



THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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PREAMBLE

Taking into account the debate that took place just from the beginning of this project with regards to the preliminary theoretical and methodological proposal, the aim of this document is to draw a definitive proposal on these issues..

Following this objective, we have tried to gather all the different contributions made by the partners along the last two months, both by e-mail and during the two different meetings celebrated in Barcelona¹, as well as the feedbacks on the first document, which have been taken into consideration for the present final version.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal of GVEI project is to design social indicators to measure gender violence 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 causes on women's life.

Social indicators are quantitative tools that reflect a specific conceptualisation of a social phenomenon. Depending on the concept used and particularly depending on the dimensions of social reality included in the concept, we will design different social indicators to measure it. In the first section of the theoretical framework (1.1), we will refer to the concept of social indicators and present the process for building GVEI, pointing out the objectives that we seek with the design of new indicators (section 1.2.).

Following, and to deal with one the main problems regarding the concepts used behind the social indicators to measure the effects of VAW for women's life, in the third section (1.3.), we are going to define what we understand for VAW, gender violence (GV) and gender violence effects. The present proposal is also based (as the previous one) on the concept of VAW recovered by the Declaration of Beijing², pointing out that VAW is an expression of GV. In this sense, and as it is detailed below, GV is a concept that while emphasises the gender dimension of the VAW, includes that into a broader context.

From this theoretical framework, and taking into account that this project is based on qualitative research methods, in the second chapter we will deal with the

¹ The kick off-meeting with University of Calabria and University of Tartu and the bilateral meeting with University of Oulu, May and June of the current year, respectively

² Fourth World Women's Conference, Beijing, 1995.

methodological proposal, by defining the process, structure and tools for the fieldwork and the focus groups. In particular, the methodological approach will deal with the following issues:

A. In-depth interviews with women

- Target group
- Sample and criteria of selection of women to be interviewed
- Ways to contact and approach women and ethical issues
- Guide for the women's interviews: dimensions and variables.

B. Focus groups

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The feminist theories and the feminist movements have vehemently demonstrated that knowledge cannot be considered neutral or objective. Traditionally, researchers have engendered knowledge on the basis of the dominant perspective and behaviour in society, which was the male one (androcentrism). As a consequence, knowledge has been blind to the specific historical, political, social and personal conditions on which it was reported, making invisible gender differences. Feminist epistemologies have claimed that knowledge is dynamic, relative and variable and that it cannot be considered an aim itself but a process.

Taking into account this idea, the theoretical and methodological proposal of this project is based on the following principles:

- gender inequalities and the promotion of women's rights, interests and issues, are the common basis of the feminist studies and their epistemological concerns, despite the fact that there multiple meanings of gender and the concept of gender itself has been criticised (e.g. Butler, 2000; Breines, Connell and Eide, 2000);
- violence against women "constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms" (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, UN, General Assembly Resolution 48/1004 of 20 December 2003);
- there are many expressions of violence against women and new ones can appear according to the development of the social changes and the social dynamics;

- violence against women has multiple and multidimensional effects, but all of them have the common denominator of being gender based;
- from a feminist perspective, the best way to know something about violence against women and its effects is by hearing the voices of the women that have experienced this phenomenon.

1.1. Social indicators as the framework of Gender Violence Effects Indicators

According to Gabàs, *“social indicators can be understood as quantitative measurements of a social phenomenon, its presence or its absence in the social reality”*. Indicators are quantitative data often presented as *“statistical information chosen specifically to shed light on a specific economic, demographic or social problem/question. Indicators can be a single figure or distribution; figures can be expressed as numbers, percentages, rates or ratios”*³. The challenge therefore, is to capture qualitative information and to transfer it into quantitative indicators to give visibility to a social phenomenon.

In this way, social indicators can be useful tools in planning, policy-making, research and general monitoring of social and living conditions. Stuart Rice⁴ contended that *“Social indicators are needed to find pathways through the maze of society’s interconnections. They delineate social states, define social problems and trace social trends, which by social engineering may hopefully be guided towards social goals formulated by social planning”*. In our view, this definition gathers two core elements of the rationality and purpose of social indicators, which can be applied in GVEI project:

- Social indicators can have a descriptive function (description of social states and of trends in social change),
- The analytical tools they can be for policy-making, planning and monitoring⁵.

On the basis of the above conception, the resulting indicators of GVEI should seek to describe and measure the multidimensional effects of GV in women’s life and, at the same time, serve for future planning and policy-making for the design of integral policy responses to this phenomenon and the women who suffer it.

³ HEDMAN, BIRGITTA, PERCUCCI, FRANCESCA, SUNDSTRÖM, PEHR, *Engendering Statistics, a Tool for Change*. Statistics Sweden, 1996. Cited in EUROPEAN WOMEN’S LOBBY, *Towards a common European Framework to monitor progress in combating violence against women*. EWL, 2001.

⁴ UNESCO (1974), “Social Indicators: problems of definition and of selection” in *Reports and papers in the social sciences*. No. 30.

⁵ Idem.

There are several definitions, kinds and processes of measurement of social indicators that here we will not explore. However, it is noteworthy pointing out the criteria that, according to experts, indicators should accomplish⁶. In particular, the desired indicators are those:

- Indicators that come from the theory used as the framework of the research and indicators that answer the objectives of the project.
- Indicators that are direct measures of the phenomenon analysed.
- Indicators of results (those indicators that inform about the stage of the phenomenon) and not indicators of means (that inform about the resources addressed from society to the social phenomenon).
- Valid indicators, this means indicators that are not affected by “participant indicators” (other indicators that determine the selected ones).
- Indicators that can be integrated or disintegrated.
- Precise indicators and indicators that could be easily interpreted.
- The selection of indicators must not be determined by the existence of statistical data. In this sense, it could be useful to distinguish between “possible indicators”, those indicators that can be calculated using the existing statistical data, and “desirable indicators”, those indicators that can not be calculated because there are not available data.
- And, finally, experts recommend avoiding “redundant indicators”. The aim should be to capture the maximum of information with the minimum indicators.

Social analysts point out that social indicators are always approximate measurements. They are probabilistic measures that can never capture the phenomenon in all its extent. In this way, as Gabàs⁷ claims, we will design social indicators according to our conceptualisation of a social phenomenon. Depending on the definition of this phenomenon, on the dimensions we focus our attention on, and depending on the characteristics we use to describe it, we will design different indicators. This is the reason why a previous theoretical analysis of the social phenomenon is an essential part of the process of designing social indicators.

Social phenomena can be differently conceptualised and each concept accepts different definitions. Therefore, methodological and theoretical choices will determine

⁶ SURT, Gabàs, A. (2003) Methodological proposals for the design of social indicators, in the project GENDER INDICATORS AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION, Transnational Exchange Programme Phase I and Phase II. Employment and Social Affairs. European Comisión (2002-2004).

⁷ SURT, Gabàs, A. (2003) Methodological proposals for the design of social indicators, in the project GENDER INDICATORS AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION, Transnational Exchange Programme Phase I and Phase II. Employment and Social Affairs. European Comisión (2002-2004).

the process of designing social indicators. This is why some authors consider that besides any system of indicators, there is a political and ideological approach coming from the theoretical framework selected⁸.

On the basis of the methodology used in a previous SURT project of creating social indicators (*Gender Indicators Against Social Exclusion*), we propose the following methodological process for GVEI:

- A definition of the objectives of the project: why we want to design a system of gender violence effects indicators, which kind of applicability we are looking for, what do we want to reach, and so on;
- Conceptual and theoretical analysis of the phenomenon that we want to analyse: establishing the theoretical framework that will be the basis of the system of indicators. For GVEI purposes, this implies to define carefully the theoretical framework and the concepts of GV, VAW and GVEI, and to establish a list of the main dimensions of effects that will guide the new proposal of indicators.
- Fieldwork: to recover the voice of the women suffering GV and to collect qualitative information about the effects of this particular form of violence.
- De-constructing concepts and creating new qualitative indicators according to the results of the fieldwork.
- Transforming the qualitative information into quantitative indicators, so the real design of indicators as quantitative measurements of the effects of GV experiences.
- Analysing the viability of the new indicators according to the existing data, distinguishing between “possible indicators” and “desirable indicators”.
- Launching recommendations of necessary basic data in order to be able to implement GV effects indicators and design integral policy responses for women to the phenomenon.

1.2. Objectives of GVEI (Gender Violence Effects Indicators)

This project aims to design GV effects indicators for measuring and shedding light on the multidimensional effects of GV in women's life. The rationality behind the indicators is:

⁸ CARRASCO, CRISTINA; DOMÍNGUEZ, MARIUS. *Nous indicadors de treball i gènere. Una proposta metodològica* (New labour and gender indicators. A methodological proposal. Barcelona societat/12. Revista d'informació i estudis socials (Review of information and social studies). Ajuntament de Barcelona. 2003.

- to make visible and measure the effects of GV episodes in multiple spheres of women's life that usually remain invisible (beyond health consequences, dimensions such as labour, family, social networks, participation in the public sphere, housing, etc. will be explored). Previous research projects have shown that the fact of suffering GV has a holistic effect in the sense that becomes a transversal factor affecting women in all spheres of life. The indicators, therefore, at first stage will seek to shed light and measure these multiple effects.
- to provide information and data with a view to design comprehensive policy responses to help and empower women suffering GV.
- to improve social policies to combat GV.

1.3. Concepts: Gender Violence, Violence Against Women and Gender Violence Effects

There are many ways to name violence against women. Terms such as “domestic violence”, “male violence”, “sexist violence” and “domestic violence against women” are usually used to conceptualise this kind of violence, but their meanings may be different.

The Fourth World Women's Conference, celebrated in Beijing in 1995, has described **violence against women (VAW)** as a social subject that consists in “*any act of violence based on gender, which may result or actually results in physical, sexual or psychological harm, including threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, in either private or public life*”⁹.

Thus, VAW can be considered gender based violence, understanding **gender** as the set of roles, rights, representations, expectations and values assigned to each sex; this socio-cultural construction of what is feminine and masculine places men and women in different positions in society, establishing power relationships among them and locating women in an inferior and less valued situation. In this way, gender “*refers to the social organisation of the relationship between the sexes and to the fundamentally social quality of the distinction*”¹⁰.

As Russo and Pirlott¹¹ state, in “*Western society, gender is typically organised around the social categories of male versus female and assigned at birth on biological sex*”. In

⁹ Platform for action. Item 113 - Fourth World Women's Conference.

¹⁰ Sunnari V., Kangasvuo, J. And Heikkinen, M. (2002), *Gendered and Sexualised Violence in Educational Environments*. Oulu. 2003.

¹¹ Russo, N and Pirlott, A. “Gender-Based violence. Concepts, methods and findings” in *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087, p. 178-205, 2006.

this way, “gender defines the appropriateness of behavioural, psychological and social characteristics of males and females over the life cycle, and shapes the way we construe ourselves”¹². Thus, children, through the process of socialisation, interiorise the roles associated to their sex, behave as expected and reproduce the division between genders, which places women in a position of subordination, less power, recognition and resources than men. In our patriarchal society, masculinity is usually associated with power, domination and control over women and, as McHugh argues, “violence is one means by which men can perform masculinity”¹³ as well; this male trend traditionally has been legitimised and seen as *natural*. Hence, this dominant model inevitably shapes the way children grow up and construct themselves.

Therefore, we understand that, as Godenzi claims, “men’s violence against women is both a means and an expression of the conditions of inequality between men and women”¹⁴. In other words, VAW needs to be understood as “a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women’s full advancement”¹⁵. This gender based violence is perpetuated against women for the sole reason of being women¹⁶.

VAW, therefore, can be considered as the main expression of gender violence, understanding that GV is a broader concept because it can cover any type of violence (usually against women but not solely) as a consequence of the aforementioned gender relationships and unequal distribution of power between genders. For this project purpose, therefore, when talking about GV we will refer to gender-based violence perpetrated against women, which is constituted by:

“any kind of violence addressed against women as a representation of discrimination and inequality, framed in an ancient and structural system of power of relationships between men and women, that is expressed in any sphere of life (private or public) throughout economic, physical or psychological harms, including threats, intimidations or coactions, which may result or actually result in physical, sexual or psychological injury or suffering”¹⁷.

¹² Cross and Masden, 1998. Cited in Russo, N and Pirlott, A. “Gender-Based violence. Concepts, methods and findings” in *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087, p. 178-205, 2006.

¹³ Anderson and Umberson, 2001. Cited in *Understanding gender and Intimate Partner Abuse*, McHugh, M. Sex Roles, vol. 52, n 11/12, June 2005.

¹⁴ Godenzi A., in Breines, I.; Connell, R; Eide, I, (eds). *Male Roles and Masculinities: A Culture of Peace Perspective*. UNESCO, 2000, Paris.

¹⁵ Platform for action. Item 118 - Fourth World Women’s Conference. 1995

¹⁶ This concept is also recovered by the Spanish Integral Law Against Gender Violence, Organic Law 1/2004, of 28 September.

¹⁷ Platform for action. Item 118 - Fourth World Women’s Conference. 1995

We believe that “gender roles and expectations, male entitlement, sexual objectification, and discrepancies in power and status have legitimised, rendered invisible, sexualised, and helped to perpetuate violence against women”¹⁸. Major institutions also reinforce and perpetuate these entitlements and inequalities, which are at the roots of gender violence. This violence, therefore, may take place in any sphere of life. In other words, gender inequalities are reproduced at home, in the labour market and the workplace, in education, etc.

The two main focuses of GVEI will be GV perpetrated by men in intimate partner relationships, which is one of the most known manifestations of GV, although till last decades it has been considered (and it is already considered so in many countries) a private problem; and GV experienced in the workplace. The situation of inequality of women in the labour market is visible and recognised in most Western societies; this is also a consequence of gender division and unbalanced relations of power between genders. Thus, the sexual division of work and patriarchal values reinforce and maintain this women’s disadvantage situation, which in many cases, leads to gender discrimination and violence against them. GV in the workplace can be shaped by three axis, three dimensions of a same problem: VAW, where violence is understood as a tool of gender power; a sexist labour context that is based and reproduces multiple discriminations against women (a more cultural and invisible dimension); and a context of abuse of power; of gender and, many times, of hierarchy¹⁹.

This situation of inequitable gender relationships is visible in all spheres of life, such as between female workers and male employers, wives and husbands, female athletes and male coaches, etc. and maintains the legitimacy of male violence²⁰. As a result, the reality is that women and girls experience gender based violence over the lifespan, in homes, schools, churches, workplaces, public spaces and therapeutic settings²¹. Kelly²² carried out a research in the UK where she found out that most women experience sexual violence in their lifetime. She uses the concept of *continuum of violence* to refer, on the one hand, to the fact that the common character in sexual violence is that men use a variety of forms of abuse, coercion and force in order to control women. And, on the other hand, to the continuous elements that pass into one another and cannot be distinguished, which constitute a range of abuses, coercions and force that women experience. Kelly argues that this last meaning serves to explain

¹⁸ Russo, N and Pirlott, A. “Gender-Based violence. Concepts, methods and findings” in *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087, p. 178-205, 2006.

¹⁹ Instituto de la Mujer (2006), El acoso sexual de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral. Estudios e investigaciones. MTAS.

²⁰ Russo, N and Pirlott, A. “Gender-Based violence. Concepts, methods and findings” in *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*, 1087, p. 178-205, 2006.

²¹ Idem.

²² Kelly L. “Continuum of sexual violence”, in Hamner, J. & Maynard, M. (eds.) 1987, *Women, violence and social control*. Explorations in Sociology 23. MacMillan, London.

that depending on how women subjectively define the experiences they have, these experiences will fall into or out of a given category like, for instance, sexual harassment. She stresses that continuum of violence underlines the fact that “*sexual violence exists in most women’s lives, whilst the form it takes, how women define events and its impact on them at time and over time varies*”. In this way, *continuum of violence* also refers to the fact that within the wide range of abuses that women might experience, the more common and everyday forms might be considered part of male behaviour and, as a consequence, women might not define these as abusive.

The idea of *continuum of violence* goes in line with our understanding of gender construction and, in this sense, it is interesting to keep it in mind for two main reasons. On the one hand, because it recovers the idea stressed earlier that women, for the sole reason of being women, are exposed to male violence throughout the whole lifespan and they can receive violence in all spheres of life.

On the other hand, *continuum of violence* also refers to the continuous of abuses that pass into one another, from the more common to the more extreme. In this continuum, the more common and everyday abuses might be interiorised by women, as a consequence of the social and cultural transmission of gender roles, expectations and entitlements, as natural. Women, therefore, might not recognise these abuses and tolerate them. Furthermore, continuum of violence also relates to the fact that abuses are not isolated facts but part of a process. The definition of abuse for a woman changes among women and also might change over time.

Within this perspective, women for the sole reason of being women are exposed to various forms of gender violence all over their life. A position paper of the European Women’s Lobby reflects this idea stating that “*Violence against women is a continuum, a concept that refers to a continuous series of physical, verbal and sexual assaults committed by men on women, encompassing sexual violence and includes “any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault, that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact”*²³.

In the present project, we will keep this perspective as a broad framework and, although we will put our attention on women who recognise that they have experienced gender violence in the partner relationship or/and in the workplace, we might find out that they have suffered violence in other spheres of life.

²³ European Women’s Lobby (EWL) *Violence against women - an obstacle to equality of women and men*. http://www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=702&v1ID=&RevID=&namePage=&pageParent=&DocID_sousmenu=

Conceptualisation of GV effects

This project starts from the hypothesis that GV has multiple and multidimensional effects for women's life. In other words, suffering such a brutal phenomenon has consequences at diverse spheres of women's life like health, labour, family and social relations, housing, social and political participation, affective relationships, etc. Thus, GV has an unquestionable impact in the quality of life of women, reducing their capacities of development and well-being, and impeding women to live in safety. As Carrasco²⁴ argues, the lack of safety implies that women are not able to live in freedom and welfare, to enjoy the fullness of rights and to have possibilities of access to an own project of life. In this way, we hold that GV becomes a mainstream factor crossing and affecting all dimensions of women's life, undermining women's personal and social well-being, deteriorating their quality of life and increasing their vulnerability in a society where women are already in a situation of inequality respect men.

According to this perspective, GV may become an impoverishment factor, understood in a wide sense, that's it, as a factor of social exclusion. Thus, understanding that social exclusion is a dynamic and multidimensional process that impede a person to enjoy of individual autonomy and rights to participate fully to social, communitarian, economic, educative, labour,... spheres of life, we can affirm that GV, since it affects all these dimensions and deteriorates the capacities of women, can push women towards social exclusion or poverty.

Therefore, GVEI project will analyse the effects that GV has in 9 dimensions of women's life by recovering the experiences of women who have suffered GV. The analysis of these effects will be done from a gender perspective.

On the basis of the information collected, GV effects indicators will be designed, with a view to capture and measure the extent of these multidimensional effects. These indicators will also alert of the risks of social exclusion for women suffering GV.

Taking into account SURT experience of working with women suffering GV and the previous researches being done on the effects of GV, the dimensions of women's life that will be explored in the present project are the following:

- Health
- Housing
- Legal
- Economic
- Labour
- Children

²⁴ Carrasco, C. (2006) Estadístiques sota sospita. Proposta de nous indicadors des de l'experiència femenina. Institut Català de les Dones. Barcelona.

- Social relationships
- Relations with men in general
- Intimate relationships

However, new dimensions remaining invisible so far different from the ones above might arise from the fieldwork with women.

Main expressions of Gender Violence

Among the several expressions of gender violence²⁵, and in an illustrative way, we remark the following:

- Physical violence: intentional or negligent action or omission against the woman's body which may result or actually results in physical injury.
- Psychological violence: any kind of intentional action or omission, as threats, humiliations, vexations, exigencies of obedience or submission, verbal coercion, verbal abuse, isolation, stalking, deprivation or limitation of liberty, that may result or actually results in psychological suffering, harm or self-esteem dismissing.
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual abuses against women: including exhibition, surveillance or any behaviour of sexual nature imposed to the women without her consent, throughout violence, intimidation, emotional manipulation, forced sexual relationships, stalking, etc. and with independence of the relationship between the victim and the offender.
- Economic violence: intentional or non justifiable deprivation or limitation of economical resources of the woman or her family, that may result or actually results in physical or psychological damages, injuries or sufferings on the woman or her children²⁶.

Main spheres of life affected by Gender Violence

GV is also a phenomenon that takes place in all spheres of life. With the provision that we are talking about some expressions of this kind of violence (see footnote 7), we remark the following:

- Partner relationship context: it includes physical, psychological, sexual or/and economic violence against the woman, caused by her partner or her ex-partner, as well as by a person who has or has had a similar relationship with the woman.

²⁵ We have expressly dropped out of this example other forms of violence against women, such as the violence perpetrated or tolerated by the Government or their agents or officials, or the violation of the women's human rights within armed conflicts circumstances, among others, because these kinds of violence against women remain out of the limit and the scope of the GVEI project.

²⁶ These expressions of violence against women are also recovered by the Draft bill of the "Law on the Women Rights for the Elimination of Male Violence" (Catalan Government, January 2006).

- Family context: it includes physical, psychological, sexual or/and economic violence against the woman or/and her children, caused by the members of the family (apart from the partner, which is included at the concept above), and which is conditioned by the affective and emotional family relationships.
- Workplace context: it includes physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence that usually, but not solely, adopts the form of the so called “sexual harassment” or “sexual based harassment”. We define “sexual harassment” as any undesirably behaviour of sexual nature (including verbal abuse, gesticulations, physical actions), with the purpose of attempting to the dignity of one person, throughout the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, offensive or disturbing environment. On the other hand, we understand “sexual based harassment” as a situation where a person is suffering an undesirably behaviour in relation with her sex, in her work or vocational training, with the purpose of attempting her dignity, and throughout the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, offensive or disturbing environment.
- Social or community context: it includes physical, psychological or sexual violence against women, like sexual aggressions (rape and any other sexual aggression in which sex is the weapon to demonstrate the power of the men over women), sexual harassment, forced marriage, genital mutilation, sexual slavery, trafficking in women, crimes against sexual and reproductive rights, etc.
- Any other kind of violence against women based on gender with the purpose of attempting their dignity, integrity or freedom.

1.4. Which kinds of Gender Violence we will focus on

Taking into account, on the one hand, the nature and characteristics of GVEI project and, on the other hand, the complexity of the phenomenon of GV, in this project we will focus on two kinds of GV:

- GV in the intimate partner context: understood as physical, psychological, sexual and/or economic abuse²⁷ of a woman by her male partner or ex-partner(s) or by another person who has or has had a similar relationship with her.
- GV in the workplace context: understood as any kind of discrimination or violent act (physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence) targeting women that takes place in the workplace context and that is based on gender. Thus,

²⁷ The definitions of physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse are the ones referred earlier.

violence and discrimination are used as mechanisms of gender power against women, who are in a position of inequality respect men, in a sphere that traditionally has been a male domain. It may include, among others, sexual harassment²⁸, wages discrimination, mobbing, discrimination for maternity, etc. In GVEI we will focus on GV acts taking place under the umbrella of labour relations (that is, between employer-employee or employee-employee) and perpetrated by men.

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological approach for GVEI is based on qualitative research methods. In this sense, the research techniques are thought to capture the subjective experiences of women who have suffered GV and, in particular, the effects that GV has had on women themselves and their lives. The focus of our research, therefore, is the multidimensional effects of GV for women's lives. On the basis of the encountered effects, we will build indicators to measure them.

As mentioned earlier, this approach is based on the perspective of Women's Studies, which aims to challenge the dominant forms of research, which are andocentric, biased and blind to gender differences and, therefore, are unable to understand social reality as a whole²⁹. Thus, the use of qualitative and participative methodologies will allow us to re-construct concepts and pay attention to new ones not attended so far, with a view to move forward on the analysis of a phenomenon that has its roots in gender relations and roles.

Qualitative and participative methodologies will allow us to recover the voice of the real actors of the phenomenon studied, women who have suffered GV. Thus, women's experiences will alert about the limits in the existing concepts and indicators and provide information on the factors that we need to consider in order to design GV effects indicators.

The research techniques to be used are the following:

- A. In-depth interviews with women who have suffered GV in the partner context and in the workplace sphere.
- B. Focus groups with experts.

²⁸ See definition in the previous page.

²⁹ Espinar Ruiz, E. (2006) *Violencia de género y procesos de empobrecimiento*. Córdoba. Servicios de publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba.

By using qualitative methodologies, as it is the case of GVEI, the potential value of the selected interviewees is more important than the concrete number of interviews. In this sense, the current research does not aim to be representative but to search for quality and to provide an in-depth insight on the effects of GV in the partner context and in the workplace for women. For this reason, interviewees have to be selected considering relevant categories in relation with the subject of the study. However, certain degree of flexibility is assumed.

Following, some guidelines to carry out the fieldwork and select the interviewees will be detailed.

A. In-depth interviews with women

In-depth interviews can be defined as “face to face meetings between the interviewer and the interviewee addressed to the understanding of the interviewee’s perspectives in relation with their lives, experiences or situations, according to their own words”³⁰. The interview is thought to create a room for a dialogue between interviewee and interviewer, but where the real actor is the interviewee.

Thus, interviewed women will have freedom to stress the important issues, raise new ones, voice their experiences, etc. In this way, this technique will allow us to collect comprehensive information and to understand women’s experience on the effects that GV brought about in their lives.

2.1. Target group

The target group of GVEI research is constituted by:

- Women in the age of majority; according to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990), a child is any person under the age of 18 and, therefore, we will focus on women who are at least 18 years old.
- Women who have suffered GV in the partner context and/or women who have suffered GV in the workplace sphere.

2.2 Sample and criteria for women’s selection

The **sample** of GVEI project will be constituted of: 15 women in each country (in total, 60). The distribution will be the following:

³⁰ TAYLOR, S.J. and BODGAN, R., *Introducción a los métodos cualitativos de investigación*. Barcelona, Paidós, 1992.

- Spain and Estonia: 8 women who have suffered GV in the partner context and 7 women who have suffered GV in the workplace.
- Finland and Italy: 7 women who have suffered GV in the partner context and 8 women who have suffered GV in the workplace.


The **criteria** for women's selection will be:

- **Nationality**: considering the current migration flows to the EU, the diversity inherent to our society and the fact that migrant women are even more unprotected and vulnerable to suffer GV, it is important to incorporate migrant women in the sample. In many countries, statistics on DV state that migrant women suffer DV to a greater extent than autochthonous women. For GVEI, however, we will try to include migrant women in a proportional way to their presence in general society. At least, there should be a migrant women in each of the two groups (GV in partner context and in workplace)
- **Ethnic group**: at least one woman of an ethnic group not majority in society in each of the two groups should be included. If more ethnic groups can be included, excellent.
- **Age**: 5 women in each of the following age groups: 18-30, 31-45, and +45 years old.
- **Expressions of violence (physical, psychological, sexual and economic)**: for the women who have suffered GV in partner context, a woman of each case should be included. For the women who have suffered GV in the workplace, at least a woman experiencing psychological violence, a woman suffering sexual violence and a woman suffering economic violence should be included. For the case of physical violence in the workplace, as it might be very difficult to find a woman experiencing it, it will not be a required criteria but a desirable one. We are aware, however, that in some cases (above all in the partner context) these expressions of violence might take place in a combined way whereas in other cases they might take place individually.
- **Economic sector for GV in the workplace**: considering that the realities of the territories of the 4 countries might be a bit different, our proposal is to consider 3 broad economic sectors: services, industry and education. Each partner can adapt the sample to the State reality but at least women working in 2 of these economic sectors should be included. Women working in feminised sub-sectors will be incorporated in the sample.
- **Labour relations**: for the selection of the women suffering GV in the workplace, we will concentrate on all the relations that take place under the umbrella of labour relations. Therefore, we will choose women having experienced GV that has occurred between employer-employee and employee-employee.

2.3. Approach to and contact with women. Ethical issues.

Each partner will develop its own strategy and use its own networks to approach and contact the women participating in the fieldwork. However, following we will give some indications for the process of reaching, contacting and interviewing our target group.

- The contact of women will be done through entities/organisations. Thus, women will be reached by means of:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's Institutes - Women's associations - Shelter houses - Support groups - Trade Unions - Lawyers offices 		<p>The general criteria for contacting these organisations is that they are sensitive to gender and do not victimise the women</p>
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- As a research coherent with the feminist epistemology, the rights and respect of the women will be guaranteed throughout the research process. In this sense, women will participate voluntarily and will set the conditions for carrying out the interview (e.g. the place). The interviewer will promote a safe environment and will act without victimising the women. The safety of the women is the most important and, in this sense, we should of course provide water, juice and seat. Besides, we should be supportive and let them stop if they need it.
- The technique to be used is the in-depth interview. An interview guide with dimensions that should be explored within the interview will be facilitated. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed.
- Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed. As the interviews will be recorded, each country will apply the State norms related to the protection of personal data.
- The interviewer will have in mind, and work according to, the aims of the research and the basic guide of the interview.
- Flexibility will be a key in the development of the interviews: it means that sometimes it will be necessary to set up more than one meeting with the woman, others a second one will not be needed, time of the interviews may be variable, etc.
- Each partner will write a letter to send to the entities and, following, to the women, informing about the research framework (Daphne project, partners involved, etc.), aims and expected results. The letter will also state that research will respect anonymity and confidentiality of data.
- When possible, the results of the project will be given to the entities and the women participating in the fieldwork.

Taking into account that the methodological process will be quite flexible and adapted to the national realities, once the sample selection will be done and the focus groups will be formed, each national team will elaborate a brief document on the methodology, outlining those particularities of their selection process as well their own methodological process (ways followed to contact women, composition of the sample, period of interviews, ethnic groups and nationalities included, etc.). This information will be gathered by SURT and added to the present document, "Theoretical and Methodological Framework".

2.4. Guide for the interview

The concrete form of in-depth interviews to be used in GVEI project is the semi-directed interview. This form is a half way between open and closed interviews. In this case, the researcher has a list of topics to guide the interview and her role will be to focus the interview on the expected subjects.

Thus, the guide presented in this section includes the dimensions that should be covered during the interview. It has been elaborated on the basis of SURT's experience in working with women suffering GV and the secondary research carried out during the first phase of the project.

As it is a qualitative research, each interview will take its own pace and development, since the woman will be the real protagonist. However, the interviewer should bear in mind that all these dimensions should be tackled. It might happen, as mentioned, that others initially not foreseen raise.

For achieving the aim of the in-depth interview and guaranteeing the stress on the interviewee, it is important not to start the interview with very directed questions, which would imply that the interviewer defines the relevant information, but with suggesting general questions allowing the interviewee to talk about what they consider important and relevant. Once the interviewer has information about the general context on interviewee's life, she/he can focus on concrete subjects or asking more directed questions³¹.

The guide of the interview presented below has the aim of orientating the interviewer, clarifying and taking care that the aims of the research will be maintained. As Gabàs³² claims, it is a support tool and it never has to be considered as a strict questionnaire. It

³¹ SURT, Gabàs, A. (2004) Theoretical and methodological framework, in the project GENDER INDICATORS AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION, Transnational Exchange Programme Phase I and Phase II. Employment and Social Affairs. European Comisión (2002-2004).

³² Ídem.

is based on a thematic list, collecting a map of the general areas that the researcher wants to cover in the interview. The interviewer will decide how to ask the questions and when to ask the interviewees for them during the interview.

The dimensions/variables to be explored are the following:

- 1) **Health:** this dimension covers both physical, sexual/reproductive and psychological effects of GV for the women. Thus, it should be explore the health state of the woman as a consequence of the GV experience; not only short-term effects (immediately after the experience of violence) but also when possible (if the experience of violence took place some time ago), long-term effects of violence.

Some illustrative examples of potential effects are:

- Physical:
 - i. headache, buzzing in the ears, earache,
 - ii. muscular contractions or muscular pains; fractures
 - iii. internal or external bleeding
 - iv. cerebral commotion
 - v. wounds, bruises, bullet wound, burns, cuts
 - vi. anaemia, blackout
 - vii. tiredness or chronic fatigue
- Psychological:
 - i. alimentary disorders
 - ii. feeling of becoming crazy
 - iii. Sleep disorders
 - iv. PTSD
 - v. Depression
 - vi. Sadness, fears, anxiety, anguish
 - vii. Loss of self-esteem, loss of confidence
 - viii. Auto-blaming
- Sexual/reproductive:
 - i. miscarriage
 - ii. Sexually transmitted disease
 - iii. Non desirable pregnancies

- 2) **Housing:** this variable consider the effects that GV has had on women in terms of housing. Some potential issues are:

- Need to run away from home or to move as a consequence of the conflicts
- Loss of the house
- Difficulties to pay the rent or mortgage
- Troubles to find home
- Need to go to a shelter house

3) **Legal:** this dimension deals with the legal process that can be associated to GV and some women might go through. Some potential elements to consider are:

- Reporting of the facts to the police
- Presenting formal accusation at the Court
- Bringing the case to trial and verdict resulting
- Partner compliance of the sentence and effects to the woman
- Protection measures taken, during the proceeding or as a consequence of the sentence
- Legal assistance available during the proceeding
- Feeling of safety and protection during the proceeding
- Trust in the legal system

4) **Economic:** this dimension refers to the economic effects that the experience of GV might have had for the women. Some issues can be:

- Economic autonomy or dependence
- Loss of the control of her economy or finances
- Economic damages as a consequence of the violent incidents
- Need to ask for economic or financial help
- Economic losses (money but also car, jewelry and others)
- Institutional dependence

5) **Labour:** this dimension deals with the consequences that GV has had for women in the labour sphere, both if she had a job during the experience and if she did not.

- Employed women:
 - i. Absenteeism
 - ii. Lack of punctuality
 - iii. Economic sanctions, disciplinary measures or any other punishment, like to lose the job or to be removed of her job position as a consequence of the unpunctuality and absenteeism resulting from GV experience
 - iv. Problems of concentration or efficiency at work
 - v. Disabilities as a consequence of GV experience
 - vi. Sick leaves

- vii. Sexual harassment
 - viii. Threats of being fired
 - ix. Threats of losing the job position or the job status
 - x. Threats of salary or income reductions
 - xi. Problems of relationships with colleagues
 - xii. Need to quit the job
 - xiii. Fear to go to work
 - xiv. Isolation in the workplace
 - xv. Possibilities of voicing the situations and effects on her job and situation
 - Non-employed women (before or as a consequence of the GV experience):
 - i. Difficulties to find a job as a consequence of her physical or psychological state
 - ii. Rejection of job opportunities
 - iii. Access to vocational training
- 6) **Children:** this dimension deals with the effects that GV has on women with relation to her children. As the aim of this project is to examine the effects that GV has for women, despite being aware that GV has direct effects to children, here we will deal with the effects for the women related to children. In this sense, some areas to be explored are:
- Custody
 - Care of the children
 - Economic responsibilities
 - If the woman is the sole responsible for taking care of the children:
 - i. Economic difficulties
 - ii. Difficulties in work-life balance
 - Difficulties in bringing up the children due to her psychological state
- 7) **Social relationships:** this dimension focuses on the effects that GV might have on the social sphere for women. Some elements that can raise are:
- Loss of friends and social relations
 - Social/familiar isolation
 - Distrust in people
 - Relationships questioned (family/friends)
 - Feeling of being questioned by family, friends
 - Difficulties to communicate and mix with people
 - Difficulties in ordinary conflict resolution

- Troubles to ask for help
- Lack of the sense of pertinence
- Decrease on the participation in community organisation, volunteer activities, political or religious organisations, etc.

8) **Relations with men in general:** this dimension explores whether GV experience has had an impact on women in terms of establishing social relationships with men. Some elements that could be explored are:

- Consideration of men in general
- Ability to communicate with men
- Fears of men in general

9) **Intimate relationships:** this dimension deals with the effects that GV might have had on women regarding potential intimate relationships. This dimension might include issues such as:

- Ability to have and maintain an affective relationship
- Attitude towards sexual relationships
- Experience of sexual relationships: absence of orgasm, pain, not sexual appetite
- Fear of having a new intimate relationship

B. Focus groups with experts

The fieldwork of GVEI also foresees the realisation of 3 focus groups with experts. The aim of these focus groups is to provide supplementary information to the one facilitated by women and to bring about a deeper insight to the effects of GV from the professional expertise and experience of working with women or researching on this issue. In this way, below there are 3 proposals on the composition of the three focus groups:

1) Mixed focus groups:

- One focus group multidisciplinary, gathering experts from the legal field, psychology, anthropology, etc., both from the academic field, public institutions, trade unions,... and the area of intervention with women suffering GV.
- One focus group gathering psychologists who intervene with women suffering GV, by carrying out individual or group support sessions to women, by supporting women in their process of labour insertion, etc.

- One focus group gathering professionals offering integral support services to women suffering GV such as social workers, professionals working in shelter houses, etc.

2) Separate focus groups: to carry out one/two focus group targeting experts and professionals working with GV in intimate relationships and another one/two with experts and professionals working with GV in the workplace.

3) 2 focus groups and individual interviews with professionals/experts: if any partner cannot carry out 3 focus groups, another possible option is to conduct 2 focus groups plus some individual interviews with experts/professionals. This option would allow those partners who need it to solve agenda problems or to obtain specific information on those aspects that have not been covered sufficiently in the previous focus groups. As long as each partner justifies and explains her methodological choice, it is enough.

Both the composition and the conduction of the focus groups are thought to be flexible. In this sense, we suggest that each partner will be able to conduct the focus groups on her own way (without a previous guide), just keeping in mind that the focus of the research is to analyse the multidimensional effects of GV, and the aim of these discussion meetings is, therefore, to provide a complementary insight to these effects from the view of the experts.

The facilitator should lead the course of the discussion, suggesting items, questions, etc. but in a flexible way. The aim is to collect information on the effects of GV in the different dimensions considered (or if new ones come out, then, in the new ones as well), so the facilitator can lead the discussion having this goal in mind.

The items for discussion will be proposed orally (using a support like a powerpoint presentation if needed). It is important to not give much information in order to not influence the participant. As the idea is to go in depth into the effects of GV in each dimension, a way to facilitate the discussion would be to start focusing on each dimension and exploring the effects that GV has in each of them, according to the experts.

A proposed number of people for a focus group could be between 4-7 people.