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A methodological journey towards integrating a gender perspective into the measurement of violence against women and intimate partner violence

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# Summary

Over the past 40 years, violence against women has been the subject of a multi-disciplinary dialogue regarding its nature, origins, and “true numbers,” as illustrated by the increasing number of publications on the issue. This debate has focused on how violence against women compares to other forms of interpersonal violence and how individual victimization experiences are to be understood in the broader system of hierarchical gender relations and inequalities. Most importantly, scholars struggled to integrate sociocultural factors into measurement tools that individualize or decontextualize violent behaviors. This debate has been tightly intertwined with—and fostered by—the collection of an increasing amount of empirical data, although several gaps remain. In this contribution, we review some of the specifics of gender-based violence: how it is defined, operationalized, and ultimately measured through various types of prevalence studies. We briefly describe the development of dedicated violence against women surveys, and how international efforts contributed to the dissemination of best practices and survey guidelines. With this in mind, we reflect on the current state of research on violence against women and intimate partner violence in Switzerland and highlight promising avenues for further developing rigorous gender-based violence prevalence studies building on the state-of-the-art international expertise.

**Keywords:** gender symmetry; intimate partner violence; prevalence studies; screening questions; sexual violence; violence against women; wording.

# A methodological journey towards integrating a gender perspective into the measurement of violence against women and intimate partner violence

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## 1. Introduction

Violence against women<sup>4</sup> (VAW) studies date back to the late 1970s, if one considers early attempts to define and measure the problem. This 40-year-long history has been driven by epistemological and theoretical disputes and, most interestingly, heated methodological debates. Undeniably, obtaining accurate estimates of VAW rapidly became a priority for both scholars and activists in their struggles to convince policy makers of the social importance of the issue and the need to reform criminal justice laws and policies. This quest for the “true” numbers was evident in multiple academic fields at the time, even though their epistemological perspective on VAW varied considerably, from mainstream positivist to family conflict to feminist perspectives. Various disciplinary frameworks—and related political agendas—have shaped the methodological decisions of those engaged in researching VAW, impacting the measurement, design, and implementation of research as well as the interpretation of study findings.

Among the various controversies that have marked decades of VAW research, a recurrent criticism<sup>5</sup> has been addressed to those studies that claimed to integrate a gender perspective: studies that considered VAW as an expression of unequal gender relations arguing that it could not be examined without taking into account the structural factors at play. Like in other research fields, the need for integrating a gender perspective has given rise to intense opposition and scepticism. Feminist researchers, in particular, were instrumental in challenging dominant claims

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<sup>4</sup> The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (article 1).

<sup>5</sup> See Dutton and colleagues (Dutton, Corvo, & Hamel, 2009; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005) and Straus (2010, 2012).

about both the extent of VAW and the alleged gender symmetry of intimate partner violence (IPV) through the development of alternative research instruments.

While more and more data are made available through scientific journals and mass media, it has become increasingly difficult to make sense of existing discrepancies. Some scholars claim to study VAW, others have engaged in researching IPV, all the while the last ones discuss gender-based violence.<sup>6</sup> Although adherence to “state-of-the-art” should translate into the increased standardization of surveys and thus improve the overall validity of data comparisons, differences across surveys remain. Unfortunately, even the process of equating survey items post hoc to establish content validity across the survey is performed with varying degrees of methodological rigor (on this issue, see Jaquier, 2010; Jaquier & Fisher, 2009).

There is no doubt that all methodological decisions impact survey estimates: from sampling and response rates to survey design and administration modes to interviewer training. However, disentangling the “unique” effects of each of these factors on estimates is a challenge that research has yet to overcome. In this text we specifically discuss the effects of survey questionnaires and question wording, focusing on those methodological advancements that are most relevant to the integration of a gender perspective into the measurement of violence. First, we examine how the (feminist) criticisms of general crime victimization surveys and family violence research paved the way for theoretical and methodological advancements in measuring VAW. Next, we reflect on the development of some state-of-the-art recommendations to measuring gender-based violence, considering in turn the type, number, order, and wording of survey questions, but also additional contextual measures that could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gender-based violence. Last, we review available data in Switzerland in light of other national and international efforts. We conclude by emphasizing the relevance and necessity of integrating a gender perspective when measuring IPV and propose a series of recommendations on how to start addressing gaps in research.

Through discussing contemporary methodological challenges inherent to the wording of survey questions, this paper sets to provide summary guidelines on how to best address critical gaps in the measure of gender-based violence in Switzerland and how to select the most promising survey instruments.

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<sup>6</sup> The term *violence against women* is gradually being replaced by *gender-based violence* in both research and policy. Most often both terms could be used interchangeably as most gender-based violence is perpetrated by men against women. Yet the explicit use of the qualifier “gender-based” underscores the fact that VAW is an expression of the power inequalities between women and men. In other words, gender-based violence refers to violence inflicted on an individual—most often a woman—as a result of normative gender role expectations and therefore gender-based violence that both reflects and reinforces gender inequalities.

## 2. Survey instruments: From criminal offences to gender-based violence

### 2.1. General crime victimization surveys

The first surveys that were used to measure VAW belonged to the family of *crime victimization surveys* that developed in the United States during the late 1960s into the early 1970s (Robert, Pottier, & Zauberman, 2003). At that time, crime victimization surveys were developed, in part, in response to the growing criticism of traditional measures of crime exclusively derived from crime and criminal justice statistics. Official statistics were criticized as essentially measuring police activity and criminal justice decisions rather than the “true” figure of crime.

Adopting a “generalist” approach to crime and victimization, these surveys measured occurrences of criminal events through the responses of individuals to so-called “victimization questionnaires,” with the primary goal to estimate the proportion of a given population who declared they had experienced selected criminal offences over a specific period of time.

Crime victimization surveys are labelled “general” or “generic” because they measure multiple criminal offences, ranging from burglary, robbery or car theft to bodily injury and sexual offences. Yet their *prevalence rates*<sup>7</sup> of VAW have quickly been accused of underestimating the extent of VAW and misrepresenting its multifaceted nature. This gave ground for criticisms on the validity of such measurement approach to study VAW (for a review, see Jaquier, Johnson, & Fisher, 2010) but also served as an impetus for the *development* of better measurement instruments.

Over time evidence has been amounted that because of their framing, the structure of their questionnaire and the wording of their questions, crime victimization surveys present serious limitations when it comes to capturing instances of VAW. The general profile of these surveys limits the space that can be devoted to assessing VAW and, therefore, knowledge of this phenomenon. Crime victimization surveys are poorly suited to “asking nuanced questions about the nature of the violence and its ramifications” (Walby & Myhill, 2001, p. 507). Their design also tends to limit “the extent to which time and effort can be devoted to make victims of violence sufficiently at ease to disclose personal and potentially distressing events” (Walby & Myhill, 2001, p. 507). Their definition and operationalization of VAW—and the extent to which they are able to assess its multifaceted nature—remain very narrow. For example, these surveys often restrict sexual violence to one or two types of rape, regardless of the multiple forms of sexual violence. They tend to limit physical violence to events considered the most severe and never address

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<sup>7</sup> The proportion of a population that has experienced at least one violent offence over a specific period of time.

issues of psychological violence and coercive control<sup>8</sup> while very few have measured stalking. Crime victimization surveys also rarely cue respondents to report violence perpetrated by dating and intimate partners and, as a result, simultaneously underestimate the prevalence of IPV and give disproportionate weight to violence committed by strangers (Johnson et al., 2015). Furthermore, because they do not define nor operationalize VAW as an expression of hierarchical gender relations, but rather simply as a type of violence experiences among others, they misrepresent VAW. Crime victimization surveys do not integrate more general questions about the legitimacy of gender inequalities that could contribute to explaining VAW (e.g., Allen, Swan, & Raghavan, 2009). Lastly, the very context of a crime victimization survey (i.e. the explicit use of the word *crime*) might be creating a bias because acts of VAW may not necessarily be perceived as “crime victimization experiences” by numerous respondents (Walby & Myhill, 2001).

As a response, feminist perspectives and gender studies embarked on deconstructing traditional explanations of VAW and developing their own survey instruments. They progressively demonstrated how the very design of crime victimization surveys was leading to a significant underestimation of VAW (for pioneering work, see Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Koss & Oros, 1982; Römken, 1997; Russell, 1982, 1990). Advocating for surveys specifically designed to capture the gendered nature of VAW (e.g., through adopting inclusive framing, sensitive question wording, and trained female interviewers), feminist and gender studies played a decisive role in placing the development of dedicated VAW surveys on the agenda of international organizations and institutions as a political and social issue of crucial importance, and simultaneously provided impetus for methodological improvements among existing instruments.

Feminist quantitative studies were influential for crime victimization surveys (re)design, in particular recommendations regarding question types and wording (see 3.1). In 1992, the NCS (*National Crime Survey*) was completely revised into the NCVS (*National Crime Victimization Survey*) to more accurately measure IPV, rape and sexual assault. IPV annual rates raised from 0.5 to 0.9% while the rise for violence perpetrated by other known offenders was significantly lower (0.8 to 1.3%) and the rise for violence perpetrated by strangers was the lowest (0.5 to 0.7%). The experiment provided support to the assertion that crime victimization surveys afford disproportionate importance to stranger violence (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 8). Other surveys chose to develop specific modules measuring (more) sensitive issues within the framework of routinely administered surveys. The CSEW (*Crime Survey for England and Wales*, formerly *British Crime Survey* [BCS]) makes for an interesting example: a self-completion module was first developed in 1996 to more accurately estimate the extent and nature of domestic

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<sup>8</sup> *Coercive control* or *controlling behaviours* both refer to a purposeful pattern of acts (e.g., assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation) perpetrated by one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another. Acts are diverse and may include for example isolating the person from sources of support, exploiting their resources or regulating their everyday behaviour. See Stark (2007).

violence. It was revised multiple times in the following years notably to include sexual assault and stalking. The self-completion module covering domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking is administered on a continuous basis since 2004/05 (Finney, 2006). Most of methodological revisions led to higher prevalence rates.<sup>9</sup> Although direct comparisons between incidents numbers are not possible due to methodological differences, in a few instances, comparable operationalizations were computed.<sup>10</sup> For example, the 2001 self-completion module on domestic violence found 12-month prevalence rates 5 times higher than those of the face-to-face BCS (e.g., 3.4% of women versus 0.6%; Walby & Allen, 2004, p. 112).

While these improvements could not fully address some of the limitations inherent to crime victimization surveys (e.g., the limited space devoted to VAW or IPV questions, lack of validity in assessing subtypes of violence), they provided for interesting comparisons of rates obtained through crime victimization surveys and dedicated VAW surveys—and thus informed VAW measurement efforts. There continue to be efforts to improve crime victimization surveys (e.g., Kruttschnitt, Kalsbeek, & House, 2014), and although these efforts are welcomed, the validity of these survey instruments remains debatable, in particular when it comes to assessing the extent of intimate partner and sexual violence.

## **2.2. Family conflict surveys**

Family conflict surveys and other so-called “domestic violence studies” are specific surveys that were developed in the late 1970s to uncover the hidden nature of IPV and family violence. Most of them rely on the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS) methodology designed by Straus and his colleagues at the University of New Hampshire. Initially created to measure physical violence (Straus, 1979), the CTS comprise a series of standardized scales listing aggressive and violent behaviours from aggressive screams, blows and slaps to the use of weapons. The CTS are designed to measure behaviours perpetrated by a partner towards the respondent along with behaviours perpetrated by the respondent towards his or her partner.

The CTS presuppositions, instruments, and methodological procedures have encountered harsh criticisms from feminist researchers, particularly because they introduce specific biases with respect to the measurement and understanding of gender inequalities and power relations at play in IPV. The CTS were revised to respond to some of these criticisms, incorporating new scales to measure sexual coercion and physical injuries<sup>11</sup> (Revised Conflict Tactics Scales, CTS-2, Straus,

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding the self-completion modules, including split-sample experiments, see Mirrlees-Black (1999), Walby and Allen (2004), and Hall and Smith (2011).

<sup>10</sup> See Walby and Allen (2004) for comparisons between 2001 and 2004/05; see Finney (2006) for comparisons between 2001 and prior years.

<sup>11</sup> Both scales did produce higher estimates of male-perpetrated versus female-perpetrated IPV.



Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), yet their validity remains questioned. Specifically, the CTS-2 are criticized for their ignorance of the *context* (e.g., chronicity of IPV), *motivations* (e.g., to exert control or ensure subordination), and *consequences* (e.g., physical injury, psychological harm) of IPV (Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Miller, 2005, pp. 15–21). They fail to distinguish between different types of violence and their varying degrees of severity. Further, scholars have argued that in asking about victimization *and* perpetration in the same survey, the CTS-2 contribute to trivializing IPV (Cavalin, 2013; Debauche & Hamel, 2013). Their introductory *exculpatory* or *normalizing* statement suggests that conflict is inherent to intimate relationships. While this approach is more inclusive—it is likely to increase the disclosure of IPV—it could be criticized as a form of leading or suggestive questioning. Last, violence perpetrated by former spouses or partners is not included in family conflict surveys, while these experiences make up for a large portion of IPV and also tend to be more severe (Kimmel, 2002). Although family conflict surveys and those that utilize the CTS-2 do not necessarily underestimate the overall prevalence of VAW,<sup>12</sup> they tend to produce similar rates of male-perpetrated and female-perpetrated IPV thus erroneously concluding to the “equal participation” of men and women in IPV: the so-called *gender symmetry* hypothesis (see Appendix 1).<sup>13</sup>

In failing to capture the desire to control that drives the abusive partner and how it is exerted through various forms of coercive control, the CTS methodology neglects the gendered power dynamics at play in IPV (Babcock, Miller, & Siard, 2003; Miller, 2006) while simultaneously failing to account for the central role played by fear in explicating victims’ reactions (Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005; Houry et al., 2008). Inversely, studies that take into account the multiple forms and varying degrees of severity of IPV, its chronicity and consequences (e.g., physical injuries, psychological distress, and fear) provide support to the *gender asymmetry* of IPV (see, for example, Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Johnson, 2006; Kimmel, 2002; Walby, 2005, 2007).

The above criticisms have fuelled numerous methodological discussions on how to best measure VAW and IPV. They have been instrumental in the development of large-scale dedicated VAW surveys, those that consider VAW a form of gender-based violence.

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<sup>12</sup> This somewhat paradoxical conclusion is most evident when one examines a specific type of violent act. Take, for example, physical IPV: prevalence estimates derived from family conflict surveys (Appendix 1) tend to be similar—at times even higher—than those derived from VAW surveys (Appendix 2). Scholars have suggested that CTS surveys might be “better [at capturing] low-intensity abuse” compared to VAW and other surveys (Medina-Ariza & Barberet, 2003, p. 307; on the same line of thought, see Payne & Gainey, 2009, p. 135). This could be the very same explanation why relying on the CTS approach tends to artificially create “gender symmetry” of IPV because of their (over)focusing on less severe forms of abuse.

<sup>13</sup> Of note, similar findings have emerged from studies conducted with adolescents, including in Switzerland where one study found higher rates of girl-perpetrated violence in intimate relationships compared to the rates for boy-perpetrated violence (Ribeaud, Lucia, & Stadelmann, 2015).

### 2.3. Dedicated violence against women surveys

During the early 1990s, VAW researchers began working on designing large-scale survey instruments dedicated to assess the extent and multifaceted nature of VAW, attempting to correct methodological biases inherent to both crime victimization and family conflict surveys. Pioneering feminist research in particular demonstrated early on the critical importance of question wording in increasing the disclosure of sexual violence, as can be seen in the development of the Sexual Experiences Survey by Koss and colleagues (Koss et al., 1987; Koss & Oros, 1982), with the work of Russell (1982, 1990) on marital rape or with the *National Women's Study* conducted in the United States (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992). These early contributions informed the development of the first dedicated VAW survey, Statistics Canada 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (Johnson & Sacco, 1995), which paved the way for numerous national studies that were conducted during the late 1990s and early 2000s, including studies in the Netherlands (Römkens, 1997), Switzerland (Gillioz, De Puy, & Ducret, 1997),<sup>14</sup> Finland (Heiskanen & Piispa, 1998), the United States (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b), and France (Jaspard et al., 2003).

Findings obtained through dedicated VAW surveys systematically produced higher prevalence rates than crime victimization surveys, most evident with lifetime rates (see Appendix 2). Comparing various national studies, Walby and Myhill (2001, p. 506) found that crime victimization surveys underestimated the 12-month prevalence rates of both physical violence (2–4% versus 2–12% in VAW surveys) and sexual violence (0.1–0.6% versus 0.3–5% in VAW surveys).

In the next section, we summarize some of the methodological advancements sparked by dedicated VAW surveys with respect to the type, number, order, and wording of survey questions and how international collaborations contributed to the development and dissemination of “lessons learned” that foster the integration of a gender perspective into the measurement of violence.

## 3. How survey questions and wording contribute to uncovering hierarchical gender relations

Building on the theoretical work of feminist and gender studies scholars, incorporating the best practices of pioneer dating violence and rape studies, and taking into account lessons learned through the work of family conflict theorists, VAW researchers strived to develop valid instruments that integrate a gender perspective. Innovations in VAW research both improved the

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<sup>14</sup> The questionnaire for the study conducted by Gillioz et al. (1997) was in fact adapted from the CTS. Well aware of the limitations of the CTS, the authors used feminist theory and prior research to develop an instrument that could take into account gendered inequalities and power relations within relationships.

measurement of the multiple forms of gender-based violence and allowed for the increasingly complex theoretical conceptualization and understanding of the underlying mechanisms of gender-based violence (Johnson, Fisher, & Jaquier, 2015).

### 3.1. State of the art

Dedicated VAW surveys first proposed more **inclusive definitions** of VAW that covered (multiple forms of) physical violence, sexual assault and harassment, psychological and emotional abuse, coercive control, and stalking.

Next, convinced that crime victimization surveys used too few and poorly-worded questions and did not provide the time and safe environment necessary for respondents to disclose sensitive experiences such as IPV and rape, scholars embarked on a quest for the “best wording”. VAW surveys gradually moved towards the “replacement of criminal justice terms with more behaviour-specific language” (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 6). This approach aims to explicitly describe violent and aggressive acts without using generic (e.g., assaults) or legal terms (e.g., rape) as these imply a (negative) labelling process. Most importantly, the use of **behaviourally-specific screening questions** cues respondents and helps trigger their memory (for examples, see Appendix 3). Consequently, disclosure increases together with the validity of estimates as one ensures that researchers and respondents share a similar understanding of reported events. Over time, sophisticated empirical comparisons have been conducted to demonstrate how the type and wording of survey questions impact VAW estimates. For example, using a quasi-experimental design, Fisher (2009) compared two nationally representative studies of college women’s sexual victimization that were almost identical in their design and methodologies, except for a few aspects intentionally created to vary across studies.<sup>15</sup> Differences pertain to (a) the number and wording of screening questions; and (b) the wording of the detailed, incident-level questions used to qualify the type of victimization. Specifically, one study used behaviourally-specific screening questions while the other used questions worded in criminal justice terms. Prevalence rates for completed and attempted rapes were respectively 10 times and 5 times higher in the study that used behaviourally-specific questions compared to the study with criminal justice wording (Fisher, 2009, p. 142, Table 2). Given the design it is safe to agree with the author that differences in question wording most likely account for discrepancies in prevalence rates and conclude that the use of behaviour-specific language provides more valid estimates of (sexual) VAW.

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<sup>15</sup> For a similar experiment with the CSEW, see Hall and Smith (2011). Specifically, respondents were either presented with lists containing different types of abuse and asked to select any of those they had experienced, or each option in the list was presented in turn and respondents were asked to respond “yes” or ‘no’ to a question on whether they had experienced that type of abuse.

Extant research also suggests that behaviourally-specific screening questions need to be **repeated across multiple life domains** (e.g., intimate relationships, workplace, and school)<sup>16</sup>, prompt for **all possible types of perpetrators** (e.g., former intimate partners, acquaintances, casual dates and “hooks-ups”, family members, strangers), and ask about **various reference periods** (e.g., 12 months, lifetime). Designs that adopt this or similar structures improve recall and disclosure and thus yield higher prevalence rates.<sup>17</sup> Probably the most recent dedicated VAW survey, the French VIRAGE project,<sup>18</sup> draws on the methodological expertise developed through the former French study ENVEFF<sup>19</sup> and other dedicated VAW surveys and strongly resembles a “state-of-the-art” survey. Administered to both female and male respondents, the survey adopts a largely inclusive methodology to cover (almost) all forms of gender-based violence. Attentive to question wording, it measures the severity and consequences of violence experiences across six life domains in the last 12 months, an approach that tends to produce more accurate estimates especially for frequent events (e.g., IPV). It also includes items providing for a gender perspective on the comparison of women’s and men’s experiences. In particular, the VIRAGE team devoted specific time and efforts to ensure that question wording was adequate for both women and men, which is innovative because this issue has not been given a lot of attention even when male respondents participated in dedicated VAW surveys (for exceptions, see Black et al., 2011; Jugnitz, Lenz, Puchert, Puhe, & Walter, 2004; Lefaucheur, 2012).

VAW researchers challenged the alleged gender symmetry of IPV by creating large-scale surveys (see especially Kimmel, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000a, 2000c)<sup>20</sup> alongside with conducting secondary analyses of crime victimization surveys data (for a summary, see Walby, 2007). Walby and Allen (2004), for example, used the number of victimization incidents experienced over a specific period of time instead of the number of individuals in their re-analysis of the 2001 BCS data. The 2001 BCS administered a specific survey self-completion module (see above) on domestic violence that used behaviourally-specific questions to men and women aged 16–59. Analyses showed that while 1.8 times more women than men had experienced IPV victimization in the previous year, there were 5.2 times as many IPV incidents against women as there were against men (see Walby, 2007, p. 14). Not only are women more likely to experience IPV, but they

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<sup>16</sup> This also allows for screening and follow-up questions specific to a particular life domain as well as the adaptation of question wording to measure identical acts in different life domains (e.g., sexual harassment in the workplace versus in public spaces).

<sup>17</sup> The alternative design is the one adopted for example by the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) and National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS): one screening question for each form of violence and, next, a first follow-up question to identify the perpetrator(s) and a second follow-up question to record the timing of the event(s).

<sup>18</sup> VIRAGE. *Violences et rapports de genre: contextes et conséquences des violences subies par les femmes et par les hommes*, see: [virage.site.ined.fr/](http://virage.site.ined.fr/)

<sup>19</sup> ENVEFF. *Enquête Nationale sur les Violences Envers les Femmes en France*.

<sup>20</sup> Of note, while VAW surveys generally only interview women, some like the NVAWS and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) also sample men, providing an opportunity to empirically test the gender symmetry hypothesis.

also are on average the victims of a higher number of violent acts. Measuring IPV **frequency and repetition**—*chronicity*—is then key to validly compare women’s and men’s experiences.

Similarly, examining **IPV severity** using VAW surveys indicates gender asymmetry. For example, a comparison using the latest national U.S. data showed that the most striking gender differences are observed with the most severe forms of IPV (Black et al., 2011, pp. 37–49). Gender differences in prevalence rates were especially large for physical violence items such as “my partner kicked me” (7.1% of women versus 4.3% of men), “slammed me against something” (17.2% of women versus 2.7% of men), “beat me up” (11.2% of women versus 2.6% of men) or “used a knife or a gun on me” (4.6% of women versus 2.8% of men). Gender differences were smaller for items such as “my partner slapped me” (20.4% of women versus 18.3% of men) or “pushed or shoved me” (27.5% of women versus 19.4% of men). This shows both the existence of discrepancies between female and male IPV victimization rates and that the convergence of estimates tends to be limited to “the lower-end of violence” as others have noted (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanaugh, & Lewis, 1998). Further, as we mentioned above (footnote 12), it provides a convincing explanation as to why the CTS instruments are prone to suggest an equal participation of men and women in the perpetration of IPV given that they more accurately capture low-intensity abuse.

In sum, it is fair to conclude that adequately assessing the extent and multifaceted nature of VAW and gender-based violence requires the use of carefully designed survey questionnaires that include a large number of behaviourally-specific questions to explicitly describe violent and aggressive acts in unambiguous terms and avoid connoted or legal terms such as “violence” or “rape”. Questions need to be repeated across multiple life domains and in relation to all possible types of perpetrators in order to cue respondents and trigger their memory of more distal events. Such approach will facilitate the disclosure of sensitive victimization experiences to unknown interviewers no matter how victims labelled their personal experiences, meaning whether they considered it “crime”, an “accident” or simply “something that can happen”. In our opinion, these evolutions have allowed to refine existing measurement strategies while scholars continue working towards a better, more nuanced understanding of the realities of victims’ experiences.

Obviously, following these recommendations inevitably creates (very) long questionnaires. However, extant research shows that it is almost impossible to do otherwise. Developing more “efficient” measurement approaches, meaning approaches that are time-saving in terms of survey administration<sup>21</sup> and cost-saving in terms of data collection is always associated with a compromise on the types or number of questions (Walby, 2005, 2007). Dedicated VAW surveys

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<sup>21</sup> Dedicated VAW surveys are known to last an average of 22–25 minutes, but can last over 50 minutes on average when screening questions are repeated across multiple life domains to foster disclosure.

remain the “state-of-the-art” approach to integrate a gender perspective into the measure of VAW. They have become increasingly popular as evidenced by the growth of national surveys but also international ones.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.2. The contributions of international comparisons

Answering both the growing use of international comparisons in social sciences and the mistaken tendency to simply juxtapose findings originated from different countries (e.g., Jaquier & Fisher, 2009), national surveys gave rise to international research collaborations seeking to improve the validity of cross-country comparisons through the use of standardized survey instruments. These objectives rapidly received the support of international organizations like the UN and the WHO, and recently the European Union. The first international collaboration was the *International Violence Against Women Survey* (IVAWS; Johnson, Ollus, & Nevala, 2008), followed by the *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women* (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005) and, last, the *EU-Wide Survey on Violence Against Women* conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2014a).<sup>23</sup> These surveys advanced our knowledge about the extent of VAW in participating countries, especially in those that had never conducted a national prevalence study. They also provided empirical evidence that VAW was a “worldwide societal-level problem and [found] considerable consistency among correlates and harmful impacts” (Johnson et al., 2015, pp. 11).

The IVAWS, for example, was carried out in eleven countries between late 2002 and 2006, sampling over 23,000 women aged 18–69 using CATI or face-to-face interviews. It builds on dedicated VAW surveys, in particular Statistics Canada 1993 survey (Johnson & Sacco, 1995). The standardized questionnaire of behaviourally-specific screening questions was administered by trained female interviewers. The WHO Survey was implemented in 15 sites across 10 different countries and interviewed over 24,000 women. It was designed to provide prevalence rates of physical, sexual, and emotional VAW, in particular IPV, with a special emphasis on health consequences (Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, & Garcia-Moreno, 2008; Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Watts, & Team, 2006). In 2012, the FRA initiated a survey on the “nature, extent and consequences of VAW” destined to all 28 EU Member States. A total of 42,000 women reported on their experiences of physical and sexual violence (and associated impacts), psychological IPV,

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<sup>22</sup> However, as Nevala pointed out “in only a few countries have surveys been repeated, and in fewer still have surveys been adopted as a part of a national program of statistics. In most cases prevalence surveys continue to be carried out with ad hoc funding, without commitment of the state to support the surveys on a sustain basis, either as a part of their annual data collection or less frequently” (Nevala, 2015, p. 39), which highlights the problematic lack of integration of VAW survey as a part of the regular activities of national statistical agencies.

<sup>23</sup> One could also mention the secondary analyses conducted by Hindin, Kishor, and Ansara (2008) using data from the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS). Although these surveys do not count as dedicated VAW surveys, they include a specific module on IPV. The DHS present the advantage of relying on large samples (usually between 5,000 and 30,000 households) and being administered every 5 years.

stalking, sexual harassment, childhood abuse, and fear of victimization. The FRA survey also provides some insight into the extent of women's reporting of physical and sexual violence to law enforcement and criminal justice authorities according to the victim-offender relationship. One of the criticisms that could be addressed to this survey is the rather small size (i.e. on average 1,500 women) of the respective national samples. These samples might prove to be too small to conduct within-country analyses on statistically rare types of victimization. On the other hand, the FRA survey filled critical gaps by providing for the first time VAW prevalence rates in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Luxemburg, and Slovenia (FRA, 2014a).<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, to our knowledge, the FRA survey is the only population-based survey which covers cyberviolence against women (sexual cyberharassment and cyberstalking),<sup>25</sup> showing for example the high prevalence of sexual cyberharassment experienced by young women in the EU: 20% of women aged 18–29 years reported an experience of sexual cyberharassment since age 15.

Over time, hands-on experiences and best practices developed into sets of formalized recommendations and standardized guidelines giving rise to a “state-of-the-art”, further relayed by international institutions and organizations such as the United Nations (UN) or the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>26</sup> Gathering “lessons learned” and feedback from these international efforts, various UN agencies collaborated with experts from these survey teams to produce templates and extensive technical documentation forming sets of methodological (and ethical) recommendations.<sup>27</sup> These guidelines bring forward state-of-the-art violence definition and question wording, identify the ethical challenges inherent to specific types of fieldwork, list the data collection strategies most effective in maximizing response rates, and detail the criteria of interviewer selection and the objectives of their training. These sets of recommendations are regularly refined according to the latest (sometimes) innovative experiences. They tend to focus on the rationale for examining the number of victims versus the number of incidents, the different dimensions of violence to be surveyed (e.g., setting up lists of indicators and the variables on which those indicators should and could be disaggregated), the various perpetrators to consider (e.g., current and former partners, family members), as well as how to depict the context and circumstances of violence experiences, measure their severity and impacts, select a reference period, and other methodological “best practices”. Further, secondary analyses and reviews conducted using large datasets (Schröttle et al., 2006; WHO et al., 2013) have raised several issues and have not been able “to resolve many of the comparability issues which are the result of choices made during survey development and data collection” (FRA, 2014a, p. 15); they thus had to be limited to a narrow set of variables.

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<sup>24</sup> For methodological information, see FRA (2014b, 2014c).

<sup>25</sup> For smaller studies on specific population, see Marganski and Melander (2015), Martinez-Pecino and Duran (2016), or Reed, Tolman, and Ward (2016).

<sup>26</sup> See WHO (2001), UN (2006, 2007), UN DAW (2005), UNSD (2009), and UN Women (2012); also see expert reports by Jansen (2012), Nevala (2005), and Walby (2005, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> For a complete review of indicators' availability, see UNSD (2009).

International research experts continue to stress the importance of using the same research criteria and methods in any attempt to conduct cross-country comparisons, for instance adopting identical definitions on violence forms, aggregating data using the same logic, choosing the same method of data collection and interviewing. They also reaffirm the critical importance of using standardized survey questionnaires. That said, cross-country comparisons remain characterized by methodological issues that prior research has not systematically addressed and for which no consensual explanation has been proposed. Validation efforts need to put on the agenda of future research collaborations (Johnson et al., 2015).

## 4. All the while, what was happening in Switzerland?

In this section, we explore how VAW and IPV have been measured in Switzerland, from the first national data to the current state of knowledge and reflect on the degree to which extant research integrated a gender perspective.

Switzerland joined the movement towards a better of measurement of intimate partner and sexual violence against women with the 1994 study on IPV conducted by Gillioz, De Puy, and Ducret (1997). This survey was administered to a representative sample of 1,500 women recruited from all Swiss cantons except Ticino. The main inclusion criterion was being in a current cohabiting relationship with a male partner or having separated in the previous 12 months. The violent behaviours measured in this survey reflected the multifaceted nature of IPV: assessing physical, sexual, and psychological violence perpetrated by current and former male partners. Claiming a feminist understanding of IPV, their work drew attention to the widespread prevalence of IPV (see Table 1) but most importantly the importance of capturing gender inequalities and power relations to understand the occurrence of violence among partners.

Table 1.

**The Prevalence of Male-Perpetrated IPV Against Women in Switzerland by Any Partner, n=1,500 women**

<b>Prevalence Rates %</b>	<b>Physical or Sexual Violence</b>	<b>Physical Violence And Threats</b>	<b>Sexual Violence</b>
<b>During the last 12 months</b>	6.1	5.6	0.8
<b>Since the age of 16</b>	20.7	12.6	11.6

Source: Gillioz et al. (1997, pp. 69 et 73–74)

A few years later, in 2003, Switzerland participated in the IVAWS (Killias, Simonin, & De Puy, 2005). The CH-IVAWS was administered to a random representative sample of individuals recruited in the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland, once again neglecting to



sample Italian-speaking respondents. The final sample was comprised of 1,975 adult women aged 18–72 years. The survey covered (a) any male-perpetrated occurrence of physical violence (including threats) and sexual violence during adulthood (since age 16); (b) emotional violence and controlling behaviours perpetrated by current and former male partners during adulthood (since age 16); and (c) physical and sexual abuse perpetrated by any woman or man during childhood (before age 16). Thus, for most questions, respondents were asked to report violence perpetrated by *any* men, namely partners as well as family members, friends, acquaintances, and strangers. Table 2 shows IPV prevalence rate for a subsample of women, those with an actual partner or at least one former partner.

Table 2.

**The Prevalence of Male-Perpetrated VAW in Switzerland by Any Partner, n=1,882 women**

Prevalence Rates %	Physical or Sexual Violence	Physical Violence And Threats	Sexual Violence
<b>During the last 12 months</b>	0.9	1.1	0.3
<b>Since the age of 16</b>	10.3	9.8	2.4

Source: estimates calculated using raw data from Killias et al. (2005)

As can be seen, IPV rates in Table 2 were systematically lower than those of the 1994 study, with larger differences observed with the 12-month estimates. Specifically, 12-month rates for physical IPV and threats were 5 times higher in the Gillioz et al. study compared to rates in the CH-IVAWS (5.6% versus 1.1%), and those for sexual violence were 2.5 times higher (0.8% versus 0.3%). Further, disaggregated data indicated that differences were similar for minor as well as serious acts of violence, suggesting that the 1994 study – whose questionnaire was adapted from the CTS – was not simply more accurately capturing low-intensity abuse. The authors attributed these differences to the way each questionnaire handled time. Specifically, the CH-IVAWS questionnaire asked whether a woman had *ever* experienced any particular act of violence and, if so, asked her to specify the timeline of her experiences in follow-up questions. Inversely, the Gillioz et al. questionnaire used two distinct screening questions: (a) whether a woman had *ever* experienced any particular act of violence in the last 12 months and (b) whether she had experienced any particular act of violence *prior to that period* (Killias et al., 2005, pp. 39-40). While this hypothesis does not explain differences in adult lifetime rates, the authors provide a convincing argument for the marked underestimation of recent IPV, and these findings suggest that one should prefer the structure of 1994 questionnaire as it more accurately reflects victims' experiences.

More recently, in 2011, the Swiss Crime Victimization Survey incidentally addressed the issue of IPV experiences among both women and men (Killias, Staubli, Biberstein, & Bänziger, 2012). This

supplementary module was administered at the request of federal institutions<sup>28</sup> as an attempt to provide updated figures on the prevalence of IPV. Advertised as a “national survey on domestic violence” it claims to have adopted a fairly inclusive definition of IPV. The survey draws on the Violence Prevention Act of the Canton Zurich that defines IPV (i.e. here referred to as domestic violence) as any harm or threat affecting a person’s physical, sexual, or psychological integrity and that occurred within a family relationship or within a former or ongoing intimate relationship.<sup>29</sup> That said, the *questions* that were used in the survey in fact only enquired about two types of violent behaviours, namely threats and bodily injuries along with sexual offences. Further, because the survey was administered as a complementary module of the national crime victimization survey, very little room was left to specific questions on IPV. Adopting a “generalist” approach, the survey relied on a limited number of screening questions rather than a detailed list of behaviourally-specific behaviours.

Findings indicated that IPV prevalence rates for female and male victims were different, although the authors did not provide any information regarding the statistical significance of existing differences (Table 3). Further, estimates for female victims were much lower than those found in dedicated surveys, suggesting that this survey underestimate the rate of female victimization, and likely the ratio of female to male victims. As such, it can be argued that, because this survey shares some of the limitations of crime victimization surveys, it partially supports the gender symmetry hypothesis (also see Section 3 and Appendix 2). Additionally, the “domestic violence” module was only administered to a subsample of respondents whose selection did not adhere to standards of representativeness in social sciences, thereby making it impossible to generalize study findings. Although more recent, it is fair to say that the questionnaire and sampling frame used do not meet the state-of-the-art recommendations and international standards described in the previous sections.<sup>30</sup> This study fails to provide valid estimates on both the extent and context of IPV.

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<sup>28</sup> Funding was provided by the Federal Office for Justice, the Federal Office for Gender Equality, and the Federal Office of Police.

<sup>29</sup> 351.0, *Gewaltschutzgesetz* (GSG), 19.06.2006, §2: “Häusliche Gewalt liegt vor, wenn eine Person in einer bestehenden oder einer aufgelösten familiären oder partnerschaftlichen Beziehung in ihrer körperlichen, sexuellen oder psychischen Integrität verletzt oder gefährdet wird a. durch Ausübung oder Androhung von Gewalt oder b. durch mehrmaliges Belästigen, Aufschaukeln oder Nachstellen.”

<sup>30</sup> Of note, a similar methodology was used to conduct a domestic violence study in the canton of Geneva (Bourgoz et al., 2013). The findings of this study are hindered by the same limitations as the ones highlighted above.

Table 3.

**The Prevalence of Male-Perpetrated Versus Female-Perpetrated IPV in Switzerland**, n=3,974 women and n=4,313 men

Annual Prevalence Rates %	Threats and Bodily Injuries		Sexual Offences	
	Female Victims	Male Victims	Female Victims	Male Victims
2009	1.1	0.5	0.3	-
2010	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.02

Source : Killias et al. (2012, pp. 10–11)

In sum, Switzerland appears to be below the standard in the measurement of VAW and gender-based violence.<sup>31</sup> The most valid estimates are now 13–21 years old, while the most recent estimates lack validity. It appears there is a critical need for a national representative survey that incorporates a gender perspective into the measurement of intimate partner and sexual violence to produce valid and reliable estimates, and so as to allow for a refined, more nuanced understanding of women's and men's experiences of violence. A survey that would incorporate the state-of-the-art recommendations of dedicated VAW surveys, cover multiple types and forms of gender-based violence, and satisfy with the contemporary methodological and ethical requirements of researching these issues (Johnson et al., 2015).

Additionally, smaller studies are needed to address specific issues or assess the experiences of (more) vulnerable populations. For example, more studies are needed to understand the specificities of young adults' experiences of violence and understand the link between youths' legitimacy of gender hierarchical relations, gender identity, and gender-based violence experiences. Similarly, few studies have examined the intersections of youths' experiences of gender-based violence across the domestic and public spheres. Specific in-depth studies remain instrumental to inform public policies and prevention strategies. It appears even more relevant to focus on young adults<sup>32</sup> given that research has demonstrated that experiencing victimization in early dating relationships increases the likelihood of repeated victimization across the lifespan (see Classen, Paresh, & Aggarwal, 2005; Hall Smith, White, & Holland, 2003; Macy, 2008). Better understanding these first incidents, their correlates and consequences is critical to inform prevention efforts.

<sup>31</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the *Istanbul Convention*, states that "parties shall endeavour to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of [the] Convention." (art. 11, al. 2). Switzerland signed the convention in September 2013 and ratification is pending; the consultation process closed in January 2016. It remains to be seen whether ratification of the Istanbul Convention could foster the implementation of routine VAW survey integrated into the activities of the Federal Statistical Office.

<sup>32</sup> Recent studies that claimed to have examined physical and sexual victimization experiences among "youths" have focused on girls and boys aged 15–17 (Averdijk, Müller-Johnson, & Eisner, 2011) or 14–16 (Ribeaud et al., 2015). So far, the experiences of the 18–24 cohort remain understudied.

## 5. Conclusion: Promising avenues for measuring VAW and IPV in Switzerland

Despite the long-standing controversy about the “gender symmetry” of IPV and a preoccupying tendency to “degendering” women’s experiences of violence (Johnson, 2015, p. 390), there is sufficient evidence today of the critical importance of a refined and more nuanced understanding of the gendered nature of violence and the importance to identify the measurement strategies and instruments most suitable to attain this objective.

Although no state-of-the-art is definitive in sciences—standard knowledge needs to be continuously challenged—in our opinion, there is sufficient evidence to outline a series of criteria necessary to integrate a gender perspective into the measurement of violence. This starts with sampling both female and male respondents, so as to enable the study of gender-based violence as an expression of hierarchical gender relations between women and men. The inclusion of male respondents in gender-based violence research should not be seen as problematic as long as survey instruments are designed to properly depict the very nature of women’s and men’s experiences of violence. Drawing on international best practices, a carefully-designed survey should closely follow the methodology of dedicated VAW surveys; in particular, it should:

1. Assess the many forms of gender-based violence through the use of multiple behaviourally-specific screening questions that avoid generic, legally categorizing, and labelling words;
2. Repeat screening questions across the various spheres of respondents’ lives including their current and former intimate partnerships, workplace, and university or school environment;
3. Cover and correctly operationalize all the possible types of victim-perpetrator relationship, paying particular attention to “new” forms of intimate relationships (e.g., “hooking-up”);
4. Assess the context, motivations, and consequences of gender-based violence, as to allow for a nuanced understanding of women’s and men’s experiences;
5. Measure precisely the frequency, repetition, and severity of violence experiences
6. Include measures of heterosexism and legitimacy of gender inequalities to further challenge the gender symmetry of male- and female-perpetrated gender-based violence.

Without a doubt, adhesion to these criteria will make for (very) long survey questionnaires. Improving the validity of survey instruments destined to measure gender-based violence inevitably increases the time needed for administering questionnaires as well as costs associated with data collection. Therefore, researchers should continue to work towards improving the measurement of violence. They should investigate new technologies and conduct research experiments testing the effects of measurement conditions (e.g., questions types and wording, setting, mode of administration, varying degrees of confidentiality and anonymity) on estimates

and patterns of gender-based violence (Hamby, 2014). Although strong critics have been voiced “blaming” specific features of crime victimization surveys or domestic violence instruments for their underestimation of VAW, exactly how these methodological limitations impact statistical estimates remains underexamined (Hagemann-White, 2001; Jaquier et al., 2010; Walby & Myhill, 2001).

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**APPENDIX 1 – The Prevalence of IPV in Family Conflict Surveys and CTS Studies**

Survey	Country	Year	Sampling Design Sample Size	Administration Mode	Response Rate %	Subtypes of Violence	Prevalence rates %				
							Perpetrator <i>Reference period</i>	Physical Abuse	Severe Physical Abuse <sup>a</sup>	Sexual abuse	Severe Sexual Abuse
<b>National Family Violence Survey [spousal violence data]</b> Straus and Gelles (1986)	USA	1985	national probability sample  3,520 adult respondents selected from households containing a currently married or cohabiting couple	face-to-face interviews	84.0	physical abuse; severe physical abuse psychological abuse	current <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	11.3	3.0	-	-
							current <u>female</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	12.1	4.4	-	-
<b>National Survey on Safety, Families and Health of Spanish Women</b> Medina-Ariza and Barberet (2003)	Spain	1999	multistage cluster sampling stratified by city of residence size  2,015 women, 17 or older, married, cohabiting, or recently divorced or separated, living in cities >100,000 inhabitants	face-to-face interviews by female interviewers in the home of the respondent.	71.3	physical violence; sexual violence; injuries; psychological abuse  questions adapted from CTS-2 and dedicated VAW survey	any <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	8.1	4.9	11.5	4.7

Note: The overview presented above is descriptive not comparative, as no category is defined consistently across studies.

<sup>a</sup> In these examples, “severe physical abuse” is not included under “physical abuse”; these estimates are drawn from distinct measurement scales.

**APPENDIX 2 – The Prevalence of IPV Against Women in Dedicated Surveys**

Survey	Country	Year	Sampling Sample Size	Administration Mode	Response Rate %	Subtypes of Violence	Prevalence rates %			
							Perpetrator Reference period	Physical Violence and Threats	Any Sexual Violence	Rape, Completed or Attempted
<b>National Violence Against Women Survey</b> Tjaden and Thoennes (2000b)	USA	1995–1996	RDD sampling (landline telephone numbers)	CATI by trained female interviewers	72.0	heterosexual and same-sex partner: physical violence and threats; sexual violence; emotional abuse and controlling behaviours; stalking;	any <u>male or female</u> partner <i>lifetime</i>	22.1		7.7
			8,000 adult women				any <u>male or female</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	1.3		0.2
<b>Women’s safety</b> McLennan (1996)	Australia	1996	representative random sampling (unspecified)	CATI and/or face-to-face interviews by trained female interviewers	78.0	physical assault and threat; sexual assault and threat; stalking and harassment	current <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	2.4	0.3	
			6,300 adult women				current <u>male</u> partner <i>&gt; 12 months ago</i>	5.2	0.7	
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	3.0	0.6	
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>&gt; 12 months ago</i>	38.7	9.6	

APPENDIX 2 (cont.)

Survey	Country	Year	Sampling Sample Size	Administration Mode	Response Rate %	Subtypes of Violence	Prevalence rates %			
							Perpetrator <i>Reference period</i>	Physical Violence and Threats	Any Sexual Violence	Rape, Completed or Attempted
<b>Captured Queen, Men's violence against women in "equal" Sweden</b> Lundgren, Heimer, Westerstrand, and Kalliokosk (2002)	Sweden	1999–2000	probability sampling  6,926 women	postal survey	70.1	physical violence and threats; sexual violence; sexual harassment; controlling behaviour	current male husband/cohabitant partner <i>lifetime</i>	7.0	3.0	
							former male husband/cohabitant partner <i>lifetime</i>	28.0	16.0	
<b>Australian component of the IVAWS</b> Mouzos and Makkai (2004)	Australia	2002–2003	Adapted RDD sampling (i.e. "White Pages plus one" method)  6,677 adult women	telephone survey	39.0	physical violence and threats; unwanted sexual touching; attempted/completed forced intercourse; forced sex with a third party; other sexual violence; drug-facilitated sexual activity	current <u>male</u> partner <i>lifetime</i>	9.0	1.0	
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>lifetime</i>	33.0	14.0	
							current <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	3.0	<1.0	
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	2.0	1.0	

APPENDIX 2 (cont.)

Survey	Country	Year	Sampling Sample Size	Administration Mode	Response Rate %	Subtypes of Violence	Prevalence rates %			
							Perpetrator Reference period	Physical Violence and Threats	Any Sexual Violence	Rape, Completed or Attempted
<b>Violence Against Women in 2005</b> Piispa, Heiskanen, Kääriäinen, and Sirén (2006)	Finland	2005–2006	representative sampling  4,464 women	postal survey	62.0	physical violence and threats; sexual violence and threats; sexual harassment				
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>lifetime since 15</i>	44.7	17.3	
							current <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	6.3	2.0	
							former <u>male</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	4.7	1.6	
<b>National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey</b> Black et al. (2011)	USA	2010	RDD sampling (landline telephone numbers)  9,086 women	CATI by trained female interviewers	27.5–33.6	physical violence and threats; completed/attempted rape; alcohol/drug-facilitated rape; sexual coercion; unwanted sexual contact; non-contact unwanted sexual experiences; psychological aggression and coercive control; control of reproductive health; stalking	any <u>male or female</u> partner <i>lifetime</i>	32.9 <i>of which severe: 24.3</i>		9.4
							any <u>male or female</u> partner <i>last 12 months</i>	4.0 <i>of which severe: 2.7</i>		0.6

Note: The overview presented above is descriptive not comparative, a no category is defined consistently across studies. CATI = computer-assisted telephone interview; RDD = random-digit dialling



**APPENDIX 3 – Examples of Generic versus Behaviourally-Specific Screening Questions for Sexual Assault**

National Crime Victimization Surveys, NCVS <sup>a</sup>	a	Other than any incidents already mentioned, have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by (a) Someone you didn't know before; (b) A casual acquaintance; or (c) Someone you know well?
International Violence Against Women Survey, IVAWS <sup>b</sup>	a	Since the age of 16, has a man ever forced you into sexual intercourse by threatening you, holding you down, or hurting you in some way? Please at this point exclude attempts to force you.
	b	Since the age of 16, has any man ever attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way? This is an attempt where sexual intercourse did not take place.
	c	Since the age of 16, has any man ever touched you sexually when you did not want him to in a way that was distressing to you?
	d	Since the age of 16, has any man ever forced or attempted to force you into sexual activity with someone else?
National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, NISVS <sup>c</sup>	a	How many people have ever (a) exposed their sexual body parts to you, flashed you, or masturbated in front of you? (b) Made you show your sexual body parts to them? (c) Made you look at or participate in sexual photos or movies?
	b	How many people have ever (a) harassed you while you were in a public place in a way that made you feel unsafe? (b) Kissed you in a sexual way? (c) Fondled or grabbed your sexual body parts?
	c	When you were drunk, high, drugged, or passed out and unable to consent, how many people ever (a) had vaginal sex with you? By vaginal sex, we mean that a man or boy put his penis in your vagina? (b) Made you receive anal sex, meaning they put their penis into your anus? (c) Made you perform oral sex, meaning that they put their penis in your mouth or made you penetrate their vagina or anus with your mouth? (d) Made you receive oral sex, meaning that they put their mouth on your vagina or anus?
	d	How many people have ever used physical force or threats to physically harm you to make you (a) have vaginal sex? (b) Receive anal sex? (c) Make you perform oral sex? (d) Make you receive oral sex? (e) Put their fingers or an object in the vagina or anus?
	e	How many people have ever used physical force or threats of physical harm to try to have vaginal, oral, or anal sex with you, but sex did not happen?
	f	How many people have you had vaginal, oral, or anal sex with after they pressured you by (a) doing things like telling you lies, making promises about the future they knew were untrue, threatening to end your relationship, or threatening to spread rumours about you? (c) Wearing you down by repeatedly asking for sex, or showing they were unhappy? (d) Using their authority over you, for example, your boss or your teacher?

*Note:* For additional examples, see Fisher (2009) or Kruttschnitt et al. (2014)

<sup>a</sup> Kruttschnitt et al. (2014, pp. 60-61)

<sup>b</sup> Johnson et al. (2008, pp. 246–251)

<sup>c</sup> Black et al. (2011, appendix C)

