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# Research on gender- based violence against women

**Work done, work emerging  
and work needed – a view  
from my experience**

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# Overview

1. Stages of practice and research 1976-2002
2. Collaborating on a European level: CAHRV
3. Research on policy after 2005: CoE monitoring
4. New approaches: Exploring the roots of gender-based violence
5. Perspectives




# 1. Addressing gender violence – a very brief history

- n Stage 1: Name it violence and provide advocacy and services.
- n Stage 2: Call on the state and the professions to respond effectively, meet needs, close legal loopholes, end impunity.
- n Stage 3: Coherent and sustained policy: state and voluntary sector work together.



# Transition point in Central Europe: the 1997 Austrian law

- n From stage 2: improving professional responses of single agencies, to
- n Stage 3: new comprehensive principle of policy: re-framing the „domestic incident“
- n „Confronting perpetrators“ became model for the surrounding countries – linked to a new level of mult-agency cooperation




# The role of research in these three stages (ca. 1976-2002)

1. Formative, process evaluation of new „model projects“, raising awareness and developing conceptual framings
2. Assessing the overall support services, the responses of police, social work and the need for improvement
3. Research on local and regional cooperation networks, 6-year study of „intervention projects“



# The crucial role of human rights frameworks

- n Key to shift in practice and theory – seeing structurally based violence against women as a human rights issue (beginning 1995)
- n Required deep change in feminist positions towards the state
- n Women no longer „socially vulnerable“ but citizens with a claim to respect for rights
- n Went hand-in-hand with new research patterns



# Moving towards a broader and deeper scope of research

- n Building the CAHRV network: taking impulses for comparative European research to a more systematic level.
- n Expanding research on the biographical context of victimization.
- n Developing multi-professional training.
- n Follow-up to CoE Recommendation – interaction of state policies and NGO activism.



2. Structured collaboration among researchers on a European level :  
the FP 6 network CAHRV





- n Multidisciplinary network of ca.100 researchers from 24 countries working on interpersonal violence from a gender perspective (funded 2004-2007)
- n Sought to include research on women, men, children, elderly

[www.cahrv.uni-osnabrueck.de](http://www.cahrv.uni-osnabrueck.de)



# Guiding ideas

- n Interpersonal violence is a challenge to democracy and social cohesion
- n Awareness of violence needs to be extended to all vulnerable groups
- n Undeterred victimization detracts from all other basic rights
- n The field typifies fragmentation in addressing human rights violations



# Main tasks accomplished

- n SN 1: survey existing quantitative data, inspect instruments, and design integrated data analysis
- n SN 2: develop shared methodological framework for new comparative research
- n SN 3: create research synopsis to assist in evaluating interventions and measures
- n SN 4: map research and build web-based information resource



# Findings of the research network: What did we learn?

- n Research on violence sees multiple patterns and differences – some distance to policy inevitable
  - .. E.g. when does male-on-male violence serve a gender-power order?
- n Human rights are indivisible, but perceptions of what is violence differ
  - .. How can we give equal attention to women's safety and children's rights?

# What can protect against gendered violence?

- n „Risk factors“ do not translate in reverse into „protective factors“
- n There are dozens of equality indicators that do not correlate with each other
- n We must learn to describe
  - Environments that protect against violence
  - Environments that protect against further harm

# When are legal measures effective in practice?

- n Some states have invested in research-based evaluations, but continuity is lacking
- n Others (very few) have inspection procedures and publish reports
- n CAHRV Multi-country review: attention to the ***interactions*** among measures is vital
- n Results flowed into the CoE monitoring



3. Research on policy after 2005 –  
monitoring implementation of the  
Council of Europe Recommendation  
– Formative evaluation writ large



# Human rights call for use of the law, but this needs monitoring

Laws on VAW may fail or even backfire:

- Habits and attitudes may hinder sanctions
- Other legal proceedings (divorce, custody) may take no note of criminal violence
- Protection orders may be violated
- Agencies may not recognize needs and rights of the victim
- Protection for some may leave others at risk.



# Institutional cultures favor different strategies

States differ in how police, justice, health, social care systems work

- n There are differing police and legal cultures
- n There is no one model that fits all
- n But all models must be evaluated regularly based on reliable, regular data
- n For this, we must invest more research thinking into defining what is an „outcome“

# Monitoring implementation of the CoE Recommendation

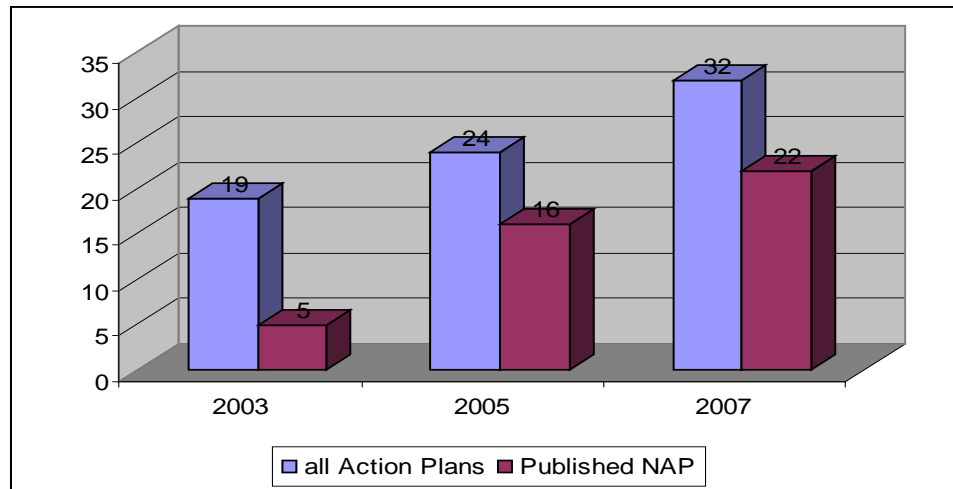
- n Since 2005 monitoring instrument has been circulated three times.
- n Data came in from 40 out of 47 states, only two (Russia and Moldova) never responded.
- n Reports integrate further public access information and research.
- n Fourth analytical report now available, some progress can be seen:



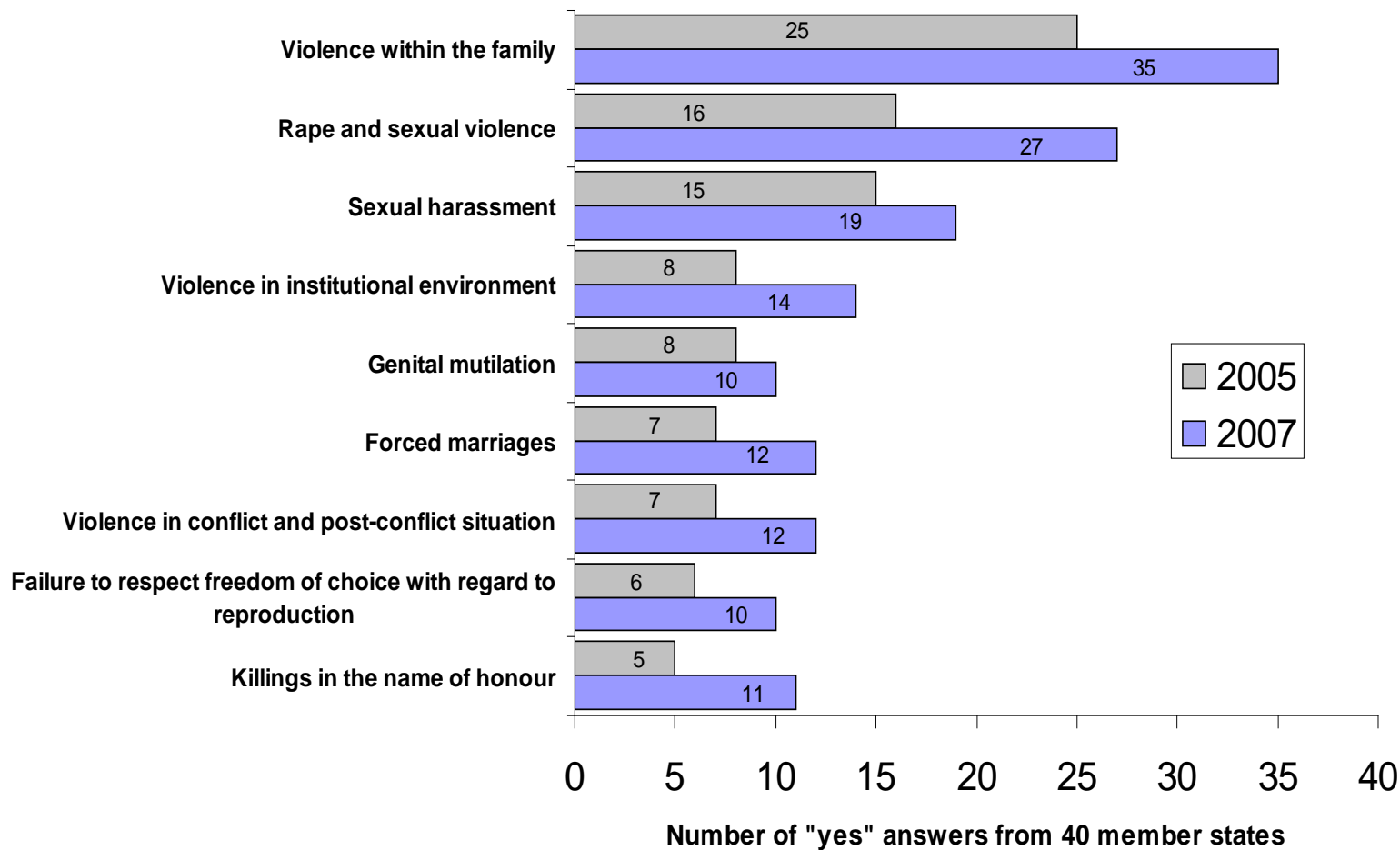
# ***Progress towards coherent overall policies since 2002***


- n More policy-makers today understand the need for a comprehensive and prolonged effort.
- n Significant increase in number and scope of National Action Plans since 2005.
- n Very weak reporting on services – decentral provision may be more effective, but States need to know whether all citizens are safe.

# Member States with partial or full Action Plans - 2003 to 2007





# Forms of violence in action plans





# States must recognize serious duty to address gender-based violence

- n Sustained planning and data collection
- n Cross-cutting strategies that address the connections between different forms and contexts of violence
- n Sustained funding of effective prevention and services
- n Evaluation vital for an evidence-based study of „what works?“ and „what is to be done?“



## 4. New approaches and emerging issues: Exploring the roots of gender-based violence



# Emerging issues and research questions

- n How to make intervention and protection more effective: Stopping the violence
- n Serious and consistent monitoring: How can institutions learn to do their jobs well?
- n Understanding perpetration, developing broadly-based prevention
- n Understanding how women become victims: How to translate universal rights into the vernacular





# Restoring agency to the women exposed to gender-based violence

- n Establishment of services as a duty of the state, and pressure to protect, are tending to position women as objects for their own good
- n Research can embed victimization in the biography and explore
  - .. The full impact of violence
  - .. Barriers to, and potential for resistance
- n Listening to women needs to move forward to new levels – qualitative research indispensable.



# Some recent findings: modelling factors at play in perpetration

- n We compared the results of systematic reviews in different bodies of research (VAW, VAC and SOV),
- n Clustered the numerous variables in empirical studies
- n Identified overarching “main factors” relevant to different forms of violence
- n On four levels, from macro to ontogenetic.



# Different patterns, common roots – towards an integrated approach

- n The weight and influence for each factor and the interplay between them differs by form of violence,
- n But together they describe a set of common roots of violence resulting from structural inequalities of gender, generation and sexual orientation.



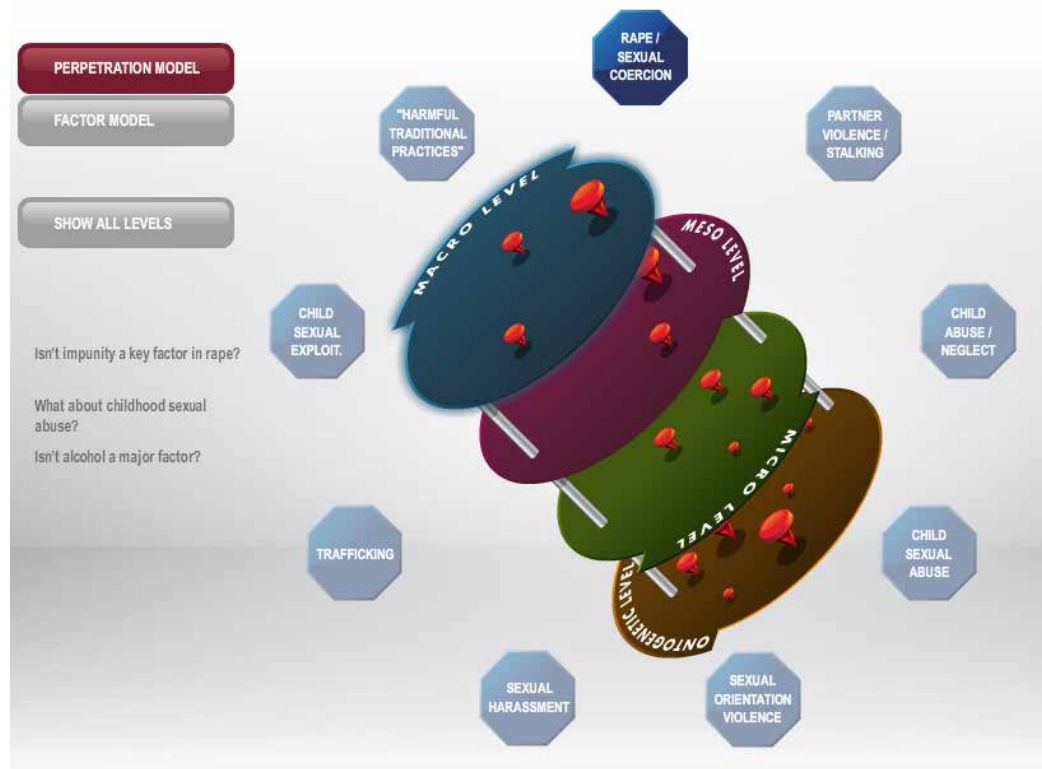
# The multi-level interactive model

- n Not causal explanation, but **probability**: What makes it more likely that individuals will use certain forms of violence?
- n A **confluence** model showing how factors flow together to make perpetration the likely outcome.
- n A **research-based** model, and there are major gaps in the (empirical) research! We can only model what we know about.

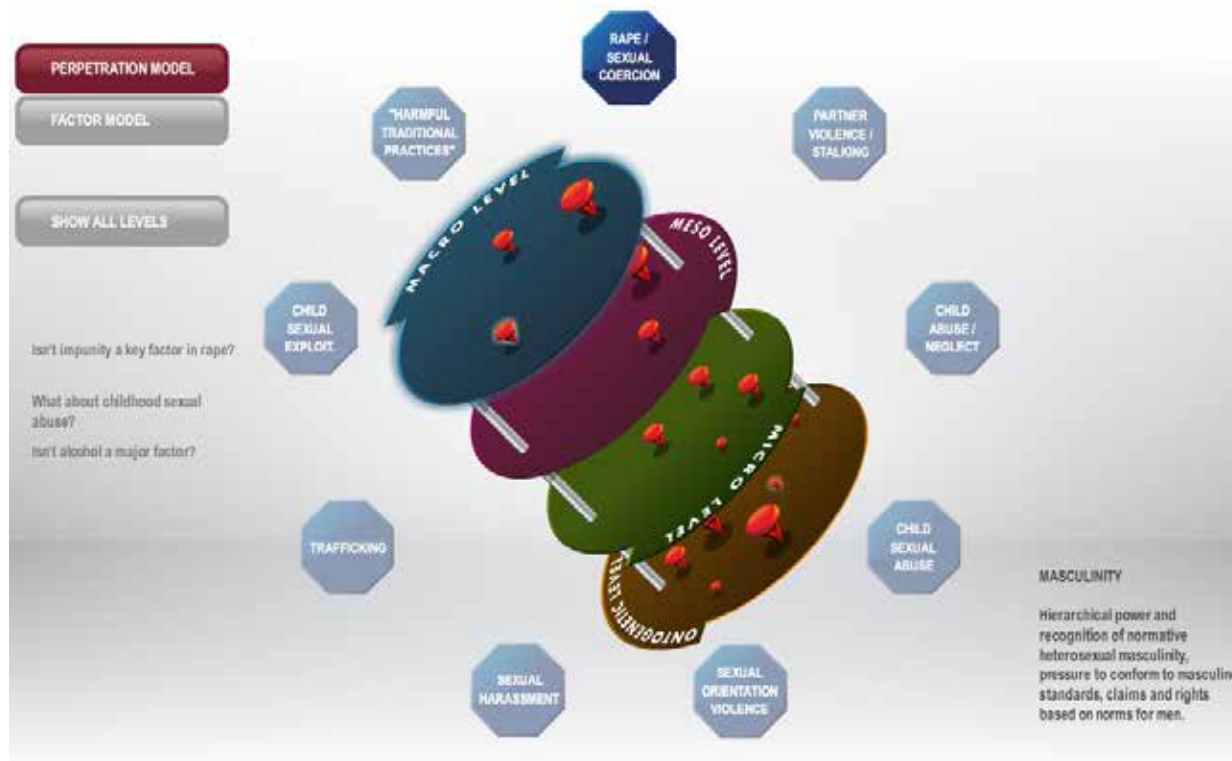
# A quick look at the interactive model with screenshots

- n The following screenshots aim to give a first impression of the model
- n The full model, along with a review of the research is available for download online (EN, FR, DE) with the feasibility study at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/document/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/document/index_en.htm)
- n or at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm)

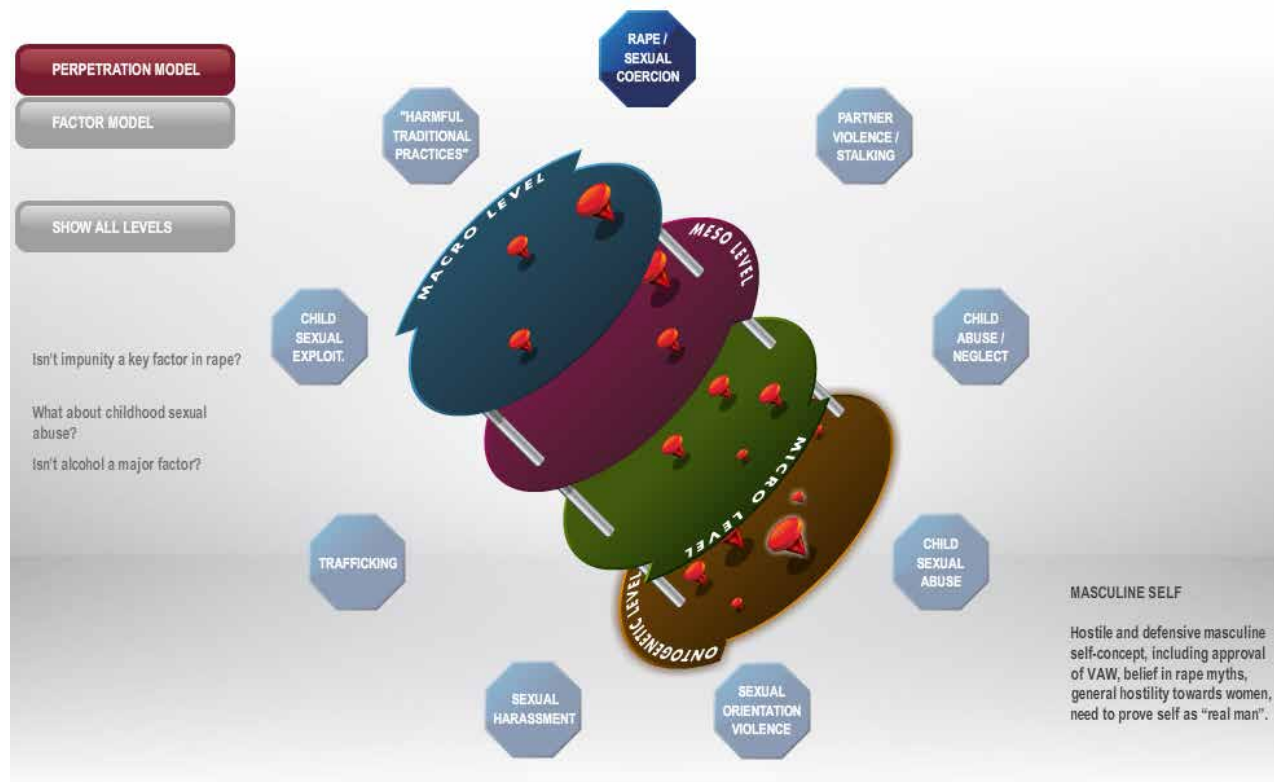
# Screenshot: Factor model for sexual coercion/ rape



# Dominance-oriented masculinity on the macro level



# „Masculine self“ on the individual life history level

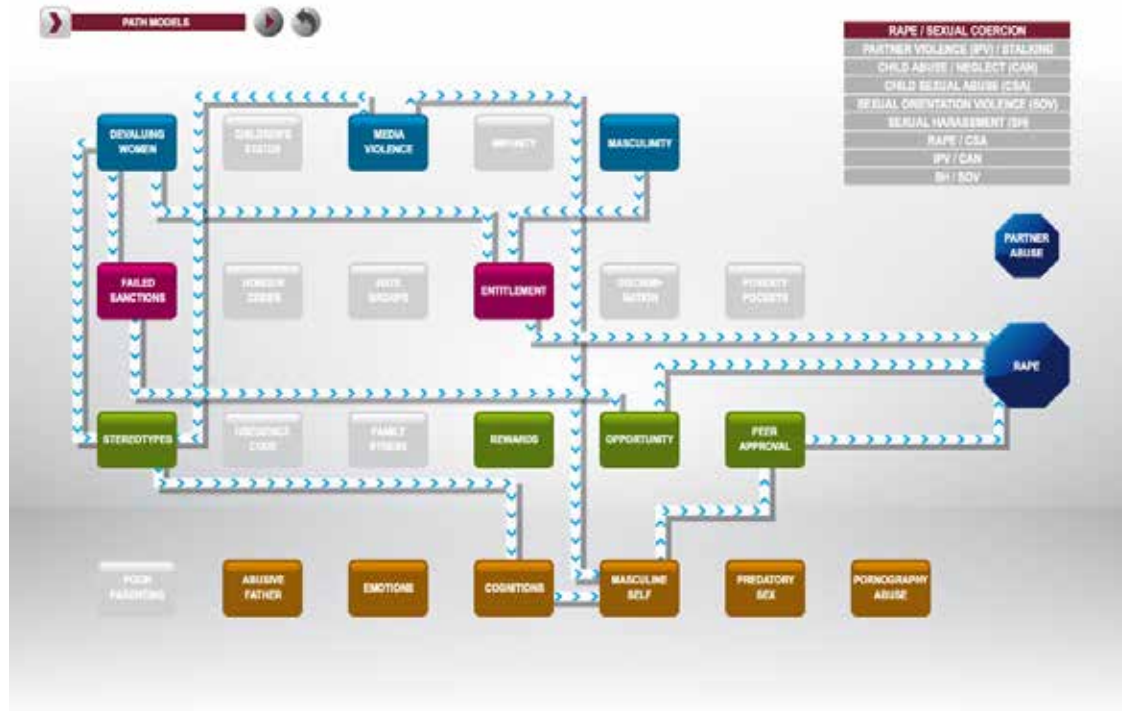




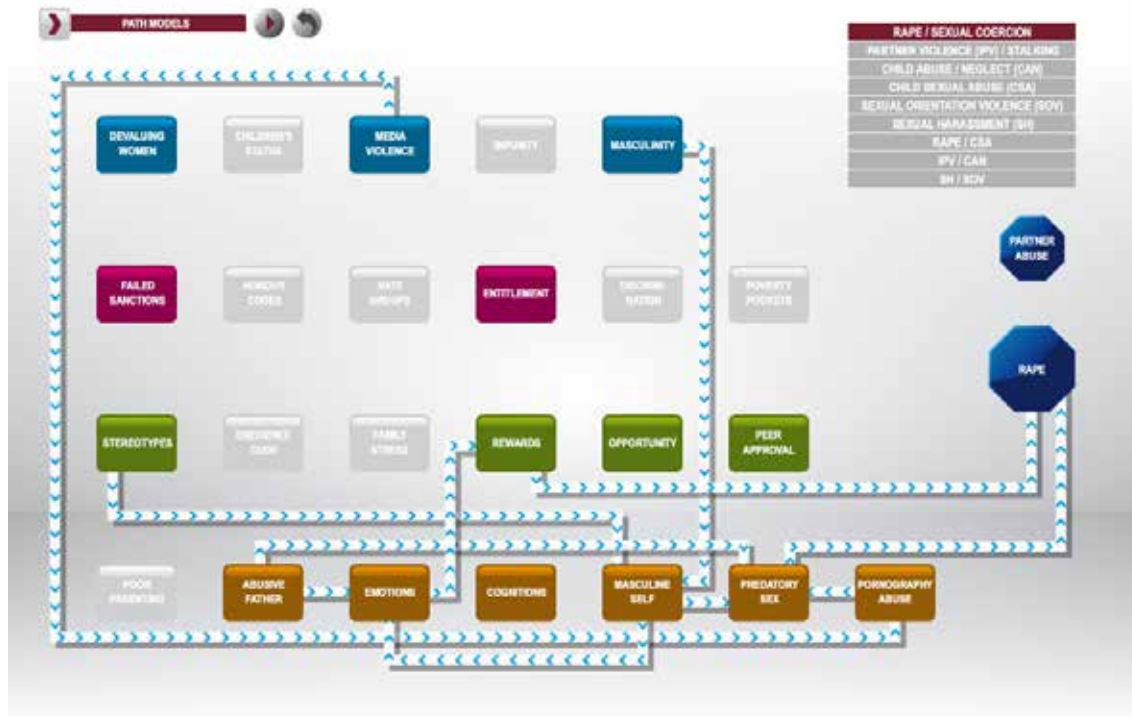
# Similar factors conducive to both rape and CSA on the meso-level



# Interplay of factors: Different pathways can lead up to rape



# Negative childhood experiences can also dispose towards rape





# 5. Perspectives



# Perspectives for research and practice – What is needed?

- n Understanding the factors conducive to specific forms of violence and their commonalities offers a framework for prevention.
- n It also shows that different methods of intervention are needed.
- n Needs complement studying the factors at play in victimization, resistance and agency
- n There are many significant gaps in the research that call for more study.



# Changing terms of reference: Council of Europe Convention

- n Final remark: research can help us deal with the different but overlapping categories in policy.
- n Emerging dual approach, defining:
  - violence against women
  - domestic violence
- n Both require a gendered approach!
- n Change of terms reflects complexity of issues, needing empirical and conceptual framing.



# What do we need to know?

- n We need a sustainable research culture based on recognizing gender-based and intergenerational violence as a key societal and economic challenge
- n We need research that links in-depth understanding of the problem and its foundations with systematic collection of data on implementation and outcomes.