



VIOLENCE  
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LAB

# VICTIMS OF (DOMESTIC) VIOLENCE IN CROATIA

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**croVIMO**  
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## **VIOLENCE?**

- Physical, psychological or emotional, verbal, sexual, economic, cyber, institutional, structural
- Violence against women, violence against children, violence against the elderly, violence between intimate partners, peer violence...

## **CHALLENGE?**

Expansion of the concept of violence

Challenges in defining psychological violence

Grading the severity of violence

## Domestic violence concept

## **DOMESTIC?**

- Intimate partners, ancestors and descendants, adoptive parents/adoptees, siblings, persons living in the same household

## **Challenge?**

Transformation of the family  
(extended / nuclear)

Subjective vs. formal criteria



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### Conceptual features

- **Social concept** — its definition depends on the values of each society (culturally conditioned)
- Awareness of the devastating effects of family violence—and thus the very topic—only entered the spotlight of scientific research, the public, and policy-makers in the second half of the 20th century (a **relatively recent concept**)
- **No single, clear definition** exists; family violence is often equated with intimate partner violence, while violence against children is examined separately as child abuse (fragmented research approach)
- Family violence is typically perpetrated **in private settings** and marked by a **high dark figure** of crime (detection challenges)



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### Key social forces

- **Civil-rights movements + women's rights movement** (strong feminist influence)
- Building **victim-oriented criminal-justice systems** (focus on the victim)
- Development of the **scientific disciplines** of criminology, victimology, psychology, and sociology, which showed how growing up in a violent family environment shapes behaviour patterns in adulthood (the cycle of violence)
- **Secularisation + liberal-democratic ideals** (equal protection for all)
- Strong influence of **NGOs + globalization**
- **Penal populism**
- Humanitarian law (international mechanisms)



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## Etiology

### **STRUCTURAL THEORIES**

The cause: patriarchal social structures

PROBLEM: what about homosexual couples/violence of women against men/violence against children?

### **PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL THEORIES**

The cause: psychopathology

PROBLEM: Overcircular, relatively high proportion of domestic violence in relation to the proportion of psychopathology in society



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## Etiology

### **SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES**

social learning theory – domestic violence is a learned phenomenon (based on previous direct experiences and learned patterns)

**PROBLEM:** Growing up in violence sometimes leads to a person becoming a victim of violence, not a perpetrator.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES**

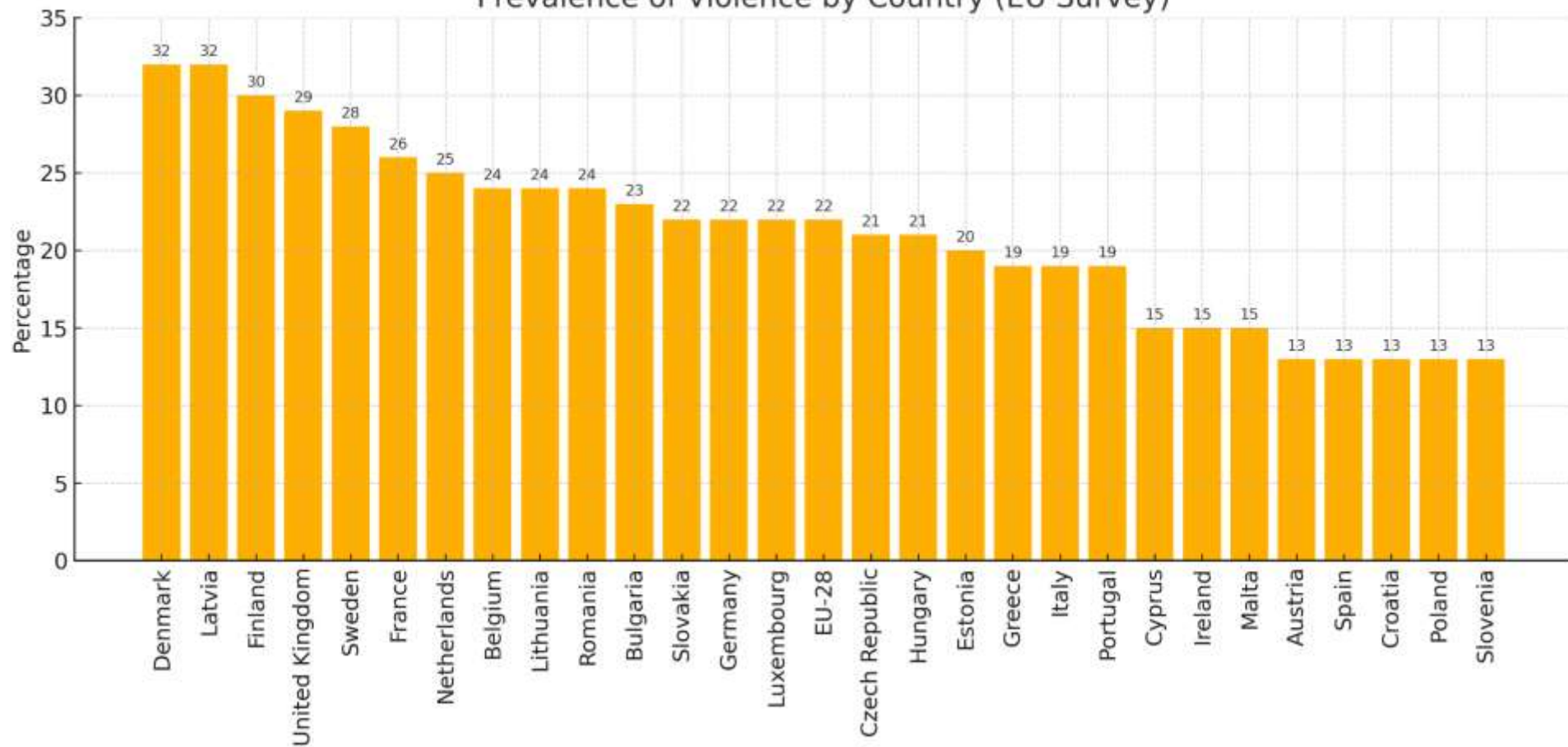
frustration theory - see the cause of domestic violence as the individual's inability to cope with frustration (in situations where an individual's goal is unachievable), which the person expresses through aggression.

**PROBLEM:** They explain the risk factor, but don't answer the question why



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Prevalence of Violence by Country (EU Survey)





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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT – unpopular topics?

Should family (domestic) violence be punished more severely than violence between strangers, and why?

Cheating .....VIOLENCE?

Autonomy of the victim in less severe cases?

Bystanders and responsibility?





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## Project info

**FULL NAME OF THE PROJECT:** CROATIAN VIOLENCE MONITOR - A Study of the Phenomenology, Etiology, and Prosecution of Delinquent Violence with Focus on Protecting Particularly Vulnerable Groups of Victims (Violence Research Lab)

**PROJECT LEADER:** Prof. Dr. Anna-Maria Getoš Kalac, LL.M. (June 2021), Assist. Prof. Dr. Reana Bezić

**PROJECT FUNDED BY:** Croatian Science Foundation

**PROJECT DURATION:** 60 months (March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 – February 28<sup>th</sup> 2023)-extension September 2025



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## Project info

**MEMBERS:** 24 members (including 6 experts) – multidisciplinary approach

**FUNDS:** 265.500 EUR

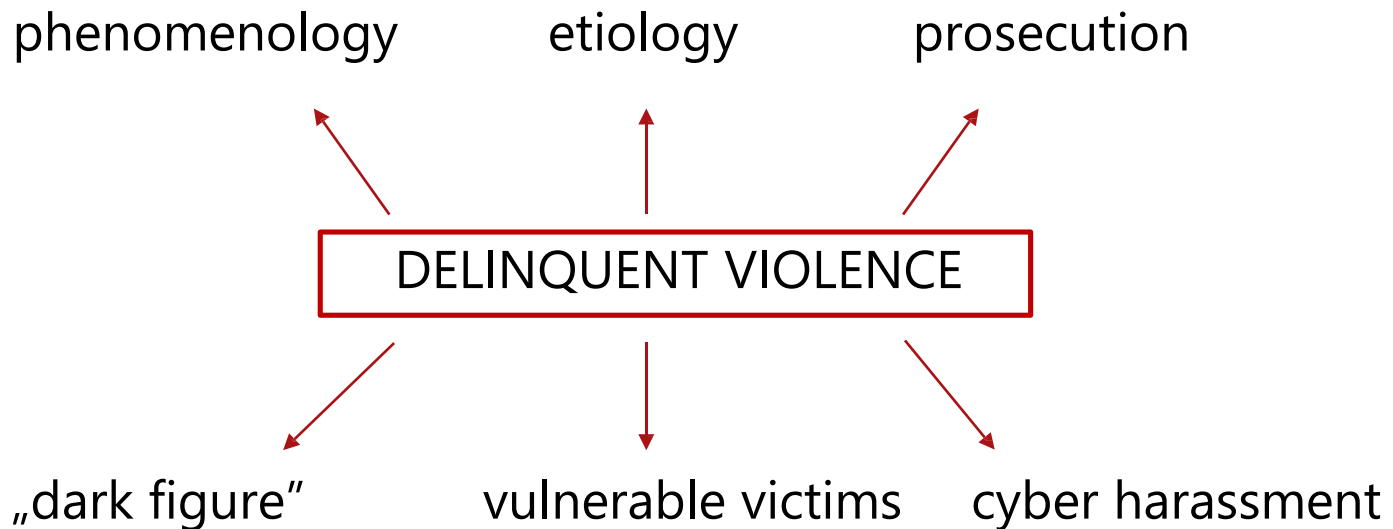
**WEBPAGE:** [www.violence-lab.eu](http://www.violence-lab.eu)



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## Research focuses

- Delinquent violence – unlawful use of force by person(s) towards another person(s) against their will with the exclusive or primary intent to inflict physical harm or to kill





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## Methodology & Field work

- 4 Municipal and County Courts
- Establishing 1 Central Violence Lab in Zagreb and 3 Regional Violence Research Lab in Split, Rijeka, Osijek
- Field work: 2021/2022 and 2022/2023
- 1117 finally adjudicated court files occurring between 2017-2021
- Students (law background)
- Online vs paper and pencil
- Questionnaire: case, offender & victim



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## First results

- First findings:

### PROFILE OF VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

**Dr. sc. Marko Mrakovčić**, Assoc. Prof. at the Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka

**Dr. sc. Petra Šprem**, Senior Assistant at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb

**Dr. sc. Reana Bezić**, Assist. Prof. at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb



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## First results

<i><b>Location of the file</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>	<i><b>Gender of the victim, %</b></i>	
Zagreb	28,5	female	58,3
Split	29,6	male	34,2
Osijek	22,5	M.D.	7,5
Rijeka	19,4		
<i><b>Working status</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>	<i><b>Income</b></i>	<i><b>%</b></i>
Unemployed	14	There is none	25,8
Employed	32	Below average	26,6
Pupil/student	15	Average	7,7
A pensioner	9,9	Above average	0,4
M.D.	29,1	M.D.	39,5



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## First results

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Kids</i>	<i>%</i>
0-18	22,3	unfinished elementary school	13,3	Single	23	No	36,3
19- 30	22,8	finished elementary school	10,2	In a relationship	3,7	One	18,5
31- 40	13,7	finished three-year high school	28,3	Marriage union	21,1	Two	15,8
41- 50	9,8	finished four-year high school	3,7	Extramarital union	10,7	Three	4,6
51- 64	11,6	bachelor degree	4,1	Divorced	3	Four	1,3
65 and more	7,5	master's degree	5,5	In the process of separation	2,8	Five	0,3
M.D.	12,3	M.D.	34,9	A widower	0,7	Six and more	0,5
				M.D.	34,9	M.D.	22,7



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## First results

- **women** are significantly more likely to become victims of violence, especially within a private environment, where the perpetrators are often partners or family members
- **men** are exposed to a greater risk of violence in public spaces, often by strangers or acquaintances
- age also plays a key role, with **younger people** more likely to be victims of violence compared to those of an older age





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## First results

- **Socioeconomic status, including education level and financial status**, also affects the likelihood of becoming a victim of violence.
- People with **lower education and income** are more often exposed to violence, which points to a complex interaction between economic opportunities, education and the risk of violence.
- Violence is more often **reported by the victims** themselves
- The majority of victims **do not suffer physical injuries** or experience only **light physical injuries**, while more serious injuries and deaths are rarer



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## Conclusion & Practical impact

- **Lack of Victimology Research**
- **Victim oriented system**
- **Department for support and assistance to victims and witnesses**
- ✓ Improving normative framework
- ✓ Training, workshops and seminars for practitioners
- ✓ Findings actively incorporated in higher education programs
- ✓ Methodological solutions for violence researches



# Thank you for your time!

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