

Understanding the Complex Relationship Between Economic Independency and Intimate Partner Violence by Applying a Socio-Ecological Analysis Framework

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Abstract : In the Netherlands, the assumed causal relationship between employment, economic independence and individual freedom of choice has been extended to the approach of intimate partner violence (IPV). In the interests of combating IPV, it is crucial to further investigate this relationship. Based on a literature review, this article shows that the relationship between economic independence and IPV is highly complex. To unravel this complex relationship, a socio-ecological analysis framework has been applied. First, it is a layered relation, in where employment does not necessarily lead to economic independence, which can be explained by social inequalities. Second, the relation is bidirectional, where women do not by definition have access to their own financial recourses due to tactics of financial control by the intimate partner. This reveals the coexistence of IPV and economic abuse and the extent to which an intimate relationship affects the scope for individual choice. Third, there is a paradoxical relationship in which employment is both a protective and risk factor for IPV. This, in turn, cannot be separated from traditional norms about masculinity and femininity, where men occupy a position of power and derive status from being the breadwinner. These findings imply that not only the approach to IPV but also the labor market policy requires a gender-sensitive approach.

Keywords : intimate partner violence, economic independence, literature review, socio-ecological analysis framework

Conference Title : ICVAT 2021 : International Conference on Violence, Abuse and Trauma

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : September 16-17, 2021