

Reporting on Gender-based Violence in the News: Context and Evolution

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Abstract

The way violence against women is portrayed has been the object of analysis by the Catalan Audiovisual Council on a regular basis for more than 15 years. During this period, the concept of violence against women has undergone a profound transformation that has led to very important legislative changes: violence is no longer strictly circumscribed to the private sphere (domestic violence) and is conceptualized as the consequence of systemic structural inequality, a definition that allows for discussion of violence. This article follows this conceptual and legislative evolution with respect to violence against women, and how this evolution has been transferred to the area of news reporting and its analysis.

Keywords

Sexist violence, reporting, recommendations, evolution, gender-based violence, domestic violence

Resum

El tractament informatiu de la violència contra les dones ha estat objecte d'anàlisi del Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya de forma regular des de fa més de 15 anys. En aquest període, el concepte de violència contra les dones ha experimentat una profunda transformació que s'ha acabat materialitzat en canvis legislatius molt importants: la violència deixa d'estar circumscrita estrictament a l'àmbit privat (violència domèstica) i passa a conceptualitzar-se com la conseqüència d'un sistema de desigualtats estructurals en tots els àmbits, definició que ens porta a parlar de violències masclistes. Aquest article ressegueix aquesta evolució conceptual i normativa de la violència contra les dones, i com aquesta evolució s'ha traslladat a l'àmbit del seu tractament informatiu i a l'anàlisi d'aquest.

Paraules clau

Violència masclista, tractament informatiu, recomanacions, evolució, violència de gènere, violència domèstica

1. Conceptual Evolution

It is a truth acknowledged by a broad sector that includes international organizations, institutions, academia and civil society, among others, that the violence perpetrated against women has its origin in the patriarchal culture on which our society is based and organized, and which persist today. Patriarchy assigns very specific and stereotyped gender roles that attribute social prominence to men and relegate women to secondary positions. In this context, violence, in its different expressions, has become an instrument to ensure the maintenance of this hierarchy. A violence that, for centuries, society in general, including women, has kept silent due to its "normalization". However, in recent decades and largely as a result of the work of the feminist movement, this social model has been called into question and there has been a growing collective awareness and rejection of violence against women, which democratic societies have not been able to ignore.

Without being exhaustive, since this is not the objective of this article, a brief overview of the facts that have led to the

conceptualization of violence against women evolve takes us back to the 1970s when the visibility of discrimination against women and the need for empowerment gained strength. The year 1976 was declared by the United Nations **International Women's Year** and in 1979 the General Assembly of the United Nations drafted the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. This international treaty, ratified by the Spanish State in 1984, establishes that men and women have the same rights as men and proposes actions to achieve gender equality. The 70s was also an important decade in Catalonia in terms of raising awareness about discrimination against women with the celebration of the First Catalan Women's Conference in the Paraninfo at the University of Barcelona in May 1976.

However, it would take almost two decades to address the problem of violence against women from a social perspective. The **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women** (Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993) **adopted by the United Nations General Assembly** was a step forward and defined violence against women as "any act of gender-

based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women (...) whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Subsequently, in 1995, the **Beijing Declaration** emerging from the **Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women** was adopted, reinforcing the principle that violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men and defines its existence as structural in nature.

Following in the footsteps of the United Nations, Spain's legal system progressively incorporated changes in the fight against gender-based violence. Thus, in 2004, the **Ley orgánica 1/2004, de 28 de diciembre, de medidas de protección integral contra la violencia de género (Organic Law No. 1/2004, of 28 December, on Comprehensive Protection Measures Against Gender-Based Violence)** was adopted. The law's explanatory memorandum states that “gender-based violence (...) manifests itself as the most brutal symbol of inequality in our society”. Despite this recognition of violence against women as a structural fact, its definition within Law 1/2004 regulates its manifestations to the sphere of the couple or ex-partner and, therefore, to the existence of an intimate relationship between the victim and the aggressor.

In Catalonia, **Llei 5/2008, de 24 d'abril, del dret de les dones a erradicar la violència masclista (Law 5/2008, of 24 April, on The Right of Women to Eradicate Sexist Violence)** takes a further step in the approach to violence against women. It conceptualizes it not only as the result of a series of elements of structural inequality but also, in line with the United Nations doctrine of the 1990s, develops the idea that there are multiple forms of exercising this violence (physical, psychological, sexual and economic) as are the areas where it manifests (intimate relationships, work, community, etc.). This legal text, therefore, hinges on a broader concept, which encompasses any form of violence against women because they are women.

In the same spirit, in 2014 Spain ratified the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**, presented in Istanbul in 2011. This document lists all forms of violence that affect or may affect women—both in public and private life—and classifies them as a violation of human rights.

Thus, in the last four decades, the concept of violence against women has made great strides in our society which, progressively, has involved a shift from referring to it as *domestic violence*—which refers strictly to the private sphere—to designating it as *gender-based violence* and, ultimately, as *various forms of gender-based violence*, to reflect the multiplicity of ways and areas in which it manifests itself.

2. The Responsibilities of the CAC

Law 5/2008 on the Right of Women to Eradicate Sexist Violence includes a specific section dedicated to the media.

Within this section, Article 20 bestows the Catalan Audiovisual Council (CAC) with the power to “[...] guarantee the fulfilment of the obligations of the providers of audiovisual communication services to ensure that women are treated in accordance with the principles and values established [...] by the same law.

Likewise, Article 21 establishes that the CAC must “[...] promote agreements and guidelines for self-regulation or co-regulation in all media, which must incorporate orienting criteria regarding the way programs engage with gender-based violence and the representation of women”. These self-regulatory agreements or conventions “[...] must have the character of ethical codes and act as criteria for the decisions taken by the media and as a guideline for *a posteriori* controls”.

In fact, **Llei 2/2000, del 4 de maig, del Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (Law 2/2000, of 4 May, of the Catalan Audiovisual Council)**, establishes in letter i) of Article 10, that one of the functions of the CAC is to “promote the adoption of self-regulation standards for the audiovisual sector”. Over the course of its history, the CAC's various recommendations have existed precisely within the context of this power to foment self-regulation and are structured as a combination of criteria and guidelines that have been agreed upon by the different parties involved and adopted voluntarily by the media, who seek to improve the quality of the content broadcasted about particularly sensitive issues in regards to public opinion such as violence against women.

3. Guidelines Regarding Reporting on Violence against Women

Within the framework of the powers the law confers on the Catalan Audiovisual Council in terms of the promotion of self-regulating standards within the audiovisual sector, in 2004 the CAC released its **Recommendations on the Coverage of Gender Violence in News and Entertainment Programmes**. The document synthesized the reflections and collective contributions of institutions, associations of professional journalists, the media, and representatives from public safety institutions.

Five years later, in 2009, and pursuant to the approval of Law 5/2008 on the Right of Women to Eradicate Sexist Violence, it became necessary to revise and update said Recommendations. The result would be the **Guidelines on the Portrayal of Violence against Women in the Media**, also created in collaboration with other institutions and associations of journalists. This second set of recommendations consists of fifteen points that concisely describe what principles the journalists should use as inspiration when they inform about violence against women, respecting the privacy of the people affected, sensationalist coverage, the kinds of discourse used in the report, and the sources of information or context provided.

As established by the Law, the CAC periodically monitors the extent to which the media are following and implementing these

guidelines. The results of these observations are released to the public through specific reports analysing the reporting on violence against women.

4. The Analysis of the CAC Regarding Reporting on Violence against Women

The initial analysis that the CAC undertook regarding the portrayal on violence against women was a 2003 report in reference to reporting on domestic violence in Catalan news media. In this first analysis, women are portrayed as a group of people who might suffer violence (analogously to men, children, and the elderly). This report predates the existence of the *Recommendations on the Coverage of Gender Violence in News and Entertainment Programmes*.

Following the approval of the Recommendations, follow-up reports have been issued every three years in 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017, all available online.

Additionally, coinciding with the 2018 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, CAC published some data on reporting gender-based violence from a transnational report coordinated by the CAC with the Gender and Media Working Group of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities (MNRA). MNRA is a network of audiovisual regulators that have also released reports on **gender stereotypes and advertising** and on the representation of **women in sports reporting**.

The evolution of the conceptualization of gender-based violence is evident in the CAC's reports. In this sense, the first two reports in the series, for the years 2005 and 2008, although they continue to treat reporting on violence against women as a subgroup of the domestic violence dataset, incorporate the specific analysis of the follow-up to the 2004 CAC's guidelines on the treatment of gender-based violence.

The 2011 report differentiates for the first time between domestic violence and gender-based violence, in accordance with the definition included in Article 3 of Law 5/2008 on the Right of Women to Eradicate Sexist Violence. It is also the first time that the tracking of the new *Guidelines on the Portrayal of Violence against Women in the Media* have been analysed. CAC drew up these recommendations in 2009 in order to adapt those of 2004 to the new regulatory framework.

Finally, the exclusive focus of the 2014 and 2017 reports, as well as the data published in 2018, is reporting on gender-based violence and continue to track the implementation of current recommendations in this area.

All these analyses are based on a common methodological approach: putting into practice the concepts established in the standardizing documents and in the recommendations, in order to structure a system of quantitatively measurable variables and indicators, the combined reading of which provides a qualitative analysis of the media's treatment of gender-based violence.

5. Research Methods

The research methods used regarding the background for the series of reports on the portrayal of gender-based violence in the media are based on analytical tools. These incorporate a series of general variables and items that are part of the methodological corpus that the Council usually applies to their analysis of audiovisual content, along with specific variables and concepts, deriving from the implementation of the normative texts and codes that are applicable in each case.

5.1 General Variables and Items

The first level of analysis from which it is possible to construct a general and common framework, and therefore a basis of comparison with other themes, is structured through four basic elements:

1. Segment time corresponds to the total of the duration of the segment referring to a specific report or theme; in this case, violence against women.
2. Actors are defined as individuals who appear in the audiovisual broadcast with speaking time, either as a representative of an interest group, an association or an organization, a political party or an institution, or as an individual and not representative of any collective.
3. Speaking time is the total sum of the duration of the sequences in which an agent intervenes, as a subject, by making an *insert* (insertion of images and voice of a political or non-political agent, without there being any kind of voiceover on the part of the medium).
4. Actor groups are categories that classify actors according to the role they play in each of their appearances.

5.2 Specific Variables and Concepts

The second level of analysis, which allows for a singular focus on reporting on gender-based violence, is articulated around the concepts that are derived from both the legislation and the recommendations, starting with a concrete definition of violence against women.

Starting with the 2011 report, violence against women is conceptualized in the terms used in Article 3 of Law 5/2008 ("that which is perpetrated against women as a manifestation of discrimination and the situation of inequality in the framework of a system of power relations of men over women and which, produced by physical, economic or psychological means, including threats, intimidation and coercion, results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, whether it is produced in the public or private spheres") and in Article 4, which lists and defines four forms of sexist violence: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence and sexual abuse, and economic violence.

In addition, the creation of a series of thematic categories (specific themes) related to the general concept of segment time allow the analysis of the specific content and a focus on violence against women reporting that is issued through a specific media or time period. As mentioned above, the creation of these categories has evolved over time to accommodate the conception of the many forms of gender-based violence. The current list of thematic categories used is as follows:

- **Actions of Political Entities:** news about the actions by the government, administrations and legislative powers of Catalonia and the State, as well as the dynamics of the political parties around this issue.
- **Other examples of structural discrimination based on sex:** actions or situations, apart from physical, psychological or sexual violence, which are related to the manifestation of discrimination and the situation of inequality of women in different spheres of society.
- **Assaults:** news about the commission of acts of gender-based violence.
- **Judicial processes:** information on court cases related to gender-based violence.
- **Statistical data:** quantitative information related to gender-based violence.
- **Ideological debate:** information on the expression of the different ideological positions of social and political actors regarding gender-based violence.
- **Proceedings of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women:** news about events commemorating this day, held on 25 November.
- **Sexual exploitation:** news about on human trafficking sexual purposes and forced prostitution.
- **Social and awareness-raising programmes:** news about support programmes for victims of gender-based violence or the dissemination of these issues.

The analysis also incorporates a specific categorization of the informational actors, calculated in terms of speaking time, which allows the incorporation of elements regarding the quality of information in the analysis. The classification applied is as shown below:

- **Affected person:** limited to the aggressor and the direct victim of the violence.
- **Qualified sources:** people who bring to the news an expert or professional view, including political appointees whose responsibilities include themes related to gender-based violence.
- **Third parties:** people who are neither victims nor aggressors, who appear in the audiovisual media depending on the news in question, contributing their strictly personal experience. This category includes neighbors, the family or witnesses of acts of gender-based violence.

Additionally, a third level of analysis is established aimed at providing information on aspects of visual content and verbal discourse that contribute to the construction of the reporting narrative. In conclusion, the follow-up analysis of the *Guidelines on the Portrayal of Violence against Women in the Media* (2009) in quantifiable elements is articulated around six major axes of action.

The first of these axes refers to the informative attention and the thematic structure of the information: How much do daily news outlets talk about gender-based violence and, equally important, from which perspective. **Recommendation 1** advises not only reporting on the violence itself, but also portray the phenomenon in all of its complexity. With this in mind, **Recommendation 3** calls for making women's contributions in all spheres society visible and considering their experience as a first-order documentary source, while **Recommendation 7** advises making "other violence stemming from machismo" visible, going beyond physical violence confined to the intimate realm. In sum, it is recommended that news regarding violence against women transcend the chronicling of events and provide elements of reflection and social awareness in order fight its structural nature. The analysis of the values obtained in relation to segment and speaking time, as well as their different categorizations, provide an answer to this first block.

The sources of information constitute another important axis for the reporting of violence against women. The selection of voices is not harmless but rather contributes to shaping a certain vision of this problem. **Recommendation 2** suggests prioritizing the use of qualified or specialized sources over those that only circumstantially relate to the facts, since the latter often do not provide any relevant information on the case. The assessment of the degree of compliance with this recommendation is based on the quantification of the speaking time of qualified sources and third parties (i.e. neighbours, relatives and witnesses) in comparison to the total number of voices involved.

Recommendations 8 and 9 call for avoiding sensationalism and drama when reporting on violence against women. Consequently, excessively dramatic reporting is discouraged. The quantification and analysis of the use of visual resources (close-ups, zooms, slow-motion, etc.), sound (dramatic music, for example) or lexicons (detailed descriptions, rough language, striking turns of phrase, etc.) make it possible to evaluate if these recommendations have been followed.

Recommendations 6 and 10, which explicitly allude to the discourse used in the report, respond to the presence in the narrative of certain expressions that may trivialize or justify violence against women or establish cause-effect relationships. Special attention is given to the use of descriptors that can be understood as justifying aggression (for example, *crime of passion*) and the presence in the discourse of elements that favor the establishment of cause-effect relations between the facts and characteristics, such as the origin of the people

affected, their socioeconomic situation or any other personal circumstances.

Recommendations 4 and 5 relate to respecting the privacy of the persons concerned, protected both by the right to privacy of the assault victims and by the presumption of innocence of the alleged aggressors. In this sense, the dissemination of personal data or other elements that may lead to their identification is analysed.

Finally, **Recommendations 11, 12, 13 and 14** relate to the need for the media to provide contextual information that goes beyond the mere commission of the act of violence and interrogates the elements that surround it as a way to combat this type of violence. Analysis of the category of data related to segment time provides a sense of how much these recommendations are being observed.

6. Results of Gender-based violence Reporting Analysis

The series of reports that include the different analyses carried out by CAC on the reporting of violence against women show how, parallel to the evolutions of the conception and the legal framework of the same, reporting on the conditions that surround this violence has also evolved within news media content.

The analysis of this evolution is based on data from TV3, TVE Catalunya and 8tv corresponding to the quarter October-December of 2010 2013 and 2016 (corresponding to the

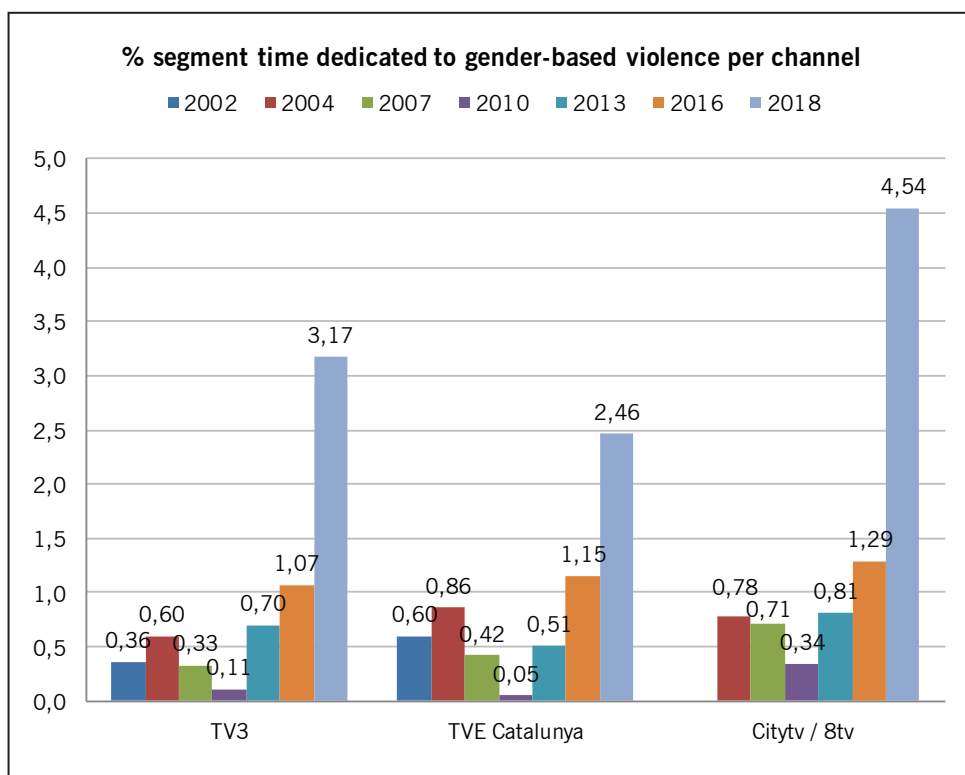
reports published in 2011, 2014 and 2017 respectively). Additionally, the results of the analysis of data from these same channels that has been carried out within the framework of the international report of the Gender and Media Working Group of the Mediterranean Network of Regulatory Authorities (period March-May 2018), has been incorporated. Similarly, and with regard to news coverage, the comparison offers official data of the first three reports (2003, 2005 and 2008).

6.1 News Coverage and Thematic Structure

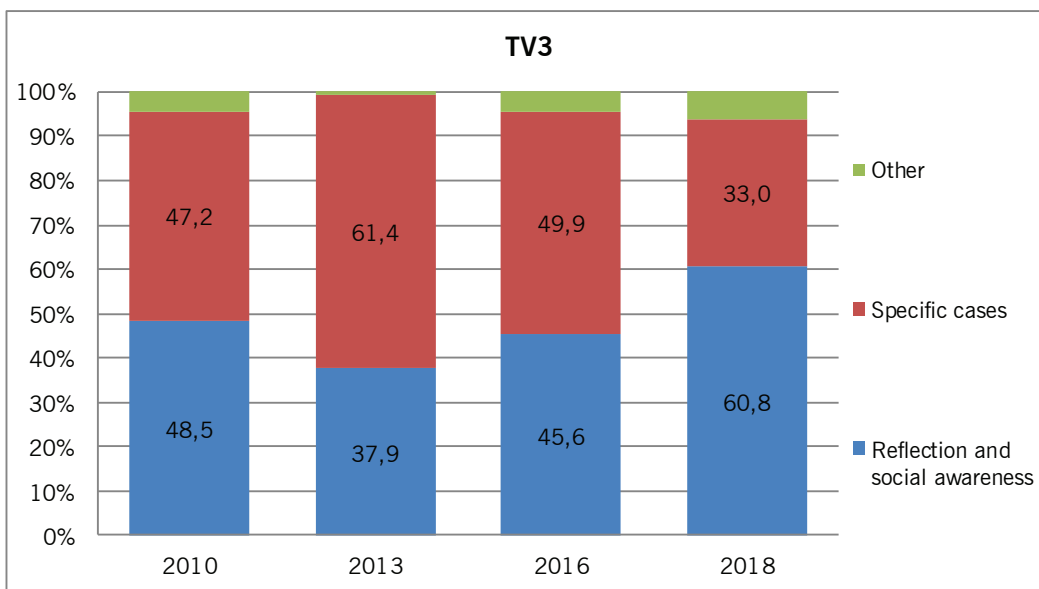
In the analyses carried out by the CAC there is a clear tendency to increase the depth of the **coverage** related to gender-based violence in the set of the televisions analysed, which increases from 0.41% in the 2003 report to 1.13% in the 2017 report, and exceeds 3% in the data referring to the period March-May 2018, which is an exponential growth in the coverage of this issue.

By channel, between 2011 and 2017 —when the period analysed covered the October-December quarter— the percentage of news about gender-based violence grows gradually in TV3, TVE Catalunya and 8tv. This increase shoots up in 2018, in the next period analyzed (the March-May quarter), due to social demands and awareness-raising campaigns coinciding with International Women’s Day and by the societal rejection of the judgment by the Audiencia de Navarra in relation to the group sexual assault of an 18-year-old girl during the San Fermin festivals in 2016.

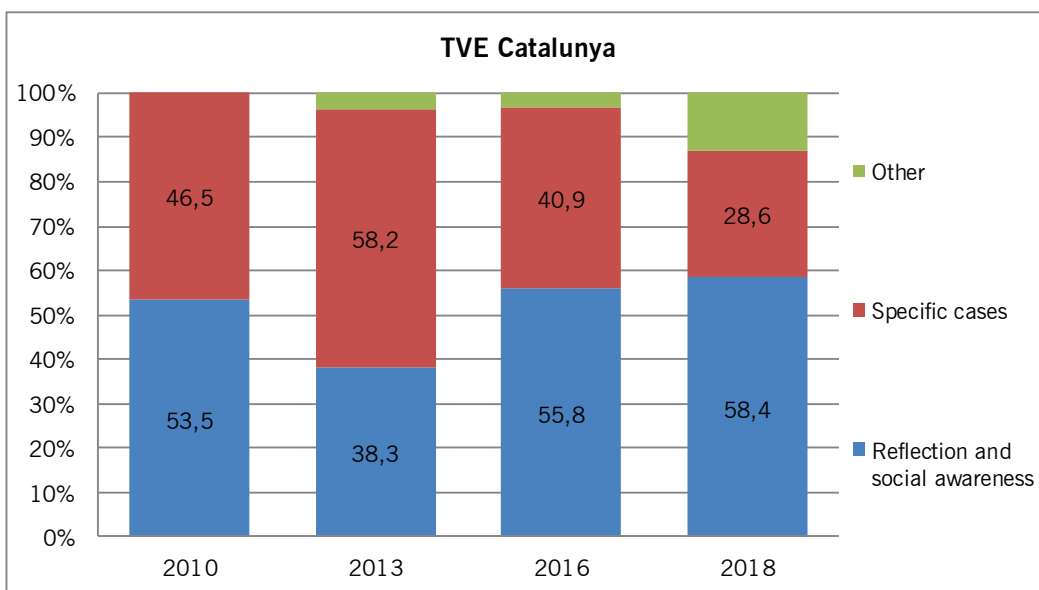
Figure 1. Evolution of news coverage with respect to gender-based violence by channel



Source: By Authors.

Figure 2. Evolution of the thematic structure of information on TV3

Source: By Authors.

Figure 3. Evolution of the thematic structure of information on TVE Catalunya

Source: By Authors.

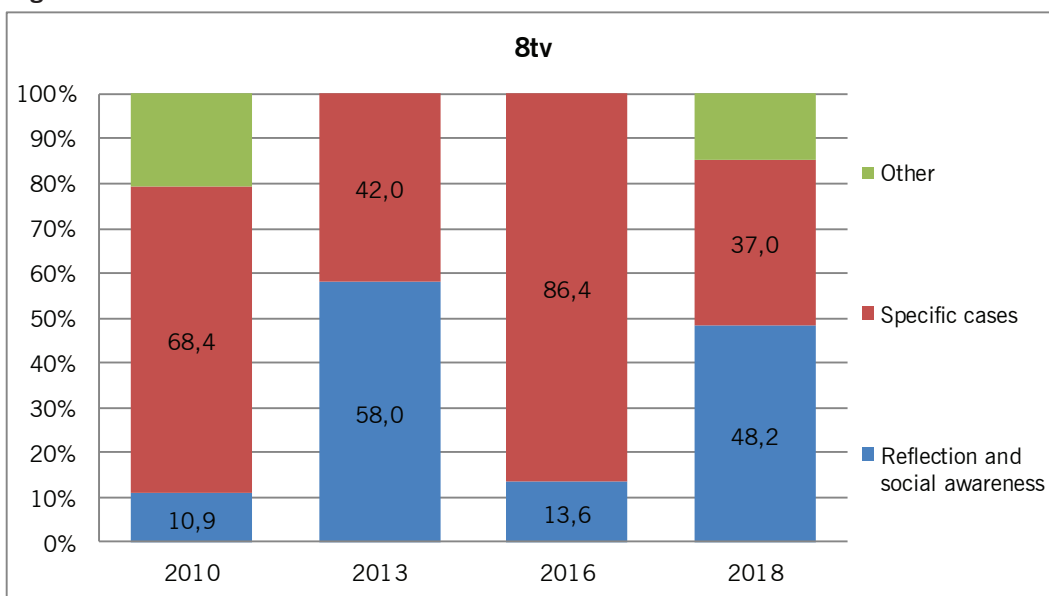
With regard to the thematic structure of the information (from which perspective do television news media approach information on gender-based violence), there is a trend towards a raised awareness and reflection over specific cases and the judicial process.

In the first reports of the CAC, the media attention of public television channels regarding male violence focused, above all, on the chronicle of events (corresponding to the “specific themes” of *assaults, judicial processes and cases of sexual exploitation*). This type of content, which in relative terms achieved the highest proportions in all channels in 2007, has

been progressively decreasing since 2013 on both TV3 and TVE Catalunya.

Conversely, the information with elements of reflection **and awareness of social issues** (corresponding to the specific issues of *social movements and awareness campaigns, statistical data, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and other elements of structural discrimination*) have been steadily taking up more space on TV3 and TVE Catalunya.

On 8tv, on the other hand, the weight carried by these two main types of information (concrete cases versus reflection and raising awareness) has fluctuated considerably over time.

Figure 4. Evolution of the thematic structure of information on 8tv

Source: By Authors.

6.2 Sources of Information

It is also true that the participation of **qualified** sources constitutes a large majority on public television news broadcasts, which only allow the participation of third parties to a very limited extent. Although with different proportions that have fluctuated over the years, the two public broadcasters have devoted most of their speaking time to qualified sources during the periods analysed in 2010, 2013 and 2016, while 8tv shows a gradual decrease.

As for the most recent period analysed (March-May 2018), the increased reporting on protests has led to a high percentage of participation of demonstrators and, consequently, to a decrease in the proportion of interlocutors who provide a professional or expert view regarding gender-based violence. Despite this factor, which affects the relative values of the data, expert voices continue to represent almost half on TV3, more than 40% on TVE Catalunya and more than a third on 8tv.

6.3 Sensationalist elements

In general terms, the evolution of this parameter in the series of CAC reports over time shows that televisions have significantly lowered the **sensationalist tone** of news about gender-based violence, despite the fact that it persists in some cases.

TV3 is the channel that has improved the most in the last four periods analyzed: it has gradually but consistently reduced the presence of sensationalist elements in the reports on violence against women, which go from being present in 40% of the news in 2010 to doing so in 15% of the cases in 2018. The other public television channel analysed, TVE Catalunya, makes moderate and generally consistent use of this type of audiovisual resource over the course of the research. The private medium

8tv usually incorporates a greater proportion of visual and/or lexical elements aimed at dramatizing the contents of the broadcast, notwithstanding that during the last period studied there was a notable decrease.

This decrease in sensationalism, especially in the last period analysed, is directly related to changing priorities with respect to the typology of information: as the media dedicates more time to raising awareness to the detriment of chronicling events and excessive dramatization of events, the level of sensationalism also decreases.

6.4 Discourses in News Stories

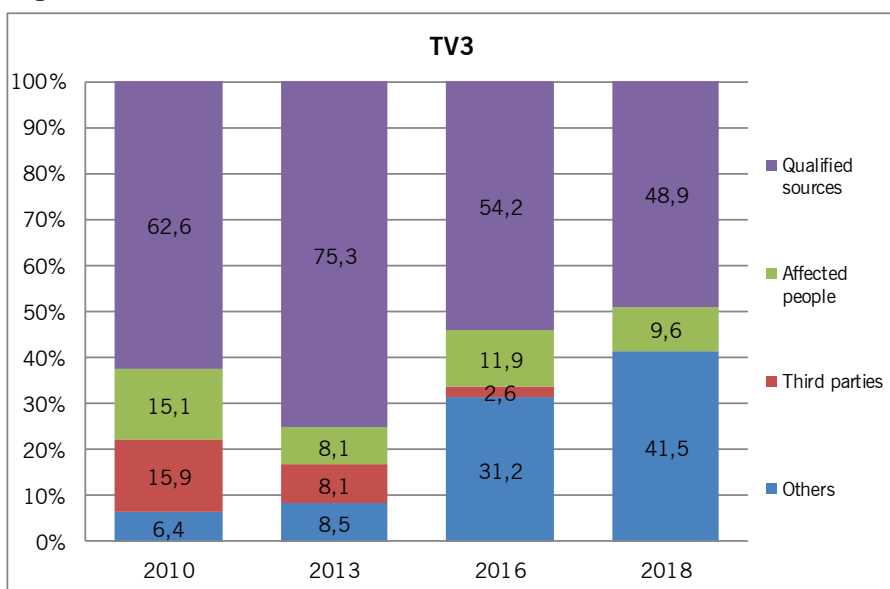
Throughout the successive periods studied, none of the channels has made use of elements that could be interpreted as **trivialising** gender-based violence. In the same vein, neither has the use of adjectives that implicitly **justify** aggression been noted.

In contrast, the CAC reports for the quarter October-December 2010, 2013 and 2016 do note, albeit with a clear downward trend, the tacit establishment of **cause-and-effect** relationships, often resulting from old reporting habits, between the violent act or assault and elements such as the origin of the persons affected, their socio-economic situation or other personal circumstances.

6.5 Respect for the Privacy of Affected Persons

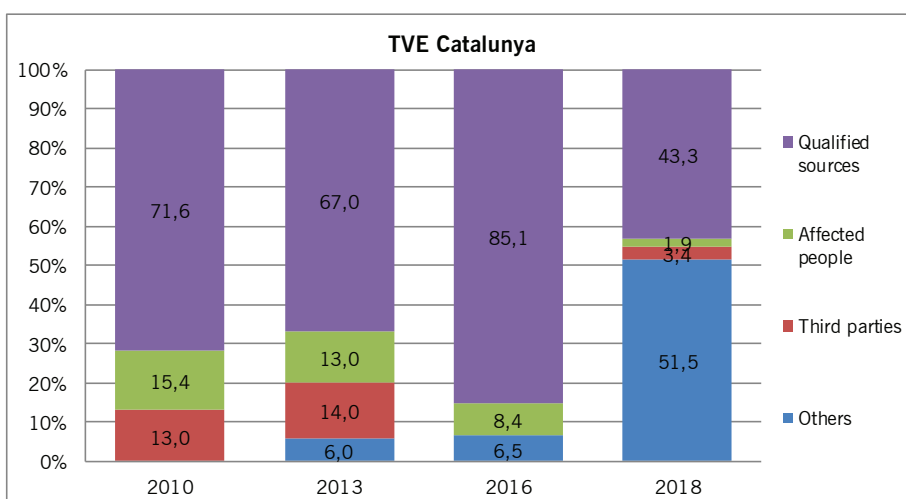
In the studies subsequent to the approval of Law 5/2008, which defines the concept of **secondary** victimization, no case has been detected in which the identification of women currently affected by an act of machismo has been carried out in such a way as to be understood as contributing to their revictimization.

Figure 5. Evolution of the sources of information on TV3



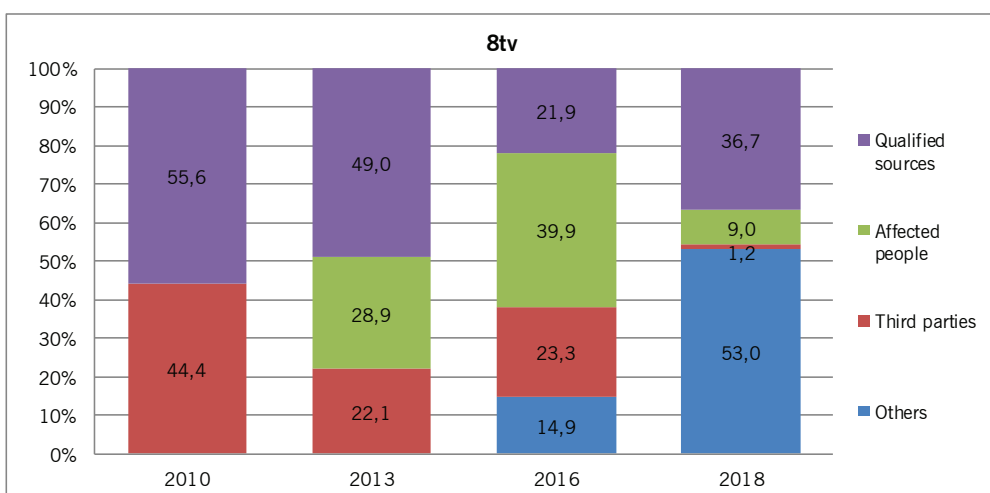
Source: By Authors.

Figure 6. Evolution of the sources of information on TVE Catalunya



Source: By Authors.

Figure 7. Evolution of the sources of information on 8tv



Source: By Authors.

It has also been found that there is an increasingly restricted use of elements that can contribute to the identification of those affected. In this context, the restriction of the dissemination of **images where the assault took place** can be viewed as the evolution of a positive journalistic practice.

The identification of **affected persons** with their full names and/or images, whether they be victims or aggressors, as well as the inclusion of their personal data (age, nationality, physical characteristics, employment situation, etc.) is probably the element that fluctuates the most depending on the casuistry of specific cases in each period.

The results of the most recent analysis by the CAC, corresponding to the quarter of March-April 2018, show that, strictly in regards to the victims, there were almost no images shown of affected persons and their personal characteristics were disseminated in less than 10% of the news stories analysed for each channel.

6.6 Contextual Information

In relation to the contextual information on gender-based assaults provided by broadcasters, the series of CAC reports shows that as regards the **following up on cases** and portraying the **negative consequences** that acts of violence have for perpetrators of violence are directly proportional to the amount of news dedicated to specific cases broadcast by each channel.

On the other hand, the presence of concrete elements that contribute to a comprehensive view of gender-based violence, such as the dissemination of statistical data and the inclusion of resources for victims, has progressively diminished.

The proportion of news segments including **statistical data** experienced a very significant decrease between 2010 and 2016 on the 3 television channels analysed. This continuous

decrease is compensated in 2018 in terms of awareness of the coverage provided on the March 8 demonstrations.

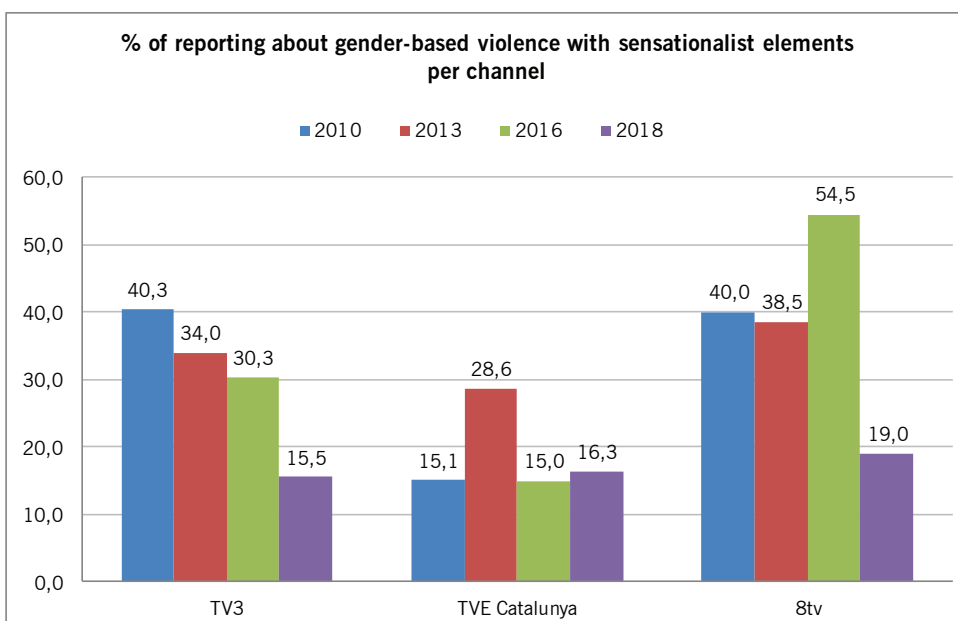
As regards information on **resources and services** (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for women suffering gender-based violence, contact information for associations working in this area, etc.), there is also a **general decline** on public television channels, while data for 8tv was only collected in 2016.

7. Assessment of Gender-based violence News Reporting Analysis Results

Despite the fact that specific cases have undoubtedly affected the results of the different periods analysed, the data allow us to state unequivocally that, in general terms, the quality of the information that televisions transmit in relation to gender-based violence has improved considerably:

- There is a higher volume of coverage, which in turn translates, above all, into more coverage aimed at raising awareness regarding the problem.
- There is a growing awareness of all forms of violence against women, as reporting increases about inequalities between women and men, and about court cases, activism and information campaigns.
- The presence of identifying characteristics of the persons affected has reduced, especially in terms of images of the scene of the crime.
- Channels have reduced, but not eliminated, the use of sensationalism.
- On the channels analyzed, the news story neither trivializes nor justifies the gender-based violence, but

Figure 8. Evolution of the use of sensationalist elements in TV3, TVE Catalunya and 8tv



Source: By Authors.

rather to the contrary, there are more and more elements of reflection.

- Information comes mostly from quality sources and provides expert insight. Testimony from third parties who do not provide valuable information are being used less and less frequently.

In short, more is reported and reported better, despite the fact that there are still aspects to be corrected and others on which we must continue to insist. From an empirical point of view, violence against women continues to be a social problem of the very first order. Television channels have made space for the problem within the news cycle and have delved into its causes through the incorporation reflection and analysis, despite the fact that old habits that favor the sensationalist news stories die hard.

8. Other Narratives

While it is true that the traditional audiovisual media have positively modified the way in which they report gender-based violence, it is also true that they are not the only means of disseminating content, and for younger age groups they are not even the main source.

More than 90% of Catalonia's 16 to 24-year-old population connects to the Internet several times a day. This fact alone denotes a change in the habits of consumption of audiovisual content. This content is accessed via a complex framework, both in terms of the quantity of material and the plurality of actors involved in its production and dissemination.

Faced with this reality, the Catalan Audiovisual Council has conducted, among others, several analyses on discourses around gender-based violence in audiovisual content broadcast over the Internet.

Three analyses have been carried out in three different time periods (June 2016, February 2018 and June 2018) with a user-based approach and with full awareness that the Internet is impossible to cover in its entirety.

However, the results of all three analyses show a worrying picture. The existence of audiovisual content has been detected in which gender-based violence is incited, justified or trivialized; discourses in which women are disbelieved and through which misogynist messages are conveyed. Degrading stories in which women are treated as objects; defences of women's inferiority and demonstrations in favour of restricting their rights, such as the right to freedom of movement, education, voting, sexual freedom, the purchase of property, etc.; victim-blaming and trivialisation of the use of drugs to commit rape, and even videos showing children simulating scenes of gender-based violence as if it were a game.

After the Council denounced these contents, close to 50% have been removed and more than 30% have been subject to access limitations.

However, the fundamental question remains. While the discourse of reports on gender-based violence produced by traditional audiovisual media demonstrates an awareness of the problem, other narratives are created on other audiovisual platforms, which discriminate against women and justify sexist behavior. Other stories that are very easily accessible to younger generations.

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