



PART ONE:

The theoretical debate on the question of women and violence

I - TRADITIONAL CRIME ANALYSIS

Before turning to the question of violence against women and analysing how this question is dealt with by different trends in analysis, let us first reflect on the way in which violence is considered in traditional crime analysis. This introductory framework will allow us to better understand the theoretical context in which violence against women is perceived.

1.1 - *Conceptualisation of violence:*

A) The framework: the importance given to the public arena when analysing violence:


Present research, analyses and the establishment of crime prevention policies are based on a traditional definition of violence. This is defined as all acts which cause physical or psychological damage or injury. This definition comes from traditional criminology and anglo-american tradition and has led to the development of theories explaining the current state of insecurity in public places. However, it ignores many individual experiences not officially seen as criminal acts but which nevertheless have something to teach us about danger and insecurity.

What are the foundations of traditional criminology? The main body of crime research is based on the conceptualisation, explanation or definition of policies which aim to prevent acts of violence committed by individuals. As a result, only one perspective is considered in the definition of violence: that which fits into the parameters of criminal status.

This means that force or the threat of force – understood as physical or sexual aggression – are categorised by what is legally defined as violence. Offences are committed by individuals against victims who should then report it to the official authorities, who, in turn, assess these acts as criminal, or not. It follows then that only violence which comes within the framework of the state's definition of crime is included in official statistics.

Nevertheless, police studies show that what actually happens in practice is that a significant proportion of criminal acts are never reported to them or, not all the different forms of violence reported to them are then registered by them. Violent crime is usually defined as a group of several criminal acts, for example, robbery with violence, thereby corresponding with the legal definition of force or the threat of force and some kind of injury. On the other hand, an act of aggression resulting in a slight injury, or indeed no injury at all is often listed separately, and not included in the category of "true violence". Seen like this, acts of violence would appear to be rare. A major study on crime carried out in Great Britain in 1981 stated that, statistically, a person aged 16 years or over is likely to become a victim of crime once every century.²

² E. Stanko, *Challenging the problem of men's individual violence, in Just Boys doing business?*, edited by Tim Newburn and Elisabeth Stanko, Routledge London and New York, 1994.



The origins of this tradition in crime go back to the 19th century when street security was a reflection of the maintenance of order, that being the fight between the classes and attempts to control the working classes, the poor and those on the fringes of society. Because focus was given to deviant acts committed by the working classes and society's drop-outs, the image of "real violence" is still seen as that which takes place in the street. This has profoundly affected the way in which crime is considered. This in turn has had a huge impact on the way in which violence is perceived, especially violence against women and victimisation.

Within this framework then, violence is perceived as an intrusion into a peaceful life without crime. Authors such as Elisabeth Stanko (1985, 1990) have, however, suggested that male violence is an ordinary part of women's daily lives. Insecurity is the basis of women's understanding of personal and sexual integrity (Stanko 1990). Women's violent experiences with persons known to them, and indeed violent acts they have been subjected to in private, have been the subject of many articles. But, whatever impact the recognition of violence against women has had, it has remained limited, even negligible, due to the hegemonic belief that "real" violence is that which takes place in the street, in public, by strangers. It is no surprise then, that although men statistically are less likely to suffer a personal attack than women and spend more time in public places conducive to violence, they emerge as the main victims and the main offenders of crime in official statistics.


As traditional criminology concentrates on "real" violence according to the previously stated criterion and given that that is all that appears in the statistics, being the victim of a criminal offence would also seem to be unusual, disturbing the harmony of "normality". That being the case, it is not surprising that victimology also concentrates its analyses on the street and public places in general. The term, used for the first time at the end of the 40's by Frederic Wertham³, was only taken up and analysed in the 60's and 70's. Conventional victimology developed during this period by authors like Hindelang et al (1978), and Cohen and Felson (1979) departs from the premise that there is a link between daily routine activities and being exposed to circumstances where the risk of falling victim is higher. In the tradition of these authors, the study of victimology has therefore developed tools of methodology designed to illustrate such a link. However, such an approach concentrates on what happens in public and ignores that which takes place in the home, whilst also failing to take into account the individual experience of the victim.

Faced with the above, how then do we begin to explain the causes of violence, and in particular violence against women?

B) Traditional explanations of the causes of violence:

Shocking images of abnormal behaviour presented in the male-dominated media are widespread, especially when the violence is of a sexual kind. However, the blame is often laid on male hormones or deranged minds. As a result, when condemning men who commit crimes in public places, the focus is placed on their inability to control their actions or impulses. These limits, according to contemporary criminology, may be caused by the ethnic

³ Author of *Seduction of the innocent*, 1955, in *Just Boys doing business?*, op. cit.



origin of the offender⁴, his psychological weaknesses or disorders, his uncontrollable sexual desires, etc. But to explain why some men are violent and others are not is a more difficult task. Sometimes, human nature is used as the ultimate explanation, although the argument which states that all men are violent offers too simple a solution. This does not mean that women are not capable of violence, but on the whole it is men who commit acts of violence. Moreover, the argument which states that all men are violent is not scientifically acceptable.

In trying to explain the use of violence, criminological research has defined two categories: instrumental violence and expressive violence. The first is defined as violence for material gain, for profit or for territorial control (of a street). Expressive violence, according to the research, is that which results in the offender losing his calm and self-control, leading to an explosion of anger. This is the typical explanation given when a man beats a woman with whom he is intimate. Those who study acts of criminology therefore make a distinction between these two forms of violence because this categorisation allows one to understand why men use violence during theft and other criminal perpetrated to gain something material. The basic premise underlying this distinction is that the prevention of crime can have an impact on violence considered instrumental, but not on that considered expressive, which is the result of an impulsive temperament.

However, when examining fatal violence between men which ends in death, we can see how violence is used in very specific contexts. Many authors (Polk, Katz, Stanko and Hobdell) have shown that the complex reasons of the origin of violence cannot be summarised into the oversimplified dichotomy of instrumental and expressive violence. Men use violence for different reasons: in order not to lose face, to resolve an argument to defend their personal territory, to increase their status, to attract the attention of women, etc. Criminology remains focused on men who use violence in the street, through studying gangs, for example. This approach ignores violence where the motive is not to control the street, but which is nevertheless commonly experienced by men and women, and is unable to explain why violence affects groups differently according to their ethnic origins, social status, age or sex.

We have already seen how traditional criminology deals with sexual violence from a pathological angle. It is therefore interesting to look closely here at its approach to the aggressors. That sexual delinquents exist is indisputable. Despite this, only those aggressors who have been arrested, sentenced and whom are in prison are identified as such. They make up a small group, apparently sharing the same characteristics. For many years, research has confined itself to the study of these sexual delinquents. As a result, research is based on studies of men already sentenced for their acts. It is therefore not surprising that explanations put forward for their behaviour essentially centre on clinical and psychological causes. Sexual delinquents are neurotic, psychopathic, immature, sexually frustrated, mentally disturbed, etc. Unfortunately, criminological research on aggressors has not taken into account the fact that a large number of sexual attacks are not reported and that most victims are attacked by men they know. This points to the fact that those who are already in prison for their acts do not truly represent the majority of aggressors.

Before studying the limits and shortcomings of the approach taken by traditional criminology to deal with the phenomenon of male violence, let us begin by looking into the effects of these analyses on prevention and treatment programmes.

⁴ Gilroy, 1987 in *Just Boys doing business?*, op. cit.

1.2 - Impact on prevention and treatment programmes:

A) Prevention programmes concerned only with violence on the street:

We have seen that traditional criminology explores the personal motives behind street crime and looks for justifications and explanations of it. This has consequences on the conceptualisation of the wrong done to women. Let us take the example of the police and the nature of the protection they afford. It has long since been believed that the best way to reduce violence was to increase the strength of the police on the beat. Domestic violence, racial hatred or violence against those in a sexual minority have been dealt with using special police initiatives and by making more officers available to deal with these types of violence. However, it is now recognised by police officers themselves that increasing the strength of the police force, even if it reduces or manages to counteract these forms of violence, only addresses the symptoms of violence and not the root causes.

Literature on crime prevention gives us another example: in Great Britain, the Home Office Crime Unit specifically targets women. But whilst women are seen as targets of violence, the literature scarcely recognises the greatest risk for women, that which comes from men they actually already know. On the contrary, advice on how to prevent being attacked concentrates on: walking in the street, using public transport, parking the car and closing doors.⁵

Violence within the family, intimidation, racial violence and sexual harassment are not dealt with by traditional criminology and are therefore not included in prevention policies.

B) Treatment programmes concentrate on the offender and rarely on the victim:

Crime treatment policies have concentrated mainly on the aggressor and on the reasons behind him committing the act, rather than on studying the victim. Most studies have concentrated on aggressors who commit violence on the street and in particular those who have been identified and imprisoned. Insufficient attention has been given to the complexities of victimisation. For a long time, the victim has therefore been considered as a powerless and vulnerable person, to whom we should give advice on how to avoid experiencing another attack in the future. Victims are not thereby truly recognised as victims, as they have to share a small part of the blame for the attack. Victims' experiences are not an important consideration for traditional criminology.

II - THE FAILURE OF TRADITIONAL CRIMINOLOGY TO ANALYSE VIOLENCE AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHER ANALYSES:

2.1 - The failure of criminology to understand and analyse male violence against women:

*«Violence against women hinders their true advancement and is the manifestation of the antidiluvian inequality between men and women at the root of female discrimination and domination».*⁶

⁵ Source: Elisabeth A. Stanko, *Challenging the problem of men's individual violence*, in *Just Boys doing business?*, op. cit.

⁶ Source: World Conference on women's rights, Beijing, Programme of action, paragraph 118, 1995.

Criminology has its shortcomings. The most obvious is ignoring violence inside the home. Domestic violence is more prevalent, statistically, but is also more important in terms of its impact, than violence outside the home⁷. That being the case, we can legitimately wonder why such “harmful” consequences were forgotten when analysing violence committed by men against women. One explanation is that crime analysis has ignored the socio-cultural context in which relationships between men and women are built and develop. Another explanation which follows on from this is that criminology has also overshadowed gender analyses as well as the relationship of force and power that exists between men and women.

- A) The historical context: a patriarchal system which does not discourage, and even encourages violence by men against women

The legal, economic and social dependency of women has historically placed them in a subordinate position and made them especially vulnerable to male aggression. From this viewpoint, violence against women must be seen as a continuum and should not be attributed to pathological causes. Paternal power and marital power already manifest themselves in Roman Law; the first gave the fathers of families -men- powers over the person and property of their male and female children; the second absolute power over their wives. Violence is therefore a part of the structural and cultural order governing patriarchal societies.⁸ Only in this century, with the mass entry of women into diverse sectors of society, with the leap from the private to the public sphere, has the real nature of this ongoing situation been revealed. The socio-cultural context into which violence falls and its use bring out the existing links between masculinity and violence. Violence was, and is, an instrument of power and a means of maintaining a statu quo that favors men and boys. Various works have emphasised this. Diana Scully⁹, for example, has examined various explanations given by rapists. These men recognise themselves that sexual violence, whether it be committed against women known to them or not, can be seen in the light of


⁷ Some illustrative data: According to statistics on the causes of death established by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Finland, an average of 26 women die each year as a result of domestic violence, which is the equivalent of 1 woman every 2 weeks. In Denmark, it is estimated that 90% of women seeking divorce quote domestic violence as the reason.

In Kenya according to the daily newspaper, The Nation, police report that 10 women are beaten each day by their husbands. This figure is most certainly an underestimation if one considers the number of incidences which are not reported to the police.

In the US, the biggest cause of injury to women is inflicted by their partner and is the cause in a third of cases of women being admitted to hospital. (Source: *An Urbanizing World*, Habitat, 1996). According to the same source, studies conducted in numerous developed countries have found that between one third and a half of women interviewed were beaten by their partners.

⁸ “During the European middle ages, religions tolerated, an even encouraged, physical aggression against women. The witch hunts of Europe and North America were used to punish women from deviating from the norm. In the 18th and 19th centuries, family laws recognized the rights of men to commit abuses, in that physical violence against wives was regarded as a “punitive reprimand”. In Napoleon legislation, women, like minors, were regarded as legally incompetent”. in Hanna Binstock, *Violence Within Couples*, Women and Development Unit, Serie Mujer y Desarrollo, Economic Commission For Latin America and the Caribbean, September 98, Santiago, Chile.

⁹ Diana Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence*, London, Harper Collins, 1990.



the patriarchal and structural relationships which exist between the sexes. The need to devalue, humiliate and hurt women was born of a climate which, structurally, nurtured, reinforced and in many cases encouraged such an attitude. Men abuse women, not because they are driven to it biologically, but because deep-rooted in our society is a general feeling of cultural and social contempt towards women.

In his research on the founding and structural elements of society, the anthropologist, Malinowski, clarifies this theory by making a distinction between patriarchal and matriarchal societies. With regards the former,

“When the father gets home tired after a day’s work or tipsy after having had a few drinks, he naturally takes it out on his family and batters the wife and children. There is not a village or any part of a modern town where we do not see cases of true, patriarchal cruelty.”

On the contrary, in his studies on matriarchal societies, he states that: *“Men are not at the head of the family. This changes his legal rights and his personal attitude towards his wife. In such a society, men rarely argue with their wives, practically never try to batter them and are never in a position to permanently dominate them... As a consequence, tribal traditions made up of legal, moral and customary elements and the whole set-up of social life come together to give men a radically different attitude in their conjugal and paternal role than that which we find in a patriarchal society.”*

In Malinowski’s analysis, we can see that legal and social attitudes shape men’s behaviour, inferring that in a patriarchal system where they hold power, they tend to abuse it. Clearly, in a patriarchal system, men’s power lies in the socio-cultural and economic order.

Another study conducted in Switzerland in 1989 illustrates this theory. Its aim was to reach those sexual delinquents who had not been identified or sentenced by using questionnaires and anonymous interviews. The main issue here was: what effects can non-detection – and by contrast detection – have in the minds and behaviour of sexual delinquents? The results of this study are particularly interesting¹⁰.

The main difference between delinquents who have been caught and therefore imprisoned, and the others, is that the former recognise that they had a responsibility in the acts they committed, and even feel a sense of guilt. The latter, on the contrary, do not recognise any responsibility. They believe they are sexually neglected, and their attitude is simply one of getting what is due to them. The violence they commit is therefore perceived as a way of defending themselves against women’s power and manipulation¹¹. They do not feel guilty because if they were, they would have been found so and imprisoned. Their logic is that women only denounce those who are guilty. The failure of the criminal justice system is therefore used to legitimise their actions.

Another point taken from the Swiss study is that the cross-section of men interviewed was mostly made up of men who not only knew their victim, but most often knew them intimately. The majority of sexual delinquents are generally “normal” citizens (without criminal pasts),

¹⁰ Alberto Godenzi, *What’s the big deal? We are men and they are women in Just Boys doing Business?*, op. cit.

¹¹ In fact, according to the statements of violent men, women make men dependent on them and play with and abuse this power over them.

who have attacked women not because they were unable to control themselves emotionally, but on the basis of a rational decision which allowed them to gain all the benefits of their violent act.

It is clear here that violence by men against women is part of the implicit social rules which govern our society. Inequality between the sexes, the power and privileges men benefit from, patriarchal norms and values and the images of violence presented in the media, are the main forces behind these destructive attitudes. They are also one of the main reasons which explain why certain men think that they have the right to sexually abuse women.

With regard to the above, one might be led to believe that the increased participation of women in political and social life, feminist movements and the recognition of women's rights among other factors, would decrease the violence against women. On the contrary, the advancement of women has produced a renewed resistance and even an increase in violence. Many men have responded violently to the change in women's roles and women's increased autonomy. They have seen it as a threat to their supremacy and their control over women. Consequently, gender-based violence has become more intentional and has diversified to include situations where there is no sexual relation, such as intimidation, economic dependence, and psychological violence.

B) Bringing gender into the analysis:


To understand the significance of violence and its motives, it is not enough simply to use the categories of instrumental and expressive violence, as suggested by mainstream criminology. Explanations regularly given by criminology for violence are that the offender lost his calm or just exploded. There again, in order to understand such acts,¹² we need to put them back into a socio-cultural context. The works of Daly and Wilson¹² on murder reveal that whether it be in industrial or aboriginal or any other social group, violence is used by men to control their wives. Although they recognise that murdering women is fairly rare, the use of violence is widespread and the main motives behind it are adultery and jealousy.

Far from being as a result of an explosion of anger, reality shows that battered women, and the men who batter them, both say the same thing; men's behaviour is used to control.

The same authors look at other interesting questions on male violence. According to them, in all human societies, competition within the sexes is much more intense between men than between women. This takes into account social conditions and the way in which men competitively situate themselves on the social ladder. Men use violence for all manner of reasons but always as a means of power. Through it they negotiate their status vis-à-vis other men and their place in the social hierarchy.

Other elements linked to gender and the consequences of violence are equally interesting but have been overshadowed by criminology. Those who have been victims of violence put their experiences into the context of their true lives as women and their experience of insecurity. Women are all too aware that men unknown to them could attack them simply because they are women, although practice shows that they are most often attacked by men they know. Victimisation of men on the other hand, is multi-dimensional. Very few

¹² In *Just Boys doing business?*, op. cit.



analyses have been carried out on it and very little is known about it, especially when it comes to female violence against men. What should be noted, nevertheless, is that women and men who live on the fringes of society are potentially more vulnerable to violence.

2.2- The criticisms and contribution of other analyses:

The limitations of traditional criminology and victimology have been highlighted by analyses on women. Feminist analyses have not simply defied the bases of methodology on such issues, but have questioned the objectivity used by criminologists in order to exclude the experiences and interests of women. Feminists believe that it is by looking at the experience itself that we can begin to understand the effects of rape, sexual attacks and domestic violence. This analysis has highlighted a fact which is of vital importance to victimology; that specific forms of crime can only be properly understood by considering the historical and cultural context into which they come and which give them sense.

For several years now a new perspective in victimology has emerged using “realism” to try and place more importance on women’s actual experiences. This more “realistic” analysis has therefore put the experience itself as the central issue:

*“The realism here is primarily concerned with the problems people experience. It seriously considers women’s complaints concerning the danger of being in public places at night, takes note of the fears of the elderly of being robbed and recognises the frequent incidence of domestic violence and racial attacks. It does not ignore the fears of the most vulnerable in society, neither does it simply place them in the category of the “average citizen” without considering the social class or gender”.*¹³

Despite the commendable intentions of these analyses, the tools used continue to rely on studies conducted on such a grand scale that they cannot analyse or understand the victims’ individual experiences. Victimological analysis has therefore remained relatively indifferent to its critics and the issue of violence against women remains confined to that which takes place outside the home. As Steinmetz¹⁴ states:

“Evidence suggests that law makers, historians and social scientists as well as the general population, tend to deny the existence of family violence or to assume violence only occurs in sick families”.

It is therefore clear that these issues need to be looked at more closely. The stakes are high: claims cannot be made of full analysis of the causes and impacts of violence against women without considering the central role played by domestic violence in this process.

¹³ Young, 1986, in Wangoi Njau and Wanjiku Kabira, *Women and violence, an investigation into factors associated with violence in the family with a specific emphasis on women*, Ossrea Project, Nairobi, 1989.

¹⁴ In *Women and violence, an investigation into factors associated with violence in the family with a specific emphasis on women*, op. cit.

PART TWO:

Domestic violence as central to the consideration of violence against women and the initiatives to take to fight it

I – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: DEFINITION, QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA, CAUSES AND IMPACT :

The term “domestic violence” is used to cover various situations which take place in the home and which are characterised by their brutality. The expression is used in its strictest sense to describe incidents amounting to physical attacks which: “may take the form of physical or sexual violations, such as pushing, pinching, spitting, kicking, hitting, punching, choking, burning, clubbing, stabbing, throwing boiling water or acid¹⁵.” The results of such physical violence can range from bruises to death and what can initially seem to be minor incidents can worsen as much in intensity as in frequency.

There are some who see the term “domestic violence” as meaning psychological or mental violence, whilst others use it to describe violence against women within the family. The expression can equally refer to all violations where the victim and her aggressor are united by a past or current personal relationship. Used in this wider sense, domestic violence includes child abuse, whether it be physical, psychological or sexual, violence between siblings, abuse or negligence of the elderly and children’s abuse of their parents.

Here, the term “domestic violence” refers essentially to the most common forms of violence, that being physical or mental abuse of women by their male partners. However, children will be covered in the analysis, as it will cover the causes and effects on them of domestic violence. Behind every mother battered by her partner, we see one or more children who, even if they are not directly victims of aggression, nevertheless suffer in different degrees from the generally violent atmosphere which pervades their daily life. These acts of violence can have equally irreversible consequences on their future development.

1.1 – Some qualitative and quantitative data on the phenomenon:


“The gravity and extent of the problem of family violence are universal. Although the family is the first and the most important social institution which educates and protects its members, it can often become a place of suffering and violence¹⁶”.

A) Qualitative data on domestic violence:

We should begin by making the following, vitally important statement: domestic violence is a hidden problem. We have already seen that research into this subject is relatively new

¹⁵ Source: *Strategies for confronting domestic violence: a resource manual*, United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Publication, New York, 1993.

¹⁶ UNICEF, No. 2 Innocenti Digest, *Children and violence*, 1997.



in the sense that it has been consigned to the confines of what is private and intimate. It is therefore difficult to assess real incidences of violence within the home. Not only is the problem largely hidden, but its very existence is denied by certain communities who fear that by recognising the phenomenon the integrity of the family will be compromised.

Few statistics exist on the subject and when they are published, they only partly correspond to the reality of the situation. Whether the normal methods of assessing the number of woman abused by their husbands are reliable is also questionable. Indeed, these statistics are based on cases of abuse reported either to the police or to hospitals or even in interviews in the field. The data collected by the police and other official sources show that abuse of women exists but it is a well-known fact that this data does not show the full extent of the problem. Victims are often hesitant to report incidents, either because they fear reprisals or because they are ashamed to have been attacked by their husbands. They often doubt whether reporting the incident will make any difference or fear having to relive their traumatic experience when recounting the event to strangers. They may also have a sense of family loyalty or be prisoners of the socio-cultural constraints which dictate they be silent¹⁷.

Even when women do report cases of abuse, the statistics can be lost. This may be because official organisations do not register the incident or at least not in a way which can be used by future researchers into the question. Criminal statistics are a main source of information on violence against women. However, they often omit to give the sex of the victim or the assailant, or state whether they are related. It is therefore impossible to distinguish between incidences between husband and wife and other incidences. As a result, data on incidences of violence in the home is not easy to collate.

Surveys conducted on victims also have their limits. Women who have been abused often prefer to remain silent. When they do reply to surveys, they may underestimate the seriousness of the facts of which they are victim. For example, some women will consider being slapped as an insignificant event not even worth mentioning.

As for “phone-in” surveys (a good way to reach a large cross-section of woman), these are unfortunately limited to those who have a telephone and who are prepared to give out intimate information to a stranger. They can also exclude women from ethnic minorities.

Despite the difficulties in assessing the scale of the phenomenon, it is obvious that domestic violence is a serious problem. Its true extent is not precisely known, but it is clear that this violence exists in many different family situations and is present as much in developed countries as in developing countries. Research conducted on the subject indicates that women are killed, physically and sexually attacked, threatened and humiliated under their own roofs by men who they should be able to trust completely. Anecdotal evidence suggests these events occur frequently.

Domestic violence is not confined to any particular social class. Because of the limitations of existing research, it is difficult to put forward generalisations on the social position of victims of domestic violence.

¹⁷ On this subject, see the following paragraph regarding the causes and impact of domestic violence.

Some research shows an over-representation of economically disadvantaged victims or those belonging to a lower age group¹⁸. It is likely that there is more domestic violence in deprived families, or in families where the husband is less educated than the wife.

However, most available information is based on studies of people who can be officially located. These people are less able to shield their private lives from official research. For example, middle class women or those from comfortable backgrounds, are probably less likely to make use of emergency refuges. In certain countries, public hospitals are mainly used by the most economically deprived. The more wealthy are in a position to benefit from the services of private doctors or clinics whose data is not generally available to researchers. Women from more comfortable backgrounds are therefore more likely to escape the attention of the government or the police.

Finally, research indicates that attacks on women cut across class, culture or colour barriers. At the same time, age would appear to be a differentiating factor. The American Department of Justice discovered that women aged between 19 and 29 are more likely to be subjected to violence by their partners than woman outside this age group¹⁹.

The lack of adequate data and statistics on the incidents of violence against women coupled with the lack of comprehensive information, documentation and research regarding the different aspects of this violence, make it very difficult to devise intervention strategies. Despite this, the few figures we do have shed some light on the phenomenon and are proof of the gravity of the situation.

B) Some figures:

Some general statistics on violence against women:

In **South Africa**, one woman is raped every 26 seconds and only one rape in 36 is reported to the police²⁰. On 25th June 1994, the Daily News, (a national newspaper), reported the following statistics: one woman in two is likely to be raped at some point in her life, whilst one woman in 6 is likely to be battered by her partner.

In the **United States**, a woman is physically abused every 9 seconds and in the **Dominican Republic**, a woman is raped every eight hours²¹.

¹⁸ In *Strategies for confronting domestic violence: a resource manual*, op. cit. The authors refer here to the following works:

- The research conducted by the Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission reveals that domestic violence is more common in the lower and rural classes.
- D. Marsden: "Sociological perspectives on family violence", in *Violence in the Family*, J. Martin ed, 1978.

¹⁹ In Steven R. Donziger, *the real war on crime, the report of the National Criminal Justice Commission*, Harper Collins, New York, 1996.

²⁰ Source: Sunday Tribune, 1st March 1992 in Agenda magazine, No. 36, 1997 on the theme of *Gender and Violence*.

²¹ in "A plague of the century", Maria Eugenia Meza Basaure, in *Maria, Maria, United Nations Campaign for Women's Human Rights*, 1998

Some statistics on domestic violence:

In **France**, 70% of all rapes occur in the family. In **Vietnam**, 70% of divorces are caused by the violence of the spouse²².

In **Canada**, on the basis of statistics taken from doctors, judges, social workers and police reports, it is estimated that one woman in ten is physically or sexually abused by her partner²³.

National statistics in **Papua New Guinea** show that on average, 67% of married women have been the victims of violence inflicted on them by their husbands.

In **Guyana**, in 1989, two out of three women with partners had been beaten at least once, and one-third of them had been beaten on a regular basis²⁴.

A recent survey in the **United Kingdom** on violence in the family revealed that 82% of children interviewed worried about domestic violence in their homes. In 1995, 43% of attacks on women were carried out by their partners. This report also showed that only 25% of incidents of domestic violence were exposed²⁵.

In the **United States**, more than one in three Americans have witnessed an incident of domestic violence, according to a nationwide survey released by the Family Violence Prevention Fund in 1998. A study of violence against women showed that two thirds of these attacks were committed by someone the victim knew -such as a husband, boyfriend, other family member or acquaintance- a much higher figure than for men. The survey, conducted by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics found approximately 2,5 million of the nation's 107 million females 12 years old and older, were raped or assaulted in a typical year, or were the victims of a threat or an attempt to commit such a crime. 28% of the offenders were intimates, (such as husbands or boyfriends) and another 39% were acquaintances or relatives. In contrast, victimisation by intimates and other relatives accounted for only 5% of all violent victimisations against men. Men were significantly more likely to have been victimised by acquaintances (50%) or strangers (44%) than by intimates or other relatives²⁶.

Abuse carried out by husbands and partners is the main cause of injury inflicted upon women between the ages of 15 and 44. American women are 9 times more likely to become the victims of violence inside their own homes than outside.

In **Kenya**, The Daily Nation also reported that between 1995 and 1996, 55 women were killed by men they knew. Nearly every week the same newspaper gives examples of domestic violence.

²² In S. Jan, "De la violence sous toutes ses formes", in *Femmes, le mauvais genre ?*, Manière de voir n° 44, Le Monde Diplomatique, n° 44, mars-avril 1999

²³ In *Strategies for confronting domestic violence: a resource manual*, op. cit.

²⁴ In "A plague of the century", op.cit.

²⁵ Source: Harriet Harman, Member of Parliament, in her speech on the *Age of anxiety*, a survey on violence concerning families and children, used by NCH Action for Children, United Kingdom, 1997.

²⁶ In US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Violence against women: a National Crime Victimization Survey Report", January 1994

In Jamaica, one in every eleven women between the ages of 25 and 60 has been physically abused by a man they knew. In 1995, the police reported that 39% of all murders resulted from domestic quarrels²⁷.

1.2 - Causes and effects of domestic violence:

A) The causes:

Domestic violence occurs as a result of the male domination over women. It is an expression of the sexual, economic and social inequality which exist in today's society:

The original causes of domestic violence are complex and numerous pieces of research have been dedicated to trying to understand them. Some have focused on individuals and have tried to reveal personal explanations, for example, the use and abuse of alcohol or drugs, stress, frustration and mental breakdowns, etc. We have already underlined the limitations of such an approach. Explanations which take into account the social and structural elements in society would appear to be more convincing when analysing domestic violence. The origins of violence within the family can largely be found in the social context and in an analysis of the relationship between the sexes. Acts of brutality against women are a reflection of the structures underlying the prevailing sexual and economic inequality in our society. Far from being an aberration, violence within the family is generally accepted and tolerated. The abuse of women is perceived as a manifestation of male power perpetuating the inferior position of women. Women's social, political and economic dependence on men provides an environment favourable to their abuse (Inset No. 1).

There seems to be a correlation between economic difficulties and domestic violence. This link was established as a result of research into urban households conducted between 1988 and 1992 in Guayaquil, Ecuador. In households where women had a regular income, there were less incidences of domestic violence. A large percentage of the cross-section of women interviewed who were not in work or who had low-paid jobs, experienced domestic violence on a daily basis. Caroline Moser makes the following statement about this research:


*"A distinction was made between men who became angry due to frustration at not earning enough and those who became angry because they wanted to keep what they had earned for themselves, basically to spend it on alcohol and women. However, in both cases, the result was the same; men would beat their wives"*²⁸.

The above observation is confirmed by other research (notably that conducted by Bard, Steinmetz and Strauss) which shows that the less financial resources the family has to meet its needs, the more susceptible it is to becoming violent.

Nevertheless, a woman's economic success does not automatically reduce her risk of becoming a victim of domestic violence; in fact, to the contrary. A woman who is economically

²⁷ in "A plague of the century", Maria Eugenia Meza Basaure, op cit.

²⁸ Source: Caroline O. N. Moser, *Domestic violence and its economic causes*, the Urban age, quoted in Dr. Olawale Albert, *Women and Urban violence in Kano, Nigeria*, UMP Working Paper, September 1995.



and professionally successful, can be more exposed to violence inflicted by her jealous husband who, by doing this, will try to control the economic resources of the household and thereby maintain his power. One Tanzanian woman's experience shows how hostile her partner became to her professional success:

"He started to hit me the day I found out about my promotion. It was a deliberate act, although he later excused himself by saying he was drunk. But it did not stop there. He would often hit me, twice in public. Things got worse and he would continually insult me in front of my family and friends and even hit me in front of my father"²⁹.

In this context the cultural aspect, understood as the combination of each society's values, beliefs and traditions, plays a fundamental role in the perception and comprehension of domestic violence:

In patriarchal societies, domestic violence is seen as a natural way of disciplining women. A number of traditional African societies, beating one's wife is considered acceptable and even normal. Men beat their wives in order to maintain discipline in the home. The Kenyan study (already quoted) demonstrates that despite current socio-cultural changes, wife battering is still a widespread cultural practice and is not confined to rural areas. Men even stated that were they not to beat their wives, it would be seen as a lack of trust and love! This complete distortion of reality powerfully illustrates how such cultural beliefs can lead people to believe that women provoke, tolerate and even appreciate a certain amount of violence from their husbands.

The fact that domestic violence is confined to the intimacy and privacy of the home, can largely be explained by the power cultural beliefs have. In Asian societies, to admit to domestic violence within the family amounts to publicising marital breakdown. Women will try to hide the problem because it is they who are largely responsible for maintaining harmony within the family. Should they decide, despite everything, to make their situation public, they would be stigmatised by a society which would consider them incapable of resolving their own family conflicts. In the vast majority of cases, the victim is therefore confronted by huge social and cultural pressure, which in effect forces her to keep quiet. Even when other members of her immediate family are informed and realise the serious nature of the problem,³⁰ they prefer the problem to be resolved within the family so as not to taint its reputation³¹.

Cultural and social pressure is also one of the reasons why victims remain silent in other cultures. In North America and Europe notably, a woman may decide not to press charges against her aggressor because she knows³¹ she will have to relive her experience within a judicial system well-known for its sexism³¹.

²⁹ *Women and Urban violence in Kano, Nigeria*, op. cit.

³⁰ Source: *No small matter*, a video on family violence in Punjabi, the public legal Education Society, the People's Law School, 1991 and *Fighting violence against women: the experience of the Lihok-Pilipina Foundation in Cebu*, Tessie Banaynal-Fernandez in Environment and Urbanization, Vol 6, No. 2, Oct 1994.

³¹ The reasons why women remain silent are however more complicated, a lack of confidence in the law is also a determining factor.

**INSET NO. 1: A traditional patriarchal system and its effects on male-female relationships:
the case of Kenya**

In Kenya, conjugal violence is essentially the brutality of men towards women and their sisters and in some measure, the brutality of these women towards their children. This is due to the patriarchal nature of Kenyan society, which is essentially male-dominated despite the fact that women work extremely hard. Productive resources belong to men. Under this traditional social system, a woman can neither possess land nor property because, according to customary law, her assets belong to her husband or father and it is their sons who will inherit them. These cultural values have therefore perpetuated women's dependence on men. A girl cannot inherit her father's estate. She will be encouraged to get married in order to acquire a house and a piece of land to cultivate. On getting married, the future husband must pay a dowry to the father of the bride who will then give the husband absolute power over his daughter. She can only return to her parents if the dowry is repaid, a practice which is poorly thought of by the community.

Today, this power and subordination is still apparent in Kenyan society. Traditional roles allocated to women and men dictate their responsibilities and status in public and in the home. Women continue to assume positions and perform tasks which are considered of less importance than those assumed by men. The unfavourable conditions in which most of them find themselves make it more and more difficult for them to be independent of men. Besides these economic and social concerns, women continue to suffer under the cultural weight of discriminatory traditions still in force.

With respect to **ownership and inheritance**, women cannot inherit their husband's estate after his death. In her place, a man close to the family is elected to look after the deceased's assets. Even if these traditional practices may seem to actually benefit women in the long run, the study carried out in Kenya revealed that only certain women can inherit from their husbands. The same study indicates that women rarely inherit valuable assets, such as land or money.

Another illustration of women's subordination is seen in **divorce**. Adultery and violence within the family are the main reasons given for divorce. It is therefore interesting to compare its consequences for men and women. Whilst a man would be encouraged to remarry, thereby proving his ability to form another relationship, it is socially and culturally unacceptable for a woman to do the same (especially in the Christian community). A divorced woman is stigmatised and therefore has even less chances of remarrying. Women suffer the most as a result of divorce, not least because they lose their social status, custody of their children, their means of existing and other resources. (Divorced women do not have the right to own land).

Sources: Ossrea Project, *Women and Violence, an investigation into factors associated with violence in the family with a specific emphasis on women, a case study of Kiambu District*, Wangoi Njau et Wanjiku Kabira, Nairobi, 1989

***Women and Violence in Nairobi and Kajiado districts of Kenya*, Dr Wangoi Njau and Dr Enos H.N Njeru, Nairobi, February 1997.**

B) Effects and impacts of domestic violence:

The impact of domestic violence is serious and goes way beyond the family. It affects not only the victims and other members of the family, but also the aggressors and society as a whole.

The effects of violence against women are also serious. In addition to the physical injuries already mentioned, which can range from bruises to death, battered women suffer from serious psychological problems. They tend to be very anxious and are prone to depression, leading to abnormally high rates of suicide³². Most of them are disorientated and lack self-confidence. They blame themselves and feel responsible for their situation, particularly in societies where it is generally considered that if a woman is beaten by her partner, she has somehow deserved it.

A national survey conducted in Canada in 1993³³ on violence against women showed that a quarter of women who have had a violent partner admit to consuming or having consumed alcohol, drugs or medicines thinking that this will help them to face the situation. In almost a third of cases of physical or sexual violence, the woman has had to stay away from work or has been unable to assume her normal daily activities.

The consequences of conjugal violence do not only affect the victim. Violent men themselves may suffer from the consequences of their conduct. Research into the subject indicates that women who kill their husbands more often do so in response to an attack or the threat of one. This is not limited to women in developed countries. Research carried out on violence within the family in India showed that a large number of women in prison were there as a result of having killed their violent husbands. This is also the case in Turkey³⁴. Whilst it is acknowledged that men can also be attacked by their wives, research has demonstrated that in Canada, less than 5% of cases of violence within a couple was the victim a man³⁵.

The effects of violence on children need more attention and should be dealt with more seriously. Children of battered women are deeply affected, even when they are simply witness to the attacks. Children living with violence are more likely to become violent at a later stage. (Inset No. 2). This is all the more true should they become direct victims of it. A Canadian survey estimated that 30 to 40% of children who are witness to the brutality inflicted on their mother also fall victim to it. Children who witness domestic violence often suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome. Symptoms can include the following: constantly reliving the experience, fear, anxiety, tension, the feeling of always being on their guard, irritability and outbursts of anger and aggression.

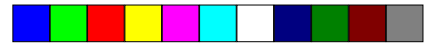
The precise consequences, depending on the age and sex of the child, are also significant. Even at a very early age, children are seriously affected by violence. Pre-school children show signs of anxiety or aggression whilst older children feel that they should intervene when a violent incident takes place. Some studies indicate that girls have a greater tendency

³² Source: *Strategies for confronting domestic violence, a resource manual*, op. cit.

³³ Source: *La violence conjugale*, information from the National Centre for information on family violence, Santé Canada internet site.

³⁴ Source: *Strategies for confronting domestic violence, a resource manual*, op. cit.

³⁵ Source: *La violence conjugale*, information from the National Centre for information on family violence, Santé Canada internet site.



INSET NO. 2 : The cycle of violence :

Studies conducted in various countries have shown that violence towards women and children can have **multiplying effects on violence in society as a whole**. Children who grow up in a violent environment are more susceptible to becoming violent themselves as adults. Whether they are simply witness to violence or direct victims of it, they see and perceive violence as a way of communicating with others. It is in this respect that this statement by a young South African is so revealing: *'I am in prison now because of the domestic violence that I encountered as a boy in my family. I witnessed my mother being assaulted by my father on a regular basis. I was hit too. I went to the streets and this reinforced for me that the only way of surviving is to use violence'*. The cycle of violence which starts inside the home has a tendency therefore to escalate once outside. In the States, studies have shown that many children will become abusive towards their own partners and towards others in general. Children brought up in a violent atmosphere have five times as much chance of becoming delinquent than other children. Boys who come from violent families are twice as likely to commit crimes towards other people and are 24 times more likely to sexually abuse their partner. Another piece of research carried out by the US National Institute of Justice estimated that the chances of developing criminal tendencies go up by 40% when the person has suffered abuse during his childhood. The study also reveals that having been abused or neglected as a child increases the probability that that person will be arrested when still a teenager by 53%, as an adult by 38%, and for a violent crime by 38%.

A recent investigation into children in the United Kingdom who have killed or have been implicated in violent crimes revealed that 72% of them had been the victims of abuse, 57% had suffered a loss (a death or the loss of a loved one). 35% had experienced both whilst 91% had suffered one or the other.

Source : Adapt, proceedings from the seminar *Confronting violence against women : men as part of the solution*, March 1997.

- Spatz Widom, C., *The cycle of violence*, US National Institute of Justice Study, September 92, in Steven Donziger, *The real war on crime, the report of the National Criminal Justice Commission*, Harper Collins, New York, 1996.
- Boswell, G., *Violent victims : the prevalence of Abuse and Loss in the lives of Section 53 offenders*, The Prince's Trust, London, 1995 in Unicef, *children and violence*, innocenti digest, No. 2, September 1997.

to become withdrawn or depressed whilst boys tend to become aggressive. What is clear is that very early stages of life, children growing up in a violent environment perceive violence as a means of power and control over others.

This phenomenon is noticeably different in different societies. In developing countries, we can see other consequences linked to the reality of being exposed to violence within

the family, for example the increase of street children³⁶. These are often children who have been witnesses or victims of violence at home and who have run away. Some may join violent street gangs. In his study of street children in Nairobi, Deyssi Rodriguez-Torrès³⁷ shows that street children come from families suffering from deprivation and various other problems. These children have not been adequately cared for at home and many of them have been seriously neglected. A significant number of them also have been the victims of incest and domestic violence. This account from a 14 year old boy living in Nairobi is significant: *'my father would arrive home drunk every night, and would begin to hit my all of us including my mother; every day, the same problem. He never contributed anything to the house, and I was unable to go to school. I decided to leave home and earn my own living; my father only ever gave me grief: why should I stay with him ?'*

The author of the study adds: *'This helps us in some way to understand why many street children decide themselves to leave home and are not in fact kicked out of the house'*³⁸.

Society also pays, financially, for the violence inflicted on women and children. Enormous amounts of money are spent on medical treatment, the police and judicial system, emergency care... etc. By way of example, a recent enquiry into the economic costs of domestic violence in Holland showed that around 15 million ecus are spent each year on the above. In Canada, the cost of injuries, chronic illnesses and general health costs linked to domestic violence, add up to a figure of around a million dollars a year³⁹.

II - STRATEGIES FOR CONFRONTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2.1 - Using the law to respond to domestic violence :

A) Legal channels :

Many countries are now treating domestic violence as a problem requiring a legal solution. After having denied the very existence of domestic violence for so long, under the pretext of not wishing to interfere in family affairs, an awareness of the effects of domestic violence is gradually becoming apparent.


In countries where domestic violence is seen as a serious problem, there is strong pressure to find legal solutions. This can mean changing the law. For example, some countries have changed existing laws on rape to include marital rape. This was the case in Canada in 1983, where a law was passed that made it a crime for a husband or wife to sexually assault his or her spouse. Other countries have passed laws making it easier for the state and its agencies to intervene in cases of domestic violence: in Puerto Rico, there is a law on

³⁶ Of course, family violence is not the only explanation for the increase in street children, poverty within families and the fact that children often live on the streets from a very young age are also contributory factors.

³⁷ Deyssi Rodriguez-Torrès: *Nairobi: les gangs de la rue en direct* in *Jeunes, culture de la rue et violence urbaine en Afrique*, Proceedings from the international symposium in Abidjan, 5-7 May 1997, IFRA Ibadan.

³⁸ Deyssi Rodriguez-Torrès: *Nairobi: les gangs de la rue en direct*, op.cit.

³⁹ Source: *La violence conjugale*, information from the National Centre for information on family violence, Santé Canada internet site.



the prevention of and intervention in cases of domestic violence (Law 54, of 15 August 1989), whilst in certain states of Australia, police powers of entry have been extended to allow them to enter private premises if they suspect violence is taking place.

Domestic violence is now perceived by some countries as a crime. This means that criminal law can be applied to incidences of domestic violence in order to protect the victim, punish the offender and deter him from using violence again. In Poland, under article 184 of the Penal Code of 1969, domestic violence is a crime and the “punishment” includes paying damages to the victim. Equally, in many European countries, the legal framework for prosecuting physical or sexual violence is being revised in order to clarify legal definitions of violence, the responsibilities of offenders and the interests of victims.

However, the situation is different from one culture to another and it is interesting to note that some countries have only criminalised specific forms of violence: Bangladesh and India, for example, consider dowries, and any violence inflicted to obtain them, as criminal acts. What is more, legal proceedings are seriously compromised in countries where women are not permitted to witness against their husbands. In legal terms, they are not considered “reliable” witnesses.

Family law relating to divorce and separation and other legal provisions. Whilst family laws on divorce and separation mean that a woman can put an end to an abusive marriage, but this is not a solution for women who wish the marriage to continue but the violence to end. Divorce and separation can be a solution to end acts of domestic violence, depending on the different jurisdictions around the world. For example, if a marriage is governed by customary law, dissolution is possible but not encouraged. It is a problem which must be resolved through mediation within the family. This is particularly the case in systems where the wife’s family will have to return the dowry paid by the groom’s family if the marriage ends. Whilst providing a relief in certain situations, divorce or separation are not universal solutions to the problem of domestic violence. They do not guarantee that the woman will be protected from violence in the future. Moreover, many women do not want to divorce or separate from their partners. Their priority is to end violence in the relationship, not the relationship itself⁴⁰. Finally, many women are too ashamed to ask for a divorce (when it is socially or culturally unacceptable) because they wish to preserve the family for the sake of the children or in order to maintain an acceptable standard of living.

There are alternative solutions for the victim other than divorce or separation. Family law has other remedies. In Argentina, for example, the family law system can order the removal of the perpetrator from the home, compulsory participation in re-education programmes and compensation for the victim.

However, in certain countries where women cannot take legal action on their own, these procedures can be limited. In these countries, women are considered as minors and can only sue their husbands under the guardianship of a man, their father or brother, if they

⁴⁰ In Hanover, a study of statements by battered women using refuges shows that 50% of them do not want to leave their partner but simply hope that the behaviour of their partner changes and that he will stop beating them and their children. Source: *Polices d’Europe et sécurité urbaine*, publication from the European Forum on Urban Safety, 1996. Other research conducted elsewhere in the world has made the same observations.

are unmarried, or their husband, if they are married⁴¹. This effectively prevents them taking any action.

Some countries have established government-funded compensation for victims of domestic violence. This can take the form of covering the cost of medical care, compensation for lost salary, transportation costs or any other expenses incurred as a result of this violence. Sometimes, however, obtaining this compensation is subject to certain conditions. In the United Kingdom, for example, victims who continue to live with the perpetrator or refuse to cooperate with the police cannot receive compensation.

It is clear then that the law can bring about an improvement in the situation in certain cases, although it is only part of the solution to this complex problem. In some cases it is not a solution at all, and other strategies or policies have to be used to bring some relief to the victim. In this context, redefining the role and response of the police can be a determining factor.

B) Improving the role and response of the police when dealing with domestic violence:

The reticence of the police to intervene in private affairs :

The police have a key role to play in an effective response to domestic violence. They have the power to stop or control socially unacceptable behaviour and they are there to respond quickly to violent situations.

The traditional police approach to domestic violence is changing. The way they respond has for a long time been quite different from their response to other forms of violence. Police are thought not to offer the victim of domestic violence adequate protection from the perpetrator and underestimate the violence, ignoring cries for help.

It has been shown that police officers do not give the same priority to reports of domestic violence as they do to other calls. Equally, when victims come to the police station, they are not always given adequate attention or protection. In a study on domestic violence in Kenya, one woman stated that the police simply advised her to go⁴² to the chief in her community, who was the only who could deal with domestic violence .

Police may be reluctant to intervene in domestic affairs as they place more value on privacy and family rights than to the victim's right to freedom from assault. They often subscribe to the view that the victim in some way provoked the violence. They are reluctant to act and show little interest in cases of domestic violence, doubting that it will lead to a successful prosecution. In a survey carried out in the United Kingdom, 59 women who had left their violent husbands were interviewed. 25 of them had suffered life-threatening attacks. In

⁴¹ In Kenya, even if there is no specific law on this subject, in practice and in certain communities (for example the Maasai community), the voice of a woman has the same value as that of a child and it is therefore recommended that a female victim of violence be assisted by a man if she wishes to testify against her husband. Elsewhere, certain jurisdictions have modified the law, as in Zimbabwe, which recognised in 1982 the Legal Age of Majority.

⁴² Source: *The relationship between domestic violence and women's political and economic empowerment*, Ele Palewelski, UNIFEM (Nairobi office), June 1998.

8% of the cases, the police had not come when called to the scene and in 51% of cases the police simply stated that this was a private affair and no practical help was given to the victim. In 17% of cases, the violent husband was charged with assault or threatened with the possibility of being charged and in 20% of cases, practical help was given by taking the offender away for the night or the woman referred to a refuge⁴³.

When the police respond to violent situations, their practice is rather to act as mediators. In Egypt, for example, women abused by their husbands are referred to the social worker at the police station. In Malaysia, Nigeria and Thailand, the police attempt to conciliate between the parties and dissuade the victims from taking the matter to court.

The police therefore need training to help them understand the dynamics underlying domestic violence. They themselves admit that their experiences of domestic violence can be frustrating. In fact, despite frequently being subjected to violence, women tend to stay with the perpetrators and are hesitant to assist the authorities in prosecuting them. Sensitising the police is therefore necessary for them to understand the feelings of dependence and fear, the sense of responsibility towards their children or their marriage, and the isolation which many of these women experience. As a Kenyan Commissioner of Police stated: "*Officers of the force lack training on gender violence cases. This leads to mishandling of complaints and aggravation of trauma upon victims*"⁴⁴.

Strategies to improve police response:

The role the police should play with respect to domestic violence is a delicate one. This ambiguous role, relying sometimes on mediation, sometimes on law enforcement, is a reflection of society's own ambiguous perception of domestic violence as somehow private and the business of the family and somehow a crime. Several strategies could be implemented in order to improve the way cases of domestic violence are dealt with. One of these strategies consists in strengthening police powers of intervention in private matters. This power is limited throughout the world. This limitation has its roots in international texts on protection of human rights. These texts provide an important guarantee, to protect the lives of men and women from arbitrary State intervention. However, with respect to domestic violence, sticking firmly to this guarantee can often be to the detriment of the victim.

Another strategy to guide effective police intervention would be to set up special units to treat cases of domestic violence. Certain jurisdictions assign female police officers to work specifically in this area. These women are trained to collaborate with or be a part of the crisis intervention teams and interview victims. In Hanover (Germany), police have initiated a social work unit. Its psycho-sociological aid services are run by female police officers whose role it is to aid and listen to victims⁴⁵.

A telephone call is often the victim's first contact with the police. When a victim calls the police, the officer's response is extremely important. Improving police response to domestic violence also begins with improving the speed and treatment of phone calls. Emergency

⁴³ in *Strategies for confronting domestic violence...*, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Source: *The relationship between domestic violence and women's political and economic empowerment*, op. cit.

⁴⁵ *Polices d'Europe et sécurité urbaine*, op. cit.

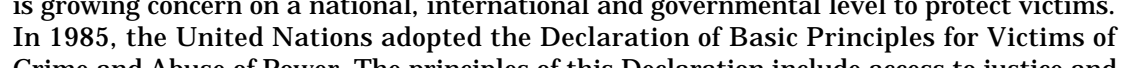


telephone lines exist in certain countries (Belgium, Austria, France, United States) to link victims up with the police.

As an integral part of dealing with domestic violence, the police could develop their collaboration with other sectors of the community, as a way of benefiting from their expertise. For example, health professionals have developed special techniques for talking to young children. The police and social workers could come together to interview the child victims of sexual abuse. This cooperation with other agencies need not stop at a social level. It can include other sectors such as education and health. This cooperation can be strengthened through inter-agency protocols. These would lead to coordinated action, optimisation of existing resources and reinforced efforts. Protocols must include the following elements: jurisdictional responsibilities, definitions of domestic violence, principles of action, procedures already in force, strategies for sharing information, legal options and procedures and other available support services.

In Canada, several protocols already exist. By way of example, in Ontario, a protocol on abused women has been developed by the police and the judicial system. It includes: information on how to recognise and report cases of wife battering, descriptions of each step in the police investigation and prosecution, a description of the area of each professional person's responsibilities and mechanisms to encourage mutual consultation and communication during the whole of the judicial procedure.

2.2- Victim aid policies :



The security and well-being of victims are vital in any response to domestic violence. There is growing concern on a national, international and governmental level to protect victims. In 1985, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Basic Principles for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. The principles of this Declaration include access to justice and fair treatment, compensation and assistance to victims. The recognition and protection of victims' rights, as well as their needs and interests, are very important. All strategies must take into account the safety of women and their children and the assistance given to them.

Assistance to victims can take several forms, including better access to the law and legal aid for victims, appropriate training for professionals working in this area, emergency assistance measures, as well as more long-term assistance. The action taken by non-governmental organisations in this area is a combination of several of these aspects (Inset No. 3). Measures taken to provide emergency and more long-term assistance remain the most important and the most common areas of response to victims.

Emergency measures :

Victims need access to emergency services. These can include: crisis intervention teams, special telephone lines, shelters or other emergency residential facilities, transportation networks and measures allowing victims or their aggressors to be removed from the home.

Crisis intervention teams use qualified personnel (including volunteers) to respond to domestic violence. In particular, they must be able to recognise the inherent signs of domestic violence, have detailed knowledge of the problem, be highly sensitive, competent and professional. Their intervention assures the safety of the victim, takes the victim's statement (it is vital for the victim that social workers believe her) and supplies assistance and appropriate victim support.



INSET NO. 3: A practical example of aid to victims of domestic violence: the experience of the Lihok-Pilipina Foundation in Cebu (Philippines).

The aim of this Foundation was originally to respond to the priorities and needs of women from deprived households by encouraging them to initiate small micro-credit projects. However, the Foundation very quickly had to include the fight against domestic violence into its programmes, as one of the problems encountered by women in their experience of micro-credit was the often violent reactions of their husbands. The support programme for women in crisis began in 1991 in an attempt to respond to domestic violence. The Foundation specifically initiated this programme after having had to deal already with four cases of domestic violence. Services included in the programme were defined according to the needs of the victims. Five services are currently in force: legal aid, medical assistance, legal advice, temporary housing and advice on alternative ways to survive, financially. Legal aid consists of legal representation of women who take their problem to court and the benefit of legal advice on women's rights and general human rights. Cases brought to court are taken on by the centre's lawyers or volunteer lawyers from the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA).

Medical assistance refers injured women to other medical services like Kauswagan, an NGO which provides community care. They possess the appropriate skills and can invest the time necessary to simply listen and talk to the victim. After these sessions, the most difficult cases are referred to psychiatrists or psychologists. With respect to temporary housing, the Foundation provides a room in their headquarters for women for one night after which they are referred to social agencies providing more long-term temporary accommodation.

In order to give alternative means of subsistence, the Foundation has a special fund allocated to women giving them the chance to join or rejoin the micro-credit project. During their stay at the centre, victims take part in specially initiated projects in alternative resources.

Source: *Fighting violence against women: the experience of the Lihok-Pilipina foundation in Cebu*, Tessie Banaynal-Fernandez, in *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol 6, No 2, October 1994.

Emergency telephone lines provide immediate assistance and direct people towards assistance services. These lines cover a wide variety of problems, including domestic violence. In Canada and the United Kingdom there are special telephone lines for children, who are encouraged to ring should they need any kind of help. In countries where this kind of service is not available, victims rely on community networks. In Lima, Peru, some women carry whistles. Should they be attacked, they whistle and community members come to their aid. In Cebu, in the Philippines, community watch groups have been set up and support women who are victims of abuse by referring them to the appropriate services. These community-based strategies can prevent violence and protect the victim. The victims' and the perpetrators' families are encouraged to get together in pre-organised meetings.

The aim is to prevent subsequent or future violence by shaming the perpetrator within his community and threatening to expel him from it.

In the event of an emergency, women and children need a safe place to live. Many countries have emergency refuges (public or private) for battered women and their children. The first shelter of this kind opened in London in 1971. Named the "Chiswick Family Rescue", it is still a model for refuges around the world. It offers a 24-hour crisis line, emergency accommodation for more than 25 women and 60 children, a crèche for young children and counseling and support services⁴⁶.

These refuges do not only offer the guarantee of a safe place to live in an emergency. Battered women may receive active assistance in centres which offer support and information services to women. The aim is to help women regain their self-confidence and become independent. Services offering legal aid are another way in which victims can be helped to make vital decisions about their future.

More long-term measures :

Although refuges provide women with a safe place to stay in an emergency, it is equally important for them to be provided with a more long-term place to live. In Canada and Scotland, accommodation is offered to women who have left violent homes. This accommodation gives them a chance to live in a safe environment for several months.

Victims do, however, need more help than simply being provided with safe housing. They usually need practical and moral support. If a woman decides to leave her partner, she will also need: housing, facilities for her children, financial support, medical and or psychological help, therapy for herself and her children, emotional and social support, legal aid and education and training opportunities.


Within this framework, victims, those who work in crisis centres, women's groups and community-based organisations can all contribute in researching and developing better ways to respond to domestic violence. Any evaluation of existing services must be done from the victim's point of view. She also has an important role to play in creating new programmes. At the same time, the above does not bring about a lasting solution to domestic violence. In fact, when initiatives only concentrate on the victim, they solve only part of the problem by responding after the event. Effective strategies to fight domestic violence must attack the causes as well as the symptoms. Working with violent men is particularly vital to any fighting strategy against domestic violence and can significantly influence subsequent offences or abusive attitudes. What must follow is the sensitisation of young people to violence, educating them on its realities and the cultural and social relationships between men and women.

2.3 - Other initiatives to fight against domestic violence:

A) Working with the perpetrators:

Men's violence against women needs to be situated in its social context rather than being treated as a pathological problem. It is the product of social and cultural life and the

⁴⁶ In *Strategies for confronting domestic violence...*, op. cit.

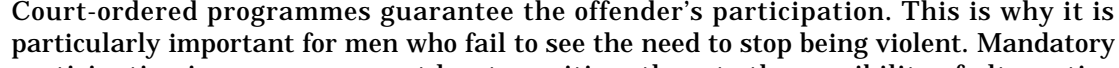


relationships between men and women. This is why victim aid cannot by itself analyse the causes of violence or try to fight it. Fighting strategies must also endeavour to analyse the causes of violence by working with the perpetrator. Existing initiatives which place the perpetrator at the centre of any intervention can generally be divided into two categories, treatment and education programmes.

Treatment programmes: various institutions (prisons, social services, emergency refuges...) offer treatment programmes for violent men. Some concentrate on individual awareness. Men learn to recognise the thoughts and feelings which led up to the violence in order to avoid future acts of violence. Other programmes give men skills in the following areas: conflict resolution, passive problem solving, relaxation techniques and anger management.

Although various programmes such as this exist, little study has been done on their short or long-term effects. However, the most promising programmes are those combining the following characteristics: well-defined objectives and a clear structure, a detailed assessment of the offender and the context of abuse (for example, the need to refer violent men to forms of assistance or therapy for particular problems, for example, substance abuse), precise admission criteria, clear assessment of the offender's motivation and commitment in participating in the programme and working on his behaviour and an evaluation of the impact of the treatment.

Experience has shown that treatment programmes are only effective if the perpetrators recognise their responsibility in their action. If they are motivated enough to change their attitudes, the treatment is more successful. On the other hand, if they are only participating in the treatment programmes to escape incarceration, its effectiveness will be limited.




Court-ordered programmes guarantee the offender's participation. This is why it is particularly important for men who fail to see the need to stop being violent. Mandatory participation in a programme at least sensitises them to the possibility of alternative behaviour.

Education programmes and resources for violent men: these aim to change the values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour contributing to violence against women. Those run by women's organisations centre on the abuse of power and control in domestic violence. There again it is the victim's safety which is of utmost importance. (Inset No. 4). Group work is common practice in programmes for men who mistreat their partners. Group dynamics encourage men to share and trust others in the group. As a consequence, the group may suggest alternative methods of approach for each other. These groups can also question the beliefs and attitudes of violent men and encourage them to be responsible for their actions. The groups can give long-term support to violent men and their families, once the programme has finished.

B) Taking preventative action to sensitise and educate:

Education is a key tool in preventing violence. It can expose the direct causes of violence, evaluate its impact and promote alternative behaviour and solutions. The aims of education strategies are to increase awareness, change patterns of behaviour and develop the wherewithal to manage violence and avoid it. These educative strategies can assume other forms. They may be initiated by the state, the city government or the communities. They may be taken on at a national level or aimed towards specific groups. In particular, women's groups and NGOs possess various channels of information and networks which allow them to pass on messages.



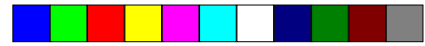
Methods used vary from one country to another. For example, in Bangladesh and India, women use street theatre to sensitise the public on this issue. Members of the community participate in the performances, recounting events based on their own experiences. Afterwards, there are discussions with members of the public about the problems raised. In Costa Rica, the musical group Claro Oscuro writes and sings to raise public awareness on violence against women⁴⁷.

Education campaigns which concentrate on specific groups are also good ways of preventing violence. An example of this can be seen in Holland, where an education programme has been set up for young men between the ages of 14 and 18 years and 25 and 30 years old. These education campaigns include a wide variety of models for young people and school-age children. They lead to the sensitisation of children to violence from a very early age and encourage alternative ways to resolve conflicts. Education programmes on family life also target younger children and adolescents. These programmes sensitise youngsters on subjects such as: men's power and control over women, stereotypes linked to sexual inequality, sex education, human rights, principles of equality and equal treatment, the importance of autonomy and relationships based on mutual respect, family violence, passive conflict resolution, child development and parental obligations.

Sometimes, teachers, social workers and other professionals have come together to develop education programmes. These programmes offer young people strategies to avoid violence. In the United Kingdom and in Canada, the Public Board of Education, with the cooperation of teachers and students, has developed information sheets and booklets on domestic violence. Several seminars on the prevention of violence have also been suggested in local schools. In the state of New Jersey in the United States, teachers are trained in domestic violence and its impact on children who witness it. "Domestic Violence: a Guide for Educators" helps teachers to recognise the behaviour of children coming from a violent home. It allows teachers to help children individually and in the classroom⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ in *Strategies for confronting domestic violence...*, op. cit.

⁴⁸ in *Strategies for confronting domestic violence...*, op. cit.



INSET NO. 4: Three examples of aid and education programmes aimed at violent men:

CHANGE is a multi-agency Scottish reeducation programme linked to the criminal justice system. It has two objectives: to reeducate violent men and educate professionals and society about domestic violence.

The Change programme complements the organisation Women's Aid Services which provides assistance to battered women. The underlying principle of the CHANGE programme is that men's violence against women is intentional and supported by sexual inequalities present in patriarchal societies. The aim of the programme is to increase male understanding of their violent attitude. It also teaches values such as cooperation, negotiation and patience.

Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) is an NGO based in Alexandra township, Johannesburg. ADAPT has developed a new approach to domestic violence and the treatment of it. It considers the issue according to a gender perspective and attaches as much importance to comforting the victim as it does to helping and reeducating the offender. The way in which it responds to violence is therefore with respect to these two targets and includes: workshops for social workers designed to develop appropriate intervention for battered women; training for other professionals (including the police); training based on personal development and legal advice for community advisors; individual assistance for battered women, victims of rape and offenders; support groups for women and men; seminars for women's, men's, youth, church, school, university and community-based organisations.

The underlying principle of ADAPT's philosophy is that men have a considerable role to play in preventing violence and that they are the main players in constructively helping violent men. That is the reason why in 1997, the organisation started a Men's Programme, whose implementation challenge is made possible by young males who are volunteers. The groups of male presenters are often ex-offenders, who, after a considerable amount of work on themselves and their own behaviour, can use their experience to benefit other men. One major motivation for this programme is to begin a healing process for all men and not only the abusive ones. Amongst the significant initiatives taken by the association, the "men's march against violence" deserves mention. Initiated in 1997, the aim of this march was to denounce violence against women and children and to recognise that this violence concerns all South African citizens. The success of this initiative was to make public the fact that all men are partly responsible for violence against women and therefore are a part of the solution.

POWA (People Opposing Women Abuse) is another South African NGO providing assistance to battered women. The fact that they include men in the programme is due to the observation that many women have expressed the desire to see their partner given help to control his violent behaviour. The association states that these women return to their partners despite the assistance they have received. According to POWA, there is a considerable lack of services for female victims of abuse. This is why the association believed it was time to work at a preventive level with violent men rather than concentrating only on the consequences of this violence, that is to say, the female victims. POWA therefore set up a pilot project at the beginning of 1998, creating a working group for abusive men. POWA's therapeutic approach is based on changing abusive behaviour. This is seen as the basis for any treatment and the presenters constantly challenge participants on their reaction to deny, find excuses or share the responsibility of their actions. The group also discusses the positive and negative aspects of violent behaviour, using methods of relaxation, psychological help and empathy.

Sources: - *Strategies for confronting domestic violence, a resource manual, op cit.*

- *Agenda magazine, op cit.*

- *Programme for batterers, Lindsey Breslin, in Agenda magazine, op cit.*



PART THREE:

Women and violence in urban areas

I – HOW DOES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MANIFEST ITSELF IN THE PUBLIC ARENA?

The aforementioned strategies have concentrated on violence against women in their domestic life, which, in quantitative terms and in terms of its impact is the main problem. However, women are not immune to violence outside the home. This type of violence is also heavily associated with the social relationships between men and women and the power men have over women. What is more, the two phenomena (violence in the home and outside it) are closely connected. The phenomena of street children and child prostitution are often caused by a violent family background where the children are the victims of continual abuse. We have already seen how domestic violence has an impact on violence in society in general and especially on criminal behaviour. As a final point here, it is clear that for female victims of violence, the experience has a lasting effect on their behaviour and only serves to increase their feelings of insecurity when out and about in city. All men are seen by them as potential aggressors.

In the city, the question of violence is multifaceted, although the issue of primary importance is that of the suitability of public areas for women. Whether it be about threats, intimidation, harassment, sexual attacks or rape, all aggression or aggressive threats considerably inhibit women from moving around the city. They are targets of violence due to their vulnerability, (as are young people, the elderly, the handicapped and ethnic or sexual minorities) and this vulnerability perpetuates their position in society. Finally, violence is not impartial and expresses itself differently according to the age, social group and ethnic origin of its victim.

1.1 – *Some information and facts about violence in urban areas:*

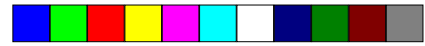
A) Women: a group vulnerable to violence in urban areas:

Whilst women are particularly affected by domestic violence, they are also the primary victims of rape or sexual attacks committed by strangers.

A study by the US Department of Justice⁴⁹ reveals, for example, that amongst the most serious crimes committed against women over the last ten years in the United States, incidents of rape have increased by four times as much as the rate of all other types of crime. Every hour sixteen women are attacked by rapists and a woman is raped every six minutes. Since 1974, the rate of attacks against young women (between the ages of 20 and 24 years) has increased by almost 50%. For young men of the same age, it has decreased by 12%.

The same study also states that the average age of rape victims is around 18 and a half years old. Young women between the ages of 16 and 19 are more vulnerable to rape and it is young girls between the ages of 12 and 15 who are the most exposed to rape by strangers.

⁴⁹ In US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, internet site www.ojp.usdoj.gov, 1998.



B) Feeling afraid and unsafe in the city:

According to this data, it would appear that women are the frequent victims of violence or threats of violence. This affects their attitudes and feelings when out and about in urban areas. Feeling afraid and unsafe is a feeling experienced by all women, whatever their age, ethnic origin or social class.

*"It is everyone's fundamental right to be safe in town. But, there you go, fear is all around. It is not a transitory impression or a spontaneous feeling. It is deep-rooted, and born of the isolation and inequality between men and women which breeds insecurity"*⁵⁰.

Although feeling unsafe is not a feeling confined to women, the fear women feel in urban areas is quite particular. It is all to do with physical and psychological honour. This is because most, if not all women, feel that their honour needs protecting. It is a physical as well as psychological and sexual honour. Although not all women have been raped or attacked, all have felt at some point that indescribable feeling of unease which ranges from merely feeling uncomfortable through to paralysis. According to a study conducted in Canada in 1992, violence or the threat of violence, committed for the most part by men, affected more than 60% of women in Canada⁵¹. This violence creates feelings of fear, helplessness and insecurity. As they do not wish to be exposed to possible violence, these feelings end up controlling women, restricting their social activities. Many women living in large cities do not feel safe in their own city and this feeling of insecurity limits the freedom they should rightly enjoy and their fundamental right to frequent public places.

1.2 - The different and varied effects of violence:

A) The different and varied effects of violence according to age, social class and the ethnic origin of the victim:


Violence affects various groups of people differently, men and women, young and old or those belonging to an ethnic or sexual minority. Surveys throughout the world on victimisation have shown that gender, ethnic origin or age can explain the variety of ways in which a violent attack can affect different groups of people.

In South Africa, the Institute of Security Studies⁵² regularly publishes the results of victimisation surveys conducted in South African cities. The most recent, conducted in Cape Town shows significant results regarding the characteristics of victims in the city (the same trends can also be seen in Johannesburg and Durban). The questionnaire used was based on the model victimisation questionnaire used in nearly 60 cities worldwide. Nearly 6,000 people were interviewed in Cape Town. The results were classified according to age, gender and location of the incident and are representative of the criminal trends in the city. What emerges from these surveys is that the main targets of violence are those

⁵⁰ in *Agir pour une ville sans peur*, proceedings from the Forum organised by the Comité d'Action Femmes et Sécurité Urbaine (CAFSU), in Montreal, 23rd November 1993.

⁵¹ in *J'accuse la peur*, proceedings from the Conference in Montreal on women and urban security, 30th March 1992. Report produced by the Canadian Secretary of State and Tandem Montreal. By way of comparison, the same report estimates that only 15% of men feel unsafe.

⁵² in *Crime in Cape Town, results of a city victim survey*, L. Camerer, A. Louw, M. Shaw, L. Artz and W. Scharf, ISS Monograph Series, No. 23, April 1998.



who are the most deprived in society. In South Africa then, ethnic origin and, consequently, social class, are determining factors in who is exposed to crime. Although one must take the ethnic divide into account when trying to ascertain the typology of victims, what is also relevant is that this corresponds to another division, that of the economic status which determines one's general lifestyle and place of residence. As a consequence, victims' profiles are directly linked to where they live in the city. The mixed race population in the townships and informal settlements where gangs operate are therefore the most exposed to crime.

With respect to sexual assaults and rape, out of 32 victims interviewed, 16% were Black South Africans, 68% of mixed origin and 16% White. This confirms the belief that women from mixed race areas of the city are more likely to be sexually assaulted.

The survey states that women under 25 years of age are the most vulnerable to sexual assault. The emergency call centre in Cape Town estimated that for the period 1994-1997, 31% of victims were less than 18 years old and 75% less than 25.

Data concerning the location of the attack also shows some interesting trends. Sexual attacks are often presumed to be street crime, taking place in dark alleys, car parks or parks. However, the study shows the reality and extent of sexual assault in a woman's private life, revealing that 43% of attacks of a sexual nature take place in the victim's home, whilst only 16% of incidents take place in the streets. Black South Africans are most likely to be attacked whilst going shopping or coming back (50%). This means that the different ethnic groups are more vulnerable or exposed to certain types of crime because of their way of life. More than 60% of women of mixed race were attacked whilst at home or at a friend's home, whilst 80% of white women were at home or going about a leisure activity.

Vulnerability to repeated victimisation also differs according to ethnic groups, women of mixed race origin being more susceptible than black or white women, especially to assault. It would in fact appear that women of mixed race origin living in Cape Town have 40 times more chances than other ethnic groups of becoming a victim of the same type of crime more than once. One explanation is that they are less able to protect themselves in an environment overrun by gangs and crime.

These trends are not limited only to South Africa. In the United States, studies carried out by the Department of Justice⁵³ also show the fundamental importance of using data on the gender, age and ethnic group of victims to explain the disparity in victimisation. Surveys show that those who are the most susceptible to violent crime are men (rape excluded), the young, those on low incomes, black people and those who live alone (divorced, separated or single). With regard sexual attacks, results indicate that women aged 25 years or less are the most exposed and black women are 5 times more likely to become victims of sexual crimes than white women.

B) Those groups marginalised by society are particularly vulnerable to violence and its effects:

Sexual minorities, street children and prostitutes, are also especially vulnerable to urban violence. They suffer the inherent dangers of the situation of exclusion and marginalisation

⁵³ in *Report to the nation on crime and justice, second edition*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, March 1990.

in which they find themselves, as well as those inherent in their overexposure to what goes on in the street.

Sexual minorities⁵⁴ are often victims of different types of violence. Besides psychological violence, they are also exposed to domestic violence and street violence. It is significant here that the legal definition of rape and sexual assault assumes that the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) are members of the opposite sex. This definition does not recognise other forms of sexual abuse, notably that which occurs between two men or two women. This lack of recognition of the different types of sexual abuse has repercussions on victims from sexual minorities. Lesbians who find themselves the victims of violence and who seek help, face a higher level of victimisation than other women. What is more, homosexuals have less chances of finding support from their family or fear being judged for their «deviant» or «abnormal» behaviour. They can become the victims of several types of violence: physical, emotional, sexual and economic. Emotional abuse is common amongst victims lacking in self-confidence and its effects can lead to suicide, especially if they do not receive any help. This testimony by a Lesbian is revealing:

“It is true that I lacked self-confidence mainly because of the unresolved conflicts within me with regards my sexuality and society’s oppression of lesbians. She (my partner) regularly hit me and threatened to tell my parents everything. I stayed because I was afraid and never thought I could one day love another woman”⁵⁵.

Acts of violence in the home can reemerge and intensify in public when a woman is rejected from structured victim support after revealing her sexual orientation.

The issue of sexual minorities questions and challenges society on the institutionalisation and recognition of certain types of violence against women. For action to fight violence against women to be effective, all women’s experiences need to be taken into account.

Prostitutes who work in the streets (but do not actually live there)⁵⁶ also experience the same kinds of violence as other women. Violence inflicted by men and by the police is a part of their daily lives. The kidnap, beating and rape of prostitutes is common, although they receive no help. The majority of them do not report incidences of violence to the police. According to these women, police do not consider that prostitutes can be victims of rape and,⁵⁷ anyway, police officers are guilty of playing an active role in the violence inflicted on them .

Moreover, as a result of rape and forced sexual relations, women are very exposed to sexually-transmitted diseases, the most significant of which is Aids. There is no service available to help women who work in the streets and who find themselves the victims of aggression. They must therefore find other means of protection. In Cape Town, for example, women organise themselves into small groups, watching over one another. When a prostitute leaves with a client, she makes sure that the others have noted down a means of identifying him (the registration plate of the vehicle, for example).

⁵⁴ This will mainly concentrate on female homosexuals, in line with the subject under discussion here.

⁵⁵ in *black, lesbian and speaking out*, Agenda magazine, op. cit.

⁵⁶ The case of prostitutes who live in the street is included in the paragraph on street youth.

⁵⁷ in *naming the dangers of working on the street*, in Agenda magazine, op. cit.

As a final point, street children and youths are equally exposed to the dangers inherent in life in the street. They may come under threat from their friends or enemies, a crowd administering mob justice or the police. Girls are particularly vulnerable to prostitution, rape or sexual relations with their contemporaries (Inset No. 5). These children are powerless to change the perverted effects of their physical and social environment and cannot rely on assistance from public institutions or from the usual aid networks.

II - RECLAIMING PUBLIC AREAS AND IMPROVING THE SECURITY OF WOMEN IN THE CITY:

2.1 - Recognising women's right to be safe in the city

We have seen how women's experience of living in the city differs greatly from men's. Although a city belongs to those men and women who live there, women's access is limited due to the unsuitability of public places. Developments within the city, infrastructure and urban life in general, are often carried out without consulting women, thereby hindering them from exercising their fundamental right to full citizenship.

INSET NO. 5: The particularly dangerous hazards of life for girls on the street. The case of Nairobi:

"It is girls especially who are subjected to rape. **Rape is an initiation rite into gang life** but is also one of the expressions of violence street youth are exposed to (youngsters on the street are known to engage in rape. This takes place mostly at night in parks, near public toilets in the city centre, etc). It is extremely difficult to gather data or even find those willing to talk about their experiences, but we do know that these girls are sexually attacked by adults after dark. It is equally difficult to collate reliable information on prostitution and sexual exploitation involving street youth. According to some estimates, around 25,000 girls live on the street in Kenya, the majority in Nairobi (where they make up 35% of street children). As a result of on the spot investigations, it was discovered that the majority of girls on the streets of Nairobi, aged 11 years and over, are engaged in prostitution, often the only way to make money. Their only protection comes from other members of the gang, but generally they have no choice but to suffer the violence of their social environment. A second generation of street children is thus being born into a disastrous situation, both for the mother and the child, lacking in basic hygiene and nutrition. Let us not forget the case of young girls exploited by national and international paedophiles. Despite their meagre resources and their lack of formal education, the girls, and even the boys we met, were aware of the dangers associated with sexual activity. They claimed to protect themselves against Aids by using condoms stolen from hotels. They would then keep them for use with other clients. Girls also steal condoms to give to their husbands or boyfriends(...). **Rape and prostitution are an implicit part of the reality facing women on the streets.** This reality is also part of current street culture, in a global process where children and the youth of today have become sexual commodities".

Sources: extract by Deyssi Rodriguez-Torrès in Nairobi: les gangs de la rue en direct, in *Jeunes, culture de la rue et violences urbaines en Afrique, Actes du symposium international d'Abidjan, 5-7 mai 1997*, IFRA Abadan, under the supervision of Georges Héroult and Pius Adesanmi.

A) Global awareness:

During the 70's in North America, women's place in the urban environment became a topic of concern amongst researchers. During the 80's, with help from women's groups, this concern began to have an effect on municipal life. In Europe it was the publication of the European Charter on Women in Cities in 1995 which led to the consideration of this issue in cities and villages, whilst at the same time generating debate on citizenship and cities⁵⁸.

It was not long before the quality of women's lives became of international concern. In 1994, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) brought together delegations from 27 countries for the first time to discuss the theme: "women and cities: housing, facilities and urban environment". This conference allowed participants to share their experiences and practices and to compare national programmes to increase women's contribution in city planning⁵⁹.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), which took place in Istanbul in June 1996, was an important turning point. After the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the City Summit placed great importance on women's concerns, leading to a series of commitments by national governments within the framework of the Habitat Programme. These commitments are part of a greater objective: to target sexual equality when managing human settlements in cities and communities. Paragraph 46 of the Habitat Programme also committed itself to: "*developing programmes and practices to encourage the full and equal participation of women in the planning of and the decision-making process involving human settlements, and the reinforcement of those decisions*"⁶⁰.

As a preliminary to the City Summit, the first World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities took place, bringing together more than 500 city mayors. The Assembly's Declaration invites city association members to implement the Habitat Programme on a local level, committing themselves especially to: "*promoting and ensuring the full participation of women in the decision-making process at a municipal level by taking necessary measures for them to share power and authority*".


Habitat II places equal importance on joint cooperation and the sharing of experiences and resources. In this perspective, governments, local authorities and their counterparts are encouraged to develop five-year plans of action. An international commission (the Huairou Commission), comprised mainly of representatives from various women's groups, local authorities and United Nations agencies, will monitor the measures taken by governments and local authorities with reference to three main objectives:

- to ensure the full and equal participation of women in government proceedings at local and regional level,
- to ensure the full participation of women as citizens in the development of cities and communities,

⁵⁸ in *Compte à rebours pour Istanbul*, United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, No. 4, 1995.

⁵⁹ in *Les femmes et la ville: logements, services et environnement urbain*, OECD, Paris 1995.

⁶⁰ *La déclaration d'Istanbul et le programme pour l'Habitat*, United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, Turkey, 3-14 June 1996, CNUEH, Nairobi, 1997.

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- to implement different approaches for men and women in planning, development and urban management procedures.

B) Towards greater involvement of women in city management:

Women represent more than 50% of the population. They are still, however, far from being represented to that degree in political and administrative programmes. They are in fact short-changed as citizens, due to the fact that city facilities, equipment and development are not usually conceived with them in mind: inefficient public transport, strict opening hours of municipal services, unsuitable public transport, being just some examples. It is for this reason that in order to apprehend and modify one's response to women's particular needs with respect to city affairs, their participation in the decision-making process is vital. This participation can take several forms. Equal representation is certainly an excellent means of ensuring that the needs of women and men will be taken into consideration in municipal planning and management. Ensuring the election of equal numbers of men and women at a municipal level is a challenging priority. In Quebec for example, 9% of city mayors are women and only one city councillor in 5 is a woman⁶¹. In order to increase female representation, municipal authorities must show clear willing, backed by equitable legislation, as a way of guaranteeing lasting change. Some countries, such as Brazil and Tanzania, have even introduced legislation to reserve a percentage of seats in municipal proceedings for women. Another significant example of women's participation in city affairs can be seen in Sweden (Inset No. 6).

It is essential that women be encouraged to participate in the management of municipal services. City councils must develop various measures to encourage women into key positions within its administration. Equally, these measures must ensure that the workplace be secure and non discriminatory, with clear policies against sexual harassment and towards a safe working environment.


Finally, it is paradoxical that whilst it is women who are particularly affected by security or the lack of it in urban areas, they have little opportunity to defend their own interests

INSET NO. 6: Sweden, a society supportive of women's needs

"Sweden has been described by researchers as a society which is supportive of women's needs. Indeed Swedish legislation and policies reflect this by allowing women to have a family, a career and be involved in politics should they so wish. Swedish women have one of the highest rates of working women in the world, one of the lowest rates of economic dependence within the family and the narrowest of discrepancies between men's and women's salaries. In the 1994 elections, the highest rate ever of women gaining parliamentary seats was attained. There are currently 141 women (40.4%) in Parliament and half of the 22 ministers are women. The same kinds of figures can be seen in local authorities and counties where women occupy 41% and 48% respectively of the seats".

Source: extract from: *L'impact des politiques publiques de sensibilisation au genre sur la vie des femmes en Suède*, Barbara Hobson and Michelle White, in *Compte à rebours pour Istanbul*, op. cit.

⁶¹ in *A city tailored to women, the role of municipal governments in achieving gender equality*, City of Montreal and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Montreal, October 1997.



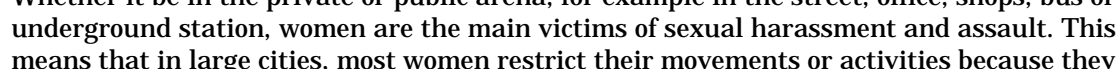
and little say in policy-making. One way in which to redress the balance is to ensure that women be allowed to act as consultants, encouraging them to hold key positions on committees and consultative public councils. Their contribution to urban life must be given more recognition so as they may be a party to collective, political and administrative decisions concerning their community. Their opinions should be considered as specific expertise and indeed another way entirely of looking at urban development, their experience as an asset to city councils.

“Women are not linear in their approach and do not compartmentalise, tending rather to be pluralistic. They are used to finding solutions to complex problems. This kind of approach is particularly suited to urban management, where the often multifaceted problems amongst the different sectors in society need to be resolved. It would be an asset to urban management to actively include more women and not simply an expression of altruism”⁶².

City councils therefore have a major role to play in opening up the decision-making process to women and can facilitate their participation by making the whole public consultation procedure more accessible. However, their role does not stop there because they are also key players in implementing prevention strategies to fight against the lack of security for women in urban areas. They are thereby in a position to channel the action and energy of those in local associations and city networks involved in these issues.

2.2-Local government: a key player in all strategies to fight violence against women:

A) Women’s security in the city, a clear priority:



Whether it be in the private or public arena, for example in the street, office, shops, bus or underground station, women are the main victims of sexual harassment and assault. This means that in large cities, most women restrict their movements or activities because they feel unsafe. We have already seen how this feeling acts as a way of socially controlling women’s activities.

Living with this feeling each day makes women sensitive to various aspects of urban life which may contribute to their insecurity, or reassure them. This daily experience makes them infinitely qualified to detect problems and offer solutions. One of the ways in which women can reclaim their city in order to gain full benefit from its resources and move around freely whatever the hour, is to actively go about changing their environment together with municipal authorities and other community institutions and groups. The safer cities are for women, the more they will be able to go about their business.

Municipal initiatives must therefore concentrate on changing the city’s physical environment in order to make it safer for women. Clearly fundamental is the need to make public places (such as parks, car parks and university campuses) safer and more accessible. Public transport networks must also minimise the chances of women being attacked. Adequate lighting is also essential. However, how can we best understand women’s fears and objectively grasp the full reality of their situation in order to actually make them safer? The Urban Management Programme City Consultation offers an effective way of dialogue between city administration and stakeholders (represented here by women’s

⁶² in *Les femmes et la ville: logements, services et environnement urbain*, OECD, Paris, 1995.

groups) to address a particular problem, as well as looking at the issue of priorities and key actions to be taken (Inset n°7). Furthermore, the Canadian example quoted favoured the use of a particular methodology and analysis which place women at the heart of the matter and which sees clear results.

INSET N°7: The UMP City Consultation methodology

The UMP City Consultation approach has been designed to enable a process of dialogue between city administration and key stakeholders in the community to address a particular problem. The outcome of dialogue is an action plan that has citywide support. Concerning the issue of a better security for women, a city consultation can lead in order to assess strategic priorities through dialogue with stakeholders. The City Consultation process can be summarised as follows:

- 1) **Planning:** Detailed planning of the UMP City Consultation by the already known key actors is an essential step for successful operations. During this phase, the identification of the problem has to be clearly defined, as well as the responsibilities and role of each key actor (City government, civil society actors, women's groups, the media, etc).
- 2) **The City profile:** It should provide a thoroughgoing analysis of the city's situation in relation to the focus area and the security situation of women in the city. The City profile should assess the city specificities and characteristics that will have implications for action planning.
- 3) **The consultation process:** There are various alternatives for the consultation process, such as a plenary event held over 1 or 2 days, workshops over a number of weeks with identified stakeholders, etc. However, whatever the modalities for dialogue that is chosen, the point of departure should be agreement on the problem to be addressed by the city consultation. The problem should be defined in terms of specific issues for defined sections of the population, e.g. "violence against women endemic in informal settlements". Once there is an agreement on the problem to be addressed, it should be converted into a positive objective that the action plan should achieve. In the case of the previous example, the objective could be expressed as "violence against women in informal settlements reduced to or below the national average by the end of the action plan period". When there is an agreement on problems and objectives, the consultation should assay the range of options available to achieve the agreed objective.

The main outputs of this phase are a report summarising the consensus of the discussions and a draft action plan.

- 4) **The other phases of the city consultation** are the production of a detailed Action Plan, the Final Plan of Action, (the city can produce at this stage a short popular version, which will be attractive to the public, in order to popularise the end product in the city and to inform the targets groups affected by the action plan), the implementation and the replication within the city (this last phase includes a monitoring report).

Source: in "UMP City Consultation Guidelines", internal working paper, UNCHS, 1998

B) Effective prevention policies:

A schedule designed to fully understand the many sides of the issue: a differentiated approach:

“ True equality is not attained by treating all groups the same; policies and programmes often need to treat diverse people and groups differently. The aims and results of any policy should be to ensure equality between men and women”⁶³.

Women’s reality is not the same as men’s, either socially, politically or economically. In order to attain true equality, one has to be aware of the differences. It is with this in mind that several countries are now using a common yardstick: different approaches for the different sexes. This approach leads to an alternative understanding of the reality of the situation. It is in fact a schedule to interpret comparative quantitative and qualitative data on the exact realities and needs of women and men, as well as the situations in which each group lives (according to other social criteria). Using this approach, we can obtain a more precise image of reality. The aim of the differentiated approach, is clear: to track down the sources of inequality between men and women visible in order to eliminate them.

City councils and those who work with them would be well advised to integrate the differentiated approach according to the sexes into their planning programmes. This would allow them to better target their actions depending on the particular needs of each group, thus guaranteeing more effective management of human and financial resources. A simple method has been developed for initial guidance as described in inset No.8 below.

Differentiating the approach taken according to the sexes, allows the implementation of certain plans of action to improve women’s security in the city and reduce their fear. This approach has been further extended by Canadian city councils by developing other methods to resolve the issue of women’s safety.

Women’s safety audit guides:

Women’s safety audit guides drew their inspiration from the first of their kind, published by the city of Toronto in 1989 for the use of its female citizens, called: the “Women’s Safety Audit Guide”. METRAC (Metropolitan Action Committee on Public Violence against Women and Children) is a non profit-making organisation, established in 1984 by the Municipal Council of Toronto, following the recommendations of a report on violence against women. The objectives of METRAC, behind the concrete action taken to sensitise the public and various institutions, are to prevent violence against women and children and promote their right to live in a safe environment. It is this committee which conceived the idea of exploratory walks (Inset No. 9) and safety audits, resulting in a women’s safety audit guide. METRAC’s approach works on the premise that the experts on the security of a particular area are those who frequent it. As a result, they are consulted at each stage of the evaluation. The audits therefore involve those who are the most vulnerable, women, children, the elderly, the handicapped and people from ethnic minorities. The audit guide helps the user to detect what corrective action needs to be taken in the urban environment in order to make it safer for its inhabitants.

⁶³ in *Analyse comparative entre les sexes, guide d’élaborations de politiques*, Condition féminine Canada, Ottawa, 1996.

INSET NO. 8: the method used in the implementation of the differentiated approach according to the sexes

This is comprised of four stages:

- 1) Assessing the situation: this involves breaking down the quantitative and qualitative data according to the different sexes. This way of gathering information brings out the discrepancies between men and women for any given situation. Obviously, in each case, the most efficient way of obtaining the desired information would have to be ascertained. Were there to be no information, the city council could then choose how to obtain it, through a piece of research, a work committee, public consultation...etc. However, whether one proceeds with original or already existing data or not, what is important is that it covers all sides of the question. In this initial stage, collaboration between the council and women is essential. This is because, simply as a result of their experiences, women have special insight into the environmental, functional, economic and social layout of the city. Women must therefore be consulted and right from the beginning. Once the data has been gathered, the city council will have a very accurate picture of the city. It is then a question of interpreting this data in order to understand the reasons behind the imbalances with a view to redressing them.
- 2) Establishing a plan of action: once they have all the necessary information, the municipal authorities decide on their general aim, which will then be clarified by more specific objectives. At this stage, it is important to identify the positive and negative factors which will eventually support or hinder the project. The authorities then decide on concrete actions to be taken in consultation with women and other chosen parties. These actions will be adapted to the specified target. Moreover, it is vital to take into account not only the specifics of the sexes, but also the particular characteristics of subgroups (the elderly, handicapped, women from ethnic or sexual minorities...). As and when needed, the various data according to sex and the subgroups can be retained. Finally, in order for the project to be successful, provision must be made for the allocation of necessary human and financial resources. The responsibilities and degree of imputation of each participant (municipal services, support networks...) must then be decided upon. The council should also establish a work schedule and finally, supervise the introduction of the plan of action into its work area, coordinating action taken with its associates. Setting up a plan of action requires the full participation of women and the groups representing them. It is in the city council's interest to collaborate with women if they are to fully understand their situation, expectations and needs and thereby improve action taken.
- 3) Evaluating the plan of action: How are things going? Have the objectives been attained? At this stage, the city council and its associates evaluate the results. All in all, the evaluation must be as precise as possible, as much from the qualitative point of view as the quantitative. The outcome of this assessment will decide whether action and objectives are to be kept as they are, slightly modified or completely rethought for the future in view of the already established general objective. Consultation with women and other minority groups is vital at this stage with each and every one shedding different light on the subject, guiding the municipal authorities in the decision-making process.
- 4) Periodically reevaluating: the council periodically reevaluates the action. The overall picture of the situation must be touched up at predetermined intervals to ensure that the project remains on the right tracks. It is, however, important to be aware that many desired changes often take several years to noticeably and tangibly take effect.

Source: *A city tailored to women, the role of municipal governments in achieving gender equality*, op. cit.

INSET NO. 9: Women's safety audit guide and exploratory walks: the case of Montreal

Exploratory walks are one way of critically evaluating the urban environment. This step works on the principle that women are best able to identify elements of the urban environment likely to pose a threat to women and lead to them feeling unsafe: this step is an integral part of women reclaiming their right to frequent public places. An exploratory walk is an audit conducted in the field by a group of 3 to 6 people, mostly women. At each specific site, participants identify areas where the potential for an attack is high or where women may feel unsafe. The first walks of this kind led to the publication of the "**Guide d'enquête sur la sécurité des femmes en ville**" by Montreal's department of leisure, parks and community services. The audit guide identifies improvements to be made to the urban environment in accordance with the main principles of women's security: (i) knowing where I am and where I am going, (ii) seeing and being seen, (iii) hearing and being heard, (iv) being able to escape and obtain help, (v) living in a clean and welcoming environment.

The guide contains other stages to follow when organising an exploratory walk, a list of the resources available and a questionnaire on elements of the urban environment to take into account: signposting, lighting, hiding places, transport facilities, amenities, obtaining help, maintenance and development of public places.

Exploratory walks can bring concrete results: property owners or local shopkeepers cleaning up a rundown yard or walls covered in graffiti, adequate lighting of alleys, removing the doors and windows of abandoned houses. They also aim, as any security project should, to raise the awareness of those who work in the public sector, such as municipal workers. As well as this, these walks facilitate the monitoring of the collaboration between the city of Montreal and women who work in urban areas.

Sources: *Agir pour une ville sans peur*, conference proceedings, op. cit.

- *Guide d'enquête sur la sécurité des femmes en ville*, Anne Michaud, City of Montreal, Department of Leisure, Parks and Community Development, Community Development Unit, Montreal, 1993.

The guide takes the approach of prevention and personal responsibility. Prevention is society's responsibility as a whole. In order to achieve this, we must act to educate children, mobilise the population and encourage women to walk in groups in parks and occupy public places. Inset No. 9 illustrates the approach taken by the exploratory walks and the audit guide in Montreal.

A necessary partnership between all the social services:

The Canadian example suggests a methodology and the tools with which to implement it to address the problem of urban security and the mechanisms to solve it. However, in order to copy this model, careful attention must be given to the cultural and social context in which it will be implemented. The place of women, not only in the city and public areas, but equally at the heart of society, must be considered.

Another essential element of any successful prevention strategy is the role of the city council and the partnerships and collaboration it can forge with women's groups, community groups, social institutions and the police. In Canada, as elsewhere, this coalition between the various social services and the dynamics of the entire network is the indispensable condition of successful prevention programmes or strategies to fight violence against women. (Inset No. 10).

INSET NO. 10: women's security in the city: a communal problem and the need for concerted action:

1) Tandem Montreal:


Tandem Montreal is an urban security programme established in Montreal. Supported and run as a general cooperation, (although run by community organisations in the various districts), the programme suggests individual and collective strategies to prevent and fight against certain types of crime. In association with its different partners, Tandem Montreal also participates more and more actively in the fight against violence against women, the elderly, children and sexual minorities. The success of any project on women's security in urban areas lies in concrete action taken communally. Consultation and permanent contact with the police through debate, joining exploratory walks, etc, is equally vital. Contact with the media and society as a whole is essential. Rather than developing new services, Tandem Montreal's philosophy is to encourage a communal approach and forge interpersonal links in order to destroy the stereotyping which goes on amongst individuals, police officers or members of institutions. Men's involvement is essential and can only be achieved through full and equal understanding. In order to involve them in experiments within the various districts, it is important to consider them in their role as father, partner, son or potential victim.

2) The Comité d'Action Femmes et Sécurité Urbaine (CAFSU)

CAFSU first saw the light of day in autumn, 1992, following the first Montreal conference on women and urban security "j'accuse la peur". It has created a precedence in the issue of women's security in urban areas: the alliance of women's groups, community organisations and public institutions (the City of Montreal, Société de transport de la Communauté Urbaine de Montréal, Service de police de la Communauté Urbaine, Secrétariat d'Etat du Canada...). Partnership members of CAFSU agreed that it was essential to base their intervention on a feminist approach of the problem. They also recognise: the feeling of insecurity experienced by women as paramount in any evaluation or analysis, the socio-political inequalities between men and women and the need for women to reduce their vulnerability, break out of their isolation and increase their autonomy by obtaining reliable information about assaults. Armed with this approach, CAFSU's objectives are:

- to work together to improve women's security in urban areas, notably by reducing the opportunities for an attack to take place, defeating the perpetrators and reassuring women about their personal security, by taking concrete action,
- forging partnerships between organisations and institutions,
- rallying the various communities, districts and neighbourhoods to act towards solving the problem of women's security in urban areas,
- encouraging men to assume their responsibilities and act against masculine violence towards women.

Source: *Agir pour une ville sans peur*, committee proceedings, op. cit.



In order to advance further consideration of the issue and encourage the sharing of experiences, the “women and cities” networks are developing rapidly at local, regional and national level throughout the world. Their aim is to link up local authorities, elected representatives, researchers and NGOs. The network Women and Habitat, initiated by UNCHS, is a part of this. Such networks could equally be developed at a regional level.

C) Principles for action in developing countries:

In order to fight against insecurity and urban violence and establish a programme of action, the aforementioned considerations must be taken into account. It is particularly vital to analyse the problem in its social and cultural context when establishing such initiatives. This analysis follows a particular format allowing for greater understanding of the tight links between violence in the home and violence outside the home, through an understanding of women’s feelings of insecurity. Any policy aiming to fight against this violence must include both sides of the problem and develop a plan of action which will target domestic violence as well as violence in public. The complex issue of violence against women would then be seen as an important element to consider in the global effort to fight insecurity and urban violence. In general terms, this must include: a multi-sectoral and communal approach to the problem, encouraging partnerships in the public and private sector to implement action, a coalition of all the main organised forces in society involved in the issue (with local government acting as mediators), consulting women at every stage of the analysis. From this more solid perspective, several possibilities and strategies can be envisaged:

The city council can itself define a strategy to fight against violence in the city and specific areas of the city, in tandem with the government. Violence against women will then become a part of this strategy. Within this framework, the city council can deploy its efforts in three areas:

- introducing the **prevention** of violence against women as a cross-cutting component of municipal policies,
- **educating** children at school on prevention of violence and the roles of men and women in society,
- targeting **risk groups** in order to develop appropriate policies
 - women from families in crisis
 - child prostitutes (temporary)
 - street children
 - prostitutes
 - female drug addicts

Parallel to its responsibility in taking charge of prevention policies, the city also has a vital role to play in coordinating and facilitating initiatives taken by the general public. This role consists of rallying the key players in the issue and keeping the work of those on the network moving along. Within this framework, the city council can target:

- **Key players:**
 - *the police:* the council could encourage the training of police officers and work to raise awareness of the problem, or if necessary, promote the use of female squads to deal with this issue
 - *NGOs:* the council could contribute financially to the further development of their actions (for instance by providing funds for 24 hours crisis lines), put them in contact with other key players and in particular initiate dialogue and partnerships between them and the police.
 - *the municipal staff:* the council could encourage the training of municipal staff on laws and procedures for the victims and perpetrators of violence.
- **Areas of action:**
 - *widening society's knowledge of the subject:* this is the prerequisite of any action strategy or programme. Conducting a diagnosis of the situation has proved to be an efficient method of gathering data on the violence women experience in private and public areas. This diagnosis will involve all key players (NGOs, police, community organisations) who know the area well and have an aptitude for rapidly assessing situations. The methodology used will include surveys and focus groups. What will be needed here is an assessment of the actual situation by socio-economic group, age and district and also data on the current situation of groups marginalised by society (female street children, child prostitutes, the disabled).
 - *Campaigns to raise awareness:* this would involve disseminating information on the problem and encouraging women to break the silence and deprivation. These can be set up with the help of the various city media.
 - *improving the infrastructure:* this would mean providing equipment, setting up drop-in centres, crisis lines, and centres where women could find someone to talk to. These centres must be available to all female victims even if they are from a minority group (homosexuals in particular). They must also be open to young prostitutes or children who work in the street who are stigmatised and rejected by the more traditional victim support centres.
 - *mediation:* this is important and can ensure the efficiency of programmes set up to fight or prevent violence. Mediation can take on several forms, for example, communal mediation or using the services of special mediators or counsellors (in the case of mixed marriages, for example). Mediation can also be undertaken by women's organisations.



Conclusion

This study on violence against women in urban areas has attempted to give an overview of existing studies and research on the subject as well as innovative initiatives to prevent the violence. It has aimed to offer an alternative view and concept of the relationships between the sexes and the action to be taken to change them.

Two observations need to be made here. Firstly, the main difficulty of the exercise lay in handling such a wide subject, in the sense that it transcends several areas of social and political science: sociology, political science, anthropology and criminology are the main sciences taking a keen interest in the subject, using varied, but nevertheless complimentary approaches. A proper analysis of the subject would need to allocate more time to discussing the individual theme of interest of each social science. The role of society and especially its ability to develop the relationships between the sexes, the root causes of male domination, and all questions concerning the nature and forms of violence, are worthy of deeper analysis from the viewpoint of the various aforementioned social sciences.

The second observation is a consequence of the first. The most detailed studies on the subject (I am not including here the militant feminist approach) have come from anglo-american research. Although feminists have put forward and developed particularly detailed concepts for analysis, they have been done in a social and cultural context which cannot necessarily be applied to other countries or cultures.

Armed with these observations, we have tried to demonstrate throughout this analysis that society generates violence against women as much in the home as in the street. As the sociologist and anthropologist, Pierre Bourdieu, states: "*It strikes me, in fact, that if the home is one of the places where the expression of male domination is the most obvious and visible (and not only through physical violence), the perpetuation of the tangible and symbolic balance of power within the home, can be found outside the home, in the Church, the School or the State and in their political, declared or hidden, official or unofficial actions*"⁶⁴.

Reducing sexual inequality, treating and preventing violence against women are political issues. We have seen how local government can play a major role in easing inequalities, helping women to reclaim their right to the city and protecting them from violence. As a result, the level of success of proposed solutions will always lie in the strict and indissociable consideration of private and public areas.

⁶⁴ in Pierre Bourdieu, *la domination masculine*, Liber, Seuil, Paris, September 1998.



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