

## Summary

### I. Aim of research

Abuse in the family both in the everyday as well as in the scientific terms means first of all physical violence against women, the victimisation of female family members, therefore these activities are always seen from the point of view of woman.

In my paper I try to approach this question from the men's side which may seem to be quite unusual in many respects. On one hand this topic is not popular neither in the Hungarian social research nor in the everyday language. The results of international research can hardly evoke the interest of the Hungarian people. Even in criminology we can find only a few experiments to understand and explain the relation between man's behaviour and this type of crime.

The role of sexes in the abuse within the family has been greatly confined to the research of the situation and problems of women. Man's studies as discipline appeared only in the last twenty years due mostly to the feminist movements and thinking.

### II. Methods of research

The paper introduces the entire spectrum of research history on this subject, the present state of international and national research, along with the obligatory basic English language material defining this field of study. Beside secondary sources, the paper includes an original empirical study.

### III. The summary of scientific research and the possible solutions

1. In the first chapter I present details from the **history of international and Hungarian research on the problem of family violence**. This chapter follows the process from the family researches of the 1970's up to these days. Gives detailed analysis of the classical research carried out by Murray Straus and his institute on the abuse in the family. According to the research half the conflicts in the family results in mutual violence, in one-quarter of the

cases only men use violence while in one quarter of the cases women do so against men. Suzanne Steinmetz article on The Battered Husband Syndrome defined greatly the direction of further researches. Radical feminist responses have questioned her results ever since. According to their sources not less than 95 percent of women suffer from their male partner's brutal abuse which exactly reflects the men's power in the society. They firmly state that such thing like battered man does not exist at all, women strike back very rarely and only from justifiable self-defence and the whole issue is not worth of mentioning, anyway. The solution would be the punishment of men and their exclusion from the partnership which would entail with the economic self-assessment and stronger public acknowledgment of women

From that point the debate revolves around the question how much symmetrical or asymmetrical the roles of sexes in the abuse within the family. Opinions appear which are aware of the battering of men but do not consider it as a social problem.

Among researchers a view has recently gained ground that more attention should be paid to the biological factors and risks since new genetic and evolutionary psychological researches revealed so far unknown information. Also new theories appeared based on an analysis of psycho-patological risks in conflictuous partnerships. Some researchers follow the theory of family system and the sociological theories connected with it. While others, in increasing number, doubt the overall validity of learning theory. Thus, the feminism, even radical feminism remained the core ideology in almost all of the researches.

Most of the experts agree that any kind of theoretical approach has its function in researches except the simplifying, generalizing preconceptions which rather serve the „industry” of domestic violence than create new aspects for any solution.

Compared to the researches elsewhere, Hungarian ones lag at least three decades behind. The analysis represents two directions. The early American radical-feminist and the sociological more on the learning theory oriented views have already their roots. But even in these two directions it became quite soon obvious that the one-dimensional, symplified explanations have

been still more acceptable for the public opinion and populist policy in Hungary. Moreover, while in the western countries several empirical and theoretical research on domestic violence have been done, in Hungary feminist preconceptions still precede facts, data and knowledge.

2. In the second part of my paper I analyse the violence in the family from the point of view of **male offenders**. Since there has been no empirical research based on Hungarian data sources I use the results of international surveys in order to present the types of male offenders, the causes and possible explanations.

There are lots of empirical studies in the international literature which, at least in principle, could make possible to get more knowledge about male offenders. But even experts have difficulties to find those features which would generally applicable to more effectively prevent and handle abuses within the family. According to the results the causes for assaulting women can be found in four distinctive terrains. All in biological and macrosocial factors, in the process of socialisation of sex roles and in the sphere of interpersonal relationships we found elements of risk which are responsible for the development of aggressive personality and violence.

Among many models researchers find the complex multifactoral approach the most promising.

Offenders are classified according to whether coercion is a fundamental feature of their personality (whether they show aggressiveness in and outside the family), if their personality has pathological disorders as well as how frequently they use force in their partnership and whether it turns into criminal action.

In the plentiful literature I found three tipology to present: the Holtzworth-Munroe-Stuart, the Jacobson-Gottman, and the Johnson models.

As a conclusion it is important to mention that knowledge related to the male offender is insufficient both for effective therapy as well as for the defence of the victim if the partners are not examined simultaneously in their mutual reflection to each other.

3. The core argumentation in the paper relates to the **male victims**. As opposed to researches dealing with the male offenders, the question here is not the process leading to male victimization in the partnership. The attention is rather paid to the fact whether there exist at all any battered man abused by his female partner? Though nobody doubts the fact that there are battered men, the real question is revolving around the measured frequency. In terms of „social significance“. Who suffers more of abuses, men or women, who deserves more help and who needs more support to help the offended person? In this chapter we scrutinize two questions. On the one hand why do not appear offended men neither in researches nor in front of the public and why empirical studies do not show too much of them, on the other. The answer to the first question is manifold: the traditional expectations regarding sex roles, „manhood“ and more importantly the prevalent social norms related to masculinity. Thus social institutions and the battered men themselves do not want to appear as victims of women.

Since all participants are against the image of the „weak man“, „black and blue“ beaten men do not likely show up in the social scenario, therefore such cases prove invisible thus socially „insignificant“. This might be one of the reasons why we are not able to find adequate solutions for domestic violence. There are evidences that the states make international efforts to give as much help as they can. Surveys on man-study financed by the state in Canada, United Kingdom and Australia usually end up in one finding: there is no need to help men or even if there is any help, the attention paid to this problem is still not sufficient.

4.. **Battered men in Hungary.** In this chapter I present the results based on statistical, sociological and documentary methods. The survey was organized by the researchers of OKRI and aimed at gathering case-studies in which men became victims in the partnership. This survey was a part of a general and all-embracing project on domestic violence. In this chapter we analyse not only the ERÜBS statistics in the period of 1997-2002, but also data of executory judgements delivered in 2002 from all regions of the country. From the collected cases of domestic violence (N=1500) we selected those

(N=130) where men were abused by women. I also presented details of those cases which ended up with the death of men (annual average number 24 killings). The results firmly show that not only women commit offenses against men but also the generalization of justifiable self-defence on the part of women proved to be a rebuttable presumption. The data neither support the popular feminist argument stating that women in the partnership are more defenceless than men. According to the documents criminal offence at the end of a longlasting conflictuous partnership and both partners get mutually involved in it. Risk factors are age (both women and men become offenders and victims in the age period of 35-60), unemployment, bad or worsening life-conditions, marital status (murders are more frequent in co-habitation, while more serious injuries occur in marriage) and last but not least alcoholism.

The conflict between partners can be caused neither by forceful exertion of coercive male supervision nor by the coercive reaction on the part of the woman. Rather, it can be a result of emotional alienation, the increasing loneliness and more importantly social helplessness. These couples regardless of sex roles, do not know how to manage conflicts without force.

5. The sixth chapter of the paper deals with the technics of **prevention, management and intervention** used in the last three decades. Since Hungarian experiments are still at an early stage, we refer mostly to international experiences.

In the Anglo-Saxon projects research of the prevention, management and intervention policy of domestic violence are separated because the three sets of problems need different methodology and technique.

According to the result of these surveys of domestic violence decreased by 30 percent in almost every states though the anaysis of efficiency of the applied management and intervention techniques does not clearly prove the causes of the promising results.

Since the core subject of my paper are men, I am focussing on the management and prevention from the point of view of sex roles. It can be stated that men, either offender or offended should be handled differently as

opposed to the usually applied, basically feminist-oriented methods and prevention theories.

In this chapter I present those significant criminological theories and their expected results from the point of view of prevention as well as the latest communal and individual procedures including their expected measurable efficiency. The picture is not at all promising but it can be very useful for the elaboration of both short-term and long-term programs for the application of preventive and management techniques in Hungary.

6. A special chapter is devoted to the role of jurisdiction in the management of family violence. Here the core issues are **law and police**. In this terrain policy seems to be more characteristic than scientific scrutiny in the management of domestic violence.

The international documents (UN, EU, EC) give more emphasis to women's right separately from the general human rights since their philosophy is that women are socially backward, men's dominance is overwhelming and this situation justifies the positive discrimination of women. European organisations are sure that men are the reason behind the coercive behaviour against women. These statements are characterized by one-sided overt and covert feminism.

Hungarian society tries to refrain from this feminist ideology which can be seen in the present discourse about domestic violence. Only a few representatives of different Hungarian feminist organisations, backed up by international actors try to exert political pressure through media on government organisations.

As a consequence of liberal influence the Hungarian parliament put the government under the obligation to elaborate overall strategy and legislation. In the national crime-prevention strategy against domestic violence is gaining more and more emphasis.

The experts of feminist civil organisations demand even stronger and more complex criminal legislation and do not accept the fact that the effective regulations are suitable to properly punish the family violence offenders and to defend the victims of such a treatment. In 2006 a new regulation

introducing restraintment orders came into force was the first step in the legal reform to prevent domestic violence. According to this regulation the police is authorized to remove the offender from the family and the court may also decide to extend the punishment to permanent separation. Not all the experts were satisfied with this regulation. According to the representatives of feminist organisation the possible time span of the restraintment order is too short and they also regarded insufficient the number of effective legal procedures. Others stated that the regulation was not suitable to decrease family violence as the creation of a financial and organisational background required, will need more time. Even if so, the motivation and effort of the legislator showed an honourable moderate and sober consideration.

7. **To sum up:** my effort has been to place domestic violence in a broader social and historical context.

8. Since the literature related to the topic is extremely rich I could not refer to all important sources in the **bibliography**, I concentrated my research work basically on those reports, articles and books which were published in the English language.

9. Though I consider the following topics very important, however I could not deal with them in detail: the changing historical forms of family together with the historical problems of domestic violence. Researches in the history of sex-related aggression, I owe a more detailed presentation of women as offenders or victims.

10. My primary aim was to present partner violence as a complex problem, as a hidden dimension of family life and draw the attention to battered men. Also based on scientific results and observations I endeavoured to shed light on the importance of prevention and management of family conflicts by trying to avoid political and subjective prejudices.

