



The economic costs of family violence.

Applicable methodology to Rosario city.



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The real wealth of a nation consists of its people, both men and women. That's why the goal of development is to achieve human welfare, expanding opportunities for individuals, the most important of which are a long and healthy life, access to education, the enjoyment of a decent standard of living, political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect. But the continue exclusion of women on many opportunities in a lifetime, totally distorts the development process and, no doubt, violence against women constitutes a clear violation of human rights.

Domestic violence has serious social and economic consequences. The costs of domestic violence are not limited to the sufferings inflicted to their victims, but also society is affected by the consequences of this important social problem.

The causes of violent behaviour are multiple and interrelated. Different explanatory models of violence can be grouped into four theoretical perspectives: Psychiatric or Single Model, Model Psychosocial, Sociocultural Model and Ecological Model.

Psychiatric or Individual Model focuses primarily on personality characteristics of the aggressor considering variables pointing to psychopathological aspects. It postulates that violence comes from the innate qualities in individuals.

According to the **Psychosocial Model**, social and environmental context determines further subject's violent behaviour. Among its various theoretical lines, **Social learning theory** states that there is a close relationship between the attack on the protagonists during their childhood and aggression displayed or suffered in conjugal life.

The **Sociocultural Model** takes as priority socioeconomic variables, the distribution of power into society and the family, political and institutional violence, etc. Among the various sustained theoretical perspectives outstands patriarchy model and the model of resources.

According to the **Patriarchate Model**, violence is a modality of demonstrating that flaunts power by use of force and implies the existence of a "superior" man and a "subordinate" woman.

Meanwhile, in the **Resources Model** violence is explained in terms of the greater or lesser amount of resources held by a person, considering resources a set of economic variables such as intelligence, knowledge, prestige, respect, etc. This position, in which violence might be the result of frustration and it appears linked to poverty.

Is a common belief that there is a positive relationship between poverty and violence and is based on the idea that poverty causes frustration situations which trigger violent behaviour: first, by the status of permanent tension and stress

generated by the unavailability to attain family's minimum needs (absolute poverty) and, secondly, by the notions of deprivation and frustration resulting from not attain certain standards of consumption (relative poverty). From this perspective, the violence could have economic triggers.

The **Ecological Model** includes all the variables mentioned in previous models and is presented as a set of systems where the human being develops along its life: the micro system, the exosystem and macro system levels.

The World Health Organization defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, either in degree of threat or effectively, against oneself, another person, a group or community, which either causes or having high probabilities to cause injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 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." The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of either gender, family members and even the "State" itself.

The violence may be classified on one side in: self-inflicted violence, interpersonal violence - domestic or community - and collective violence. Depending on the act's nature, it can be physical, psychological, sexual and financial violence on the other.

Two main factors characterize the Violence: cyclical nature and increasing intensity. Three phases can be identified: first: tension building-up: second: violent outburst; and the third, honeymoon or regret.

Although is an indisputable fact nowadays that violence inflicted to women into family ambit constitutes a serious and delicate human rights violation, it was a long way to walk until arrive to recognize, discuss, legislate on human rights women.

The United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (1967) and CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) (1979) established an important progress due the recognition of women's rights, but the issue of violence against women began to be placed prominently on the public agenda until the middle of the *United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace* (1976-1985).

In 1993, the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* (DEVAW) established itself as a landmark, not just increased the status to violence against women as human rights violation, but also took account of the violence into the family ambit.

In mid-1994, in the context of the OAS (Organization of American States) gathered in Belém do Pará, the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women* was signed in and it is the only current Convention existing worldwide specifically issuing on violence against women.

The Argentina Republic also made progress in law through the ratification of international conventions and punish violence legislation at both, national and provincial levels.

Additionally to get addressed as human rights violations, domestic violence entails many costs for both, as much for mistreated women as for the whole society; which can be considered into different classifications:

- A first major classification distinguishes between **accounting or nominal costs** and **economic costs**, being the priors those to incurring in when a monetary disbursement prosecutes and the seconds are those which include both, nominal and opportunity costs.
- A second categorization divides the economic costs in: **tangible costs**, **intangible costs** and **opportunity costs**. The priors are those incurred directly as result of violence; the seconds regards the punishment, fear and suffering endured by the victim; and the latest are those losses which result of maintain a violent relationship.

Finally, an alternative classification to the economic costs which divides them into four categories: **direct costs (monetary)**, **non-monetary costs**, **monetary multiplier effects** and **social multiplier effects**, Being these three latest categories, indirect costs of family violence.

Direct costs include the value of goods and services allocated to the prevention of violence, treatment of victims, and capture and punishment of perpetrators; **non-monetary costs** relate to health impacts, the **monetary multiplier effects** consider economic impacts over job market; and **social multiplier effects** refer to the impacts over interpersonal relationships and quality of life.

No country is exempt from this problem and the numbers showed by the studies are truly alarming: as a result of some of 50 globally comparable surveys, between 10% and 50% of women reported physical violence by an intimate partner, whether they were former or current.

Internationally, the main research about the economic costs of domestic violence is circumscribed to a few countries: United Kingdom, Switzerland, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Chile and Nicaragua. The estimates indicate that these costs range between 0.11% and 6.12% of GDP in each country.

Rosario city has many centres, institutions and human resources dedicated to tasks to prevent, address and resolve issues related to domestic violence. However, to nowadays, it is not possible know reliably how is the true magnitude of this problem around the city, since there are no reliable records and no efforts have been made to collect and concentrate the data related to this problem.

Since this work has an eminently economic profile, as is the fact that is related to the identification, survey and measurement, to the extent feasible, the economic costs associated with family violence affecting the city of Rosario, it is considered that the **Resource Model** comprises the object of study of this work.

At the time to identify, relieve and measure the economic costs of domestic violence, we applied the **classification which divides direct from indirect costs**, trying to detect the direct cost associated with the main reference agencies located in downtown district of Rosario city:

- 1) Secretaría de Promoción Social de la Municipalidad de Rosario – Área de la Mujer.
- 2) Defensoría del Pueblo – Centro de Asistencia a la Víctima y al Testigo del Delito (CAV).
- 3) Comisaría de la Mujer – Centro de Asistencia a la Víctima de Delitos Sexuales y Violencia Familiar (CAVDS).
- 4) Hospital de Niños "Víctor J. Vilela" – Grupo de Atención al Maltrato Infantil (GAMI).
- 5) Tribunales Provinciales – Tribunal de Familia.
- 6) Colegio de Abogados – Centro de Atención a la Mujer Víctima de la Violencia de Género.
- 7) Maternidad Martín – Área de Salud Integral de la Mujer.
- 8) Instituto de Estudios Jurídico Sociales de la Mujer (INDESO – MUJER).
- 9) Hospital Provincial del Centenario – Departamento de Trabajo Social.

This work did not contemplate as an objective the measurement from other cumbersome to estimate costs. Due this reason, the indirect costs of family violence; such as pain, fear and suffering endured by the victim of violence, self-esteem issues, lower rate participation in the job market, highest rate of absenteeism (labour), lowest incoming capacity, intergenerational impact on productivity, intergenerational transmission of violence, etc.; were discarded as topic for this study. Quantify them is more than a wish, it deserves the planning of a methodology most suited to it.

According to the collected data along the research, it can be said that family violence is a flagellum striking Rosario city, generates economic costs and, although it is present across all social strata, the largest number of cases that are attended come from low-income people.

It manifests in the different testimonies from the chiefs of the aforementioned reference agencies in numerous calls and inquiries registered in the Green Phone Rosario, in the resources destined to shelter's household maintenance, in the human resources cost of whom attend this problem, police and judicial staff - that, without disclosing specific cost data suggest that many hours, staff and effort dedicated to solving these types of cases - in the services offered pro bono by different professionals who stop earning income for the hours they dedicate to this volunteering at violence programs implemented by NGO's and financed by the United Nations, and surely many more examples which are invisible but they are as important as these records, among them, grief, pain, fear and death suffered by victims of this calamity.

Rosario Society is concerned about the reality of suffering of many women and children, and it is reflected on the decision to allocate increasing amounts of resources from Participatory Budgeting to prevention projects, training and awareness on domestic and gender violence.

It is also true that there are no general or unified statistics neither a concerted effort to affront this situation: if well there are many centres, institutions and organizations focused on attend the problem, each has its own data, resources and working methods, missing on one hand, the synergy of working together, organized and structured, where each part contributes its experience and knowledge on the subject and, on the other, the opportunity to show concrete, real and global facts, generating space of discussion of public policies in order to allocate resources to efficiently affront such a problem.

Urgently address the issue of family violence is an unavoidable requirement of our society to achieve the Millennium Development third objective: **"to promote gender equality and empower women"**. Consequently, we will have taken an important step towards achieving the so appreciated Human Development.