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Resumen

En El Salvador, la violencia contra las mujeres y los feminicidios son los problemas más graves que azotan el país. Aunque en los últimos años se han promovido algunos cambios legislativos y diferentes políticas públicas, la sensibilización y conciencia sobre las desigualdades de género en la sociedad en su conjunto han avanzado más lentamente que los cambios estructurales. Por esto, se hace urgente el diseño y la validación de programas de formación y prevención de violencia de género, así como el uso de herramientas útiles para la interiorización de estos cambios. En el presente trabajo se propone una herramienta de registro de situaciones cotidianas de desigualdad de género que fue empleada en un programa de prevención de violencia de género, cuya evaluación se hizo a través de un diseño cuasi-experimental (De Lemus, Navarro, Megías, Velásquez y Ryan, 2014), y que buscaba cumplir con el primero de sus objetivos: incrementar la conciencia sobre las desigualdades de género en la vida cotidiana. Se discuten los resultados cualitativos obtenidos a partir de dicha metodología basada en otros estudios (Becker y Swim, 2011) y al tenor de los resultados obtenidos en la aplicación del programa, con el fin de reducir las creencias sexistas y la discriminación de género.

Palabras clave: violencia de género, sexismo, registro, prevención, poder.

TOOLS FOR GENDER VIOLENCE PREVENTION: IMPLICATIONS OF KEEPING RECORDS OF EVERYDAY SITUATIONS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Abstract

Violence against women and feminicides are some of the most severe problems in El Salvador. During the last few years, some legislative changes as well as changes in matters of public policies have taken place; however, increasing sensitivity and awareness on gender inequality in society have not matched the structural changes. Given this context, the design and validation of violence prevention and promotion programs is mandatory, as well as the implementation of useful tools for the internalization of these changes. The main objective of this paper is to propose a tool for keeping records of everyday situations of gender inequality. This instrument has been already used in a gender-based violence prevention program (De Lemus, Navarro, Megías, Velásquez & Ryan, 2014, whose evaluation was done through a quasi-experimental design and sought to achieve one of its goals: to increase awareness on gender inequalities in everyday situations. Qualitative results of this methodology based on other studies (Becker and Swim, 2011) are discussed, with the aim of reducing the existing sexist beliefs and gender discrimination.

Key words: gender-based violence, sexism, recordkeeping, prevention, power.

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FERRAMENTAS PARA PREVENIR A VIOLÊNCIA DE GÊNERO: IMPLICAÇÕES DE UM REGISTRO DIÁRIO DE SITUAÇÕES DE DESIGUALDADE DE GÊNERO

Resumo

Em El Salvador, a violência contra as mulheres e os feminicídios são os problemas mais graves que afetam o país. Embora nos últimos anos tenham sido promovidas algumas mudanças legislativas e diferentes políticas públicas, a sensibilização e a consciência sobre as desigualdades de gênero na sociedade em seu conjunto têm avançado mais lentamente do que as mudanças estruturais. Por isso, fazem-se urgentes o desenho de programas de formação e prevenção de violência de gênero e a sua validação bem como o uso de ferramentas úteis para a interiorização dessas mudanças. Neste trabalho, propõe-se uma ferramenta de registro de situações cotidianas de desigualdade de gênero que foi empregada num programa de prevenção de violência de gênero, cuja avaliação se fez por meio de um desenho quase-experimental (De Lemus, Navarro, Megías, Velásquez e Ryan, 2014), que buscava cumprir com o primeiro de seus objetivos: aumentar a consciência sobre as desigualdades de gênero na vida cotidiana. Discutem-se os resultados qualitativos obtidos a partir dessa metodologia baseada em outros estudos (Becker e Swim, 2011) e de acordo com os resultados obtidos na aplicação do programa a fim de reduzir as crenças sexistas e a discriminação de gênero.

Palavras-chave: violência de gênero, sexismo, registro, prevenção, poder.

INTRODUCTION

In El Salvador, gender-based violence is one of the most extreme manifestations of inequality between men and women and has become one of the most severe problems of the country. With prevalence levels of abuse toward women around 50% (Navarro-Mantas, Velásquez & Megías, 2015; Fesal, 2008), El Salvador has been at the top of the worldwide figures for femicide for this period of time (Nowak, 2014). The patriarchy and *machista* cultures which are rooted in Salvadoran society, together with the situation of generalized violence that the country has suffered for decades, seem to be factors related to the tragedy that more than half of the female population suffer. Some studies have pointed to the rigid gender roles that the culture perpetuates, which support the “right” the husband has to “control” and “correct” his wife, giving him the authority to use violence against her (Buvinic, Morrison & Shifter, 1999; Hume, 2008). At the same time, women subordination is obvious regarding the use of public spaces in the cities; the “public woman” in El Salvador has a negative connotation, which puts her in a situation of greater risk and vulnerability outside the home and manifests itself through harassment, delinquency, abuse, or sexual aggression in the workplace, among others (Massolo, 2005).

There has been a lot of research work in social psychology which has analyzed the underlying processes of gender-based discrimination (Rudman & Glick, 2008; Swim & Hyers, 2009). Also, there are many gender-based violence prevention programs that have been carried out. Nevertheless, it is not very frequent that the people who carry out these studies are also involved in the design and validation of the programs, with a few notable exceptions

(to review please see: Becker & Swim, 2011; Kilmartin et al., 2008; Shields, Zawadzki & Johnson, 2011).

The Gender-based Power Model by Pratto & Walker (2004) is founded on the theory that gender inequality is a characteristic factor of groups’ domination in society (Pratto, 1996; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). According to the authors, there are four bases in which power inequality between men and women is supported: distribution of resources, social obligations, ideology, and strength. The *unequal distribution of resources* is produced either through obtaining and managing economic and material resources or by its relationship with the dichotomy between productive (paid) work and domestic (unpaid) work. Productive jobs are mainly performed by men, who usually hold better positions and earn better salaries than their female counterparts. Domestic work has been traditionally assigned to women because of their role as home and family caretakers. Another base of power inequality related to the latter is *social obligations*, such as education of children, household activities, care of the elderly or sick, care of the environment, of the community, etc. These tasks are necessary for the maintenance and functioning of families, communities and society in general. However, they are commonly carried out by women, are not paid and constitute severe limitations in terms of obtaining other economic or material resources, participation in social, political, economic activities and in decision-making processes. The *ideology* base serves to justify inequalities exposed in the two power bases described above. In this way, through beliefs, myths, stereotypes, and prejudices, a sexist ideology is built justifying discrimination based on gender. And finally, the power base that Pratto and Walker call *strength*, refers to physical, psychological and sexual violence against women, and control of women, which not only causes damage to them but also limits their power

since it weakens and hinders their ability to make decisions, obtain resources and even leave the violent relationship. Violence is used by men to maintain or recover power and produces this effect not only through violence itself but also through threats. While sexist ideology, control of resources and strength grant men more power over women, social obligations reduce the power that women have with respect to men. Pratto and Walker (2004) show that the four bases maintain a dynamic relationship between them. Because of this, in order for efforts to reduce inequality of power between genders succeed, it is necessary to generate a change within these four bases. On the other hand, many studies in social psychology conducted in the last few years empirically support the theory of sexual ambivalence formulated by Glick and Fiske (1996; 2001). These authors speak about a subtle sexism disguised by attitudes that appear to be in favor of women but that in reality persecute in the same way with discrimination and inequality. Ambivalent sexism is made up of two components, clearly differentiated but related to each other: hostile sexism, which is a negative attitude toward women, and benevolent sexism, characterized by a series of positive attitudes toward the female gender. This latter includes affection, protection, search for intimacy, but not without being sexist, since it maintains female stereotypes and limits women to certain roles, while displaying behavior that is interpreted as prosocial or “chivalrous”. Just as Moya, Páez, Glick, Sedano, and Poeschl (1997) state that both types of sexism, hostile and benevolent, are founded on the basis that men possess structural control of economic, legal, and political institutions and that women have command of “dyadic power” which is what comes from the dependence of the relationship between two people. Within this dyadic power, benevolent sexism is observed when men protect women as wives and mothers, idealizing them as love objects and assigning them the care of house and family. These forms of discrimination have been evolving in such a way that, as Expósito, Moya and Glick (1998) state, actually hostile sexism can be barely seen in western, developed societies, and benevolent sexism has become the most common form of discrimination in those countries, whereas in El Salvador hostile sexism continues to be present and manifesting itself with extreme harshness.

Regarding the design of intervention programs, Jackman (1994) considers that in order to reduce gender-based prejudice, inter-group contact is not enough. Becker and Swim (2001) consider that the fact that men and women are not conscious of the occurrence of sexist situations in daily life, it brings as a consequence, the maintenance of those sexist attitudes. It seems to be that identifying sexism in the lives of others is very simple while doing the same

for one’s own life is more complicated. This maybe so because as Swim, Scott, Sechrist, Campbell and Stangor (2003) have stated, the true reason underlying this behavior is still unknown. Swim, Hyers, Cohen and Ferguson (2001) corroborated that women who were trained to identify benevolent sexism, directed their attention to daily sexist behaviors, raising their awareness level with regard to sexism. Other studies have demonstrated that this can result in a rejection of such beliefs and the impact seems to be higher in women than in men (Becker and Swim, 2011). In the case of El Salvador, although hostile sexism is very frequent, there are important boundaries to the building of sensitivity and awareness about gender inequalities that limit the advancement. Therefore, it was considered useful to have an instrument that could enable, through training in perception of these inequalities, to raise awareness among the participants regarding different types of discrimination, violence, and gender inequality that they experience in their daily lives.

This paper presents the qualitative results obtained from the implementation of a technique of daily documentation of gender inequality situations in everyday life. Based on the methodology described by Becker and Swin (2011) and taking as a reference the “Model of the Bases of Power” by Pratto and Walker (2004), a tool was designed to identify situations of gender-based inequality of daily life on a daily basis. This was applied on the gender-based violence prevention program which was developed in El Salvador and was also implemented in other countries like Argentina and Spain (De Lemus et al., 2014). A quasi-experimental design was used in which the program (i.e., participation in the workshop) was the intervention and involved a randomly selected control group that received other information. The objectives of the research were: a) increase awareness about situations of gender inequality that are experienced in daily life; b) reduce sexist ideologies (ambivalent sexism, gender stereotypes, traditional masculinity and homophobia); c) provide useful tools to the participants with the goal of reducing sexism, sexual violence, and homophobic attitudes in social interventions. The impact of the program was measured by a pre, post and 6 months post evaluation. Results showed the effectiveness on the group trained with the program, mainly regarding a change in hostile and benevolent sexists attitudes, as well as a change in homophobic attitudes, perception of gender-based violence, the traditional masculine role and beliefs justifying the system (De Lemus et al.; Navarro-Mantas, 2013). In order to meet the first of the above objectives, the documentation technique was implemented and this paper shows the qualitative results obtained that describe the beliefs and experiences of gender inequality present

in the Salvadoran daily life, the differences of perception between men and women, and the evolution such perception showed along the development of the program.

METHOD

Design

Perception training and documentation of inequality situations were carried out throughout the course of the gender-based violence program, using a quasi-experimental design with a control group and comparison groups by sex. Nevertheless, the technique presented in this paper was applied only to the experimental group.

Participants

The participants were a group of undergraduate Psychology students at the *Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador* who had not yet specialized in a particular area. The total sample was comprised of 40 students; 14 men and 26 women between the ages of 23-66 ($M=32.83$; $SD=9.64$).

Instrument

The participants in the prevention program filled-out a "Documentation of Situations of Gender Inequality" designed by the research group, taking as a reference point the recent studies by Becker and Swim (2011). It consisted of a form with various columns. In the first column, the participants had to describe the inequality situations that they had observed in the days previous to the session, regardless of whether these were personal experiences or experiences observed in others. Then, they had to classify each of these experiences, signalling with an "X" in one of the next four columns, indicating if it corresponded to an unequal situation due to resources, social obligations, ideology, or strength/violence (referring to gender-based violence). These options are in accordance with the four bases of power explained by Pratto and Walker (2004). Finally, in the last column, they had to judge the level of severity of each episode of inequality that they had documented, within a range from 1 to 7, where 1 was not serious and 7 was very serious, according to their own criteria.

Procedure

The program lasted for 21 hours and was carried out in six sessions of three hours each. The Model of Power and Gender by Pratto and Walker (2004) was the theoretical foundation for designing the structure of the course contents, which was also founded on social psychology research in this area. The "ideology" component was based on the theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1996). The themes

included were: gender and social construction, resources and social duties, ambivalent sexism theory, masculinity, homophobia and gender-based violence. In the first session of the prevention program, participants were asked to document personal experiences or those observed in other people about discrimination and inequality in their daily lives. The form designed for this purpose was distributed among them. These experiences should be classified in one of the four bases of power described previously, which became better understood as the program progressed. These documentation questionnaires were anonymous and for this reason participants were asked to write down a code name designed with the second maternal last name and their date of birth. All of the sessions began with sharing and debating over the experiences that the participants voluntarily shared and at the end of the gatherings, the documentation questionnaires were collected for analysis.

RESULTS

The results presented below correspond to a mainly descriptive analysis of the data collected in the documentation questionnaires on situations of gender inequality. Firstly, the results of the quantitative analysis are presented with respect to the number of experiences documented, the severity attributed to those experiences and the types of events. Secondly, a qualitative analysis about the content of those experiences, based on the four power bases described by Pratto and Walker (2004) was carried out.

In total, 506 experiences of inequality were documented and classified according to the four gender power bases, proposed by Pratto and Walker (2004). A first quantitative analysis showed that the majority of experiences were recorded after the first session, with an average of four experiences per person, which decreased in the following sessions. Women documented an average of experiences slightly higher than that of men throughout the program. In relation to the severity attributed to these experiences, all averages were high, located over 5, both for men and women, with a maximum level of 7 as the most severe. Nevertheless, aside from the first session where men assessed events with higher severity than women, these in general, attributed more severity to the reported situations, in many cases with the highest level of severity. According to the four bases of Pratto and Walker (2004), the highest percentage of experiences documented was classified under the ideology base. These were followed in frequency by experiences documented under the "strength" or violence base. The lowest percentages of documented experiences were those of social obligation and distribution of resources.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the analysis by sex and session showed that the majority of experiences were documented by women, with a higher percentage categorized under the ideology and strength/violence bases.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the comparison of severity averages by sex, attributed to each power base, showed that

men assigned more severity to the experiences of inequality based on the distribution of resources and strength, whereas women, on their part, showed higher severity averages in experiences based on ideology and strength/violence. Both men and women presented lower levels of severity in experiences related to the social obligation base.

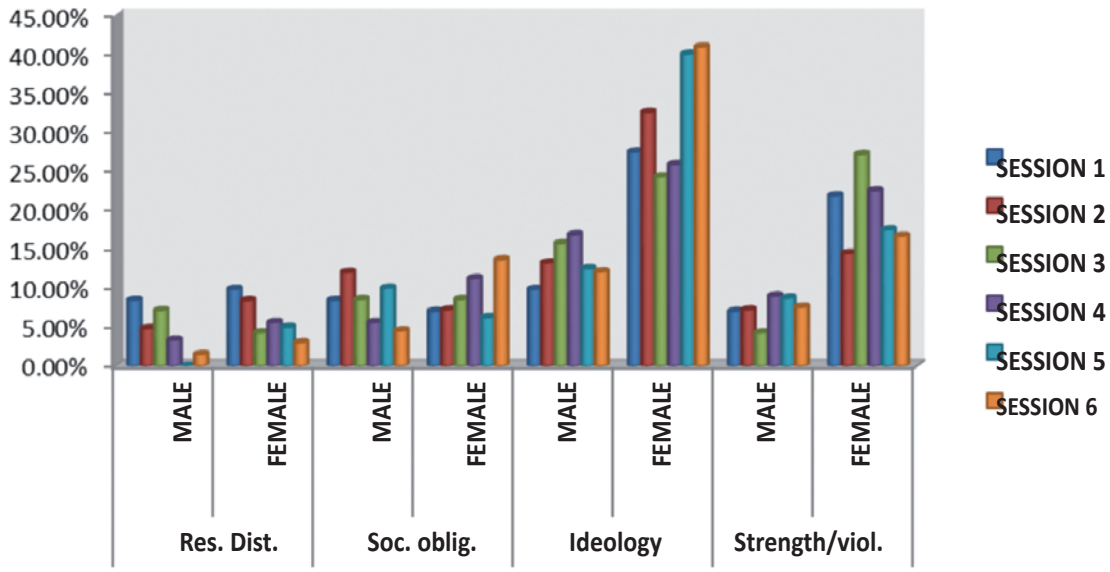


Figure 1. Percentage of situations of gender inequality observed according to the power base theory by Pratto and Walker (2004), by session and sex.

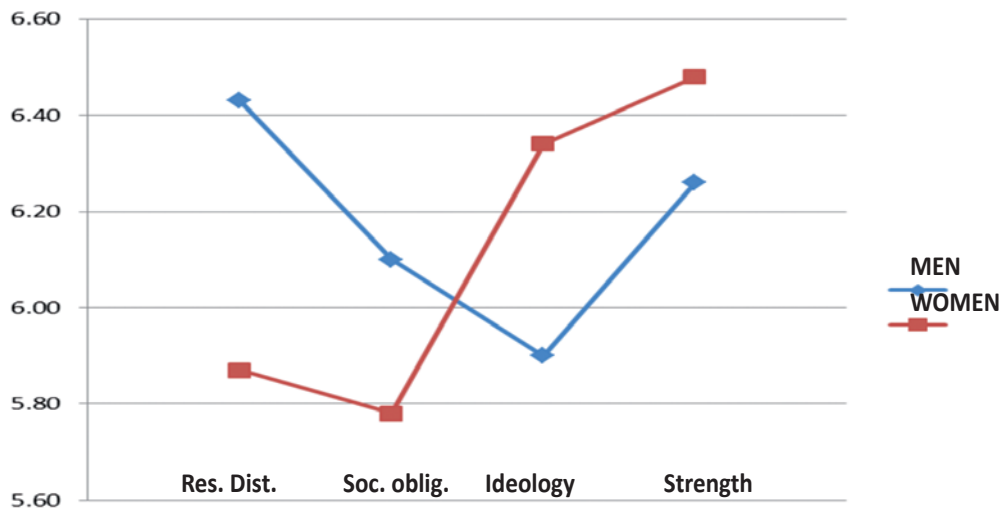


Figure 2. Measures of estimated severity, by sex, of the experiences analyzed according to the power base theory by Pratto and Walker (2004)

Each of the documentation questionnaires was analyzed, identifying the context where the experiences took place: public or private. 52.77% of the experiences reported occurred in the private sphere, that is to say, mainly in the context of family or couple, without meaning that it necessarily occurred within the home. The most frequent were situations of discrimination or violence against women by the partner, although there were also other events documented where the perpetrator was the mother, father, sibling, among other family members. 47.3% of the experiences documented occurred in public contexts including the community, media, the workplace, etc. In relation to the socializing agents, that is to say, the contexts where these experiences are produced or influenced, it is possible to identify the family, the type of education (formal and informal) –also including culture and tradition in this category–; the workplace, the media and the church. The most frequent socializing agent, with 56.67% of experiences was the family, followed by education (19.15%), and the workplace with 18.96% of the cases. Even though the church has an important influence in El Salvador, only .97% of the experiences described had to do with this socializing agent. In relation to the situations that the program participants detected in themselves or in others, the majority of experiences were observed in other women, with 79.6% of the cases, followed by situations experienced by the female participants personally with 21.3%. In line with what Swim et al., (2003) demonstrated with respect to the difficulty of identifying prejudice based on gender in personal experiences, the documented episodes were analyzed by session with the goal of verifying if the training with the “documentation questionnaire” and the program influenced women to recognize more personal experiences. In this sense there was a slight increase in personal experiences documented by the female participants as the program advanced, going from 8.55% in the first session to 22.58% personal experiences documented in the last one. However, in every session the situations observed in other women were more frequent.

A content analysis was carried out about the documented experiences by organizing the information according to the four power bases by Pratto and Walker (2004) and, taking for this paper, textual examples that illustrate some of these situations. Because of space, the results are not presented in their totality and only some of the most representative examples of all of the documented experiences were selected. With respect to the distribution of resources power base (Pratto and Walker, 2004), the documented experiences occurred in diverse scenarios. One participant commented: “A neighbor doesn’t let his wife work outside the home and requires her to finish all of the housework. And he assaults and insults her because he has to support

her economically”. In this case, obstruction is shown by the partner with respect to access to resources on the part of women, which in turn, increases the vulnerability of women to become victims of violence. In the work context, the unequal distribution of resources is reflected in the vertical and horizontal segregation of jobs based on sex. There are “feminized” jobs, for example, those in the services and elementary education sector, among others, which have lower salaries and less prestige. These are mainly held by women because of their relationship with the traditional feminine role of caretaking. As one participant commented: “One of my female friends, who is an architect, even though she meets all of the job requirements, she’s not offered any greater opportunities because those spaces are reserved for men”. Generally, men gain power over women because of the discrimination women suffer as they try to enter into certain professions and encounter limitations to attain higher positions or salaries, a condition also called the “glass ceiling”. Another participant commented: “When a neighbor of mine was hired for a job, her salary was lower than the one they were paying the man who held the job before her”.

With respect to the unequal distribution of resources, this power base is supported on social obligations. Many of the examples reported associated with this power base referred to the unequal distribution of house chores: “My husband demands that I have everything in order in the house but he doesn’t help me” or “My uncle asked me to bring him coffee, but I was busy and could not serve him the coffee. My aunt scolded me and told me that I had to serve men.” In these examples, the socializing agent is the family or the partner, who demand women to fulfill social obligations and furthermore, to serve and provide attention to men. On the other hand, this very division of roles implies that on many occasions, men are denied the opportunity to perform those tasks. This social obligation makes it difficult for women to carry out other work that could provide them with income and power. One participant reported: “I have observed that my brother-in-law is constantly threatening his wife because (...) since she started to work she no longer obeys him, and she has changed a lot since now she no longer gives him the same attention that she used to.”

The allocation of roles goes beyond the borders of the private, leaving evidence of acceptance of these roles in other environments such as the workplace: “In my company there is a married couple who work together, but when one of their kids gets sick, she is always the one who asks for permission to take them to the doctor”. This suggests a case in which the assigned roles socially facilitate -with more probability- the promotion of the husband’s work rather than the wife’s, thus limiting her in terms of getting resources. At

the same time, very often, examples of this kind are called the “double work shift” referring to women who frequently arrive home to do domestic work after a workday of paid work, which duplicates their work and responsibilities, affecting their health, wellbeing and capacity to promote and obtain other types of resources. Such mandates arise not only within the family, but rather are reinforced culturally with beliefs such as: “I heard that a politician said: ‘Women to the kitchen!’”. Or television advertisements that were frequently mentioned in the documentation questionnaires as reproducing these roles, showing women in the kitchen or performing domestic chores, and men in work environments and making decisions, constituting the institutional, political and social structures. The media are, therefore, active players in the public scope of this division between productive and domestic work.

On the other hand, the ideology functions as a support and justification for the power bases described previously. These kinds of examples were the most commonly reported, mainly by women, providing evidence of the important role that the sexist ideology plays in the subordination of Salvadoran women. One of the participants commented: “In a school they look for male sports teachers and not female because women are considered physically weak”, referring to a prejudice based in the supposed physical inferiority of women. The consequence of this belief is the horizontal segregation of work and occurs because of the discrimination in the public sphere. This particular socializing agent is the formal educational system. Benevolent sexism attributes certain characteristics to women based solely on the fact that they are women, which limits them to traditional roles. Messages of this type are spread by different sources: “One TV personality asserts that women are here to maintain the balance in the home and be responsible for the kids’ education”. Nevertheless, participants reported many examples of hostile sexism against women based in a supposed intellectual inferiority. This can be seen in this next example: “The boss of one of my friends humiliates her in front of all of her coworkers...he always yells at her, since he doesn’t like women holding that particular job because he says they are useless”. This supposed physical and intellectual inferiority of women is part of the hostile sexism that is still very ingrained in Salvadoran culture. The sexist ideology also exercises an important influence in the distribution of public and private spaces through leisure and free time. One participant said, that the mother of a girl who enjoys playing soccer would tell her: “Look at you, as if you were a boy! Don’t you see that this is for men?” In this example, there is also an imposition of a gender identity that forces both men as women to keep themselves within those rigid established stereotypes. This resistance against

transgression of the social mandates frequently manifests itself also in the form of discrimination against men who do not follow the traditional male roles: “Some parents forbid their sons to wear pink shirts since they believe that only girls wear pink”. This is an example of a culture that often manifests aversion also towards people with different sexual orientation, which is considered a threat to the hegemonic masculinity. Examples of this type of discrimination are reported too: “I have observed that at the university, there is very low tolerance for homosexuals, who are always left apart and ridiculed.”

Violence against women is used to maintain and reestablish the power inequality imposed and is one of the most severe problems in El Salvador. The documented gender-based violence experiences show the severity under which women suffer in many homes. One participant shared the following experience: “Two women were talking about their husbands and one said that her husband had punched her in the eye for not having ironed his shirt, and the other responded: “Maybe I should leave right now just in case my husband decides to do something like that to me!” Violence against women in El Salvador has become so normal, that it is still considered the husband’s right to “punish” and “correct” his wife, using it to exercise control over her. An example of this is the following: “There is a couple in a rural area, the husband goes out to enjoy himself, hangs out with friends, but he doesn’t bring his wife along because he says that she needs to be at home and also that it is very dangerous to be out at that time of night. Because of this they argue and he gets to the point of hitting her.” Many of the documented examples had to do with intimate partner violence, which occurs in the private sphere. However, since it has been naturalized, it happens that, like in this case, it is eventually shared publicly or even exposed to other people, such as in this example: “A couple in the street, and he says to his girlfriend: “you’re such an idiot, it is your fault we got lost!”. Psychological violence and disqualification also appear on many occasions as a tool to control and abuse: “A friend argued with his girlfriend and he asked me for advice. I asked him why they were arguing and he said it was because she wanted to put on a really short skirt and that only sluts wear those...” Insults, the sense of women as property, and the control over their bodies are very common events that occur both in public and private spheres. The different socializing agents (family, education, church, media, etc) are constantly sending messages that reinforce this vulnerability. This reality is so strong that harassment and sexual aggression frequently appear in public Salvadoran spaces as a form of social control over women that is very much related to the hostile sexist ideology whereby women continue being treated as

sexual objects at the service of men. Examples of this kind were recorded with alarming frequency: “Today something horrible happened to me. I was waiting for the bus to go to work when a man walked up to me and touched my butt, and started to say obscene things to me. It is awful that a woman has to live these situations in the street!” Society in general is frequently in complicity regarding this type of sexual violence, since it allows maintaining the *status quo* of gender inequality. One example of institutional violence is the lack of supportive policies that make it easy for public functionaries to get away with sexual harassment and aggression against their female coworkers. Institutional violence also takes place regarding the lack of sanctions in companies when denying women their fundamental right to maternity. “In a service company so far this year they have fired two women after those women took maternity leave, and they have hired men to replace them because men aren’t going to take so much leave of absence so frequently.” Salvadoran women experience violence at all ages and in many environments throughout their lives. They are treated as second-class citizens from the moment they are born, or this is shown by the lack of support and understanding in situations of mistreatment: “The young woman says to her mom, “Mom, I am going to leave Manuel. I can’t take any more mistreatment or any more of the indifference he shows towards me.” And the mom responds: “Look, daughter, the important thing is that he gives you the money to cover your own and your son’s expenses. Everything else, you just have to deal with it! Who forced you to be with him? So now, you have no other options. I do not want you back in my home!”

DISCUSSION

The observation training and the documenting of situations of inequality and gender-based discrimination led to raising awareness and understanding of a large range of daily situations which otherwise would have probably contributed to the naturalizing of this severe phenomenon. The observation and documentation of these types of experiences led the participants to have a more personal understanding of the gender-based discrimination that permeates Salvadoran society. The greater impact occurred in women; however, men also experienced a gradual process of acknowledging this discrimination in their own lives. The fact that both men and women documented more experiences based on strength/violence and ideology than others based on distribution of resources and social obligations leads to think that maybe the analysis of this social problem continues to be superficial, giving less importance to the social and

power structures which build and support these problems. These qualitative results offer, at the same time, a more accurate picture of the lives of women and the Salvadoran reality. Furthermore, the figures are strongly supported by the quantitative figures obtained in the main investigation that frames this study. The quasi-experimental design, with a control group, that was carried out with the application of the prevention program and the documentation tool (De Lemus et al., 2014), showed a reduction in sexist beliefs. Particularly, this reduction was more significant in hostile sexist beliefs, although there was also a reduction in benevolent sexist beliefs when compared to the control group. There was also a change in homophobic attitudes and beliefs regarding the traditional rigid masculine roles. These findings coincide also with the results obtained in the study by Becker and Swim (2011), in which the attention to daily sexist experiences led to a reduction of ambivalent sexist beliefs. Likewise, after the program, there was a significant decrease in the perception of blame attributed to the victims of violence against women (De Lemus et al., 2014) and an increase in the perception of blame placed on the aggressor, since these were the experiences most commonly documented and the most severely rated. Therefore, the specific training in prevention of gender inequality and violence against women, just as the instrument for documenting situations of gender inequality in daily life, seem to be effective tools to reduce sexist attitudes and advance towards social change (Becker and Swim, 2011; De Lemus et al., 2014; Swim et al., 2001).

Nevertheless, many of the results in the De Lemus et al. (2014) study were only significant for women, coinciding with the qualitative results of the present work where it can be observed that women were those who experienced a greater impact from the program considering the fact that they documented more experiences and attributed more severity to them. Such an effect may be due to women having a higher willingness to learn about this content, considering they are the most affected by situations of inequality, but also to a greater resistance from men who lacked awareness and refused to give up power and privileges that perpetuate inequality. Despite this, the average documented experiences were high for men as well as for women and this fact should be regarded as a positive result. In this respect, Pesacor (2010) states that it is important to value the trend showing more men interested in social changes with a view towards building more egalitarian societies, especially since the traditional gender roles harm men and their personal development. In fact, it can be appreciated that in some of the examples described above, various men denounced the discrimination they suffered when they did not perform the traditional masculine gender role socially accepted, which

could be used in interventions programs as an important source of motivation to create change. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that in the first session men were the ones who reported more experiences and attributed more severity to them, compared to women. These results are consistent with those found in the De Lemus et al. (2014) study, where after the participants had been exposed to some fictional episodes of physical, psychological and sexual violence, the pre-evaluation showed that women, more often than men, found ways to blame the female victims of violence and were less focused on the aggressors. This tendency was reversed in the post-evaluation, thus showing greater impact thereof on female participants but also an initial resistance to acknowledge gender-based discrimination and violence, probably as a defense mechanism against a situation that could be happening to those women themselves. In any case, both men and women reported more experiences in the first session than in those that followed, which is a paradoxically opposite result to what was expected after applying a training program intended to sharpen the perception of sexist episodes. This outcome could be due to what Swim et al., (2003) found in their studies in relation to a greater difficulty in identifying experiences of gender-based discrimination in a person's own life. This would require a sensitization process to start to self-observe themselves and personalize these experiences. The qualitative analysis demonstrated that the majority of documented experiences were not experienced by the participants themselves, and in many cases, were not even observed, but were rather a product of a personal reflection which continued to evolve in the following sessions.

According to Rocha and Cruz (2013), the unequal distribution of resources, which makes it difficult for women to reach economic autonomy is something imposed by a structural barrier and a subjectivity in gender organization that divides spaces, assigns different tasks and attaches an uneven value to the public and private spheres. Women occupy less directive positions and therefore manage fewer resources and access jobs with lower payment and little social prestige (PNUD, 2011). In the Rocha and Cruz (2013) study, it can be observed, through women's personal testimonies, that the social obligations of looking after family and children, in many cases make it very difficult for them to get a promotion at work, and inadvertently also force them on occasions to give up their professional development. Many examples of this aspect were documented in this study; nevertheless, the social obligations category was in general attributed the lowest severity, both by women and men, even though, according to Pratto and Walker (2004), it is the power base that most hinders women's access to resources. This datum leads to think that domestic

unpaid work, pertaining mainly to women is very socially accepted, and this can represent obstacles in training and sensitization processes. On the other hand, it is positive that women were the ones who most frequently documented these episodes, especially regarding ideology and gender-based violence. However, the fact that they attributed less severity to these experiences of resource distribution and social obligations, could be due to the fact that they do not associate them with the cause of inequality, discrimination, and gender-based violence that they suffer, and maybe this constitutes an aspect that must be taken into account when intervention takes place. On the contrary, men attributed more severity to the episodes of resources distribution and strength, which could be interpreted as a liberation from their responsibility in social change, since their ideology and the unequal distribution of social obligations are gender power bases that are deeply rooted in social norms and that all families tend to have in common. Men could feel less responsible for the violence of other men or for other sexist organizations in the workplace, and therefore they attributed more severity to those facts. Consequently, it is necessary to involve more men in these interventions, make them aware of their responsibility and their potential to create change, abandoning their role of mere spectators in questions of gender and adopting a most active position in these educational processes.

Regarding the results described above, gender equality was promoted in the program as a common goal for both men and women, legally supported by institutions, in line with Allport's work (1954) about the optimal conditions of contact between groups. This meant that both men and women engaged themselves with very similar results regarding quantity and level of severity of the documented experiences, although gender differences that influenced some themes and concrete methodologies ought to be taken into account. At the same time, the intersection of gender and national identity has been generously portrayed through this qualitative analysis illustrating the idiosyncrasy of the country in terms of its patriarchal culture, customs and beliefs. This information is very valuable and must be taken into account for the design of intervention programs. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is necessary to continue working along these lines, by applying gender-based violence prevention programs equipped with tools that will have a potential impact in raising awareness and sensitizing (De Lemus et al., 2014). At the same time, both the content of these programs and the emphasis of the subjects covered by them should be adapted to the specific culture of each country. Also, carrying out qualitative analysis similar to the one presented here will facilitate social change and create a real reduction of sexism and of the alarming levels

of violence against women that are currently registered in El Salvador.

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