



ASSESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESEARCHES IN SERBIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Introduction

- Data sources:
 - Survey on violence against women conducted in Central Serbia in 2010 (Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2010)
 - Survey on gender based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 (Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2013)
- Main differences between surveys were:
 - in the subjects - in Serbia focus was only on domestic violence against women, while in BiH non-domestic WAV was also included
 - in WAV measures - in BiH UNECE indicators defined methodological framework, while in Serbia indices were constructed based on the different methodologies
 - in data collection methods – in Serbia self-completion and face-to-face interviews in BiH.
- The results of two surveys were not comparable due to these differences, but they brought abundant experience and enabled us to learn about specific advantages and disadvantages based on that experience.

Lesson 1: The scale and features of violence cannot be reliably estimated based on official evidences - specialized surveys are necessary

- The improvement of official evidences on VAW are necessary for improvement of the protection of women and monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies and functioning of system for protection and its individual parts (police, health care, social protection, judiciary, etc.). However, relying only on data registered by the system for protection bears danger of severely underestimating scale of violence and to getting biased view on its numerous features.
- only 10% of women who were exposed to violence contacted any institution or organization for support (including medical doctor, police, centers for social work or NGO specialized for support to victims of violence), as indicated by the surveys.
- In BiH 13% of women did not know to name any institution or organization that might provide support in case of violence.

Lesson 2: Operational definitions of violence - Be cautious when saving space and time by reducing number of items measuring forms of violent behavior

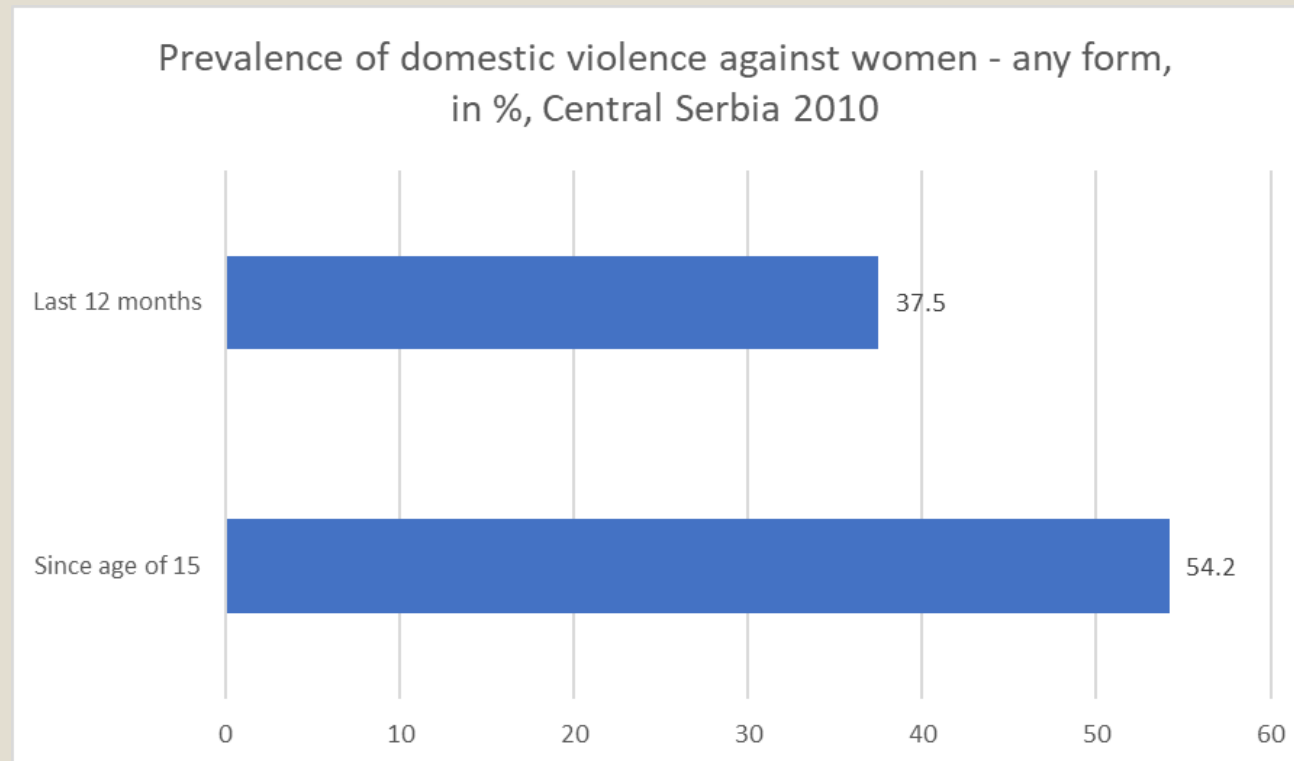
- Survey in BiH included 4 items for measuring sexual violence, while in Serbia include only 2 items. Basically, indicators in Serbia were limited to measuring rape (forced sexual intercourse or some acts during the sexual intercourse by verbal or physical threat or harm). Questionnaire for BiH included in addition to rape only one question, asking about experiences of touching or any other acts that were of sexual meaning without consent of respondent. This influenced higher prevalence rate of sexual violence.



Source: Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2010, 2013.

Lesson 3: We need precise single indices, but also complex, composite that enable life course perspective

- Focusing on single form or perpetrator, or only actual period hinders the real scale of violence to which women are exposed throughout their life course.



Source: Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2010, 2013.

Lesson 3: We need precise single indices, but also complex, composite that enable life course perspective

Some women are exposed to multiple forms of violence and this kind of 'concentration' of violence makes particularly severe damage and undermine their chances to lead quality lives.

Forms of violence	% of women who experienced violence since age of 15
Psychological	46.1
Physical and psychological	17.3
Physical, psychological and economic	12.0
Psychological and economic	8.0
Economic	4.8
Physical	4.2
Physical, psychological, economic and sexual	3.4

Source: Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2010.

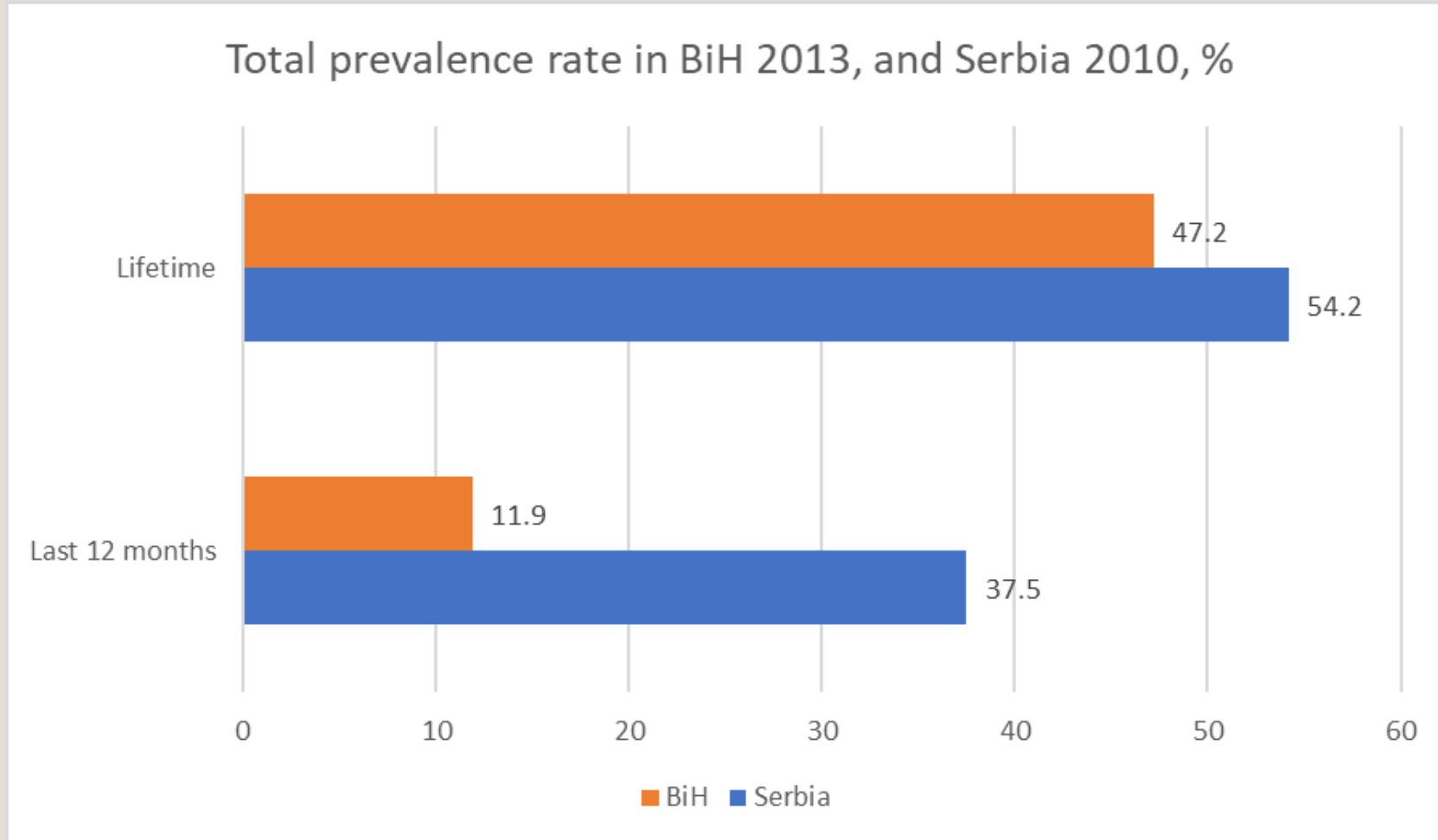
Lesson 3: We need precise single indices, but also complex, composite that enable life course perspective

- Life course perspective is important to take into account when researching violence as it reveals diversity of forms of violence to which women were exposed during lifetime and 'gallery' of perpetrators. Only with this kind of insights we can study violence as embedded in social relations of women with other persons, as structured, rooted in culture and reproduced by ineffective, unsupportive formal and informal institutions.
- Qualitative component of the research in Serbia reveals that typical pattern of violence through life course includes violence in the primary family, mostly committed by father, which continues during adult age and is committed mostly by partners (actual and former), and transforms in the older age into a violence committed by sons in addition to partners or as replacement for partners violence (in case of widowed women).
- It changes also forms, as young women are more exposed to physical violence than older, but it does not stop even in old age. Older women often describe that lack of physical strength and physical capabilities of their partners does not stop violence but just transforms it from physical to more intense psychological.

Lesson 4: How to choose data collection method – interviewing vs. self-completion

- Experience from Serbia:
 - Self-completion taking into account findings from other experts that prevalence rates are higher when data are collected by this method (4-5 times in UK and Germany), and it is easier to provide adequate environment for respondents (Walby, 2004)
 - 'Trojan horse' strategy – survey on reproductive health of women and quality of life – separation of household members and women.
- Experience from BiH:
 - UNECE methodology with face-to-face interviews.
- Comparison: bigger differences in actual violence, small differences in life-time violence (probably women are more open to report in the interview past experiences than actual).

Lesson 4: How to choose data collection method – interviewing vs. self-completion

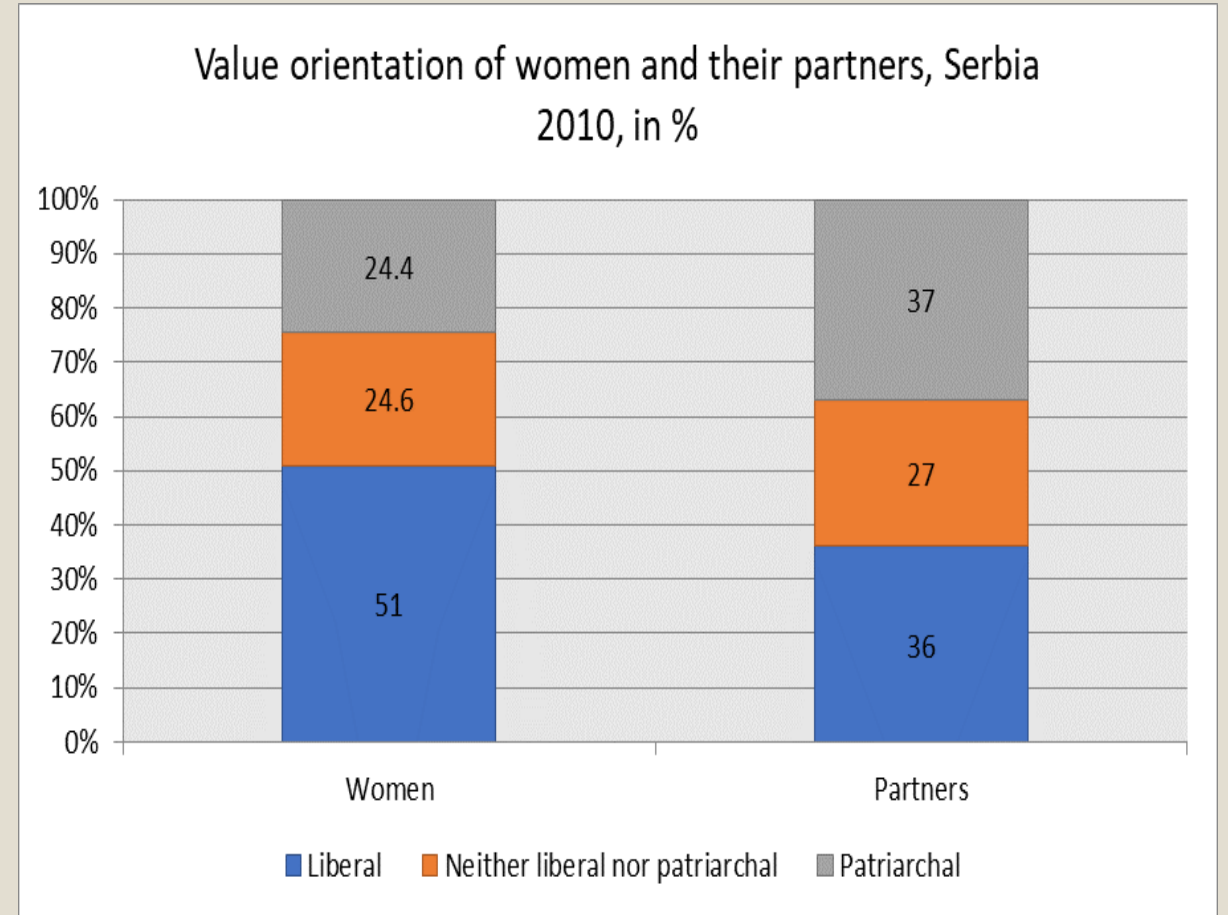


Lesson 4: How to choose data collection method – interviewing vs. self-completion

- Third type of data collection method that was implemented in the survey conducted by Victimology Society of Serbia in AP Vojvodina in 2010 - feminist action research.
- Demanding as it requires highly skilled interviewers and more resources as interviewing setting must be optimized which means that can require multiple attempts to interview one respondent.

Lesson 5: Exploring factors is necessary for designing protection but also prevention of VAW

- Surveys indicated that the most important are family related factors, health problems of family members (particularly presence of alcohol and drug abuse in the family), participation in war, but also economic factors, such as material deprivation of the household, and cultural factors, such as values and gender roles attitudes. It is true that violence occurs in rich and poor families, among low and high educated, but risks of poverty and deprivation and value 'confusion' of the partner significantly increase risks of violence against women.



Source: Babovic, Ginic, Vukovic, 2010, 2013.

Lesson 6: Socio-cultural and historical context matters

- In Serbia women were more reluctant to speak about violence than in BiH. This is probably unfortunate consequence of more violent past during wars in BiH that increased openness of women to speak about it.
- In Serbia women from rural areas were much less open to report violence, even with self-completion, than women from cities. Lack of anonymity in rural areas combined with strong campaigns against VAW, made them to be aware that this is experience that is not acceptable, and to feel shame or fear to report it even on the paper.
- Another contextual difference was related to participation in wars as predictor of VAW in the partner relation or in the family. Presence of household member who participated in the wars in former Yugoslavia during 19902s was found as statistically important factor in Serbia that was increasing risks of violence 1.2 times. In BiH, however, this was not revealed as statistically significant factor. Probable explanation can be that mass involvement in war conflicts annulated the differences and variation across the households.
- Instrument for identifying economic violence worked better in Serbia than BiH, and the reasons are not clear, they would require further exploration.



THANK YOU FOR THE
ATTENTION 😊

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