

Gender and Crime Prevention

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Introduction

In the course of the past year ICPC has undertaken a preliminary international review of crime prevention initiatives relating to violence against women and to women's safety.ⁱⁱ This has enabled us to explore a number of trends and developments, and to consider the broader question of how far gender as a concept has had an impact on crime prevention strategies and practice.

Over the past twenty five years, the inequalities experienced by women in terms of cultural practices, education, employment and power and decision-making roles, as well as the extent of violence against women, have been recognized in many countries. The importance of taking into account the differential needs and experiences of men and women in policy development, research and practice, notably in fields such as health and medicine and education, has also been recognized and resulted in a range of changes to government policies and strategies. Since the 1980's many international conferences, declarations and protocols have called on governments to increase their support for gender equality. Much of the international initiative has been in reaction to the situation of women in developing countries, and the crucial role that women can play in achieving sustainable development (World Bank, 2001).

One of the most significant of these international meetings was the fourth *United Nations World Conference on Women*, in Beijing in 1995, which called on governments to work to ensure *gender equality* through gender mainstreaming. It made *gender mainstreaming* - the incorporation of gender into all areas of public policy - part of its platform for action.ⁱⁱⁱ Gender mainstreaming is also concerned with the empowerment of women in terms of their position within decision-making structures. Since that time, many national governments in both the North and the South have initiated or expanded policies relating to women. The European Union adopted a formal commitment to promote gender mainstreaming in 1996 (Mazey, 2001). The Beijing conference also required governments to report regularly to the UN on their activities and progress, and detailed national reports were prepared for the 2000 Beijing +5 conference in New York.

In many cases this has led to the establishment, or redevelopment, of high-level government departments dedicated to policy and project development, advocacy, oversight and monitoring. These are now variously referred to as working to promote gender equality, gender mainstreaming, or emancipation, and deal with an array of issues including education, labour market participation, pay equity, health-care, elected and decision-making access, and violence against women. Many of them work at an inter-ministerial level. In France, for example, the Secretary of State for Women's Rights and Equality (SDFE) and an inter-ministerial convention on gender equality were established

in 2000; in the UK two Ministers for Women were appointed in 1997, supported by a Women's Unit in the Cabinet Office; in the Netherlands, the national policy on emancipation has been re-directed to action and implementation and gender impact assessment methodologies developed; in Canada, a Federal plan for gender equality was established in 1995, and a commitment made to introduce gender-based analysis in all 24 government departments.

In the field of crime and crime prevention policy, however, gender has received much less attention, and while there have been recent calls at the international level for gender mainstreaming in criminal justice and prevention policy (e.g. UN, 2000; Ollus & Nevala, 2001) there is less evidence of action at the national level. To a large extent prevention policies relating to women remain separated from overall policies, or ghettoized. (It can also be said that crime prevention itself is still not fully integrated into criminal justice policies). Crime prevention in general continues to pay little attention to the significance of gender on the behaviours of potential or actual offenders – to be ungendered or, more often, gender-neutral.^{iv} The gendering of crime prevention would mean paying greater attention to women and masculinity, and the behaviours and structures which promote delinquent behaviour among boys.

Thus the arguments for paying greater attention to gender differences relate both to the promotion of good governance and democratic policy-making, as well as to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of crime prevention strategies and practice for both women and girls and men and boys.

Multiple definitions and terms

Examination of the extent to which crime prevention policies take account of the differential needs of women and girls (or men and boys) is not a simple process. One of the biggest challenges to international comparative work is that concepts and ideas are often understood, translated and responded to in rather different ways. This is a greater problem than usual when the question of gender is posed, for at least two reasons.

In the first place, difficulties relates to the location of responsibility at the government level. In most countries there had been no *traditional* ministerial responsibility for issues concerning women. Violence against women, as a very complex problem rooted in a range of social, political, economic and cultural factors, was forced onto government agendas by the women's movement. The result is considerable variation in the location of government responsibility and activity. This has also applied to responsibility for gender issues as a whole.

Responsibility for *crime prevention* on the other hand, has traditionally rested with ministries responsible for justice and policing. In most countries, while crime prevention is no longer seen as solely a police function, primary responsibility remains located in ministries of justice, or with national crime prevention bodies closely linked to ministries of justice, the interior, environment, housing and cities, social welfare etc. Nevertheless,

there are not always clear links to government departments concerned with gender equality.

In the second place, gender as a concept is not fully understood, nor is it interpreted in similar ways by countries, or within them. It is still primarily seen as referring to *women*, rather than to both men and women. Within the crime prevention field, a focus on gender is generally interpreted to mean strategies and programmes to reduce *violence against women* or, less often, to promote *women's safety*. There is still a strong emphasis and focus on victims, and the kind of victim-oriented values which have gained ascendancy in social policies in many countries. This in turn reflects the historical development of crime prevention and the field of violence against women which are discussed briefly below.

Thus undertaking an international review of crime prevention relating to gender elicits varying responses, depending on country interpretations as well as the questions posed. Questions to justice or crime prevention departments tend to be referred to programmes on violence against women, questions about promoting women's safety or preventing violence against women tend to be referred to health ministries or social service sectors, questions about gender, to gender-equality divisions. Projects and policies may be found in a variety of ministries. There is a wide array of terms and definitions currently in use. Language adds an additional level of complexity, since terms in one language do not always translate easily into another. In English, the following are all common:

• violence against women	• women's safety
• domestic violence	• gender-based violence
• family violence	• gender safety
• sexual violence	• gender-based crime

These terms are also variously used to include, or exclude, children, other family members, male family members, men and boys, or women and girls. Untangling the confusion about gender requires a brief review of the development of crime prevention and of policies relating to women and prevention.

Policies, initiatives and projects concerning violence against women.

The prevention of crime against women has developed around two distinct, although linked, areas of work:

- i) policies, initiatives and projects concerning violence against women
- ii) policies, initiatives and projects concerning women's safety.

Policies, initiatives and projects concerning violence against women

The women's movement has put much energy into putting *violence against women* – and especially domestic violence – on the public agenda. What was seen as a private family matter in the 1970's became by the 1980's a public issue, with the development of shelters and victims services, and arguments that such violence be recognised and treated

as criminal, along with other kinds of violence. Most countries in the world now recognize the seriousness of the problem of violence against women, and have passed legislation, established policies, and funded and initiated strategies and projects to respond to and reduce violence against women.

Much of that energy has focused on criminal justice and victim assistance strategies: shelter provision, chaperone or surveillance projects for those at risk, charging policies, police and judicial training, tougher sentences for men who batter wives or partners, better support and protocol systems, and remedial programmes for perpetrators of abuse. There has been less consideration of longer-term prevention strategies to prevent such violence.^v More recently, a number of more preventive policies and projects have emerged, including the designation of funds to education and anti-violence programmes targeting children and young people, and the exploration of intimate violence outside the home (eg. workplace and dating violence).

Internationally, the term *gender-based violence* is now used to refer to the wide range of violent behaviours affecting women and girls, and which are supported culturally, legally and institutionally in many countries (UNIFEM, 2000). The Protocol on the trafficking of women and children has now been adopted, and recognition of the extent of culturally supported practices such as female genital mutilation have received much greater attention.

Policies, initiatives and projects concerning women's safety.

The area of *women's safety* has emerged since the 1980's in a number of countries, and refers to a range of strategies and policies which work to create safer environments for women, focusing on women's insecurity and risk of violence in *public* spaces. There is an emphasis on the risks of sexual violence and the restriction of women's personal freedom. Initially, much of the work centred on the prevention of street and stranger violence in public space, using tools such as *safety audits* and exploratory or safety walks, and leading to recommendations for situational crime prevention initiatives, as well as increasing local authority support to front-line services for women. The development and use of safety audits was pioneered in a number of Canadian cities in particular (eg. Toronto, METRAC, 1992) and is now being adapted in other settings including rural areas, and in cities in the South such as Dar es Salaam (Mtani, 2002).

Successful safety audits can lead cities to impose fewer boundaries on women. They can result in more women using a full range of urban space, and doing so throughout the full twenty-four hour cycle. Truly successful safety audits can encourage a wider range of women and other vulnerable groups to use this space, leading to a wider variety of uses of the space.
Andrew, 2000

Women's safety has gradually expanded to include environmental changes through urban planning, housing design, and transport design and scheduling e.g. the work of the Belgium NGO *City & Shelter*.^{vi} There is an emphasis on prevention strategies which are pro-active in their conception, and pursued through direct partnerships between local grassroots organizations, communities and municipal governments, thereby increasing the role of women in local decision-making.

The active involvement of municipal governments has been a significant component in this movement (e.g. Toronto, 1999; Andrew, 1995; Montreal, CAFSU, 2002). This attempts to ensure that the experiences and needs of women and girls are taken into account at all stages of city and community safety planning and implementation. The European Forum on Urban Security (EFUS, 1999)^{vii} and the UN Habitat's *Safer Cities* programme have both actively promoted this approach to women's safety (Smaoun, 2000) and it was the basis of the May 2002 international seminar in Montreal.^{viii} At the international level it is closely associated with the promotion of urban governance and democratic decision-making.

Thus both these areas of policy and project development start from the perspective of women's experiences, and have generally worked *apart from* mainstream crime prevention initiatives, attempting to change policy and practice in relation to women's interests and needs. Those working from a women's safety perspective are more likely to argue for gender mainstreaming, and for gender to be integrated into crime prevention planning. There has been, however, a long-standing reluctance on the part of women's organizations to work with, or to consider, the implications of working with men, a concern that resources and attention will be diverted from women in so doing, and an unwillingness to enter into community partnerships.

Crime prevention and gender

Crime prevention was for a long time a field of policy which was *un-gendered*, and subsequently can be described primarily as *gender neutral*. The different impacts and experience of crime by men and women were ignored, and most prevention policy was concerned with traditional forms of street or household crime, ignoring violence in the home. Crime victimization surveys developed in the 1970's paid no attention to violence in the home, and while they assessed sex differences in terms of fear of crime, had many limitations in terms of measuring women's experience (Johnson, 2001). Women's higher levels of fear of crime compared with men have been seen as irrational, given their lower likelihood of becoming a victim of street crime compared with men. This has again led to women's concerns being treated apart from 'ordinary' crime prevention policy and practice. The response to street and stranger violence against women has often been in the form of advice to women on the avoidance of dangerous situations. This has been criticized, both for the unwillingness to tackle the systemic causes of violence against women, and the lack of attention to the higher incidence of violence from partners of acquaintances.

The development of crime prevention in England and Wales illustrates some of these trends. Much policy and practice since the 1980's – especially situational crime prevention - has focused on preventing property crimes such as burglary, car theft, vandalism and damage, or reducing street crime. Similarly, community-level crime prevention did not take account of women's experiences and needs. Most of the inter-agency crime prevention projects developed in the 1980's, for example, which brought together social services, housing, police and other local agencies, ignored violence

against women in the home. As one study pointed out, this was in sharp contrast to ‘the elaborate liaison apparatus which is arranged around child protection.’ (Blagg et al. 1988).

Prevention projects on domestic violence, primarily focusing on immediate justice and victim responses, have now been funded for a number of years, but the absence of attention

...gender issues tend to drop out of most discussions of community crime prevention.
Elliot Currie (1988, p. 282)

to gender in both community and situational crime prevention strategies in Britain is still noted by observers. Walklate (2001) has argued that multi-agency partnership approaches tackling local crime problems such as burglary or public nuisance, do not pay attention to gender differences (nor genuinely engage diverse community views). Thus while attention has been given to *public* and now to a *private* sense of well-being in Britain, with crime prevention initiatives in public spaces and policies on victim support and offender arrest, what she terms a ‘gendered’ sense of well-being is absent (Walklate, 2001).

Recent national crime prevention initiatives

Since the mid 1990’s a number of countries have initiated specific prevention programmes targeting women as part of their national crime prevention strategies. In England and Wales, the Home Office 1998 *Crime Reduction Programme* allocated £7 million of its overall £250 million budget to projects on violence against women.^{ix} Much larger sums were allocated to other targets, for example, £150 million for closed circuit television projects, and £60 million for burglary reduction programmes.

In Australia, National Crime Prevention launched its *Partnerships in Domestic Violence* programme in 1997. The most recent phase 1999-2003 provides \$25 million for four target areas: community education, work with perpetrators, indigenous family violence and children at risk of exposure to family violence.

In *Canada*, women and girls are one of the four priority groups in the National Strategy on Crime Prevention announced in 1998 (together with children, youth and Aboriginal peoples). The *Policy Framework for Addressing Personal Security Issues Concerning Women and Girls* (NCPC, 2000) outlines the principles and objectives guiding initiatives and funding. *Gender-based* crime (and violence) in this document is defined as:

a range of criminal actions that are targeted at women and girls, including their person and/or property (NCPC, 2000 p.3).

Since the overall emphasis is on crime prevention through social development, funding is targeted to projects which address root causes of violence against women, women’s safety projects, education and awareness campaigns, but also risk-factors for girl’s offending. Personal security thus includes not only the potential for victimization, but also for offending.

In Botswana, Kenya and South Africa, where high levels of sexual violence against women and girls have led to national action, national crime prevention strategies include an integrated series of strategies and policies, including work with children and young men.

In Australia, Canada, South Africa, the US and the UK, there is now some attention to the development of child and youth prevention projects which are specifically designed for girls. Overall, however, while in many countries there has now been a recognition of gender in crime prevention policies and programmes, it remains separate within overall mainstream strategies and policies. Relatively small amounts of money are usually allocated specifically to such projects in comparison to total funding, and the focus remains largely on women and girls. Yet in terms of the incorporation of gender into crime prevention, the issue is not the relative amounts of money allocated, but the continued separation of women in mainstream crime prevention strategy.

On the other hand, there has also been little attention until recently to the role of gender in shaping male behaviour, although there is now much greater attention being given to the effects on children of both sexes of witnessing domestic violence.^x Those working from a victims' perspective have tended to exclude a broader conception of gender, which conceives of gender as being about men too, and have been unwilling to work with men. This includes assumptions that scarce resources will be directed to men's programmes and away from services or projects for women or girls, and that men will dominate in joint projects; and for similar reasons an unwillingness to take part in local government partnerships, and a general fear of the appropriation and co-optation of women's concerns (Greig, 2001).

Prevention, masculinities and men and boys

One impact of the focus on gender has been to increase attention to strategies and projects targeting men and boys. Again much (but not all) of the work stems from the violence against women field to 'support the role of men and boys as partners against gender violence and in favour of equal rights' and to 'question stereotypic gender roles' (UNICEF, 2001 p. 2). This recent review identified 60 organizations in 28 countries, primarily in the South, working to combat male violence against women and girls.

Interest in the concept of masculinities and their implications for crime has developed over the past decade (Newburn & Stanko, 1994). While crime in almost all countries is predominately committed by men, only a minority of men and boys become involved. Thus the arguments for studying 'what it means to be a man' include that:

it provides a tool with which to begin the task of unpicking why it is that certain boys/men become involved with one sort of activity rather than another, and how...they might be persuaded to stop. (Newburn & Stanko, p. 4)

Studying masculinities also includes examining relationships between men/boys, rather than just between men and women, examining men's experience of being violent, how

notions of masculinity affect the social control of males as they grow up, how it directs them towards, or away from, risk-taking behaviours, delinquency, offending or victimization. Understanding of the impact of crime victimization by males against males, and work on bullying and victimization behaviours among school children, have both helped to illuminate some of the risk factors and components of male (as well as female) victimization and bullying behaviours which are important for prevention programmes. As the UNICEF review also acknowledges:

strictly speaking “gender violence” includes violence which men experience because of their own gender roles and relationships, associated with higher homicide rates, suicide rates, and involvement in professions associated with aggression, violence and physical risk.’ (UNICEF 2001p.2).

Some of this work has resulted in a growing number of programmes which aim to change attitudes, expectations and behaviours, create alternative norms and provide alternative role models, focus on the role of fathers in parenting, and increase awareness and responsibility among parents, teachers and others in professions such as law, education and health. The potential and role of the school, in particular, in protecting boys from external cultural pressures has been clearly identified.

What would the gendering of crime prevention involve?

At the national level, strategic crime prevention policies have been developed during a period when there was a clear separation between the fields of crime, victimization, and violence against women, and in the absence of any discussions on masculinity. The emergence of greater attention to gender is signaled in the recent UN *Guidelines for Crime Prevention* which were co-sponsored by 46 countries at the Vienna meetings of the 11th UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in April 2002. They include recognition of gender and diversity as one of the basis principles for strategic crime prevention at state and local levels.

If gender were fully incorporated and mainstreamed in crime prevention, what would this imply for strategies and policies? What it does *not* mean is the abandoning of strategies and programmes directed at the prevention of violence against women or the promotion of women’s safety, or necessary abolition of women’s safety committees. It does not mean a continuation of arguments about the extent of women’s violence against men.

Some of the following would become routine practice:

- The establishment and routine use of disaggregated data and indicators for crime prevention planning and evaluation
- Investigating masculinities and gender relationships
- Undertaking education and awareness training with men in professional roles, associations and leadership positions on gendered attitudes as well as the links with violence

- Recognizing gender-based violence to include male violence against men, as well as male violence against women
- Greater representation and inclusion of women at all decision-making levels
- Integrating gender into strategic safety planning and urban design
- Taking account of gender at all stages of local crime-prevention partnership planning
- The development of tools for analysis, implementation and evaluation which are sensitive to gender
- Incorporating exploratory walk approaches used in safety audits in city-wide community safety audits, and school, institution or work-place settings
- Incorporating gender actively into school, youth, recreation and other youth prevention programmes
- Actively engaging the media to change stereotypical gender models.

This also requires, perhaps, a greater willingness on the part of policy-makers and grass-roots organizations, and all partners involved in crime prevention, to discuss their reservations and (mis)understandings about gender more openly, to work for long-term gains, and to trust men or women a little more.

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ⁱⁱ *Developing Trust: International Approaches to Women's Safety*. Margaret Shaw and Laura Capobianco. ICPC draft paper May 2002

ⁱⁱⁱ The concept of gender was first introduced at the 3rd UN International Conference on Women in Niarobi, 1985.

^{iv} The term *gender neutral* refers to assumptions that polices, strategies or methodologies have equal applicability to men and women and no specific changes are necessary; *ungendered* means that no consideration whatsoever is given to the implications of gender and gender differences.

^v The changes in Canada, even since the first *Family Violence Initiative 1991-5*, are very evident. A Department of Justice review summed up the lessons learned from that phase of the Initiative in its seven priority areas (Touchette, 1996). The focus was on sensitizing justice personnel, the criminalisation of family violence, improving coordination between justice and other sectors; charging and prosecuting policies; testifying in court, treatment programmes for men who batter and encouraging alternative dispute resolution techniques. Prevention as it is now conceived did not receive great attention.

^{vi} They collaborated with universities and NGO's in five other European countries to formulate the *European Charter for Women in the City 1997*.

^{vii} The EFUS *Secucities Women Project* included women's safety projects in six European cities.

^{viii} *Ist International Seminar on Women's Safety: Making the Links*. Montreal, May 9-11 2002 www.femmesetvilles.org.

^{ix} Thirty four projects on violence against women and sexual assault and rape are currently being implemented and evaluated 2001-2.

^x For example, Geffner et al., 2000; Finkelhor, et al, 2001; Australia, 2001.