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**THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SURVEY**

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**I. Background**

1. In the course of the past three decades, a growing understanding has emerged that there are many forms of violence in our countries that are not very well understood and known because they have traditionally remained outside the discourse of law enforcement. Violence here may be defined as any behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens, attempts to inflict, or does cause physical, sexual or psychological harm to others or to themselves. This is indeed a broad definition, and obviously not measured adequately by any existing information source. Why this is a relevant observation is because violence and its potential has a massive impact on the quality of life; a welfare society is, or should be, responsible for coping with such a problem.

**II. Definitions**

2. Speaking of domestic violence, one question is whether we should stick to a broad or a narrow concept of violence. A narrow concept might only comprise serious assaults, or perhaps even only killings, whereas a broad concept would encompass sexual harassment and assault, mobbing, physical

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violence, psychological violence, restrictions of liberty; and, indeed, exploitative phenomena such as trafficking in human beings. Those who prefer simplicity of measurement would probably also prefer a narrow definition, whereas those who choose the broad definition would face a much more difficult task.

3. In general terms, domestic violence (DV in the following) is a problematic concept. It has often been used as a synonym for wife-beating. However, it has often been also used to cover child abuse, situations where (adult) children assault or abuse their (elderly) parents, and some other constellations as well. In more recent literature, the discussion is often not about DV but of male violence against women (MVAW in the following).

4. Male violence against women will mean quite a different target than domestic violence as the first encompasses even such events as workplace violence or sexual harassment in public places etc. So, it is quite important to be clear about which aspect we are dealing with.

5. It has been understood over time that each of these (domestic violence, violence against women and its subcategories) are indeed to a degree separate - albeit that they are often inter-linked - phenomena that in practice, for preventive purposes but also analytically, are to be targeted separately. 1) The analytic point is, as the framework of analysis is extended to encompass assailant, victim, and the situational framework, i.e. all three logical elements of a violent encounter (largely equivalent to violent crime in the penal code), quite self-evident. 2) Similarly, the interventionist pragmatic crime-policy/ crime prevention approach has made this obvious: to study each of these three aspects of different kinds of violent encounters will reveal partly different characteristics of the target phenomenon which in turn will then require partly different kinds of - tailor-made - interventions.

6. I'll explain. A violent encounter may be deconstructed as being explained by three independent elements: 1) there must be a motivated and able offender, or the potential perpetrator. 2) there must be a suitable target, or the potential victim. As these two elements coincide, an incident of violence is possible. However, often nothing happens even if these two preconditions are fulfilled. This is because 3) there also must be a lack of capable guardians (cf. Felson 1996), or a lack of able and effective control.

7. Individual incidents, groups of incidents, and macro-level changes may all be analysed by making use of this conceptual framework. The three elements may grow or shrink, and overlap to variable degrees, and such changes will explain many actual changes in the crime situation.

Figure 1. The logical elements of criminal incidents

Motivated offender	inter- action	Target/victim
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Control

8. Only when all three preconditions are met, then a violent encounter will take place. Whether the consequences of such an encounter will then be fatal or merely risky depends very much on situational features of the encounter, i.e. this is mostly determined only after the situation has been created, and steered by the interactive process itself.

9. Analysing different types of violent encounters reveals easily that different constellations of motive, target and control are in the play in different cases. A rape between acquaintances comes about in a different framework than a rape in the park. Or a regularly repeated/ recurring incident of partner abuse after a drinking night again is determined differently from a drinking group killing among friends. Or a fight with a pub waiter or a security officer follows a different logic than a bar-room brawl between bar patrons.

10. To return to the question of DV vs. VAW, there is a major conceptual leap from "domestic violence" to "male violence against women": in the analysis of the three logical preconditions of the violent event, many features of the phenomenon are quite different in these two categories, as noted above. The scope of DV is quite different from the one of VAW. I am, nevertheless, discussing both more or less at the same time.

11. As may be understood, comparative empirical results of either phenomenon are difficult to present as there still are great differences in awareness and understanding of the phenomenon. The international debate and research are still on a level of increasing awareness-raising and "politicisation". The present state of the art is that there are no very useful conventional data, but some more recent data exist, albeit that they are not able to answer the question very accurately. What indeed is available today are results from victim surveys. Before turning to these, a brief overview of possible data sources will be given.

### **III. How to measure: What data**

12. As a matter of fact, the available data sources are scarce, the ICVS being perhaps the most representative one.

13. Data sources are inconsistent, incomplete and biased, and do typically not correspond to the term DV. Instead, there are a number of sources that illuminate one or the other aspect, nothing comprehensive.

#### **III a. Authority working files/ registers**

14. Studies of the impact of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation (to name but a few) have expanded our understanding of violence. These studies have led to questions about the adequacy of criminal statistics in capturing the true dimensions of violence as so much of it remains outside of the domain of criminal justice. Information stemming from police statistics, moreover, has the effect of treating all violence as if it had similar meanings, motivations and impacts. This is further complicated because most violence – regardless of its meaning and motivation – is not reported to the police. The traditional way violence is studied leads to a fragmented understanding of the overall impact of violence on social groups. There is not much recognition in the conventionally available information of the ways in which the meanings and forms of violence may differ, or have similarities. Nor is there any exploration why some forms of violence may arise in one historical or geographical context and not in another, within one country or countries and not others.

15. The most conventional source on DV/VAW is restricted to killings recorded in police statistics and in cause-of-death statistics. It is rather exceptional that killed children and partners/ spouses would in our societies remain unrecorded - albeit that this is not so self-evident everywhere and in all cases.

However, children killed by their parents remain more easily mis-classified. Similarly, cultural differences are behind the problem that some types of killings (for instance, so-called honour murders) are actively concealed or classified as something else than homicides. Also, some cultures would tend to misclassify some homicides as suicides and some types of suicides and some homicides as accidents, and so on. Nevertheless these sources are relatively stable and uniform in standard situations. WHO cause-of-death statistics mostly give a larger figure than those provided by police records.

16. A more comprehensive source of violence are the assaults and rapes etc recorded by the police. This type of source covers also less serious cases, thus being much more representative than those only comprising homicides. However, it has been shown that the dark number (i.e., unrecorded cases) is quite large, in particular for example in MVAW and sexual incidents. Recording practices also differ much across countries, seriously hampering any serious comparisons of authority data.

17. A typical further data source that has served as a kind of signal of the existence and the extent of DV, child abuse, partner violence (and other phenomena with a high dark figure such as police violence) have been hospital sources. A more specific source for DV/MVAW are shelters (only after such institutions have become established as a result of extensive awareness-raising and campaigning). Sources of this kind provide data on patients or clients. Their strength is that they represent real and serious cases, and quite a lot of cases that have not been reported to the police. This, however is at the same time their weakness: a clear lack of statistical representativity and a corresponding bias, meaning that even this kind of sources cannot provide an overall picture of the problem/ phenomenon. Such sources are also usually designed for other purposes, and are therefore often unable to identify relevant cases that in fact fulfil the search criteria - the classifications applied are often not referring to "violence" in an explicit and uniform fashion. Furthermore, such data sources do not comprise many cases that have been reported to the police.

18. Below, these data sources are discussed one by one.

- Hospital data, shelter data, special authority studies

- contents: Patient data have been used to provide knowledge of who are the violence patients, under what circumstances they have become victims, what kind of injuries they have suffered.
- strength: This sort of sources are able to provide some information of the problem. The cases found in such sources are often different and more numerous compared to those found in police sources.
- weakness: Such data are still very selective and biased. For example incomes, the ability and courage to come for treatment or other kinds of help, and the availability of help services are serious sources of bias. Also, data of helping agencies are often not collected and classified in a manner that would facilitate their use for analysing specific types of violence or, indeed, any kind of violence as the epicrise and the diagnosis often fail to identify interpersonal violence. For international comparisons of violence rates, these types of data are highly problematic as they depend primarily on the volume and kind of services available.

- Police data on assaults, rapes, homicides

- contents: Police data describe crimes reported to the police. Characteristics (time, place, modus operandi) of the crime, the victim (gender, age, sometimes socialstatus, ethnic background etc.), and the offender (if known) may be described. Sometimes, the data may even provide something about the weapon and the situation. Homicide data are exceptionally comprehensive (in advanced western countries at least) and do not suffer significantly from non-reporting
- strength: This type of data are usually quite uniform and standardised, and it does comprise a large volume of incidents. Police-recorded incidents also typically pass a certain "quality control", giving some confidence into that the reported incidents have really happened.

- weakness: reporting to the police is unusual in many specific types of violence. A good example is that female victims often do not report sexual harassment or sexual violence. Furthermore, it is rare that relatively minor incidents are reported to the police. For this reason, police data are only able to provide a partial and severely biased picture of violent encounters, crimes, or victimisations. – For international comparisons, differences in reporting, recording, and definitions, make that police data are highly problematic if crime rates are concerned. Trend comparisons are often considered to be more acceptable.

19. The problem of a massive lack of coverage and representativity applies indeed to police data sources as well to data of social welfare/ support or medical agencies. For a recent example, the British researcher Betsy Stanko made an analysis of London police data and could demonstrate that DV/MVAW was in fact found under some 40 different crime categories and its prevalence was consequently seriously underestimated even within the police data. This is also a good illustration of the fact that criminal legislations are usually not "keyed" into the DV/MVAW perspective, again supporting the interpretation that it is at least in part for this very reason that authority awareness of DV/MVAW is low and, consequently, little systematic police attention is paid to DV/MVAW.

- cause-of-death statistics

- contents: Cause of death statistics, similarly as police data on homicides are a rather comprehensive source of killings, also of partner homicides. This source describes characteristics of the victim (age, gender), the concrete cause of death classified in a standard manner. Nowadays it is often also possible to distinguish domestic/partner violence victims from the rest.
- strength: A relatively comprehensive source with a quite high degree of standardisation. Also suitable for international comparisons.
- weakness: Only incidents resulting in death are comprised. Also the descriptions of the circumstances, the violence situation, the perpetrator etc. are missing.

### **III b. Population surveys (interview and postal surveys)**

20. General victimisation surveys have been developed since the 1960s with great success. They have been able to uncover a massive volume of violence that has not been reported to any authority. In regards of violence and related experiences, they have been able to show that the volume of victimisation varies strongly across different social groups (age, gender, lifestyle in particular), and also that there is strong differentiation of the population into low and high-risk groups. These studies have however not been equally successful in measuring the experiences of weak minorities, or children. These studies are, in fact, mostly studies of the adult normal population. Furthermore, as they have usually been focused on measuring victimisation to many kinds of crimes (not just violence), there has usually not been much space for important details in the instruments (questionnaires) applied.

21. Even if the victimisation surveys have been a great success, they are not the perfect or final answer to the measurement problem. They should, rather, be understood as an important complement to other sources. In addition to the feature that they are not covering all kinds of population groups with an equal degree of success, survey data also suffer from many kinds of inaccuracies related to such matters as memory failure, exaggeration, misunderstanding, and interviewer effects. Results have also been demonstrated to depend quite significantly on the degree of prompting, i.e. the more detailed the questions are and the more time is used to improve the respondent's recollection of the reference period of the survey, the more positive answers are received.

### **III c. National studies on general victimisation and the comparability problem: overcome with the introduction of the ICVS**

22. The multitude of national or local crime victimisation studies that have emerged over time have also raised the problem of comparability. From this research experience, it has become slowly accepted and generally understood that survey data are never sufficiently comparable unless collected by identical procedures and identical research instruments. Small differences in question wordings, in sampling designs, or the interview situation may result in major flaws in regards of comparability. This is of course equally true of different studies in the same country.

23. In order to overcome some of these problems, a group of scientists developed the ICVS. Even with its introduction, all problems of comparability did not disappear. At least a few serious problems remained. For instance, the question of translations is tricky – the same expression may have quite different connotations in different cultural settings. Also, the selection of crimes comprised in the ICVS is not equally representative or relevant in different cultural settings.

24. The ICVS is not better at capturing crime than the national surveys, perhaps it is rather worse. Its strength is that because of the standardised design the findings are **comparable** across countries.

### **III d. National/local studies on general victimisation vs. national/local studies on MVAW: overcome with the solution of designing genderspecific victimisation surveys (Canada, Finland etc.).**

25. General (crime) victimisation surveys (whether using the interview approach or a postal enquiry) suffer of severe limitations if a full picture of the multiplicity of group-specific violence experiences and problems is the objective. That has not been the purpose of the general victimisation surveys, either. For that objective, group-specific approaches will need to be developed. Which one s will succeed depends on which perspective is successful in the scientific and political debate in securing the necessary financing and the required commitment from experts and decision-makers. What violence is being studied is thus today a highly political issue, not a neutral one.

26. The examples of Canada, Finland, and several other countries today show that the MVAW proponents have been quite successful in their programme. These examples also clearly show that much of the criticism of general victimisation surveys was on the right track: the gender-specific studies have indeed been able to unveil a higher prevalence of victimisation than the general studies. In particular, they have succeeded in uncovering violence suffered by women in intimate partner relationships. Furthermore, they have succeeded to demonstrate that there are certain high-risk stages in partner relationships, such as the initial phase early in the relationship, pregnancy and the time with small babies, and the separation phase. Also, the concentration of violence problems to high-risk groups has been clearly proven. The MVAW studies have also been able to measure psychological harm caused by victimisation, and many other interesting and relevant features of the problem.

## **IV. Results from the ICVS**

### **IV.1 - what is the ICVS**

27. The ICVS is a standardised version of various national victimisation surveys. The main point is that the questions are identical in each country, as well as the survey methodology applied. As it was developed for a general assessment of the prevalence of some common crimes, there is not space for any detailed descriptions related to any specific type of crime. The average length of each interview has

been about 20 minutes. The ICVS has been revolutionary in its time and remains still today a unique tool for assessing the “general” crime situation across countries. It has provided decision-makers with much new insight into the relativity of many national crime problems as they are understood locally.

#### IV.2. Some central findings

28. Table 1 shows the type of findings that this kind of survey can provide on a comparative level. The surveys typically measure one-year and five-year prevalences of victimisation.

Table 1. Female victimisation rates for selected countries. Women 16 years and older who had been victims of sexual and other violence or threats (% of respondents) over the last five years, 1996. Part of the data are for 1992.

	Sexual harassment	Other violence	Sample size
New Zealand	9	16	1,122
USA	9	14	594
Canada	9	13	1,098
Australia 1992	9	10	1,095
England & Wales	6	12	1,159
Sweden	6	11	534
The Netherlands	8	9	1,080
Finland	7	9	2,066
<b>Average 1996</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10,150</b>
Switzerland	10	6	538
Austria	10	4	855
France	4	10	503
Scotland	4	9	1,190
Northern Ireland	3	6	533

29. These figures are only about victimisation, they do not specify who the perpetrator was. We would know from other sources that in our cultures the perpetrator against female victims is mostly male. In the most recent (2000) sweep of the ICVS, a follow-up question was inserted after the violence item, asking whether the respondent also included persons who were close to her; this item was indeed able to locate a number of new cases of victimisation, not captured by general formulations like "has anyone behaved in such and such a manner towards you...?"

#### IV.3. Some problems

30. The ICVS approach was developed in the late 1980s. Consequently, many of the concerns summarised by e.g. Stanko, presented over time by a large number of people engaged in MVAW action or research are not adequately dealt with in the ICVS. For instance, the ICVS deals with instantaneous violent incidents and is insensitive towards violent relationships of longer standing, something that has been found to be a rather gender-specific feature characterising MVAW rather than other violence. Furthermore, the ICVS does not ask questions about psychological violence/ intimidation, or about the psychological consequences of victimisation, or about the social relationships involved in violent incidents. The ICVS has also been accused of failing to grasp violence in intimate relationships as well as sexual harassment and sexual violence, all of which seem to be concentrated about male-female

relationships. However, there must be many other specific violence categories and victim categories that are not adequately grasped by such a general instrument (ethnic, sexual, religious, or other powerless minorities etc.).

31. Much of these problems depend on the fact that the ICVS is a general crime victimisation survey, and is therefore unable to spend a large number of questions on violence, or, even more so, a particular category of violence such as MVAW. But these shortcomings are also a reflection of the historical time when the instrument was developed, as it may easily be understood as a successor of national or local general crime victimisation surveys that were actually initiated already in the late 1960s. In that approach, the interest of knowledge was to learn more about the dark number (or non-reported/ non-recorded crime).

## **V. Further aspects**

### **V a. The costs approach**

32. Part of the awareness-raising function of the international debate has been based on the idea of costs. This has been because proponents of the awareness-raising front have become convinced that decision-makers - and the general public, the media etc - must be made aware not just of the volume of the phenomenon but also of the size of the cost caused by DV (or some part of MVAW etc.) in order to take the problem seriously - or to agree or to admit that there is indeed a neglected problem. This conviction is based on experience; there is a fundamental battle concerning the funding of any social or other programme that does something beyond what has already been done before. And this battle can hardly be won if there is an understanding that DV/MVAW is not a significant problem - this notion being supported by tradition that is part of the male-dominated culture where decision-makers and opinion-builders continue to be dominantly males, often seemingly in active opposition against revising existing beliefs.

33. What the usefulness of this approach is in the end may be debated. I elaborate some related problems in the following:

a. Costs may be assessed in a narrow fashion. In this case, we could speak of crime damages, rather than costs. The recent debate on the topic has, however been rather in favour of a broad, multi-dimensional costs assessment. To give a concrete example of the incomparability and non-objectivity of the attempt to measure costs in a comprehensive or broad manner, I present the case of graffiti. Many countries have experienced that graffiti have covered vast surfaces of various kinds. The cost associated with this depends very much on what is being done about it. The graffiti and tags as such do not cause very much cost, if any. What is bringing about the costs is their removal and/or other similar measures - and, of course, preventive measures.

b. Considering what kind of data could be readily available for comparative purposes: probably some data about control costs/resources would come closest, in the first place expenditure on police, prosecution, courts, prisons. Such data are indeed already being collected for some purposes. It has been found to be hard to ensure the comparability of the data. This can however be dealt with, and poor or inadequate data can, in principle at least, be improved.

c. An absurd consequence of broad cost assessments may be that "high" rankings are received by countries that can afford it: wealthy countries can afford to have a large volume of services, treatment, helping agencies, and a lot of concern since this seems to be



partly an awareness issue that is induced by a powerful press/ media, only possible in wealthy countries, much in the same way as massive crime prevention and restorative measures are possible in a large scale only where resources are abundant.

d. The problem of indirect expenses is aptly illustrated by the Finnish study that attempted to assess the costs of MVAW, including treatment and social support expenditure, among others. This choice at national level is perhaps not to be objected - however, at international level this becomes overwhelmingly an exercise of measuring affluence rather than "cost". Medical services, psychotherapy, social support services such as family counselling all depend on affluence, and can be provided only where such services are available - which means that affluent countries will score high on such costs regardless of the "size" of the crime problem in question; to say nothing of the other obvious problem that this "size" is to a certain degree also a matter of awareness - and consequently of emancipation and affluence.

e. The interest of knowledge related to the "costs of crime" needs to be made clear. It may not be unimportant to take note of the fact that such considerations have been recently receiving a lot of attention among experts working with MVAW. In this context, it is also relevant to note that the objective in such exercises would seem to have been to find as large figures as possible, and this has been because of an experienced need of raising public and decision-maker awareness in regards of this topic, i.e. the wish to show that the topic deserves attention because the costs involved are so amazingly high. What could be the uses of such new insight? Could it be that the general population could be made more interested in crime prevention? Or could it rather be that local and national governments could in this way be made more interested to invest in crime prevention measures and programmes? The latter could be a more sensible purpose that could even have some merit in regards of social planning and knowledge-based crime policy.

f. Having come so far, we must recognise that such information about the distribution of the different cost items among different parts/groups of society is not readily available. Furthermore, we are going to have a problem of defining what the relevant parties are: one simple dividing line, sometimes actually appearing in the debate on crime policy, could refer to offenders and victims. Another dividing line could concern the public and the private sectors, and the public sector could be subdivided into local and national levels. Each of such rough categories could then be subdivided into relevant subcategories, whichever they should be. An open question would be if such subcategories could include young/old, male/female, rich/poor, high/low education, urban/rural etc.

g. Again, it would hardly be possible, for the time being, to find a lot of such information for any country, however developed or wealthy they may be. In principle it should nevertheless be always possible to determine the party who is suffering a particular cost as such a cost is identified.

34. Despite these difficulties, the "costs" approach has some merits which are illustrated for example by the Finnish, British, Swiss, etc. studies of the costs of MVAW: each of such exercises have indeed been able to show for one that the costs are difficult to calculate because our information systems have not been designed for this purpose and it is largely for this very reason that the awareness of the phenomenon is so low. Furthermore, they have been able to show that there are indeed many different kinds of cost factors that are relevant in the context and that have not received proper attention.

## **VI. The IVAWS**

35. The IVAWS has been developed in order to provide better comparative data on aspects of MVAW, not all of them but quite many, building on the principles developed in national or local MVAW studies. No coherent data are as yet available. What we can look at presently is the study structure and the questionnaire outline.

### **VI a Predecessors**

36. Predecessors of the IVAWS are national MVAW studies such as Canada in the early '90s, Finland '97 (and some others). In these, the specific female approach was developed based on the observation that "general victimisation surveys" are not very good at capturing MVAW for several reasons that are in part related to the same facts as the problem that female violence victims seem to be particularly reluctant to report their problem to the authorities - whether police or other. A special survey of women has been thought to help overcome this feature of female victims (albeit that this has not been completely successful).

37. Then, in order to develop internationally comparable measures of MVAW, the IVAWS was developed much in the same way, and following the same arguments as the ICVS. The success of the ICVS encouraged indeed researchers engaged in MVAW studies to launch a similar project for comparative purposes of their own. Thus, the ICVS approach is largely replicated in the IVAWS, however with the important feature that as the IVAWS is about male violence of all kinds as directed against women, the fieldwork is carried out in an especially victim-sensitive manner, appreciating the fact that being asked questions about traumatic experiences may be painful and unpleasant to the respondent.

38. An important difference in comparison to the ICVS standard is that the IVAWS applied three time frames: one-year (last year), five-year (last five years) and lifetime (after the age of 15, "ever") reference periods. The lifetime prevalence has been adopted from the first national MVAW study (Canada). It has been used frequently to demonstrate that MVAW is very widespread in the experiences of the general population. It is however a rather problematic measure and should be interpreted with great caution.

### **VI b IVAWS outline**

39. The IVAWS has been piloted using samples of 50 women in a number of countries, and by September 2004, five countries (Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Switzerland) have completed their data collection (full-fledged surveys with samples of at least 2,000 respondents). National reports on the survey results are to be published in these countries by the end of 2004 (the Australian report is already available). The data sets are being collected and integrated into a common database. During the final, quarter of 2004, data collection is in progress in five further countries (Greece, Italy, Mozambique, Philippines and Poland). In addition to these it is likely that during 2005 a survey will also be started in Hong Kong. All countries all participating on a self-funded basis, apart from Mozambique where the project is supported by the United Nations Development Programme, and co-ordinated by the UNODC Regional Office for Southern Africa. Lately the efforts have been concentrated on successful completion of the project in the ten participating countries. The project documents (questionnaire and methodology manual) are available for those who are interested in organising a survey in their own countries.

40. The IVAWS questionnaire, being only about violence, goes into much detail about the woman's violence experiences and the consequences of these.
41. First of all, the questionnaire explores the partner history of the respondent. Then questions about her education, ethnic background and religion follow. Next, she is asked about her drinking habits, and whether she is working outside of the home, whether she has other sources of income and about her economic independence. In the very end of the questionnaire, this background information is complemented with questions about the incomes of the respondent's whole household.
42. Next, the questionnaire turns to experiences of violence. The questions are restricted to experiences after the age of 15 (i.e. since the respondent was 16 or older).
43. The first set of questions relates to threats of violence ("Has any man ever threatened to hurt you physically in a way that frightened you?") perpetrated by any man. They probe what kind of men the perpetrators were (husband, boyfriend, relative, acquaintance, stranger), how often each type of perpetrator has done this, when was the most recent time for each type of perpetrator, and how often this happened within the last 12 months.
44. The second set of questions has a similar structure, and deals with situations where "Any man ever has thrown something at you or hit you with something that hurt or frightened you".
45. The third set of similar questions, then, deals with situations where "any man pushed or grabbed you or twisted your arm or pulled your hair in a way that hurt or frightened you".
46. The fourth set of questions is about situations where "any man slapped, kicked, bit or hit you with a fist".
47. The fifth set is about situations where "any man tried to strangle or suffocate you, burn or scald you on purpose".
48. The sixth set is about situations where "any man used or threatened to use a knife or a gun on you".
49. The seventh set is about situations where "excluding sexual violence, any man has ever been physically violent towards you in a way that was not already mentioned" (other).
50. After these seven sets, the questionnaire turns to sexual violence. The details asked of each experience follow the same pattern as in the violence section.
51. The first set of questions concerns situations where a man has forced her into sexual intercourse "by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way".
52. The second set is about attempts to force her into sexual intercourse.
53. The third set asks whether "any man ever touched you sexually when you did not want him to in a way that was distressing to you".
54. The fourth set is about whether any man ever "forced or attempted to force you into sexual activity with someone else, including being forced to have sex for money or in exchange for goods.
55. The fifth set, then, is about situations where any man has ever "been sexually violent towards you in a way that was not already mentioned" (other).

56. The questionnaire then continues to a section called "non-partner victimisation report". This section contains follow-up questions about details on the most recent non-partner victimisation event, including injuries and helping or support services the victim contacted. Furthermore, there are questions of whether the incident was reported to the police, why this was not done, as well as what the police did when contacted. Finally, the respondent is asked whether she talked to anyone else about what happened.

57. A similar section then follows that is called "partner victimisation report". Here, the follow-up questions again only concern the most recent incident of this kind. The questions are mostly similar to those presented in the previous section. In the end, however there are three questions about the partner: whether he was violent to the respondent after being separated, whether any children witnessed some of the violent incidents, and whether the partner received professional counselling for his violent behaviour.

58. Three more sections of questions follow, one about characteristics of a violent previous intimate partner, one about characteristics of the current intimate partner, and last one about the childhood victimisation of the current partner and his mother, similar questions of the previous partner and his mother, and finally the respondent's own childhood victimisation.

59. This questionnaire is rather lengthy, and yet it manages to cover only part of many relevant issues in the area. A possible problem is that it uses the technique of standardised closed questions to grasp many such aspects where qualitative studies would perhaps be more adequate. A standardised quantitative measurement may not be able to use all the abundant details in an effective manner. However, this may only be assessed properly after the first sweep of the survey has been reported. Also, much of the details may likely be reported separately at national level, while the forthcoming comparative report may concentrate on a selection of central indicators of the situation in each country.

## **VII. Future developments**

60. Concerning this topic, DV/MVAW theory, research, action and empirical experience are closely inter-linked. Illustrative of this is that MVAW research has developed parallel to shelters, rape crisis centres, help-lines, victim and batterer awareness-raising and discussion groups and other support developments. A similar constellation may be discerned in regards of male violence: male anti-violence support and discussion groups and male crisis centres have emerged as an extension of the women's support movement - and, finally, also in the same vein, empirically based scientific analyses of male violences (e.g. Jeff Hearn) have been published; and eventually violence against men (VAM) research is being propagated.

### **VII a VAM studies**

61. A further development to be expected are VAM studies, in a similar manner as the MVAW approach. It should be obvious that the criticism of "general" victimisation surveys is valid also in regards of violence against men – this gender-specificity of violence has been neglected equally where men are concerned. Similar studies as those developed to assess MVAW are called for to improve our understanding of the male violence experience. No ready-made model can be presented yet; however, already at least one German study with this particular focus has been carried out, indicating that also violence against men is seriously under-reported and many of its aspects are not well recognised.

### **VII b. The Conflict Tactics approach (Straus & Gelles)**

62. One research approach that does take the interactive aspect of violence into account is the "Conflict Tactics Scale" developed by Murray Straus and Richard Gelles. When men and women are

asked how they deal with conflict situations, it turns out that there is often no significant difference in the degree of aggressive ways of behaviour, albeit that physical encounters typically end in the defeat of the female. This has resulted in some heated debate concerning the relevance of such an approach. Regardless of conflicting views of the political correctness of this perspective, it would seem to have the merit of trying to understand some important features of violent interaction which are not covered by the approaches described previously. Indeed, opponents criticise such an approach as, once more, "blaming the victim", therefore to be avoided.

### **VII c. The interaction and the situation must be analysed**

63. Also the IVAWS remains primarily an assessment instrument, just like its predecessors, and just like the proposed VAM studies. It does not contain the necessary elements of an analytic approach to MVAW. For such an improvement, the violent incident and the violent relationship should be studied as an entity: violence is a form of social interaction, and there is ample evidence suggesting that both parties involved are playing important roles in this interaction. If the phenomenon should be understood properly and if useful ways of influencing the problem should be developed, then all of the described approaches fall short. They are necessary steps towards an improved understanding of violence but they are not yet providing a full analysis, first because they are only grasping the interpretation of one of the persons involved, and second because they are not paying sufficient attention to the interaction and other aspects of the violent situation. Some research has for instance demonstrated that in many, perhaps even most of known violent incidents it is in the initial phase of the situation not possible to determine who is going to be "victim", or what the outcome of the violent scene is going to be. If this is true, then characteristics of the violent situation must play an important role in regards of the outcome. And if this is so, then effective prevention must take the situational aspects of violent interactions seriously, and study the interaction accordingly.

64. The idea of this approach is that, if looking at violence in partner relationships, both partners should be addressed, and both should be asked for their description and interpretation of what happened, why it happened, what the circumstances were, and what the consequences were for themselves and for their partner. It seems that if approaching the matter along these lines, new understanding could be gained, and also understanding that has new practical and preventive value.

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