

Executive Summary

Sub-network 2: Analysing the Roots of Interpersonal Violence

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1. Introduction

Sub-network 2 comprises women and men researchers from the EU Framework 5 Thematic Network (<http://www.cromenet.org>), from Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, and the UK, along with new partners or members from Finland, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. The Sub-network's work began by updating and expanding the existing database of the European Documentation Centre on Men (<http://www.cromenet.org>) (Workpackage 8). This included the addition of new national research reviews from Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain and Sweden, and the updating of existing national research reviews from other countries. From this research baseline the Sub-network designed a shared methodological framework for comparative research on the roots of violent behaviour, social inclusion/social exclusion, and violation. In this work it was agreed that it was necessary to develop methodological tools rather than a single tool. This was partly to be sensitive to the variability of cultural/social contexts in time and space when researching men's practices. It was necessary conceptually to sub-divide the idea of a "methodology" into six components interlinking one another. These six components were defined as follows:

- (i) Procedural frames focused on the process of how to find knowledge.
- (ii) Epistemological frames.
- (iii) Critical methodological re-reading of existing materials on the CROME website: to analyse and reflect upon the methodologies used in selected studies in national reports with a view to methodological development.
- (iv) Consideration of a series of theoretical/analytical issues in relation to men's practices summarised under the heading of "Cultural Variations, Convergences and Divergences in Time and Space". Among these issues are: understanding the data in terms of the "intersectionality" of various forms of power relations associated with, for instance, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexuality and class; analysing dynamics of men's practices in the context, and critique, of mainstream comparative welfare frames.
- (v) Working towards the development of adequate quality assurance of research methods.
- (vi) Examination of the implications of (i) to (v) for development of a Research Strategy for future trans-European research on men's violences in the context of Human Rights Violations.

The Sub-network has developed a shared methodological framework for transnational comparative research on men's violences and men's gendered practices of social exclusion and inclusion, taking account of cultural and social differences; considered and assessed the possibilities for common concepts, definitions and standards for

European level research on the roots of violent behaviour, social inclusion/social exclusion and violation; and documentation of the process of developing a methodological framework, identifying the obstacles and solutions. These provided the basis for the Methodological Framework Report (Workpackage 10).¹ The process of this work on a methodological basis for further research on men's violence to women can be summarised as an *abductive research approach*. This highlights the importance of the constant movement between the data, ideas and theories. Abductive research enables the 'transcending' of data; it encourages the use of multiple theoretical sources in order to make discoveries and achieve new insights. The process of developing a methodological framework has been *interactive* in many ways, including many rounds of commenting on the draft texts and bringing in new ideas on future research methodologies on men's violence to women. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that this collective, collaborative process has been important in producing research strategy on men's violence in Europe in a way that includes contributions from as many countries, researchers and disciplines as possible. The contributions from the collectivity of partners and members have been crucial in producing the collectively authored Final Report and other documentation.

2. Methodological principles

The following perspectives are fundamental in developing a research strategy:

2.1 Gendered analysis and gendered power relations. Research strategy needs to attend to the centrality of gender and gendered power relations. This is not only in terms of the substantive focus of the research, but also in terms of the gender composition of the research networks. Issues of gendered content and process need to be addressed throughout research, including the production of data and the interpretation of data and gaps in data. While it is now clearly recognised that violence is gendered, the gendering of research on violence is discussed less often.

An adequately gendered approach would include at least the following features:

- attention to the variety of feminist approaches and literatures; these provide the methodology and theory to develop a gendered account;
- recognition of gender differences as both an analytic category and experiential reality;
- attention to sexualities and sexual dynamics in research and the research process; this includes the deconstruction of taken-for-granted heterosexuality, particularly in the study of families, communities, agencies and organisations;
- attention to the social construction of men and masculinities, as well as women and femininities, and including understanding masculinities in terms of relations between men, as well as relations with women and children;
- understanding of gender through its interrelations with other oppressions and other identities, including those of age, class, disability, 'race', ethnicity and religion;
- acceptance of gender conflict as permanent, and as equally as normal as its opposite, as well as examining resistance to this view;

¹ Jeff Hearn, Irina Novikova, Keith Pringle, Iva Šmídová,, Gunilla Bjerén, Marjut Jyrkinen, LeeAnn Iovanni, Fátima Arranz, Harry Ferguson, Voldemar Kolga, Ursula Müller, Elżbieta H. Oleksy, Dag Balkmar, Cornelia Helfferich, Ilse Lenz, Marek M. Wojtaszek, Elizabete Pičukāne, Victoria Rosa (2007) *D32 Methodological Framework Report SN 2*. Sub-network 2 Final Report, Co-ordination Action on Human Rights Violations. Swedish School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland (<http://www.cahrv.uni-osnabrueck.de/reddot/190.htm>, <http://www.cromenet.org>).

- understanding that gender and sexuality and their relationship are historically and culturally acquired and defined; and
- understanding that the close monitoring of gender and sexuality by the state (the official biography of individuals) is not accidental, but fulfils the purposes of particular social groupings.

Research on men's violence has to be gender-present. To scientifically present violence as gender-absent or gender-neutral would require that it be random in its doing and receiving in relation to women and men, and require it to play no role in the maintenance of gendered and other social boundaries and social divisions. This does not apply to any form of violence, including same-sex violence where, for example, violence between men is far greater than violence between women.

2.2 Gender collaboration. Research on men's violence needs to bring together women and men researchers who research men and masculinities in an explicitly gendered way. Such a meeting point for women researchers and men researchers is necessary and timely in the development of good quality European research on men in Europe. Such work offers many opportunities for collaboration and learning across countries and between colleagues. Research on men that draws only on the work of men is likely to neglect the very important research contribution that has been and is being made by women to research on men. Research and networking based only on men researchers is likely to reproduce some of the existing gender inequalities of research and policy development. This is not a comment of gender essentialism but a commentary on the need to draw on the full knowledge and expertise available. Gender-collaborative research is necessary in the pursuit of gender equality, combating gender discrimination, achievement of equality, and anti-discrimination.

2.3 Use of multiple methods, methodologies and epistemological frames. It is assumed that no one method is able to answer the spread of research questions. A range of methods needs to be employed. While attending to statistical and other information, qualitative and grounded methods and analyses need to be emphasised and developed. Methodological contributions need to be from across social sciences, demography, anthropology, and so on. All forms of approaches and epistemological frames to understanding knowledge should be utilised including positivist social science, feminist standpoint theory, poststructuralist, postcolonial, critical social postmodernism approaches, but all should be reviewed critically. Methodology needs to attend to both material inequalities and discursive constructions.

2.4 Interconnections, and separations, between social arenas. A key principle is to see the interconnections between men's violence and other social arenas: home, work, social exclusion/inclusion, health, care, and so on. Violence does not operate as a separate sphere of practice. There are impacts of work/employment on violence (including gender differences regarding work), and vice versa; impacts of domestic and family relations on violence, and vice versa; impacts of social inclusion/exclusion on violence, and vice versa; and impacts of men's health and women's health on violence, and vice versa.

2.5 Ethical and political sensitivities in collaborative work. Studying sensitive but also powerful topics, such as gendered violence, calls for addressing specific ethical issues on the research process and method(s) used. Ethical issues concern especially

professional integrity and relations with and responsibilities towards research participants, sponsors and/or funders. Possible problems, such as methodological, technical, ethical, political and legal problems, need to be taken into consideration at every stage of the research on a sensitive topic.

The importance of good collaboration and work process, and appropriate ethical practices cannot be emphasised too strongly in the development of high quality comparative, transnational research. This question operates in several respects and at several different levels, and is an important ethical issue in its own right. This applies all the more so when the attempt is made to act against violence, violation and abuse, in this case men's violences and abuses.

This is also a practical question in terms of getting tasks done with the benefit of the greatest input and contribution from all concerned, from different ethnic(ised), gendered, sexual, linguistic, national and other differenced socio-political contexts. Without this, there is a great danger of some participants dominating the research process, leading to a limited understanding of men's violence. Indeed ability to work collaboratively is a *sine qua non* of successful transnational research work, especially so on such difficult and sensitive topics as gender power relations, violence, violation and human rights. Furthermore, it is a matter of the content of research knowledge and of epistemology, for without good collaborative practices the epistemology of dominant one(s) may dominant the epistemologies of others. These points apply for all participants, and particularly for those in leadership positions. In particular, it is vitally important to develop facilitative and supportive research working, research practices, and research leadership. Our experience of working on European, EU and comparative, transnational research on men and masculinities suggests a number of pointers for developing such research practice. These matters of research process cannot be separated from the content of research, in this context, comparative, transnational research on men, masculinities and men's interpersonal violences.

Thus we suggest these positive guidelines:

- Strong attention needs to be given to ethical questions in the gathering, storage and distribution of data and other information;
- Be respectful of all researchers and what they bring to the research; this extends to understanding of difference, and for other's research and national and regional locations;
- Be aware that the major regional differences within Europe (and beyond) mean that assumptions that single models should be applied in all parts of Europe should be treated critically and with great caution. While there may has been more research and more research resources in Western Europe, researchers there have much to learn from Central and Eastern Europe, including about the latter's historical situations. As is often the case within structural and uneven power relations, those with less resources often know more about those with more resources, than vice versa.
- Be aware of major national, legal and cultural differences within Europe, around openness/secretcy, financial accounting and many other matters.
- Value self-reflective approaches to the development of multiple methods, and in the conduct of researchers, meetings and other activities.
- Be aware that much research is done by goodwill, and indeed overwork, and with few or no additional resources; thus excessive demands can mean that

time and resources are taken from other academic and related activities, and other research projects; this is issue of ethical allocation of time and resources between different activities, which is especially important in working on questions of violence and violation

- Express positive support and gratitude, not excessive criticism;
- Be aware that most people are working in their second, third or fourth language, and that extra attention may need to be given to clarity in the working language;
- Take care in writing emails and other communications; where possible, write clear short emails and other communications; do not use obscure phrases or make ungrounded suggestions in email and other communications;
- In collective research discussions give feedback in good time, and not late in the process of research production;
- Develop an appropriate and fair collective publishing policy, so texts and information are not used inappropriately by others as their own;
- Be aware of internal differences within research projects, especially between those who are more funded and those who are less (or not) funded, and between universities and similar institutions that are better resourced (especially in Western Europe) and universities and similar institutions that are less well resourced (especially in Central and Eastern Europe). This involves a thorough grounded understanding of the conditions under which different researchers are working: some are working on permanent contracts, some temporary contracts; some are well paid, others are not; some are in supportive working environments, others are in environments lacking support. Researchers are subject to other social divisions and differences, such as by age, class, disability, ethnicity and racialisation, gender, sexuality.
- Develop projects that are fair in terms the distribution of resources, including between those with greater coordinating functions and other research functions, between those who are more funded and those who are less funded, and between universities and similar institutions that are better resourced (especially in Western Europe) and universities and similar institutions that are less well resourced (especially in Central and Eastern Europe); This is especially so with the under-resourcing of research and the overwork of many researchers doing much work unpaid or in “overtime”.
- Develop a violation-free mode of organisation and working;
- Aim to produce a working environment that people are satisfied with, that they look to working with and are pleased to be in.

2.5 Examining and problematising roots and explanations of men’s violences.

The examination of causes, explanations and ‘roots’ needs to be considered, both in broad and multiple ways, without seeing them in over-simple and deterministic interpretations. Debates on why men do violence – the ‘roots’ of men’s violences - have been long and varied. They have moved through shifts in disciplinary and discursive constructions, and in the placing of men’s violence in relation to ‘men’ and ‘violence’. Explanations of men’s violence may be developed from a wide range of academic and disciplinary traditions. These include biological and sociological, psychological and psychoanalytic, sociological, anthropological, political and economic. Within such different traditions, there are different conceptual, analytical and empirical building blocks. Forms of explanations, and thus possible ‘roots’, include: nature and biology; various moves towards various social explanations;

psychological and psychodynamic explanations; role theory and the social environment, and cognitive and cognitive-behavioural approaches; reactive theories: frustration, stress and the blocking of social roles; environment, cultures and systems: family culture, subcultures and cultural theories; hybrid theories: stress, inequality and subculture; multicausal explanations; violence as structured oppression: the socio-political critique of patriarchy/ies; cross-cultural societal studies; difference and diversity, including influences from poststructuralism and postmodernism; hegemonic and dominant masculinities, and their empirical and theoretical critique. These all should be considered critically. Within human rights frameworks, instead of 'roots' of violence, the terminology is often based on 'causes' of violence that can sometimes, but not in all cases, be interpreted as obliging states that have signed the relevant UN conventions to address such violations through prevention and intervention.

2.6 Building on and reviewing the contribution of Critical Studies on Men. There is a substantial international body of critical, feminist and profeminist work on men, masculinities and men's practices. Some of this is on men's violences. Some of the implications of this general research can be extended men's violences. The approach here argues for Critical Studies on Men that are: comparative, international and transnational; interdisciplinary; historical; cultural; relational; materialist; deconstructive.

2.7 Developing a comparative and transnational orientation, by attending to cultural variations, convergences and divergences in time and space, and intersecting forms of power relations. A shared methodological framework for a research strategy needs to adopt comparative and transnational orientation in examining men's practices, gender relations and social policy responses to them in their specific social and cultural contexts. Consequently, it seeks to understand them as both socially and culturally constructed and with real material forms, effects and outcomes for people's lives. This involves taking into account the complex intersection of gendered inequalities with other forms of social disadvantage. While all of these principles are very important, this last principle is especially so, and is now examined in more detail.

3. Studying men and men's violences comparatively and transnationally

3.1 Introductory remarks. Comparative research can be pursued for many reasons. One of the most convincing reasons for adopting a comparative approach is the potential offered for deconstructing the assumptions that underpin social practices and policies in different countries. Such a process of deconstruction facilitates reconstruction of more effective policies and practices. There is growing awareness that such practices and policies increasingly interact transnationally, at European and global levels: consequently research may seek to explore the processes and outcomes of those interactions and connections.

There are well-known methodological difficulties in comparative research around the cultural equivalence of concepts/frames that are problems primarily for quantitative research. The same issues occur with qualitative research. However, provided it is carried out with both cultural sensitivity and a critical perspective, qualitative research can thrive on the lack of cultural equivalences or differences/variations in cultural equivalences: because qualitative research can allow one to explore those differences and variations in detail – as well as the cultural continuities and the connections

between continuities and variations across cultures, which of course enriches our understanding of the social, cultural and political dynamics within those varying cultural contexts. Such qualitative exploration of culturally differing concepts/frames can be a vital precursor to broader quantitative exploration. All this applies as much to the topic of men's violences as any other. Cultural variations in concepts and conceptual frames are both a big problem and massive opportunity for transnational comparative research – including that on men's violences.

Comparative study facilitates several avenues for research:

- Representatives of different major welfare regimes allow testing of general welfare typologies in relation to men's practices. This includes exploration of the extent to which differential social patterns and welfare responses between countries often grouped together based on alleged historical, social and/or cultural proximity are similar or different.
- These and other considerations can be framed within developing notions of what 'being European' constitutes. However, this is much contested with the enlarging of the EU. There are and will be several contested ideas of 'Europe' and being 'European', which strongly highlights the analysis of violence and diversity/difference to be a focus and subject to problematisation.
- Inclusion of countries from Central and Eastern Europe allows exploration of how recent massive economic, social, cultural and political changes impact upon attitudes and practices relating to men across Europe. It seems that the most powerful nations in the EU are also powerful in the context of defining of what and how things are to be researched. The aspects of 'transit countries' might be too easily overcome, even though these transitions and their roots embed very difficult problematics concerning violence to women and their gender relations. For instance, the shift from communist rule can be 'liberating' in many senses, but the socio-economic circumstances of many men and women have actually deteriorated. For many men, this has meant losing of working places and at the same time, the position in society. In planning research that covers the enlarged Europe, it is crucial countries in Central and Eastern Europe are included, and that the circumstances of women and men in the post-socialist countries are taken into account when planning research in the future.
- There are clear similarities among the countries studied as well as clear differences, in terms of the extent of egalitarianism, in relation to gender and more generally; the form of rapid economic growth or downturn; the experience of post-socialist transformation; the development of a strong women's movement and gender politics.

In addition, distinctions need to be made between: transnational research on men's violences; comparative research, comparing different countries, societies, cultures and systems; and research on men's transnational violence in terms of cross-border violences, such as in trafficking and slavery, pornographisations, militarism, abduction, "paedophile" rings, "honour" killings, and so on. These include actions by men, as individuals and as collectivities, both directly as in their practice of violence and less directly in their management, monitoring, sponsorship and facilitation.

3.2 Studying men transnationally. There has been strong emphasis within recent Critical Studies on Men (CSM) on interconnections of gender with other social divisions, such as age, class, disability, ethnicity, racialisation and sexuality. The idea that gender of men is derived from any kind of fixed, inner trait or core is antagonistic to CSM. There are well-established arguments that men's gendered relations of and to

power are complex, even contradictory. The collective, historical power of men may be understood as maintained by the dispensability of some men, for example, as soldiers in war, even with the violence to and killing of women and children.

Attempts have been made to push forward the boundaries in the comparative field using (pro)feminist perspectives to consider men's practices in Asia, Southern Africa, the South, Central and North Americas, Australasia and Europe. These are attempts that seek to locate such considerations within debates on globalisation and men's practices, throwing some doubt in the process on more ambitious claims of globalisation theses. There is growing academic and policy literature on men in development, which examines the impact of globalisation processes on men and gender relations. To undertake comparative study, specific attention to the challenges and difficulties of comparative perspectives in European contexts is necessary. There is growing concern with more precise specifications of men's individual and collective practices within gendered globalisations or glocalisations. There is also increasing focus on global transactions in processes of masculinity formation and transnational categories of men and masculinities, as in 'global business masculinity', 'men of the world' or the central place of men and masculinity in the collective violence of war, with the apparent increased use of rape and sexual violence in war. Despite these recent developments, there remains a massive deficit in critical transnational studies of men's practices and in the sources available for such study.

Men's relation to social power is closely interlinked with men's relations to social problems, that is, in both the creation and experiencing of problems, and the broader issue of the societal problematisation of men and masculinities. Not only are men now increasingly recognised as gendered, but they, or rather some men, are increasingly recognised as a gendered social problem to which welfare systems may, or for a variety of reasons may not, respond. These processes of problematisation of men and construction of men as creating gendered social problems apply in academic and political analysis, and in men's own lives and experiences; they exist at the societal level, and very importantly in quite different ways in different societies. Thus while it may be expected that some kind of problematisation of men and masculinities may now be observable in most, perhaps all, European societies, the form that it takes is different from society to society. Social problems exist in terms of men's violence, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, buying of sex, accidents, driving, and so on, and indeed the denial of such problems as sexual violence. These are all activities with immediate and long-term negative effects on others, friends, family and strangers. Some men suffer from adversity, as with ill-health, violence, poverty, suicide.

In the gendered problematisation of men and masculinities and constructions of men and masculinities as gendered social problems have been examined in their European national contexts. There is great national and societal variation in how men and masculinities interact with other major social divisions and inequalities, in particular, class, "race" xenophobia and racism, ethnicity, nationalism and religion. The intersection of "race", ethnicity, nationalism and nationality appear to be especially and increasingly important for the construction of both dominant and subordinated forms of men and masculinities. This entails investigation of the complex interrelations between these varying genderings and problematisations and the socio-economic, political, state structures and processes within and between the countries.

In terms of the “actuality” of men’s violences, we are already aware from existing transnational studies that in general there are massive continuities and massive variations in the forms of such violences and their underlying dynamics across broadly differing cultures. Therefore, *any research strategy for exploring the dynamics of men’s violences transnationally must give a primary role (not necessarily the only primary role) to qualitative approaches.* For, in seeking to explore in more detail such shifting patterns of continuity and variation – as well as the complex dynamics underpinning those patterns – qualitative research is clearly of crucial importance. Partly because, in itself, it can provide the sensitivity for exploring such comparative subtleties; partly because it is an essential pre-cursor to any quantitative comparative research if the latter is to minimise as far as it can the massive methodological problems it will inevitably face.

Processes of cultural variation impinge directly not only on any research topic (including men’s violences) but also on the research process itself. Of course this occurs in a whole range of ways – not least the fact that different research traditions in different countries value various forms of research differently. Moreover, where qualitative research is carried out, one can find considerable cultural variations in how it is done, especially as of course there is no clear dividing line between qualitative and quantitative research. So, for example, in a cultural context where quantitative research is seen very much as the “norm“, it may well be that much qualitative research is carried out there along more quantitative principles than is the case in a context where qualitative research is more broadly accepted. These kinds of variability have important implications for what is researched and how it tends to be researched in different countries and contexts. The picture is even more complex when one takes in to account variability between research approaches across disciplines as well as across countries. Thus it can be concluded that *a research strategy to explore the dynamics of men’s violences in a transnational and trans-disciplinary fashion must allow, as a central requirement, considerable “spaces”/fora - both initially and throughout the project – to ongoing discussions and consultations between the researchers involved about the methodologies/methods they adopt and about developing frames for accommodating/dealing with/taking advantage of variations in such methodologies/methods. This cannot be emphasised too much.*

These considerations apply to theoretical and analytical understandings of men’s violences, and indeed of men’s gendered practices more generally. There are massive potential variations in the way in which men’s practices can be understood analytically and theoretically, not least the highly political and emotive issue of men’s violences. *When and where a collection of researchers are drawn together to explore such issues, it is vital that any research strategy for this purpose creates clear “spaces”/fora – again initially but also throughout the process – whereby analytical and theoretical variations can be discussed and clarified, and frames developed to accommodate and deal with and harness such variations. This is especially the case, again, where research will be transdisciplinary. Most of all, this is essential where research is to be transnational and transcultural.* There are indications that different theoretical and analytical approaches vary partly by national and cultural context.

3.3 Ethnicity and gender. Situations where issues of ethnicity and gender intersect in various ways to increase the likelihood of violence occurring and/or to increase the likelihood of violence not being prevented or halted. There are a number of types of

situations that can be envisaged under this heading. Some of these include: (i) militant racism; (ii) projects of State and non-state nationalism and pan-nationalism (e.g. in the Baltic States, in the Balkans, in US and UK foreign policy, the “Alliance of the Willing”); state and non-state terrorism; (iii) The unwillingness sometimes of state and non-state agencies to intervene in gendered violence in minority ethnic group families; (iv) over-eagerness sometimes of state/non-state agencies to intervene in gendered violence in minority ethnic group families (at other times avoidance); (v) relative lack of attention sometimes paid to gendered violence in majority ethnic group families compared to that in minority ethnic group families.

3.4 Multiple dimensions of power/disadvantage. Situations where multiple dimensions of power/disadvantage (for instance including age, gender, ethnicity/”race”, religion, sexuality, disability, kinship, class) intersect may often be ones where violence is most likely to occur, even if not all the dimensions of power flow constantly in the same direction. For example, the “commercial sexual exploitation of children”, in one perspective, can be seen as the outcome of a complex interaction of various dimensions of oppression and violence: at least gender, age, class, ethnicity/”race”, sexuality. We are thinking here primarily of dominant, even taken-for-granted, ways of being men, rather than the concept of so-called “paedophilia”. It is indeed heterosexuality that most often - though not always - enters problematically into processes of violence and oppression. This involves examining the specificity of intersectionalities, in such a way that:

- the likely vulnerability of both women and men in less powerful social locations
- the less resources of both women and men in less powerful social locations
- the greater likelihood of the prosecution of men in less powerful social locations
- gender power relations are not neglected.

Violence and violations are not simply means for or structurings of *other* forms of power, domination and oppression. They are forms of power, domination and oppression in themselves that structure organisations. While such a perspective can mean that violence as violation may blur into power relations, a key distinction is that power relations are not necessarily violating.

3.5 Challenges in comparative and transnational research. There are many challenges around methodology in research on gender violence and in particular how to plan and accomplish such research comparatively and/or transnationally. The premises of human rights framework and social research frameworks and their embedded positions and ideologies differ in many ways. The human rights framework is based on universality, commonalities and setting boundaries, whereas in current social research much attention is increasingly paid to diversity, differentiation and cultural contexts. This creates tensions, even though such tensions could be overcome by (re)constructing of methodologies as well as procedures in doing research.

In reviewing previous research, considerable differences have been identified between the ways in which academic research and statistical sources in different countries have conceptualised social exclusion, and indeed social inclusion. These differences varied to some extent depending upon which forms of national and international data or evidence were examined, as in the contrasts between academic research and statistical sources. Theoretical issues include how different theoretical models and assumptions

may be more or less consciously used by researchers in different societal contexts. There are dangers in reifying nation or society at the expense of, say, the region. Researchers' familiarity with each others' systems varies greatly. While much comparative research has been focused on macro comparisons and the pursuit of an objectivist notion of truth, our approach is informed more by a critical realist approach in which everyday meanings are taken seriously, located within the context of historical material change. The micro-level of individual life strategies and settings of "doing gender" must be analysed in the context of supranational institutions and organisations that powerfully influence (such as the EU, transnational corporations).

The importance of attention to different historical and political contexts of different regions, countries and parts of Europe cannot be overstated. There are dangers in transplanting ideas and theories from one part of Europe to others, in seeing comparison as an 'even surface'. Caution needs to be exercised in terms of developing a single methodological measure across all Europe. Cultural differences in Europe, as elsewhere, need to be taken into consideration when researching gender violence transnationally. Major differences are related to history, forms of organising societies and their welfare models, and power relations between different groups of people, such as ethnic majorities and minorities. Diversity among citizenships often impact on how violence is understood societally: culturalised and ethnicised citizenship can lead to essentialism in interpreting violence. For instance 'honour killings' or forced marriages are sometimes explained, even excused, on cultural grounds.

In the light of these considerations, we provide three examples of possible comparative and transnational research approaches to men's violence:

Comparative surveys on gendered violence: Accomplishing such surveys can often meet various problems based on differences in cultural and social situations in different areas. In spite of such problems, comparative survey studies of men and masculinities in the context of gender power relations may be developed. One approach combines diverse quantitative measures with more qualitative assessments of situational context and embodied dimensions, informed by poststructuralist approaches. Men's violences can be considered in the broad context of conflict and peacemaking and other aspects of gender relations.

Comparable cases of men's violences: The study of parallel cases on forms or locales of men's violences simultaneously across several or many countries, for example, men in prison (short-term, long-term, lifers), men arrested for 'domestic violence', men in men's anti-violence programmes, young men and violence in and around sport. This can draw on quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic approaches, and build on matched cases. Similarities in some parts of the procedures or basis for the organisations can offer an important common ground for comparative research, which still leaves space for embedded cultural, social differences to be taken into account.

Studies of men's transnational violences: Studies of men's transnational violences can include the sex trade, use of information and communication technologies, 'paedophile rings', violence in transnational interpersonal relations, abductions, 'honour killings', human trafficking, militarism, and related violences. These involve both transnational violent phenomena and demand transnational collaboration in doing research. This links with contemporary developments in transnational feminist and profeminist scholarship, including critical research on men and masculinities.

4. Research priorities

1. Focus on men's violences to women, men, children, transgender people, by full attention to men's relations with men.
2. Develop quality assurance in research on men's violences in terms of it being conducted in the full knowledge of international, critical gender scholarship and research on what is already known.
3. Link research on men's violences to social inclusion/exclusion, and intersectional approaches to cultural and other differences.
4. Link research on men's violences to human rights agenda, its potentials and its limitations, including its feminist critiques.
5. Link research on men's violences to current critical debates on masculinities and men's practices.
6. Include physical, sexual and other forms of violences, including the relations of men's violences and men's sexualities.
7. Develop transnational, as well as comparative and international, research, including research on men's transnational violences.
8. Develop policy-driven research on what reduces and stops men's violences.
9. Attend to both questions of research content on men's violences and questions of research process in researching men's violences, and also to their interrelations.
10. Increase investment and build support for investment in research in Central and Eastern Europe, which remains the most under-funded area for research into men's violences.
11. Focus on ethical issues during and throughout the whole research process, and develop collaborative, facilitative and supportive research environment from the beginning of the process.
12. Develop relational approaches between: forms of men's violences; men's interpersonal violences and men's institutional violences; social divisions/exclusions/inclusions; violence and other social arenas.
13. Develop research that explores the dynamics of men's violences transnationally by giving a primary role (not necessarily the only primary role) to qualitative approaches.
14. In developing research strategy to explore the dynamics of men's violences in a transnational, transdisciplinary fashion, create and maintain considerable "spaces"/fora - both initially and throughout the project - to ongoing discussions and consultations between the researchers involved about the methodologies/methods they adopt and about developing frames for accommodating/dealing with/taking advantage of variations in such methodologies/methods. This cannot be emphasised too much.
15. When and where researchers are brought together to explore such issues, it is vital that research strategy creates clear "spaces" or fora - both initially and throughout the process - whereby analytical and theoretical variations can be discussed and clarified, and frames developed to accommodate, deal with and harness such variations. This is especially so with transdisciplinary research, and is essential where research is to be transnational and transcultural.