



# COMPARATIVE REPORT OF ANALYSIS OF THE FIELDWORK



Written by Nanette Scriba, with the collaboration of Mar Camarasa



## Content

Introduction .....	3
1. Method (and data) .....	4
2. Violence in intimate partnership – Women’s perspective .....	4
2.1 Understanding gender violence in intimate partnership .....	4
2.2 Gender Violence Effects .....	6
2.2.1 Health .....	6
2.2.2 Relationships and social life.....	9
2.2.3 Economy/ Income .....	13
2.2.4 Housing .....	14
2.2.5 Labour .....	16
2.2.6 Legal .....	17
3. Violence at the workplace – Women’s perspective .....	19
3.1 Understanding gender violence at the workplace .....	19
3.2 Effects of GV at the workplace.....	20
3.2.1 Health .....	20
3.2.2 Relationships and social life.....	22
3.2.3 Economic.....	25
3.2.4 Housing .....	26
3.2.5 Labour .....	27
3.2.6 Legal .....	29
4. Gender violence from expert’s perspective .....	30
4.1 Gender violence from expert’s perspective in the partner context .....	31
4.2. Gender Violence from experts’ perspective in the work context .....	33
5. Conclusions and recommendations.....	35

## Introduction

The proposal of the GVEI project is to design social indicators to measure gender violence (GV) effects on women's life. It starts from the hypothesis that the existing systems of indicators of gender violence do not pay attention to the specific and multidimensional effects that violence against women (VAW) causes on women's life.

Previous research projects have shown that the fact of suffering GV has a holistic effect in the sense that it becomes a transversal factor affecting women in all spheres of life. However, the existing indicators on this field mainly focus on rather legal matters (which only inform about reports, imprisoned males, deaths... and, therefore, do not enlighten about how this experience affects women) or health issues (which are, obviously, very important and do give information about women experiences). Consequently, the diverse and multiple consequences of suffering such a brutal phenomenon, remain invisible.

Thus, GVEI aims at making visible how violence against women affects women in their life as a whole, i.e., in the diverse spheres of their life such as health, employment, housing, economy/income, the legal field, social relationships and participation in social life. GVEI has focused on two kinds of GV: GV that takes place within the partner context and GV suffered in the labour sphere.

The research has been carried out at a national level in the following four countries of study: Estonia, Finland, Italy and Spain. The work method for shedding light on the effects of GV has been to recover, by means of the fieldwork, women's voices. In this sense, the methodological approach for GVEI has been based on qualitative and participative research methods because these can capture the subjective experiences of the women who have suffered GV. Thus, women have explained their own perceptions and experiences of suffering GV in relation to the effects that it has had on themselves and their lives. Furthermore, focus groups consisting of experts for both analysed sectors of GV were carried out in each country, in order to gather in-depth-information about the topic from a professional point of view.

This analysis of the fieldwork has been carried out in two stages and levels: in a first step, 60 interviews were carried out, 15 thereof in each country, in order to gather information and create four reports on the effects of GV for women at a national level. In a second step this information was collected and interpreted in a comparative way in order to find out about similarities and differences among the four countries. As these countries are diverse in numerous aspects (geographically, culturally, legally and politically), GVEI intends to find out about the effects of gender violence at a EU-wide level.

The fieldwork has allowed us to capture these consequences and has provided information on the factors that we need to consider in the design of social indicators to measure GV effects. This report contains the analysis at European level of the fieldwork carried out, with a view to become the main tool in the following phases of the project, the definition of qualitative variables to be translated into quantitative indicators.

## 1. Method (and data)

The fieldwork was carried out by means of semi-structured interviews, which are based on an interview plan previously agreed on. This plan aimed at gathering information about the effects of violence in six dimensions of life: health, relationships and social life, economy/income, housing, labour and legal aspects.

From the 60 interviews carried out, half of the interviewees suffered GV in the partner context and the other half in the workplace sphere, although some of the women were subjected to GV in both contexts. The interviewees in the partner context were given names beginning with P (Estonia: Piret, Finland: Piia, Italy: Paola, Spain: Paloma) and the interviewees in the workplace context were given names beginning with V (Estonia: Viia, Finland: Venla, Italy: Violetta, Spain: Vanesa). It was agreed to include at least one interview with a migrant women, depending on the scale of immigration in each country.

An essential pre-condition for selecting the sample was that all women recognised that they had suffered GV and that their participation in the research was based on a voluntary decision.

The focus groups consisted of the following professional profiles: psychologists, jurists, social workers, police officers, and others, all of which specialised on GV either in the domestic or in the workplace sphere, or in both of them.

The interviewees and the experts were approached by means of women's and migrants associations, shelter houses, specialised intervention centres, contacts of the university's research centres, workplace health centres, mobbing/labour harassment associations and through personal contacts of the researchers.

## 2. Violence in intimate partnership – Women's perspective

### 2.1 Understanding gender violence in intimate partnership

In a first step it is important to shed light on the forms of GV. GV does not only exist in form of physical attacks, but also in psychological aggressions, economic control, sexual aggressions, etc. All the quotes exposed in the

following sections illustrate what violence in the partner context means to all of the interviewees. They clearly picture, for example, how they suffer from physical aggressions, including sexual relations against their will:

*"My daughter was born and ten days after I still had the stitches of the Caesarea, and he took me by my hair and dragged me from the main door to the bedroom". (Paloma6,43)*

*"He hit me a lot, he hit me with anger and then he took me ..... and then I had to go to the hospital (...) And he turned to the same, to followed me, and he made me pregnant".  
(Paloma5,38)*

*"I suffered all sorts of abuse: he even ran me over with his car. He was terribly jealous, I used to be conditioned by him; I was under his control every second of every day, he made me change school so that he could check up on me more easily; he also used to check my calls. It was awful: he beat me every day".(Paola6,22).*

Also psychological aggressions, as insults, threats, blackmails, control over women's movements and relationships (by hindering them from working, going out, and thus isolating them socially) have far-reaching impacts on the interviewees:

*"It is very difficult because you live with someone who is always telling you, since you get up until you go to bed, that you are useless, that you are nobody". (Paloma6,43)*

*"My husband always has humiliated me, insulted me (...) And he used to tell me that he was going to take the children away from me because I was a foreigner and I was going to end in the streets, that I was going to be a servant (...) That I was not useful at all, that I was a sack of potatoes, a piece of meat with eyes...." (Paloma2,58)*

*"But then psychological violence is really bad as you don't really understand anymore where the limits are. I don't know anymore today where the limits are. Then I should study so that I realise what is allowed and what is not allowed (....) yes I am always really "lost", and then when it's so unpredictable, that sometimes there are good days therefore your mind has no time to get used to the fact that once again he will start talking weird". (Piia1, 29)*

*"It was a talk without dignity, it was like, (.), but there was nothing, eh (.). It was just like, he was in a good mood and then it suddenly disappears. Nearly every day there was some kind of irritation and there was a lot of such (.)...insoluble things for me, and these things were impossible to solve". (Piret11)*

Perpetrators exert violence also on the economic level, through the control of economic resources:

*"Lately we were living in a hostel (...) and as he went out, he locked me inside (...). He always was asking me for the money and if I didn't give it to him, he hit me (...). One day he gave me a stab". (Paloma1,49)*

The quotations of the interviewees reveal that the manifestations of violence generally equal each other, regardless of culture or country. Women clearly define physical attacks, but also identify psychological or economic violence, which sometimes can take quite subtle forms.

Yet, there exist some particular dimensions, which do not have the same level of importance in all the countries. This is due to cultural, social and political differences among the single countries that women relate the violence with:

Women from Spain and Italy do not connect GV to male addictive behaviour. In Finland and Estonia, however, there are several women who relate the violent behaviour of their partners to their drinking problems, which might be due to a higher level of alcoholism in these countries.

*"If he was drunk, and did not want to have sex with him, then all these serious conflicts started"*  
(Piret10).

*"He is nice when he is abstinent"* (Piret10).

Immigrant women have a heightened risk of being subjected to violence due to their marginalized and vulnerable societal position. Discrimination and a fragile legal status increase their dependency on their partners, which in many cases serves them as a further means of oppression:

*"The last two months he began to tell me that I should go back to my country or wherever I wanted but the child was staying with him, because I didn't have documents and nobody wanted to be with me and all of that".* (Paloma8,30)

One immigrant woman in Finland describes the connection between being an immigrant woman and GV:

*"Here it is really different. Culture shock. They (...) give men money, don't even know that the child benefit is meant for them, their bank accounts. Many don't even have a bank card (...). I have blamed myself, that I am the guilty one here and that there is something wrong with me as I have been told year after year that there is something wrong with me. That I am too dark, that I have too much makeup on or something like that or I should not be dressed this way or that. In the end only a tracksuit and trainers are acceptable. I thought it was normal, that this was a different culture and I am a wife and I must obey"* (Piia8).

## 2.2 Gender Violence Effects

### 2.2.1 Health

The effects of GV on women's health are multidimensional. Three different dimensions can be stated: physical effects, psychological effects and sexual/reproductive effects. The research clearly reveals that there are no differences among the single countries, so that it can be inferred that the consequences that suffering from GV has on the health-dimension are the same, regardless of culture.

#### **Effects on physical health:**

The effects on physical health appear both as immediate consequences of physical attacks, and as psychosomatic effects.

The interviewees point out a variety of direct physical injuries as an immediate consequence of GV: Black eyes, head traumas, bruises, broken bones, blows, wounds, contusions, loss of teeth, unconsciousness, etc.

*"He broke 3 fingers of my hand (...) the face fractured, blows and blows"(Paloma5,38)*

*"without any warning, he got up and punched me in the face so hard he completely destroyed my jaw".(Paola5,50)*

*"During my marriage I have experienced everything. Physical and so on. I have read that you classify violence to physical violence, and (...). What else? [After hearing an answer] He has beaten me and humiliated me on repeated occasions. I have here two scars [points to the face]. The scar under the eye I have got when he was hitting me by handset and this other one (...) I do not remember any more. And on my chest I had huge bruises. He was very tactical. /---/ Something in his past had such serious effect on him. I think that he was out of his mind from time to time"(Piret5).*

Apart from that, interviewees stress several physical effects that cannot be attributed directly to physical aggressions, but are related to them by women. They outline a wide range of psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, muscular pains, urine infections, sickness, tiredness, tremors, increase or loss of weight, etc. It is noticeable that even chronic illnesses, can be related to the violence. In Estonia, some women even relate their suffering from gynaecological cancer to the GV they have suffered for many years.

*"Lately I have been sick, because if you think of it, it [the situation of violence] comes out from any part of your body" (Paloma2,58)*

*"A very hard muscular contraction in my back. Every time I argued with him I had a terrible pain in this part of my back, and it lasted, lasted, lasted until one day when I wanted to get up in the morning, I felt down to the floor and... and I vomited (...) I tried to stand up and I could not (...) and, well, since I left him I do not have more pain" (Paloma3,40)*

*"Sometimes I can't sleep at night: I get the shakes and that keeps me awake. I'm now taking several drugs to relax my colon and to keep me calm. My gastroenterologist explained to me that our colon is like our second brain and so all that goes through my head has an impact on my stomach and my colon" (Paola1, 39).*

*"Arthritis has progressed. This is always worse when I have some emotional stress".(Piret7).*

These statements clearly show that women are in need of diverse forms of physical treatments due to GV. Apart from hospitalisation as a result of an attack, they need medical attention from a variety of doctors whose area of work is not directly connected to GV.

### **Effects on psychological health :**

Apart from psychosomatic diseases, women also suffer direct psychological symptoms as a consequence of the experienced GV. Depression and PTSD are prevalent effects of GV. Women outline symptoms like sadness, fears, sleeping disorders, eating disorders, the loss of self-esteem, a change in the self-image, self-accusing, feelings of guilt.. Suicidal thoughts are also very common and some women tried to commit suicide:



*"I wanted to kill myself, I wanted to go under the train, to kill my children.... but all of these were just thoughts, huh, thoughts, I have never ended up trying it, neither with my children nor with myself, (...). Once I was so desperate that I said, look, I throw myself to the underground and everything ends up" (Paloma2,58)*

*"The only thing I wanted was to die, to bury myself alive (...) I took medicines for the depression, a lot. And sometimes I thought in taking all of them... I have tried three times to commit suicide" (Paloma5,38)*

*"And then I have hanged a rope. I have made a contract about my corpse, which should be given for clinical research after my death" (Piret7).*

*"I wished for death... I asked God to take me". (Paola1,39).*

*"I have always felt like an ant, I have felt very badly (...) because these are moments when you see yourself such a little thing, so insignificant..." (Paloma2,58)*

*There was this kind of personality change which I didn't notice then but noticed later on when I started to analyse the situation...(...) I realised that I always had this small feeling of apathy, yea, you kind of recognise it. (Piia1, 29)*

*" Well, everything then changed. I'm not at all the person I used to be. Not at all. It's such a complete change, which has happened in me" (Piia6).*

*"Sometimes I felt guilty, but not now, not now" (Paloma1,49)*

*" You are silly, like crazy, as if you were in another world" (Paloma4,39)*

*"I have thought that I was efficient in coping with ... and there were no problems. But then a year and half ago my spirit collapsed" (Piret11)*

Most of the interviewees have obtained some sort of psychological treatment. In most cases, women have used medication like antidepressants and tranquillisers, in order to bear the situation. Many women also went to see a psychologist, or went to group therapy.

In Estonia, searching for psychological support is not always socially accepted. One interviewee reports that her mother hindered her from going to a psychologist, because of

*"what people might think about you". (Piret5)*

*"She (her mother) has argued that going to psychologist gives a bad reputation" (Piret11)*

Furthermore, some women in Italy and Estonia state that they did not see a psychologist for financial concerns and due to a lack of information about free-of-charge services. It should be stressed that the establishing of nationwide free-of-charge psychological services for women suffering from GV is of great importance. Because of the seriousness of the effects that GV has on psychological health, and its long-lasting impacts, professional help is a decisive means for the women in coping with the consequences of GV and being empowered for returning to normality.



### Effects on reproductive and sexual health:

Sexual violence in the partner context, especially in a marriage, is a societal taboo in many countries. On a European-wide level, laws tackling sexual violence and rape within the partner context, are implemented just recently. Especially in more conservative countries, sex is considered an inherent duty of a wife. As a consequence, women either do not voice the experienced incidences of sexual violence or they do not get any help from outside, as it is considered a private issue.

While many women express implicitly that they have suffered sexual violence perpetrated by their partners, only few women voice it directly. Those women voice the psychological pain it causes to them, but not many of them report effects on their sexual health. Just one interviewee clearly voices the effects of GV on her own sexual identity, that even at the age of 50 she has not found yet.

On the basis of the quotation, the main effect of GV lays in the loss of their sexual autonomy, and the unwillingness to have sex.

*“... I noticed that he’d become even more violent because I didn’t want to have sex with him. I thought that was just ridiculous: it was really hard for me to have a sexual intercourse with him only a few days after he’d beaten me”.(Paola1,39)*

*“Sometimes I was forced to conform to his requirements, I had to be with him against my will”.  
(Piret10)*

*“... he’d become more aggressive... even more violent towards me; so I’d yield to sex to try and protect myself”.(Paola1,39)*

*“he never tied me to the bed, but still that was violence because I was always scared of what he might do and therefore I had to have sex with him in order to avoid the worst”.(Paola1,39)*

Other important sexual/reproductive effects identified are the transmission of sexual diseases as well as pregnancies and miscarriages due to violations.

*“He transmitted to me a venereal disease (...) they [doctors] made me a cytology test and I had a sexual transmission infection” (Paloma1,49)*

*“violations... (...) He hit me a lot, he beat with anger and afterwards he mounted me by force ... (...) and after one month and a half more or less I realised that I was pregnant... and the only one thing I wanted then was to die” (Paloma5,38)*

*“I could never have a quiet life, I had mutiple miscarriages due to periods of distress and arguments. Some of these miscarriages occurred after a fight and this left an even greater void in me that cannot be filled”.(Paloma2,38).*

## 2.2.2 Relationships and social life

This dimension refers to the analyses of the effects that GV has, on the one hand, on women’s relationships with their relatives, their friends, colleagues,

neighbours and men in general, and, on the other hand, on their implication in social, cultural and leisure activities. Taking into account the enormous impact that GV has on the psychological state of women suffering or having suffered from GV, it is not surprising that their relationships with the others and their willingness to participate in social activities are also deeply affected. Due to the psychological problems, feelings of shame or mistrust towards others, or the control of their partners, women tend to isolate themselves socially.

While in many cases women feel supported by their family and close people, there are also many examples of the contrary. Especially in the case of Estonia and to a lesser extent Italy, some women express that people do not support them appropriately. This might be due to a cultural conception of GV as a private issue (and not a social one), or to the fact that minor occasions of GV are accepted by some parts of the population.

## Family

### a) Children

In some cases women remain –due to stereotypes and social attitudes - in their violent relationship because of their children. Some women – especially migrants – also express the fear that their children might be taken away from them. GV clearly affects women's relationship with their children in many aspects. Children sometimes follow their father's model and disrespect their mothers as well, or women do not feel supported by their (grown-up) children. Women develop a variety of strategies to protect their children, guarantee their safety and avoid their suffering, which turns out to have the priority over their own safety and in many cases they try to hide the GV from them. In other cases, women experience a lot of support, affection and understanding of their children:

*"My sons have been lovely (...). They remember many of the things their father did, they don't like me to talk about him (...) For me, the best is the family, because there you have affection, love, and it is the most important, the calm, the games, the support among each other, it is wonderful". (Paloma7,37)*

Some women express worries or a guilty-conscience about how their bad psychological state influences their behaviour towards their children:

*"When I'm really upset, I take it out on her. I often tell her off and I also make innuendos about her father but then I feel sorry about that because she takes things ten times more seriously than I intended". (Paola2,38)*

*"I was always in a bad mood. I have been sullen and have shouted at my children. I have wound them up. I couldn't cope with listening to their voices and I had to go out. So life wasn't much joy. Not at all". (Piia8)*

## b) Other family members/relatives

Concerning the relationships with other family members, women have very diverse experiences. Some of the interviewed women hide from their parents or other relatives the problem they are suffering. In more conservative environments, women can not rely on their family members in order to get help, as the reports of Italy and Estonia demonstrate:

*“they came to collect information on what had happened soon after it had happened. Then, when I asked them to testify, only one uncle accepted, as well as only one of my female cousins, who was very hesitant anyway and whose father even got angry with her. I’m talking about an uncle who was related to me by blood, not my marriage”.(Paola1,39)*

*(Mother of interviewee:) “See what you can do to please him”.(Paola1,39)*

*“Once I tried to visit psychologist, this was advice from my friend’s mother. But my mother was so much against that. She argued that this is a very bad and unwise activity. She has argued that going to psychologist gives a bad reputation. I am pity that I have listened my mother too much. During all my life my mother had controlled immensely my life. May be she tried so hard, because she was afraid that my life is going as bad as her life. (Piret11)*

Also one case of Spain expresses this:

*“I felt very lonely because neither my own family believed me” (Paloma4,39)*

In other cases, women trust their relatives and tell them about the GV, express the value that the support and affection received by their families has for them:

*“My siblings were calling me constantly, telling me to go to their place if I was alone, and not to stay alone in the flat. My mother moved near me and she was constantly worried, going from her flat to mine so that not to leave me alone”. (Paloma5,38)*

## c) Men

Concerning relationships with men, most women who are separated deny, in a short and mid-term period, to have wishes of having any other intimate relationship with a man. They state to feel distrust and fears towards men or that they fear to fail as a woman, because of the low self-esteem caused by the GV experience. Thus, many women clearly express that at present they do not think about having another partner.

*“I don’t think about it [to be with another man], because I don’t feel like doing that, I don’t miss sex, not a bit of it. I suppose that it is due to fears (...) I am ready but I don’t have the will. I don’t want to be mistaken”. (Paloma1,49)*

*“I’m not saying I don’t want to get married again: I’m just scared, so scared”.(Paola1.39)*

However, some of these women do not exclude the possibility of a relationship at a later state. Some women are dreaming of a better man who protects them, or would not object to a mere sexual relationship with a man. These statements show, that some women do not consider that all men are the same, and that there is the possibility of trusting another man at a later state.

## Friends/ Colleagues/ Neighbours

A supporting social network is very important for a women suffering GV, as it can ease the burden and give them comfort and self-esteem, or even help them to get out of the violent situation. In many cases, friends, colleagues and neighbours protect women from their perpetrators. In case of a partner exerting social control, women lose their friends and as a result, colleagues can be the only kind of social relationship they have access to. Neighbours are in many cases the first persons to find out about the violence, and very often they call the police or help in another way:

*"I had a neighbour who used to help me, they cannot testify, but my neighbours called once the police". (Paloma7,37)*

However, the experiences with people outside of the family circle are of a very diverse nature due to social control of the partner (in isolating the women and/or threatening other people), social self-isolation of the woman or a lack of understanding or interest on the part of other people.

*"There is no such thing as true friendship" (Paola 1,39).*

*"He used to hit me a lot and on top of that, the neighbours defended him". (Paloma4,39)*

*"My colleagues at work accepted me but they took distance from me because of fears of him (...) One day, as I was with one of my colleagues, I met my husband and he almost hit her, and after that, everyone was afraid of being with me". (Paloma5,38)*

## Social/ cultural/ leisure activities

Taking into account the restrictions that women experience (control by their partners, fears, mistrust, apathy and lack of understanding from the people around them), it is not surprising that most of the interviewees have very little, or even inexistent participation in any social, cultural or leisure activity.

*"And you start isolating yourself, you do not want to participate in group because you feel ashamed, because maybe your experience is embarrassing, because if you tell something they will laugh at you. And you feel embarrassed (...) You don't feel like doing anything, you are alone, shut it with your family, your self-esteem lows, you have lots of fears, you are fear and distrust of everybody". (Paloma5,38)*

Once the GV experience finishes, it is noticeable that some women start to participate in social and cultural activities, which is very positive after long periods of isolation and suffering. Women highly value it since they feel that once again they have decision power, feel free and can control, at a certain point, their life.

*"Now I am doing what I want, I signed on a sport course and world dances". (Paloma1,49)*

### 2.2.3 Economy/ Income

GV in the intimate partner context deeply affects the economic status of a woman. All national reports reveal that the situation of violence encompasses economic effects for women not only during the violent relationship, but also after finishing it. This economic impact can also be aggravated by situations that increase women's vulnerability, such as having children, being elder, being unemployed or being migrant. Therefore, when analysing the economic effects caused by the fact of suffering GV in the partner context, it must be taken into account not only the situation that women are living (still cohabiting with their partners or being separated) but also the specific factors of vulnerability.

In relation to the economic effects of GV for women still living together with their partners, several interviewees outline that they suffer economic dependence and precariousness due to the fact that their partners exert an intentional deprivation of economical resources as a manner of abuse against them. This material deprivation does not only take place in situations where the man is the only responsible for the household income, but also in circumstances, where women contribute or even are the main contributors of the house. In both these cases, violence itself causes economic deprivation in form of economic violence.

*"Without money, all that I work, nothing...I was sleeping and he took me away my credit card, if I gave money to the children to pay something, he took it away (...) and at last he even took away the money for the food". (Paloma7,37)*

Especially for migrants who do not have working permit or women in advanced years or with low level of education, economic dependency is very strong:

*"To arrive here...I couldn't start working due to my documents, I could not pay the rent, and then it was as he was the one who had to bring the money at home and it was me the one who had to stay at home. And he could go out because he was the one who was bossing (...) I could report it [to the police], a restraining order, but I didn't want to do it because, where would I go? Because, how was I going to pay the rent?... I couldn't meet ends, I was not able". (Paloma3,40)*

*"I've had a debt thrown on my shoulders, and I have signed papers when I did not understand the language and did not know anything, he tried to save his own firm from bankruptcy"(Piia4).*

Beyond that, the economic situation also is severely affected after a break-up. In some cases, for example, women lose their jobs as a consequence of the move. In general it can be stated that due to new housing costs in consequence of a move, the lone support for children, separation agreements, the deliberate destruction or removal of common goods by the perpetrator, divorce settlements and – as all national reports state – a very low governmental aid, many women find themselves in a very restricted financial situation after leaving their violent partner:

*"You have to die for saving money and then be able to pay the rent, the electricity bill, the town gas bill, the children's clothes... the whole responsibility on me".(Paloma7,37)*

In many cases, this is one of the decisive factors for remaining in a violent relationship.

*"I depend on him economically (...) I don't see myself earning a good salary to survive, to live alone, to live as I am living now, well". (Paloma2,58)*

As we have seen, the financial dimension is very important, as the decision of leaving the partner sometimes is very much conditioned by economic issues. Also if women eventually split up, they suffer hardship to some extent, above all at the beginning, which affects the other spheres of their lives (housing, children, legal,...). Therefore it is very important to provide women suffering from GV with adequate financial support and integration programs to the labour market, in order to give them the independence they need to free themselves from the violent situation.

## 2.2.4 Housing

A home is supposed to be a safe place of withdrawal. However, this basic human need can not be met in a situation of GV, where the house or apartment becomes the centre of the violence and thereby of fear and hardship. Furthermore, violence determines the spatial freedom within the home. Apart from direct control by the perpetrator (in locking women, in forbidding them to go to certain rooms, etc.), this is partly due to women's attempts to avoid violence or being prepared for it.

*"No really I had this habit of always taking my keys and purse with me to the bedroom when I went to sleep. They were always there so I could escape through the window". (Piia4, 48)*

The effects of GV on housing become clearly visible when women are forced to run away from home, which implicates the loss of the home, the need to move to a shelter house or to another place, facing difficulties to find a new home, and the struggle with the payment of the rent or mortgage. These facts imply changes in women's life, affecting them at short, mid and long-term, because for most of the interviewees, leaving the house they shared with their violent partners, means the beginning of a period of successive changes of accommodation, from one place to another one, from living together with relatives and/or cohabitating with other women in shelter houses, while looking for a new place to settle down, because in many cases the circumstances do not permit them to live at the house where they used to cohabit with their partners.

The change of residence is usually the only choice women have to escape from the violence experience. In some cases the separation is planned ahead, but many women have to run away in an acute situation of violence. Running away from home is a distressing moment for women, since it encompasses not only the difficulties associated with any move, but also fears, insecurity, loneliness (when they have to live far away for security reasons), etc. Therefore, this is a



very tough period for women, as most of the interviewees describe. Above all, this can be aggravated by situations of unemployment and hardship at the moment they leave their home.

Some women have the opportunity to live with family members or friends:

*"[When you decided to separate from him ¿Where did you go?]  
-To my parents (...) because it was impossible to pay a rent". (Paloma1,49)*

Another option for these women is to move to a shelter house, which is a common solution in Spain and Finland. In the Italian case, the interviewees tend to search shelter with their families, although this is not generalised for the whole country. In Estonia, on the other hand, there are no social facilities like shelter houses available for women, which renders the situation for women suffering from GV even more difficult. In one case the project manager of a social institution said to a woman:

*" try to cope yourself or go to sleep in kindergarten. I am not going to help you at night".  
(Piret7)*

But also in the other countries the situation is not ideal. In Spain, for instance, the maximal period to stay at a shelter house is 6 months, which puts pressure on many women to find in this short period of time, a place to live, a job,...Also security reasons might oblige women to change the shelter houses several times.

*"Five months in a shelter house (...) I was a month at the first shelter (...) and four at the other one". (Paloma7,37)*

*"At the first shelter house they told me that as I was at the same village, I could not go out, it was near the house where I lived with my husband, and that's why I couldn't go out, it was like a prison (...) and I stayed there until they moved me to another house at a village I didn't know where it was". (Paloma7,37)*

It is important to state that almost none of the women interviewed was able to stay in the place she shared with the violent partner. Usually the woman is the one who leaves, and not the perpetrator. In almost all cases men eventually keep the property, sometimes without any refund for the women. Besides, just a very small percentage of women was able to immediately rent an own apartment. This is due to the fact that many women are forced to escape in a situation of acute danger, but also financial problems contribute to this. It is particularly shocking that in some cases women were forced to return to live with their partners because the monetary situation or the lack of social facilities made other solutions impossible. Considering the horrifying emotional state in which women who leave a perpetrator are, it is very important to take measures to ease the housing situation for them.



## 2.2.5 Labour

Suffering GV in the partner context has multiple consequences on the labour sphere. Due to the loss of social contacts, colleagues can become a very important resource for the women, as already seen. Sometimes women get help and support from their colleagues or employers. In other cases, these persons are also threatened by the partner, so that they do not dare to help the women. Many women also feel ashamed of being a victim of GV or fear the consequences of telling them about it, so that they do not voice their situation to their colleagues and employers.

But GV affects the labour sphere to a much greater extent and on multiple dimensions: Absences from work, sick-leaves, job changes and loss, periods of unemployment, etc are consequences of GV. These effects can be caused by diverse reasons. One direct reason is the physical and psychological power the perpetrator exerts on the women in forbidding them to work or in merely being jealous of it:

*“He was jealous of everything, not only of whether I had other male friends, but also of my time I had to spend at work. The problem was that money had to be spent left right and centre as was our way of living and especially the standard of living he wanted, but I wasn’t allowed to do anything anywhere else. (...) And the autumn was just so awful and crazy, with my return to work, which just sort of sparked something off in him, that it was just terrible. If I had stayed with him it would have meant not being able to continue my work. I would have had to hand in my notice”. (Piia2)*

*“He used to threaten me many times to make something to my face... so that no one could look at me and I wouldn’t be able to find a job”. (Paloma7,37)*

*“and when he saw that I felt well in a job, is when more he ill-treated me in order that I did not continue working”. (Paloma4,39)*

As a result of these aggressions, the physical and emotional state of the women might prohibit them from going to work:

*“I had to stay two weeks without working because all my body was bruises”. (Paloma1,49)*

*“I could work perfectly but maybe suddenly I felt down and started to cry, and cry” (Paloma5,38)*

It is important to remark that GV affects women’s labour situation not only while being in the relationship, but also after leaving the partner. When partners force women to quit their job or hinder them from looking for one, it implies that at the moment women leave their partners, they are unemployed. Others, who are working while cohabiting with their partners, might have to quit the job at the moment they leave their houses, due to security reasons or changes of residence.

*“He follows you and he appears at everywhere, then I said to myself, better to change of job... and I went to work in another place. Even my family did not know where I worked”. (Paloma5,38)*

Thus, escaping from violence seriously damages the labour situation of women. For these reasons, in all national reports, most women who separate from their partners have to pass a period of unemployment, which has consequences on other important spheres of their lives, like housing, economy, social contacts, etc.

## 2.2.6 Legal

The legal context of GV differs due to national legislation. Although there are some European-wide guidelines, each country deals with GV in the partner context on its own basis. In Estonia, e. g., in Soviet times, legislation was closely connected to the working sphere: Perpetrators sometimes were being punished in public, which as a consequence was being wrecked on the women, instead of protecting them. One interviewee voices such a 'punishment':

*"Only one time I have called a police, it was called 'militia' in this period of time. It was when my husband burst and the militia came and my husband got sanctions at the workplace in public meeting (during the Soviet time there were special 'courts of comrades'). He got furious. Then he punished me. And I have these punishments enough and I did not want to get more to be punished. Due to 'militia-case' I have got enormous punishment, all these hair pulling and hitting. Main hits were targeted to my head, back and he wrenched my hands. But I never had a call any more. This was the one and the last time to look for help. Even now he asks me whether I would like to call to the police and then I answer: 'No. Not any more.'"(Piret10,62)*

Almost every woman suffering from GV in the partner context, has to deal with it in a legal manner in one way or the other, as all national reports reveal. Women can be forced to call the police (and report the fact to them), in order to protect themselves in a situation of immediate danger:

*"He tried to strangle me, I had a shock and I called the police". (Paloma8,30)*

In the case of Estonia, e. g., until some years ago police did not necessarily come after receiving an emergency call, as GV in the partner context was considered a private matter, which is a paradox, as at the same time public punishments as mentioned above, also occurred. Due to the European integration this has changed now: laws have been improved and also awareness among policemen has raised:

*"Attitudes have changed a lot. The world has enlarged also to the police".(Piret8)*

In the case of Spain, many women – apart from some negative experiences - express the support and the protection measures they receive by the side of the police:

*"nowadays with the police I am delighted... we've got this safety in Catalonia, you've got safety for the women victims of gender violence..." (Paloma1,49)*

*"I called [the police] and the police came very fast, very fast. I didn't have to explain anything (...) they told me that firstly they would take me to the hospital and later they would take me to report him". (Paloma8,30)*

In many cases women also have to present a formal accusation at court, ask for legal assistance and, in some cases, bring the case to trial. Yet, many women restrain from bringing their case to trial, which is partly due to national legal possibilities. In Estonia, e. g., it is impossible to take a complaint back, once it was reported, which makes women think twice before doing it. Also in Finland, women have to provide evidence about the GV they are suffering, which is not always easy as this takes place in the shed of the home and does not necessarily leave proofs.

All national reports also show that the fears of the consequences, like the revenge of the perpetrator, economic hardship, or in case of migrants, effects on their legal situation might hinder women from initiating a trial:

*"They told me to ask for a restraining order but I didn't want to do it because, it is so, where could I go? Because, how was I going to pay the rent? how was I going to do that?". (Paloma3,40)*

In all national reports, women also express a lack of trust in the legal system and the society:

*"I thought they wouldn't believe me; when I decided to separate, as I said before, I was met with a wall of resistance: nobody believed me". (Paola, 1,39)*

*"My sister told me to report him once more, but for what? if I had already presented lots of accusations for the same reason and no one paid attention to me (...) In 2003 I presented the last accusation, but until today I never knew, they never told me". (Paloma5,38)*

*"These men often get away with it" (Paola1,39)*

Despite all these facts mentioned above, some women decide to initiate a formal trial against the perpetrator, although the national reports differ in that. While there are not many legal possibilities in Estonia, and also the interviewees in Italy and Finland tend to hesitate a lot, most of the interviewees in Spain initiated a legal process, which might be due to public awareness on the subject of GV in the partner context.

Going through a legal process also implies a deep emotional impact for the women, arising feelings of fears, anxiety and anguish, especially when their partners ignore the restraining orders or remain free.

*"Because, after so many legal actions, he had a restraining order but he didn't care about that, not at all (...). The most he had were formal accusations (...). I made about 16 formal complaints and he was even twice in prison". (Paloma5,38)*

*"Then, one day (...) I got off the bus and I met him again (...) I took the telephone of assistance and I called the police and they came" [he had a distant warrant] (Paloma1,49)*

*"[At court] very tough. The first time I got discouraged (...) and the sentence states that I got really low because I started to cry (...) Last year the trial for his imprisonment took place. As I*

*didn't have any witness, at the end I lost the trial, he was set free, the mister. Then, as he was set free, I started to have such a fear..." (Paloma1,49))*

In Italy, although having the legal possibilities, there are cultural aspects that render a legal case more difficult. As voiced by one woman, a doctor, who witnessed her bruises in a medical examination, later denied having identified them. It also can be a problem that witnesses refuse to report the crime. An Italian woman, e. g. says:

*"My daughters won't talk ... they're scared ... he's their father"(Paola1,39).*

Many women ask for a divorce, which also implies many problematic aspects. In particular the question of the custody for the children plays an important role. Many women declare that it is difficult to gain sole custody for their children and that, as a result, the GV goes on, as fathers can use the children against their mothers:

*"And then when you separate, so many women need to try to appease their partner so that he wouldn't take it out on the kids. When he gets the kids every other weekend he can still control you through them very well. Or then he does the conversion work, as he did to the boy, like "then you attack mummy with a knife and then you hit her and strangle her". (Piia3)*

The quotations show that there is a big gap between theory and praxis in the legal sphere, although there are differences among the countries. It is of basic importance that women can rely on the state as a source of protection, as it is their human right. Therefore it should be enforced to implement free-of-charge legal services, facilitate and shorten legal processes and safeguard women's protection.

### 3. Violence at the workplace – Women's perspective

#### 3.1 Understanding gender violence at the workplace

Gender violence at the workplace can take many forms. The interviewed women who suffered GV at the workplace not only perceive direct insults or physical harassment as GV, but also more subtle forms which aim at violating their dignity and lowering their self-esteem. GV at the workplace thus stretches from sexual harassment or other forms of physical attacks, to discriminatory acts, verbal insults and non-verbal actions, which include offending mimics and gestures, as well as ignoring women or hindering them from effectively performing their work.

When voicing their experiences with GV at the workplace, women in all national reports offer very illustrative examples about their understanding of violence and describe the acts of GV their bosses and/or colleagues undertake.

*"While he was driving, his hand slid on my leg... I grabbed his hand and moved it, saying: what are you doing?" (Violetta7,46)*

*"For me, the fact that they told me: 'you are useless', 'you never know what's going on, you are silly' (...). They even told me that I was mentally handicapped, in that way, literally (...) Even my colleagues treated me as I was a slave, with all the negativity that it involves (...). Shouting, bad manners, defiant gazes..." (Vanesa1,56)*

*"He'd call me all sorts of names: bitch, idiot, loony". (Violetta5,46)*

*"I was a person who received lot of mailing, and I stopped receiving it, the post disappeared, I don't know where (...). They took me the post away, they didn't put me through the telephone calls. I had less and less work everyday". (Vanesa2,56)*

*"And there was once I was alone with him at the office, and as you can imagine, he tried to embarrass me, he tried to kiss me (...) He used to call me home, he persecuted me through the streets, a terrible harassment". (Vanesa3,54)*

*"He planned the skiing trip and he asked me to come along and told that the company will pay for all travel and accommodation. And I felt that I have to go, as it had been my duty or something..." (Viia4)*

*"I think that what most affected me is that they try that you refuse yourself as a person, that you become nobody and you just devote to work. And that is when I think that the violence is more psychological". (Vanesa4,30)*

*"... one day he told me straight out that if I didn't go to bed with him he would have made my life hell..." (Violetta5,46)*

*"At the end I was isolated, even my colleagues didn't talk to me, they became also accomplices, I was isolated. Isolated and humiliated because later he started to give me less work and give it to my colleague, who passed through in front of me and didn't talk to me, as if there was a wall (...) And my boss used to mock me when I was hoarse, he used to mimic me making gestures and laughing". (Vanesa5,52)*

*"They called me, they shut me up in a room and told me that I was no one important at the enterprise, that I didn't have work category there, etc". (Vanesa6,53)*

*"He left me bruises on my thighs, with two punches that he gave me when I was seated" (Vanesa7,29)*

## 3.2 Effects of GV at the workplace

### 3.2.1 Health

Gender violence experienced at work and in the workplace limits, shatters and destroys a person's well-being. In all countries, women express effects that GV has on their health. Many women, e. g., have to go on sick leave as a consequence of the GV. On the basis of our research, the main effects that GV at the workplace has on women's health are physical and psychological. None of the women declared having experienced any effect on their sexual and reproductive health.

## Physical health

In most cases, GV at the workplace does not occur in form of physical aggressions that result in serious physical bruises. All national reports thus identify psychosomatic effects - as a consequence of the psychological stress - as main effects on physical health. That's why it is not always easy for women to identify the effects of GV on their health. However, women express a wide range of consequences on the physical health, such as headaches, tiredness, palpitation, trembling, pain in the articulations, arterial tension rise, lose of weight, vomits, intestinal disorders, chronic diarrhoea, muscle pain and tension, infections, dizziness, ...:

*"I had gastric problems and intestine pains,... Not to mention the headaches! ... gastritis, swollen and, in fact, I am still taking drugs for my stomach because I am not recovered yet (...)  
Apart from a mental tiredness, it was also physical (...) vomits and nauseas, sicknesses."*  
(Vanesa1,56)

*"Pains? Many... because this affects your whole organism,... headaches, muscle pains,..."*  
(Vanesa5,52)

*"I lost weight, 6 Kg (...) I was talking and all of a sudden my hands started to shake, or the legs, as if I had Parkinson (...). Asthma, and the blood pressure also raised" (Vanesa6,53)*

## Psychological Health

The psychological dimension is a sphere that clearly shows how devastating it is for a woman to suffer GV at the labour sphere. In all national reports, there are some women who feel a change in their character, a different way to perceive or to face some situations as a consequence of the GV experience. Because of the sometimes very subtle forms of GV, some women imagine that this situation is not real, that it is only happening on their minds. They try to deny the reality or freeze their feelings entirely, or dissociating themselves, which means that they split their mind and their feelings:

*"I came up to a point that I didn't ask anything, I didn't think, you are so demoralized that you don't react. You start doubting of yourself, if it is really happening. You think it might be you that you might be silly". (Vanesa5,52)*

*"You also think you are imagining everything, they cannot be doing that. You deny yourself what you are seeing, as if it could not be possible". (Vanesa2,56)*

*"I had concentration problems and sometimes I used to think that if anyone asked me for my name, I wouldn't know the answer". (Vanesa5,52)*

All reports reveal that many interviewees suffer from depression as a result of the GV. On the basis of the psychological effects described by women, together with other physical effects (mentioned on the Physical Health section), we can infer that women present the typical symptomatology of a posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Women describe feelings of insecurity, loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, feelings of auto-blaming, sadness, loneliness or weariness; fear, anguish, attacks of anxiety and sleep disorders; lack of perception, concentration, lack of memory and the constant repicturing of the events. All of



these effects have repercussions on the way they carry out their tasks at their workplaces but also on other dimensions of their lives, as women themselves express.

*"... After the work I only wanted to go home to stay there, shut, because I felt myself such a little thing... I did nothing at all. I didn't have life". (Vanesa1,56)*

*"It was not about my job, I did not feel that I couldn't do my job. But it was about human relations, I felt that I am not capable to socialise with others in normal way."(Viia5)*

*"I really wondered which lorry I would drive under, when I couldn't even bear to go there. Like I really wanted to die. The feeling was really strong and the only thing that was that I began to think of how the kids would survive without me. I have to remain alive". (Venla6)*

*"I'd go back home and cry, I lost seven kilos in three months; I stopped eating and cried all the time. I got upset for any odd reason: if people simply looked at me I thought they wanted to rape me;" (Violetta5,46).*

*"I didn't sleep (...) the whole night unable to get to sleep". (Vanesa3,54)*

The Spanish and to a lesser extent the Italian and Finnish fielwork record women who have asked for psychological help. Women report to have asked for medical attention and/or psychological counselling at a certain stage:

*"All that comes out and I was very depressed so that I asked for a psychological counselling..." (Vanesa4,30)*

*"I went to visit all the doctors I have never visited in my whole life: I went to the neurologist, to the psychologist and the psychiatric ...". (Vanesa6,53)*

*"I had to go twice to the emergency services due to nerve attacks". (Vanesa6,53)*

*"I take medicines for the anxiety and to sleep". (Vanesa5,52)*

*"... I had work-related problems; they wouldn't leave me alone. Then I started seeing a psychiatrist because I'd fallen into a depression and so I started taking drugs... I was fired... and my job has now been filled..."(Violetta5,46)*

There are not many psychological service centres specialised on GV at the workplace. While more women who suffer GV in the partner context seek psychological help, this is not the case in the work context. This particularly applies to the more conservative countries of this research. It is important to raise public awareness for the devastating psychological effects of GV suffered at work, and to implement means like free-of-charge psychological services on a broad level in order to help women to overcome their poor psychological state.

### 3.2.2 Relationships and social life

The relationships and social life dimension needs to be analysed from a double angle, since it is relevant in two senses: On the one hand, it has to be considered if women suffering GV at the workplace have got social and family



nets and if they can use them as a resource of support. On the other hand, it is essential to look at how the emotional situation of the women affects their involvement in social and family life.

### Children/ Partner/ Other family members

Some women outline certain difficulties in their familial relations. Especially children have to suffer from the devastated psychological state of the women, which hinders them from giving their children the affection they need.

*(about her son) "When I had him I was going through the last of two intensive years of therapy sessions. It was really hard for me to take care of my child, as I experienced a total shutdown of my feelings at the very beginning. I mean I had no feelings towards my child until he was a few months old." (Venla2)*

In all countries, many interviewees try to hide the violent situation from their children, their husbands and other relatives, in order to protect them:

*[- ¿And in that moment did your sons know anything about what was happening to you?]  
- No, no, I thought it was better to keep them apart from it. (Vanesa5,52)*

*"I kept it to myself, because if I had told it to my husband he would have pushed him [the boss]. Neither to my mum... to nobody". (Vanesa3,54)*

In other cases, they feel supported by their family, which can help them softening the effects of GV, but the following quotations also reveal that the relationship is being affected by the bad state of mind of the women:

*"I had communication problems with them, and of relation due to my nerve state. They have been the ones who helped me most, but they paid for it as well (...). The support I got was the one of my sons, my sons have been always next to me (...). I am lucky for them". (Vanesa1,56)*

*(about her partner) "... he protected me, he'd take me to work, he'd come and pick me up in his car, I didn't get around by myself anymore". (Violetta5,46)*

*"My parents, thanks god, have helped and supported me a lot (...) My father had an asthmatic crisis because he was very affected and worried about me, and due to the action on court against me and so, he had a crisis". (Vanesa7,29)*

### Friends and social life

Friends can mean an important source of support, although many women either do not tell them about their situation or do not feel understood and supported by them. Violence in the workplace affects one's concept of oneself as a social being. In many cases the violence at work results in mistrust and doubt. Women speak of having partly isolated themselves at their own will as a means of surviving, or because they do not have the energy to deal with other people. Also, as women often reduce their social contacts due to their psychological state, they are in danger of losing friends and thus remain isolated without any social life.

*"This leaves you in a mood for not going out, you end up quite ill... and afterwards you find that they do not understand you (...) They drift you apart and you drift yourself apart". (Vanesa5,52)*

The experience of violence also has consequences on the ordinary relationships with other people. Interviewees from all countries state changes in their personality and that they feel distrust, shame and fears when mixing with people.

*"I distrusted people, I had communication problems with them" (Vanesa1,56)*

*"I was a confident, cheerful person and I became shy, reserved, I mistrusted people (...), your character changes. You become more suspicious, evil-minded, thinking the worst of people (...). You have the alert on". (Vanesa3,54)*

*"It was not about my job, I did not feel that I couldn't do my job. But it was about human relations, I felt that I am not capable to socialise with others in normal way". (Viia5)*

*"...maybe I've become a sadder person... I feel really good when I'm by myself". (Violetta5,46)*

*"I now have a video entry phone; I had it installed straight away! If it's late and somebody I don't fully trust rings it, I just don't open the door. That's a protection. Then, I also had a security grille fitted at the entrance, so if somebody should find the main door open by mistake and try to come up, they'll find this grille. Now I only allow in who I choose. I don't need to let everybody in; if somebody wants some documents (when delivering work to clients) I could let them have them without letting them in". (Violetta1,28)*

## Colleagues

As the GV takes place in the context of work, colleagues play a decisive role in how women manage to deal with the situation. In general, the relationships at work are affected by the violence experience; most interviewees state that they lose colleagues, feel non-understood, lonely and disappointed.

*"At work I had friends, after 20 years there, but then I did not want to keep them or I lost them (...). I understand they want to keep their workplace but I do not understand that they do not support me for fear of losing the job. I did not want to keep the colleagues because (...) I saw that for them, the first thing was to keep the job". (Vanesa6,53)*

*"They didn't really turn against me. They were just scared (...) they did nothing, if they had done anything their own job would have been in question, it was as if they all had their hands tied." (Venla3)*

*"Initially it was really concrete. If I went to a coffee table, all the people there would stand up, and it didn't just affect me but all those who dared to have anything to do with me." (Venla8, 54)*

In other cases the colleagues behaved solidly with the women, which softens the psychological pressure of GV. Being supported by the colleagues can mean a source a comfort as they perfectly understand the situation:

*"My closest colleagues were so wonderful and we also had neighbouring offices, so I knew that there was always back up there. The feeling that I was not alone and that this harassment was directed at my working person helped so that I did not feel so stressed out when I went to work." (Venla5)*

All these quotations demonstrate the importance of a working social support system and intensive human contacts. If women trust the people around them, they feel backed up, which can relativise the GV suffered at work. If women do not feel understood and protected, this just increases their isolation, leaving them even more subjected to the violence. The fact that women start to isolate themselves due to the lack of energy or depressive feelings deeply impacts their relationships with their family and friends as well.

### 3.2.3 Economic

Suffering GV at the workplace has an undoubted economic impact on women, as this implies sick leaves or the change or loss of job. However, the extent of this impact will depend, on the one hand, on the personal situation of each woman and, on the other hand, on the different aspects (legal, labour, health,...) she will deal with throughout the whole violence experience. In this sense, the personal situation of the woman, such as having children, being a single mother, being migrant or an elderly woman, etc., is very relevant when determining the economic effects that suffering GV has for them. This is because women's income decreases due to sick leaves, unemployment (sometimes without unemployment benefits), invalidity pension, etc. In this way, women who find themselves in vulnerable situations have to struggle when facing these situations deriving from the violent experience. It is important to stress that for these women in vulnerable situations, the decision of changing or quitting the job is not easy, since they strongly depend on their wage and sometimes it implies that they keep the job, despite being suffering GV, due to economic dependence.

*"I worked in another bar for one month. After talking to the owner about pay and work hours, we reached an agreement... then he started asking me to work more, I ended up working 12 hours a day and when he paid me, he didn't even pay me the amount we had originally agreed on; he gave me less, even though I'd worked much longer hours. So I told him that I was leaving, saying: 'If you don't pay me what we agreed on, I'll leave'. He didn't say anything, so I left" (Violetta2,23).*

*"I had a daughter and a mother that I had to look after. I had to bring a plate in the table, ... I mean,... I could not afford anything,...". (Vanesa3,54)*

*"because, when my husband and I broke up, he didn't pay alimony and so I had to find a solution...". (Violetta7,46).*

*"The first I did when I came here was to pay the debt he had with the bank and pay him the studies (...). And here with difficulties to pay the housing (...). I am in hardship, I have a huge debt." (Vanesa4,30)*

It is noteworthy highlighting the economic impact of the interviewees who took legal action for the violent experience:

*"At an economic level, I had to ask for help to my sons because I could not afford to pay the lawyer. I am alone with my sons and I have to pay everything, the house, the bills and the lawyer". (Vanesa1,56)*

*"My lawyer didn't receive yet any money, because I don't have money to pay him, he is pressing me more and more every time, but I don't know how to do it (...) I have economic support from my parents but they cannot go on supporting me the whole time this is going to take". (Vanesa7,29)*

Receiving psychological help can be a very problematic aspect regarding the financial situation as well:

*"It has cost me a couple of Mercedes Benz cars to come out alive from this business. It was expensive."(Venla8)*

GV in the work context deeply influences the economic situation. On the one hand, taking legal action or receiving psychological help is very expensive. On the other hand, losing the job has serious consequences on the economic situation. It is obvious that the lack of support systems for women suffering GV in many countries renders their situation more difficult.

### 3.2.4 Housing

In none of the countries, housing has appeared as a relevant dimension when talking about the effects of GV occurred at the workplace. In this sense, the interviewees do not point out that the fact of suffering GV in the labour sphere has any direct effect on housing. However, the Spanish case demonstrates the indirect, inherent effects that GV in the workplace has on the housing situation. Women, especially those who are in a situation of increased vulnerability, mention housing issues when talking about income, referring to either their dependence on their job to pay the rent or mortgage, or the difficulty of paying it.

*"I am alone with my sons and I have to pay everything, the house, the bills and the lawyer". (Vanesa1,56)*

*"And here with difficulties to pay the housing". (Vanesa4,30)*

In the case of one migrant woman in Spain, the situation of exploitation lived at the workplace (which is the employer's home where the interviewee also lives) lead the woman to change of accommodation.

*"I had told my boss that I needed money because every month I had bills, and then in August my boss told me to go with him and his family to his house (...), and that I could stay with them and find a room calmly. I was delighted, but I started to realise that (...) they did not appreciate my extra hours and I noticed I was wearing out, I had no resting time, timetables were extending and I said that I left. And then I found a little room, with a Bolivian couple (...). It is one month now that I am there and they know that I am in hardship, I have a huge debt. I asked them to reduce the rent 50€ one month (...). They discussed it and yesterday told me that they also needed the money for the bills. What can I do? It is like a chain." (Vanesa4,30)*

Except in this last case in which the violent experience directly provoked a change of accommodation, the effects of GV in housing should be interpreted as follows: for the interviewees with certain economic well-being (especially when having a partner with a good income), the GV experience at the

workplace does not have a considerable effect on housing. For those interviewees in vulnerable situations (e.g. mothers being lone responsible of the family, migrants, elderly women), the violence experience increases their vulnerability at all levels, and also in the housing one, due to the economic impact already discussed.

### 3.2.5 Labour

Undoubtedly, suffering from GV at the workplace has diverse effects on the labour dimension. Sick leaves, e. g., are a very common effect of GV. As all national reports state, most women sooner or later change their job, or they lose it (because they get fired or because their psychological state does not allow them another solution), and as a consequence they suffer from unemployment.

In the Spanish case, women go more in depth in reporting effects on the labour sphere, that's why the following effects relate to women's experiences in Spain. None the less, it is quite probable that these effects also apply to the women in the other countries. The Spanish interviews demonstrate that women feel their performance of work being suffering due to the pressure and their bad psychological state. Interviewees mostly refer to feelings of insecurity, low self-confidence and to a lower capacity of attention, concentration and perception. As a result, they feel that their performance at work is not at the level it used to be and they start losing their self-confidence and security as efficient and competent employees:

*"There are moments when I lose my concentration and you start having mistakes in your work (...). It is horrible, my memory is failing quite a lot..." (Vanesa4,30)*

*"And it also comes up a moment when you are blocked and you don't know what you are doing. When I left my job, for me, doing things like filing any paper, I had to consult how to do it, because I didn't know anymore how ...." (Vanesa5,52)*

*"I had concentration problems, I was not achieving much, if I was told to do something I did not notice. I was tense and worried." (Vanesa1,56)*

*"Due to the harassment our memory gets damaged (...), memory and concentration. (Vanesa2,56)*

#### Loss of Job

Most of the interviewees in Spain lose their jobs because they see that quitting the job is the last option they have to stop the GV. They resign jobs where they used to feel quite qualified and recognised until the moment the harassment started:

*"So I wanted to leave that job... and I lost a very important, very important job. It was an enterprise where I felt very good, I was highly valued (...). I had a high status there and that man ruined it". (Vanesa3,54)*

There are also cases of women who lose their jobs due to their bad health conditions, which lead them to a situation of labour invalidity.

*"Until one of the times that I was on sick leave, and I was quite often like this because I didn't recover from my arm, they called me from the Labour Inspection (...) and told me that as I was on sick leaves for such a long time I should have to ask for an invalidity, earning the 55% [from the salary] (...) Well, it was not also the best solution, but it is the only one they give to you".*  
(Vanesa2,56)

## Unemployment

As mentioned earlier, another effect of suffering GV at the workplace is to face a period of unemployment, although not always with employment benefit. For these women the unemployment period is described as a time to regain their physical and emotional health:

*"And... I stayed calm at home 3 years without working until it was all over, but it was very hard for me to return to the labour world (...) When I left that job, I felt liberated, you bet I do!"*  
(Vanesa3,54)

However, for many women, the fact of being unemployed does not mean in any way a time to rest or to regain her health, but a time of economic worries, worsened by the emotional state of confusion and insecurity as a consequence of the GV experience.

## Change of job

A job change is, on no account, an easy option for a woman who is suffering GV at her workplace, mainly due to economical or psychological reasons. It is important to remark that this change of job/centre results to be a good solution only in appearance. A change of the physical place of work and of the colleagues does not mean that the bad emotional conditions women are suffering will improve automatically. As in general terms the health of the women is deeply affected, when changing of job place they still will be suffering most of the symptoms of the PTSD (low self-confidence, insecurity and distrust, anguish, etc) because overcoming the traumatic experience of suffering GV at the workplace, takes a long period of time, even if the woman is not more exposed to the event that provoked the trigger and even if she is receiving medical and/or psychological support, as the interviewees in Spain report:

*"Regarding the transfer... I was not replacing anyone, I was a ... ghost (...) and so the people is keeping an eye on that, "let's see what she comes for" (...) I was not alright, I didn't mix with the colleagues at work. I kept on feeling bad, I kept on feeling bad".* (Vanesa2,56)

*"I started a job (...) went back to unemployment (...) Since I started to look for a job until now, I have changed 7 times (...) Up to now it didn't happen, but this is the sensation, that I am not capable".*(Vanesa6,53)

*"When I went to the new job, I had quite strong prejudices when I noticed that I would have male boss again, but everything is OK and I have not had any problems in this new place...."*(Viia4)



Nevertheless, most of the interviewees change of job because they realised, in a certain way, that it was the best manner to escape from the violence experience they were suffering. Some women thus lose career opportunities or end up in a job they are overqualified for, as outlined by women in Spain and Italy.

### 3.2.6 Legal

Many women ask for legal help or advice at a certain point. In Spain and Finland it seems to be a very common action, while in Estonia and Italy women tend to less address to lawyers or advisers. The Estonian report even states that there is no case of a trial about GV at the workplace officially recorded at all. But also in the other cases it is important to state that almost none of the interviewees actually decided to initiate a legal case at court. This is due to many reasons, some of which are psychological and others social or cultural. Women fear to lose the case, or to be rejected socially, to lose their job and career, and that the violence will never end. Also they fear that losing the case entails the fear that they themselves are found guilty of the crime and that thus the Violence is made legitimate. Women suffering from GV at the workplace very often do not see themselves in a psychological condition for going to court, as they do not have a lot of energy:

*“I was looking for a new job, I did not want to fight(Viia4)*

*“And it is true that they guide you a little (in an association against mobbing) about what you can do, but when you are ready to do that is when you are getting better, because at first you are not in the substance to go to a lawyer or to anyway”. (Vanesa5,52)*

*“If I had complained or said something, they would had buried me. I was frightened (...).I was frightened, so I never thought about reporting or asking for help”. (Vanesa3,54)*

*“There was not a trial because I didn’t want. It is so that, on the one hand, I did not have any problem to do it, but comparing the situation, I told myself, that if I do report for such a question and if it comes up, more or less, to another level, I can already forget about keeping on working for this official institution for the rest of my life”. (Vanesa1,56)*

Although gender equality is legally recognised of all member countries of the EU, the reality looks quite different in many cases, so that public awareness and an effective legal support system for women who suffered GV at the workplace are not automatically given. The Italian report shows very clearly, how a patriarchal cultural environment prevents women from bringing their case to trial, as women fear the disapproval of their family and other people, or when minor incidences GV at the workplace are considered something normal. Thus, many women do not know where to approach in order to get some advice and support:

*“I didn’t know what to do, where to go, to whom consult (...) With no one to give you advise”. (Vanesa2,56)*

*“[Did you think at any time to go to the trade union or any association?]  
- I didn’t think of those things because I ignored that”. (Vanesa3,54)*



Also when women decide to take legal help, it can become obvious for them that society is not prepared for dealing with GV at the workplace. E. g., a lawyer said to a woman in Italy regarding initiating a case:

*“she told me that I’d be better off not getting myself into this situation because there was no chance of winning. She said , You can try, but you will never win”*(Violetta5,46)

(About the lawyer working in the women’s centre): *“in that situation, she looked powerless, which is strange because she’s very much on the ball and very clever. She seemed to be powerless; I saw something was stirring inside her”*.(Violetta8,48)

In many cases women also were asked to provide proof of the GV suffered, which usually is very difficult without the support of witnesses like their colleagues, etc.

*“I went to the labour inspection but it is basically impossible, because they ask you to prove it, but how to prove it, how do you prove what they are telling you? (...) Then this inspection was precisely unfavourable, because it was impossible to prove what he was telling me”*.(Violetta5,52)

The only report that includes at least some positive cases regarding the legal support is Spain, where legal and social institutions seem to be more prepared to deal with GV at the workplace than in the other countries:

*“Then we talked to a lawyer (...) and he told me we were going to report about it (...) The trade union also helped me a lot and they had a lot of meetings with the responsible people and advised me (...). I had the support of the lawyer during the whole legal process and I felt myself safe and good accompanied”*. (Vanesa1,56)

GV at the workplace still is a taboo in Europe. In some countries, women get some kind of support, whereas in others, society rather tends to judge them and thus reinforces the oppression women suffer. It is very important to raise public awareness and to clarify what GV at the workplace is, which forms it can take and how devastating the effects on the lives of the victims are. Measures as such also have to be undertaken in the legal sphere and in the trade unions, as well as in the psychological sector, in order to provide women with the support they need.

#### 4. Gender violence from expert’s perspective

Experts working in support services for women suffering GV provide complementary and/ or additional information to the one gathered by means of the interviewed women. Thus, the experience of professionals in this field is useful to clarify the complexity of some of the processes women have to go through as a consequence of GV.

It is important to point out that some of the experts in Italy and Estonia observe a lack of awareness among many professionals working in the field of GV. This is reflected, for example, in the use of softer, indirect synonyms of violence, instead of naming the fact directly. Furthermore, not all professionals have received a special training on gender and violence, as an Italian expert states.

The experts questioned for this research agree on the enormous impact that GV has on women's life, which equal each other to a great extent, regardless of the country.

Experts' experiences and observations confirm the views of the women suffering GV in national reports, which demonstrates that the subjective effects of GV manifest clearly and visibly to outsiders as well.

## 4.1 Gender violence from expert's perspective in the partner context

### Health

Regarding the health dimension, experts equally describe the physical and psychological problems women suffer as a consequence of the GV on a short- and long-term-basis, which often require medical attention.

However, experts point out that many women do not get the professional help they need, which is partly due to the unreadiness or inability of women to see a doctor, for fear or shame that the GV might be discovered. Apart from that women also lack of information or money to do so, although differences among the countries are perceivable. The barrier seems to be particularly high in Estonia, while in Spain, women have better opportunities to rely on the services offered.

On the other hand, experts state that awareness and knowledge about GV on the part of many professionals like doctors, is not sufficient, which particularly applies to the Estonian and Italian cases. As a result of this lack, women do not necessarily get the help they need. Furthermore experts opine that there are not enough services offered to support women suffering GV in the partner context.

### Relationships and social life

Although experts generally observe similar effects in the sphere of social life and social relations, there are also some differences noticeable: In all reports experts agree that women use social relations in diverse manners. Many women, e. g., find support in their children, other family members and friends. On the other hand, many women hide the violent situation they are suffering from them, for feelings of shame or in order to protect their family. It has to be stated that the reactions of the people around women are not always positive.

They are ranging from caring support and relief to misunderstanding and blaming on the other side. Yet, it seems that experts observe more negative reactions on behalf of family members and the people around women in Italy and Estonia, whereas in Finland and Spain this seems to be less the case. Experts from Italy and Estonia clearly relate this lack of social support to cultural notions of gender, the acceptance of the inferior social role that women take and the notion of GV as a private issue.

Experts from all countries agree that women's participation in leisure and social life activities is severely reduced, which is both a consequence of the control their partners exert on their activities, but also of women's disastrous psychological state, which makes them isolate themselves from the society. Furthermore experts from Finland and Estonia stress the influence that alcohol abuse by the perpetrator and within the family can have on the social relations.

### **Economic**

Also in the economic dimension there are no major differences observable: Experts emphasize the decisive role that economic dependency on men plays in the decision whether to leave a violent partner or not. Many women suffer economic hardship both while being in their relationships (when men control the money women earn or hinder them from working) and in particular after finishing their violent partners.

After finishing the relationship with their partners, women have to face extreme changes in their lives as looking for a job, paying a flat, having the sole responsibility over their children. Both, if women stay at the same residence they used to share with their partner or if they move to another house or flat (which usually is the case), it implies economical changes in their lives, that they may not be able to confront alone.

### **Housing**

Experts also agree with the housing difficulties women find when leaving a violent partner. Yet, it has to be stated that the situation regarding public housing facilities differ among the countries. In this context, the case of Estonia has to be highlighted: Experts describe the housing situation as very difficult as flat owners prefer to rent a flat to men. Furthermore they mention the extremely high costs of renting a flat and the lack of adequate social housing or shelter houses, which increases the difficulties women have to face.

### **Labour**

The effects of GV in the partner context on the labour sphere was mainly discussed in the Spanish case. Regarding the social aspect of work, experts emphasize the importance of the recognition and support women might receive, but they also mention the fact that many women hide the violent situation from their employers and colleagues due to fear or shame.

Experts generally point out the same effects on the labour sphere that women describe: control of the partner on their employment, unemployment (directly in forbidding, and indirectly due to physical and psychological state), and women's acceptance of unstable and precarious jobs as a consequence of the violence sick leaves and the worsening of their performance at work.

## **Legal**

The legal dimension reveals the main differences among the countries, although also here they show similar aspects. Experts from all countries agree that the percentage of women which actually initiates a legal trial against their perpetrator is very low. Yet, there are differences noticeable: While in Spain and Finland there are more women willing or able to bring an action against their violent partner, Italian women tend to hesitate more, and Estonian women almost never start a legal procedure. Experts state that this is due to a deficient law system in Estonia, which is not able to effectively protect women. Also in Italy experts point out that women are aware that their complaints will not be met with effective juridical measures. Punishment of the perpetrator in both cases is minor and usually not monitored legally.

Also in the Spanish case professionals state that many women who start a legal process, feel frustration and consequently distrust in the legal system, when they realise that starting a legal process against their partners implies time, fears and for some of them, economic hardship.

## **4.2. Gender Violence from experts' perspective in the work context**

### **Health**

Professionals from all countries affirm the devastating effects that GV in the workplace has on women's health. Experts in Spain emphasize the psychosomatic and psychological consequences of successive phases of stress in the workplace. They point out that many women suffer from PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) and depression.

Medication and/or psychological support are needed by most of these women, especially in order to confront the symptoms of depressions. However, these services are not accessible for all women, in particular in Estonia and Italy.

### **Relationships and social life**

The GV suffered at work also affects women in regard to their relationships with their nearest persons. Professionals state that the stressful situation suffered at work affects the harmony in women's family relationships.

Regarding their relationships with friends, experts describe two different reactions on behalf of the women: On the one side, women may avoid any social contacts due to their depressive state and consequently end up alone in an isolated situation. On the other side, women may search for the understanding and support of their friends. Nevertheless, women do not always receive the support they expect, thus also having feelings of loneliness, distrust and incomprehension when friends turn out to be distant.

## **Economic**

Professionals state that the economy of women who suffer GV at the workplace is also affected, which mainly is due to unemployment. Also if women decide to take legal assistance or consulting, they usually have to face the costs, because of the lack of free of charge services in most cases.

## **Employment**

Experts describe all the effects on the labour sphere that the interviewed women experience: A worsened performance due to the psychological stress, sick leaves and change or loss of job are very common effects. Very often women lose important job opportunities and end up in jobs they are overqualified for.

Colleagues take a decisive role in women's coping with the violent situation, which is emphasized by experts in Finland and Spain. If women feel supported and understood, it can ease their situation. However, many colleagues take distance from the harassed woman, in order to avoid reprisals to themselves.

## **Legal**

Experts comments about the legal sphere clearly show a general lack of legal and social awareness regarding GV at the workplace. Experts, e.g, state that there is no case of a trial due to GV at the workplace recorded in Estonia. Also in Italy lawyers tend to discourage women who want to initiate a trial. In Spain and Finland, where the legal frames seem to better allow such trials, there are still not many cases, as women restrain from initiating them due to their psychological state and a lack of a well-structured legal support system, which leaves women alone with their problem.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The fieldwork carried out with women having suffered GV in the partner and in the workplace context together with the results of the focus groups confirm our initial hypothesis that GV has multidimensional effects on women's lives.

It became obvious that all the six analysed dimensions – health, relationships and social life, economic, housing, labour and legal - are severely affected by the GV women suffer. Thus, women are not only exposed to the GV itself, but also have to face multiple simultaneous events as a consequence of the GV.

Women who are suffering GV in the partner context find themselves in a deep emotional shock due to the horrifying experiences. They are probably not in the position to perform their work appropriately, or in many cases they eventually lose it, thus suffering economic hardship, also having housing problems if they take the decision to leave their partner and sometimes they have to deal with the GV in a legal way. Those multiple challenges meet women in a very vulnerable situation, which very often results in a vicious circle: women need money to get a house and maintain themselves and their children, and in order to get money they need a job; however, their emotional state is bad, their personal competences and resources to cover their needs of well-being and safety, and face all the simultaneous events taking place. A process of labour insertion usually takes some time. Therefore, it can be stated on the basis of the fieldwork, that finishing a violent relationship usually implies situations of precariousness and impoverishment for women; the separation from their partners encompass circumstances that place women in a very vulnerable position which can lead them to a social exclusion processes.

We perceive social exclusion as a multidimensional and dynamic process, understood as *“the obstacles that certain persons find to fully participate in social life, thus being deprived from one or several options considered being fundamental for their human development”*<sup>1</sup>. As the European Commission stated in its Background Report *Social Exclusion-Poverty and Other Social Problems in the European Community ISEC/B/11/93*, “poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services”. Thus, when talking about social exclusion we refer to the conditions that impede a person to enjoy of individual autonomy and rights to participate fully to social, communitarian, economic, educative,... spheres of life.

The research has also demonstrated the devastating effects that GV at the workplace has on women. Its effects are by no means reduced to this sphere, but they damage women's well-being on all levels of their life. As GV perpetrated at the workplace is not an isolated episode of one day but a

---

<sup>1</sup> MARTÍNEZ ROMÁN, A. *“Género, pobreza y exclusión: diferentes conceptualizaciones y políticas públicas (Gender, poverty and exclusion: different conceptualizations and public policies)”*, in TORTOSA, J.M., cited in SURT, *Poverty, Gender and Social Exclusion*, DG 5, Occupation, Work Relations and Social Matters, European Commission (2000-2002).



continuous and prolonged exercise of denigration and humiliation in different ways, it has serious long-term effects on women's health, in many cases resulting in depressions or PTSD, which influences their social and family relationships, makes it difficult to search for another job (if they are in the position to leave the job in which they suffer the GV), thus affecting their economic situation. All of these multiple effects can leave them in a very vulnerable situation as well, with a similar danger of being socially excluded as women who suffer GV in the partner context.

Furthermore, as seen various times in this report, many women suffering GV accumulate other factors of vulnerability such as being migrants and living in an irregular situation (encompassing lack of social, civic, politic rights, precariousness in the labour sphere, discrimination,...), being elder women (less opportunities in the labour market, discrimination, ...), being the lone responsible for their children with lack of family or social nets to support them (hardship, more difficulties for labour insertion, more complexity when balancing labour and family lives,...). These vulnerability factors place women in a position of lack of opportunities for fully participating in social life. All in all, suffering GV means an inflection point in women's life; such a brutal phenomenon leaves them in a very vulnerable and risk situation in all senses, which puts on the table the need for public comprehensive support services, at a legal, psychological, labour, economic and housing level.

Although public help is decisive in coping with GV, this research reveals serious deficiencies in the national social support systems for women. This comparative report in fact demonstrates that most women in the four countries of research do not get adequate help. In some of the countries, women are literally left alone with the severe problem they are suffering, which is mainly due to the lack of legal and social support and cultural awareness, as we have seen. However, also in the countries where women can revert to established support services, they still are not protected and supported appropriately in all cases. Thus they remain in risk of being socially marginalised or even having to live on with the violent situation.

For this reason it is important to implement various measures in order to provide women with the help they need.

First of all, it is of fundamental importance to provide a comprehensive and operating service that supplies women with support at different levels:

It is necessary to establish an adequate number of shelter houses, so that women will always have a place of refuge in case of acute emergency. This particularly applies to the countries where a organised system of shelter houses is lacking. Furthermore, a free of charge emotional support service from professionals as psychologists or psychiatrics, and also medical support to attend women's situations of stress, confusion and physical weakness, is necessary. All of these means of support could lead women to cope with the enormous psychological stress and the changes they will experience in their lives once they decide to leave their partners or their workplaces, and facilitate them to confront the changes in their economy, housing and labour situation.



Jointly with the psychological assistance, free of charge legal assistance for women who are considering taking legal action should be guaranteed. In a first stage, this service has to give women information about all the steps they have to take, including the advantages and disadvantages they imply. Legal assistance, legal accompaniment and support should be guaranteed during the whole legal process if a woman decides to start it, as well as providing them police protection when needed. In theory such service is available in all countries. However, in some of the country women actually can not rely on any legal help at all, which particularly applies to the legal possibilities regarding GV in the workplace context. Furthermore, even in the countries where facilities are more established, only very few women actually decide to take legal action. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to take political action in order to establish adequate legal services and to make sure women can get and easy access to these services.

It is also important to organise these support services in a comprehensive way: They should be cooperating with each other to a greater extent. They also should be offered at the same place, in order to avoid women unnecessary journeys from one place to another. This would imply to reduce their inversion on time and energy, which most of them do not have in such circumstances. Furthermore, all professionals working in this field should receive a special training to attend women with empathy and understanding, in order to provide them with all the safety, protection and guidance they need in that moment.

Apart from this, women's social reintegration and the reinsertion in the work sphere should be promoted in offering additional services, as the access to work is decisive in gaining independence and enabling women to fully take part in social life.

This report has shown that the effects of GV remain mainly invisible to society. Although sometimes the health or the legal aspect (especially in the case of death in consequence of GV) become public, the all-comprising consequences on all spheres of women's life remain in the dark.

However, the sole supply of free of charge and easily accessible services will not trigger GV successfully. In all countries exists a lack of awareness concerning GV, even though to different degrees. While in Spain the government is launching nationwide campaigns in order to raise awareness, in Estonia, e.g., it is still considered a private issue without relation to social notion of gender roles and the acceptance of gender inequity. Such an attitude promotes directly or indirectly violence against women.

Therefore awareness-raising measures on a Europeanwide and national level, reaching all spheres of society have to be undertaken, in order to make the effects of GV visible. These programs should not only trigger GV in both contexts, but also aim at a broader understanding of gender notions and the gender inequity practised in all countries, as existing gender roles play a decisive role in the manifestation and acceptance of GV.