

PREVALENCE, CONTEXTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The Virage demographic survey on violence and gender relations (Violences et Rapports de Genre) was conducted 15 years after the first national survey on violence against women in France (ENVEFF – Enquête nationale sur les violences envers les femmes en France)⁽¹⁾. It examined interpersonal violence suffered by respondents in the 12 months before the survey and in their lifetimes. The definition of violence it used was not based on judicial or policing definitions, in terms of crime or unlawful acts, but on the notion of the physical or mental harm inflicted. It covered any verbal and bodily behaviour designed to «impose one's will on the others or to dominate them, if need



be by humiliating and disparaging them, or harassing them until they give in or submit.»⁽²⁾ Unlike conflict, in which the positions of the protagonists may change, violence is «perpetrated unilaterally and destructively.»

(1) ENVEFF was conducted in 2000 by a multidisciplinary team under the responsibility of CRIDUP, the research centre of the Institut de Démographie at Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne) university. It was the first statistical survey of interpersonal violence in France, based on a representative sample of women between the ages of 20 and 59 living in metropolitan France.

(2) M. Jaspard and the ENVEFF team, 2003, *Les violences envers les femmes en France; une enquête nationale*. Paris, La Documentation française.

IN PUBLIC AREAS, AT WORK, BY INTIMATE PARTNERS: WHO REPORTS WHAT?

IN PUBLIC PLACES WOMEN SUFFER MORE VIOLENCE THAN MEN

Women are more often victims of violence in public areas than men. One woman in four (25%) had suffered at least one of the acts covered, compared to about one man in seven (14%). In terms of frequency, 7% of women had suffered more than one incident in the year, compared to 4% of men. And women reported more acts they considered serious: one woman in 12 (8%) had suffered at least one such act, compared to 1 man in 20 (5%).

Men and women do not suffer the same kinds of violence in public areas

Men most often reported insults, followed by physical violence, which could happen along with insults or with being followed. For women the most frequent type of violence was unsolicited attention (wolf-whistles, being accosted etc.) on one or more occasions, combined with other forms of violence. Harassment and molestation (being touched on breasts or buttocks, rubbed up against or kissed by force) were the second main category of violence against women in public areas, reported by 5% of women.



Most violence is inflicted by strangers, usually men

Over the year, women were more likely to experience violence repeatedly and of more different kinds, and more incidents they considered serious. In 90% of cases the perpetrator was a man. For male victims, apart from unsolicited attention (wolf-whistles, being accosted etc.) and persistent sexual advances, the perpetrator of the violence was another man (72% of incidents) and, except in the case of physical violence, usually a stranger. Women were subjected to unsolicited attention almost always by strangers, whereas persistent sexual advances came from someone known to the victim in 32.5% of cases.

Violence in public areas happens in everyday situations

Respondents chose the most significant of the incidents they considered serious and described the situation in which it occurred. For men and women alike, most incidents happened in places they regularly frequented. For women, incidents usually happened in daytime but physical violence, harassment and sexual violence were slightly more likely to occur after nightfall than other kinds of violence.

Women who reported insults and unsolicited attention which they perceived as serious said that the incident had happened in the street, a car park or the common areas of a block of flats. Other acts they considered serious, such as touching up, rape and attempted rape, had most often happened on public transport. For men, who were mainly subjected to insults and physical violence, two-thirds of incidents happened in the street. Other public places (parks, bars, hospitals etc.) were not often mentioned.

Young people, especially young women, at greatest risk

Higher risk of violence in public areas is partly connected with lifestyle. Young men and women use public space more and suffer more violence than older people. In the 20-24 age group nearly six women out of ten (58%) had suffered at least one incident of violence in a public place (vs 25% of women overall). For men aged 20-24, the rate was 30% (vs 14% for men overall). Young women are particular targets of sexual violence: 14% of women aged 20-24 had been harassed or suffered sexual violence (vs 5% average). Perpetrators of sexual violence think of young women as being sexually available.

Percentage of people having suffered different types of violence in public space in the previous 12 months, by gender and proportion of incidents they considered serious		
Type of violence	Women	Men
Insults	4.0	6.0
Unsolicited attention*	15.0	2.0
Physical violence	1.0	4.0
Harassment and molestation	5.0	2.0
Sexual violence**	0.1	<0.1
All types of violence	25.1	14.0

Dark blue and purple: acts mostly perceived as serious (by 3/4 of victims).
 Pale blue and purple: acts mostly perceived as not really serious.
 * Wolf-whistles, being accosted, pickup attempts, once or more than once, but not combined with any other type of incident within the year.
 ** Genital touching, attempted rape, rape.
 Population: Men and women aged 20-69 living in metropolitan France.
 Source: Virage survey, INED, 2015.

MEN AND WOMEN DO NOT REPORT THE SAME TYPES OF VIOLENCE AT WORK

One set of questions was answered by those who were working or had been in work for at least four months in the previous 12 months.

Of this subset, 20% of the women and 15.5% of men said they had suffered at least one incident of violence at work in the previous 12 months. In eight cases out of ten, for both sexes, the violence was repeated or was of more than one type.

Women report more incidents than men, for all types of violence

Women reported twice as much sexual violence (distressing sexual attitudes or remarks, sexual assault or blackmail) as men: 4% of women vs 2% of men. Women also reported twice as much physical violence as men (2% vs 1%). And they suffered more insults and psychological pressure.

For women, more than one perpetrator

Superiors were the category most often held responsible for psychological pressure (38% for women respondents, 46% for men) and obstructing work (58% for women, 66% for men), while outside persons (the public, suppliers, «others») were mainly responsible for physical violence (68% for women and 39% for men). A gender imbalance in sexual violence emerges here too: men mainly accused colleagues, while women reported sexual violence by superiors and the public as much as by colleagues. For all types of violence, male victims most often said the perpetrator, of whatever status, was a man. Women reported sexual violence by men, and other forms of violence by female perpetrators as often as male.

Tenured public servants and women managers most often victims

Among the women, managers and those in intermediate-level occupations most often reported violence at work, while among the men, clerical workers and those in intermediate occupations most often did so. Thus the service sector seems to be a particularly violent setting for women, even more so for those in positions of responsibility. Victimization was most frequent among those on short-term contracts, but also among women public servants with tenure, who reported more violence in all categories. Tenured status and job insecurity both make it hard for women to escape from a violent situation; it is especially hard for tenured public servants to change jobs.





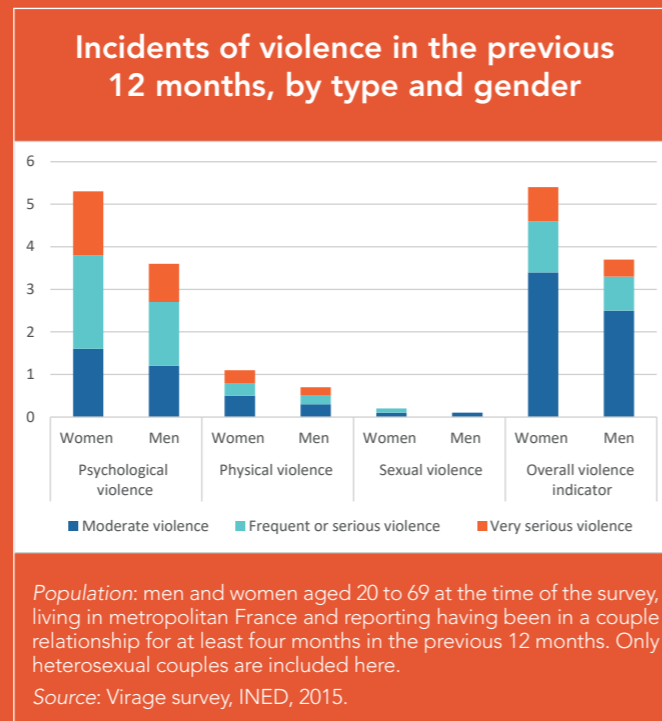
VIOLENCE IN THE COUPLE: DIFFERENT PATTERNS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

The difficulty for measuring intimate partner violence occurring in the previous 12 months is how to distinguish between conflict, more serious abuse in couples going through a crisis (temporary or not), and situations of habitual intimate partner violence. The Virage survey's interview and analysis protocol was designed to reconstruct the circumstances in which violence arose.

The circumstances and forms of violence against women had changed little since the ENVEFF survey in 2000. Verbal and physical violence had not lessened significantly between 2000 and 2015: in both surveys, between 3 and 4% of women said they had been sworn at and 1-2% had been victims of physical violence. However, the Virage survey has highlighted differences in the forms, intensity and consequences of intimate partner violence.

Women suffer serious, repeated violence of various kinds while men suffer occasional, less serious acts of violence

Men more often reported acts of violence that happened only once, and which they did not consider serious, whereas women more often reported repeated assaults (almost every week or almost every day) which they considered serious. Women reported between 1.3 and 2 times as many serious incidents as men did, and considered serious a majority of the acts of violence they reported, whereas men considered serious only a minority of the incidents they reported. Women reported serious and/or repeated incidents of all types of violence, psychological (one woman in 20), physical (one woman in a hundred, or 1%), and sexual (one in a thousand, or 0.1%). Thus the violence suffered by women is of many kinds. Men, on the other hand, mainly reported psychological violence (4% serious and 2% very serious), but even so less than women, and in most cases the incidents were related to jealousy (in particular reading the partner's text messages or emails).



OVERALL VIOLENCE INDICATOR IN THE COUPLE

The overall violence indicator breaks down as follows:

- ➔ No abuse: no psychological violence, or no more than two types of psychological violence, with fewer than five repetitions and no act of physical or sexual violence;
- ➔ Moderate abuse: several acts of psychological violence, repeated or not, but not constantly repeated over one or more periods. No physical or sexual violence;
- ➔ Frequent or serious abuse: an accumulation of repeated or constant psychological violence, or less frequent psychological violence plus no more than two incidents of physical violence (excluding attempted murder) and no sexual violence, or less frequent psychological violence and sexual violence but no physical violence;
- ➔ Very serious abuse: all situations of physical violence (including attempted murder) and/or all situations of psychological violence, together with sexual violence.

Age, inactivity and family situation are factors for increased risk

Foremost among the risk factors for is age at the time of the incident. Young people of both sexes report more incidents than older people; notably, young women report more physical violence. For men too, age is the main factor.

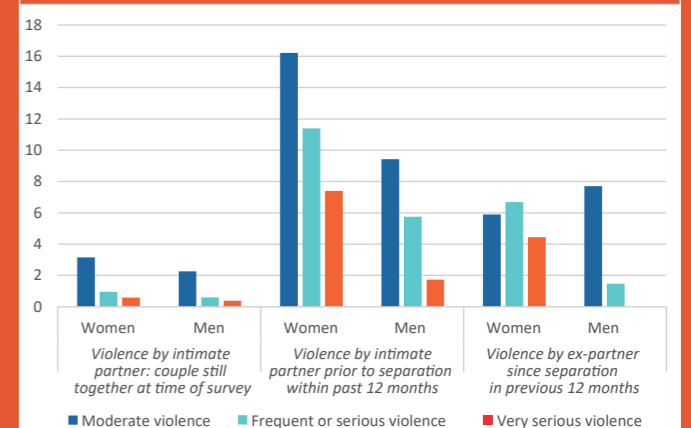
Violence occurs in all social classes, but there is a strong correlation with being unemployed or inactive, both of which often lead to social isolation. One or both partners being at home daily increases the frequency of violence, for women particularly. So it is not so much occupation or socio-economic category that makes the difference; it is temporary or permanent exclusion from work.

Situations of violence also vary with family situation. Mothers, of one child or many, are at greater risk. The arrival of a child changes the couple relationship, and material difficulties increase with the number of children, making separation more complicated. By contrast, number of children makes no difference for men.

Women experience feelings of shame and fear

While both men and women reported feeling anger (84%) and/or sadness (70%), which are classic reactions to violence, crisis, conflict or separation, they differed markedly with regard to feelings of shame and fear. Many more women than men report feeling shame (35% vs 11%). Women feel guilty (internalising and reflecting male domination) or humiliated, a reflection of the relationship established between the partners. Nearly one woman in two (40% vs 21% of men) reported fear – a fear that persists over time.

Proportion (%) of respondents subjected to violence in the previous 12 months (by a partner or an ex-partner)



More violence against women in the separation period and after

One-third of women who had separated during the previous 12 months reported violence. Nearly 20% of them reported frequent or serious incidents just before their separation. Sixteen per cent of them reported various forms of violence, including sexual violence, occurring after their separation. For women, there is a continuum of psychological, physical and sexual violence during the relationship, during the separation period and after separation.

A SURVEY TO DESCRIBE VIOLENT SITUATIONS OVER TIME AND ANALYZE THEIR CONSEQUENCES

The survey was conducted by phone in 2015 with a sample of more than 27,000 women and men, aged 20 to 69, living in ordinary households in metropolitan France.

The terms «violence» and «assault» were never used in the questionnaire; respondents were only asked about specific behaviours.

There were two main parts to the questionnaire. The first outlined the respondent's family situation, work status and health. The second was built around several modules. First, respondents were asked about any acts of violence inflicted on them in the previous 12 months in different settings. The next module asked about violence suffered over the respondent's lifetime, in their family and close social circle. Lastly, they were asked about violence suffered outside the family, prior to the previous 12 months.

The questionnaire explored different settings in which violence takes place (public areas, places of work and study, intimate relationships and the family and close social circle) and different kinds of violence: psychological, verbal, physical and sexual. It also gathered information about the frequency and repetition of such acts of aggression, their perceived severity, the situation in which they arose and their consequences. With the resulting data set researchers can measure violence, contextualize violent situations, ascertain their impact on victims (health, life course in terms of education, occupation, family, emotional life and relationships) and learn who victims turn to for help.

To comprehend experiences of violence as closely as possible, the questions about the frequency of the violent acts, their accumulation and their severity as perceived by the respondent were taken into account in the indicators whenever possible.



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