The Concept and Measurement of Violence against Women and Men

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Introduction

• The purpose of measurement
  – Theory of change
  – Evaluation of policy

• What we need to know
  – Is violence going up or down?
  – Is there more violence in one location or another location?
  – How is violence gendered?

• Proposal
  – New measurement framework relevant to all agencies and surveys
  – Indicators
  – New survey instrument

• Presentation is drawn from published research:
Challenges and Progress

• Challenges
  – Violence is under-reported to agencies (police, services)
  – Changes in violence reported to agencies are different from changes in ‘real’ violence
    • Reporting goes up if services improve
  – Lack of comparability in definitions and units of measurement across agencies and surveys

• Progress
  – Recognition of need for measurement by policy agencies and academics
  – Much experimentation and innovation
  – Proposal: New measurement framework, indicators, survey
Current Policy Initiatives

- Council of Europe
  - Istanbul Convention on Combating and Preventing Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2011): Article 11 on data collection, came into force in 2014 following ratification by sufficient State Parties

- European Union
  - Victims Directive Article 28; European Parliament Resolutions; the European Institute for Gender Equality’s 2015 violence against women Strategy

- UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Targets
  - Goal 5 Target 5.2: ‘eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls’ (which requires indicators to monitor progress)
  - Goal 16 Target 16.1: ‘significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere’

- UK Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Principles for proposed measurement framework

- Definitions anchored in principles of international law
- Gender mainstreaming
  - Gender disaggregation of all relevant data
  - Additional inclusion of categories relevant to women
- Pragmatic
  - Proposed framework revises mainstream data collection
  - Builds on: UN Sustainable Development Goals; UN Women; UN Office of Drugs and Crime; Council of Europe Istanbul Convention; European Commission and its agencies; UK Crime Survey for England and Wales
Defining Violence

- Anchored in international legal instruments
  - Includes: UN; Council of Europe Istanbul Convention
- Distinguish between violence (physical component) and other forms of coercion
  - in order to investigate relationship between different forms of power
    - e.g. between violence and economic inequality
    - e.g. to test Stark’s thesis that non-physical coercion is increasing while physical violence is declining
Defining Violence: Act and Harms

- Includes both act (includes perpetrator’s intentions) and its harms (includes victim’s non-consent) (conventional practice for ‘crime’)
- Rejects focus on act only (e.g. Conflict Tactics Scale) since this produces a gender bias as to its harmful consequences
  - The same act is more harmful when victims are women not men
  - BCS: minor act led to physical injury: 49% of cases where victim female and 36% where victim male
  - BCS: severe act led to physical injury: 77% of cases where victim female and 56% when victim male
- This gender bias compromises several surveys
  - Straus family violence
  - most violence against women surveys: Canada, FRA, WHO
Defining Gender

• Five gender dimensions
  – Sex of victim
  – Sex of perpetrator
  – Relationship between perpetrator and victim
    • domestic relation
      – intimate partner
      – other family member
    • acquaintance
    • stranger
  – Whether sexual aspect to violence
  – Whether a gender motivation
Why include men

• Comparisons with men are needed for current theoretical and policy debates
  – To address debate on the extent to which domestic violence is against women or men
• Gender mainstreaming is policy of EU, Council of Europe and UN
  – Not women only
  – Not gender invisible
Implications of including men

• Makes visible that half of violent crimes are against women
  – Violence against women is not a small specialist issue
• Gender is central to changes in rates of violent crime
  – Makes visible that violence against women is recently increasing (in England and Wales) while violence against men is still decreasing
  – Makes visible that recent increase in violent crime (in England and Wales) is driven by violence against women and violence by domestic perpetrators (not strangers)
Counting Violence

• Victims, Perpetrators and Crimes/Events
• All three units of measurement
  – Not ‘either/or’, rather, ‘all three’ always
  – In order for agencies to cooperate they all need to use the same unit of measurement
    • E.g. A problem if surveys were to use a different unit of measurement from police: Victims (violence against women surveys) and crimes (police)
  – ‘Conviction rates’ (required by Istanbul Convention Article 11) require the same unit to be used by police (usually crime/events) and prosecutors (usually perpetrators)
Counting Repetitions

• Counting repetitions matters
  – The number of violent crimes against women is increasing, but not the number of victims
  – Using ‘victims’ as the unit of measurement hides the increase in violence against women (events/crimes)
  – Capping the maximum number of violent crimes recorded by surveys included in estimates reduces accuracy by:
    • Underestimating the total amount of violent crime
    • Biasing estimates away from female victims and domestic perpetrators
    • All recorded violent crimes should be included during estimation
Trends in violent crime

All reported violent crime per 1000 adults

All reported violent crime against women per 1000 adult females

All reported domestic violence per 1000 adults
Coordination: ‘Measurement framework’ not only ‘collecting data’

- All data collected should use the same measurement framework in order to assist cooperation between agencies (and researchers).
- Surveys should use the same definitions and units of measurement as administrative data collectors and also use identical methods over time and in each country being compared.
- Often, data is collected that is relevant for the measurement framework, but only held in narrative form locally, rather than selected for inclusion in national level statistics (e.g. police records of interviews).
- Producing data for a shared ‘measurement framework’ will often involve changing the criteria for ‘selection’ into national statistics but often may not involve new ‘data collection’.
- This requires coordination: national and international.
Revisions for statistical authorities

- Example: UN Office of Drugs and Crime, developed new ‘International Classification of Crimes for Statistical purposes’ (ICCS) in cooperation with Eurostat
- New international classification of crime based on behaviour and policy priorities
- Includes violent crime
- Four hierarchical levels
- Gender is relegated to ‘optional’, ‘secondary’ ‘tag’
- So will not require production of statistics on ‘violence against women’ or ‘domestic violence’
- Is not compliant with Istanbul Convention Article 11
- Five gender dimensions should be made mandatory
Indicators: challenges

• An ‘indicator’ summarises complicated statistical information to be informative to non-experts
  – An increase in the value of an indicator must be proportionate to the increase in the real phenomenon
  – An indicator must not create perverse effects in public agencies

• Police recorded crime statistics on violent crime usually fail these tests
  – Better police practices drive up the rate of recorded violence while driving down the rate of real violence
Indicators: solutions

• Femicide: homicide disaggregated by the gender dimensions
  – Criminal justice system data: police recorded crime
    • Under development

• Violent crime disaggregated by the gender dimensions
  – Surveys
    • under development
Femicide

• Femicide: homicide disaggregated by the gender dimensions
  – Homicide is unique among forms of violence in being usually reported to/recorded by police
  – Sex of victim is usually recorded
  – Other gender dimensions are recorded unevenly
    • Need improvement
Survey of violent crime: Quality criteria

• Gender Dimensions
  – Sex of the victim
  – Sex of the perpetrator
  – Relationship between perpetrator and victim (intimate partner or other family member; acquaintance; or stranger)
  – Whether there is a sexual aspect

• Definition of Violence
  – Anchored in law
  – Includes both action and harm simultaneously, addressing seriousness
  – Addresses repetition by counting all violent events

• Unit of Measurement is all of:
  – event
  – victim
  – perpetrator

• Survey Instrument
  – Careful wording and framing of questions
  – Sampling frame is consistent and comprehensive
  – Sample size is appropriate (large)
  – Response rate is high and consistent across groups being compared
  – Each respondent is reached in the same way

• Producing Indicators from Survey Data
  – Disaggregate by the four gender dimensions
  – Disaggregate by different forms of violence
  – Include all violent events reported to survey in estimates (no capping)
Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)
VAW Survey

- FRA VAW Survey
  - Innovative experimental survey:
    - Experimentation is important
  - FRA VAW survey methodological flaws too great to use robustly for comparisons between countries
    - Excludes men: cannot compare rates of violence against women/men
    - Inconsistent method of approaching respondents statistically significant correlation with response rate and disclosure rate
    - Sample sizes in each country too small; response rates too uneven
    - Action only included in definition (similar to CTS), so gender biased
    - Does not count frequency numerically, so
      - Not comparable with criminal justice data and police recorded crime
      - Cannot discover changes in gendered rates of violent crimes
New survey

• Survey of violent crime disaggregated by the gender dimensions
  – Consistent with EU, CoE, UN principles of gender mainstreaming
  – Include men, so gender comparisons can be made and inform theory and policy
  – Measure all of: victims, perpetrators, events/crimes
  – Count each crime/event, with no cap
  – Integrate with other major survey
    • To keep costs low
Strategic Directions on Gender in Statistics on Violence

• Current three gender practices for statistics on violence
  – Women and gender are invisible
    • e.g. UNODC and Eurostat ICCS
  – Women only
    • e.g. Fundamental Rights Agency
  – Gender disaggregated and mainstreamed
    • e.g. Crime Survey for England Wales main questionnaire

• Only by gender mainstreaming and by counting events is the increase in violence against women and in domestic violence since the 2008 crisis made visible

• The EU should apply its principle of gender mainstreaming to its measurement of violence
References


