ISSN: 1889-1861

THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED TO LEGAL CONTEXT

Volume 1, Number 1, January 2009

The official Journal of the
SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE PSICOLOGÍA JURÍDICA Y FORENSE
Website: http://www.usc.es/sepjf

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Official Journal of the *Sociedad Española de Psicología Jurídica y Forense* (www.usc.es/sepjf)
Published By: SEPJF.
Volume 1, Number, 1.
Order Form: see www.usc.es/sepjf
Frequency: 2 issues per year.
ISSN: 1889-1861.
D.L.: C-4376-2008

The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context, 2009, 1(1): 123-145

SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: INDIVIDUAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS AND ABUSERS

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(Received: 10 July 2008; revised 5 November 2008; accepted 10 November 2008).

Abstract

Violence against women in close relationships is one of the most worrying and controversial situations in modern society. The main goal of this study was to identify the social perception that people generally have of gender violence in order to obtain profiles of both men who resort to violence against their partners and women who are victims of abuse, identifying both individual (e.g. self-esteem) and social (power in relationship) characteristics related to gender violence. Using a questionnaire (designed between groups), 268 participants were asked to estimate the probability of men (Batterers vs. Non-batterers) and women (Victims vs. Non-victims) displaying certain behaviours, beliefs or attitudes. The results revealed the existence of clear social profiles of both aggressors and victims, comprising both individual and psychosocial characteristics. These profiles contained aspects that coincide with the roles traditionally associated with men and women, thus highlighting inequality between both sexes, and which seems to be one of the main causes of gender violence.

Keywords: gender violence, power, sexism, discrimination, gender.

Resumen

La violencia contra las mujeres en el seno de las relaciones de pareja, constituye una de las situaciones más preocupantes y controvertidas en la sociedad actual. En este contexto nos planteamos un estudio con el objeto de conocer la percepción social de este tipo de violencia con el fin de poder elaborar perfiles tanto de hombres que la ejercen contra sus parejas, como de mujeres que son victimas de ella, identificando las características tanto individuales (p.e., autoestima) como sociales (v.gr.,. poder en la relación) asociadas al fenómeno de la violencia de género. Para ello se pidió a 268 participantes que estimaran en un cuestionario la probabilidad con la que hombres (maltratadores vs. no maltratadores) y mujeres (victimas vs. no victimas) manifiestan determinados comportamientos, creencias o actitudes. Los resultados revelaron la existencia de un perfil social, tanto del agresor como de la víctima, en el que se integran características individuales y psicosociales. Estos perfiles recogen aspectos que coinciden con los roles que tradicionalmente han sido asociados a hombres y mujeres, enfatizando una desigualdad manifiesta entre ambos géneros que se postula como una de las principales causas de la violencia de género.

Palabras clave: violencia de género, poder, sexismo, discriminación, género

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Introduction

After many years of research and hard work, and in particular the death of many victims, gender violence is now considered to be one of the most serious problems affecting societies worldwide (Nabors, Dietz, & Jasinski, 2006). There are different theoretical frameworks for addressing and explaining this problem. These include, for example, psychodynamic approaches or methods focusing on anger management which claim that certain individual characteristics are the main causes of violence, systemic perspectives in which violence is seen as a mechanism for maintaining certain family dynamics and/or resolving conflicts, or social and cultural theories that highlight aspects such as control and power as the main causes of this type of violence.

These psychosocial theories claim that violence against women is strongly linked to widely-embraced cultural beliefs, as well as to differences in power and some men's need to exercise control (Expósito & Moya, 2005). The complexity of the phenomenon of gender violence and the different study perspectives have generated a huge amount of data which is sometimes unconnected and contradictory, making it difficult to approach this complex problem, and resulting instead in multiple perspectives focusing on the study of the individual characteristics of either aggressors or victims, as if these were independent from one another. Thus, some studies focusing on aggressors have identified certain elements considered characteristics of male batterers: hostility against women, low responsibility, rigid and stereotyped, attributes of hypermasculinity, as well as narcissistic tendencies (Holtzworth-Munroe, & Stuart, 1994; Lorente, 2001). As regards victims, studies have shown that these women display typically feminine characteristics; for example, they conform perfectly to the role of traditional women, and they display psychological disorders such as Posttraumatic

Stress Disorder, depression and low self-esteem (Patró, Corbalán, & Limiñana, 2007; Walker, 1984), among other characteristics.

Regardless of the perspective adopted, one of the most interesting findings reported in studies performed with victims and aggressors is undoubtedly the fact that the distinctive characteristics of both groups are attributes associated with their belonging to a specific group: men are hypermasculine and women play the role of traditional women.

One of the psychosocial concepts most related to belonging to a group is gender identity. This concept has been conceived as social identity deriving from belonging to a specific group, such as self-perception in masculine or feminine terms and ego. People can be classified according to many different criteria; one criterion is sex. Traditionally, masculinity has been associated with instrumentality (tasks and problem solving) whereas femininity has been associated with expressiveness (contributing to group harmony and well-being). In this connection, many research studies have observed the existence of different beliefs regarding the characteristics typically attributed to men and women (e.g., Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), basically differentiating between sociability and competition; while sociability is perceived as typical of women (sensitivity, skills at looking after and taking care of others), competition is perceived as a typically male characteristic (control, security). One of the main consequences of these gender stereotypes has been the creation of different roles for men and women within both families and organisational and social contexts; as a result, men normally obtain economic resources, while women provide care (Brown, 1991; Eagly, Wood, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2004).

One of the main effects of belonging to gender groups is the self-esteem this gives. Studies in this field have shown that belonging to a group of inferior status (such

as women) is associated with lower self-esteem than that of higher status groups (such as men). In relation to gender violence, different studies have focused on evaluating self-esteem in both victims and aggressors, with uneven results. As regards victims, there is a clear consensus that the distinctive feature of women who are victims of gender violence is low self-esteem (Matud, 2004). However, results for aggressors are contradictory and are summarised in the research carried out by Prince and Arias (1994). These authors identified two profiles of aggressors: one profile corresponded to men with high self-esteem and low sense of control over their lives who use violence to feel greater control; and the other corresponded to men with low self-esteem and low control who respond violently to their frustration.

For this reason, gender roles and stereotypes and their consequences, as well as differences in socialization processes in terms of their capacity to relate to others and to the environment (women are taught to think about emotions and put themselves in other people's shoes, whereas men are taught mainly to express rage and hostility) (Díaz-Aguado, 2003), are extremely important elements in the construction of gender violence (Mahlstedt & Welsh, 2005; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002). In this sense, there is a certain consensus that aggression and violence are strongly influenced by gender, understanding gender as a social construct beyond purely biological sexual differences. However, women are not born victims and men are not biologically predestined to become aggressors. Instead, stereotypes regarding how men and women should behave and experiences that reinforce such stereotypic behaviour contribute to the creation of patterns that legitimise gender violence through life (White, 2001) and more specifically in close relationships.

As regards the importance of socio-structural factors in the genesis and the legitimation of gender violence, literature on this subject highlights that power is a basic

element in all interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Therefore, this is a social aspect strongly associated with gender and very important for understanding inequalities between men and women (Expósito & Moya, 2005; Pratto & Walker, 2004). These unequal relations, together with cultural values that legitimize the domination of the weak by the strong, may result in potential violence; hence, this situation of inequality would make it easier for the more powerful member in an intimate interpersonal relationship to exercise control in all areas of the couple's relationship (Morales-Marente, 2005). In this respect, some studies claim that batterers' need for power and control is related to violence exercised in their relationships with their partners (Coleman & Strauss, 1986; Dutton & Painter, 1993; Hyden, 1995; Tolman, 1989).

Therefore, we may affirm that inequality between men and women based on the supposed superiority of one sex over the other has given rise to an evident asymmetry of power. Power is the key element for explaining relationships between men and women in the model developed by Pratto and Walker (2004), called "The bases of gendered power", and is based on four fundamental bases or pillars: a) strength or threat (both physical and psychological): men's greater physical strength, linking aggressiveness as an inherent part of their masculinity and identity; b) control of resources: there are differences in the control of, and access to, basic resources, ranging from wage differences to the types of occupations performed by men and women; c) social obligations: the role of women *par excellence* is the obligation to provide care and this limits women's opportunities to access other bases of power; and d) ideology: sexist ideology or the set of beliefs that explain inequality and/or differences in power between men and women.

Although we cannot affirm that this asymmetry of power and some of its consequences are the direct cause of violence against women, they do provide the bases or prepare the terrain for this to be possible.

For all these reasons, this study had two objectives: firstly, to determine the distinctive characteristics people attribute to batterers and victims, both individual characteristics and those related to the bases of power proposed in the above mentioned model and thus obtain profiles of men who use violence against their partners and women who suffer gender violence; and secondly, to determine whether there were differences in people's social perception of male batterers and non-batterers, as well as of women victims of gender violence and women who are not victims of gender violence.

The main hypotheses were the following:

1- As indicated in existing literature on this subject (i.e., Herrera, 2005; Lorente, 2001; Morales-Marente, 2005; Walker, 1984), we expected male batterers - unlike their victims - to be perceived as having the following characteristics: hypermasculinity, greater self-esteem, greater strength, greater control of resources, sexist ideology and fewer social obligations. In the case of victims, we expected these to be perceived as having typically feminine attributes, characteristic of traditional women, low self-esteem, less control of resources, more social obligations and sexist ideology.

2- When comparing men who used violence against women with men who do not, we expected batterers would be perceived as having more masculine features, lower self-esteem, less control of resources, greater strength, sexist ideas and fewer social obligations than non-batterers.

3- When comparing women victims of gender violence with non-victims, we expected victims to be perceived as having more feminine characteristics, lower self-esteem, less

control of resources, less strength, sexist ideas and more social obligations than women who were not victims of gender violence.

Method

Participants

This research was performed with 268 participants with an average age of 38.14 (*SD* = 14.14): 37.6% were men and 62.4% women. 57.3% of the sample had completed or were studying at university, 24% had completed *Bachiller Superior* (high school), 9.4% had completed Vocational Training, 6.7% had completed *Bachiller Elemental* (secondary education) or similar education, and 2.6% primary education. In terms of employment, 28.5% were unemployed and 71.5% were employed. 92.9% had or had been in a close relationship. 15.5% stated they were not at all religious compared with 3% who described themselves as very religious. The average score for this variable was 4.17 (*SD* = 2.04), i.e. the majority considered themselves to be moderately religious (response scores ranging from 0 to 7; the higher the score, the more religious). In terms of political ideology, 0.4% stated they were very conservative compared with 8.7% who described themselves as very progressist. The average score was 6.20 (*SD* = 1.63), with response scores ranging from 0 to 7 points (the higher the score, the more progressist).

Procedure and design

Four different questionnaires were constructed, each containing questions on the targeted study groups: male batterers, male non-batterers, women victims of gender violence and women not victims of gender violence. Random sampling techniques were used by a group of researchers from the University of Granada to obtain the sample

from different employment, sports and educational centres in the city. Each participant was asked to estimate the probability of male batterers, male non-batterers, female victims of gender violence and female non-victims displaying certain types of behaviour or possessing certain beliefs or attitudes. The test was self-administered and applied individually.

Measurement instruments

The questionnaire contained the following sections:

1. Sociodemographic characteristics: age, sex, education, religiousness, political ideology, labour and emotional situation and/or close relationship.

2. Gender identity. An own scale was used containing items to measure the gender identity of the individuals in masculine (instrumental) or feminine (expressive) terms. Nine of these items were obtained from Spence, Helmreich and Stapp's Personal Attributes Questionnaire (1974) and the rest from a scale prepared by Expósito (1997). The instrumental items included the following: ambitious, independent, self-confident, individualist, leadership capacity, strong. The expressive items included the following: devoted to others, friendly, warm, sensitive to praise, emotional, able to capture the feelings of others. Each participant had to indicate how applicable each item was to men who used violence in their close relationships/men who did not use violence in their close relationships/women victims/women non-victims, on a 7-point response scale (from 1 = nothing to 7 = a lot) (each participant only responded to one of the four stimuli). The alpha coefficients of the instrumentality and expressiveness subscales were .88 and .93, respectively.

3. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (1965). This consisted of 10 items (5 formulated positively and 5 negatively). Responses were measured on a Likert 4-point scale (from

agree strongly to disagree strongly); the higher the score, the lower the self-esteem. The alpha coefficient for our sample was .89.

4. Battery of 48 items informing of possible behaviours, beliefs or attitudes refering to the different bases of power proposed in Pratto and Walker's model (2004). Participants were asked to estimate the probability of male batterers, male non-batterers, female victims and female non-victims (according to the assigned condition) displaying the beliefs, behaviours and attitudes described in the battery of questions. The internal consistency of this measurement was .74. The items attempted to gather information on the following power bases:

Strength: Physical strength was measured using 2 items: the probability of each of the four stimuli (male batterers/non-batterers; female victims/non-victims), according to the profile, generally "using physical strength to achieve their objectives", "offering physical security to their partner". The Pratto and Walker model (2004) conceptualises strength as "physical" strength. In this study, we also studied another type of strength we called "psychosocial" strength, refering to the capacity to calmly resolve and deal with problems and stressful situations. We measured *psychosocial strength* using 8 items, such as the "capacity to resolve conflicts". The internal consistency of the overall scale of .53 was obtained (physical strength, alpha coefficient = .83; psychological strength, alpha coefficient = .42)

Control of resources: One of the power bases in Pratto and Walker's model (2004) is the control of resources, mainly economic resources. Based on prior studies by Morales-Marente (2005), we also considered another resource such as the capacity to influence decisions in the couple or family nucleus. We also considered social support as a resource, i.e. having a good social network for support and available when needed. Not having alternative resources was a strong limitation and one of the main reasons

why women feel obliged to remain in abusive relationships (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). The internal consistency of the overall scale was .89.

Economic resources were evaluated using 7 standard items: the probability of men (batterers vs. non-batterers) and women (victims vs. non-victims), according to the specific profile in each case, generally perceived as "having a stable job", "having a well-paid job", etc. The scale obtained an internal consistency of .81.

As regards the *capacity to influence decisions taken by the couple* or family nucleus, this resource was measured by 5 items, including the following: the probability of men (batterers vs. non-batterers) and women (victims vs. non-victims), according to the specific profile in each case, generally perceived as "having a say in decisions about decorating the home", "influencing decisions on how to spend the couple's income", etc. An internal consistency of .77 was obtained.

To measure *social support*, 3 items were included that estimated the probability of men (batterers vs. non-batterers) and women (victims vs. non-victims), according to the specific profile in each case, generally perceived as "maintaining frequent relations with their relatives and friends" for example. An internal consistency of .73 was obtained in this case.

Social obligations: 11 items were included, such as the following: the probability of men (batterers vs. non-batterers) and women (victims vs. non-victims), according to the specific profile, generally perceived as "doing the daily shopping", "being the ones who look after the children most of the time". The internal consistency of the scale was .69.

Ideology: 12 items were used to measure sexist ideology, such as the following: the probability of male batterers/non-batterers/ female victims/non-victims, according to the specific profile in each case, generally perceived as "thinking that attractive women

are good for advertising", "thinking that men must not worry about their physical appearance". The internal consistency of the scale was .87.

Data analysis

The sociodemographic characteristics in each of the four conditions were considered to avoid possible effects in our targeted study groups, and no differences were observed in the mean scores for age, political ideology, religiousness and education. These variables were not included in our analysis because they were not the main objective of this study.

In order to test our hypotheses, an analysis of variance was carried out using as dependent variables the scores obtained in the different scales (gender identity, self-esteem and power bases), with the factors men (batterers vs. non-batterers) and women (victims vs. non-victims).

Results

Perception of the Batterer vs. Víctim

In general, differences were observed in the main measurements analysed. Thus, male batterers were perceived with higher scores on the instrumentality subscale; the participants attributed more typically masculine characteristics to male batterers than to victims and the former were perceived as having greater self-esteem than victims, although in both cases the scores were relatively low and below the theoretical mean. As regards the four power bases, batterers were perceived as having greater physical and psychological strength and more resources of all types (economic, decision-taking and social), as well as more sexist ideas, as shown in Table 1.

Gender violence victims were perceived as being more expressive and were attributed more typically feminine features than batterers. In terms of the power bases, female victims only outscored batterers in social obligations, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean scores and results obtained in the ANOVA for the "Batterers vs. Victims" factor.

Variables	**Batterers**	**Victims**	**F**	**p**
Instrumentality	4.33	2.55	177.04	.000
Expressiveness	2.49	4.14	88.04	.000
Self-esteem	2.25	2.81	28.41	.000
Psychological strength	49.92	32.82	56.94	.000
Physical strength	65.72	28.36	116.15	.000
Economic resources	53.48	36.57	36.79	.000
Decision-taking resources	59.48	36.11	62.59	.000
Social resources	44.20	43.10	.135	.714
Social obligations	44.09	63.73	86.51	.000
Ideology	72.09	59.03	28.58	.000

Note: *df*(1, 130).

Perception of Batterers vs. Non-batterers

To confirm people's perception of male batterers compared with male non-batterers, an ANOVA was carried out using the main individual and sociostructural measurements of interest as dependent variables. As the results show, significant differences were observed in most measurements. Male batterers were perceived as having greater strength, more resources for taking decisions, as well as more sexist

ideas, as shown in Table 2. Men who do not use violence against their partners were perceived as having more typically feminine features, greater self-esteem, more economic and social resources and more social obligations than batterers, as shown in Table 2.

No significant differences were observed in the instrumentality subscale or in terms of psychological strength.

Table 2. Mean scores and results obtained in the ANOVA for the "Batterers vs. Non-batterers" factor.

Variables	**Batterers**	**Non-batterers**	**F**	**p**
Instrumentality	4.34	4.16	2.177	.143
Expressiveness	2.49	4.98	179.1	.000
Self-esteem	2.25	1.80	20.83	.000
Psychological strength	49.92	51.45	.84	.361
Physical strength	65.72	40.28	57.29	.000
Economic resources	53.48	59.26	5.35	.022
Decision-taking resources	59.48	52.10	7.92	.006
Social resources	44.20	62.52	29.33	.000
Social obligations	44.09	61.60	88.98	.000
Ideology	72.09	42.24	134.37	.000

Note: *df*.(1, 132).

Perception of Victims vs. Non-Victims

When comparing people's perception of female victims of gender violence and female non-victims, significant differences were observed in all the measurement

variables. Female gender violence victims were perceived as having more social obligations and more sexist ideas than women who were not victims of such violence (see Table 3). The latter obtained higher scores on the instrumentality and expressiveness scales and were perceived as having greater self-esteem, greater physical and psychological strength and more resources (economic, decision-taking and social resources), as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean scores and results obtained in the ANOVA for the "Victims vs. Non-victims" factor.

Variables	**Victims**	**Non-Victims**	**F**	**p**
Instrumentality	2.55	4.25	128.53	.000
Expressiveness	4.14	4.56	6.54	.012
Self-esteem	2.81	1.71	150.27	.000
Psychological strength	32.82	49.51	39.02	.000
Physical strength	28.36	37.69	7.42	.007
Economic resources	36.57	55.99	38.05	.000
Decision-taking resources	36.11	56.29	34.62	.000
Social resources	43.10	55.82	12.01	.001
Social obligations	63.73	59.01	5.23	.024
Ideology	59.03	43.29	34.64	.000

Note: *df* (1, 134)

Discussion

Studies presenting findings on interpersonal violence have focused mainly on showing that gender violence is encompassed within a broad number of individual and social dimensions. We tried to obtain profiles of both men who use violence against their partners and women who are victims of abuse, including both individual and psychosocial characteristics in these profiles.

The results of our research revealed a tendency for people to perceive male batterers (when compared with victims) as persons characterised by hypermasculinity, with few typically feminine features and greater self-esteem than victims. As regards self-esteem, although batterers were perceived as having greater self-esteem than victims, in general both the former and the latter were perceived as having low self-esteem, although it could be claimed that these findings are the result of different processes. Although the self-esteem of victims seems to be one of the many consequences of the process of victimization they suffer, and not a feature of their personality in itself, in the case of male batterers low self-esteem does seem to be a feature of personality (Amor, Bohórquez, & Echeburúa, 2006; Matud, Gutiérrez, & Padilla, 2004).

As expected, the perception of our different stimuli in relation to the power variable was that batterers had greater physical and psychological strength, greater control of economic, decision-taking and social resources, fewer social obligations and sexist ideology (Herrera, 2005). It is worth highlighting that the description we obtained of male batterers could perfectly coincide with the description of a man when compared with a woman, i.e. using the four power bases as differentiating variables on which Pratto and Walker's gendered power model (2004) described above is based. In our opinion, this finding also supports the increasingly widespread belief that the causes of gender violence must be sought in more socio-structural than individual factors. As

indicated in the introduction, men and women are not born batterers or victims, respectively, for reasons of sex. In reality, socialization processes have gradually established different roles for men and women, and culture has done the rest. It is precisely these differences that have produced asymmetries and inequalities that may give rise to situations of abuse, including violence. Men's greater power in relationships is socially legitimised by the process of socialisation, thus widening the gap between both sexes.

One interesting finding resulted from comparing men who use violence against their female partners with men who do not. As expected, in this case no differences were observed regarding typically masculine features. However, differences were observed in the expressiveness subscale, with non-batterers being perceived as having typically feminine features. This result may have been due to the fact that these types of men are considered to be more empathetic, a characteristic male batterers lack and which was seen as possibly related to the probability of using violence (Echauri, Fernández-Montalvo, Rodríguez, & Martínez, 2007; Jonson et al., 2006; Ruiz-Arias, 2007). Batterers were also perceived as having low self-esteem. However, as indicated previously, this feature does not derive from the process of violence as in the case of women and could rather be a feature of personality, although research carried out with male batterers receiving treatment report that self-esteem is not one of the main characteristics they lack (Echauri et al., 2007; Jonson et al., 2006; Ruiz-Arias, 2007). As regards the power bases, batterers were perceived as physically stronger; this was understood to mean that they were more likely to use physical force if necessary to achieve their objectives. They were also perceived as having fewer economic resources and fewer social obligations; this result has been corroborated by studies of interpersonal violence that show that male batterers are generally characterised by

having fewer social and communication skills (Cromwell & Olson, 1975). The perception of these men having greater decision-taking resources and sexist ideas coincided with findings reported in other research studies. Sexist ideology would act as a type of network structuring all aspects related with close relationships and therefore decision taking, giving men power in this respect, which some power models refer to as the *result of power* (Cromwell & Olson, 1975).

As regards the perception of women, female non-victims of gender violence were perceived as having typically masculine and feminine features, greater self-esteem, greater physical and psychological strength, more economic, decision-taking and social resources, suggesting that they are perceived as "superwomen". These are women with feminine features, but they have also embraced typically masculine characteristics, thus reflecting the greater flexibility of female roles.

Our participants' perception of gender violence victims largely coincided with the description of such women in literature and the way they have been presented in the media in recent years. Victims were generally perceived as being more stereotyped and having fewer typically masculine features and lower self-esteem (presumably because of victimization). When addressing the problem of gender violence, women victims of gender violence are often portrayed as weak (with less physical and psychological strength), dependent (with little or no control over any type of resources), low self-esteem and with family responsibilities (with greater social obligations). This image of women also tends to coincide with the image we all have of traditional women who unwaveringly accept their place in both relationships and society. This underlines the importance of sexist ideology in the maintenance of such situations by many women in our society; hence, consideration must be given to the "gender ideology" variable as the fundamental axis on which unequal relationships are normally constructed and

maintained, particularly violent relationships. Today, there is still a certain tendency to blame victims for having certain allegedly weak characteristics and for not abandoning situations from which, as observers, we believe they could escape, if they wanted to. When making these types of judgements, a heuristic is being activated in the perceiver known as "counterfactual thought" (Macrae, Milne, & Griffiths, 1993). One consequence of this is that people easily see other options for victims that are different to existing ones; hence, we tend to think and even affirm that things could be different if they wanted them to be. This heuristic in attribution judgements is important because the easier it is for us to imagine different alternatives to existing situations, the greater the responsibility and guilt we attribute to victims.

Before concluding, we would like to state that we are aware that the question of profiles is a very delicate issue and that their existence influences our subsequent judgements to some extent, creating prototypes that may be destructive in the case of victims because if a woman who suffers gender violence does not display the characteristics typically attributed to her group, her credibility may be questioned and she may subsequently suffer victimization on two fronts (Moya & Expósito, 2007; Russell & Melillo, 2006).

In view of these findings, we consider that the only condition women have to fulfil to be classified as victims of gender violence is simply their status as women (Walker, 1991). Similarly, one characteristic distinguishing male batterers from non-batterers is their normality.

Despite the potential limitations of this study, we nevertheless believe that we have shown the importance of inequality in power as one of the possible causes of gender violence and that violence can only be reduced by balancing these differences, although this is clearly insufficient.

To conclude, we would like to highlight the importance of these types of social perception studies. Problems must be known in order for them to be resolved, and knowledge of people's perceptions of gender violence can help us provide citizens with feedback and prevent the perpetuation of these social profiles, which are also causes of violence. Our perception of gender violence allows situations of violence to perpetuate and influences the way we make valuations. These types of studies are important because they help us understand and value how these types of situations are judged by all social agents, such as doctors, national security forces, judges, psychologists, etc., all actors with great responsibility for initiating a change in approach to dealing with the problem of gender violence.

Acknowledgements

This research has been partly funded with a Pre-doctoral Researcher Personnel Training Grant (FPI) (BES-2005-8715), awarded for the R&D Research Project by the second author entitled "Differences in power and gender: psychosocial aspects", Ref. SEJ2004-02817/PSIC, and for the following research projects: the R&D&I Research Project (Women's Institute) entitled "Psychosocial effects of gender violence on direct and indirect victims: prevention and intervention", Project No. 064/07; the Research Excellence Project (Andalusian Regional Government) entitled "Gender violence: psychosocial analysis of its causes and strategies for its reduction" (Ref. P06-HUM-01437).

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