

August 2018

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Recommended Citation

Cepeda, Isabel (2018). Fighting Prejudice: Campaigns on Gender Violence in Spain. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(6), 17-34.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol19/iss6/2>

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Fighting Prejudice: Campaigns on Gender Violence in Spain

By Isabel Cepeda¹

Abstract

As in almost every country, Spanish society tends to trivialize cases of violence against women. There is little chance that this violence is perceived as a problem, not only by men, but also by women themselves. Some women have come to accept domestic violence as normal and internalized their oppression to the extent that they expect this as a pattern of acceptable, normative behavior imposed by society. Some social norms and institutions can ensure the perpetuation of violence against women since they are rooted in the culture and traditions that legitimize it. Awareness campaigns that address violence against women serve to counterbalance those institutions and to change that mentality. In fact, greater awareness coincides with periods of more information and social debate addressing the issue of violence against women. The goal of this study is to determine whether the public awareness campaigns carried out in Spain to promote sensitivity to violence against women are effective. To achieve this goal, we analyzed the evolution of Spanish society's perception of the problem of violence against women from 1985 to the present, relative to the Spanish government's expenditure on sensitization campaigns on violence against women. The joint analysis of expenses and results will enable us to reach conclusions about the relationship between these two variables.

This is a novel analysis that has not been addressed until now in this field of research. It is hoped that this document will contribute to the literature by exploring the effectiveness of awareness campaigns against violence against women in the social perception of the problem.

Keywords: Violence against women, sensitization campaigns, perception, awareness, efficacy

Introduction

“But there is one universal truth, applicable to all countries,
cultures and communities: violence against women
is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.”
Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon

Among the numerous manifestations of violence against women (VaW), the most persistent is violence between partners or ex-partners, also called gender violence (GV) (Kishor & Johnson, 2004), domestic violence, spousal abuse, or intimate partner abuse, although each of these expressions can have different meanings depending on the country. According to the United

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Nations, VaW “is violence directed against women because they are women or that affect them disproportionately” (UN Women, 1992). In Spain, VaW is legally defined as simply violence inflicted on women by their partners or ex-partners (Ley Orgánica 1/2004, 2004).

Violence against women (VaW) is a serious social problem that is omnipresent worldwide and increasingly recognized in social networks and scholarly literature. VaW occurs in all countries and transcends all boundaries of age, education, economic level, religion, and race (Kapoor, 2000). The social reality and cultural roots underlying VaW determine women’s subordination and gender inequality. Patriarchy², which implies male superiority to women, is considered the main reason for VaW since it reinforces inequality in relationships (Fawole, 2008). There is a consistent relationship between men’s adherence to patriarchal attitudes and their engagement in VaW (Flood & Pease, 2009), which is why patriarchy is usually pointed out as the main reason for violence against women (Khan & Rizwan, 2011). In some countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, social customs and institutions are based on beliefs deeply rooted in culture and traditions that legitimate acts of violence against women and perpetuate their societies’ acceptance of VaW (Azhar *et al.*, 2012). Even so, there is a great discrepancy between the reality of VaW and social perception of it.

The problem is further complicated by the different methods that different countries use to define and measure violence. Insufficient statistics and lack of data breakdowns by sex make it hard to establish significant comparisons and reliable calculations about VaW (United Nations, 1996). According to WHO data, 38% of all homicides of women in the world are due to spousal violence (WHO, 2013). According to UNODC data, in 2012 two thirds of victims of homicides committed worldwide by partners, ex-partners, or family members were women (43,600 in 2012). Of all female victims in 2012, 47% were killed by their partners, ex-partners, or family members (UNODC, 2013).

Despite the enormous burden imposed by VaW worldwide, society does not perceive the full magnitude of the problem. Social reality tends to conceal and contextualize VaW as a means of justifying it. Media outlets often tolerate the content of VaW and use language that enables society to see this type of violence as acceptable (Kohlman *et al.*, 2014). Specifically, in Spain, sometimes, cases of abuse are sometimes classified as “incidents,” and only exceptionally are they given comprehensive treatment with a clear will to bring a formal social complaint (Núñez, 2009)³. Media outlets therefore contribute to the trivialization, normalization, banalization, and perpetuation of VaW and help to desensitize society, accustoming people to passive behavior toward this violence. As a result, a large amount of VaW is considered “normal” and gains a certain level of social consent (Azhar *et al.*, 2012), even though people claim to reject it. We must thus ask whether society behaves rationally toward VaW (Becker, 1962) or whether VaW suffers from the problem that economists call “falsification of preferences” (Kuran, 1995), whereby many individuals publicly profess consensus on an issue- in this case, against the abuse of women- while they are not personally convinced of this belief.

VaW is not inevitable, however. To eradicate this problem, we must tackle the economic and sociocultural factors that foster the culture of VaW, which involves recognizing the

² The concept of patriarchy holds promise for theorizing violence against women because it keeps the theoretical focus on dominance, gender, and power. It also anchors the problem of violence against women in social conditions, rather than individual attributes. (Hunnicut, 2009).

³ Although there are decalogues and recommendations for the informative treatment of sexist violence, there are many circumstances that affect the informative quality with which this news is addressed and may prejudice the focus of these issues. It is necessary to improve the treatment of sexist violence in the media in order to adequately inform about this serious social problem.

importance of questioning social norms that reinforce men's authority and control over women and permit VaW (WHO, 2013). First, cultural changes are needed. Men are not the only ones who consider neutrality toward VaW as normal. Surprisingly, women themselves often accept VaW and even justify it. Some women believe there are circumstances in which it is acceptable to "beat one's wife" (WHO, 2005), reflecting the views of their society as a whole (Fawole, 2008; Fawole, Aderonmu, & Fawole, 2005; Fawole, Ajuwon, & Osungbade, 2005). Second, we must change the attitudes that permit behavior that exploits women (Fawole, 2008). Finally, social response must change. Until society internalizes psychologically the need to eradicate VaW, this violence will prevail over the values that aim to eliminate domestic violence and reinforce the assumption of male dominance. The legal and normative advances in the fight against VaW have been substantial in the majority of developed countries. However, a mentality that normalizes sexism persists in most societies. This mentality is one of the underlying mechanisms that allow the perpetuation of VaW (Panda, 2014) and that greatly impedes its eradication. More information and social debate can trigger greater awareness.

Most studies of VaW focus on its physical, psychological, and sexual manifestations (WHO, 2013). VaW is also a relevant issue for social scientists, however, since it is recognized as a global problem that translates into increased poverty and presents a serious obstacle to development (Tinker, 1990; Fawole, 2008). But social scientists don't only study the impact of violence on external conditions; they also study the issue from their own disciplinary perspectives and women's own experiences (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Relationships between women and economics shape what Baker & Jacobsen call the economics of gender (2007). The consequences of the economics of gender for issues of well-being; the labor market; gendered division of labor; marriage rate (Becker, 1973); socioeconomic mobility; birth rate; economic opportunities for women and men; and the time women can devote to their studies, professional activities, or childcare (Becker, 1993) have profound theoretical and practical implications. These topics require reflection in academic and political contexts that should impact public policies.

In Spain, the movement that began in the 1990s to make GV socially visible (Ferrer & Bosch, 2006) culminated in the ratification and enforcement of Organic Law 1/2004 of 28 December, Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence (known as the Integrated Law). This law, the ultimate goal of which is to eradicate gender violence, has unleashed great social debate with positive results, as recognized in the Annual State Observatory on Violence against Women (Observatorio estatal de Violencia sobre la Mujer, 2007). In preparing the Integrated Law, various actions were initiated to provide information, education, and communication, which include the ongoing campaigns in communication media outlets. However, the advances made since then in the social perception of the problem in Spain have been rather erratic.

The goal of this study is to analyze the efficacy of the Spanish government's communication media campaigns to increase Spanish society's perception of and sensitivity to VaW. To achieve this goal, we compare the evolution of the perception of VaW in Spanish society to government expenditure on campaigns that aim to prevent VaW, inform the population of this problem, and sensitize people to it. Some studies relate social sensitivity to the institutional campaigns against GV (Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality, 2013), referencing isolated and absolute values from the 2012 barometer of the Center for Sociological Research of the Spanish National Research Council (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* [CIS]). Our study's main contribution is its statistical analysis and the exhaustive use of results for the period of 2007-2015. The quantitative information

provided by statistical analysis permits more precise descriptions of the relationship between *expenditure on publicity campaigns* and *change in the perception of VaW* in Spain, which, in turn, provide useful information for politicians making decisions about expenditures and actions on this issue. These results can be extrapolated to other countries in the area. This is the first study to achieve these results. Therefore, the study contributes to the scientific literature on VaW and publicity campaigns.

Methodology

The data was analyzed using statistical tools. We classified the data into frequency tables and percentages, charts, growth rates, and correlations using the statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 21.0.

Variables used: Variable 1. Evolution of the perception of VaW in Spain 200-2016 (Center for Sociological Research of the Spanish National Research Council –CIS-, 2016). We used data provided by the indicator of the Center for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas [CIS]). Variable 2, Expenditure on publicity campaigns: We used data from the Ministry of the Presidency (2007-2015).

Violence against Women in Spain

In Spain, the country analyzed in this study, the following data are available on VaW for the period 2001-2015:

Table 1. Fatalities in Spain due to VaW (2001-2015)

Year	Fatalities due to VaW
2001	50
2002	54
2003	71
2004	72
2005	57
2006	69
2007	71
2008	76
2009	56
2010	73
2011	61
2012	52
2013	54
2014	54
2015	60

Source: Developed from data of Delegation of the Spanish Government for Gender Violence (2016).

Table 1 shows that the total number of homicides considered as Gender Violence, that is, committed by the victim's partner or ex-partner, have a cyclical evolution, reaching its peak in 2010, with 73 fatalities.

Spanish Government Expenditure on Publicity Campaigns to Improve Perception of the Problem of VaW

Gender relations cannot be intuitive; they must be learned by observation and interaction with a culture (Potter, 2008). It is therefore necessary to take educational, preventive, and sensitizing actions that provide training in values that contribute to preventing gender violence, especially in couples' relationships. The Integrated Law on Gender Violence is an indispensable instrument to attempt to eradicate VaW in Spain. One of the measures taken to prevent, correct, and attempt to eradicate VaW is publicity campaigns. The campaigns are designed to inform and persuade the population of the need to reject VaW, to increase society's sensitization, and to help to foster a culture against VaW, whether due to personal conviction or a "herd mentality" (Rook, 2016), which can explain sudden changes in individual behavior. Since Spain implemented the Integrated Law, different sensitization campaigns have been initiated to improve social perception of the problem of VaW. In addition to the main goal—to provide information and sensitize society to the issue of VaW—each campaign has a specific goal. So, in 2007, it was to show the rejection of abusers and create critical consciousness, while the 2011 campaign focused on involving society in putting an end to gender violence as a common goal. Information for government expenditures on publicity campaigns about VaW is available from 2007 on.

Sensitization campaigns on VaW will only be effective if they manage to increase awareness, sensitivity, and society's perception of VaW. The constant repetition of the same message impacts the thoughts of those who receive it. Communication media can thus become an important tool in the struggle against VaW. Table 2 shows the expenditure devoted to government campaigns for prevention, information, and sensitization and consciousness-raising on VaW in the population in the period 2007-2015:

Table 2. Government expenditure on publicity against VaW (2007-2015)

Year	Expenditure on publicity (in millions of euros)	Annual growth rate of government expenditure on publicity against VaW	Length of campaign (in months)	Period of campaign
2007	2.8		4	Jan-Apr
2008	4	42.86	3	May-July
2009	8	100.00	12	Jan-Dec
2010	5	-37.50	6	1/7-31/12
2011	3	-40.00	12	1/1-31/12
2012	1.54	-48.67	6	1/7-15/12
2013	1.35	-12.34	12	1/1-15/12
2014	1.3	-3.70	12	1/1-12/12
2015	4.64	256.92	11	1/02-31/12

Table 2. Government expenditure on publicity against VaW (2007-2015)

Source: Developed from data of the Ministry of the Presidency.

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Table 2 shows that expenditures have varied greatly, from 8 million euros in 2009 to 1.3 million in 2014. From 2010-2014, this expenditure was decreasing, but it has now recovered to reach and even exceed the 2009 level. Table 2 also shows the length of each campaign and the annual growth rate of government expenditure on publicity against VaW. In 2009, the growth of this budget item was 100% relative to the previous year. In 2015, it was 256.92% over the 2014 amount, although we must take into account that the amounts dedicated to this goal had decreased considerably in 2010-2014. The sharpest decreases occurred in 2011 (negative growth rate of 40%) and 2012 (negative growth rate of 48.67%).

Perception of VaW as One of the Main Problems in Spain

The CIS develops indexes, called “barometers,” to attempt to measure the state of Spanish public opinion about different topics. One of the barometers is called “Perception of the main problems in Spain.” This barometer has been prepared monthly (except in August) since 1985 through a survey of households using a standardized questionnaire administered following the same methodology. Around 2500 adults are interviewed, selected at random from throughout Spain⁴. The respondents were asked to indicate the three problems they considered to be the main problems in Spain from a total of 30-42 possible responses, which include, for example, unemployment, international terrorism, Ebola, citizens’ lack of security, politicians, immigration, or racism, among others. One of the responses is *Violence against Women*.

Although the barometer was first prepared in May 1985, VaW does not appear on it until September 2000 (CIS, 2016) Fifteen years had to pass before this barometer began to take a form that would enable Spanish society to perceive VaW as one of its main problems.

In January 2016, when asked to choose three main problems of Spanish society, respondents most often chose the following, in order of descending importance: *unemployment* (chosen by 77.9% of respondents); *corruption and fraud* (39.2%); and *politicians, political parties, and Spanish politics* (23.4%). *Violence against Women* was ranked 19th with a very low rate of 1.3%, less than the rates for concerns such as *crisis of values* (1.8%), *citizens’ lack of security* (2.4%), *immigration* (3.2%), and *international terrorism* (5.7%). In January 2016, only 1.3% of respondents believed that VaW was one of the three main problems in Spanish society. This result shows the minimal perception in Spanish society of VaW as one of its main problems, twelve years after ratification of the Integrated Law (Appendix 1).

Regarding the percentage of respondents who indicate VaW as one of the three main problems in Spanish society, in the period between September 2000 and January 2016, only 10 of the 169 months analyzed show over 5% of respondents perceiving VaW as one of the three main problems. Eight of these months correspond to the year 2004, one to 2005, and another to 2007.

⁴ The universe of the survey is the Spanish population of both sexes aged 18 and over. Sample size: Designed: 2,500 interviews. Sampling Points: 253 municipalities and 48 provinces. Sampling procedure: Multi-stage, stratified by conglomerates, with selection of the primary sampling units (municipalities) and of the secondary units (sections) in a proportional random manner, and of the last units (individuals) by random routes and sex quotas and age. The strata have been formed by the crossing of the 17 autonomous communities, with the size of habitat divided into 7 categories: less than or equal to 2,000 inhabitants; from 2,001 to 10,000; from 10,001 to 50,000; from 50,001 to 100,000; from 100,001 to 400,000; from 400,001 to 1,000,000; and more than 1,000,000 inhabitants. The questionnaires were administered through personal interviews at home. Sample error: For a confidence level of 95.5% (two sigmas), and $P = Q$, the real error is $\pm 2.0\%$ for the whole sample and in the assumption of simple random sampling. (See: http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/3180_3199/3187/Ft3187.pdf)

The month with the highest percentage of respondents who perceive VaW as one of the three major problems was March 2004 (11.7%), but the number of months in which this percentage was under 1% totals 42. The most disappointing result was recorded in October 2012, where only 0.1% of people surveyed indicated VaW as one of the three main problems in society. The best results, those of 2004, stem from the social debate generated by the preparation of the Integrated Law, which increased social perception of VaW (Appendix 2)⁵.

In relation to the average percentage of respondents who perceive VaW as one of the three main problems, 2004 shows a rate of 6.28%, the highest value in the period (2001-2015), while this percentage falls to 0.47% in 2013. Paradoxically, the evolution is in inverse relation to level of information, even though a greater degree of sensitization and awareness of the problem should correspond to a higher position in the survey. Table 3 shows this evolution.

Table 3. Annual average % of respondents who consider VaW as one of the three main problems. Growth rates of this percentage (2001-2015).

Year	% Average	GR of average % who consider VaW as one of the 3 main problems
2001	2.31	
2002	2.24	-3.15
2003	2.31	3.25
2004	6.28	172.05
2005	3.38	-46.16
2006	2.87	-15.05
2007	2.83	-1.58
2008	2.65	-6.11
2009	1.87	-29.45
2010	1.51	-19.42
2011	1.25	-16.87
2012	0.62	-50.72
2013	0.47	-23.53
2014	0.61	28.85
2015	0.65	5.97

Source: Developed from data of the CIS.

As to the evolution of the growth rate of the average value of respondents who consider VaW as one of the main problems, Table 3 also shows the dramatic changes in this statistic. A higher information level should result in sensitization and awareness of society's problems. This explains why 2004, the year of the preparation and ratification of the Integrated Law, shows a dramatic growth of 172%, as society received greater quantities of information, communication,

⁵ On December 28, 2004, Spain's Organic Law 1/2004 of Integral Protection Measures against Gender Violence, better known as the Integral Law, was published. It was a pioneering law in Europe, which obliged and involved all public powers. It introduced very striking novelties, among them the creation of the Gender Violence Courts and the Government Delegation of Violence against Women, a Government branch integrated in the Ministry of Equality, for the elaboration of public policies in relation to this issue. The novelty and the change of course that the law meant did not leave indifferent the Spanish society, generating an important debate in all levels of society (media, universities, discussion forums, and politics), in which it became evident that VaW was a crime to fight against.

and social debate on the problem. VaW went from being nearly a private question to having public stature and notoriety. After 2004, however, the tendency was not stable. In 2005, the year following the preparation and ratification of the Integrated Law, the growth rate of sensitivity decreased by a sharp 46.16% and shows negative growth rates until 2014, when it recovers high positive rates (28.85%). The following is an analysis of public spending on awareness campaigns about VaW compared with variations in sensitivity to the problem to see if the changes are related. The growth rate of the perception of VaW as a problem is not always increasing. From the foregoing analysis, we deduce that social sensitivity to VaW is slight, variable, and highly subject to circumstantial factors.

Comparative Evolution of Government Expenditure on Campaigns for Sensitization to VaW and Society's Perception of the Problem

We will now confirm the relation or contrastable influence between expenditure on government publicity to sensitize people to the problem of VaW and society's perception of the problem.

Table 4. Annual Expenditure on Government Campaigns for Sensitization vs. Annual Average Percentage of Respondents Who Consider VaW One of the Three Main Problems (01-15)

Year	Annual average % who indicate VaW as one of the three main problems	Annual expenditure on sensitization campaigns against VaW (in millions of euros)
2001	2.309	-
2002	3.382	-
2003	6.282	-
2004	2.873	-
2005	2.655	-
2006	2.827	-
2007	2.309	2.8
2008	2.236	4
2009	1.873	8
2010	1.509	5
2011	1.255	3
2012	0.645	1.54
2013	0.618	1.35
2014	0.609	1.3
2015	0.473	4.64

- No data available.

Source: Developed from data of the Special Government Delegation against Gender Violence and the CIS.

Table 4 shows no relationship between the growth rate of the population's sensitivity to VaW and the growth rate of expenditure on sensitization campaigns. While expenditure on sensitization campaigns grew 42.86% in 2008 and 100% in 2009, the population's sensitivity decreased at a rate of 6.11% and 29.45%, respectively. Furthermore, in the years when expenditure

on campaigns decreased at a rate of 40% or 48.67% (2011 and 2012), sensitivity also decreased, but at rates with no relationship to expenditure (16.87% and 50.72%, respectively).

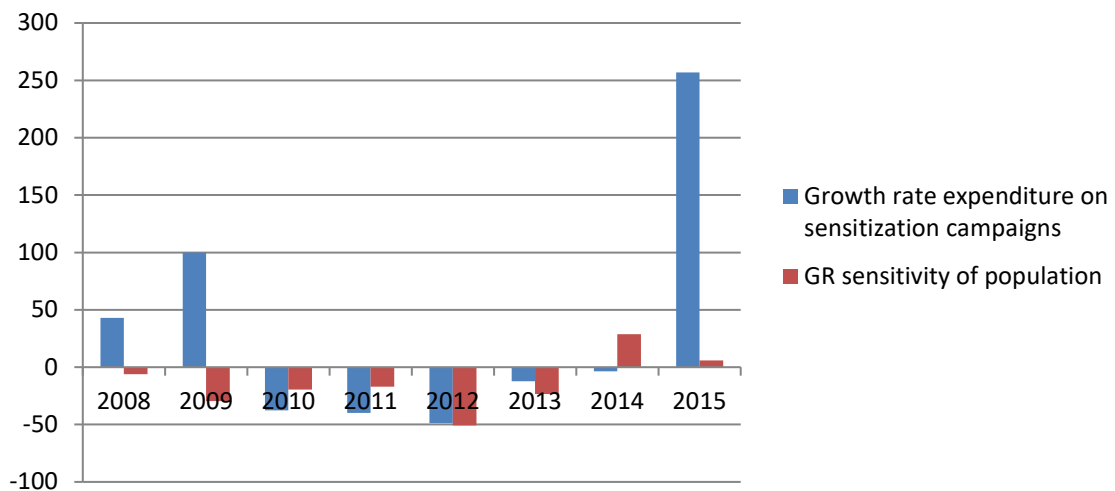


Figure 1. Growth rates of annual expenditure on sensitization campaigns; Growth rates of annual average % who consider VaW as one of the three main problems (08-15). Source: Developed from data of the Special Delegation of the Government against Gender Violence and the CIS.

Figure 1 shows that some years with negative growth rates in expenditure on government campaigns for sensitization to VaW correspond to negative growth rates of society's perception of this problem: 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. These rates show no consistent proportion to public reaction, however. In 2010 and 2011, the growth rate of expenditures decreased much more than the growth rate of respondents' sensitivity, whereas in 2013, a negative growth rate for campaign expenditures (-12.34%) corresponds to a much steeper negative growth rate for public sensitivity, almost double (-23.54%). In 2015, the divergence is very striking, as the growth rate of expenditure on sensitization reached 257%, whereas sensitivity only improved 6%.

We study below the effectiveness of the campaigns in sensitizing the population, based on period of execution.

Table 5. Annual Growth Rates for Sensitization Campaigns

Year	Growth rate expenditure on sensitization campaigns	GR sensitivity of population	Length of sensitization campaigns (in no. of months)
2008	42.86	-6.11	3
2009	100.00	-29.45	12
2010	-37.50	-19.42	6
2011	-40.00	-16.87	12
2012	-48.67	-50.72	6
2013	-12.34	-23.53	12
2014	-3.70	28.85	12
2015	256.92	5.97	11

Growth rates of annual average % who consider VaW one of the three main problems; Length of sensitization campaigns (in no. of months) (08-15). Source: Developed from data of the Special Government Delegation against Gender Violence and the CIS.

Table 5 does not show that longer publicity campaigns result in a higher growth rate in sensitivity to VaW. Although we find years in which a brief publicity campaign corresponds to a decrease in sensitivity (2006, 2008), other years with campaigns that ran all 12 months show a decrease rather than an increase in the growth rate of the population's sensitivity (2009, 2013). We can graph the results as follows:

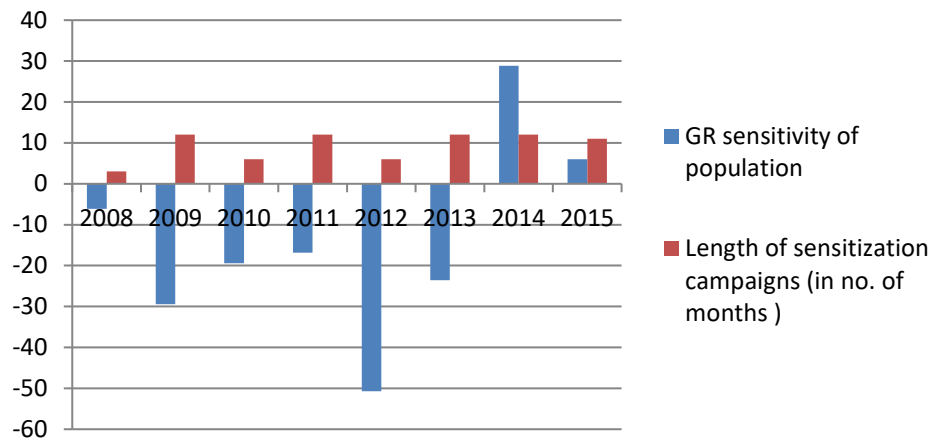


Figure 2. Relation of growth rates of annual average % who consider VaW as one of the three main problems vs. length of sensitization campaigns (08-15). Source: Developed from data of the Special Government Delegation for Gender Violence and the CIS.

The relation between the two functions, and between each of these functions and the years, a growing variable, are analyzed using calculation, interpretation, and the corresponding contrast of hypotheses of the corresponding Pearson's correlation coefficients. The next table shows these values, the number of pairings for each case, and the p-values for the contrasts whose null hypothesis is absent of correlation:

Table 6. Relation Between Evolution of Growth Rate of Sensitivity and Length of Sensitization Campaigns

	Correlations	Average percentage	Annual expenditure
Year	Pearson's r	- 0.80**	- 0.37
	p-value	0.00	0.33
	N	15	9
Average percentage	Pearson's r		0.47
	p-value		0.20
	N		9
Annual expenditure	Pearson's r		
	p-value		
	N		

Source: Developed from data of the IM, Spec. Gov. Deleg. GV, and the CIS.

From the data in the preceding table, we conclude that there is no significant correlation between the annual average percentage of respondents who indicate Violence against Women as one of the three main problems and annual expenditure on institutional sensitization campaigns

against Violence against Women (in millions of euros). The nine pairings of data available show a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.47$, and the p-value of the contrast is $0.20 > 0.05$, with a confidence level of 95%. We therefore conclude that the two variables are independent of each other. The value $0.47 > 0$ suggests some positive or direct dependence, indicating that as the annual expenditure on sensitization campaigns increases, the annual average percentage of those who indicate VaW as one of the three main problems increases. The resulting conclusions are definitely discouraging: in the period from 2001 to 2015, there has been a very high negative correlation, $r = -0.80$, with the annual average percentage of respondents who indicate Violence against Women as one of the three main problems. Furthermore, this result has a confidence level greater than 99%, since its p-value, 0.00, is less than 0.01.

The second conclusion, defined above, is that although the correlation with expenditure observed from 2007 to 2015 is not significant, the correlation coefficient of $r = -0.34 < 0$ shows that annual expenditure on institutional sensitization campaigns against Violence against Women has been decreasing.

Table 7. Correlations of Data from Table 5

Correlations		Growth rate of expenditure	Growth rate of sensitivity
Year	Pearson's r	0.30	0.40
	p-value	0.48	0.32
	N	8	8
Growth rate of expenditure	Pearson's r		0.34
	p-value		0.40
	N		8
Growth rate of sensitivity	Pearson's r		
	p-value		
	N		

Source: Developed from data of the IM, Spec. Gov. Deleg. GV, and the CIS

Even though none of the Pearson's correlation coefficients for the three pairs of variables are statistically significant, given that we only have eight values for each variable, the fact that all are positive enables us to conclude:

1. *From 2008 to 2015, both the growth rate of expenditure on sensitization campaigns ($r = 0.30 > 0$) and the growth rate of the population's sensitivity to Violence against Women ($r = 0.40 > 0$) have increased, although not significantly.*
2. *As the growth rate of the expenditure on sensitization campaigns increases (although not significantly), the growth rate of the population's sensitivity to Violence against Women increases ($r = 0.34 > 0$).*

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a great discrepancy between the size of the problem of *Violence against Women* and Spanish society's perception of it. Although social sensitization to this problem has increased, it is far from reaching acceptable levels. While society is increasingly sensitized against sexism and stereotypes of it, the percentage of the population which perceives violence against women as

one of the three main problems continues to be minimal, even in months where the statistics show better results.

Greater sensitization and awareness coincide with the months that had more information and social debate. When social debate increases, there is an automatic reflex in Spaniards' perception of violence against women as a problem. In contrast, when this debate wanes, we see another decrease in social sensitivity. From 2008-2015, both the growth rate of expenditure on sensitization campaigns ($r = 0.30 > 0$) and the growth rate of the population's sensitivity to Violence against Women ($r = 0.40 > 0$) have increased, although not significantly. As the growth rate of expenditure on sensitization campaigns increases (although not significantly), the growth rate of the population's sensitivity to violence against women increases ($r = 0.34 > 0$).

Despite these discrepancies, we can suggest that the relation between government expenditure on sensitization campaigns on VaW and the Spanish population's perception of this problem are related. We can assume that this result is due in part to the fact that the campaigns have a specific time context. Thus, publicity actions should last longer if they are to generate a change in social awareness through communication media.

Without a doubt, social acceptance or rejection of VaW influence the behavior of abusers. Evidence demonstrates a positive association of beliefs supporting violence and perpetration of violent behavior (Flood & Pease, 2009). In the most egalitarian societies, in contrast, social rejection leads to a lower tendency of people to commit VaW (Tauchen *et al.*, 1991), clearly confirming the phenomenon of adhesion, or the "herd effect" (Rook, 2006). Hence, awareness campaigns are essential to achieve the goal of eradicating VaW. The prevalence of VaW in egalitarian societies shows, however, that social rejection is not high enough to deter these criminals from their behavior. We conclude that awareness campaigns against VaW, though they are essential, are not enough. Beyond this, we believe that there should be additional mechanisms developed so that the problem becomes part of the society's consciousness, such as educational campaigns in schools (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016; Haberland & Rogow, 2015) and activism on the part of NGOs (Strebel *et al.*, 2006; Peacock & Levack, 2004). Clearly, a consistently deployed campaign is necessary, but it must also address multiple levels of society. It is important to implement all possible mechanisms so that the fight against VaW is effective. One of the tools is punitive action. The conviction and severity of the sentence and the sentence imposed differ greatly among people, activities (Becker, 1968), and nations. In undeveloped and developing countries in Latin American and the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa, whose societies are not very egalitarian, VaW is not even classified as a crime, making conviction rates and the severity of punishments almost zero. The very slight probability of serving a sentence is consistent with the high rates of VaW observed, as compared with those reported in the U.S. and Europe, where potential aggressors are partially deterred by greater probability of being arrested and condemned⁶. Severity of the punishment also increases societies' egalitarian conscience, but deterrence is insufficient, diluted largely because the VaW perpetrator weighs the immediate pleasure of harming the victim as higher than the damage that the possible sentence could cause. For him, the utility associated with the choice of committing the crime—even if it means detention and

⁶ Some studies show that arrest deters individuals from domestic violence, but that the effects wear off quite quickly. "Arrest is more like an aspirin than an immunization" (Tauchen & Witte, 1995, 11). The effect of compulsory arrest laws on domestic violence continues to be an open question. These laws can have perverse effects on intimate partner violence, potentially jeopardizing the very individuals they seek to help by increasing abusers' retaliation after arrest (Iyengar, 2009).

punishment—is higher than the utility he experiences in not committing violence against his partner (Chalfin & McCrary, 2014).

Together with the legal, punitive mechanisms and awareness campaigns, another possible tool would be to launch successful intervention programs for men convicted of violence against women in relationships, based on interventions already carried out and evaluated in a rigorous manner (Lila *et al.*, 2013). The empowerment of women is another useful instrument in the fight against VaW. Although VaW is a problem present in all economic strata, it affects more acutely the poorest women (Cepeda *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, implementing measures aimed at reducing female poverty in the least developed countries, and reducing the gender wage gap in developed countries, will have a positive impact on the fight against VaW.

From the foregoing analysis, we can deduce that social sensitivity to violence against women is slight, variable, and at present highly subject to circumstantial factors. Sensitization publicity campaigns constitute a positive element in raising social awareness, but they are not enough. We must promote and increase repetition of the message and carry out more intense, lasting campaigns. The importance—not only ethical and social, but also economic—of violence against women must impact public policies. Furthermore, we must strengthen the elements that undermine and neutralize the efficacy of publicity campaigns by being vigilant in eradicating sexist advertising and demanding that communication media outlets comply with self-regulation agreements to guarantee their handling of news in a way that transmits values of equality and vociferously protests against violence against women.

We must ask whether one reason for the inefficiency of the campaigns for sensitization against VaW might be the falsification of preferences, that conformity and social adaptation lead many publicly to express consensus against the abuse of women even though they are not persuaded personally. The question, in this case, would be how we can really act on society's preferences so that people oppose VaW. From a long-term economic perspective, it would be interesting to evaluate the importance of a “herd mentality”: If actions to prevent, inform, and sensitize are able to persuade a small but active group of the population, this group may be able, once a certain minimum threshold is achieved, to draw a high percentage of society into conformity with their views by imitation.

The study presented here can provide a foundation for developing deeper knowledge of the socioeconomic factors that determine acceptance of VaW. Only by acting on the root of the problem can we succeed in eradicating the problem in its entirety. It would be interesting to analyze whether these socioeconomic factors have common characteristics by examining data by a common denominator such as geographic area or religion. It would also be interesting to quantify the benefits of a “herd mentality,” since a change in individuals' preferences due to social commitment could give rise to a real revolution in the social acceptance or rejection of VaW.

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Appendix I. Main problems perceived by Spanish society in Jan/16.

RANK	PROBLEM	% Responses	RANK	PROBLEM	% Responses
1	Unemployment	77.9	23	Evictions	1
2	Corruption and fraud	39.2	24	Banks	0.8
3	Politicians, political parties, and politics	23.4	25	Functioning of public services	0.5
4	Economic problems	23.2	26	Increase in IVA	0.5
5	Social problems	11.7	27	Infrastructures	0.3
6	Health	11.6	28	Environmental problems	0.3
7	Education	10.2	29	Labor reform	0.3
8	Other	5.8	30	Drugs	0.2
9	International terrorism (Al Qaeda, 9/11, 11 M)	5.7	31	Problems with agriculture, livestock, and fishing	0.2
10	Problems related to job quality	4.6	32	N.A.	0.2
11	Immigration	3.2	33	Terrorism. ETA	0.1
12	Budget cuts	3	34	Racism	0.1
13	Government or specific political parties	2.8	35	Personal concerns and situations	0.1
14	Pensions	2.7	36	Fiscal fraud	0.1
15	Nationalisms (Catalan Statute of Autonomy, ...)	2.6	37	Mortgages	0.1
16	Problems related to young people	2.5	38	Rise in energy prices	0.1
17	Citizens' lack of security	2.4	39	Wars in general	0
18	Crisis of values	1.8	40	Problems related to women	0
19	Violence against women	1.3	41	The monarchy	0
20	Housing	1.2	42	Refugees	0
21	D.K.	1.2	43	None	0
22	Administration of justice	1.1	54	(N)	2496

Source: Center for Sociological Research of the Spanish National Research Council (CIS). January 2016 barometer.

Appendix 2. Percentage of respondents who consider VaW as one of the three main problems (Sept 00/Jan16)

DATE	%	DATE	%	DATE	%	DATE	%	DATE	%	DATE	%
Mar-04	11,7	Nov-03	3,3	Mar-09	2,4	May-09	1,8	Feb-12	1,2	Oct-14	0,5
Jun-04	8	Jan-04	3,3	Dec-00	2,3	Mar-10	1,8	Jun-13	1,2	Jun-12	0,4
Jul-04	8	Feb-05	3,3	Jan-01	2,3	Feb-11	1,8	Sep-14	1,2	Nov-12	0,4
Feb-04	6,7	Apr-08	3,3	Jan-07	2,3	Sep-03	1,7	Sep-15	1,2	Dec-12	0,4
May-04	6,7	Jun-03	3,2	May-08	2,3	Oct-05	1,7	Oct-15	1,2	Jan-13	0,4
Mar-05	6,3	Oct-00	3,1	Feb-09	2,3	Jul-09	1,7	Dec-15	1,2	Apr-13	0,4
Apr-04	6,1	Dec-03	3	37288	2,2	40057	1,7	Dec-11	1,1	41395	0,4
Nov-04	5,4	Sep-05	3	Feb-03	2,2	May-10	1,7	Apr-03	1	Sep-13	0,4
Nov-07	5,4	Dec-05	3	Jan-08	2,2	Nov-10	1,7	Sep-11	1	Feb-14	0,4
Oct-04	5,1	Dec-07	3	Apr-01	2,1	Jul-06	1,6	Oct-11	1	Apr-14	0,4
Feb-08	4,9	Sep-07	2,9	Jan-02	2,1	Jun-08	1,6	Dec-14	1	Jul-14	0,4
Jan-05	4,8	Apr-06	2,8	May-02	2,1	Jun-11	1,6	Jul-02	0,9	Nov-14	0,4
Nov-01	4,5	Dec-06	2,8	May-07	2,1	Nov-09	1,5	Oct-10	0,9	Jan-15	0,4
Mar-01	4,4	Oct-03	2,7	Jul-08	2,1	Jun-02	1,4	May-14	0,9	Apr-15	0,4
Dec-04	4,4	Apr-07	2,7	Feb-01	2	Mar-03	1,4	Jul-01	0,8	Jul-15	0,4
Mar-06	4,3	Dec-09	2,7	May-03	2	Jun-09	1,4	Sep-10	0,8	Feb-13	0,3
Oct-02	4,2	Apr-02	2,6	Jun-06	2	Jul-10	1,4	Nov-11	0,8	Mar-13	0,3
Nov-06	4,1	Apr-05	2,6	Sep-08	2	Dec-10	1,4	Mar-12	0,8	Nov-13	0,3
Feb-07	3,9	Jun-07	2,6	Nov-08	2	Jan-11	1,4	May-15	0,8	Jan-14	0,3
Jun-05	3,8	Apr-10	2,6	Apr-09	2	Jul-11	1,4	Nov-15	0,8	Feb-15	0,3
Mar-08	3,8	Jan-03	2,5	Jun-01	1,9	Sep-00	1,3	Jul-13	0,7	Oct-13	0,2
Sep-04	3,7	Jul-05	2,5	Mar-02	1,9	Oct-09	1,3	Mar-14	0,7	Mar-15	0,2
May-05	3,7	Nov-05	2,5	Nov-02	1,9	May-11	1,3	Sep-01	0,6	Jun-15	0,2
Feb-06	3,7	Sep-06	2,5	Dec-02	1,9	Jan-12	1,3	May-12	0,6	Oct-12	0,1
Nov-00	3,5	Oct-06	2,5	Mar-07	1,9	Jan-16	1,3	Jul-12	0,6		
May-01	3,5	Oct-08	2,5	Oct-07	1,9	Feb-10	1,2	Dec-13	0,6		
Jan-06	3,5	Dec-08	2,5	Jan-10	1,9	Jun-10	1,2	Apr-12	0,5		
Sep-02	3,4	Jul-03	2,4	May-06	1,8	Mar-11	1,2	Sep-12	0,5		
Dec-01	3,3	39264	2,4	Jan-09	1,8	Apr-11	1,2	Jun-14	0,5		

Months with the best percentages

Months with the worst percentages

Source: Developed from data of Center for Sociological Research of the Spanish National Research Council (CIS).