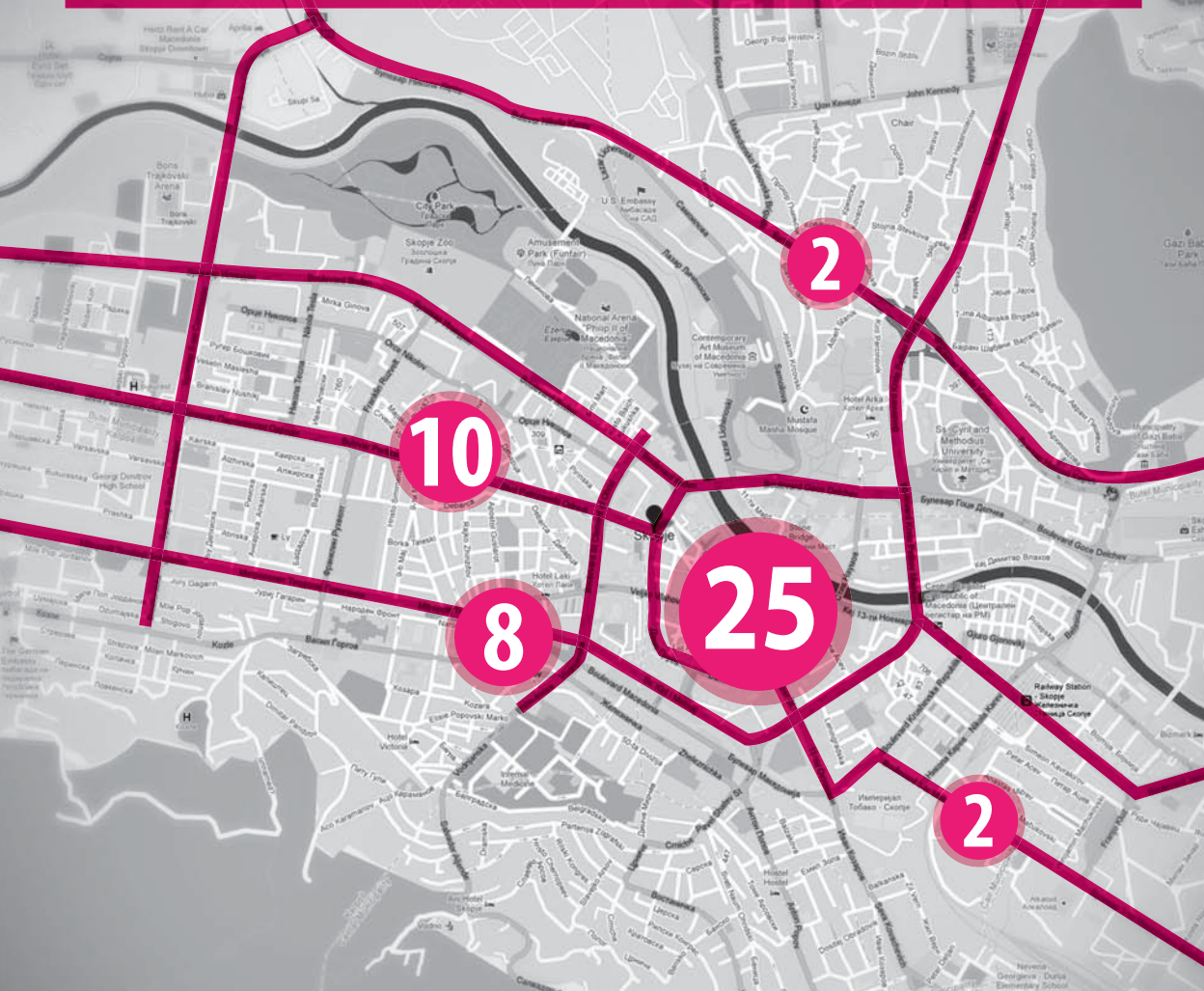


SCOPING STUDY ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACES OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE



Reactor - Reasearch in action, 2012

A Project Supported by UN Women and Implemented by Reactor – Research in Action and Strategic Development Consulting

SCOPING STUDY ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN URBAN PUBLIC SPACES OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE

Reactor - Research in action, 2012

A Project Supported by UN Women and Implemented by Reactor – Research in Action and Strategic Development Consulting

Publisher:

Reactor – Research in Action (www.reactor.org.mk)

For the Publisher:

Neda Korunovska, President

Design Concept:

Ana Risteska

Publication Design and Layout:

Aleksandar Ivanovski

Photographs:

Aleksandar Ivanovski

Print:

Propoint

Circulation:

100 copies

Free / Non-commercial copy

This publication was produced with support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The views and analysis expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations. More information can be found at www.unwomen.org

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски", Скопје

364.63-055.2(497.711)(047.31)

SCOPING study on gender based violence and discrimination against women and girls in urban public spaces of the City of Skopje. -

Skopje : Reactor - Research in action, 2012. - 88 стр. : илустр. ;

25 см

Библиографија: стр. 83-86

ISBN 978-608-4684-02-2


а) Насилство врз жени на јавни места - Скопје - Истражувања

COBISS.MK-ID 92754186



Contents

12	INTRODUCTION
14	Situation in Macedonia
15	The Macedonian Legal Context
16	National Mechanisms for Gender Equality
18	Violence at Work
19	Violence at School
20	Violence against Children and Girls
21	Public Order and Public Spaces
22	Health Services
24	METHODOLOGY
25	Procedure (methods and data collection)
25	Street interviews
26	Semi structured interviews with stakeholders
26	Safety audit walks
28	Focus groups
28	Web based crowd sourcing
29	Observations
29	Data Validation Meeting and Expert Review
29	Data Analysis
30	FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
31	OVERAL ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES
31	Perceptions of safety and impact on women's mobility
34	Women's vulnerability
35	The impact of mass media on perceptions of safety
37	Forms of gender based violence
40	Institutional and Structural Violence
43	Violence at work
44	Youth Violence
45	Date rape
47	MARGINALIZED WOMEN
48	Sex workers
49	Drug users
49	Children and adults with disabilities
50	Women victims of domestic violence
51	Ethnic Minority Women



52	VIOLENCE IN THE FOCUS OF CENTAR AND CHAIR
53	Perceptions on safety in Municipality of Centar
54	Perceptions on safety in Municipality of Chair
55	Overall Assessment of the Safety Audit Walks
57	PLACES AND SPACES
59	The City Park
59	The Park around the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (PMF)
60	Underpasses
60	Small and hidden paths surrounded by bushes and trees
60	Parking lots
60	Construction sites
60	Cafes and discos
61	Public transport
62	REACTIONS TO VIOLENCE
64	Reporting Violence against Women
66	Self-protection mechanisms
69	Institutional protection
70	Police
75	KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
76	Key findings
79	Conclusions
80	Recommendations
80	Legislative Changes
80	Political and Institutional Commitment
81	Institutional and Internal Systems Capacity Development
85	NGOs
85	Donor Agencies
85	Limitations of our study
87	REFERENCES

Glossary of Acronyms Used in the Study

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women

CoE

Council of Europe

CSR

Center for Social Work (Centar za Socijalna Rabota)

DV

Domestic Violence

ECtHR

European Court of Human Rights

HOPS

Healthy Options Project Skopje

ICCPR

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

REACTOR

Reactor – Research in Action

NAPGE

National Action Plan for Gender Equality

NCGE

National Council for Gender Equality

UN

United Nations

UN Women

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

VAWG

Violence against Women and Girls





Executive Summary

Violence against women includes physical, psychological and sexual harm which is directed against women because of their gender. This study is an attempt to provide insight into gender-based violence against women in public spaces in the city of Skopje in general, but it also includes an in-depth analysis of two municipalities, Centar and Chair.

The study looks at the extent and different dimensions of violence against women in public spaces, focusing primarily on women's perceptions of safety and the impact this has on their lives, as well as the forms of violence they experience and what strategies they have at their disposal to deal with the violence.

The findings are based on the results from 780 interviews with women in public spaces (390 per municipality), 28 structured interviews with relevant stakeholders (public enterprises, NGOs, government etc.), 8 safety audit walks (4 per municipality) with 29 participants, 7 focus groups with 51 participants (taxi drivers, sexual workers, waitresses, journalists, bus drivers and controllers, drug users), data from 296 unique visitors to the specially developed website (www.reagiraj-bidibezbedna.mk) and 70 purposeful observations in public locations in the municipality of Centar. An additional validation meeting was held with 19 representatives of NGOs, local government, Ombudsman and Center for Social Work.

The study shows that there is low public awareness and understanding of the issue of gender-based violence, which does not correspond to the actual extent of the violence experienced by women. Violent acts against women and girls in public spaces (especially sexual violence) are still widely under-reported.

Pressure from women's rights groups and the international community has influenced the political commitment to deal with gender equality and violence against women in the past decade in Macedonia. However, these efforts have mostly had an effect on the legislative framework on domestic violence, while gender-based violence is not recognized as a specific type of violence in legislation. There remain weaknesses and loopholes in the support system, as well as areas that are not sufficiently addressed, such as gender mainstreaming in urban planning.

Women's perceptions of safety are also impacted by the physical appearance of the urban environment so better maintained, wide, well lit urban spaces make women feel safer, and they have an increased feeling of safety during the day compared to night-time.

Women consider open spaces as most unsafe, whereas they generally tend to consider familiar and enclosed public spaces, such as their cars, workplaces or schools, as safer. As a result they point out the following spaces in the city as unsafe: parks, underpasses, small and hidden paths, parking lots, constructions sites, cafes and discos and public transport. Many respondents confirmed the park around the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (PMF) in Gazi Baba Municipality as one of the least safe points in the city.

Women recognize gender as a factor in their perception of the safety. Being a woman, alone and wearing certain type of clothing is considered by women as most important reasons for violence against them.

Access to public spaces for women is limited due to the circulation of the narratives that they are more vulnerable and results in fear from potential abuse. Such narratives are shaped by who uses the public space (for example drug users) as well as the kind of activities/actions that take place in the specific spaces (for example provision of commercial sexual services), the context (outcries of public violence), sensationalistic reporting of brutal cases of violence by the media, personal experiences with violent attacks and a general feeling of vulnerability. Thus, women's reactions to violence in public spaces are restrained mobility (constricted to places/spaces they feel safe in) as one of the main self-defense mechanisms, which they combine with various others.

Women in public spaces in Skopje face various forms of gender-based violence: rude comments, unwanted sexual attention, staring, whistling, touching, pinching, physical violence, sexual violence, maltreatment, harassment, rape, etc. Some women clearly identify the violence in all its forms and the others do not recognize it and sometimes even justify it by providing alibis (women's behavior, looks or clothes which, according to them, provokes the violence). Being subjected to the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence (such as staring, whistling, sexual comments), on a regular basis has led many women to merely accept it as an inevitable part of being in public spaces.

It is worrisome that women rated the likelihood of something happening to a woman around the city as very likely. Even though physical violence is generally not expected, it is nevertheless worrying that almost one in five women rated sexual attacks as likely.

The study shows that prevailing attitudes and beliefs in Macedonian community tend to present violence against women as not so important or even worse, as instigated by the women and this is the reason why some forms of violence are tolerated and rarely sanctioned.

Institutions in Macedonia (such as hospitals, schools, work place, police) often ignore violence and thus contribute to perpetuating a system of inequalities through verbal violence, exclusion and discrimination that occur within and are not sanctioned by the system.

Gender-based violence among pupils and high school students is widespread. Most of the teachers, management and pupils do not recognize the specific and various forms of violence (for example bullying) and school employees fail to recognize the "internal" reasons for the violence, but rather see it as negative influence from the "outside".

Gender-based violence among youth violence takes the forms of partner violence, with girls not being able to differentiate among love and jealousy. As a result, girls have difficulty recognizing rape because they link it to notions of strangers attacking them, rather than to psychological coercion and blackmailing by intimate partners or people they know.

Psychological aggression, threats and insults at work are still perceived as mostly (disrupted) personal relations between co-workers and superiors, thus failing to recognize the social and political context of the work relations, which are not immune to negative stereotypes, sexism and gender-based power struggles.

Sexual workers, drug users, women with disabilities and minority women are in the group of women particularly affected by violence due to the nature of their work/disability/ethnicity, and

are also more limited in possibilities to avoid violence and to access support services. Ethnic minority women experience violence in terms of lack of basic services, especially in areas where they are predominant, such as the lack of a full time gynecologist in the municipality of Shuto Orizari. Domestic violence victims are also more vulnerable and less likely to escape the violence because in addition to suffering from a combination of physical and psychological violence, they often come from low-income families in which the women are economically dependent on their husbands.

The defense mechanisms that women employ to protect themselves from violence vary. They are especially developed among marginalized groups and include, but are not limited to avoiding the use of certain public spaces, avoiding going out at night, avoiding eye contact, as well as wearing certain clothes as a form of protection from potential attacks.

Women react to violence by refraining to use the institutional mechanisms due to a lack of trust towards the institutions of the system. Despite the fact that for most women Police is the key factor in the institutional response to violence against women, there is high percentage of dissatisfaction from police's handling of reported cases. As a result women tend to avoid using this mechanism in cases of violence. An additional reason for the reluctance to report violence is that women are ashamed or afraid that people will judge them or their families.

Due to the fact that violence against women is multifaceted, the approach in dealing with this complex issue requires a variety of actions. This includes adequate legislation, prevention, inclusive support services for victims, and rapid actions against perpetrators that ensure full protection of victims and their dependents.

The study provides a set of recommendations for different stakeholders in order to deal with the issue of VAW in public spaces.



INTRODUCTION



Gender based violence is rarely discussed in Macedonia, particularly among policy and decision makers. In this context, violence against women in public spaces is a topic that has received almost no attention in discussions about gender-based violence in the country. While pressure from women's rights groups and the international community have led to significant improvements in the legislative framework on domestic violence, violence and the threat of violence outside of the private sphere remain heavily under-researched and therefore largely unaddressed.

Any attempt to bring VAWG in public spaces to the forefront of public policies that aim to eliminate violence against women in general must have as its foundation a solid framework of both quantitative and qualitative data. With this in mind, the goal of this scoping study was to collect information that will inform the design of future UN Woman projects or interventions for improving women's and girls' safety when using public spaces in the City of Skopje. The study will also provide insight into the use of public spaces by women and girls and the value and importance of public spaces to women. Furthermore, we expect that the scoping study will contribute to raising awareness about this issue and inspire further research in the area of gender-based violence in public spaces.

The specific objectives of the scoping study are the following:

1. To understand the specific local manifestations of violence against women and girls, in particular public spaces in the targeted communities (Centar and Chair). More specifically, to:
 - o Determine what forms of violence/harassment women face in public spaces in the selected communities;
 - o Determine what factors play a role or contribute to creating greater safety and inclusion for women;
 - o Determine how women respond to harassment and lack of safety;
 - o Examine whether the police are able to address women's rights and violations of those rights and to better understand women's access to the police, as well as their perception of the role of police in safeguarding women's rights; and
 - o Determine what types of spaces are perceived as unsafe or inaccessible to women, especially in the targeted communities;
2. To analyze local development policies, plans and relevant initiatives, as well as supportive infrastructures (identify and assess relevant existing services and projects);
3. To ascertain the position and priorities of significant stakeholders; and
4. To identify and clarify the opinions of the intended beneficiary groups, their positions and priorities, including locating and appraising potential delivery partners for prevention of VAWG.

These objectives are in line with the measures that UN Women supports globally on data collection on VAWG and that facilitate the creation of a new knowledge base, as well as provide much needed initial data on the issue. The project is coherent with UN Women's aim to garner policy attention to neglected forms of violence against women, such as forms of violence in public spaces, including street and sexual harassment, stalking and following, and rape and sexual assault.

This study uses the definition of violence against women as recognized and defined in international legally binding instruments. The United Nations General Assembly defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.' Article

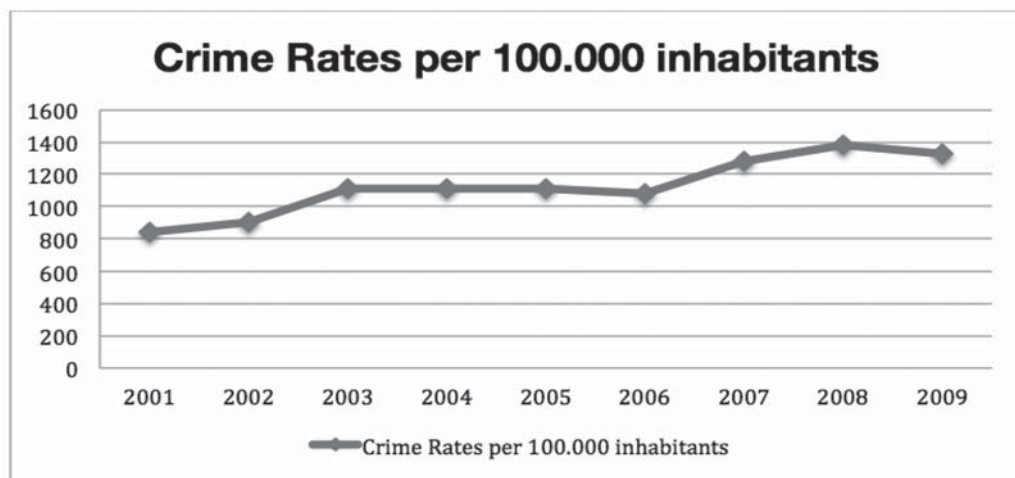
3 of the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence restates these definitions.

The UN Secretary General's In-Depth study on all forms of violence against women examined violence against women using a classification of various forms of violence and the focus of this study based on that classification is violence¹ against women in the community. Gender-based violence differs from other types of violence in that the victim's gender is the primary motive for the act of violence. In other words, "gender-based violence refers to any harm that is perpetrated against a woman and that is both the cause and the result of unequal power relations based on perceived differences between women and men that lead to women's subordinate status in both the private and public spheres. This type of violence is deeply rooted in the social and cultural structures, norms and values that govern society, and is often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence." (CoE, 2011b)

The Situation in Macedonia

The Republic of Macedonia is generally considered a safe country when it comes to violence. Reports from the Ministry of Interior² indicate that when it comes to general crime rates, the number of crimes increased in the period between 2001-2005, reaching its peak in 2003. Crime rates experienced a slight dip in 2006, after which the upward trend continued.

Graph 1. Crime Rate 2001-2009



Graph 1 shows the general crime rates. When talking about violence in public spaces in this study, we mostly refer to assaults, abuse and forceful behavior and participation in and/

¹ 1. Violence against women in the family: (a) Intimate partner violence; and (b) Harmful traditional practices; 2. Violence against women in the community: (a) Femicide: the gender-based murder of a woman; (b) Sexual violence by non-partners; (c) Sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, educational institutions and in sport; and (d) Trafficking in women; 3. Violence against women perpetrated or condoned by the State: (a) Custodial violence against women; and (b) Forced sterilization; 4. Violence against women in armed conflict; 5. Violence against women and multiple discrimination; and 6. Areas requiring enhanced attention: (a) Psychological and emotional abuse and violence; and (b) Incarceration of women in mental hospitals or prisons for not conforming with social or cultural expectations.

² <http://www.mvr.gov.mk/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabindex=0&tabid=392>

or inciting fights in public spaces. All of these incidents (except for the latter) show a steady increase through the years, despite the fact that the general trend of misdemeanors within the area of disturbance of public order and peace is decreasing. According to the Ministry, the most frequent misdemeanors are physical assault and participation in and/or inciting public fights. The statistics for 2011 show an increase in the number of crimes conducted in the context of domestic violence in Republic of Macedonia, with an increase of 23,3% compared to 2010, especially in areas of Strumica, Skopje and Bitola and the increase mostly refers to the act of bodily injury.

One must remember that all these figures refer to reported crimes. As our study shows, there is a significant underreporting of violence against women, making it difficult to assess the exact number at this point. An additional hurdle is the lack of systematic collection of data on violence against women in public spaces in Macedonia. There is data gathered on specific issues, such as violence in schools (UNICEF, Ombudsman), which also cover violence against girls in school. The State Statistical Office does not implement surveys on the perception of public safety. Other institutions and organizations hold data about victims of violence. Overall, there is a need for significant improvements of the data collected.

Another important aspect is the perceived crime and insecurity compared to the real crime rates. For example, the municipality of Chair is publicly perceived as an insecure and more “dangerous” area especially from 2001 until the recent revival of the Old Bazaar area, despite the fact that crimes more often happen in the municipality of Centar in the most frequented spaces, such as the city mall, city square and the city park. As the study shows, the perception of safety is directly linked to how women end up using public spaces.

The Macedonian Legal Context

In compliance with Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (1992), citizens have equal freedoms and rights, irrespective of their sex, race, color, national and social background, political and religious conviction, wealth and social status. The constitution underwent substantial amendments to incorporate the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001, when constitutional provisions concerning political, civil and social rights were revised to further protect minority rights, but failed to incorporate the gender component specifically. (Stojanovska, 2008)

The Republic of Macedonia is a signatory of a number of international acts pertaining to gender equality. Most recently, Macedonia signed the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CoE, 2011) in May 2011, but has not yet ratified it. This is an important step, since the Convention is the first international legally binding document that specifically addresses VAW and sets standards for preventing violence against women (including domestic violence), protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators. The Convention has filled in a huge gap in the protection of human rights of women and at the same time extended the protection to all victims of VAW.

Following the ratification of international documents that deal with the issue of violence against women, the Macedonian Parliament adopted the Declaration for Combating Violence against Women (2006), including family violence, conveying the determination of the MPs to fulfill the obligations undertaken by the state. Despite being a signatory of CEDAW, Macedonia reports progress only in combating domestic violence, excluding other types of gender-based violence, as shown in its 4th and 5th periodical reports in Part 5, which refers to the elimination of gender stereotypes and prejudices.

Equality between men and women is additionally implemented within the entirety of legal regulations of the country, adopted since 1992. The regulations and bylaws in effect that deal with this issue are high-level and wide ranging. While there is no legislation that indicates an unequal treatment of women (there are no legally binding privileges or beneficial status for men), there are many areas in practice in which the legislation is not enforced and women still face inequality. We will focus here only on the relevant legislation that regulates or can be a basis for enabling an environment for violence against women, specifically in public spaces.

National Mechanisms for Preventing VAWG: Legislative and Strategic Documents

Underlining the importance of decision-making for gender equality, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia enacted a Declaration on Gender Equality in the Decision Making Process in 1998. The national mechanism for gender equality is represented by the Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Furthermore, the first National Action Plan for Gender Equality, which resulted from the Beijing Conference in 1995, was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in December 1999 and a number of paths and defined directions of activities have since been, or are being, followed through, including the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012 and the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020 that is being drafted at the time of writing.

The general legislation to ensure mainstreaming gender equality is the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (2012) that was adopted in 2006 and amended in 2012. The law provides a framework for gender mainstreaming and aims to overcome the current unfavorable social position of women and men, which is “a result of systematic discrimination or structural gender inequality resulting from historical and socio-cultural conditions”. It prescribes special measures (affirmative, encouraging and program measures) for achieving gender equality. However, the law does not deal with violence explicitly, although it does specifically prohibit discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment.

The framework Anti-discrimination Law (2010) was adopted in 2010 and entered into force at the beginning of 2011. The law defines discrimination on nineteen different grounds, including sex and gender, and specifically points out aspects that are important when dealing with gender based violence, acknowledging harassment, including sexual harassment, as a discriminatory practice and including victimization as discrimination.

A novelty introduced with this Law is the setting up of the Commission for Protection from Discrimination as an independent body³ funded by the State. In 2011 the Commission had a total of 60 cases, of which four on the grounds of sex and five on the grounds of gender. Data from the Commission regarding the outcomes of the cases⁴ leads to the conclusion that the mechanism is still new and relatively unknown, which is probably why it is underused by the citizens. In addition to this, the fact that processing cases takes a very long time shows that these types of cases are not easy to tackle and this is further reinforced with the lack of institutional and human resources capacities of the Commission, criticized largely by the civil society sector (Najcevska & Imeri, 2012).

In the Macedonian legal system, all legislation regulates gender-based violence within the context of domestic violence. In the Criminal Code (1996), domestic violence is not determined as one specific crime but through its special forms under the existing criminal acts.

³<http://www.kzd.mk/mk>

⁴<http://www.kzd.mk/mk/prestavki> last accessed 17.10.2011

The Criminal Code defines violence as abuse, rude insults, threats to safety, conducting violent attacks and through this creating among the public a feeling of insecurity, threat or fear (Article 385). There is a separate section in the Criminal Code defining crimes against sexual freedoms and sexual morals and providing consequent punishments. Such crimes are defined as attacks on the life or body with the use of force, forced intercourse, as well as threats thereof. The punishment is higher if the forced intercourse is over a person with a disability or a minor. The law provides punishment for obscene behavior in front of others and is especially strict if this occurs in front of children. Pimping is also included as punishable violence, as is presenting pornographic material to a minor. Additionally, a parent, adopting parent or a guardian abusing a child, including forcing him or her to work, beg, or perform other activities that are damaging for the minor, will be subject to imprisonment.

Sexual assault as defined in the Criminal Code requires the use of force as one of the elements of the crime. This was confirmed in our analysis of court cases. All decisions are specifically focused in their reasoning on the force used, the duration of the force used and whether it can be concluded that such force can be assessed as truly forcing the victim to the criminal act. This is not in accordance with the Istanbul Convention and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and was additionally pointed out as a shortcoming by the ICCPR overview of the country's report. Despite this, the country has not amended the Criminal Code to reflect this concern. However, according to the latest Report by the Ministry of Justice to be submitted to the UN regarding the implementation of the ICCPR (2012), the ministry reports that a working group has been established within the ministry that is working on drafting amendments to the Criminal Code, specifically to amend the definition of rape. These amendments will be based on the jurisprudence of the ECtHR and the Istanbul Convention.

Rape is addressed under Article 186 of the Criminal Code. What is noticeable in this article is that rape is regulated with specific punitive measures only when a third party attempts, threatens or performs sexual abuse against an individual, while similar courses are not explicitly codified in cases of rape within the family. While in case of sexual abuse by a third party the public attorney is entitled to start a case, this is not the case with abuses within the private sphere, where the victim is expected to initiate the indictment herself/himself (Stojanovska, 2008).

While some measures have been undertaken to address domestic violence, other forms of VAW have not been systematically tackled and remain unaddressed. For example, a novelty that was introduced in the current Family Law is the introduction of the right of the victim of domestic violence to submit a request for provisional protective measures⁵, either directly to the competent court or via the Centers for Social work. These measures are to be adopted by the Court within 7 days from receiving the proposal, but if there is doubt that there is a serious threat to the life and health of a family member, the court is to reach a decision within 3 days. Not complying with the obligations set out in the Family Law results in penalties. These measures are not available for victims of other types of gender-based violence.

Along with the amendments to the laws, violence has been addressed at the policy level in two strategic documents. The first one is the 2007-2012 National Action Plan for Gender Equality

⁵The protective measures are: 1) prohibit making threats of carrying out domestic violence; 2) prohibit abuse, harassment, phone calls, contact or communication in any other way with the member of the family, directly or indirectly; 3) prohibit approaching to the location of residence, schools, work post or particular location which is visited by another member of the family on regular bases; 4) removal from the home regardless of the ownership until the final sentence is reached by the competent court; 5) prohibit owning firearms or any other type of weapon or confiscate any such weapon; 6) require to return all objects necessary to meet the daily needs of the family; 7) award compulsory family alimony; 8) order the defendant to receive adequate counselling; 9) order compulsory therapy, if the perpetrator is addicted to alcohol and other psychotropic substances or has an illness; 10) order to compensate the medical and other costs incurred as a result of domestic violence; and 11) pass any other measure which the court deems necessary in order to ensure security and well-being of other family members

(NAPGE, 2007), which, among other priorities, is committed to removing all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. However, the specific actions are again focused in the sphere of domestic violence and trafficking of women. In terms of violence against women, some of the objectives outlined with the NAPGE are enabling the provision of relevant statistics on the prevalence of violence against women, including domestic violence; improved information, strengthened public awareness and education on the issue of all forms of violence; improvement and efficient implementation of the legislation, institutional protection and coordination and co-operation in the fight against violence and suppression of family violence. However, not much has been done in this regard and it remains to be seen how the new Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020 will address this shortcoming.

Another important document is the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence (2008-2011), which provides a set of overarching objectives and intervention strategies in the area of prevention, protection and cross-sectoral coordination. The Report from the Study of the National Poll on Domestic Violence (Popovska et al., 2011) confirms that domestic violence victims recognize that DV is a criminal act and are aware of existing policies; however, they are less aware of specific steps that are at their disposal, which gives us some insight into the efficiency of the available mechanisms.

Economic strengthening of women who are victims of domestic violence is an integral part of the National Action Plan for Employment (2008-2011) and its main goal is the reintegration of women who are victims of domestic violence into the labor market. However, no measures have been designed to address women who are victims of other forms of violence.

Access to justice for victims of violence is one of the most important issues when we talk about violence against women. The Law on Free Legal Aid has enabled domestic violence victims and victims of trafficking to be included in the provision of free legal aid, but until July 2011 only six cases have been allowed such concessions. Again, women who are victims of other types of violence are not covered with this law. This Law also enables the provision of free legal aid in the protection of children and minors, but practice has shown that most of the cases where it has been used are cases of enforcing child support/alimony payments by parents in divorce cases.

Violence at Work

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, every citizen has the right to work, to a free choice of job, protection at work and financial support in case of unemployment, which means that there is no explicit gender discrimination in access to jobs.

Violence at work is also treated in the Law on Labor Relations (2010), but treated mostly as discrimination, such as prohibiting sexual harassment (Article 9). The latest amendments to this Law included mobbing - psychological violence in the workplace – and defined it as “any negative behavior by an individual or a group which is frequently repeated (for the duration of at least 6 months) and represents harming the dignity, integrity and honor of employees, creates fear or creates unfriendly, humiliating or insulting behavior, whose final aim might be stopping employment or leaving the work position” (Article 9a). The alleviating circumstances are that the burden of proving the mobbing (or rather its absence) is on the accused and the employee cannot suffer any repercussions during an ongoing court procedure (Article 11). The Criminal Code (1996) in Article 143 also regulates the abuse of employment rights as abuse conducted while performing work obligations, defining it as threats, insults or treating somebody in a manner that humiliates that person's dignity and personality.

There are still no cases of mobbing reported to the Ombudsman by women. In an interview with Reactor, the responsible Deputy Ombudsman reported that they have identified one case of mobbing against a woman (within a public enterprise), but the victim did not want to complain on the grounds of mobbing, since she was not aware of it and insisted that the complaint be filed as discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity.

The lack of cases related to gender-based discrimination brought before the courts is a matter of concern for the UN CEDAW Committee. In its latest conclusions for the country (2006), it called on Macedonia to enhance training for lawyers and judges on the Convention and on the communications and inquiry procedures provided in the Optional Protocol to the Convention. It also requested that the country commit to raising awareness among women about their rights under the Convention and to building the capacity of women to claim their right under the existing institutions. No substantial efforts have been made in this regard so far.

Violence at School

The Laws on Primary (2008) and Secondary Education (2002), as well as the Law regulating higher education (2008), do not contain provisions promoting gender inequality. The non-discriminatory gender treatment in the process of education is clear and explicit. The compulsory primary and secondary education applies to all children in Macedonia, regardless of their gender. However, women's share in the total number of pupils with no education remains higher. Today, one in ten children is not enrolled in primary education, and every fifth child is not enrolled in a secondary education institution, even though it is compulsory (State Statistical Office, Women and Men in Macedonia, 2012). The further analysis will show that the lack of education makes women more vulnerable to violence and this is a point of concern for further policies.

Table 1. Net Enrolment and Drop Out Rates in Primary and Secondary Education

Year	Net enrolment % Primary education		Net enrolment % Secondary education		Drop-out rate %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
2009	91	91	69	71	19	14
2010	91	91	70	72	17	14
2011	92	92	80	81	15	12

Source: State Statistical Office

As for violence within the schools, the initial versions of the Laws on Primary and Secondary Education did not even mention violence in schools and ways to counter it. However, the amendments to the Law on Primary Education from February 2011 (Article 64-a) include a novelty in that the resolving of issues with violent school children is being tackled by sending parents (legal custodians) to counseling and involves the school pedagogue and psychologist following a Counseling Program developed by the Pedagogical Department and adopted by the Minister of Education. If parents avoid the counseling, a misdemeanor procedure can be initiated against them. However, the amendments failed to prescribe procedures for systematically tackling violence at schools and providing support for its victims.

This is worrisome because in our study schools were identified as places with a high prevalence of violence. In 2007, the Ombudsman produced a special country-wide report that focused on the occurrence of physical, psychological and sexual violence against children in schools, which concluded that the violence against children in Macedonia within regular schools is a huge

problem and that physical punishment is on the rise. One third of the pupils (34.39%) reported physical violence by teachers, mostly with slaps (25.56%) and hair or ear pulling (24.28%). More than one third of pupils (37.6%) reported psychological violence from teachers. While this data cannot be segregated by municipality or by gender, since the gender of the child was not part of the questionnaire used in the survey, it is still a valid indicator and a cause for concern for girls at school. It is positive that the Deputy Ombudsman responsible for children's rights agreed in her interview for this study to include gender as demographic indicator in similar upcoming surveys.

Even though there was no question about the gender of the responding pupils, if we take into consideration that more than two thirds of the victims of domestic violence⁶ are women and victims of sexual violence against children⁷ are girls, we can speculate that the ratio between girls and boys as victims of sexual violence is similar. Therefore, it is worrisome that the Ombudsman reported that sexual violence is also widespread in primary school, with every fourth pupil in Macedonia having been a victim of some form of sexual violence (25.92%). Half of them never reported the sexual violence (50.5%) because they felt ashamed. One third (31.8%) reported the violence, mostly at home or in school, but in devastating 70% of those cases nothing was done following the report. In the remaining 30% of the cases, the teacher was sanctioned.

In the 2011 Annual Report the Ombudsman was in particular concerned that children are often violent with each other with verbal and physical attacks, and often use even weapons, which can sometimes have fatal consequences. Therefore, the Ombudsman raised his concerns regarding the general safety in schools, which resulted with increased surveillance and regular attendance from police. However, violence in schools continues. As a result, a national campaign against violence in school has been initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science and supported by UNICEF. The campaign titled Schools without Violence (www.beznasilstvo.mk) provides support to teachers, pupils, and parents as well as guides local communities in their effort to establish local support services. However, the campaign does not specifically focus on or deal with gender-based violence.

Violence against Children and Girls

Macedonia ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on December 2nd, 1993 and has since⁸ been obligated to create a policy and institutional framework in compliance with the three clusters, ensuring that children and young people freely participate in adopting critical decisions (CRPM, 2007). In terms of protecting children from violence, the Law on Child Protection (2010) in Article 9 very specifically and extensively prohibits all forms of discrimination (direct or indirect) and especially prohibits all types of sexual abuse and violence against children. The state and all institutions of the system are obligated to undertake all measures for securing the rights of children and preventing all forms of discrimination. The law does not explicitly include the rights of children in protection and participation. Bylaws are not adopted (guidelines, regulations) that will further regulate questions about the procedures and protocols that should be followed in case of sexual abuse of children and juveniles. In this context, a system that will gather data about these cases (reported, investigated, prosecuted, and convicted) needs to be established, as well as adequate services provided for care and treatment of victims of such crimes.

⁶ As reported by the Ministry of Interior

⁷ As reported by UNICEF that analyzed reported data within the Center for Social Care and the Courts

⁸ 1) Provision – child-friendly legal framework; city-wide children's rights strategy; child impact assessment and evaluation; children's budget; regular state of the city's children report; making children's rights known; independent advocacy for children. 2) Protection – children's rights unit or coordinating mechanism – developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspectives; and 3) Participation – promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes." (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 1989).

In this context, the Law on Juvenile Justice (2007) aims to protect juveniles from crime, violence and any form of endangerment of their rights and freedoms, including when they are perpetrators of criminal acts. This law also ensures protection of special rights in accordance with the Convention for the rights of children and other ratified international agreements.

Although there is no systematic gathering of data regarding violence against children and juveniles, some partial data can be accessed through court cases and MOI databases. The state council for juvenile justice states in its latest report that

Institutions that gather data are the Police, Courts and the Center for Social Care. Regrettably, such data is not collected in the country, nor are they processed and this is a very important indicator that should secure information about the scope and characteristics of juvenile victimization.

State Council Juvenile Justice, May 2012

From the analysis done by the Ministry of Justice for the court cases in 2008 and 2009 and Ministry of Interior data for 2010, it can generally be concluded that the majority of the crimes committed against children and juveniles fall under the 'statutory rape against a minor who is not 14 years of age'. Other more frequent crimes are 'sexual assault against a helpless person', 'sexual assault by abuse of position', 'mediation in prostitution', 'displaying pornographic material to a juvenile', 'production and distribution of child pornography', and 'incest'. The age of the offenders is between 30 and 55, and the age of the victims is between 10 and 14 years. The Ministry of Interior reports a total of 89 crimes, committed against 90 juveniles and 90 crimes committed against 75 juveniles, for 2009 and 2010 respectfully. A total of 196 persons were under investigations for those crimes. In half of the cases (51%) the offenders knew the victims, of whom the majority were girls. The situation is the opposite when it comes to the offenders, where almost all of them are men. The youngest offender is 12 years old, and the oldest 69. The youngest victim is a 3 year old. The vast majority of the crimes have taken place in enclosed spaces (houses, unmaintained objects, additional rooms, etc.), while the rest are conducted in open spaces.

Public Order and Public Spaces

Since the Criminal Law is concerned with severe crimes, many of the outbreaks of violence that take place in the public spaces are covered with the Law on Public Order and Peace Misdemeanors (2007), which provides regulation on behaviors or actions that belittle, humiliate and insult citizens or endanger their safety, or create insecurity, disable free movement of citizens in public places or disturb the realization of their rights and duties. This Law defines public space as the place in which there is free access for an undefined number of people without any conditions (streets, schools, squares, roads, picnic grounds, docks, waiting rooms, bars, cafes, restaurants, shops etc.) or under certain conditions (sports stadiums and playgrounds, public transport, cinemas, theater and concert halls, exhibition spaces, gardens, and similar), as well as other places that for a certain period of time are used for such purposes (grounds or premises in which public events, competitions, performances are organized). However, the law is applicable even when the offence takes place in a space that is not considered public, as long as it is accessible in the view of the public space (balcony, terrace, tree, steps and similar) or if the consequence appeared in a public place. Failure to comply with the law is sanctioned with fines.

Public spaces should be constructed and developed in ways that enable both freedom and security of movement within them. This, as well as creating conditions for life and work of citizens, should be crucial to the Law on Spatial and Urban Planning (2011). Yet the law is very technical and does not look at urban elements from the point of view where these can influence people's (especially women's) well-being while they are using the public spaces. It is more

focused on resolving property issues related to construction. For example, all plans consist of graphical, numerical (technical) and narrative explanations. Narrative explanations (for all plans) include strategic assessment of their impact on the environment, measures for cultural heritage protection and for protection of nature, as well as measures for protection from destruction. People's safety and security are not mentioned and do not seem to play a role in deciding what will be built, despite the legal opportunity for creating an advisory body⁹ by the municipality that would convey the viewpoints, opinions and needs of the citizens and legal entities and can provide initiatives, suggestions, directions for planning solutions. Besides experts, this body would include citizens and NGO representatives. However, there is no data on its work and recommendations provided.

Health Services

Health institutions are an important link in the chain of protection from violence. Unfortunately, doctors are often pointed out as the weakest link in preventing violence and providing support, since many of them want to avoid being witnesses in court and are not fulfilling their responsibilities in the sense of clearly linking health issues with acts of violence (domestic violence, rape cases).

One of the responsibilities of doctors prescribed by the Law on Inventories in the Health Sector (2009) is preparing individual inventories. These documents consist of all medical data about their patients, such as diagnoses, treatments, analysis, opinions and other important facts related to the health of the patients. The health institutions must include in the inventories data about violence, home injuries, as well as occupational diseases and psychoses among others, which are then sent to the Public Health Institute. This data is processed for obtaining health statistics that inform policies and plans. Additionally, individuals can use their personal inventories to exercise their rights. However, according to data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for 2011, from a total of 733 domestic violence cases reported in the centers for Social Work, only 7 have been reported from the health sector.

On the policy level, the Law on Public Health (2010) prescribes the establishment of Public Health Councils at the municipal level, which are responsible for analyzing issues and policies in this regard, as well as for providing initiatives or proposals to the municipal authorities. However, in practice, these seem to provide a more general approach to public health, dealing with health issues of general concern, such as epidemics and disasters. The Annual National Program for Public Health for 2012 adopted by the Government in 2012 defines actions regarding the protection of safety and health in the work place to be undertaken by the 10 existing Public Health Centers in the country, the Public Health Institute and the Institute for Labor Medicine. Most of the activities planned for 2012 are in the sphere of awareness raising, analyses and reports, educational activities in pre-schools, schools, companies and associations, assessment of water, air and food quality etc. The annual program does not plan for activities or analysis related to health risks and impact of violence on women living/and or working under violence, assessment of the role of doctors in support of victims of violence, women's (victims of violence) needs from the health sector, assessment of the use of protocols for doctors when dealing with cases of violence, etc.

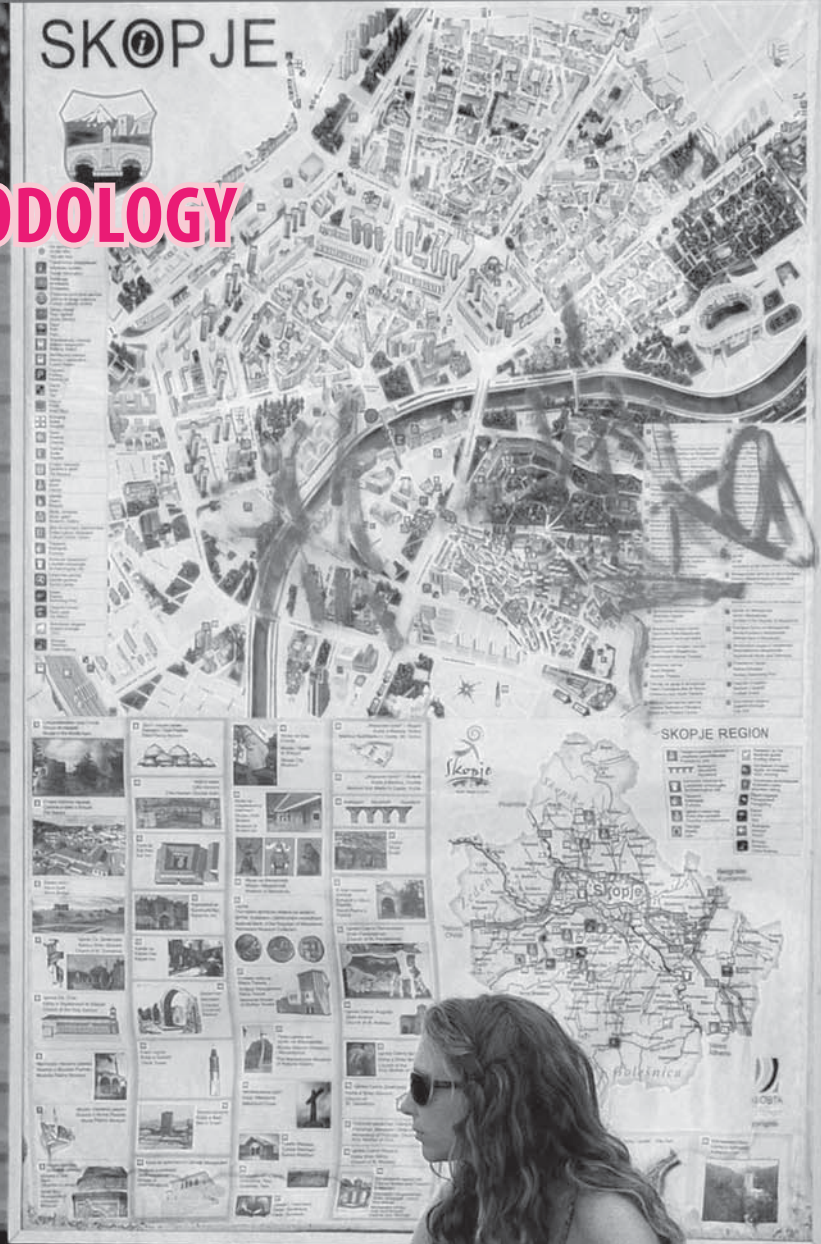
⁹ Law on Spatial and Urban Planning, Article 17.

The overview of the legal context shows that the legal framework is in place ensuring gender equality and sanctioning violence, regardless whether it is performed publicly, at work or in the home. Criminal acts performed as domestic violence even carry a higher legal consequence (penalty) for the perpetrator. While this shows that a system of protection for the victims of violence exists, gender-based violence is not recognized as a specific type of violence and hence does not have specific repercussions. More specifically, gender-based violence in public spaces is not taken into account within existing legislation on VAW. Public safety issues of both women and men are not considered in laws that determine urban development, while laws that regulate public order and peace hold specific penalties for various types of misdemeanors (however, without engaging in the reasons for them, as well as their consequences). The overview of the legal framework leads us to the conclusion that the sole affirmation of the equal economic and social rights of men and women in the public sphere without tackling the social and cultural norms regulating the gender relations cannot guarantee substantial equality between men and women.



METHODOLOGY

SKOPJE



The scoping study was based on a methodology developed specifically for this study, and was revised and approved by UN Women. A detailed description of the methodology is contained in a separate document, which can be accessed upon request. In this part of the report, we focus on the methodology used for gathering primary data of the scoping study. In addition to the primary data, we used desktop analysis and review of the legislation, as well as academic and scientific literature to inform the development of the methodology.

The primary data collection was based on a mixed method approach composed of:

1. On-site survey with women who use public spaces;
2. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders;
3. Focus groups;
4. Safety audit walks;
5. Structured observations;
6. Web- and smartphone app-based crowd sourcing.

Procedure (methods and data collection)

The data collection process took place from March to August 2012. Data was gathered in 6 different ways, depending on the method employed.

Street interviews

In July and August 2012, 4 female interviewers, of whom 2 ethnic Albanians, conducted on-site purposive interviews with a convenience sample of 800 women above the age of 16 (400 per municipality). Prior to the data collection, the interviewers were instructed on interviewing about gender violence in order to prepare them for their task.

The interviewers approached women to participate in the interviews in the most frequented public spaces in the two municipalities covered in this study: 39 different streets, including bus stops, 5 different open markets, 6 public institutions, 2 hospitals, a library, 7 shopping malls and grocery stores, 2 discotheques, 5 coffee houses, the riverbank, a hair stylist salon, the football stadium, the city park and the city square. These are the most prominent and exhaustive public spaces in the two municipalities. Due to a heat wave in August, pedestrian traffic was reduced and data collection in those weeks was either paused or slowed.

An average interview lasted 15 minutes, after which all of the respondents were given contact information for help services and similar institutions. After the initial interviews, informal sessions were held with women that found the interviews to be distressing, as well as with the interviewers. The data from the paper pencil questionnaires was then double entered in SPSS by two junior researchers and screened for accuracy of entry and validity of responses.

The questionnaire was validly completed with 780 female respondents above the age of 16. The mean age was 32.7 years and the oldest respondent was 80. The age was distributed in the following age groups: 6.6% were 18 or younger at the time of the interview; 27.3% were between 19 and 24 years old; 29.2% between 25 and 34; 14.6% between 35 and 44; 16.1% between 45 and 54; and 6.2% were 55 or older. 57 respondents, or 7.3% of the sample did not disclose their age.

Most of the respondents lived in Skopje for more than five years (93.9%). The ethnic make up of the respondents was mostly Macedonian in Centar (81.4%) and mostly Albanian in Chair (80.6%). In total, 355 or 45.5% of our respondents were ethnic Macedonians; 344 or 44.1% were ethnic Albanians. In addition to the ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanians, there were Roma (0.5%),

Serbian (2.6%), Turkish (4.4%), Vlah (0.6%), Bosnian (1.4%) and Croatian respondents (all in very small percentages).

The sample had an above average educational attainment, with 65.15% of the sample either currently in higher education or with a higher education degree. Only 2 or 0.3% of our respondents had either no education or some elementary school level education; 26 or 3.3% had completed an elementary level education; 217 or 27.8% had graduated high-school; and 515 or 66% of our sample are in higher education or have a higher education degree. 20 or 2.6% of our respondents did not disclose their educational level.

The average household income of the respondent was also slightly above average; however, almost a quarter of the respondents did not disclose their household income. Most of the respondents were married or in a relationship (56.4%) and 39.9% also had children.

366 or 46.9% of the respondents lived in the area in which the interview was taking place; 11 or 1.4% go to school in the area; 202 or 25.9% work in the area; 74 or 9.5% were shopping in the area; 102 or 13.1% were visiting someone in the area; 70 or 8.8% were in the area for a different reason. 491 or 62.9% reported they often use the public space where the interview was conducted; 150 or 19.2% use the space only occasionally; and 47 or 6.0% are rarely in the area.

Semi structured interviews with stakeholders

From March to July 2012, twenty-three semi-structured interviews were held with the most prominent stakeholders. Additionally, five interviews were held at the end of August and beginning of September with representatives of key institutions.

All interviews were held at a place chosen as convenient by the stakeholder, which in all but one case were at the offices of the interviewee. Prior to the interview, they received an information sheet and a participation consent form that was signed by all of the stakeholders. 16 of the 23 explicitly asked for total anonymity.

The interviews were held by two interviewers and were audio recorded, except in cases where the interviewee did not give consent for recording. All interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, were in free answering format and only the topic of the conversations was determined by the interviewers. Notes were taken during and immediately after the interviews.

The stakeholders who participated in the semi-structured interviews included a representative from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the superintendent of the Sector for Prevention of Violence from the Interior Ministry, one representative from each of the municipalities concerned, as well as relevant NGO representatives. Unfortunately, a convenient appointment could not be reached with the Health Ministry, as well as the Institute for Public Health even after multiple efforts to secure their participation, so the official opinions of these relevant institutions were not included in the study. One representative from an international organization rejected providing official statements and only provided an off-the-record unofficial interview and an explanation.

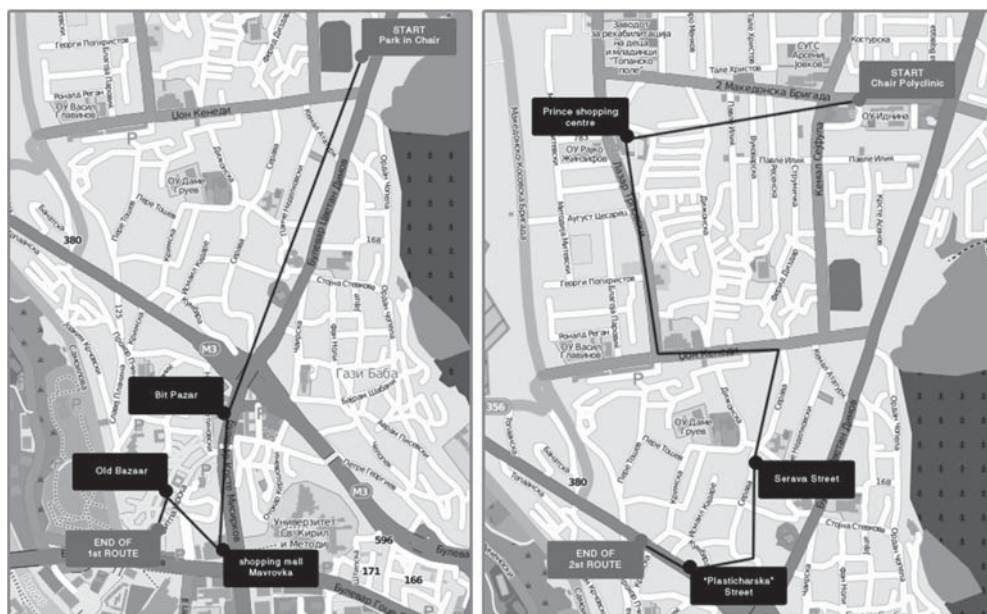
Safety audit walks

The safety audit walks took place on the 3rd and 6th of July 2012 in Centar and 11th and 13th of July 2012 in Chair.

In Chair the first walk took place during the day and the second in the evening, after 8 pm when it was dark out. In Centar it was the other way round. In each municipality two routes were

walked at the same time by two different groups. In Centar the first route started at MTV - the National TV station and then included MKC – the Youth Cultural Centre, MOB – the Macedonian Opera and Ballet, the Stone Bridge, the Central Square, the riverbank and ended at City Park. The second route started at the municipal offices in Debar Maalo with a walk to the shopping mall Zebra, continued with the inner city residential area Gradski dzid, the Green Market, City Mall and ended at the offices of the Municipality of Centar.

Illustration 1. Safety Audit Walks in Chair



In Chair, the first route started at the Park in Chair and then included the large market Bit Pazar, the shopping mall Mavrovka and ended at the Old Bazaar. The second route started at the Chair Polyclinic, Prince shopping centre and the streets Serava and ended on the so-called Plasticharska street. Prior to the first walk, a preparatory meeting was held where the methodology and the questionnaires for evaluation of the safety in assigned public spaces were presented and reviewed. Participants' comments were taken into account and remaining issues were clarified. All participants filled in a separate questionnaire for each of the key locations/stops made on the way. The duration of the walks was between 2 and 2.5 hours.

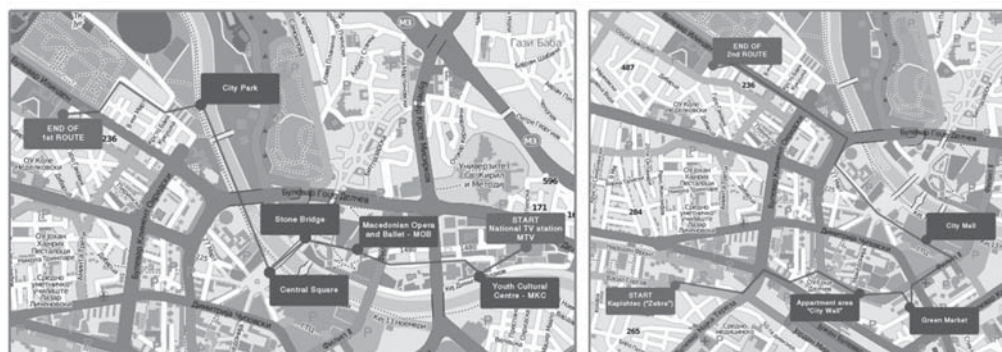
All in all, 69 questionnaires were filled in Chair, 100 in Centar. The data from the paper pencil questionnaires was double entered by two junior researchers in SPSS.

After the walk, a joint evaluation session with the group in Centar took place. The factors that affect and contribute to the safety of the environment (negative and positive aspects of the urban environment) were the main topic of the discussion. In Chair, the evaluation was done by telephone due to the heat wave and the unavailability of certain participants due to summer holidays.

A total of 29 unique participants walked at least one of the safety audit routes. Fourteen observers went only one time, the others had at least two, mostly in the same municipality during both day and night. Three observers participated in the walks in both municipalities. One

police officer and one representative of the concerned municipality took part in each of the 8 routes. All other observers were civil society representatives. A debriefing meeting was held with five representatives in the premises of the municipality of Centar after the completion of the safety audit walks to discuss the findings and prioritize recommendations.

Illustration 2. Safety Audit Walks in Centar



Focus groups

Between May 3rd and September 10th seven focus groups were organized and held between our research team and 6 vulnerable groups (sex workers and waitresses), as well as groups more likely to witness violence in public spaces (taxi drivers, employees in the Public Transport Company of the city of Skopje, crime journalists and representatives from HOPS -the Health Options Project Skopje). The focus groups were held in our premises, except for the focus group with the sex workers, which were held in the HOPS offices where they were in a more familiar environment. Prior to the group interviews, participants were briefed and asked to sign an informed consent and permission form. Participants were paid 500 denars (ca. 9 Euros) for their participation. All of the participants agreed to the terms of participation and signed the form. Sessions that lasted 90 minutes were held with each focus group, with a member of our team moderating the discussion. All discussions were audio taped and notes were taken during and immediately after the interviews.

51 participants took part in the focus groups: 12 waitresses, 17 taxi drivers (7 from Centar, 10 from Chair), 5 HOPS representatives; 5 crime journalists, 6 sex workers and 6 bus drivers and controllers. All the participants were contacted via NGOs, social media and personal connections, except for the employees in the Public Transport Enterprise of the city of Skopje. Except for the occupation of the respondents and place of residence, there was no other criteria for participation and as soon as the quota for the focus group was reached, the focus groups were organized and held.

Web based crowd sourcing

Starting May 2012 the open source software crowd sourcing platform Ushahidi¹⁰ was adopted, translated (in Macedonian and Albanian)¹¹ and designed by our web team (one web developer and one web designer), creating a unique web based platform for sharing experiences and witness testimonies of violence against women in public spaces¹². Additionally, a web page with graphic and text instructions for the use of the platform was created with Word Press and

¹⁰ <http://ushahidi.com/>

¹¹ Additional translations were done for the Ushahidi Smartphone apps for iPhone and Android.

¹² Available at <http://reagiraj-bidibezbedna.mk/>

uploaded on our server¹³. 18 initial violence reports (derived from reports released by basic courts Skopje 1 and 2 verdicts) were added on the platform by our team, to make the platform informative and give incentive for disclosure.

The site was launched on 15.08.2012 and promoted on the Reactor facebook page. The story was shared by partner NGO's pages, web sites, electronic and printed media. Only 24 hours after the launch of the React! web-site, 296 unique visitors visited the site, and there were 47 additional views from returning visitors. Most of the views came from Macedonia, but the site got visits from neighbouring Serbia, Germany, United States of America, Greece, France, Croatia, Austria, Belgium and even Brazil. After the first month, there were a total of 5.932 visits, out of which 5.379 unique visitors that had totaled 47.000 page views. Most of the views come from Macedonia (88.8%), and more importantly, out of them 72.84% are from Skopje. Most of the visitors are new (78%), and almost one in ten is a returning visitor. 85.11% of the traffic was referral (mostly from daily newspaper Vest, and www.fakulteti.mk, but also Facebook, Twitter and Radio MOF's web site); 12.83% was direct i.e. visitors typed the name of the website directly, and 2.06% search traffic.

The website has generated a total of 31 incidents reported, 4 unapproved reports, and mapped out 76 public spaces.

Observations

From 14th to 26th of June, but only in the municipality of Centar, 70 purposeful observations in public locations were conducted by 2 junior researchers. Except for assessing the approximate male-to-female ratio on a particular public space and whether women were seen alone or accompanied by men, they were also observing for harassment or violence. The paper pencil observation sheets were then double entered in SPSS. The subject of observation were all men and women who happened to be at the public spaces observed at the time of observation.

Data Validation Meeting and Expert Review

A validation meeting was held at the beginning of September in which the initial findings of the study were presented to 19 representatives of NGOs, local government, Ombudsman and Center for Social Work. The participants provided their comments and recommendations for the study and these were used to inform the final chapter of this report.

Data Analysis

The data from the street interviews, safety audit walks and the observations was analysed with the SPSS software package. We mostly used descriptive statistics (frequencies, central tendency and dispersion statistics), but also, where allowed, inferential statistics about differences between subgroups or municipalities (t-tests and ANOVAs), as well as correlation analysis were performed. The data from the focus groups was content analyzed through free listening of the tapes; note taking and notes comparison. There were no strict restrictions to the analysis. The web site data was analyzed with Google Analytics tools for visits and internal verification of complaints process for the violence reports. Every submission is read by our research team before being officially posted on the platform.

¹³ Available at <http://prikazni.reagiraj-bidibezbedna.mk/kako-da-ja-koristite/>

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY



OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC SPACES

Perceptions of safety and impact on women's mobility

The use of public places is a form of social activity, even when carried out by a single person. Therefore, the issue of safety, security and the possibility for uninterrupted use of these spaces are in the focus of interest of this study. With regards to the central question about how safe women perceive the city and whether or not they are afraid to use public spaces freely, we received mixed responses. On the one hand, as we will see below, the results from the street survey revealed that many women perceive 'the outside' as unsafe: more than a third of our female respondents said they are always or sometimes afraid to go out alone during the day and almost 60% reported being afraid to go out alone at night. On the other hand, most of the women in the interviews and focus groups without hesitation responded that they feel safe in Skopje, and this despite the fact that we were asking the question at a very specific time when ethnic tensions¹⁴ were growing in Skopje and physical violence was on the increase. This included ethnic-based assaults and attacks, especially in public transportation, in which the majority of the people involved, both victims and attackers, were men and boys. It is important to note these contexts it may have influenced the responses and opinions, i.e., the reason for the overwhelming perception of safety on part of our respondents could be that, at this specific moment in time, they were more likely to perceive means potential victims of violence in public spaces. In this group, women who reported feeling less safe or not safe at all in Skopje said that this problem is not gender specific, i.e., that the reduced safety is a result of the modern times, which are characterized with aggression that is directed equally to men and women. The reason for this discrepancy in the results is likely due to the fact that the interviews and focus groups were conducted at the height of the violence scare, when acts of violence against groups of boys and men were taking place on a daily basis, whereas the street survey was conducted a couple of months later, by which time the tensions had decreased significantly and the collected responses were less likely to be biased by current events.

Going back to the responses from the interviews and focus groups, even though the initial perception of the city as being safe for women was overwhelming among the respondents, what we realized as we delved deeper into the matter of safety was that they were only considering the safety of some spaces in the city. In other words, once we prompted the respondents to think about all the public spaces in the city as opposed to only those they use on a regular basis, it became clear that their assessment of the safety of public spaces in general did not include public spaces that they avoid, but merely those they feel safe enough in to use. This was confirmed by the audit walks (conducted in July, after the tensions had calmed) when women who lived in and used certain areas were more likely to assess them as safe, compared to those women who were exposed to these spaces for the first time.

With regard to the interview and focus group respondents not indicating gender as a factor in their perception of safety, we once again noted differences in the results of the street surveys. An important question in the street survey, in terms of finding out whether women recognize gender based violence, was what factors our respondents felt were contributing to their general sense of safety, i.e., what attributes they felt made them more likely to be attacked. The two leading responses we got to this question were "being a woman" (38.5%) and "being alone"

¹⁴ On April 13th 2012 five men were murdered near Smiljkovsko Ezero (13 April 2012), which led to increased ethnic tensions that spilled into violence in public spaces throughout April and May.

(35.9%), with “clothing” considered a factor by more than a quarter of the respondents.

Table 2. Do (you think) any of these factors affect your personal safety in this area?

Being a woman	38.5%
Being of a certain religion	6.7%
Being of a certain ethnicity	10.0%
Being from out of town	5.5%
Being of a certain age (young or old)	25.2%
Being alone (unaccompanied)	35.9%
Sexual orientation	5.6%

Having confirmed in the interview and focus group phase that despite a general feeling of safety, women tend to avoid using certain public spaces, with the following question from the survey we wanted to find out what particular contexts are perceived as more unsafe by our respondents, as well as to identify differences (if any) in their perceptions depending on whether they are using the public spaces during the day or at night.

As we can see in the table below, more than a third of the respondents (36.6%) are sometimes or always afraid to go out alone, even during the day. One in two women (54.2%) are afraid to go to certain neighbourhoods or take certain streets, and a little under half (45.3%) of the respondents are afraid to use unfrequented public spaces. As expected, our respondents reported feeling even more unsafe at night, with as many as 59.2% reporting that they are sometimes or always afraid to go out alone at night. In addition, four of five women (80.3%) reported that they are afraid to go through certain neighbourhoods or use certain streets at night, and only one in five are never afraid to use places where there are few people.

Table 3. Think about how you feel when you go out in different contexts, whether during the day or at night.

During the day, are you afraid of....	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No, Never	No answer
Going out alone?	10.3%	26.3%	62.2%	1.2%
Going through certain neighborhoods, streets?	15.5%	38.7%	42.3%	3.5%
Going to a place where there are few people?	9.7%	35.6%	49.1%	5.5%
During the night, are you afraid of ...	Yes, always	Yes, sometimes	No, Never	No answer
Going out alone?	13.2%	46.0%	38.5%	2.3%
Going through certain neighborhoods, streets?	29.7%	50.6%	13.7%	5.9%
Going to a place where there are few people?	20.4%	51.3%	20.9%	7.4%

As we can see in the table below, the fear related to being outside in different contexts is perhaps translated in the women's actual use of public spaces. When asked how many times they had been out alone in the past month, only 16.3% reported to have done so on a daily basis. One in ten women did not go out alone even once in the past month and more than a third of our respondents (36.9%) only went out alone a couple of times.

Table 4. How many times have you been out alone in the past month?

No, not even once	11.3%
Yes, but rarely (couple of times)	36.9%
Yes, many times	31.9%
Yes, almost daily	16.3%
No answer	3.6%

The perception of safety is no less important than the actual safety of women in public places, because these perceptions will limit the mobility of the women and their right to use public spaces in general, as we confirmed with both the survey and the interviews and focus groups. In her book "The Cultural Politics of Emotion", Sara Ahmed (2004) talks about fear as an emotion and its relation to the corporal, but also the social space, with an emphasis on the restriction of corporal/ bodily mobility in social space. Ahmed argues that fear as an emotion does not arise in the body and then limit that body's mobility as an effect. According to her, "the fear is conditional and depends on specific narratives about whom and what is frightening, and these narratives exist before the experience of the emotion of fear in the public space."

In addition to these main narratives that can instigate fear in women using public spaces, we also looked at how the urban environment additionally creates feelings of (un)safety among women. As one would expect, we found that participants feel safer during the day, while at night they feel the safest if they are in a vehicle. Accordingly, they feel the least safe if they are alone or with a dependent (child, elderly or person with disability) and have to walk a longer distance. Having a person with disability as a companion is considered unsafe especially at night, as limited mobility in these cases decreases possibilities for dealing with an attack. Street lighting was also confirmed as an important factor, and many interviewees reported feeling more afraid when there were restrictions on street lighting during the winter¹⁵.

As expected, awareness of previous attacks on women that took place in certain areas increases the feeling of insecurity (especially at night) of that particular place. In addition, unfamiliarity with the space, combined with low visibility, creates a sense of lurking danger in certain spaces. One of the participants in the safety audit walks said that it was the first time for her to walk through a certain part of the municipality and she felt that she was in danger even during the day, because she was unfamiliar with the path and the visibility was not very good.

The assessment of their safety by women is significantly based on aspects of maintenance, such as lighting, isolation, line of sight, etc. As the safety audit walks show, it is very problematic that spaces can transgress from very safe to very frightening places within a short distance. It is very difficult to take continuous safe route; instead, women have to take alternate paths in order to reach their destination, which requires more time and planning on their part, making them more vulnerable. As some respondents stated, they use longer routes to reach the desired destination only because they consider the shorter route less safe.

¹⁵ In February 2012 the Government introduced restrictions of the public lights in order to save electricity. For more information: <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/default.asp?itemID=66BB1453E02C634A8234A4F64D798F10>



Comparing the two municipalities that were in the focus of our research, we noted that the women from Chair are less likely to go out at night and even less likely to go out at night alone. On the other hand, taxi drivers from Centar (whose clients are mostly Macedonian) confirm that the majority of their clients at night (between 80 to 90% according to their estimates) are women. The female clients ask the taxi drivers to wait until they reach the entrance of their house in order to ensure their safety. The sense of fear is mainly related to their safety, i.e., the fear is related to potential sexual attacks. NGO activists we spoke to confirmed that women are discouraged to freely use the public space, especially at night and in particular spaces such as parks, small streets, insufficiently lit places, due to the fear of being raped. She added that this fear is likely construed through the media discourse, because victims of rape rarely report the crime to the police. We can therefore perceive the fear as a response to the threat of violence. According to Ahmed, the threat itself is shaped through the narratives that determine what is threatening and what is not and which are and which are not objects of fear. In that regard, access to public spaces for women is limited due to the circulation of the narratives that they are more vulnerable than men.

Women's Vulnerability

As already emphasized at the beginning of this analysis, most of the female respondents in the interviews and focus group discussions did not perceive violence in public places as necessarily gender based. However, most of them agreed that women are more vulnerable when it comes to various forms of violence. Many of the respondents confirmed that the perpetrators of violence assess the victim (whether s/he can be easily subdued physically) and therefore women, being commonly perceived as physically weaker than men, are the most common targets. In addition, women usually carry a bag in which they keep money and valuables, as well as wear jewelry, both of which can be easily taken away. A representative from the National Council on Gender Equality (NCGE) shared with us a case where a woman waiting at a bus stop was attacked and robbed in the middle of the day, as well as another occasion where passer-by/stranger grabbed the hand of their female colleague in order to convince her to have coffee with him.

According to Ahmed (2004), narratives of women's vulnerability suggest that women must always be ready to defend themselves when outside their home. In that way, the "outside" and the public sphere are constructed as dangerous, but, on the other hand, what is considered as "inside" and related to the home is considered safe. These dichotomies are mapped onto other binaries (male/ female, public/ private) that connect women with the private sphere and the home. Consequently, safety becomes an issue of absence from the public space or, furthermore, an issue of refusal on part of women to move in the public places by themselves. In Macedonia as elsewhere, women are far more likely to suffer violence at home, from persons known to them, with whom they have close relations (Popovska, 2011). However, through these cultural and social narratives, the women are abstracted from settling in the public sphere and are again confined to the private sphere of the home and family, under the umbrella of caring for their safety and security. This is the reason why we claim that perceptions on safety and the mobility of women are as important as the actual safety. In other words, providing safe public areas and developing effective mechanisms in preventing and protecting women from violence will also result in increasing women's mobility and inclusion of women in public spheres.

One of the interviewees talked about her personal experience of violence in public places. A newcomer to Skopje and in the first days of moving to the city, she did not know the streets and places considered less safe for movement. She was attacked from behind by a man and has since not used that street anymore. What was especially striking about her story was how she describes feeling both ashamed and guilty after the attack. She had a feeling that she was the reason for the violence, that it was her fault because she was walking on a street considered

unsafe. As a result, she told no one about the assault, not even her roommates whom she met immediately after the attack. She also did not report the assault to the police. This sense of shame and guilt the respondent was talking about is precisely the mechanism that enables some bodies (in our case male bodies) to use and move through public spaces by restricting the mobility of other bodies in spaces that become characterized as dangerous and frightening, i.e., spaces and times of day (especially at night) that are not for women. These narratives are deeply rooted in our tradition and culture and their operationalization gains significant power when used by the institutions of the system or the police, which should be the main source of protection from violence. This fact of being “outside” becomes a serious threat for the safety, but also a threat to being taken seriously after an attack, as made clear in the case of sex workers (as a marginalized group) and at the same time a bias that prevents police and other institutions from seriously responding to the request for assistance and protection in cases when they are the victims of violence. The statements of the police officers were quoted by some of the respondents: “You asked for it, what where you doing out there?” or “How come they don’t rape my wife who stays home?”

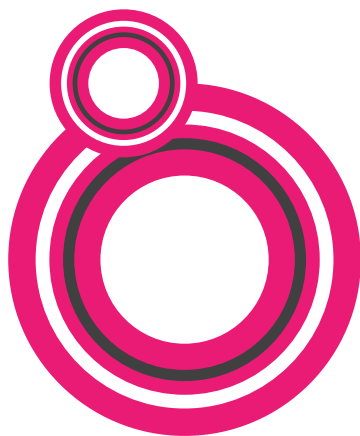
The impact of mass media on perceptions of safety

Throughout the interviews and group discussions, many of the respondents confirmed that their perception of public safety and violence in public spaces is constructed by mass media. They believe that the media are creators of reality or of perceptions of reality and as such fail to understand the importance of their role in the society. For example, in the focus group with taxi drivers from Chair, they complained that the media create an image of Albanians as violent people and the city districts populated by majority Albanians as unsafe. Referring to the ethnic violence that was going on at the time, they were aware that those events deteriorate the perception of safety, especially among women. They claimed that it is precisely this context of fear and panic that has psychological implications on women, as they become more restrictive in their choices of public spaces that they use. Similar sentiments were expressed in the discussion that took place after the Safety Audit Walk in Centar, when the respondents pointed out that the media have a significant influence on them. One of them stated that at the beginning, after moving to Skopje, she was walking the streets alone at night, but following a widely publicized murder in the Madzari district, she began to feel less free and safe. The participants concluded that the more an event is present in the media, the greater the impression that one is unsafe merely because of being a woman. On the other hand, as part of the study we held a focus group with journalists who cover crime and violence, and according to them, the media today (especially desks covering violence and crime) are not interested in violence against women as a topic. The media receive daily information from the bulletins issued by the Ministry of Interior and these include recaps of police daily activities selected by the Ministry. The journalists do not agree with the opinion that the media are creating fear and perceptions of danger by continuously reporting about violence in the city or in public places. According to them, most of these events are not even written about. As one of the journalists pointed out: “We publish only a small percentage of the horrible reality.” The journalists in the focus group pointed out that this small percentage is also intentionally selected. In other words, the media always report the “most horrific and most drastic” forms of violence against women. A recent example is the case reported in the Macedonian media, in which a girl was physically assaulted for 8 hours and the assault ended with a bomb placed in her mouth. Other forms of violence that are not as drastic are not interesting for the media¹⁶.

¹⁶ Only one journalist said that he was not allowed to publish his article in which he was covering a radical case of violence against a girl. This case included rape but his editor thought that this case is extremely brutal.

These forms of selective portrayals of cases of violence against women, as well as the selection of the most radical examples of violence, are one of the strongest strategies of “normalization”. When talking about women’s bodies, Suzan Bordo (1993) points out the normalizing strategies that are especially applicable to this issue as well. According to her, critical awareness is focused on things considered pathological or extreme. Bordo claims that the representations stimulate the experience of “circus performances,” which in this case pins down the relation between the “normal, common everyday experiences” and the things that are made public, i.e., the monsters and the victims. This preoccupation with brutal forms of violence, as is the case in Macedonian media, is one of the strongest normalizing strategies through which structural violence, verbal and psychological violence against women is neglected or even normalized and accepted, as is the case with looking and staring, sexual comments, whistling and heckling, threatening or insulting comments, as well as more severe forms of physical psychical and sexual violence.

We can conclude that women’s perceptions of safety are impacted by the physical appearance of the urban environment, so better maintained, wide, well lit urban spaces make them feel safer and they have increased feeling of safety during the day compared to night-time. This in turn impacts their mobility by posing certain limitations as to when, how and which public spaces they will use. The key reason for restriction of their freedom of movement is fear from potential abuse. This fear is generated by the context (outcries of public violence), sensationalistic reporting of brutal cases of violence by the media, personal experiences with violent attacks and a general feeling of vulnerability.



FORMS OF VIOLENCE



FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Women in public spaces face various forms of gender-based violence: rude comments, unwanted sexual attention, staring, whistling, touching, pinching, physical violence, sexual violence, maltreatment, harassment, rape, etc. Most of the respondents agree that these forms of violence do not get equal treatment or understanding among the general public, but also by those affected (women and victims). There are two opposed perceptions on what we call 'forms of violence' and in this research they match the standpoints of almost all respondents. That is to say, some of them clearly identify violence in all its forms and the others do not recognize it and sometimes even justify it (women's behavior, looks or clothes which, according to them, provokes the violence).

One way in which we examined what forms of violence that occur in public spaces are recognized as such was to ask the respondents in the street survey how they would feel if subjected to various situations, from catcalling to a sexual attack.

Table 5. If the following happens to you, how would you feel?

	Flattered	Neutral	Annoyed	Ashamed	Scared	Angry	Other
Whistle after her (or honk from a car) or called her names such as "sweetheart", "woman", "baby" etc.	1.8%	24.6%	37.6%	9.1%	11.9%	27.1%	2.8%
Comment on her appearance or make sexual comments	1.3%	15.7%	39.8%	14.8%	12.8%	27.0%	2.6%
Watch or stare at her	4.6%	29.5%	30.4%	10.0%	17.2%	17.6%	2.7%
Address her with sexist comments (women are commented in a negative way)	0.3%	5.8%	39.9%	10.9%	17.1%	39.2%	3.6%
Address her with nationally, ethnically, racially or religiously offensive comments	0.1%	6.9%	38.5%	6.8%	16.9%	45.1%	4.0%
Curse her or show her vulgar gestures	0.1%	4.1%	37.9%	10.8%	23.4%	40.8%	3.6%
Follow her	0%	2.1%	15.8%	2.8%	76.4%	19.4%	5.9%
Deliberately block her path	0%	1.8%	16.8%	2.8%	70.3%	24.6%	6.9%
Show her genitals or masturbate in front of her	0.1%	1.5%	17.7%	9.9%	64.7%	25.2%	13.6%
Touch her and/or grab her in a sexual way	0.1%	1.3%	15.8%	9.1%	73.3%	22.2%	11.9%
Attack her physically (pushing, slapping)	0%	0.9%	16.0%	5.6%	73.4%	22.5%	11.5%
Attack her sexually	0%	1.2%	13.2%	8.5%	73.8%	21.6%	12.2%
Threaten to harm her	0.1%	1.0%	13.1%	3.9%	72.9%	22.3%	11.5%

One of the ways in which catcalling or staring is normalized is when it is masked as a compliment. However, looking at the responses in the table above, we can see that women do not find even the lightest forms of harassment flattering in any way. The emotions that women are most likely to associate with are annoyance and anger in cases of verbal harassment and, expectedly, fear in cases of physical violence. What we can additionally take away from the responses to this question, and which ties in to the recognition of various forms of violence, is that although most women react negatively to street harassment, there is a significant number of women who reported feeling neutral in cases of catcalling (24.6%) or staring (29.5%). This ambivalence can be interpreted as a form of dealing with the most prevalent forms of gender violence, in the sense that being subjected to them on a regular basis has led many women to merely accept it as an inevitable part of being in public spaces. However, as we will see below, neutralizing these “harmless” annoyances is in itself a form of upholding structural violence.

In addition to asking them how they would feel in these situations, we also asked the respondents to rate the likelihood of something like that happening to a woman around the city. The table below reveals that half of our respondents believe they are likely to be harassed when they are at a public space: 61.3% expect to be stared at, 53.9% expect whistling and name-calling and 46.9% expect comments on their appearance or sexual comments. More than a third of our respondents expect to be subjected to sexist comments (34.6%) and slightly less than a third expect nationally, ethnically, racially or religiously offensive comments (31.4%). Another potential threat recognized by one in three women is being followed (33.3%). Even though physical violence is generally not expected, with about half of the respondents rating these forms of violence as unlikely, it is nevertheless worrying that almost one in five women rated sexual attacks as likely. So, in relation to Ahmed’s arguments laid out above, the results from the street survey show that women are mostly afraid of men and of non-physical acts that result in the sexual objectification of women.

Table 6. What do you think, how likely are the following things to happen to a women in public spaces in the city of Skopje?

	Not likely at all			Very likely	
Whistle after her (or honk from a car) or called her names such as “sweetheart”, “woman”, “baby” etc.	5.3%	14.0%	25.6%	20.1%	33.8%
Comment on her appearance or make sexual comments	6.0%	15.3%	29.6%	18.6%	28.3%
Watch or stare at her	2.8%	9.4%	24.7%	20.9%	40.4%
Address her with sexist comments(women are commented in a negative way)	10.5%	21.8%	29.9%	15.9%	18.7%
Address her with nationally, ethnically, racially or religiously offensive comments	15.9%	21.5%	29.5%	16.4%	15.0%
Curse her or show her vulgar gestures	19.7%	27.7%	23.6%	13.1%	13.2%
Follow her	14.0%	21.0%	29.7%	21.2%	12.2%
Deliberately block her path	16.9%	20.9%	29.2%	19.6%	10.9%
Show her genitals or masturbate in front of her	30.8%	23.1%	20.4%	12.6%	10.1%
Touch her and/or grab her in a sexual way	30.4%	26.7%	23.9%	9.2%	7.1%
Attack her physically (pushing, slapping)	27.6%	27.1%	26.6%	9.2%	6.9%
Attack her sexually	27.9%	24.3%	28.2%	10.8%	6.7%
Threaten to harm her	22.3%	28.1%	28.4%	11.7%	6.9%

Institutional and Structural Violence

One of the key areas of interest for this study was to see how official institutions function as potentially unsafe public spaces. Some of the public institutions that we identified as potentially more unsafe than others are discussed in more detail further in the text. In this section, we look at these institutions primarily in their function not as spaces, but rather as violators that uphold a system of inequalities through verbal violence, exclusion and discrimination that occur within and are sanctioned by the system. The underlying theory and definitions of structural violence that was used in our analysis of the responses from the interviewees and focus group participants about the institutions of the system are discussed in more detail throughout the section and its concluding paragraph.

One of the most frequently pointed out such institutions were hospitals. For example, one of the doctors we interviewed pointed out that doctors, when dealing with patients with a lower socio-economic status, different ethnic origin and elderly people, subconsciously discriminate them, because they feel stronger, more powerful towards certain groups of people. According to interviewees, this mostly affects women who belong to ethnic minorities and members of marginalized groups, especially illiterate women. The first type is verbal violence and discrimination by hospital staff and it is most frequently pointed out by ethnic minority women, whose apparent insufficient Macedonian language skills lead to discrimination and verbal violence by the medical staff. Many of the interviewees agreed that the situation is better today thanks to the employment of Albanian speaking staff and the use of Albanian language in the institutions; however, challenges still exists for women from other ethnicities.

This violence is a consequence of functional illiteracy, as pointed out by an NGO activist, which mostly affects ethnic minority women. Functional illiteracy is a definition used to describe the insufficient language skills that create a barrier for the use of public spaces, including the institutions of the system. Women who are functionally illiterate use public spaces only when accompanied by someone (usually men), who do things on their behalf, resulting in a lack of self-confidence on part of the women. The reasons for this are, in the words of the female respondents, the cultural and traditional norms that place women in these subordinate positions.

HOPS activists confirmed the humiliating treatment of Roma women in the health institutions. In the cases when their beneficiaries were accompanied to the health institutions, they do not disclose the fact that they are sex workers. Despite this, doctors will often come up with various excuses not to see them only because they are Roma, as pointed out by a HOPS¹⁷ representative. The strategy used for overcoming this barrier is using doctors with whom they have already established a working relation.

Another type of institutional violence is the lack of (quality) services for certain groups of women. As pointed out by a women's rights activist, the situation with the health institutions in Shuto Orizari (a municipality in Skopje with a majority Roma population) is desperate. For example, there is no gynecologist in this municipality and those health institutions that exist in Shuto Orizari are the worst of their kind in the country.

Similarly, drug users are still faced with stigma and discrimination from the Centers for Social Work, which should be assisting them. For this reason some of the female drug users deliberately do not to seek help in these institutions.

¹⁷ Healthy Options Project Skopje

In interviews with women's rights activists, school was pointed out as the key institution that produces stereotypes about men and women, which are the source of the problem of violence against women.

In schools, faced with the challenge to fulfill the educational program goals in overcrowded classrooms, teachers keep a "safety line" in order to protect themselves. In other words, teachers develop mechanisms for keeping a distance from the pupils and in doing so they rarely show any affinities, let alone capacities to establish contact with the pupils and deal with violence.

This entire context generates violence. In a school working in three shifts, with low hygiene and standards, with too many students and inability to work in quality manner, the violence is only an effect, a consequence.

Psychologist working on issues of children and youth

Another example shows how violence remains unaddressed in schools. In a high school, one of the interviewees who works as a teacher witnessed a group of students first agreeing amongst themselves through signs and gestures and then suddenly attacking a student, beating him and quickly running away. The response of the teachers was: "Oh... it's just a game".

In the interviews and group discussions participants shared several stories of violence against girls in schools and all stories pointed to an inability on part of the professional staff of the school to deal with the problem until the problem becomes severe. Such is the example shared by the pedagogue from a high school in Centar, where the gym teacher in the school insulted girls on a regular basis. The management's approach was to talk to him, which yielded no results, and the case was resolved only when the teacher retired and left the school.

There is not much discussion going on about sexual harassment in schools, even among the teachers. At the time when this study was carried out, the media showed several cases of sexual assaults of minors by teachers (but mostly against boys) that happened in schools and were reported by students. These cases received significant media attention, so due to the increased interest among the public for potential cases of child abuse in the schools, the teachers pay attention to this type of violence.

Security and safety measures implemented by the state include police patrols around the schools, use of security services and installation of security cameras. Another mechanism used especially in preventing inter-ethnic violence in schools (as pointed out in a high school in Centar) is requiring professors to keep watch between shifts and at breaks and react to stop it.

Most of the interviewees think that these methods are ineffective and can be counterproductive. As pointed out by a pedagogue we interviewed, issues of gender-based violence (from teachers towards students) are attempted to be resolved with talks and discussions; however, this is not yielding results and she feels that there is a lack of mechanisms available to resolve them.

What is highly problematic according to our interviewee is that the professional staff in the schools fails to detect the reasons for the violence as coming from within their environment and context. Usually the problems and the responsibility are identified as coming from 'outside'. Hence, they blame the media or youth entertainment such as movies and TV series (for example the Turkish series "Valley of the wolves," as well as the violent video games). Not to undermine these factors of influence, we have to point out that the school as an environment should not be excluded from responsibility.

In their (school staff) opinion, the problems always come from outside so they blame the media, the families, etc. and try to solve the problems in this manner. It is always brought down to installation of cameras, security people, nets by which they close the school playfields and the children playgrounds. This is inefficient, it is even counterproductive. It creates a picture and perception about the schools as war zones, places in which the violence flourishes and in which the violence is simply expected to happen

Psychologist working on issues of children and youth

In his typology of violence, Johan Galtung (1990) includes structural and cultural violence in addition to direct violence. Galtung (1969) defines structural violence as a form of violence created, supported and maintained by certain social structures, including institutions. Sexism, heterosexism, chauvinism are largely institutionalized and as such constitute a form of structural violence. Galtung suggests that structural violence and direct violence are highly interdependent and therefore domestic violence, hate crimes, rape should not be seen as problems of families, individuals or small groups of people, but like most radical forms and manifestations of structural violence. Through interviews and group discussions we were able to note a lack of capacity to recognize structural violence, but also what is called "soft" or less radical violence from women who are victims of it, and later on by the institutions.

In the focus group with the waitresses we spoke about violence against women in bars and nightclubs, as well as the relations of power that are gender-specific, and that are very clearly visible in their workplace. The findings of this discussion illustrate and elaborate the concept of male domination, symbolic violence, and lack of recognition of these power relations by waitresses who maintain them without being aware of their existence. We must note here that maintaining the concept of male domination was evident in the interviews and focus groups with other women and men and these will be mentioned throughout the analysis.

The waitresses stated that in their workplace, girls and women are mostly waitresses, while mostly men or boys are bartenders. Some girls stated that they requested to be employed as bartenders, but were not allowed. One of the girls shared the explanation of her boss:

Serving is women's work, but also, a good drink should be accompanied by a beautiful girl who will serve to meet the gaze of male customers.

They emphasized that the norm is satisfying the men's need to look at beautiful girls who serve them, while women - clients do not object to this situation and accept it as natural, normal and expected. Already here we can identify the expression of the authority of the male gaze applied to the imaginary and anticipated needs of all customers.

In terms of violence, women who work as waitresses say that psychological violence is more common than physical. Some of the waitresses shared instances of verbal violence by clients or superiors at their workplace. In cases where clients are violent towards waitresses, the most common coping mechanism used by owners is to remove the waitress from the job until the troubling client leaves. None of the waitresses shared cases where the client who was violent was removed from the bar/cafe. In this focus group, participants did not perceive such verbal violence as connected to gender stereotypes, male domination and power relations that are gender-specific, but the reasons and explanations according to them lay in personal relations, family or friends.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his extraordinarily detailed analysis "Masculine domination" (1998) talks about the concept of symbolic violence, defining it as a silenced,

almost unconscious model of cultural or social domination that operates in everyday social activities and is maintained by conscious entities. Symbolic violence is a mechanism of control and discipline that involves the individual and the society, the individual and the group, or the community in relations that are hierarchically determined. Symbolic violence manifests itself in rhetorics, behaviors, relations and practices which are defined as discriminatory, stigmatizing including sexism, gender-based violence, racism and the like. Hence the fact that almost all of the waitresses who were part of the focus group agreed that these insults and violence that waitresses can endure or suffer at their jobs are not a reflection of gender inequality, sexism and gender stereotypes, but the personal character of the one who insults, his upbringing, his psycho-physical stability and the like. This is an excellent illustration of blindness to the symbolic violence and unequal power relations by women who themselves participate in such relations while at work.

Examining the concept of symbolic violence, Bourdieu states that for the existence of this type of violence it is not only required for a dominator to exist, but it is of particular importance that those who are dominated accept their position in the exchange of social values that takes place between the two sides (the one who dominates and one that is dominated). He sees masculine domination as a most vivid example of such paradoxical submission, an effect of symbolic violence, „imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely misrecognition), recognition or even feeling“.

Violence at work

According to the statistics from NGO “Feministička Inicijativa”, which deals with the issue of mobbing, most of the mobbing victims are women aged 30-35 years (58%) and 68% of all mobbing victims are women, while the majority of perpetrators are men¹⁸.


We already discussed the example where the waitress was abused by her boss while working. We saw similar examples with both male and female bus drivers whom we interviewed. They shared stories of attacks by male passengers, most often because they refused to pay the bus fare, so when the driver insisted on a payment; the passenger would turn to violence. In addition, the constant pressure and stress of the job provide a good alibi for the drivers to also practice verbal violence on the passengers. In this context, women drivers are more vulnerable and more likely to be discriminated against. A point made by one of the female bus drivers is the case when she had a conflict with a driver from another bus company (privately owned) and the management of her company insinuated that the conflict came about as a result of an intimate relationship between the two.

The situation is similar in the health sector. Our interviewee from the health sector stated that, on one hand, the doctors face burn out as a result of routine, dissatisfaction from the working conditions including inadequate pay and this is reflected on their treatment of the patients. On the other hand, patients not receiving quality service resort to violence. If they fall prey to violence at work, doctors do not have support services that can provide assistance. In the rare occasions when there is a psychologist on the premises, this person deals with patients, not doctors, so in order to avoid blame, doctors rarely report violent incidents to hospital management. The doctor we talked to also confirmed that mobbing has been accepted as part of the job and victims of mobbing are hesitant to take action. She was happy to see that there is a window of opportunity for such situations with the inclusion of mobbing in the Law.

¹⁸ Data from the survey carried out by NGO “Feministička Inicijativa” in the period June 2009 - May 2010 on a representative sample of 1,100 respondents.

Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence in the work place. A representative from the NGO “Otvorete gi prozorcite” gave us the following statement in this regard:

Violence at work, verbal or psychological, is something that accompanies these persons. Firstly because they do not have adequate conditions at their workplace, secondly there appear certain manipulations with the payment of funds for their labor. Most often the employer concludes one contract with the person and when the funds have to be paid, certain problems and negative things happen, so they transfer part of the money on their account, and part of the persons are obliged to return the money in cash. The persons with whom we had previous contact, are aware of this problem; however, there is fear when and where to report, because they have great difficulty finding a job and try to keep whatever they can find. The percentage of companies employing persons with disabilities is very small.



Another example that we came across illustrates the normalizing strategy (Ahmed), i.e., the perception that the woman will avoid violence if she remains within the patriarchal and androcentric expectations and norms and stays faithful to the “moral and ethical principles”. One of the waitresses shared her story about working at a wholesale market in Skopje. She explained that in the beginning she was getting very large tips (such as 100 German marks) with no adequate explanations (for example, to get herself a cup of coffee). When she inquired with other workers at the market, she was told that if a woman takes money from a man three times in a row, she is signaling that she accepts to “be with him” (assumed consent for a sexual relationship). When she started refusing the tips, she began enjoying the protection of the men there (ethnic Albanians). Furthermore, these men continued to protect her in the future from everyone who tried to assault or insult her or make inappropriate comments. What is interesting about this story is that at no point did the woman problematize the issue of men coming to her work place and throwing money at her without explanation. What she emphasized was the fact she kept her moral and ethical principles, remained ‘clean’ in the eyes of the men and by doing so, she received the deserved prize – protection.

Youth Violence

The issue of violence in schools came up in almost all interviews and focus groups. One of the reasons why schools are considered such violent spaces lies in the impression that teachers, management and pupils do not recognize the specific and various forms of violence (for example bullying). One of the interviewees gave the example of a high school in the Chair Municipality where she worked on a project concerning violence in schools. In this project the students were supposed to evaluate their school, but had difficulties filling in the questionnaires since they only recognized physical violence. This was confirmed by a pedagogue in a high school in Centar.

Verbal harassment (yelling, quarreling, insulting, etc.) is the most common type of violence in schools. However, respondents emphasized that there is a lot of discussion about this type of violence, i.e., communication in the lower grades (up to fifth grade) of the primary schools. After that, the educational system places an emphasis on the educational component while distancing itself from the nurturing component. A more recent type of violence taking place in schools is cyber-violence taking the form of cyber-bullying. An example of this was shared with us about a group of boys who used Facebook to create a fake profile for a girl and add sexist posts about her.

Violence among high schools students takes place on school premises, but also spills over outside of the school grounds. As pointed out by the bus drivers who participated in our focus group, the main reason for violence in public transport are organized groups of high school students, who they describe as being “out of control”. These groups mainly consist of boys who fight with each other, but also harass (pinch, poke) groups of girls. When fights between the boys take place, everyone in the bus is at risk. The police are unable to stop these incidents, since the students very easily find out when the police will be present. Once the police leave, the students easily re-group and continue their brawls. The bus drivers know them (they drive the same teens every day), but say that they cannot resolve the problem on their own.

The Public Transport Company attempted to solve this problem by organizing educational parent-teacher meetings in the affected schools with representatives from the police. One of the accepted proposal included transferring some of the classes in other schools in order allow children to mix with their peers from other areas of town. However, parents from other schools complained that they would be sending their children “among hooligans”.

One of our interviewees, a psychologist working on issues of children and youth, stated that there is a significant difference between primary school and high school. In high schools the prevalent form of violence is partner violence. She pointed out that girls get confused and do not differentiate between love and jealousy and are especially unable to recognize partner violence. In many cases the mobility of these young girls is limited or forbidden by their partners. They are usually not allowed to go outside after school, to socialize with their peers and friends, especially male ones. According to the respondents, young girls mistake this form of violent behavior, jealousy and abuse for love and attention. Sometimes when the partner does not behave like that, the girl feels unloved. The opinion that these young women (or some women) prefer to be oppressed and dominated or that they themselves chose to accept the oppressive practices is a representation of “blame the victim” strategies. As we saw with Bourdieu earlier, symbolic violence cannot be practiced without the contribution of those who are victims of this type of violence. Through this analysis we consider violence against women as an inevitable result of patriarchy, masculine domination and andocentric society. In constructing and sustaining this relations of power and domination, the dominated play the key role. In other words, the expectations that girls and women should satisfy men’s needs and wishes in every possible manner are applied in the very process of socialization both on men and women. Therefore, according to many feminist writers such as Kate Millett, Susan Brown Miller, Sandra Lipsitz Bem and others, sexual violence in its many forms is perceived as a radicalization of the traditional gender and sexual roles. Instead of perceiving these forms of violence as pathological products of a criminal and disturbed mind (as waitresses suggested in the focus group discussion), they argue that all forms of violence and brutality against women are simply radical manifestations of the masculine domination and the female objectification we accept as essence and norm in the context of everyday heterosexual relations.

Date rape

Partner violence is least likely to be recognized when it occurs in the form of rape. In the experience of our youth and violence expert, none of the date rape cases were reported by the victim. The problem again is non-recognition, because rape can be easily recognized when it comes from the “outside,” i.e., when it is perpetrated by a stranger or by someone who does not have an emotional and intimate relationship with the woman. It is much more difficult to recognize when it comes from a partner. The identification and recognition is made difficult by



the fact that there is no physical attack, but rather psychological coercion and blackmailing. Key factors that keep this type of violence hidden are the stereotypes that boys have to be persistent in order to convince the girls to have sex with them and the girls should refuse the boys several times before entering into sexual intercourse in order not to be labeled a “slut”.

It is exceptionally important for the girls to know that they have the right to say “no” at any time before or during the sexual intercourse, and it is also important to know that they have the right to change their mind.

Psychologist working on issues of children and youth

Stereotypes and prejudices operate almost unconsciously in the relationships young people build among themselves. For example, if a girl goes to the boy’s house and is faced with rape or other form of sexual assault, she may feel guilty because she willfully agreed to go to his house. This would not only discourage her from reporting the violence, but could also lead to consenting to sexual intercourse without actually wanting it. Bem states: “Now, however, the norm is so much for men to keep making sexual advances and for women to keep resisting those advances without making a scene or even being impolite that many date rapists do not perceive the sexual intercourse they manage to get as an act of rape”. We must not forget here that boys and men are not excluded from being disciplined and controlled through these forms of domination and subordination. Robert L. Allen and Paul Kivel (1997) are part of Oakland Men’s Project, an organization that deals with elimination of male violence, racism and homophobia. In their article “Men changing Men” they claim that “[m]en batter because we have been trained to; because there are few social sanctions against it; because we live in a society where exploitation of people with less social and personal power is acceptable”. According to Allen and Kivel, the boys, through the entire apparatus of socialization (family, education system, media, the church and other institutions) are taught that women/ girls are primarily sexual objects and many men believe women are their property.



MARGINALIZED WOMEN



The process of interviews and group discussions also included women who belong to marginalized groups. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, their vulnerability (especially the vulnerability to violence) is greater in comparison to other women. Secondly, we want to avoid the trap of talking about women as a unitary whole, but rather as always inhabiting their racial, sexual, religious and ethnic background also. And finally, among other reasons, we have to mention the specific forms of violence these women are facing, but also the discrimination that often comes from other women who are not part of this group of marginalized women.

Sex Workers

Based on our interviews with NGO representatives who work with sex workers, street based sex work and indoor sex work are not safe at all. Sex workers consider indoor sex work somewhat safer, but violence is still not excluded. Usually the possibility of violence comes with not knowing the city and the risk is that the client might drive the woman to a remote place outside of the city, away from the eyes of the public, where she could be raped and beaten.

All interviewed sex workers who work in open spaces have experienced some form of beating, rape, violent thefts, as well as verbal and physical violence. This is the only group where we detected cases of hate crimes, which are not regulated within the Macedonian legislation. One such case was explained by a sex worker who took part in the group discussion:

I have been beaten by a customer before, but, honestly, this guy did not come for sex. I went behind the petrol station, where there are branches and trees. It was a summer night, between 7:30 and 8 pm. He signals to me to go to him. I go. How much, he asked? 500 denars, I said. He had a ring on his hand. I did not know that he would hit me. He gave me the money. He was looking at me with fear. I said to him what are you looking at, there is nobody around, do not be afraid, come on, pull it out. I thought he was afraid and expected he would undress. But suddenly he punched me – I still have a mark, 2 years later. I fainted and fell. Then he hit me in the stomach and I lost my breath. He continued to hit me in the head. I was unable to scream because of the punch in the stomach. I was unrecognizable – all covered in blood. The blood from the head entered into my throat. He did not take money or gold from me – he only wanted to beat me and that was it.

The space in which incident took place is a well-known territory where commercial sex services are offered and it is usually avoided by visitors at night. However, two cafes have been opened in the last few years and the Youth Cultural Center (MKC) works with an improved and enriched program – which makes this space busier than before. Regardless of this, none of the sex workers who reported an incident in this area ever received assistance or protection from bystanders. And even in cases where police patrols are present and intervene, they only separate the perpetrator and the victim, but never detain the perpetrator.

Because of the stigma and discrimination, but also because of the radical departure from what is commonly perceived as accepted women's sexuality, these women are victims of discrimination, violence and unequal treatment. Their looks, appearance and belonging to a marginalized group which can be sometimes read from their bodies and is sometimes recognized through shared knowledge between the people, neighbors, police, etc., is sufficient provocation for the people (perpetrators or ordinary bystanders, citizens of the city, neighbors, etc.) to undertake various forms of violence.

Drug users

Like the sex workers, female drug users also suffer violence. Very often users are using spaces that they consider less safe because they have to take drugs outside of their home and these places provide them with a minimum level of intimacy. The general public has more or less the right to enjoy those spaces because there is a correspondence between their everyday practices with the practices allowed in the public places. The practices that are not allowed (provision of sexual services, use of drugs), i.e., the norming of the practices and behaviors in the public space have effect. Because of this, drug users feel safer in hidden places, which are not busy, but still lighting as a safety factor remains because it is necessary for injecting and for minimum safety. The safety factors for drug users in public places are very similar to those applicable to various other groups and include lighting, frequency of people and vehicles, openness of the space, etc. However, since they have to use drugs in public places, these factors are changed - safety is greater in more hidden, less busy places. These spaces are safer because they are not exposed to the public eyes, but also not completely excluded both from within (among the users) and from the outside.

It is interesting to see the strategy of how narratives of fear operate, i.e., who or what is scary or the objects of fear that have long-reaching consequences for those who are 'marked', understood and experienced as dangerous. In other words, there are places in Skopje identified as less safe (often by the media) due to the current stigma and prejudices related to specific people, practices and lifestyles. The places where the users are taking drugs are labeled as such.

Public transport is also a place where sometimes these people (especially the girls) face stigma and discrimination. Women undergoing methadone therapy travel every day using public transport. Some of them are exposed to physical and verbal violence because they are recognized as women who belong to the group of drug users - especially by regular passengers who recognize them. At the time of the interviews, due to the increased ethnic violence in public transport, some of the female users did not use the public transport being afraid for their safety - not because of their ethnic background, but because of their health status and belonging to a stigmatized group of users. For them, this meant stopping therapy and presented a serious threat to their health.

Female drug users also are also discriminated by the institutions. This is impacted by the fact that use of drugs is illegal in the country and the institutions are seen as punishers and not as service providers. As a result, users mostly contact NGOs for help and cases of violence remain unreported. Experience shows that the institutions almost never resolve the cases of violence when the victims are women from marginalized communities.

Children and adults with disabilities

Most children and women with disabilities are protected by their families. They have very little opportunities to go somewhere by themselves and have difficulty recognizing various types of violence. They also face violence at work, as was already mentioned in previous chapters. This permanent protection and escort provides them with absolute safety. However, these forms of over-protection impact the freedom to unconditionally use public spaces. These people live with fear and because of that, even when they are older (over 20), they are still accompanied by either family members or personal assistants. This fear is explained by the NGOs who work with people with disabilities as psychological fear and pressure that they will "make a mistake and will not do something as it should be done":

I think that there is fear at work here. Fear of not being accepted, most of them have decreased self-confidence, because they are seen as someone who is not able to do something. I think it is more that kind of fear, the psychological fear that they will make some kind of mistake and they will not do something as it should be done.

NGO "Otvorete gi prozorcite"

This fear of failure to meet social expectations places these people in vulnerable or marginalized positions. These social norms and expectations function on all levels, creating environments in which the exclusion of the people of lower social and personal power becomes an accepted fact. However, even in these cases, as elaborated above, we identified the lack of recognition of the structural and symbolic violence and blaming individuals and families. In this regard the respondents said that:

We even have clients – we have girl who is coming to us together with her grandfather. Even when she wants to say something she first looks at him, wants to have some kind of approval before saying it. This is also problem of the families, not of the society, it is not only external influences. As I said in the beginning, they are overprotected.

NGO "Otvorete gi prozorcite"

We noticed similarities and similar experiences related to the vulnerability of these women towards more tacit forms of violence. When it comes to women with disabilities, their agency is much more limited. Interviewees stated that when the women are telling them about their emotional and sexual experiences, they have a feeling that the women have been tricked and exploited, i.e., they were given some presents or promises that, if they agree to sexual intercourse, they start a relationship with them or will marry them – which all fails to happen.

Women victims of domestic violence

According to the latest study on domestic violence (Popovska, 2011), 60% of domestic violence victims are women. Victims of domestic violence suffer from a combination of physical and psychological violence, while poorer families also experience economic violence. The number of sexual violence victims is the lowest, but the reason for this may be the failure to report this type of violence due to the fear of shame. Most common perpetrators of this type of violence are spouses (both present and former), partners, but there is also violence from children towards parents (usually sons towards mothers) which is physical. According to the interviewees, the most difficult for recognition are the cases of rape in marriage.

Domestic violence commonly takes place at home, in the bedroom, in order to hide it from the children. The psychological violence takes place outside of home, i.e., in public spaces and comes in the form of yelling, insults and swearing. One of the respondents told us about a case she witnessed – she saw a woman being thrown out of a car by her husband. She believes that this happened after a quarrel and she immediately offered assistance. The woman did not accept the assistance by pretending not to hear her. One of our interviewees said that bystanders do not react to this type of violence when they witness it because the women are ashamed to accept assistance. During the interviews and the focus groups, many of the respondents reported having witnessed domestic/ partner violence taking place in a public space. In most cases, bystanders did not react and our interviewees believe there was no reaction to this violence because, on one hand, people think this is personal problem between two adults but, on the other hand, they did not feel that the woman or the girl is asking for help.

Ethnic Minority Women

Gender, class and ethnicity are social divisions intermixed with each other, resulting in certain social relations which make members of the underprivileged groups along these lines more vulnerable to all forms of discrimination, including violence. One of the key differences among women in Macedonia is their belonging to different ethnic groups, which should be viewed through the lenses of structures of power and domination stemming from existing social relations. These relations influence the position and dominance of some women in opposition to others, whether within the same collectivity or between different ones, but also, as Nira Yuval Davis (1997) puts it: “the extent to which their membership in the collectivity constitutes a ‘forced identity’”. The safety audit walks showed that even among ethnic Albanian women in Chair, for example, there is a difference between young single Albanian women and the married ones who use the space in a different way and as a result have different experiences of violence.

Statements from interviewees point towards the conclusion that ethnic minority women in Skopje are more vulnerable to violence as a consequence of their ethnic origin. When explaining incidents of gender-based violence taking place in the school, a high school pedagogue emphasized every time when the involved girls were Albanian. At one point, when describing a specific incident involving an ethnic Albanian girl, she stated that they cannot be sure about the relevance of the case since the Albanian girls are more “sensitive”, which shows that not only are these women more vulnerable to violence, they are also more likely to be discriminated against in the aftermath of an incident.

The experiences of the civil society organizations working with Roma and Albanian women also confirm this standpoint. According to them, women belonging to ethnic minorities and members of marginalized groups, especially illiterate women, are experiencing verbal violence and discrimination. Ethnic minority women experience violence in terms of lack of basic services, especially in areas where they are predominant, such as the municipality of Shuto Orizari. In the past five years there has not been a single gynecologist to provide health checks for the 13.000 Roma women¹⁹ in this municipality, except for one organized weekly as part of the activities of the NGO Hera. The reason quoted for the lack of a full time gynecologist in Shuto Orizari is that no one wanted to work in this municipality.

These findings are in line with the results presented in “Ethnic based discrimination in Macedonia” published by MCIC (2011), where ethnic based discrimination is the second most prevalent (following political affiliation) type of discrimination in Macedonia (67,7%), followed by disability (53,8%) and sexual orientation (53,3%). The probability of Roma women to experience violence in the family is also pointed out as very high in the study on domestic violence (Popovska et al, 2011).

¹⁹ <http://telma.com.mk/index.php?task=content&cat=1&rub=6&item=19833>



MUNICIPALITIES OF CENTAR AND CHAIR

Perceptions of Safety in Municipality of Centar

Perceptions of safety in this municipality varied among the participants in the Safety Audit Walk. On the one hand are those who say that this municipality has the highest level of violence, especially violent thefts. The large frequency of people makes it easier to attack a woman and easily disappear into the crowd. On the other hand, there are those who see it as a safe community, especially compared to other municipalities such as Chair, Gazi Baba and Saraj (areas populated by majority ethnic Albanians).

Participants in the safety audit walk in Centar stated that they could not easily find their way around the places if they do not know them from before, but find it easier during the day compared to at night. One of the participants said that it was the first time for her to walk a certain section and she felt in danger even during the day, because she did not know the way and the visibility was poor.

The majority of these participants stated that there are places where a possible attacker can hide and not be seen. They identified specific places around which they feel more endangered such as: on the back side of MTV as well as the petrol station near it, the path between the front and back side of MKC, around MOB, between the Stone Bridge and the Old Bazaar, in "Zhenia park" which is adjacent to the city mall, around the student dormitory "Kuzman Josifovski Pitu", the EVN pay center, the path beside the primary school "Goce Delchev", the path between restaurants "Tomce Sofka" and "Anja" in the city park, public toilets in the city mall, small alleys, dark parking lots and generally where there are construction sites, unlit areas and untamed greens. Some of them think that the area around MTV and MKC is hopeless because it is dark and there are a lot of sex workers operating there. They claimed that feel unsafe in this area, not because of the sex workers, but because of the pimps and clients and the participants were afraid they might be approached by them. These places are seen as a threat even though most of the participants noted that the areas controlled by police/security patrols.

The participants in the safety audit walk in the municipality of Centar assessed the safety of the municipality on the whole as safe. Aspects that support this feeling are the presence of lighting, general urban landscaping of the areas (open free space) and the frequency of people. Consequently, the reasons for feeling unsafe in certain singled out spaces are the opposite ones – lack of lighting, unarranged urban spaces, litter, untamed greens and lack of frequency. We can therefore confirm that in most cases feelings of insecurity are directly linked to the quality, comfort and cleanliness of the area.

Awareness of previous attacks on women taking place in certain areas also increases the feeling of insecurity in those spaces, especially at night. Other aspects that impact women's perceptions of safety in Centar concern the familiarity with the spaces, as well as whom they are frequented by. Most of the participants said that they feel safe on a route they use every day. For example, one of them walks through the park every day and feels safe, although it is early in the morning and there are no people around. On the other hand, although beggars do not make them feel unsafe (but rather evoke a sense of grief), one of the participants said (and the others agreed) that in 90% of cases she feels unsafe in the presence of drunk people, regardless of where they are (on the street, in a car or elsewhere).

In conclusion, the women usually have to take decisions when and where they will move through the city center. One of them gave an example: the playgrounds for the children in SP Market and

Zebra in Kapishtec should be equally maintained. The one at Zebra is better maintained, so she takes her children there:

I will give you an example about hygiene. I am now in Kapistec. We have now a playground in Zebra and a playground in SP Market. Before the Zebra one was built, I took my child to SP Market all the time. We have park employees taking care of the hygiene of which all have their areas; they are subcontracted and have nothing to do with the municipality [...] No one from the supervisors has told them 'clean more in front of Zebra, do not clean in front of SP Market.' But the park employees themselves, knowing that the mayor's private business is Zebra, pay more attention to it and there is a drastic difference in hygiene, lighting and the services between the Zebra and the SP Market playgrounds. And you see what fits you and you choose the better.

Safety audit walk participant

In this context we have to emphasize that the perceptions and experiences of the space are not taking place in an isolated manner, but they are created and shaped by the wider frame of the social and political discourses. The spaces, their design and landscaping, and their social value, role and use, including the perception about them (including here the perception on safety) are determined by ethnicity, gender and class (Gottdiener, 1997). If we refer to what was said previously about the space and the creation of the space, referring to Low (2006), then in this context the Municipality of Centar, being the central municipality of the capital in which most of the shopping centers, institutions, the Parliament, etc., are located (accumulation of social value in capitalist societies), is at the same time designed and perceived through the mechanisms of class, ethnic and gender segregation. The creation of spaces represents a simultaneous practice of accommodation or grouping of people and things and linking objects – practice which, in its synthesizing activity, is not immune to the gender, class or racial exclusion.

By elaborating the perceptions of safety always related to the operation of the narratives about which people and which places/ spaces are dangerous, within this analysis we are opening the sphere of hierarchization and social structuring of the public spaces. These are the same mechanisms that create the perception that the Municipality of Centar is safer because of the small presence of people who are both racially and class determined through the public discourse (Roma, Albanians, sex workers etc.). The presence of these bodies is not excluded from the entire territory of the municipality. On the contrary, this is evident in specific places or locations of this Municipality that are hidden, less used and less frequent. Sometimes we had to explain to the respondents that these locations are actually part of the Centar Municipality, since most of the people were not aware of that fact. The reason is again in our initial attitudes and knowledge on which bodies and practices are accepted and normal on the territories we consider the most representative for the general public, citizens and peoples.

Perceptions of Safety in Municipality of Chair

Perceptions of safety in this municipality depend on whether the respondents have direct connections with the municipality (usually by living there) or not. Those not from Chair expressed doubts about the safety of the municipality. Interviewees and safety audit walk participants from Chair assess the municipality as very safe, but less frequented. The majority are aware of the bad image of the municipality, especially in the context of safety, but feels this is a result of stereotypes and prejudices that the majority of the people have towards Albanians. These stereotypes create prejudices about the territory inhabited by majority Albanians as an unsafe place for both men and women who are not part of this community. An excellent example of this

is something that happened to our researchers. During the data-collecting process, they used a taxi cab for going in a place in the municipality of Chair where a group discussion took place. The taxi driver, when given the destination (neighborhood Gazi Baba in Chair) turned to the two researchers and asked them: "What trouble is taking you there?"

In Chair, participants from the audit walks stated that they could easily find their way around the places even if they do not know them from before, which is true for during the day, but not so much at night. The majority of the respondents recognized places where a possible attacker can hide and not be seen. They identified specific places around which they feel more endangered such as: the unlit part of the park in Chair, the path towards "Prince" and as in Centar, small alleys, dark parking lots and construction sites, unlit areas and untamed greens.

Despite all identified difficulties, the general assessment of the participants is that on the whole the municipality is considered safe. As in Centar, aspects that support this feeling are the presence of lighting, general urban landscaping of the areas (open free space) and the frequency of people. Consequently, the reasons for feeling unsafe are the opposite ones – lack of lighting, unarranged urban spaces, litter, untamed greens and youngsters hanging around.

In that context, the participants of the walk highlighted the need for improvements in the areas that would contribute to their feeling of security.

Another important issue directly impacting women's safety in the municipality is the lifestyle accepted as norm in that community. This was elaborated by taxi drivers from municipality of Chair who interact with people and inhabitants from this municipality on daily basis. According to them, women in this municipality move mostly during the day. At night, they do not go out or if they do, it is in other municipalities such as Centar. One of the reasons provided by the respondents was that there are no places or spaces that would provide entertainment to these women.

Spaces available for women in Chair are several markets that incorporate restaurants ("Vero", "Princ") with children's play clubs. The space is organized in a way that attracts families, especially those with small children and usually offers family-oriented activities.

Contrary to Centar, where we said that the space is perceived as inhabited and used by accepted and normative bodies that enjoy the highest position in the social hierarchy, Chair, although a territory populated mainly with Albanians, cannot escape these strategies of hierarchization. The social structuring of the public spaces in Chair that practices hierarchy as a form is strongly conditioned by gender, sex and class. Therefore, the public spaces are designed so they attract only specific types of women (family women, married with children) that enjoy a high status in countries, societies and cultures in which the families are highest represented communities, heterosexuality is the only recognized form of emotional, sexual and social relations, while women enjoy maximum respect when in the role of mothers or wives.

Overall Assessment of the Safety Audit Walks

It is very difficult to divide and compare the public spaces according to their type and function (public facilities and residential areas, various public spaces – parks, streets, squares etc.), since the assessment of their safety is based on aspects of their maintenance such as light, isolation, maintenance, etc. At the same time, it is very contradictory that even in the center of the city, spaces can transgress from very safe to very scary places in a short distance. It is practically impossible to have a continuous safe route, so women have to take additional turns in order to reach their goal, which requires more time and planning on their part and makes them more vulnerable.

There is a significant difference in the assessment in the safety between day and night. Participants feel safer during the day in both municipalities. During the night they feel safest if they are passing the location in a vehicle. Consequently, they feel least safe if they are alone or with a dependent (child, elderly or person with disability) and have to walk a longer distance. Having a person with a disability as a companion is considered especially unsafe at night.

The significant differences between the perception of safety during the day and at night are due to the fact that some of the locations in Centar, such as MTV and MKC, are areas that are dark, isolated and locations where sex workers are operating. The street leading from them to MOB as well as the whole area around MOB is an area where intensive construction is taking place and as a result is dark, neglected, badly kept, dirty and generally uninviting. The picture is completely different during the day, since many state administrative institutions are located in this area and there is a high frequency of people. In Chair some parts of the route, such as the path towards the market/restaurant "Prince", are rather frequent but very, very dark and have construction material and untamed bushes in the vicinity. Also, the "Plasticharska street" is very well lit, but only frequented by fast cars passing by.



PLACES AND SPACES



One of the questions in the street survey was designed to identify what particular types of public spaces women consider more dangerous than others. We therefore asked women to rate the likelihood of being harassed in any way in various public spaces. Based on their responses, we can conclude that women considered open spaces as most unsafe, whereas they generally tend to consider familiar and enclosed public spaces, such as their cars, workplaces or schools, as safer.

Being out in a park, in nature or by the riverbank is considered most risky, with as many as 57.0% of the respondents thinking that they are likely to be harassed and more than a third (38.1%) thinking that this is very likely. Roadsides, streets and parking lots are also considered unsafe: as many as 46.2% think they are likely to be harassed, with one in four reporting that it is highly likely they would be harassed in one of these spaces. Market places and squares, even though they are also open spaces, are considered less risky (only one in five women thinks it is likely that she would be harassed there), probably due to the fact that these are more frequented. Public transport and bus stops, despite the frequency of people using them, are considered more risky than market places and squares, with one quarter of the respondents (24.9%) thinking they are likely to be harassed while using them. Our respondents also recognized bars, restaurants and discos as somewhat unsafe spaces, with 29.9% believing that they are likely to be harassed when visiting these establishments. According to our respondents, the least likely places for any kind of harassment are spaces that they frequent regularly and where they know other people, as is the case with their schools or work places. Only one in ten women think it is likely that they would be subjected to harassment in both these places.

Table 7. Please rate the likelihood of being harassed in any way in the following public spaces. Please rate them on a scale from one to five, where one is not likely at all, and five means very likely.

	Not likely at all			Very likely	
Roadside, streets, parking	9.4%	18.7%	23.5%	21.8%	24.4%
Public transport/Waiting at bus stops	17.8%	31.6%	22.7%	11.9%	13.0%
Market place, square	28.9%	28.0%	19.9%	10.3%	9.2%
Park, nature, river bank	6.8%	12.6%	20.4%	18.9%	38.1%
Car	33.1%	24.5%	17.1%	7.6%	6.7%
Work	42.5%	25.0%	14.8%	6.4%	3.1%
Bars, restaurant, disco	27.3%	19.4%	18.9%	16.3%	13.6%
School, university	34.7%	29.0%	19.5%	5.6%	5.5%
Other public building	25.0%	26.3%	21.3%	10.7%	7.2%
Other (specify)					

In terms of specific urban elements that contribute to a general feeling of being unsafe, the majority of the respondents identified poor lighting as a major cause for concern. In addition to this, one in ten women reported feeling unsafe when there are no shops or vendors in the area, one in three are worried about the lack of a visible and effective police force and one in five identify the general lack of respect for women on part of men as a contributing factor to the perception of safety.

Table 8. In this area, which factors contribute to your feeling unsafe?

Poor lighting	59.6%
Lack of/poor signage or information	2.6%
Poor maintenance of open public spaces	12.2%
Crowded public transport/bus stops/stations	6.7%
Garbage	6.4%
Obstacles on the road (parked cars, flower containers, various objects)	6.3%
Lack of vendors or stalls/people in the area	11.7%
Lack of effective/visible police	29.7%
Men dealing with or taking alcohol/drugs	22.5%
Groups of young men hanging around	27.0%
Lack of respect for women from men	21.2%
Street dogs	42.0%

The respondents/participants in the focus groups, interviews and safety audit walk pointed out places in both municipalities Skopje they consider less safe and which they try to avoid. They are listed below:

The City Park

The park in the City of Skopje spreads on the territory of two neighboring municipalities – Centar and Karposh. Yet, its maintenance is under the umbrella of the City of Skopje. It was not identified as unsafe by the people using it during the recreation season (when the weather is warm and there is a significant presence of people), but by the respondents who, due to their job or other reasons have to pass through it on daily basis. One of the male respondents, working in a building near the City Park, shared the experiences of his female colleagues who were attacked on a working day. According to the respondent, when the female colleague reported the assault to the police, she was told that they have many reports of similar cases in that space. One of the male journalists in the focus group even had some of the cases in the city park videotaped and aired on TV, taking care to protect the victim's identity.

The Park around the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (PMF)

The park around the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (PMF) in Skopje is located in the Gazi Baba Municipality. Even though it was not in the focus of our research, it is a neighboring municipality of the target municipalities and we are covering it here due to the large number of indicators of a lack of safety there. There is almost no larger city in the world that does not have a "rape park". It is this area in Skopje that bears this unfortunate reputation due to the many alleged cases of rape shared with the researchers by the interviewees, but not officially reported. The park is located at the periphery of the urban core of the city, hidden from views, poorly lit and there are faculties around with specific working hours. These conditions make it exceptionally susceptible to violence, including violence against women. Not many people are using this park at night (except students from the nearby student dormitories or those who work late at the Faculty). There is no alternative route that is busier or better lit that would be safer and that can be used as an exit from the Faculty to the main street. This Park was identified as unsafe by many of the participants in the group discussion and interviews. Some of them built their perceptions

from experiences of others or from the media who reported about violence on women in this space, while others personally experienced it. Many respondents confirmed that it is one of the least safe points in the city. The sexual workers also mentioned this park as a place where they experienced sexual and physical violence. They are aware of the risk when the client proposes this space, but sometimes are forced to accept it because they need the money.

Underpasses

Some of the women mentioned the underpasses as least safe places for women. Since there aren't many underpasses in Skopje, they mentioned only the one near hotel "Kontinental" (Gazi Baba Municipality). However, the respondents said that they never (or rarely) used or would use underpasses in the future. Their perception is maybe built on movies or on the media reports because they have never experienced nor heard about violence on women near an underpass in Skopje. However, we have to consider their intentional avoidance of these spaces and the possibility to be faced with violence in such places. One female respondent explained why she considers the underpasses to be least safe – these locations are not busy, they are hidden from the public eye and, in a case of violence, the chances of someone seeing or hearing the screams for help are low. The respondents say that in the urban designing of Skopje it was not a good idea to create new underpasses because they are perceived as unsafe locations and will not be useful to the people, especially not useful to women.

Small and hidden paths surrounded by bushes and trees

Safety audit walk participants as well as interviewees identified these paths as unsafe for women. There are several such paths in the Chair Municipality. Taxi drivers from Chair confirmed driving women at night on very short distances because their walking route would have had to include these types of streets and paths. Other respondents said they are not using these paths because there are spots (both night and day) where someone can hide in the bushes and attack them.

Parking lots

Some of the safety audit walk participants consider risky the public semi-closed or open parking lots. The reason for this perception is that there is no frequency in the evening and fear of the possibility of being robbed. Some also said that compared to the closed parking lots, the open ones do not have security cameras or security staff.

Construction sites

Many of the safety audit walk participants consider unsafe the parts of the city where construction activities are taking place. As reasons they provide the fact that these places are insufficiently lit in the evening, there is construction materials scattered everywhere, there is construction waste in the vicinity and high fences around the construction perimeter that block the line of sight, so that anyone can hide there and attack them. Due to the problems with the terrain (holes, etc.), it is difficult to escape and one can be easily dragged into some isolated section where no one will hear cries for help.

Cafes and discos

The perception of the safety of these places is determined by age. Senior respondents, whose children are users of these public spaces, perceive them as unsafe and their fear is directed towards the safety of their children. Contrary to them, waitresses consider cafes, discos and night clubs as safe places for women due to the frequency of people, helpful staff and the presence

of private security that ensures the safety of the clients, especially the female clients. As we saw earlier, the respondents in the street survey also did not tend to perceive these establishments as especially risky. However, a high-profile rape case that took place as we were conducting the study had as its starting place a night club in the city park, so this perception of cafes and discos as safe is not necessarily rooted in reality, but is possibly due to the fact that women do not expect an attack to go through unnoticed with so many people, as well as security (bouncers) present. Unfortunately, this expectation was proven wrong in this case, when a French tourist was dragged out of a night club by a group of men, without anyone in the club reacting to this scene, and was taken away to a parking lot and then to a hotel room to be raped.

Public transport

We remind here once again that the research was carried out in a time of frequent physical violence on ethnic grounds, which was mainly taking place in the buses or at the bus stops. This influenced the responses given by the respondents. One of the journalists pointed out that there were always physical fights in the buses. The reasons for these fights were various and they usually took place between boys from different neighborhoods. The interviewees believe that the media, by emphasizing the reports about the ethnic-based fights, present them as the only ground for fights. In this way, by over representing specific types of violence, other forms of violence are minimized and ignored, including gender-based violence, which is continuously present in the buses, as witnessed by some of our interviewees.

Our interviewees emphasized that buses are dangerous places where unwanted sexual attention, showing genitalia, close contact, touching, and similar takes place. Some of the female respondents in the interviews and group discussions pointed out that you cannot escape the attack, i.e., you have to wait until the next bus stop when the doors will open. The bus drivers shared that it is very difficult to deal with such occurrences of sexual harassment, since they are difficult to prove – it is necessary to catch them in action. The drivers have to drive, sell or check tickets and monitor the situation with the passengers inside the bus, which makes it difficult for them to react to violence. This type of violence can happen both during the day and at night. During the day, the busses are full, so the perpetrator is able to approach his victims under the excuse that the bus is crowded. At night, the buses are empty and the perpetrator can attack without serious consequences and escape at the next stop. All bus drivers pointed out the fights among high school students in buses as most frequent and dangerous type of violence for all passengers.

The focus group with bus drivers and controllers²⁰ showed that not only are they aware of the violence threatening their passengers, but also confirm that they too are under constant fear of attacks.

The taxi drivers confirmed that the women feel safer in taxis and less safe in the busses, especially at night. In Chair, 90% of the clients are women and in Centar, 80 to 90% of their clients are women, especially at night. This clearly speaks about the perception of safety on part of women in the City of Skopje, related to the use of public spaces and public transport.

The waitresses also brought up the topic of using the public spaces and transport after working hours, at night. Some of them have their transport arranged by their bosses, but this is not officially regulated and depends on the bosses' good will. Others stated that night buses are rare, so they have to find other alternatives that they consider risky, such as biking or walking.

²⁰ This focus group took place end of August 2012, several months after the events on the Smiljkovsko ezero and consequent protests and public violence took place.

REACTIONS TO VIOLENCE



In the interviews and in the group discussions some of the female respondents shared experiences of violence against women (personal but also experiences of their friends or users of the services provided by the NGOs) that included various forms of reaction to violence by the victims or potential victims. However, we must emphasize the fact that in most cases these reactions are self-defense mechanism and response to the violence without using the institutional mechanisms. The reason for that, according to the female respondents, is the lack of trust that they, or the users of their services, have towards the institutions of the system. Primarily this lack of trust is shown in the conscious decision not to report specific cases of violence on women in public spaces.

If we take a look at the responses from the street survey, we can see that there are major differences in how the women will respond to violence depending on whether they are subjected to street harassment or a physical attack. As many as 44.7% would not react in any way if they experienced verbal street harassment, but one in three (33.5%) said she would confront the perpetrator. About one in five women would turn to bystanders for help, and an equal number would file a report with the police. On the other hand, in cases of direct physical or sexual attacks, only 1.4% said they would do nothing and more than half believe they would confront the perpetrator. One worrisome result that we got from this question was that only half of the respondents said they would report the attack to the police, so later in the report we will look at our respondents' experience with the police, as well as why they think these forms of violence are underreported.

Table 9. What do you think, how would you react in case of.. [Tick all that apply].

	experiencing verbal street harassment?	direct physical or sexual attack?
Nothing	44.7%	1.4%
Confront the perpetrator	33.5%	57.8%
Report it to the police/ security officer	21.4%	52.2%
Ask bystanders for help	19.4%	43.0%
Report it to a helpline/to another service	5.1%	5.5%
Tell/ask for help from family	11.0%	20.3%
Tell/ask for help from a friend	4.7%	7.8%
Other	1.3%	1.3%

Assistance and reaction from the bystanders is also an expected protection for some of the female respondents. However, most of the female respondents shared cases of violence they or other women experienced, with witnesses present, and said that the bystanders not always, i.e., rarely react to protect the women. In most of the cases it was the taxi drivers witnessing the violence and usually they were the only ones providing help. One of the taxi drivers said he feels like a police officer, even more than that, because they are often on the street and can see what is going on directly. They confirmed that, when witnessing violence, they always come to assist the victim or just to separate the perpetrator from the victim, thus interrupting the violent act. However, they do not report the violence to the police.


In the street survey, more than half of our respondents expect that someone who is witnessing the attack would offer to help or drive the attacker away on their own accord and an additional 11.6% believe that a bystander would call for help. However, despite this faith that the majority of our respondents put in the vigilance of witnesses to an attack, more than a quarter of them still believe that despite noticing, bystanders would not react in this type of situation.

The journalists shared cases when victims of violence approach them asking for help from the media. In most of the cases, these are women victims of violence who undertook all institutional measures but feel that the institutions failed to resolve the problem. In such cases the women approach the media as a last resort to solve their problem.

The waitresses said that the institution would be the last place where they would seek assistance. In a case of violence on them, they first approach the male employees in the bar (the barmen or their superior) and if that does not produce any result, they call the security. They call the police only in cases of “more radical” forms of violence, when there are large group fights in the bar.

One interesting example of a specific action taken to respond to the threat of violence against women came up in the focus group with the taxi drivers. When we asked them about the possibility of women passengers being subjected to violence by the drivers, one of the taxi drivers said that their company has established a Commission where the clients can report any dissatisfaction, including violence. The Commission then acts further and sanctions its employees. In this case, the violence is treated by a body established by a private company and not by the institutions, but it could nevertheless be useful to follow the work of this Commission and, if successful, use it as a positive example of the private sector taking active measures to address a pressing social issue.

Reporting Violence against Women



In the interviews and group discussions, the respondents identified several factors why cases of violence are not reported. As already mentioned, one of the reasons is the lack of trust that the people have in the institutions, especially the police. This lack of trust is sometimes based on personal experiences, but more often it is based on stories experienced by others or on already established opinions and standpoints related to the inefficiency of these institutions and the bad treatment experienced by some people in these spaces. This image of the institutions to a large extent depends whether the women belong to some marginalized group. For example, the women belonging to marginalized groups have no confidence in the institutions of the system, including the police, due to the fear of being treated inappropriately and due to the opinion that violence against some of these women is in some way justified and can be tolerated. This is especially the case when it comes to sexual violence against sex workers. Very often the institutions consider this type of violence impossible, since they are women who offer commercial sexual services. Similar are the experiences of the female drug users.

The representatives of the Shelter Center for Women Victims of Domestic Violence said that they have very few reported sexual violence cases and added that the reason for this is probably the shame to report such cases of violence. In the informal discussion with the women, our research team was surprised at how many cases of rape were not reported by the women because of a fear that they will be ‘labeled’ in the environment as ‘damaged goods’ and further discriminated against in addition to the experienced trauma.

There is no good in reporting rape. My sister was raped and she reported it. No one was ever charged, and she could not marry, since the community labeled her as the ‘raped one’.

33-year-old woman from Skopje

Also,

I was astonished about the existing stigma among young people. They were telling me about some case where a girl was raped, but they say 'she was wearing miniskirts all the time, she was provoking'. And I hear this from young girls, 18 years of age and I can't believe it. So the girl reported the case, but the opinion of her community is that she was asking for it.

Representative from NCGE

Another very important reason for not reporting the violence is the inability to recognize it. According to our interviewees, these types of unrecognizable violence are the verbal, psychical and even lighter forms of physical violence. It seems that women feel that they have to have grave physical consequences in order to report sexual violence. This can be illustrated by the statement of a civil society activist:

The women have to be well beaten before they report the violence or they do not take it seriously

Respondent from the Helsinki Committee

On the one hand, some of the respondents say that these forms of violence are not perceived as violence, but as an unpleasant norm and a common occurrence, something the women are facing every day and, on the other hand, some of them think that they will not be taken seriously by the police if they report these 'minor' types of violence.

During the discussions, the NGOs pointed out that victims prefer to report violence to the NGOs and not to the institutions of the system, due to the lack of trust in them and the fear that they will be treated in a disgraceful manner and stigmatized. Furthermore, the respondents emphasized another serious problem that prevents women-victims to report the violence: the lack of systematic support for the victims and proper assistance. Most of the female respondents said the same, i.e., the key question a woman-victim of violence will ask herself is: "I'll report the violence, and then what?" Regardless of the legal prohibition for victimization, the women are afraid that they will be labeled as victims, will be subjected to stigma and shame, as well as to possible revenge by the perpetrator if they decided to report.

In the schools, the teachers are more interested in paying attention to sexual abuse of minors due to the increased public awareness and reaction to that type of violence. However, this type of violence has no systematic treatment. It is all about "stories about teachers who prefer to touch and pinch the girls". There is no specific, formal reaction. The many reasons for that are that, on one hand, it is very difficult to break the negative collegial solidarity among the teachers, staff and the adults in general (inspectors, people from the Ministry, etc.), but on the other hand, the bad experiences with the institutions of the system are another strong motivation for not reacting. Even the students/pupils have no confidence in the system.

The teacher can activate connections in the Ministry or in the pedagogical service and make the thing disappear

Psychologist working on issues of children and youth

She emphasizes the lack of trust in the efficiency of the system as one of the key reasons for the inadequate response to this (and other types of) violence in the schools. Another important reason for not reporting a case with the institutions of the system, in the words of one of our interviewees, is the preservation of the school's reputation.

Self-Protection Mechanisms

Due to the above-mentioned lack of confidence and trust in the institutions of the system and the stigma with which some women are faced with in those institutions, we identified a wide variety of self-protection mechanisms that women implement in order to ensure minimum safety while using the public space. These mechanisms largely confirm the above findings and they refer to the restriction of the women's mobility or conscious choice of the women on how and when to use the public space. In this regard, most of the respondents, for the sake of their safety, choose which districts in the city they will use at what time of day, and whether they will do that alone or accompanied by someone. This impacts the mobility of the women and their right to absolutely use the public spaces at any time and alone.

Other than these self-imposed restrictions that were the most prevalent form of self-protection, we identified a number of other mechanisms that women employ when using public spaces. For example, one of the women we talked to who had initially said she feels very safe in Skopje, told us that she carries a knife in her purse at all time. An additional self-defense strategy was shared by one of the female bus drivers. She said that her practice of pulling out a camera in certain situations helped her when she was in a car accident. Upon seeing that she is a woman, the police immediately blamed her as having caused the crash. Her practice of taking photos and videos helped her win the court case.

Self-protection mechanisms are very developed among women from marginalized groups, likely due to the fact that these women are more frequently exposed to danger and violence. For example, the sex workers have their mechanisms of identifying potential violent perpetrator among their clients, which were shared with us by the sex workers in the focus groups, as well as the sex workers' rights activists we interviewed. They assess the behavior, the way he addresses them, check if he is drunk and, very importantly, if he is part of a group, which they tend to avoid. In these cases, the sex workers withdraw. Furthermore, they avoid wearing scarves or jewelry around their necks, especially gold-resembling jewelry due to the fear of being robbed or strangled. Standing with or moving in a group is another mechanism of protection that makes the girls feel safe, knowing that there will be someone to help them if necessary. Sex work activists advise them not to wear high heels, because these would make running/ escaping more difficult; however, due to the nature of their profession, most of these girls still decide to wear high heels anyway. As prevention from violence, the girls usually share information about violent clients, including license plates and descriptions of men they have had bad experiences with.

Female drug users sometimes carry protection. In the interview with the female drug user that works as an activist for drug users rights, she stated: "Within our community (the female drug users community), I can notice that sometimes girls go in couples or in groups, they feel more safe when in groups, especially if they share the same form of addiction. But it is not always like that. It happens when they are aware of a risk, when going on specific places like street Dizonska or on a meeting with some people they fear. I can say that this is happening more to the female drug users, and not to men." In most of the cases the sex workers have a partner/ protector and the female drug users very often go with their partner or friend to therapy or to use drugs.

People with special needs are usually protected by their families or by some type of an assistant and they do not go anywhere without an escort, even when they are adults and are able to do everything on their own.

I think they have some kind of fear, because part of them even when they go to university, which means they are adults above age of 20, have an obligatory escort. Whether it is going to be a family member, whether they are going to engage a personal assistant that will go with them, whether they choose a person from an organization, there is someone with them. I think they are fearful. They fear not being accepted, most of them have low self-confidence, because they are seen as someone who cannot do something. I think it is this fear, the psychological fear that they will make a mistake and won't do something as it should be done.

NGO Otvorete gi prozorcite

In schools, as the pedagogue in a high school in Centar stated, they are aware of possible violence against their female students outside of schools and attempt to cluster girls living in the same neighborhoods in the same classes, so that they can come to and leave school together. However, she had reservations about the success of this mechanism, since the previous school year they had a case when close to the school and near a bank, a man using a knife as a threat attempted to take the chain from the neck of a girl despite the fact that she was together with two of her friends and the event took place in broad daylight.

Clothes are considered by many respondents as the most important factors for potentially unsafe situations and avoiding dressing provocatively is an additional self-protection mechanism that was often pointed out. Some of respondents claimed that provocatively dressed women deserve to be exposed to comments, unwanted sexual attention and stares because they are “asking for it”. One of the female bus drivers said that sexual harassment in buses is a result of the excessiveness of women, their provocative dress and that they should be careful since they are “asking for trouble”. One of the waitresses said that if a waitress is provocatively dressed and behaves in that manner she is provoking to be touched, to get tips placed in her cleavage and to be exposed to comments and stares with sexual connotation. Another interviewee said that she feels safe when moving around Skopje and that she is never exposed to unwanted sexual attention, verbal violence, comments and stares because she “wears pants, does not wear makeup and does not dress up, etc.” The frequency with which clothing came up in both the interviews and focus groups and in the street surveys is worrisome. This implication that clothing somehow invites violence and even more troubling, justifies it is yet another narrative that both restricts women and serves as a victim-blaming mechanism. In addition to reinforcing stereotypes about women who dress unconventionally, this is highly problematic because many of the women who took part in the study are convinced that wearing the ‘right’ type of clothes somehow excludes them from the pool of potential victims, which is certainly not the case. Some of the reports that were submitted to the React! Online platform illustrate this perfectly, as we had cases where women who were followed or attacked felt the need to emphasize the fact that they were wearing plain and unrevealing clothing.

The various defence mechanisms that women resort to in order to avoid being attacked in public spaces were also addressed in our street survey. Roughly one in three women will entirely avoid using certain public spaces or going to secluded places and an equal number of them avoid going out at night. About half of the respondents avoid eye contact and a third of them constantly look back and scan the environment when they are outside. One in four of our respondents will pretend to talk on the phone in order to minimize the risk of experiencing violence, and 15% will pretend that they are in a relationship. In addition to this, one in five women reported that they avoid wearing certain clothes as a form of protection from potential attacks.



Table 11. Have you done anything of the following from fear of such interactions with strangers in public places/ or for the purpose of minimizing the risk of experiencing some form of violence in public? Please tick all that apply:

	Never	Very rarely (only couple of times)	Often (every month or week)	Always	No Response
You workout indoors instead in the open public spaces	66.8%	15.4%	5.1%	2.7%	10.0%
Take a dog with you	76.8%	7.3%	3.6%	2.1%	10.3%
Talk on a cell phone or pretend that you are talking	34.3%	30.6%	20.7%	5.6%	8.9%
Pretend that you are in a relationship	52.2%	19.4%	11.9%	3.9%	12.6%
Go on a self-defense courses	77.5%	6.8%	2.2%	1.7%	11.8%
Constantly look back and scan the environment	23.1%	35.0%	22.1%	12.2%	7.6%
Avoid eye contact	19.3%	22.1%	25.4%	24.9%	8.3%
Cross the street or go the other way	14.6%	34.1%	24.4%	20.4%	6.4%
Carry items to protect yourself (eg, spray, keychain)	66.9%	15.4%	4.5%	3.5%	9.8%
Move to another quarter	61.1%	17.6%	8.0%	1.2%	12.2%
You change jobs because the harasser works with you	76.0%	6.4%	3.7%	2.2%	11.7%
Avoid using public transport	56.9%	24.4%	6.7%	1.5%	10.5%
Avoid certain public spaces entirely	36.3%	31.1%	13.9%	9.4%	9.4%
Avoid going out alone at all times	54.3%	22.8%	9.2%	2.6%	11.0%
Avoid going out alone after dark	32.2%	30.8%	16.8%	11.4%	8.7%
Avoid going to secluded spaces	30.7%	28.6%	19.6%	12.7%	8.3%
Avoid wearing certain clothes	42.6%	25.7%	12.8%	9.9%	9.0%
No, I don't do anything	40.8%	9.0%	4.4%	7.4%	38.3%
Other (specify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "if you are dressed provocatively, of course men will talk at you"; • "I try not do dress provocatively, so that I won't attract someone's attention"; • "I'm on the lookout for sexual perverts" • "Anything that can happen will happen even if you are well protected. You never know." 				

Institutional protection

According to our interviewees, institutional protection is very rarely used or is intentionally avoided, including here the police where violence should be first reported. Mostly cases of domestic violence are reported to the institutions and NGOs. Results from the focus groups and interviews lead to the conclusion that the existing institutional protection is DV focused and not wide enough to include other types of VAW. The employees in the NGOs dealing with DV stated that once they receive reports of domestic violence from their clients, they react further to the Centers for Social Work and the police. The employees in the NGOs are the ones explaining to the DV victims the possibilities for support, which is not always the case in the Centers for Social Work. Furthermore, the Centers for Social Work refer the DV victims to the NGOs, so they can assist them in filing request for temporary measures. The reasons for that is not always the ignorant attitude of the employees, but that the Centers for Social Work have a wide mandate and they are overburdened, so they lack the time to dedicate themselves to each case individually and thoroughly. In the interview, representatives from the NGO “Otvorete gi Prozorcite”, they said that it is much easier for them to communicate with other NGOs instead of referring a person with a disability to an institution. On the other hand, some of the experts we spoke to say that the primary aim of the assistance provided in the Centers for Social Work has the goal of maintaining the family, which especially problematic for women who are victims of domestic violence.

In this context, some of the interviewees pointed out the institutional discrimination towards marginalized women victims of DV. A good example of this is the rejection of women below 18 years of age in the shelter centers, which creates difficulties for young Roma women who often marry before they are of age and may be victims of domestic violence, but are unable to get protection. Still, the interviewees said that the centers are overcrowded and have no capacities to admit new women. The challenge here is that the shelter centers are few and operate with limited capacities. The health institutions are also an important part of the chain in the reaction to violence against women. When it comes to domestic violence victims, according to the Shelter Center for women-victims of domestic violence, it is the health institutions that least contributes towards opening the path for an institutional resolution of the problem. The interviewees emphasized that when coming in contact with a patient who is a victim of domestic violence, the health institutions are obligated to document the violence with a joint agreed protocol for procedures in the institutions when admitting victims of domestic violence. However, this obligation is mostly not respected by the health workers, probably because it is not legally proscribed and they suffer no repercussion if they fail to act. According to this Protocol, the health workers are obligated to inform the police about domestic violence cases that they are medically treating. This is very important because if the woman decides to press charges against the perpetrator later on, the confirmation by a doctor is very important in proving the act.

In terms of the institutional response to cases of rape, HOPS activists emphasized the important role the health institutions play in their resolution. The “Sexual and Health Rights of the Marginalized Communities” Coalition, together with HOPS, delivered a seminar for doctors at which it was agreed that they will take serious actions in cases of rape, instead of referring the victims to the Forensic Medicine Institute. However, this did not happen in reality. The reason for this, according to the interviewees, is that especially in cases of rape and physical violence against women where there are visible traces of violence, they do not want to be further involved in the procedure (in front of a court, police, etc.) where they will have to be witnesses.

Another major challenge faced by women who are victims of violence is the insufficient cooperation between the police and other relevant institutions, which is very important for the victims. Many of the participants feel that the institutions are just transferring responsibility from one to the other. This aspect will be covered in detail in the section below, where we look at the Police and its role in reacting and protecting the women from violence.

Police

The Law on Police (2006) in Article 3 clearly accepts that the main role of the police is to protect and respect basic human rights guaranteed not only by national legislation, but also by ratified international agreements, in addition to maintaining public order and peace in society. In order to better understand why violence against women in public spaces often goes by unreported, we asked our respondents to share their experiences or the experiences of someone they know with reporting an incident to the police. Only 102 or 13.1% of the women we interviewed reported knowing someone who had dealt with the police following an attack.

Table 12. Do you know a woman who reported an incident to the police?

	No. of respondents	%
No	678	86.9%
Yes	102	13.1%

The majority of the incidents that our respondents shared with us were of a physical nature. One fifth of the reports (21.5%) were filed following a violent physical attack, 15.6% after a milder form of a physical attack (touching or feeling up) and 8.8% after the victim experienced a sexual attack.

Table 13. What was the nature of the incident?

	No. of respondents	%
Verbal (comments, whistling, humiliate, etc)	5	5%
Physical (touching, feeling up etc.)	16	15.6%
Visual (staring, leering, flashing)	5	5%
Stalking	17	16.6%
Violent physical attack (push, shake, slap, drag you, or throw something at you	22	21.5%
Threat	14	13.7%
Sexual harassment	9	8.8%
Other (specify)		
No answer	10	9.8%

The respondents were then asked about the reaction of the police to the reported violence. In most cases, the police recorded the incident (20.5%). Only 6 reports resulted in an investigation and 8 in the arrest of the perpetrator. It seems that in many cases the police response was inadequate, so if we look at the first three reactions given in the table below (victim-blaming, minimizing the incident, or lack of action), we can conclude that the majority of the incidents did not get the needed attention.



Table 14. What was their (the police's) response?

	No. of respondents	%
They blamed her for the incident	8	7.8%
They minimalized it/trivialized it	11	10.7%
They did not do anything	10	9.8%
They recorded the incident	21	20.5%
They investigated the incident	6	5.8%
They caught the offender	8	7.8%

Based on the responses in the previous question, it is not surprising that the majority of the victims were not satisfied with the way the police handled their cases. Only 1.9% said that the victim was very satisfied with how her case was handled, and more than a third (36.1%) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the handling of their cases.

Table 15. How satisfied was she with the way the police handled her case?

	No. of respondents	%
Very satisfied	2	1.9%
Satisfied	14	13.7%
Dissatisfied	22	21.5%
Very dissatisfied	16	15.6%
Don't know/Can't remember	4	3.9%
Refused/No answer	28	27%

Finally, we asked our respondents what their opinion is on why many women do not report cases of violence to the police. Following the responses to the other questions in this section, it comes as no surprise that about a third of our respondents (33.8%) believe that the police could not do anything to help them, or that an equal number of them (33.9%) think women are afraid to approach the police. However, what was identified by more than half of our respondents as one of the reasons for this reluctance was that women are ashamed or afraid that people will judge them or their families. What this shows is that although a lot can and should be done to sensitize the police for dealing with cases of violence against women, too often what prevents reporting is an unfounded sense of shame that is not uncommon among victims of gender based violence.

Table 16. Many women do not report cases of violence to the police. What do you think, what are the reasons?

Too ashamed or afraid that people will judge her or her family	53.3%
Not serious enough to report	9.9%
Afraid to approach the police	33.9%
Do not think the police could do anything	33.8%
Would not be believed/They would blame the victim	9.6%
The process is too tedious	8.6%
Do not want offender arrested / in trouble with police	2.8%
Reported to someone else (specify)	0.3%
Other (specify)	
Not applicable – I think that all incidents are reported	2.4%
Don't know	9.9%
Refused/No answer	0.8%

For most of the respondents in interviews and focus groups, the police are the key factor in the institutional response to violence against women. Respondents singled out the police as the most recognizable institution for protection against violence and shared their experiences and perceptions on the police work in cases of violence against women in public spaces. The huge lack of trust in the police force when it comes to reporting violence is a serious obstacle in using this mechanism in cases of violence. This lack of trust is mainly present among women who are members of the marginalized groups.

In addition to the reasons we mentioned, here we also need to include the failure to act by the police in cases of violence, especially against marginalized women (especially sex workers, drug users and Roma women). The representatives from the NGO HOPS shared a case of violence against a sex worker, a field worker and a social worker when they were doing field work in the area where commercial sexual services are offered. They were victims of an assault by five drunken men who were in a car. They first attacked them by running the car into them and then two of them came out of the car and started to beat them – the field worker suffered a blow and the two other women managed to remain calm and aware in the situation and immediately wrote down the license plate of the car, the description and brand of the car, the clothes and features of the attackers and went to police to report the case. However, they were ridiculed in the police station, because the girl who was with them was recognized by the policemen as a sex worker. The NGO representative we talked to added that for the sex worker the act of reporting the violence to the police lead to additional trauma. Regardless of all the information that these women reported to the police and regardless of the presence of witnesses on the place of the attack, this case is still not resolved and no protection whatsoever was offered by the police.

The respondents also mentioned positive examples of police work, but we did not record many instances of this. One such example was shared by the female representative from NGO Antiko. This case is a true counterbalance to the previous one and, regardless of the positive attitude of the police, opens dilemmas about the unequal treatment of the police and the discrimination and stigma some women are faced with when dealing with this institution. Antiko shared the case of a mother and daughter who asked for assistance from this NGO after the girl was attacked when returning home from the school in Chair Municipality by a man who wanted to grab her and put her in his car. The victim and her mother were accompanied to the police by a team from Antiko, where they reported the case. In this case, the police acted positively and were aware about the existence of the risk that the attack could be repeated. As a result, the girl received a one-month police escort to the school and back. This shows that the police can indeed resolve the cases and can offer their services to the women and girls who are threatened, or who feel threatened, in their use of public spaces. However, in this case again the victim approached the NGO first and not the police.

The experiences and knowledge of the research team of this Study indicate that NGOs play important role in the reporting and resolution of domestic violence cases. The reason for this is that they are more gender-sensitive to work with the victims, have established systems of cooperation with the key institutions (Center for Social Work, the police, health workers, courts) and are able to guide the women through the system in order to ensure legal protection for them.

The journalists who were part of the group discussions cooperate to a large extent in the course of their work with the Ministry of Interior and they think that the violence against women in public spaces is not reported to the police due to the lack of trust in this institution, which is a result of unprofessional staff. Another reason they consider important is the negative attitude of police officers towards citizens – they are not kind and do not give an impression to the victims that the police is there to protect them. Another reason emphasized by the journalists

is the lack of discretion. They think that in Skopje, but especially in the smaller places where the police know all the women, violence will not be reported because the police officers gossip the information to their friends, so there is a real risk that the details about the case and the status of the victim will very soon become public knowledge. Some of the female interviewees said that this was precisely the reason why they did not report to the police the cases of violence they suffered. The journalists think that the negative image of the police is created and maintained by unprofessional police officers and they also emphasized that, on the other hand, there are very good police officers in the police force who are true professionals and who continuously have to fight against the stereotypes and attitudes that people have about the police.

The bus drivers also shared their dissatisfaction with the police. They all agreed that the police are not interested in solving the problems. One of the male bus drivers pointed out that he personally caught two thieves stealing from passengers and handed them over to the police; however, they were not apprehended. A female bus driver shared several examples. One time when a passenger did not want to pay the fare and when she approached the policeman on duty to help her, he said "What's the thing? Hey, come on now, it's just 35 denars. Let him go". Another time a policeman in a car overtook her while driving the bus honking, swearing and showing her the middle finger. The most frightening event for her was when she was attacked in the bus five years ago and suffered serious consequences (damaged eyesight and hearing). There is no court procedure even though the perpetrators have been identified, because the reaction that she got at the police station was: "you provoked him".

The bus controllers informed us that negotiations had taken place to increase the number of policemen patrolling in buses, even with the transport company providing extra funds to supplement the policemen's salaries. However, according to the participants in this focus group, the police had limited human capacities and did not agree to this proposal.

Another significant obstacle in the reaction of the police to the violence against women in public places are the stereotypes and prejudices about men and women, as well as the culture and tradition of gender inequality and the domination of the masculine view and authority. One of the female representatives from HOPS said that when she discussed with the head of the police, he told her that he has to protect the men too because "tomorrow any woman can think she can report violence from her husband or boyfriend". She also shared another case where she, together with the sex worker, tried to report in the police a case of rape. During the talk they had with the police officer he was continuously repeating that giving false statements is a crime. The victim finally gave up trying to report the case, since she was afraid that the perpetrator might press charges against her due to the lack of evidence for her statement.

In a patriarchal society where women are seen as sexual objects whose purpose is to satisfy men, it is difficult to speak about an institution, even an institution such as the police, which is not a patriarchal product that will go against maintaining this system of oppression. This authority of the masculine standpoint that we are talking about must be separated from men or group of men, i.e., we are not relating it to a specific group of men that implement this view by subordinating women in society. On the contrary – the male gaze is a way of viewing, understanding and experiencing the world and the society and it is systematic in both the culture and society and its mechanisms can be seen at work in both men and women. In the discussion with the male and female respondents, these narratives become obvious when they tried to emphasize the cases that are percentage-wise a minority of violation of laws and false reporting of violence by women, or to emphasize the look and the clothes of the women as a reason for violence against them.



Finally, what was very much emphasized by the female respondents in the response to violence was the question: what will happen once you report a case of violence. Not having an answer to this question, the victims often give up on their intentions to report the violence. Those who decide to report are faced with the emptiness of “what now?” i.e., an absence of institutional protection, rehabilitation, re-socialization and assistance to women – victims of violence. In the cases that were shared with us, the greatest problem was the lack of cooperation and the exceptionally low level of cooperation between the police and other relevant institutions towards a full resolution of cases of violence against women. When talking about the full resolution of cases of violence against women, we do not mean only finding and punishing the perpetrators, but we also refer to the assistance and protection for the victim so that she can continue her life without fear and stigma. This social, medical and ethical component cannot be offered to the victim by the police and it is therefore necessary for the police to cooperate with other relevant institutions that offer such services to the citizens. Unfortunately, in almost all cases that were shared with us there was a lack of this type of inter-institutional cooperation. In the cases that were shared with us, the police, even when it is reacting after a case of violence was reported, failed to escort the victim to the relevant institutions, fails to escort her to the health institutions where she can obtain a medical certificate and they very rarely explain the entire procedure in order to further process the case of violence. Many of the respondents said that they see this procedure as a bureaucratic labyrinth that victims have difficulties navigating, which discourages them from persisting until they achieve some sense of closure. Most of them agreed that if the victims receive clear information from the police and if the police was to escort them in the relevant institutions, it would be much easier to see their case through.

From the many cases that we noted, the following one best explains the lack of cooperation between the police and other institutions where, as a consequence, the victims, but also the perpetrator, are left to suffer. This case was shared with us by the journalists and has often been reported in the media. It is about a man with a mental health problem who was continuously loitering in front of the door of a family, believing that their daughter is his girlfriend. This stalking was happening every day for several years. During this time the family suffered severe psychological consequences, was under constant threat and fear for their safety. All institutions, including the police and the media were informed about this case. Since this a person with mental health issues, they also informed the Bardovci psychiatric hospital. The hospital responded that they are not competent to shelter a person until his custodian specifically demands it, so they referred them to the father of this person who was the only one who can accommodate this request. The mother was continuously informing the police and was asking for protection from them. The police reacted to all calls in the same manner: they would come and remove the person forcefully from the door, but the person was always coming back. This ad-hoc dealing with the situation had no effect – there was no long-term protection against the psychical violence that the family was suffering. The police only acted in accordance with its direct mandate instead of establishing a connection and cooperation with the health institution, but also with the Centers for Social Work that would take this case further in the benefit of the family of this person, but also on the benefit of the family who was suffering from daily psychological pressure.

We believe that this case perfectly illustrates the lack of inter-institutional cooperation, which is very important for both the victims and the perpetrator. The lack of this cooperation was the reason why this family lived under constant fear for years and that lack of safety had serious consequences on their health. The police should be the key part of the entire chain of institutional response to violence, which, in many cases, is very important for the women victims of violence.

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Violence against women is a continuum of acts that violate women's basic human rights. It includes physical, psychological and sexual harm that is directed against women because of their gender. In this study we have attempted to provide insight into the situation with gender-based violence against women in public spaces in the city of Skopje. The study has looked at the extent and different dimensions of violence against women in public spaces, focusing primarily on women's perceptions of safety and the impact this has on their lives, as well as the forms of violence they experience and what strategies they have at their disposal to deal with the violence. We looked at experiences of women in the city of Skopje in general, but we also made an in-depth analysis of two municipalities, Centar and Chair, which allowed for several socio-economic indicators for comparison.

Key findings

- Generally speaking, the Republic of Macedonia is considered a safe country in terms of general rates of violence. Violence in public spaces mostly refers to assaults, abuse and forceful behavior and participation in and/or inciting fights in public spaces. All of these reported incidents (except for the latter) show a steady increase through the years, despite the fact that the general trend of misdemeanors within the area of disturbance of the public order and peace is decreasing. Reported crimes (heavily bodily injuries, endangering with a dangerous weapon during a fight, kidnapping, rape, sexual exploitation of an incompetent person and sexual assault towards minors) show steady increase with a decline in the period 2007-2010. All these figures refer to reported crimes. As our study shows, there is significant underreporting in cases of violence against women, making it difficult to assess the exact number at this point. An additional hurdle is the lack of systematic collection of data on violence against women in public spaces in Macedonia.
- The study shows that the low public awareness and understanding of the issue does not correspond to the actual extent of the violence experienced by women. In similar situations, improved public awareness on domestic violence and sexual abuse of children increased the number of cases reported. Therefore, a link can be made between public awareness and increased willingness to report. Violent acts against women and girls in public spaces (especially rape) are still widely under-reported. Hence, the media plays an important role in public awareness. The decision to make public only the most severe and scandalous cases in a sensationalistic manner presents a distorted picture of the real reasons behind the violence and reinforces the stereotypes of women in society by objectifying and degrading them, and by failing to question the different forms of violence and normalizing them.
- As a result of pressure from women's rights groups and the international community, the political commitment to deal with gender equality and violence against women has increased in the past decade in Macedonia. However, these efforts have mostly had an effect on the legislative framework on domestic violence, leading to criminal acts performed as domestic violence to result in higher legal consequences (penalty) for the perpetrator. Gender-based violence is not recognized as a specific type of violence in the Macedonian legislation and hence does not have specific repercussions. Public safety issues for both men and women are not considered in urban and spacial planning laws, while laws that regulate public order and peace hold specific penalties for various types of misdemeanors; however, without engaging in the reasons for them as well as their consequences. When it comes to violence against women that occurs in the community, there are still areas that are not addressed, as well as weaknesses and loopholes in the support system. This issue is still not part of the public debate about gender violence in the country.
- The initial assessment of women's perceptions of safety shows that public spaces in Skopje are generally perceived by women as rather safe. Yet the survey shows that more than a third

of the female respondents are always or sometimes afraid to go out alone during the day and almost 60% reported being afraid to go out alone at night. The safety audit walks and additional analysis shows women's positive assessment of the safety of public spaces focuses on public spaces that they already use, i.e., that they feel safe enough to use.

- Women recognize gender as a factor in their perception of the safety. Assessing the factors that contribute to their general sense of safety, women consider "being a woman" (38.5%) and "being alone" (35.9%) as most important reasons for violence, with "clothing" considered a factor by more than a quarter of the surveyed women.
- Despite a general feeling of safety, women tend to avoid using certain public spaces: more than a third of the women surveyed (36.6%) are sometimes or always afraid to go out alone, even during the day. One in two women (54.2%) are afraid to go to certain neighbourhoods or take certain streets, and a little under half (45.3%) of the respondents are afraid to use unfrequented public spaces.
- Fear related to being outside in different contexts is perhaps translated in the women's actual use of public spaces. Only 16.3% of women surveyed report being out alone on a daily basis. One in ten women did not go out alone even once in the past month and more than a third of our respondents (36.9%) only went out alone a couple of times.
- Women's perceptions of safety are impacted by the physical appearance of the urban environment, so better maintained, wide, well lit urban spaces make women feel safer, and they have an increased feeling of safety during the day compared to night-time. This in turn impacts their mobility by posing certain limitations as to when, how and which public spaces they will use.
- In both municipalities spaces can transgress from very safe to very frightening within in a short distance. It is very difficult to take a continuous safe route; instead, women have to take alternate paths in order to reach their destination, which requires more time and planning on their part, making them more vulnerable.
- Fear from potential abuse significantly curtails women's freedom of movement. This fear is generated by the context (outcries of public violence), sensationalistic reporting of brutal cases of violence by the media, personal experiences with violent attacks and a general feeling of vulnerability.
- The threat of violence is shaped through narratives that determine what is threatening and what is not and which are and which are not objects of fear. In that regard, access to public spaces for women is limited due to the circulation of the narratives that they are more vulnerable. The operating of narratives about who and what is threatening influence women's perceptions about their safety. Such narratives are shaped by who uses the public space (for example drug users) as well as the kind of activities/actions that take place in the specific spaces (for example provision of commercial sexual services).
- The narratives of female vulnerability, as well as the perceptions of the safety of women in public spaces play the key role in the conscious and unconscious limitation of mobility, including the right to absolute use of the public spaces by women. Thus, women's reactions to violence in public spaces are restrained mobility (constricted to places/spaces they feel safe in) as one of the main self-defense mechanisms, which they combine with various others.
- Women in public spaces in Skopje face various forms of gender-based violence: rude comments, unwanted sexual attention, staring, whistling, touching, pinching, physical violence, sexual violence, maltreatment, harassment, rape, etc. Some women clearly identify the violence in all its forms and the others do not recognize it and sometimes even justify it by providing alibis (women's behavior, looks or clothes which, according to them, provokes the violence). Being subjected to the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence (such as staring, whistling, sexual comments), on a regular basis has lead many women to merely accept it as an inevitable part of being in public spaces.



- Women considered open spaces as most unsafe, whereas they generally tend to consider familiar and enclosed public spaces, such as their cars, workplaces or schools, as safer. As a result they pointed the following spaces in the city as unsafe: parks, underpasses, small and hidden paths, parking lots, constructions sites, cafes and discos and public transport.
- Verbal violence is rarely recognized as gender-based by women in Macedonian society. It is accepted as a kind of frequent unpleasant behavior, which is ignored or its importance minimized to behavior of certain individuals rather than seen as a form of structural masculine domination.
- It has been widely accepted now that gender-based violence is a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women and an attempt to preserve the subordinate status of women in society. However, prevailing attitudes and beliefs in the community tend to present violence against women as not so important or even worse, as instigated by the women and this is the reason why some forms of violence are tolerated and rarely sanctioned. Institutions in Macedonia (such as hospitals, schools, work place, police) often condone violence and thus contribute to perpetuating a system of inequalities through verbal violence, exclusion and discrimination that occur within and are not sanctioned by the system.
- Gender-based violence among pupils and high school students is widespread. The issue is discussed and partially resolved in primary schools, while less so in high schools. Most of the teachers, management and pupils do not recognize the specific and various forms of violence (for example, bullying). Teachers and management are interested in maintaining the reputation of the school by minimizing the importance of violent incidents and avoiding public exposure. It is highly problematic that school employees fail to recognize the reasons for the violence as coming from within their environment and context, but see it as a result of a negative influence from the "outside".
- Violence at work in Macedonia is related to the general socio-economic conditions. Women's employment in the informal sector or within the wide range of low-income jobs makes them exposed to violence. Opportunities to sanction mobbing have been recently introduced in legislation. Psychological aggression, threats and insult at work are still perceived as mostly (disrupted) personal relations between co-workers and superiors, thus failing to recognize the social and political context of the work relations, which are not immune to negative stereotypes, sexism and gender-based power struggles.
- Gender-based violence among youth takes the forms of partner violence, with girls not being able to differentiate among love and jealousy, which limits their mobility and freedom to interact with their peers in ways they consider adequate. As a result, girls have difficulty recognizing rape because they link it to notions of strangers attacking them, rather than to psychological coercion and blackmailing by intimate partners or people they know.
- Sexual workers, drug users, women with disabilities and minority women are in the group of women particularly affected by violence. They are more likely to experience violence due to the nature of their work/disability/ethnicity, and are also more limited in possibilities to avoid it and escape. In cases when support services are available at all, these marginalized groups face restrictions when accessing them. Domestic violence victims are also more vulnerable and less likely to escape the violence because in addition to suffering from a combination of physical and psychological violence, they often come from low-income families in which the women are economically dependent on their husbands.
- Women's defense mechanisms to violence are various. They are especially developed among marginalized groups and include but are not limited to avoiding the use of certain public spaces, avoiding going out at night, avoiding eye contact as well as constantly looking around and scanning the environment. Even wearing certain clothes is considered a form of protection from potential attacks.

- Lack of trust towards the institutions of the system results in women reacting to violence by refraining to use the institutional mechanisms. Primarily this lack of trust is shown in the conscious decision not to report specific cases of violence women are subjected to in public spaces to the Police.

Conclusions

This analysis of the extent and existing policy approaches to the issue of gender violence in Macedonia shows that there are improvements in the approach to this issue, but that these mainly deal with domestic violence. Concerning violence in public spaces, many shortcomings have been detected that need immediate attention on part of the national and local institutions. This study looks at them through the following four aspects (Taylor, 2011):

- Gaps in policies and laws. In Macedonia most of the policies focus on domestic violence in the home and neglect public spaces, as well as structural forms of violence.
- Invisible issues in policy, such as the limited mobility of women and vulnerability of certain groups of women as a result of gender-based violence, which are not covered by policy in Macedonia.
- Connection of existing laws that protect particular rights to women's rights. Existing urban planning laws are highly relevant to women's safety in public spaces, but do not make this link.
- Being specific about the meaning of safety, especially women's safety. Exclusion of some forms of violence in Macedonian legislation poses challenges to enforcing women's safety.

The main conclusions are the following:

- The notion of gender-based violence has not been included in legislation and policies in Macedonia with the effect that different forms of violence against women and girls are not considered gender-based and/ or they are understood in isolation from each other. Current legislation and policies fail to include attention to the forms of gender-based violence other than rape and physical violence. Even in the case of rape, the definition centered on use of force is noncompliant with current jurisprudence at the European level. Gender as the basis for discrimination is only included in the Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination.
- Non-physical violence is understood as part of the prevailing cultural norms and it is minimized as individual behavior and not a larger societal issue.
- Violence in public spaces is underreported and the gaps in existing procedures and protocols make it difficult for such cases to be processed.
- The institutions responsible for providing protection and support often share the gender stereotypes, biases and assumptions that perpetuate women's vulnerability to violence and especially violence in public spaces. In our study, we found that many respondents, including many women held the view that women's clothing is a major factor in the likelihood that they would become targets of sex crimes. This sexist bias is remarkably widespread and it serves to justify crimes, belittle women's testimonies and ultimately reproduce violence with impunity.
- A significant proportion of the respondents in our study assume that certain marginalized groups of women cannot be victims of violence (sex workers, drug users, women with disabilities).

- Incomplete and inadequate protection and support to violence victims is provided with lack of psycho-social support, rape centers and shelters.
- Women's input in urban planning initiatives is sidestepped.

Recommendations

The recommendations rising from the scoping study can be grouped as follows:

1. Legislative changes

Despite harmonization in many spheres already taking place, numerous challenges still remain in terms of adjusting the system for protection of violence against women to reflect European standards, as well as recognition of gender-based violence in all legislation and not only the Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination (Mirceva, 2011).

Recommendations:

- Provide equal treatment of all forms of violence in legislation.
- Define violence against women as a form of discrimination and include definition of gender-based violence against women.
- Include gender-based violence in the new National Strategy for Gender Equality, which is currently being drafted, since the previous one only projected undertaking actions in the sphere of domestic violence and trafficking of women. This should be expanded to include all policies dealing with violence against women. Most policies formally include violence against women, but in fact specify actions to be taken in combating domestic violence only, making other types of violence less of a priority.
- Provide explicit definition of economic violence as a form of violence in national legislation.
- Include gender-based verbal violence as a misdemeanour in the relevant legislation.
- Amend the Criminal Code by introducing psychological violence as a crime or supplementing the existing crime: Threatening the safety, where the serious impairment of person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats will be sanctioned.
- Supplement the Criminal Code either by a new crime: Stalking, or by supplementing the existing provisions on the crime: Threatening the safety.
- Amending the crime referred to in Article 186: Rape, by improving the definition to include more than just "forcible" rape.
- Although included in the Law on Employment, introducing provisions in the Criminal Code to cover all cases of sexual harassment.
- Include public safety issues in laws and plans that determine urban development, such as urban planning, transport, public lighting etc.

2. Political and institutional commitment

The political and institutional commitment needs to be strengthened by putting words into practice. The Declaration adopted in 2006 by the Parliament for fighting violence against women clearly states that the fight against all forms of violence against women will be a priority. Despite this, key actions set forward in the Declaration have been undertaken only in the area of domestic violence, neglecting all other forms of violence against women. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has the 30 Centers for Social Work as pillars of the system of social protection. However, our study shows that women victims of violence do not identify these institutions as places that offer support. According to the Law on Social Protection (2009, 2011), the Centers

cover a variety of subject matters within social protection, varying from support to social benefits users to child protection and support of the elderly. Understaffed and overburdened, they have turned from Centers responsible for directly providing professional social work to beneficiaries to administrative bodies administering benefits (Dimitrievska 2011).

Recommendations:

- Parliament should organize an oversight hearing in order to assess the progress of the implementation of priorities set in Declaration and set new conclusions that would accelerate the process of implementation.
- The National Government should officially endorse principles and standards for services in response to VAW, relying on CoE recommended standards (Kelly and Dubois, 2008).
- Support and fund specialist, NGO-run services for women survivors of violence, especially to rape survivors. Ensure these services (such as rape crisis centers or sexual violence referral centres) are adequate, accessible and fulfill minimum set standards.
- Adjust the system of protection from violence against women to reflect European agreed standards, for example, the number of Shelter centers per capita (Kelly and Dubois, 2008). Make available and effective shelter centres for women victims of all forms of violence and their children.
- Develop specific programs that deal with violence against women separate from gender equality plans and strategies. Ensure these programs provide specific solutions pertaining to marginalized women.
- Separate the administrative work of the Centers for Social Work from professional work with beneficiaries. We also recommend re-organizing the centers to include separate departments and teams for separate services they provide.
- Extend the group of beneficiaries to include women who are victims of gender-based violence (not only domestic violence) and to provide necessary support to them, including to rape victims.
- Diversification of services can also be accomplished by including service-provision by NGOs supported through targeted grant schemes for providing appropriate, high-quality and specialised support (psychosocial support to rape victims, setting up rape crisis centers, shelters etc.).
- Develop sound systems for monitoring and evaluation with clearly set out goals, actions and most importantly, funding at all levels and in all institutions. For example, the State Statistical Office can conduct regular surveys on the perception of public safety, which can give indication about the issue and guide further action for improvements.
- Set up a monitoring system at two levels in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. At the first level, monitoring the status and number of cases of different vulnerable groups in order to see the trends, conduct analyses and inform policy decisions; and on the second level, develop clear indicators for monitoring the quality of services provided in the Centers.
- Promote an integrated approach with all relevant stakeholders taking action and responsibilities, as well as facing consequences when failing to comply.

3. Institutional and internal systems capacity development

Our study shows that violence is structurally rooted in institutions of the system, and we expect that the changes proposed here will be the hardest part to implement, since this is the area where most of the shortcomings were identified. The validation meeting held with the NGO representatives, municipalities, Centers for Social Work and the Ombudsman showed that institutions with a mandate to protect and deal with violence still lack the knowledge and

understanding of gender-based violence and demonstrate very high tolerance to its different manifestations.

a) Police

Despite the fact that the Police is seen as the institution most responsible for protecting and providing support to women who are victims of violence, this is also an institution that women are not always satisfied with. One of the main complaints provided both by the NGOs dealing with domestic violence victims, as well as by women victims of violence starts with the initial contact with police officers when reporting the case. Many of the respondents pointed out that the officers on duty are not sensitized about the issue of gender-based violence and most often consider women's behavior as the cause of the violence they suffered. This makes some of the NGOs that provide services to domestic violence victims feel hypocritical when they have to direct women to the police despite knowing they will not get quality service. In addition, the lack of knowledge about the roots and causes of violence against women allows them to treat women with disrespect and ignorance. In order to prevent crimes the police needs to treat all crimes as "serious".

Recommendations:

- Include gender as a subject or incorporate it within human rights lectures at the Police Academy;
- Train police teams to deal with cases of gender-based violence on women and provide adequate support in the police stations.
- Improve the police's inter-institutional cooperation and coordination in dealing with cases of gender-based violence by developing and abiding by agreed procedures for cooperation.
- Develop internal regulation for dealing with cases of gender-based violence reported by victims as well as internally among police employees. In that context, engage Sector for Internal Control of the Police to monitor and sanction non-compliance with the regulations for respecting gender equality and especially women's victimization.
- Develop external control to monitor implementation of gender responsive policies in the police that refer to their personnel as well as their work with women.

b) Local governments and Public enterprises

Women have stated that the appearance of the environment has an impact on how they assess its safety. Several public enterprises in Skopje, founded by the city of Skopje or the municipalities, are responsible for the maintenance of various physical aspects of the city's urban profile. Yet, as demonstrated by interviewees from public enterprises in charge of maintenance of city parks and greens as well as public parking lots, these organizations are disinterested in issues of safety or perceptions of safety and focus on fulfilling their primary tasks. One of the respondents considers that women find some areas dangerous due to the type of activities taking place there (drug users, sex workers) and not their appearance, but this is merely a reinforcement of the stigma around certain marginalized groups of men and women, not to mention an easy way out of ensuring urban spaces are designed and built with safety in mind. Furthermore, this additionally reveals that gender-based violence is not part of participatory urban development and planning.

Local governments are responsible for urban planning and changes in the urban territory. In Skopje, the city consists of 10 municipalities and the city of Skopje as a separate unit of local self-government (Law on the city of Skopje, 2004). They have divided responsibilities in all local government competences. Very often this can lead to difficulties for citizens when trying to solve

urban and communal problems, since they have no knowledge on which part falls under the competence of their municipality and which under the competence of the city of Skopje.

The City of Skopje in 2011 adopted a Strategy for Gender Equality (2011) setting a vision of Skopje as a city in which gender equality is way of life of its citizens. One of the four strategic areas in which the City will concentrate its efforts is women and violence. We strongly recommend that this part be reviewed in order to incorporate the real needs of women related to violence, especially violence in public spaces.

We will also elaborate here on public transport (buses), since it was pointed out as a place where many of the women feel unsafe. Studies have shown (Yavuz and Welch, 2010; Loukaitou-Sideris et al. 2009) that both men and women are sensitive to traits of the environment they function in. However, women feel more vulnerable to violence in public spaces, including in the public transportation environment and need different solutions to this problem compared to men. Installing camera surveillance systems, for example, increases the feeling of safety among men, but not among women. As a result, undertaking increased and focused safety measures give a stronger positive effect on women passengers. Women are more afraid to use public transportation at night since they fear empty bus stops and buses or having to take underground pedestrian subways.

Recommendations:

- Improve the inter-institutional cooperation between the public enterprises and the municipalities in order to alleviate and resolve public safety issues.
- Since all municipalities have established committees for equal opportunities of men and women, they should work within their mandate to review all work plans of the municipality and its enterprises in order to incorporate the principle of gender equality, including the elimination of gender-based violence against women in public spaces, as well as monitor their implementation.
- The annual work plans (their main activities) of the public communal enterprises should be presented and discussed with the public. This is very important since women have very specific requirements in relation to the urban environment.
- Amend the practice of presenting detailed municipal urban plans in an overly mechanical manner and ensure that discussion is not very technical in order to leave space for citizens, including women, to place their concerns, and ensure that sufficient time is allocated for discussing and presenting urban plans.
- Review the part in the City of Skopje Strategy for Gender Equality (2011) referring to women and violence in order to incorporate the real needs of women related to violence, especially violence in public spaces.
- Incorporate in the Strategy aspects of the competences of the City in the communal sphere (transport, maintenance of streets, lighting, maintenance of parks and greens, hygiene etc.) which, as our study shows, have a direct impact on the perception of violence in public spaces by women. The City can recommend to the public enterprises under its umbrella to include the gender aspect when preparing their annual programs, which its Commission for Equal Opportunities will review as well.
- Improve the formats for assessing the impact of the actions funded by the City on both genders.
- The Public Transport Company should collaborate with research/consulting organizations in order to obtain relevant information about the status of the safety of their passengers with a focus on women.

- The Public Transport Company should include women's needs in the planning process. This can be done through consultations with local NGOs, organizing focus groups of women, as well as surveys targeting women; or organize safety audits.
- Partnerships with women's NGOs. These types of initiatives can provide them with the insight of how women perceive public transport and if there are specific groups that need additional support and ultimately lead to new services offered by the Transport Company.
- Since fights between youth groups are identified as a major obstacle to safety, working with the police, especially local prevention councils, to prevent fights in and around buses as well as to identify and sanction culprits is crucial.
- Adopting a more "holistic" approach to travel safety to include concerns not only for safety in buses, but also on bus stops and around them. This is quite a challenging approach since it includes cooperation and coordination with other relevant local actors (municipalities, city of Skopje, other public enterprises); however, if set as a priority, it can also impact the general public safety.
- Public Awareness Campaigns, including ads inside the buses inspired by "If you see something, say something", which would encourage bystanders to react when they witness improper behavior.

c) Schools

Structural violence in schools is a crucial aspect to be addressed by the system. The Association of professional bodies (Aktiv) was formed at city level to include pedagogues, psychologists and sociologists from all schools in Skopje. They have adopted a Policy for Decreasing Violence in Schools. This could be a step forward to dealing with the issue of gender-based violence in schools.

Recommendations:

- Reviewed the Policy for Decreasing Violence in Schools to ensure its gender-sensitivity, as well as set up a monitoring system to ensure its dedicated implementation.
- Amend the school self-evaluation, which is a legal requirement every three years, to include gender-based violence.

d) Health sector

Gender-based violence is a pre-condition for the prevalence of serious health problems among women, both physical and mental, ranging from injuries, physiological disorders, to mental health problems (Ellsber and Heise, 2005). The health sector has been identified as the weakest link in the chain of victim protection and support. Our interviewees point out the structural violence in the health care system, especially towards marginalized groups of women and minority women, reflected in the non-provision of services or complete lack of them. Existing protocols for domestic violence victims, as well as the obligation to report any case of violence is not respected.

Recommendations:

- The Annual National Program for Public Health to define actions or analysis related to health risks and impact of violence on women living/and or working under violence, assessment of the role of doctors in support of victims of violence, women's (victims of violence) needs from the health sector, assessment of the use of protocols for doctors when dealing with cases of violence, etc. These analyses combined with improved data collection mechanisms in all above-mentioned institutions should enable the development of better-informed policy decisions with impact in needed areas.

- Training for doctors on recognizing injuries from gender-based violence and using WHO classifications for these injuries (see also the WAVE-UNFPA portal: <http://www.respondgbveeca.org> and UN Women's Virtual Knowledge Center for more resources on the health response to GBV: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/modules/view/6-health.html>)

4. NGOs

- NGOs (individually or with government) should employ awareness raising activities and carry out public awareness campaigns, which refer to loosening the rigid gender roles in which masculinity is linked to toughness and dominance. They have to condemn violence and send the message that women never ask for or bring upon themselves the violence that they are subjected to.
- NGOs should work on advocating for specialist services as well as developing and diversifying their specialist services in terms of support to women victims of violence. These specialist services in response to VAW should work across all forms of VAW, including public space violence and rape and not only domestic violence and trafficking. They should also encompass all groups of women (rural/urban, ethnic minority women, disabled women etc.)
- NGOs should build their own expertise on violence against women and develop a full package of services for all violence survivors, such as free legal aid and psychosocial support. To do this, NGOs also need to advocate for services for VAW survivors.
- Advocate and lobby both donors and government for financial support of specialist services and their standardization. This funding should not compromise the independence of services.

5. Donor Agencies

- Donors' policies, especially those of the EU, should correct their preference for channeling funds through governments and instead redirect funds from institutions to specialist women's NGOs. Otherwise, donors will contribute to the support of structural violence in institutions at the expense of women's empowerment. International donors should prioritize funding to service providers. (UN women Advocacy Strategy, 2011)
- In addition, donors should correct their selective interests, which channel funds to specific forms of VAW – in particular, DV and trafficking – at the expense of more comprehensive interventions and enable funding of VAW to ensure a more holistic approach to the issue.
- UN Women should pressure government to fulfill obligations from ratified international documents referring to VAW.

Limitations of our study

With this scoping study we have attempted to provide insight into the use of public spaces by women and girls and to understand the specific local manifestations of violence against women and girls, in particular in public spaces in the targeted communities in the city of Skopje (Centar and Chair).

Our research had to overcome many obstacles. The initial and most frequent one, faced by many researchers, is the lack of data concerning our research area. These include a near absence of both state and NGO research, as well as projects focused on gender-based violence (apart from domestic violence) and on new perspectives on violence against women. Therefore, for the most part, we had to rely on secondary sources mostly from international NGOs and academics.

A major difficulty was the slow response of the institutions or rather their non-response. With a few notable exceptions, the researchers had to use personal contacts and referrals by key

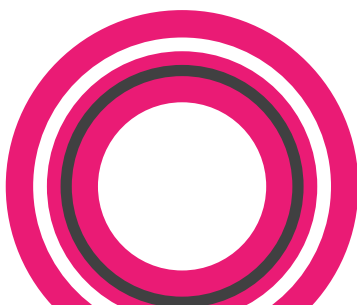


persons who were not easy to identify. Linked to this and very noteworthy is the decision by most public institutions representatives to require full anonymity, meaning a request not to be quoted in the final report.

Placing the issue of domestic violence high on the public and state agenda by UN agencies in support to the national strategy to combat this issue has provided very little space to recognize and discuss other forms of VAW. Hence it was difficult to consult and discuss any other manifestation of VAW than DV with most CSO representatives and state institutions included in the process.

Finally, one significant omission in our study is the choice to exclude non-physical public spaces. Increased Internet availability in Macedonia has created a whole new “battleground” and literally millions of non-physical public spaces on the web where women and girls are more vulnerable to harassment than men and boys. The reason for this exclusion is that this is a growing area of research and the subject matter deserves its own study on this emerging problem.

Despite all limitations, we expect that the scoping study will contribute to raising awareness about this issue and inspire further research in the area of gender-based violence in public spaces, as well as consequent actions. We expect that the findings and the recommendations provided above will become part of a more strategic framework that will guide interventions to make Skopje a safer city, enabling women from diverse backgrounds to fulfill their fundamental right to work, study and move around free of violence and fear.



References

A world fit for Children (2005).

Ahmed (2004) – Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Allen and Kivel (1997) - Robert L. Allen and Paul Kivelarepart, "Men changing Men" in Bruno Leone, Scott Brabour & Brenda Stalcup (eds.) *Sexual Violence/ Opposing viewpoints*, Green haven Press, San Diego, California.

Bem (1997) - Sandra Lipsitz Bem, "The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality" in Bruno Leone, Scott Brabour & Brenda Stalcup (eds.) *Sexual Violence/ Opposing viewpoints*, Greenhaven Press, San Diego, California.

Bordo (1993) – Suzan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, University of California Press, California.

Bourdieu (1998) - Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

CISCSA (2006) - Tools for the promotion of safe cities from the gender perspective, 1st Edition - Córdoba: CISCSA: 2006.

Council of Europe (2011a). *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*

Council of Europe (2011b), *Explanatory report Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*, CM (2011) 49 final, 7 April.

Constitution of Republic of Macedonia (1992) - Official Gazette no. 52.

Crepaldi et al. (2010) - Chiara Crepaldi, Manuela Samek Lodovici, Marcella Corsi, in collaboration with Sandra Naaf, *Violence against women and the role of gender equality, social inclusion and health strategies*, Synthesis Report, EGGSi coordinating team: European Commission, 2010.

Criminal Code (1996) – Krivicen Zakon, Official Gazette no.37.

CRPM (2007) – Is Skopje a child-friendly city?, Policy Brief no. 15.

Declaration for Combating Violence against Women, including Family Violence (2006) – Official Gazette No. 124.

Dimitrievska (2011) – Vera Dimitrievska, *Social Delivery Services in Macedonia*, GIZ, 2011.

Ellsberg and Heise (2005) - Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise, *Researching gender based violence*, WHO, 2005.

Moser, Annalise (2007). *Gender and indicators*. Bridge, July 2007.

Family Law (2006) – Official Gazette no. 33

Galtung, (1969) – Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" in *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 167-191.

Galtung (1990) - Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence" in Journal of Peace Research, Vol 2, No. 3, pp. 291-305

Gottdiener (1997) – MarkGottdiener, The Social Production of Urban Space, University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas.

Hadzi-Zafirov, Kocovski and Prcanovikj (2012) – Zarko Hadzi-Zafirov, Goce Kocovski and Emir Prcanovikj, Bajka ili realnost!? Besplatnata pravna pomos vo Republika Makedonija, Analiza na primenata na Zakonot za besplatna pravna pomos za 2011, FOOM, March.

ICCPR (2012) - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, June (online at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm> , last accessed on 23.09.2012)

Jovanovikj et.al. (2010) - Prof. Dr. Amalija Jovanovikj, Vesna Jovanova, Neda Maleska – Sačmaroska & Prof. Dr. Slobodanka Markovska, Gender-Budget Analysis of Social Protection and Active Employment Policies in the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Kelly and Dubois (2008) - Liz Kelly and Lorna Dubois, Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, September 2008.

Klitgaard et al. (2000) - Robert Klitgaard, Ronald Maclean-Abaroa & H. Lindsey Parris, Corrupt cities, ICS Press and World Bank Institute, 2000.

Law on communal activities (2012) - Official Gazette no. 95.

Law on child protection (2010) - Official Gazette no.170.

Law on equal opportunities of women and men (2012) - Official Gazette no. 6.

Law on higher education (2008) - Official Gazette no. 35.

Law on Inventories in the Health Sector (2009) - Official Gazette no. 20.

Law on juvenile justice (2007) - Official Gazette no. 87.

Law on Labor Relations (2010) – Official Gazette no. 158.

Law on Police (2006) - Official Gazette no. 114.

Law for prevention and protection of discrimination (2010) - Official Gazette no. 50.

Law on prevention of violence and inappropriate contact at sports events (2004) - Official Gazette no. 89.

Law on primary education (2008) – Official Gazette no. 103/08.

Law on public Health (2010) - Official Gazette no. 22.

Law on public order and peace misdemeanors (2007) - Official Gazette no. 66.

Law on secondary education (2002) – Official Gazette no. 52/02.

Law on Social Protection (2009, 2011) - Official Gazette no. 79/09, 36/11 and 51/11.

Law on spatial and urban planning (2011) - Official Gazette no. 60.

Law on the City of Skopje (2004) - Official Gazette no. 55.

Loukaitou-Sideris et al. (2009) - Loukaitou-Sideris with Amanda Bornstein, Camille Fink, Linda Samuels & Shahin Gerami, How to ease women's fear of transportation environments – Case Studies 2009, October 2009.

Low (2006) – Martina Low, “The social construction of Space and Gender”, European Journal of Women's Studies May 2006 vol. 13 no. 2 119-133.

MacKinnon (1993) – Catharine MacKinnon, Only Words. Harvard University Press, Harvard.

Massey (1999) –Doreen Massey, Power-Geometries and the Politics of Space-Time, University of Heidelberg Press, Heidelberg.

Mc Call (2005) – Leslie McCall, The Complexity of Intersectionality, Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Vol. 30, No. 3.

MCIC (2011) - Ethnic based discrimination in Macedonia, MCIC, March 2011.

Mirceva (2011) - Stojanka Mirceva, Analysis of the national legislation and identification of key areas for alignment with the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, April 2011.

Najcevska and Imeri (2012) – Mirjana Najcevska and Ljuan Imeri, Shadow Report for Shadowed Commission, Open Society Foundation – Macedonia, March. (on-line <http://soros.org.mk/dokumenti/Shadow-report-for-shadowed-commission-ANG.pdf>, last accessed on 23.09.2012).

NAPGE (2007) - National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012. Skopje, May.

National Action Plan for Employment (2008-2011).

National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence (2008-2011) – Skopje,

Ombudsman (2011) - Annual Report, March, Skopje (online at <http://www.ombudsman.mk/ombudsman/upload/documents/2012/Izvestaj%202011-MK.pdf>, last accessed on 23.09.2012).

Ombusman (2007) – Special report for the received responses from children on questions in the poll regarding physical, psychological and sexual abuse in schools (online at <http://ombudsman.mk/upload/documents/lizvesta-fizicko%20maltretiranje-mk.pdf> , last accessed 23.09.2012)

Optional Protocol to the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (2003).

Popovska et al. (2011) – Ljubinka Popovska, Vlado Rikalovski and Dr. Elizabeth Villagomez, Report from the Study of the National Poll on Domestic violence, UN, Skopje.

Tavares & Thomas (2010) - Cynthia Tavares and Geoffrey Thomas, Population and social conditions



in Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, no. 58. (online at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-10-058/EN/KS-SF-10-058-EN.PDF, last assessed on 22.09.2012)

Taylor (2011) - Alice Taylor, Women and the city: examining the gender impact of violence and urbanization, Action Aid.

SSO (2011) – State Statistical Office, News release, no.2.1.11.19 (online at <http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2011/2.1.11.19.pdf>, last assessed on 22.09.2012)

Stojanovska (2008) - Dominika Stojanovska, Gender Equality and Human Development in Macedonia during Transition (1991-2006), PhD thesis

Strategy for Gender Equality (2011) - Skopje rodovo ednakov grad, Strategija za rodova ednkavost na Gradot Skopje, September 2011.

UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1991).

UNICEF (2012) – “The State of the World’s Children 2012: Children in an Urban World”, February.

Un Women Advocacy Strategy 2011 - Financing Services in Response to Violence against Women, Tirana, November 8-11, 2011 (http://www.unifem.sk/uploads/doc/AdvocacyStrategy_ServicesVAW.pdf, last assessed on October 23rd, 2012)

Yavuz and Welch (2010) - Nilay Yavuz and Eric W. Welch, Addressing fear of crime in public space: gender differences in reaction to safety measures in trains transit, Urban Studies, November 2010.

Yuval-Davis (1997) - Nira Yuval-Davis, Gender and Nation, Sage.

Zizek (2008) – Slavoj Zizek, Violence / Six Sideways Reflections, Picador, New York.

REAC+OR
research in action



REACT!

SHARE A STORY, STOP VIOLENCE

