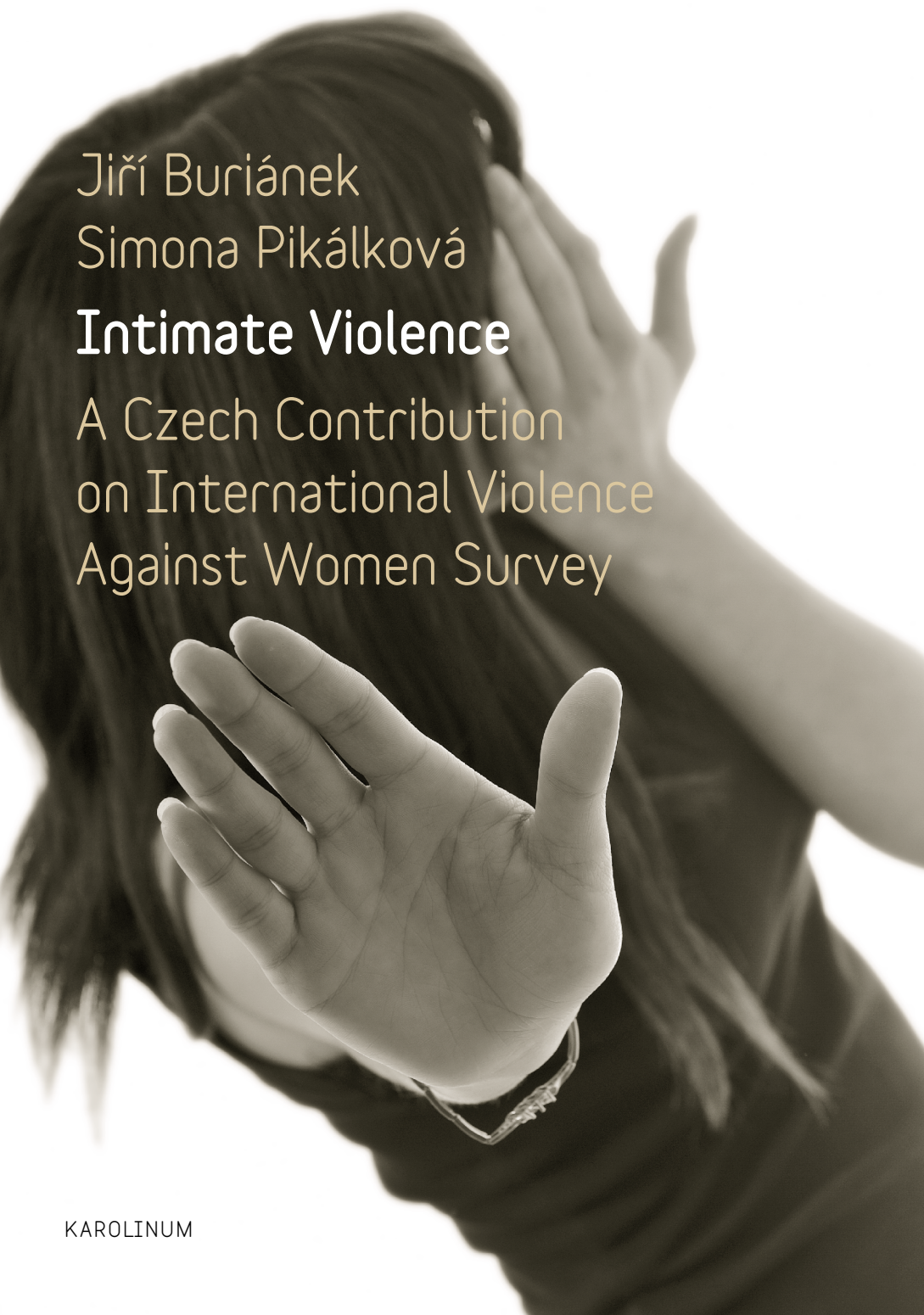

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Intimate Violence

A Czech Contribution on International Violence Against Women Survey

KAROLINUM

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Foreword

In recent years, the issue of domestic violence in the Czech Republic has broken the long-time taboo. This was greatly influenced by the new and modern legislative changes that were adopted and the related public debate as well as by results of certain surveys. Among these surveys, important was the *International Violence Against Women Survey*, for which we had the honour to serve as the Czech Republic coordinators.[1] Czech readers may find more information on this topic in a special summary publication [Pikalkova 2004], but even at the time of its publishing we were aware that there is more work to do. At that time, results of cross-national comparisons [Johnson, Ollus, Nevala 2008], enabling to put original basic information (sometimes surprising or even shocking findings) into wider perspective, were not yet available. There was also not much space for opinions or comments to be included a systematic manner. All the aforesaid is the objective of this book.

In this book we would like to offer a synopsis of basic findings identified by the IVAWS survey. We would like to show that a tradition of examining these topics (even though short) has already emerged in the Czech Republic. Since we intend to focus more on partner violence, we will take the opportunity and add to the perspective also basic information from a similar study focusing on men. Foreign readers will need to find out more about the current legal context and in order to be able to do so, we have invited to our team also D. Lisuchova. The involvement of Z. Podana enables us to open issues of the provision

1 The research was supported by the GA CR 403/03/1472 grant. This book is published with the support of the research project *GACR 404/12/2452* "Násilí v partnerských vztazích: výzkum navazující na IVAWS 2003" *(Intimate partner violence: follow-up research to IVAWS 2003).*

of assistance to domestic violence victims and to analyse institutional frameworks, opportunities and constrains.

We are aware that discussions on the data presented and the resulting conclusions can be affected also by methodological aspects of the research, which could not yet have been elaborated in all details. The topic itself is a very sensitive one and very demanding taking into account the organization and preparation of surveys. Discussions on the limitations of our methodology are therefore welcome and there is also space for further complementary analyses. The Czech report on the survey includes the analysis of qualitative research responses and studies of this type will continue to serve as an important source of information, not mentioning clinical experiences from the practice.

Even though numbers play the main role in our study and we tried to strictly observe all rules governing the validity, reliability and generalization potential of the conclusions, the selection of the topic itself indicates that we don't intend to take vague and neutral positions. These data are reflections of individual human stories, family dramas ending sometimes in a tragedy. Tabloid press could be easily involved, but that would not help the victims at all and could lead to their secondary victimization. Our approach is not based on strictly paradigmatic and clear-cut positions, we do not intend to prefer one or another explanation (the times of educational activism have long been past). What is needed most are well-founded and matter-of-fact measures for the benefit of victims and the society as a whole.

1. Sociological Framework of Studying Violence in Intimate Partnership

Despite great attention paid to the problems of family violence abroad (especially in the USA, see Gelles and Strauss), the Czech sociology and also the Czech society still seem to keep away from this area. Yet, the problem of domestic violence is very topical and its importance is likely to grow [Smuts 1992]. In the Czech Republic, domestic violence as a specific phenomenon started to be reflected by the organizations concerned, sociologists and other specialists and actually by the whole society only after 1989. Up until then, i.e. during the communist regime, solid sociological research on this subject did not exist for the main and specific legal instruments in the Czech criminal law were not available either. Let us look in short at the phenomenon of domestic violence more generally. When analysing the area of family violence in the Czech Republic, it is necessary to take into account some facts as they are presented in the wider socio-cultural context.

It was R. Gelles who defined, on the basis of large sociological research, the myths concerning the problem of domestic violence. One of these myths is an idea that violence does exist only in socially excluded families (it cannot happen in "normal" family) or that real causes of violence are drugs and alcohol. Another dangerous myth is conviction that the aggressor must be a psychotic and that victims (mostly women) in fact like violent behaviour (otherwise they would not live together with him) or that they deserve it (the aggressor is violent because they provoke him by their behaviour). These ideas are fed considerably by media that focus mainly on the hardest cases of violence.

Within this context it is important to view the family as a specific place of conflicts: The family represents one of few securities in the modern world. Its failure, for instance in the form of violent attacks, may provoke a feeling of threat or fear from "social chaos". This seems

to be the cause of a common strong tendency of hiding the violence, both from oneself and the society. On the other hand, the family is easy to allow rise of violent behaviour. Very intimate and private character of family interactions, authority and power that is not distributed symmetrically – all these facts help considerably to create and keep violence.

When taking violence as a general problem, there is another factor involved: in accordance with historical evolution it is sure that the Euro-American civilisation has a lot of violent elements in its cultural patterns. Moreover, the society tolerates specific forms of violent behaviour also within people's socialisation. The violence is strongly viewed as a way of solving interpersonal controversies [Gelles 1998].

Defining "family violence"

> *The definitional question has been debated for more than three decades and has been contentious. On the one hand, one definition is that family violence is "*any *act that is harmful to the victim". This broad definition of family violence includes physical attacks, threatened physical attacks, psychological or emotional aggression and abuse, sexual assaults, neglectful behaviour, or behaviours intended to control the other. On the other hand, there are narrower definitions of "violence" that are confided to only acts of physical violence [Gelles 2003: 838].*

There is no consensus as how broad or narrow the definition of family violence should be: the discussions about the appropriate definition of family violence are influenced by a variety of perspectives. First, there is the scientific or research perspective that seeks a clear nominal definition that is grounded in theory and can be reliably and validly operationalized. This perspective tends toward a narrow definition of violence, because violence is, at least theoretically, conceived to be conceptually distinct behaviour from other methods of inflicting harm or pain on another person. A humanistic perspective takes a broader approach and conceptualizes a definition that captures the full range of harm that can be inflicted on individuals – harm being defined as acts of commission or omission that interferes with a human being achieving hers or his developmental potential. Finally, there is a political or advocacy dimension that defines the behaviour in terms of advocacy or political goals. Thus feminists define the problem as one of

"violence against women", rather than spouse abuse, domestic violence, or family violence and conceptualize the violence as coercive control of men on women in patriarchal society which can be physical, sexual or psychological [see Gelles 2003].

A second consideration in the definition is the term "family". The Czech Census Bureau defines "family" as a group of persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing together in a household (see [*Sčítání* 2001]). However, this definition limits the examination and analysis of violence to only those related individuals who share a residence. Violence in courtship, violence between couples that are divorced, and violence between gay and lesbian couples falls outside of this definition. One solution to the narrowness of the term "family violence" is to broaden the scope to consider "violence in intimate relationships".

The National Academy of Sciences panel on "Assesing Family Violence Interventions" defined "family violence" as:

> *"Family violence includes child and adult abuse that occurs between family members or adult intimate partners....For adults, family or intimate violence may include acts that are physically and emotionally harmful or that carry the potential to cause physical harm. Abuse of adult partners may include sexual coercion or assaults, physical intimidations, threats to kill or harm restraint of normal activities or freedom, and denial of access to resources." [National Research Council 1998: 19].*

Measuring family violence

There are various methods used to measure the incidence and prevalence of family violence. Generally, there are three main sources of data on family violence: (1) clinical data; (2) official report data; and (3) social surveys.

Clinical studies carried out by psychiatrists, psychologists, and counsellors were traditionally a frequent source of data on family violence. The clinical or agency setting (including hospital emergency rooms and battered woman shelters) provides access to extensive in-depth information about particular cases of violence. Such samples are important because they are often the only way of obtaining detailed data on the most severely battered women. However, these data, because they are based on small, nonrepresentative samples, cannot be used to estimate the incidence and prevalence of intimate violence.

Official reports are represented mainly by official data from hospitals[2] and criminal justice agencies[3]. One of the few nations that collect official report data on child maltreatment (because of mandatory reporting laws)[4] is the United States; still, as for the intimate partner violence, even there has not been a tradition of officially reporting these cases, with the exception of a handful of states in the United States that collect data on spouse abuse (see [U.S. Department of Justice 1999]). However, official reports are in general substantially limited to instances of family violence that are reported to the police, and only a small fraction of the instances of violence between marital partners are ever reported to the police [Gelles, Straus 1988]. The likelihood of undercounting cases of domestic violence is high also due to variations in defininig cases of family violence and variations in accuracy and reliability of police / medical reports. Official records so suffer from variations in definitions, differing reporting and recording practises, and biased samples of violent and abusive behaviors and persons.

Sociological surveys are the third source of data. Such surveys are constrained by the low base rate of most forms of abuse and violence in families and the sensitive and taboo nature of the topic. Some investigators cope with the problem of the low base rate by employing purposive or nonrepresentative sampling techniques to identify cases. Other problems of sociological survey data include differential interpretation of questions and intended and unintended response error.

Sociological surveys oriented to investigating family violence can be classified into three groups by the methodology used:

- Using nonrepresentative sampling technique – case studies ;
- Using available large groups of objects (for example investigators of courtship violence have made extensive use of survey research techniques using college students as subjects);

2 "The National Center for Health Statistics" in the USA maintains mortality data that could be used to measure and track domestic homicides; death certificates are completed by medical examiners or coroners. However, there is a possibility of undercounting domestic homicides due to police or medical examiners categorizing a homicide as an unintentional event (accident) or undetermined intent.

3 Czech police statistics reflect Czech legislation system, see Chapter "Instruments of criminal law for protection of victims of domestic violence".

4 For example "The Office of Child Abuse and Neglect" collect data on child maltreatment as the part of "The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System".

- Nationally representative surveys of violence between intimates such as International Violence Against Women Survey; longitudinal surveys.

Because of various definitions of abuse and neglect and the differing methodology used to examine incidence and frequency, there are inconsistencies in the data on family violence[5]. On the other hand, the data on family violence represent the only way to research and study specific and broad problems of this issue.

1.1 Theoretical models of researching family violence

Family violence has been approached from three general theoretical levels of analysis: (1) the intraindividual level of analysis, or the psychiatric model; (2) the social-psychological level of analysis, and (3), the sociological or sociocultural level of analysis.

1. The psychiatric model
The psychiatric model focuses on the offender's personality characteristics as the chief determinants of violence and abuse of intimates; although some applications focus on the individual personality characteristics of the victims (see for example [Snell, Rosenwald, Robey 1964; Shainess 1979]). The psychiatric model includes theoretical approaches that link personality disorders, character disorders, mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse, and other intraindividual processes to acts of family violence.

2. The social-psychological model
The social-psychological model assumes that violence and abuse can best be understood by careful examination of the external environmental factors that impact on the family, on family organization and structure, and on the everyday interactions between intimates that are precursors to acts of violence. Theoretical approaches that examine family structure, learning, stress, the transmission of violence from one generation to the next, and family interaction patterns fit the social-psychological model.

5 Even for the most extreme form of violence, homicide, where the data are thought to be most reliable and valid there are differencies between FBI statistics and NCHS data (National Center for Health Statistics).

3. The sociocultural model

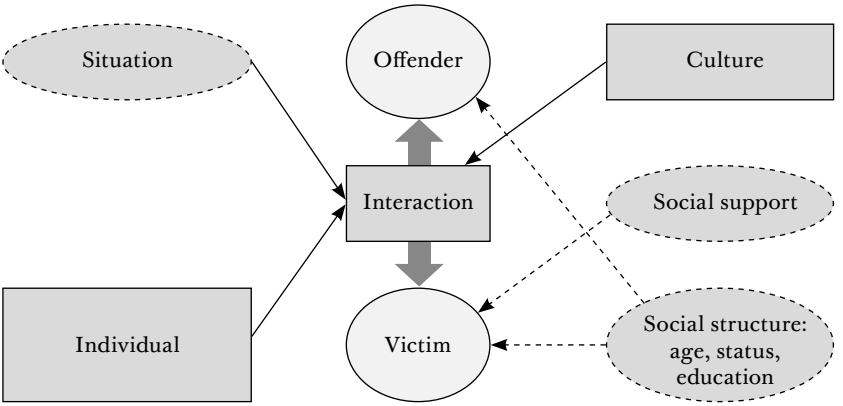
The sociocultural model provides a macro-level of analysis. Violence is examined in light of socially structured variables such as inequality, patriarchy, or cultural norms and attitudes about violence and family relations.

These three basic approaches do not exhaust the analysis' potential. It would certainly be the ideal to be able to study violence-producing interactions (in relation to individual dispositions and histories of actors involved as well as on the level of general social / normative climate). Sociologists who examine personalities and individual stories would consider this much too subtle matter but on the other hand, explaining violence only by general socio-cultural and historical conditions does not really have a very promising potential. In cross-national projects, national specifics serve as sorting variables; nevertheless, it is often difficult to find satisfactory interpretation for their effects.

Empiric studies of domestic violence offer limited opportunities for studying the dynamics of the relationship between partners from the developmental perspective. We must work with individual opinions, where attention focuses mostly on the victim itself. It is only through the victim that we find out more about the abuser, the relationship and the incident settings. This does not necessarily limit the analysis' potential. Social contexts are represented not only by cultural factors (such as values or norms), but also by social structures. It is important to note how the situation of the victim reflects her social status and the same applies also with regard to the offender. The consequences of the incident depend also on the immediate social environment (which may help the victims greatly during the recovery). The absence of a social support, i.e. social isolation, worsens the situation.

The previous statements can be illustrated on the following picture (Figure 1): it comprises three levels (models) plus other dimensions and analytic axes. One of them can be characterized as a relationship between cultures and structures, the other one as a relationship between situations and structures.

Figure 1: Basic models of approaches to partner violence (as a base for analysis)



The model offers also other perspectives. The lower horizontal line may serve as a base for the application of the vulnerability concept. The assistance provided to the victim by the society includes not only the support of close family members / friends, but also the assistence by local community and institutions (state authorities, counselling services etc.).

It would certainly be premature to claim we have here a complex solution to the problem. We will show that the Gordian knot is being untied only slowly and gradually and it uses many other partial studies. The IVAWS survey touched on a number of important aspects. The importance of the model lies in the fact that it points out to many other important circumstances, even those which have up to now (for whatever reasons) escaped the attention of the researchers.

1.2 Arising violence in the family: risk and protective factors

With regard to what are the risk and protective factors for family violence, there also has not been any consensus. Some sociologists argue that violence cuts across all social groups, while others agree that it cuts across social groups, but not evenly. Some researchers and practitioners place more emphasis on psychological factors, while others locate the key risk factors among social factors. Still a third group places the greatest emphasis on cultural factors, for example the patriarchal social organization of societies. In addition, the source of data has an impact

not only on measures of incidence and prevalence of family violence, but also on what factors and variables are identified as risk and protective factors. When basing an analysis of risk and protective factors on clinical data or official report data, risk and protective factors are confounded with factors such as labeling bias or agency or clinical getting catchment area. Researchers have long noted that certain individuals and families are more likely to be correctly and incorrectly labeled as offenders or victims of family violence, and, similarly, some individuals and families are insulated from being correctly or incorrectly labeled or identified as offenders or victims [Gelles 1975; Hampton, Newberger 1985]. Social survey data are not immune to confounding problems either, as social or demographic factors may be related to willingness to participate in a self-report survey and a tendency toward providing socially desirable responses.

The definitional issue mentioned earlier also constrains the field's ability to develop a comprehensive and coherent inventory of risk and protective factors. While this study uses a broad definition of "family violence", it is believed by many in this field that acts of physical violence are conceptually distinct from and arise from different generative causes than acts of nonphysical harm. Thus it is nearly impossible to enumerate, by type of violence, each set of risk and protective factors. Some factors will be more strongly related to one form of harm (e.g., injurious physical violence) and may be unrelated to others types of harm (psychic forms of violence).

The final caveat is that any listing of risk and protective factors may unintentionally convey or reinforce a notion of single factor explanations for family violence. Clearly, no phenomenon as complex as family violence could possibly be explained with a single factor model. This chapter lists risk and protective factors for heuristic purposes, with the full knowledge that multiple factors are related to family violence and there is often an *interaction* between and among risk and protective factors.

With all these caveats in mind, this section reviews the most widely discussed risk and protective factors in the study of family violence and, where appropriate, identifies for which forms of violence and which types of relationships the factors are or are not relevant. By and large, risk and protective factors are discussed if they have been found to be related to family violence in self-report survey research and official-report data.

Social and demographic risk factors

Age: One of the most consistent risk factors is the age of the offender. As with violence between non-intimates, violence is most likely to be perpetrated by those between 18 and 30 years of age.

Sex*:* Similarly with non-intimate violence, men are the most likely offenders in acts of intimate violence as well. However, the differences in the rates of offending by men compared to women are much smaller for violence in the family compared to violence outside the home. Men and women have somewhat similar rates of child homicide, although women appear more likely to be offenders when the child victim is young (under three years of age) and males are the more likely offenders when the child victim is older. According to the most of research works, men are offenders in 95% of violent attacks when studying violence between intimate partners [Gelles 2003: 850].

Income: Although most poor parents and partners do not use violence toward intimates, self-report surveys and official report data find that the rates of all forms of family violence, except sexual abuse, are higher for those whose family incomes are bellow the poverty line than for those whose income is above the poverty line.[6]

Situational and environmental factors

Stress: Unemployment, financial problems, being a single parent, being a teenage mother, and sexual difficulties are all factors that are related

6 **Race:** Relation between race and incidence of violence in the family has been frequently investigated in the USA. In the USA both official report data and self-report survey data often report that child abuse and violence toward women are overrepresented among minorities. Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicate that the rate of intimate adult violence is slightly higher for blacks (5.8 per 1,000) compared to whites (5.4 per 1,000). The rate of intimate violence for Hispanics is 5.5. The Second Study of the National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1988) found no significant relationships between the incidence of maltreatment and the child's race / ethnicity. There was no significant relationship for any of the subcategories of maltreatment.

The two National Family Violence Surveys, however, found stronger relationships between race / ethnicity and violence between partners and violence toward children. Although in the first National Family Violence Survey, the difference in rates between blacks and whites disappeared when income was controlled, an analysis of the larger data set from the Second National Family Violence Survey found that the differences persisted even when income was controlled.

to violence, as are a host of other stressor events [Gelles, Straus 1988; Parke, Collmer 1975; Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz 1980].

Social isolation and social support: As much of the research on family violence is cross-sectional, it is not clear whether social isolation precedes violence or is a consequence of violence in the home. Nevertheless, researchers often agree that people who are socially isolated from neighbors and relatives are more likely to be violent in the home. Social support appears to be an important protective factor. One major source of social support is the availability of friends and family for help, aid, and assistance. The more a family is integrated into the community and the more groups and associations they belong to, the less likely they are to be violent [Straus et al. 1980].

The intergenerational transmission of violence: The notion that abused children grow up to be abusing parents and violent adults has been widely expressed in the child abuse and family violence literature [Gelles 1980]. Kaufman and Zigler [1987] reviewed the literature that tested the intergenerational transmission of violence toward children hypothesis and concluded that the best estimate of the rate of intergenerational transmission appears to be 30% (plus or minus 5%). Egeland and his colleagues examined continuity and discontinuity of abuse in a longitudinal study of high-risk mothers and their children [Egeland et al. 1987]. They found that mothers who had been abused as children were less likely to abuse their own children if they had emotionally supportive parents, partners, or friends. In addition, the abused mothers who did not abuse their children were described as "middle class" and "upwardly mobile", suggesting that they were able to draw on economic resources that may not have been available to the abused mothers who did abuse their children.

Evidence from studies of parental and marital violence indicate that while experiencing violence in one's family of origin is often correlated with later violent behavior, such experience is not the sole determining factor. When the intergenerational transmission of violence occurs, it is likely the result of a complex set of social and psychological processes [Gelles 2003: 851].

Gender inequality: One of the important risk factors for violence against women is gender inequality. Individual, aggregate, and cross-cultural data find that the greater the degree of gender inequality in a relationship, community, and society, the higher are the rates of violence toward women [Walklate 2001; Browne, Williams 1993; Levinson 1989; Straus et al. 1980].

Presence of other violence: A final general risk factor is that the presence of violence in one family relationship increases the risk that there will be violence in other relationships. Thus children in homes where there is domestic violence are more likely to experience violence than are children who grow up in homes where there is no violence between their parents. Moreover, children who witness and experience violence are more likely to use violence toward their parents and siblings than are children who do not experience or see violence in their homes [Straus et al. 1980].

2. Domestic Violence in the Czech Republic: Research and Legislation

2.1 First research on domestic violence in the Czech Republic

The first comprehensive sociological information on the phenomenon of the violence in the family in the Czech Republic was brought by the surveys Safety Risks (1999, 2001) and by the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS, 2003). Since these surveys represent basically the first and very substantial inputs both to the perception and researching the problems of the violence in family, we bring in short information on the main points concerning these studies. Furthermore, the key part of this article (see Help-seeking Behavior of Czech Women: Results from IVAWS) is based on the data of International Violence Against Women Survey which among others focused on police co-operation with the victims of partner violence and satisfaction with their involvement.

The first Czech sociological study concerning the topic of domestic violence was called "Safety Risks 1999" and was accomplished by agency UNIVERSITAS in 1999 within a grant of Ministry of Interior. This research generally concerned the problems of victimisation, criminality and safety situation in the Czech Republic. One part of it dealt with the subject of domestic violence. A second phase of the research was carried out in 2001. Final reports from both surveys concerning main conclusions are available, as well as an article in the Sociological Review [Pikálková (Vymětalová): Domestic Violence: A Natural Phenomenon? Sociological Review, XXXVII, (1/2001)].

The survey was accomplished by the method of face to face interviews using a nation wide representative sample of 1,361 respondents aged 15+. The quotas for age, gender, achieved education and working status were used.

A self-completion was also enclosed to the questionnaire concerning the most intimate parts of the subject of domestic violence (c. 25 questions on a separate list). This part was processed separately. 900 respondents of 1,361 participated in the self-completion, it means 66% response-rate.

The questions in the general part of the survey concerned particularly attitudes of the Czech society towards different violent forms of behaviour. The self-completion was, on the other hand, devoted mainly to the self-experience with violence within its different physical and psychical forms between partners and between parents and children[7].

A second phase of the research was then carried out in May 2001.

When describing the first sociological research concerning the area of violence in the family in the Czech Republic, the study "Selective Criminological and Legal Aspects of Domestic Violence" should not be omitted [Martinková, Macháčková 2001]. This study deals with the cases of physical violence that were recorded by the defined administrative authorities (municipalities) during the year 1999 in Prague. The three following categories of physical violence were studied: 1) physical violence among adult family members including violence between intimate partners; 2) violence from adult family members against children up to 18 years; and; 3) violence from children (up to 18 years) against adult family members. The findings of the survey can be found in [Martinková, Macháčková 2001].

Attitudes towards violence between partners

In most cases, violence between partners is a question of husband-to-wife violence. We examined attitudes towards different forms of violent attacks (13 items total).

From the general point of view, attitudes of the Czech society towards different forms of violent behaviour are rather tolerant. Although most of the respondents did feel the given forms of behaviour as "violent", around each item there are many of those who did not or who did so only sometimes. We analysed gender differences: men considered given forms of behaviour as violent less often than women. For instance, 78.9% of women, but only 39.8% of men stated that "to slap partner's face" is violence. Even though women were less tolerant towards violence

7 A second phase of the research was carried out in May 2001. As in 1999, one part of the survey was again devoted to the problem of domestic violence, this time mainly to the incidence (forms and frequency) of domestic violence in the Czech society. A final reports concerning main conclusions is available.

between partners, 21 of the total 671 still did not feel forced sex as violence and 24 of 671 answered "it depends on situation". Rather high tolerance in attitudes is apparently common also with most of victims of violence – i.e. women.

One factor that significantly differentiates the attitudes towards violence between partners is the achieved level of education. The lower this level, the bigger the tolerance towards violence (they oftener do not consider the given forms of behaviour as "violent"). This tendency appeared both in men and women; in men is however much more pronounced. The factor analysis[8] confirmed gender differences in perceiving violence between partners. With small exceptions, women seem to be less tolerant towards all three lines of violent behaviour than men who achieved only the lowest level of education (lower secondary ed., i.e. compulsory education lasting 9 years) form a distinct group: they are clearly most "liberal" to the violence and they stand well apart from other groups of respondents.

Partnership violence and men as victims

Many studies have shown that domestic violence affects both sexes – "sides" of the conflict [Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz 1980; van Dijk 1998; Gelles 2003]. Even though some of the proofs or conclusions made may be debatable [Dobash, Dobash 2004], the question certainly is legitimate. Our first study of 1999 noted that 22% of men and 25% of women indicated having experience with "a constant undermining of self-confidence or humiliation by the partner". One year after the IVAWS research, we have by coincidence come across data from a study focusing on South-Bohemian male population (our role was to advise during the preparation of a questionnaire and later we prepared an extensive secondary analysis – see [Burianek et al. 2006]). This research carried out by the South-Bohemian University examined selected forms of psychological abuse (some items were the same as those used under IVAWS). The slightly extensive introductory set focused on the

8 When examining the attitudes towards violence, the factor analysis was used. The particular forms of violent behaviour can be grouped into three factors and three main lines of violent behaviour can be defined: "hard violence" (beating up, choking, sexual abuse, hitting with something) "light violence" (slapping a face, painful grip, pushing, throwing something at him / her, pulling his / her clothes) and "psychical violence" (psychical compulsion). The average factor scores then form a basis for the best possible picture of attitude differences within several social groups, particularly between men and women, and contrasts due to different levels of education.