



Hipatia Press
www.hipatiapress.com



Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://generos.hipatiapress.com>

Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Spain. A Quantitative Analysis

Eva Espinar-Ruiz¹

Begoña López-Monsalve¹

1) University of Alicante. Spain

Date of publication: October 25th, 2014

Edition period: October 2014-February 2015

To cite this article:

Espinar-Ruiz, E., & López-Monsalve, B. (2014). Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Spain. A quantitative analysis. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 3(3), 509-529. doi: 10.4471/generos.2014.44

To link this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/generos.2014.44>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to [Creative Commons Attribution License](#) (CC-BY).

Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Spain. A Quantitative Analysis

Eva Espinar-Ruiz
University of Alicante

Begoña López-Monsalve
University of Alicante

Abstract

A growing number of authors have been suggesting the necessary incorporation of children in the analysis of gender violence and, specifically, in the analysis of intimate partner violence against women (IPV). Such incorporation would be relevant not only for reducing children's invisibility and vulnerability, but also for achieving a better understanding of the characteristics and dynamics of IPV. Based on these considerations, we present in this paper the results of a secondary analysis applied to the data obtained in the last Spanish Survey on Violence Against Women. The available information allows us to analyze: 1) the presence of children exposed to IPV, 2) the relationship between this presence and the probability of reporting the violence, and 3) women's perception about the parental role of the aggressors.

Palabras clave: gender violence, intimate partner violence, childhood, quantitative analysis.

Menores Expuestos a Violencia contra la Mujer por Parte del Compañero Íntimo en España. Un Análisis Cuantitativo

Eva Espinar-Ruiz
University of Alicante

Begoña López-Monsalve
University of Alicante

Resumen

Cada vez más autores destacan la necesaria incorporación de la infancia en el estudio de la violencia de género y, en concreto, de la violencia contra la mujer por parte del compañero íntimo (VCI). Tal incorporación puede facilitar, no sólo una menor invisibilidad y desprotección de niños y niñas, sino también una mejor comprensión de la propia violencia, sus características y dinámicas. Partiendo de estas consideraciones, en este artículo se presentan los resultados de un análisis secundario de los datos obtenidos en la última Macroencuesta sobre violencia contra las mujeres en España. En concreto, la información disponible permite analizar: 1) la presencia de menores expuestos a VCI; 2) la posible relación entre esta presencia y la formulación de denuncias; y 3) la percepción que tienen las mujeres en torno al rol parental de los agresores.

Keywords: violencia de género, violencia del compañero íntimo, infancia, análisis cuantitativo.

The lack of social recognition can intensify the victimization effects in case of violence. This is especially relevant in relation to gender violence, that has been present throughout history but has not been considered as a social problem until recently (Araujo, Guzmán & Mauro, 2000). Among the different shapes that gender violence can take, it has received special attention the study of intimate partner violence against women (IPV). This violence is also our general object of study but, in this article, we will focus on the analysis of a number of aspects related to children's exposition to IPV.

Specifically, we present the results of a secondary analysis of the data obtained by the Center for Sociological Research (CIS, for its acronym in Spanish) in the last Survey on Violence Against Women in Spain, conducted in 2011¹. Although the main purpose of this survey is not the analysis of children exposed to IPV, we will try to extract and analyze all the information that can be related to this population. Thus, according to the variables included in the questionnaire, our objectives are: 1) to determine the presence of children in IPV settings, 2) to analyze the relationship between this presence and the probability of reporting the violence, and 3) to study women's perceptions about aggressors' parental role.

The initial research hypothesis related to objectives 1 and 2 are:

H1. The presence of children in IPV settings increases the probability of the women reporting the violence.

H2. There is a predominant differentiation between the violence against a partner and the parental role of the aggressor. Consequently, being violent with a partner doesn't determine women's perceptions about aggressors' parenting skills.

Theoretical Framework

The term gender violence is used to embrace those forms of violence that are based on the gender identities and relations prevalent in a given society (Espinar & Mateo, 2007). In other words, it refers to a violence linked both to the imbalance in gender power relations and to definitions, stereotypes, identities and expectations about what it means to be a woman and to be a man. Among all the different forms gender violence can take in this paper we will focus on one of them: the violence against women by an actual or a

former intimate partner (IPV). In this sense, it is generally recognized that the violence against women by husbands and intimate partners provides the highest evidence of the determinant role gender identities and inequalities play (Martín & Martín, 1999). This violence has been receiving an increasing academic and political attention and around it there is a relatively broad agreement in terms of terminology, impact, characteristics and prevalence. Specifically, according to the World Health Organization (2013) about 23% of the women living in high-income countries that have ever had a partner have suffered physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their life. In the European Union (FRA, 2014), around 22% of the adult women report to have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV at least once in their lives. In Spain, a study based on a sample of 11,000 women using primary care centers reported a prevalence of about 35% for 2007 (Ruiz *et al.*, 2010).

Although much of the research on IPV incorporates references to the involved children, this population is usually studied only indirectly. Therefore, and despite a growing interest in recent years, some authors consider still insufficient the available information (Øverlien, 2010; Erikson, 2010). An expression of these limitations is the variety of terms used to refer to these children. In this sense, options such as 'witnesses of IPV' have tended to be abandoned as they hardly include the possibility of hearing, seeing the consequences or being part of the violence (Grip, 2012; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008). More inclusive terms are beginning to be broadly accepted in an attempt to cover the diversity of situations and experiences: 'exposed to' (Holden, Geffner & Jouriles, 1998), 'forced to live with' (Goddard & Bedi, 2010) or 'subject to' (Eriksson, 2010) violence. According to this logic, some authors have suggested the need to include all the children exposed to IPV in the category of victims, regardless of whether they are or they are not direct targets of the violence. This reclassification would have obvious practical and political implications (Cunningham & Baker, 2004; Eriksson, 2011).

The most usual approach to the study of children exposed to IPV is the quantitative one, mainly aimed at the description of the consequences the violence has for this population (Øverlien, 2010, p. 87). Therefore there is quite available information about the physical, psychological, emotional and behavioral effects that IPV has on boys and girls (Graham-Bermann, Castor,

Miller & Howell, 2012; Levendosky *et al.*, 2013; Kuhlman, Howel & Graham-Bermann, 2012). This information allows us to conclude, among other things, that the impact of IPV on children is more significant than traditionally thought (Øverlien, 2010, p. 91).

In addition to identify the effects, some studies have also tried to quantify its prevalence. However, as highlighted by Øverline (2010, p. 81), 'both because of the variability in what is understood and reported as domestic violence, and because researchers and practitioners define 'a child exposed to domestic violence' differently' the comparison between results is extremely difficult. Anyway, we can mention some relevant data. For example, in a survey carried out in Sweden (Annerback, Wingren, Svedin & Gustafsson, 2010) with young people aged 13 to 17, 11% responded affirmatively when asked about exposure to any incident of IPV. In the United States, Zinzow *et al.* (2009) obtained a prevalence of 9% for the exposure to severe forms of IPV among adolescents aged 12 to 17; while a research in the United Kingdom (NSPCC, 2012) concluded that 12% of children under 11 and 17% of adolescents aged 11 to 17 had been exposed to physical IPV at least one time in their lives.

Other dimensions and perspectives have also been analyzed, although to a lesser extent. For example, this is the case of relevant issues as: the meaning IPV has for children themselves, the inclusion of a gender approach or the study of mother's interpretation about their children's exposure to IPV. One of the most neglected issues is the analysis of the relationship between the children and their fathers (Eriksson, 2010; Perel & Peled, 2008; Rothman, Mandel & Silverman, 2007). In this sense, according to Maria Eriksson (2002, p. 3): 'A man's relationship with his partner and his relationships with his children can be conceptualized as parts of the same gender project, as arenas that might be linked to an overall process of gender constitution'. However, previous researches point out a general tendency to separate the partner/aggressor role to the parental role, so that fathers are broadly interpreted as essentially nonviolent (Eriksson & Hester, 2001; Eriksson, 2002).

In this article, despite the limitations of using secondary data, we will try to make some contributions to this research area. We won't be able to address children's experiences or aggressors' perceptions, but we can provide information on other relevant aspects: 1) the presence of children among

cases of IPV, 2) mothers' perception about aggressors' parental role and 3) to what extent the presence of children can increase the likelihood of mothers reporting the aggression.

Methodology

We have applied a secondary analysis to the data obtained in the fourth Survey on Violence Against Women in Spain. This survey was conducted by the CIS in 2011 on behalf of the extinct Spanish Ministry of Equality. The main difference between the fourth (and last) survey and the previous ones (conducted in 1999, 2002 and 2006) lies in the method of data collection. While telephone interviews were used in the three first surveys, the latest one is based on face-to-face interviews at the respondents' homes. This option has led to a decrease in the sample size (from 20,552 in the first survey to 7,898 in the last one). In any case, the sample continues being representative of the population of women over 18 years old living in Spain. The main objective of the series of surveys is to know the approximate number of women who are or have been victims of violence in the family context, with particular attention to IPV. Additionally, a number of variables have been included in order to analyze possible relationships between different characteristics and being a victim of violence. In this sense, the fourth survey incorporates several new variables that help to obtain information about the presence of children exposed to IPV, as well as about how women perceive aggressor's parental role and custody rights. We will focus our attention on these variables.

Specifically, the data analysis has been carried out using SPSS statistical program, that has allowed the univariate and bivariate analysis of the relevant information. Given the mainly nominal nature of the selected variables, we have applied an exploratory and descriptive approach, analyzing possible relationships through contingency tables, and Chi-square results. When required we have also calculated the adjusted standardized residuals in order to analyze not only the relationship between variables, but also between specific categories of the variables.

Cases of Intimate Partner Violence

The first step is the necessary construction of IPV indicators. In this regard, two different strategies to detect cases of violence have been applied in the series of Surveys on Violence Against Women. These two strategies have been characterized as Type A and Type B violence. Type A cases refer to those women technically considered as victims of violence; while type B cases are related to those women who identify themselves as victims (Sigma Dos, 2006). Thus, in the type A strategy women are classified as victims after their affirmative response to a number of items that reflect different forms of violence. This classification is carried out regardless how women themselves interpret their own experience. They are considered victims of violence even if they don't recognize themselves as such. The specific question used for detecting type A violence was: (P35) 'At present, how often would you say that a closely related person...?'. The response was associated with a set of 26 items, including different forms of psychological, physical, sexual, economic or social violence. Additional variables enable to identify the person exercising the violence and, therefore, it is possible to select those cases where the aggressor is the husband/partner or ex-husband/ex-partner.

For the first three surveys, the affirmative responses (and the categories 'frequently' and 'sometimes') to 13 selected items (those describing situations rated as more severe) were used in order to construct the indicator of Type A violence. This same strategy has been followed in the present article for the analysis of the fourth survey². Thus, taking into account only the violence exercised by partners or former partners (IPV), about 10,2% of the surveyed women can be classified as victims of type A violence. This percentage is relatively similar to the results obtained in the previous surveys (12,4% in 1999, 11,1% in 2002 and 9,6% in 2006) (Sigma Dos, 2006).

Regarding the second strategy, type B violence, women are directly asked if, during the last year (P36) or at some point in their lives (P37), they have felt being battered by her husband/partner, ex-husband/ex-partner or by other family member. Thus, type B refers to situations that make the women perceive themselves as being abused. Once again it is possible to identify those women who responded affirmatively and selected their partners or former partners as aggressors. In this case 2,9% of the surveyed women

claim to have been victims of IPV during the previous year, and 10,7% at some point in their lives.

Results

Children Exposed to IPV

The lack of agreement around concepts and the difficulties in detecting and accounting IPV cases make it especially problematic to obtain comparable data concerning the number of children exposed to this violence (Øverline, 2010). Usually, women's perspective is taken as reference for analyzing the presence of IPV and the extent to which children are involved. Consequently, the attempts to account mainly depend on women's perception about both violence and its effects.

Considering the data provided by the CIS' survey we can follow two procedures in an attempt to quantify the presence of children in contexts of IPV. These two procedures rely on the two different strategies applied to identify cases of violence: type A (women technically considered as victims of violence) and type B (women that classify themselves as victims of violence). Briefly, we can stress the relatively high presence of children in IPV settings: there are children in 43% of the type A cases and in 54% of the type B ones (considering the women that have ever felt being abused). These results support previous researchers (Eriksson & Hester, 2001) who underline the importance of including children in the study of IPV.

Women who affirmed having been abused (type B violence) and had children (under-18s) at the time of the abuse were asked if their children had directly suffered the violence. 54% of the women that had ever felt being battered and 60% of those who had felt being battered during the last year answered affirmatively. These results don't allow us to know what 'suffering directly the violence' means to women and to what extent they consider a risk the simple presence of their children in contexts of IPV. Thus, although we have obtained relatively high percentages, the results still support previous studies highlighting a tendency for mothers to underestimate the degree to which their children may be affected by the violence they themselves suffer (Øverline, 2010, p. 89).

Children's Presence and the Probability of Reporting the Violence

Previous researches highlight the contradictory effects that children's presence has on women's interpretation of IPV, as well as on their decision to end or continue a violent relationship (Espinar, 2006; Rhodes, Cerulli, Dichter, Kothari & Barg, 2010). In fact, children's presence can both foster women's permanency in a violent relationship (supposedly putting their children's welfare before their own) and encourage the women to report or finish the cohabitation with the aggressor (Salazar, Högberg, Valladares & Öhman, 2012; Chang *et al.*, 2010; Enander & Holmberg, 2008).

Using the data of the CIS' survey it is not possible to deepen the study of all these aspects, but we can analyze the relationship between two key variables: children's presence and the probability of the women reporting the violence. Thus, for type B violence (i.e. for women who classify themselves as victims of violence) it has been possible to analyze whether it is more likely to report when there are children exposed to the violence (Table 1).

Table 1
*Relationship between women reporting the violence and children's presence (%)**

Base: cases of type B violence

		Presence of children		Total
		Yes	No	
Reporting the violence	Yes	36,0	21,3	30,9
	No	64,0	78,7	69,1
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration from the data provided by the study number 2.,848 (CIS)

* Chi- Square: 16,145; P-value: 0,000

As shown by Chi-Square results associated with Table 1, it is possible to speak about a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. That is, the probability of reporting is significantly higher when there are children exposed to IPV. 36% of the women with minor children at the time

of the abuse reported the violence, compared to 21% of the women who had no children or whose children were not minors. In short, children's presence seems to encourage the women to report the violence. Still, it should be noted that most women (69%) do not report the aggressor, whether they have minor children at the time of the abuse (64%) or not (79%).

Continuing with the analysis of type B violence, another possibility is to test if children becoming direct victims of the violence (at least from the respondents' point of view) encourages women to report the situation. The results are shown in Table 2. Once again Chi-square test indicates a significant relationship between reporting and the perception of children as directly affected by the violence. 47% of the women who responded that their children had been directly affected reported the situation against 24% of those who denied this direct implication. Still, we can highlight that in around 54% of the cases with children being direct victims of violence the situation was not reported.

Table 2.

*Relationship between women reporting the violence and the perception of children being directly affected (%)**

Base: women who classified themselves as abused (type B violence) and had minor children at the time of the abuse.

		Children perceived as directly affected by the violence		Total
		Yes	No	
Reporting the violence	Yes	46,5	24,4	36,5
	No	53,5	75,6	63,5
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration from the data provided by the study number 2,848 (CIS)

* Chi- Square: 23,235; P-value: 0,000

In case of type B violence and when the abuse had not been reported, women were asked about the reasons for not reporting. 40% answered 'for my children' as either first, second or third option. The available data do not

enable us to know if this answer is related to an attempt to guarantee children's economic security, or it has more to do with maintaining the family unity and the coexistence of parents and children. In any case, the results would seem to support previous researches (Espinar, 2006; Rhodes *et al.*, 2010), where children appear to be an incentive both to report and end a violent relationship and to not report and try to keep the family unity. The results also suggest a relatively restricted perception of women about the risks their children face when exposed to IPV.

Women's Perception about Aggressor's Parental Role

According to different authors (Eriksson, 2002; Guille, 2004; Perel & Peled, 2008; Rothman *et al.*, 2007; Salisbury, Henning & Holdford, 2009) there is a widespread tendency to dissociate the parental role from the partner role. Consequently, the presence of violent attitudes and behaviors toward a partner does not necessarily affect how aggressor's parental skills are perceived. This dissociation would be prevalent in the society, among victims of IPV, and also in social services and judicial procedures, with a tendency to precede the maintenance of the relationship between fathers and children against other considerations.

The survey we are analyzing allows a direct approach to this issue, as it includes a question about the degree of agreement with the following statement: 'A man beating his partner does not imply him being a bad father'. The results obtained for the whole sample would appear to contradict the supposedly widespread tendency to dissociate the roles of partner/aggressor and father. Thus, 69% of the surveyed women are little or not in agreement with the statement against 23% that are very or quite in agreement. If we observe the results in Table 3³, it is noteworthy that victims of IPV (both type A and type B) seem to be significantly more in agreement with the differentiation between the roles of partner/aggressor and father.

Table 3

Relationship between violence (type A and B) and dissociation of roles (partner/father) (%)

		Type A violence*		Type B violence**	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Agreement with the statement: 'A man beating his partner does not imply him being a bad father'.	Very/Quite	22,0 (-4,6)	29,1 (4,6)	22,4 (-2,1)	25,6 (2,1)
	Little/Not at all	69,6 (4,1)	62,5 (-4,1)	68,6 (-1,3)	70,8 (1,3)
	Don't know/	8,4	8,4	9,0	3,7
	No answer	(0,0)	(0,0)	(5,3)	(-5,3)
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration from the data provided by the study number 2,848 (CIS)

* Chi- Square: 21,353; P-value: 0,000

** Chi- Square: 29,666; P-value: 0,000

If we only consider the cases of type B violence, there are not significant differences in dissociating roles between those women with minor children in the moment of the abuse and those without. However, differences are statistically significant between those who stated that their children had directly suffered situations of violence and those who denied it⁴. Thus, 76% of the abused women whose children had been direct victims of violence were little or not in agreement with the possibility of an abuser being a good father. This percentage is significantly lower (66%) for the women who reported that their children had not directly suffered the violence. However, the information included in the questionnaire don't allow us an appropriate interpretation of these results. Among other things, it would be necessary a deeper knowledge about women's understanding of their children's relationship with the aggressors and experiences of violence.

Nevertheless, two more variables can be analyzed in order to provide further information about women's interpretation of aggressors' parental role. Specifically, the surveyed women were questioned about the degree of agreement with the following statements concerning children custody:

- If there is a verdict of guilty, aggressors' children custody should be removed.
- After serving the sentence, custody should be returned to the father.

Regarding the first item ('If there is a verdict of guilty, aggressors' children custody should be removed') the results are relatively different from the ones previously observed. First, the rejection of the dissociation of roles rises to 83% for the whole sample (that being the percentage of women who are very or quite in agreement with the removal of children custody if there is a verdict of guilty). Similarly, Table 4 shows, on the one hand, a significant relationship between type A violence and a greater disagreement with the withdrawal of children custody (consistent with Table 3); and, on the other hand, a significant relationship between type B violence and a higher agreement with the withdrawal of the custody. In this sense, the presence of a legal resolution (a verdict) appears to increase the association of roles (abuser/partner and father), especially among women who claim having been battered.

Table 4.

Relationship between violence (type A and B) and the degree of agreement with the withdrawal of children custody (%)

		Type A violence*		Type B violence**	
		No	Sí	No	Sí
Agreement with the statement: 'If there is a verdict of guilty, aggressors' children custody should be removed '.	Very/Quite	83,4 (1,5)	81,3 (-1,5)	82,8 (-2,9)	86,7 (2,9)
	Little/Not at all	7,9 (-3,0)	11,0 (3,0)	8,2 (-0,4)	8,6 (0,4)
	Don't know/	8,7	7,7	9,1	4,7
	No answer	(1,0)	(-1,0)	(4,3)	(-4,3)
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration from the data provided by the study number 2,848 (CIS)

* Chi- Square: 9,757; P-value: 0,008

** Chi- Square: 18,183; P-value: 0,000

The statement 'After serving the sentence, custody should be returned to the father' adds an element of permanence not included in the previous item. Thus, the percentage of women who show a clearest association between the violence against a partner and the parental role decreases to around 65% (that being the percentage of women who are little or not in agreement with returning the custody to the father after serving the sentence). However there is a remarkable increase in the percentage of women who don't know or simply choose not to answer this question (around 20% of the surveyed women).

Table 5

Relationship between violence (type A and B) and the degree of agreement with returning the custody after the father has served the sentence (%)

		Type A violence*		Type B violence**	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Agreement with the statement: 'After serving the sentence, custody should be returned to the father'.	Very/Quite	11,6 (-2,4)	14,5 (2,4)	12,1 (1,7)	10,1 (-1,7)
	Little/Not at all	64,7 (-1,1)	66,7 (1,1)	63,9 (-5,6)	73,5 (5,6)
	Don't know/ No answer	23,7 (3,1)	18,8 (-3,1)	24,0 (5,0)	16,4 (-5,0)
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration from the data provided by the study number 2,848 (CIS)

* Chi- Square: 12,884; P-value: 0,002

** Chi- Square: 32,377; P-value: 0,000

Finally, the results in Table 5 are relatively consistent with the ones observed in Table 4. On the one hand, the women victims of type A violence show a significant greater agreement with returning the custody to the father once he has served the sentence. On the other hand, the women who have ever felt being abused by a partner or former partner (type B violence) express a greater rejection of this devolution (around 74% are little or not in agreement). In any case, there is a significant negative relationship between

the two forms of violence and not knowing/not answering the question, so that victims of both type of violence (A and B) express or appear to have a clearer opinion. In contrast, serving the sentence raises more doubts among those women supposedly not victims of violence.

Conclusion

This article presents the results of a secondary analysis applied to the data obtained by the Spanish Center for sociological Research (CIS, for its acronym in Spanish) in the last Survey on Violence Against Women in Spain, conducted in 2011. According to the variables included in the questionnaire, our objectives are: 1) to determine the presence of children in IPV settings, 2) to analyze the possible relationship between this presence and the probability of women reporting the violence, and 3) to study women's perceptions about the parental role of the aggressors.

With regard to the presence of children in the context of IPV cases (both type A or women technically classified as victims of violence and type B or women self-classified as such), we can conclude that this presence is relatively high. Exactly, in 54% of all the cases of type B violence and in 43% of the type A cases there are minor children exposed to the violence. Among women who have ever felt being abused (type B violence) and had minor children at the time of the abuse 53% stated that their children had also directly suffered violent situations. Even being a relatively high percentage, this number must be interpreted in the light of the results of previous authors that highlight a trend among mothers to underestimate their children's involvement in the violence (Øverline, 2010, p. 89). In this sense, it would be necessary further research into two specific areas: first, the study of alternative sources of information beyond mothers, as may be children themselves (Cater & Forsell, 2014; Eriksson & Näsman, 2008; Øverlien & Hydén, 2009); second, the analysis of women's interpretation about gender violence and about the extent to which children can be affected.

Our first hypothesis suggested that children's presence would affect women positively in relation to reporting the violence she was suffering. However, results seem to support previous researches highlighting the contradictory role that children's presence has (Espinar, 2006; Rhodes *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, we can only conclude a partial confirmation of the

hypothesis. On the one hand, although the majority of the women who have ever felt being abused by a partner or former partner (type B violence) have not reported the violence, children's presence correlates with an increased likelihood of reporting. On the other hand, children are also one of the main reasons that women give for not reporting the violence. In this sense, it would be necessary a deeper knowledge about other aspects as, for example, the possibility of not only reporting, but also ending a violent relationship or about women's interpretations regarding the coexistence of children and aggressors.

In our second hypothesis, we predicted a predominant dissociation between violence against a partner and aggressor's parental role, so that violent attitudes or behaviors toward the mother would not necessarily affect women's perception of aggressor's parenting skills (Eriksson, 2002; Guille, 2004; Perel & Peled, 2008; Rothman *et al.*, 2007; Salisbury *et al.*, 2009). However, our results would not show a clear support to this hypothesis. In this sense, it is relatively high the percentage of women (for the whole sample) that disagree with the statements: 'A man beating his partner does not imply him being a bad father' and 'After serving the sentence, custody should be returned to the father'. Especially high is the percentage of women who are strong or quite in agreement with the statement 'If there is a verdict of guilty, aggressors' children custody should be removed'.

It is noteworthy that the victims of violence (both type A and type B) are significantly more in agreement with the fact that being violent with a partner does not necessary turn the aggressor into a bad father. Consequently these women would seem to dissociate to a greater extent the role of partner (aggressor) and the role of father. However, when it is introduced the existence of a guilty sentence results vary. The victims of violence seem to have clearer opinions (with lower percentages in the category Don't know / No answer) than the rest of the sample. Moreover, although victims of type A violence continue to show a greater probability to dissociate roles, victims of type B violence are more critical of aggressors' parental skills, showing a greater refusal to them maintaining the custody of the children.

In short, this is a research area that still requires further study, especially applying a qualitative approach, and focusing on the experiences and interpretations of the children themselves (Cater, 2004). It is also necessary an even deeper analysis of how women interpret gender violence, the risks

this violence has for exposed children and the parental role of the aggressors (Grip, 2012). Likewise, we would need further insight into how aggressors themselves interpret their parenting skills and the relationship with their children (Peled, 2000, p. 26). All of them are relevant areas for a better understanding of the experiences of children exposed to IPV and are also essential issues to improve the intervention with them.

Notes

¹ Survey commissioned by the former Ministry of Equality. CIS' study number: 2,858. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.cis.es>.

² It is worth to note that type A indicator has not been included in the official reports of results for the 4th survey. These reports only reflect the responses to each item in a disaggregated way. CIS' report is available at: <http://www.cis.es>. The report of the Government Department for Gender Violence is available at: <http://e-mujeres.net>.

³ Tables 3, 4 and 5 include in parenthesis the adjusted standardized residuals. A value greater than $\pm 1,9$ indicates a (positive or negative) significant relationship between categories of the variables. Thus, residuals facilitate the interpretation of the tables beyond what chi-square statistics indicate.

⁴ Chi-square: 4,800. P-value: 0,028.

References

- Annerback, E. M., Wingren, G., Svedin, C. G., & Gustafsson, P. A. (2010). Prevalence and characteristics of child physical abuse in Sweden: findings from a population-based youth survey. *Acta Paediatrica*, 99(8), 1229-1236. doi: 10.1111/j.1651-2227.2010.01792.x
- Araujo, K., Guzmán, V. & Mauro, A. (2000). Surgimiento de la violencia doméstica como problema público y objeto de políticas. *Revista de la CEPAL*, 70, 133-145. Retrieved from <http://www.cepal.org>
- Cater, Å. (2004). Negotiating Normality and Deviation. Father's Violence against Mother from Children's Perspectives (Örebro Studies in social work No 5). Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org> (Uppsala University).
- Cater, Å. & Forsell, A. M. (2014). Descriptions of fathers' care by children exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV): relative neglect and children's need. *Child and Family Social Work*, 19(2), 185-193. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00892.x

- Chang, J. C., Dado, D., Hawker, L., Cluss, P.A., Buranosky, R.; Slagel, L., McNeil, M. & Scholle, S.H. (2010). Understanding turning points in intimate partner violence: Factors and circumstances leading women victims toward change. *Journal of Women's Health*, 19(2), 251-259. doi: [10.1089/jwh.2009.1568](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2009.1568).
- Cunningham, A. & Baker, L. (2004). *What about me! Seeking to understand a child's view of violence in the family*. London, ON: Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System.
- Enander, V. & Holmberg, C. (2008). Why does she leave? The leaving process(es) of battered women. *Health Care for Women International*, 29(3), 200-226. doi: [10.1080/07399330801913802](https://doi.org/10.1080/07399330801913802)
- Eriksson, M. (2002), Men's Violence, Men's Parenting and Gender Politics in Sweden. *Nora. Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 10(1), 6-15. doi: [10.1080/080387402317533844](https://doi.org/10.1080/080387402317533844)
- Eriksson, M. (2010). Children Who 'Witness' Violence as Crime Victims and Changing Family Law in Sweden. *Journal of Child Custody*, 7(2), 93-116. doi: [10.1080/15379418.2010.508258](https://doi.org/10.1080/15379418.2010.508258)
- Eriksson, M. (2011). Contact, shared parenting, and violence: children as witnesses of domestic violence in Sweden. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 25(2), 165-183. doi: [10.1093/lawfam/ebp004](https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebp004)
- Eriksson, M. & Hester, M. (2001). Violent men as good-enough fathers? A look at England and Sweden. *Violence Against Women*, 7(7), 779-799. doi: [10.1177/10778010122182730](https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010122182730)
- Eriksson, M. & Näsman, E. (2008). Participation in Family Law Proceedings for Children whose Father is Violent to their Mother. *Childhood*, 15(2), 259-275. doi: [10.1177/0907568207088426](https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568207088426)
- Espinar, E. (2006). *Violencia de género y procesos de empobrecimiento*. Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba.
- Espinar, E. & Mateo, M. A. (2007). Violencia de género: reflexiones conceptuales, derivaciones prácticas. *Papers*, 86, 189-201. Retrieved from <http://www.raco.cat>
- FRA-European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2014). *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results*. Luxemburg: European Union. Retrieved from <http://fra.europa.eu>

- Goddard, C. & Bedi, G. (2010). Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse: A Child-Centred Perspective. *Child Abuse Review*, 19(1), 5-20. doi: 10.1002/car.1084
- Graham-Bermann, S. A., Castor, L. E., Miller, L. E. & Howell, K. H. (2012). The impact of intimate partner violence and additional traumatic events on trauma symptoms and PTSD in preschool-aged children. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25(4), 393-400. doi: 10.1002/jts.21724
- Grip, K. (2012). *The Damage Done. Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence and their Mothers: Towards empirically based interventions in order to reduce negative health effects in children*, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg. Retrieved from <http://www.gu.se/>
- Guille, L. (2004). Men who batter and their children: An integrated review. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 9(2), 129–163. doi:10.1016/S1359-1789(02)00119-2
- Holden, G. W., Geffner, R. A. & Jouriles, E. N. (1998). *Children Exposed to Marital Violence. Theory, Research and Applied Issues*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Holt, S., Buckley, H. & Whelan, S. (2008). The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: A review of the literature, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 32(8), 797-810. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.02.004
- Kuhlman, K. R., Howell, K. H. & Graham-Bermann, S. A. (2012). Physical health in preschool children exposed to intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 27 (6), 499-510. doi: 10.1007/s10896-012-9444-2
- Levendosky, A. A., Bogat, G. A. & Martínez-Torteya, C. (2013). PTSD symptoms in young children exposed to intimate partner violence. *Violence Against women*, 19(2), 187-201. doi: 10.1177/1077801213476458
- Martín, E. & Martín, M. (1999). *Las violencias cotidianas cuando las víctimas son las mujeres*. Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer.
- NSPCC (2012). *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. London: NSPCC. Retrieved from <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>
- Øverlien, C. (2010). Children Exposed to Domestic Violence: Conclusions from the Literature and Challenges Ahead. *Journal of Social Work*, 10(1), 80-97. doi: 10.1177/1468017309350663

- Øverlien, C. & Hydén, M. (2009). Children's Actions when Experiencing Domestic Violence. *Childhood. A Journal of Global Child Research*, 16(4), 479–496. doi: [10.1177/0907568209343757](https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568209343757)
- Peled, E. (2000). Parenting by Men Who Abuse Women: Issues and Dilemmas, *British Journal of Social Work*, 30(1), 25-36. doi: [10.1093/bjsw/30.1.25](https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/30.1.25)
- Perel, G. & Peled, E. (2008). The fathering of violent men: Constriction and yearning. *Violence Against Women*, 14(4), 457-482. doi: [10.1177/1077801208314846](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801208314846)
- Rodhes, K.V., Cerulli, C., Dichter, M.E., Kothari, C.L. & Barg, F.K. (2010). 'I Didn't Want To Put Them Throught That': The Influence of Children on Victim Decision-making in Intimate Partner Violence Cases. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(5), 485-493. doi: [10.1007/s10896-010-9310-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-010-9310-z)
- Rothman, E. F., Mandel, D. G. & Silverman, J. G. (2007). Abusers' perceptions of the effect of their intimate partner violence on children. *Violence Against Women*, 13(11), 1179-1191. doi: [10.1177/1077801207308260](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801207308260)
- Ruiz, I., Plazaola, J., Vives, C., Montero, M.I., Escribà, V., Jiménez, E. & Martín, D. (2010). Variabilidad Geográfica de la violencia del compañero íntimo en España. *Gaceta Sanitaria*, 24(2), 128-135. doi: [10.1016/j.gaceta.2009.10.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2009.10.014)
- Salazar, M., Högberg, U., Valladares, E. & Öhman, A. (2012). The Supportive Process for Ending Intimate Partner Violence After Pregnancy: The Experience of Nicaraguan Women. *Violence Against Women*, 18(11), 1257-1278. doi: [10.1177/1077801212470549](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801212470549)
- Salisbury, E. J., Henning, K. & Holdford, R. (2009). Fathering by Partner-Abusive Men. Attitudes on Children's Exposure to Interparental Conflict and Risk Factors for Child Abuse. *Child Maltreatment*, 14(3), 232-242. doi: [10.1177/1077559509338407](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559509338407)
- SIGMA DOS. (2006). *III Macroencuesta sobre la violencia contra las mujeres. Informe de resultados*. Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer.
- WHO. (2013). *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, Geneve: WHO. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int>

Zinzow, H. M., Ruggiero, K. J., Resnick, H., Hanson, R., Smith, D., Saunders, B. & Kilpatrick, D. (2009). Prevalence and mental health correlates of witnessed parental and community violence in a national sample of adolescents. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 50(4), 441-450. doi: [10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02004.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02004.x)

Eva Espinar-Ruiz Departamento de Sociología II. Instituto Interuniversitario de Desarrollo Social y Paz (IUDESP). Universidad de Alicante. Spain.

Begoña López-Monsalve Departamento de Sociología II. Universidad de Alicante. Spain.

Contact Address: Direct correspondence to the author at Ap. de Correos, 99. 03080 - Alicante, Spain.

E-mail address: eva.espinar@ua.es