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## **The role of Control and Gender in Domestic Violence**

**Case study: The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

Student: Stephanie Ingrid Höglund

Supervisor: Wolfgang Zank

Censor: Søren Villadsen

## **Acknowledgements**

In the summer of 2017, before starting this Master's Degree in Development and International Relations at Aalborg University, I spent one month as a student intern at the Ministry of Equality between Men and Women in Luxembourg. Up to that point, with the exception of some campaigns that I stumbled upon in high school, I didn't know much about their work and efforts in making gender equality a reality, in promoting equal political presentation between men and women, in empowering men and women, boys and girls, to chase any career they want to chase but also their work and efforts in tackling human trafficking, gender-based violence and domestic violence, issues I had always been greatly interested in, but never actually had the opportunity to work with.

This thesis would have probably not have taken its shape if it hadn't been for that very summer that I decided to try something new, nor for the summer after where I decided to spend another month at the very same place.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is a research paper on the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg. The seriousness of domestic violence, a violence that happens behind four walls, in a place that is supposed to be one's safe haven, requires a correct understanding of its roots in order to address it appropriately.

With rather stabilising numbers in what concerns its prevalence in recent years and with a lack of academic research contributions in the specific context of Luxembourg, the aim of this paper is to provide a thorough understanding of the causal processes of domestic violence in Luxembourg.

In an attempt to unveil specific causes of domestic violence, this thesis adopts the methodology of an explicative case study, a methodology that allows the author to identify causal processes of the phenomenon of domestic violence within the real-world context of Luxembourg. The chosen data supporting this research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative material: statistics provide an overview and background knowledge on the prevalence and demographic characteristics of domestic violence in Luxembourg and semi-structured interviews with professionals working in the field were held in order to provide in-depth insights for studying its causes. These different professionals provided significant observations from different perspectives ensuring an adequate representativity of Luxembourg's scenario. The case study is guided by a theoretical framework that combines Control Balance Theory, which focuses on control asymmetry, and Feminist Theory, which focuses on gender inequality as the explicative factors of domestic violence.

With this methodology and theoretical framework in place, the analysis is divided into two main parts according to the theory in use. The findings gathered through the interviews allowed the author to identify control as an inherent cause of domestic violence which in some cases is reinforced by gender dynamics. The author was able to single out specific settings of power relationships and methods of control as well as the extent to which gender plays a role in those different settings, which are labelled as *intimate terrorism* and *reversed intimate terrorism*.

In studying its causes in Luxembourg, this thesis is an academic contribution to the study of domestic violence as it unmasks unexplored settings of control and power relationships and unexplored gender dynamics which sow the seeds of domestic violence.

**Keywords:** Luxembourg, Domestic Violence, Gender, Control, Power Relations

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## 1. Introduction

Violence is a global issue present across societies and countries, time and history. It is something the human being has experienced, indirectly or directly, and in its many manifestations, violence is just as much a threat to a sustainable society as it is to individual and collective well-being.

Sometimes violence is grand, can be publicly seen and is long-lasting, involving hundreds, thousands, if not millions of people and causing a great deal of collateral damage: this kind of violence takes place in the form of wars, political crimes, gang fights and alike. But sometimes, violence happens on a private scene, unseen by the most but causes just as much distress as the kind of violence that can be publicly witnessed (Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deuschle 2015: 4). And sometimes, this hidden kind of violence even happens behind four walls, in a home, in a family, in a place that is supposed a safe space: domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a problem that is devastating in many ways and occurs all around the world, in different countries, societies and cultures. The consequences of experiencing domestic violence affect every single aspect of the witnesses', victims' and perpetrators' lives: their psyche, health, social life, education and professional performances only to mention a few.

It is only in the 1970s that domestic violence was publicly spoken about and became recognised as a social problem. Over the years, domestic violence gained further recognition and in the 1990s, by becoming a prioritised issue within the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action<sup>1</sup>, domestic violence was seen as a human rights abuse. Consequently, the issue gained the necessary attention and profile inciting states to develop specialised laws and policies to this regard; and one of those states is that developed a specialised law and policy in tackling domestic violence is the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (hereinafter referred to as Luxembourg) (Harne & Radford 2008: 9).

In 2003, Luxembourg passed a law on domestic violence. This law meant turning a private matter into a public one and for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, there was legal recognition of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (Hetto-Gaasch 2009). Since the introduction of this law,

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted in 1979, the CEDAW represented a turning point in the history of human and women's rights and it is in 1992 that its Committee presented general recommendations for the signatory states to specifically tackle domestic violence within the scope of the Convention. And in 1995 during the Beijing Platform for Action, domestic violence as a type of violence against women was flagged as one of the twelve prioritised areas of action (UN Women n.d., UN Women 1992).

Luxembourg developed awareness, prevention and intervention strategies to address domestic violence and statistics provided by the police and social services suggest that, relative to population growth, new incidents of domestic remain rather stable or even experience a slight decrease every year (Comité 2018).

In 2015, a national study on the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg had been published. The study was led by the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) between 2012 and 2014 in collaboration with the Ministry for Equality between Men and Women (MEGA). The aim of this study was to identify the specific causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg, gain a statistical overview of the tendencies since 2003 and provide recommendations for targeted prevention.

However, this study presents lacks regarding its theoretical backbone as it doesn't explore specific theories on domestic violence which explain its causes through different aspects. In an attempt to uncover the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg, the researchers behind this study were indeed able to identify important risk factors and the role of power and control as influential elements. These risk factors include work related stress, unemployment, low income, exposure to domestic violence as a child, unstable relationships, the embodiment and endorsement of gender stereotypes, mental health issues, alcoholism and problems of self-control (Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015).

Admitting that these factors are certainly important and may create an environment in which people are more prone to be violent towards their loved ones and relatives, the LIH study finds limitations in that it does not come to the conclusion of direct causal explanations, i.e. the study does not dig into the causality between these factors and domestic violence and how these specifically contribute to a violent household (f.ex. factor XY causes domestic violence; domestic violence happens because of XY...).

It is certainly an extensive national study considering that the researchers studied statistical tendencies covering the decade between 2003 and 2014, activity reports of institutions and organisations working with domestic violence, surveyed and interviewed not only professionals of those institutions and organisations, but also actual victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015: 4). However, its objective to specifically unveil the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg remains unconcluded. And this is the ambition of this thesis.

In attempt to uncover the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg, the aim of this thesis is to explore the different theoretical presumptions on domestic violence, examining their relevance to the Luxembourg context and finally, unfolding specific explanatory factors.

Hence, this thesis carries its purpose to explain causes of domestic violence with the following research question:

*Why does domestic violence happen in Luxembourg?*

To answer this question, this thesis takes the shape of a case study and is guided by a theoretical approach that combines Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory.

In order to gain a better understanding of the logic and course this thesis takes, the chapter that follows will run through its structure, method and logic, explaining how and with what tools the author will tackle the research question.



## **2. Methodology**

To answer the research question of *Why does domestic violence happen in Luxembourg?*, this thesis takes the shape of a case study using mainly primary qualitative data framed by Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory.

### **a. Case Study and Research Design**

The reason for adopting the research method of explanatory case studies is because it allows for an in-depth understanding of contemporary problems in a “real-world contextual environment”; here, this method allows for an extensive study of the problem of domestic violence in the Luxembourgish context (Yin 2018: 24-25, 45).

As “all-encompassing mode[s] of inquiry”, case studies are not limited to one single methodological path, type of data collection and analysis approach but can accommodate “customised research procedures” in terms of technique of analysis, data collection, methodology and design logic (Yin 2018: 25, 46).

Among the four types of case studies, this thesis is an explanatory case study. Unlike descriptive, illustrative and enlightening case studies which all respectively focus on describing, illustrating and evaluating/enlightening phenomena, the explanatory case study aims to identify causal processes of a problem within its real-world environment, which is the goal of this thesis (Yin 2018: 50).

With the question of this case study being “*Why does domestic violence happen in Luxembourg?*”, this thesis pursues a customised methodological design adapted to the Luxembourgish context. Before specifying the theoretical framework, the author runs through existing theories on domestic violence to gain a basic understanding of the different streams and perspectives in studying the problem. The use of having a theoretical backbone is that the theoretical statements are helpful in shaping the case study, data collection and analysis as it sets orientational criteria in this study (Yin 2018: 60-61, 70). Parallely, data is collected through semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders in Luxembourg. The content of those interviews and existing statistics and reports, provide the needed toolbox for arguing the relevance of the chosen theories.

Hence, this thesis shall be divided into 6 main chapters: Introduction, Methodology, Theorising Domestic Violence, Background knowledge on Luxembourg, Analysis and Conclusion. The introductory chapter introduces violence in a general perspective before narrowing it down to

domestic violence in Luxembourg and introducing the research question. The present chapter illustrates and justifies the method and design of the thesis followed by the data that will be used as well as the limitations to consider. The theoretical chapter introduces different theoretical approaches on domestic violence before arguing and going into detail of Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory, which will shape the analysis chapter that studies why domestic violence happens in Luxembourg. Finally, the Conclusion and Discussion Chapter will summarise the findings, answer the research question and open the topic for further discussion.

## **b. Data**

The data that will be used in this thesis consists of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will mainly be used for the factual and statistical overview of domestic violence in Luxembourg, whereas as qualitative data will prevail in the analysis.

The sources of the quantitative data are provided by National Report to the Government which is created on a yearly basis by the MEGA alongside other stakeholders in the field. However, the most recent report available is of 2018 with data on 2017. The report containing the most recent observations (on 2018) will not be published until June 2019, hence the reason why this thesis focuses on data of 2017.

For the qualitative data, the most significant source, especially for the analysis, are semi-structured interviews which were conducted with various professionals working with domestic violence in Luxembourg. The interviews were structured according to targeted topics put forward by the theoretical framework with enough openness and fluidity for further in-depth discussion and inclusion of relevant anecdotes (Adams 2015).

The target group of the interviews being professionals working with domestic violence in Luxembourg, the interviewees were introduced to the different theoretical streams given that, as professionals, they possess a basis of knowledge allowing them to refer to these different streams, perspectives and topics in their discourse.

Due the author not being in Luxembourg at the moment of the writing process, the interviews were held by telephone. The interviews were recorded for thorough data analysis through the NVivo12 data analysis software. Given that specific cases and detailed information were disclosed in some of the interviews, the transcriptions are held confidential.

The interviewees were chosen according to their relevant position in Luxembourg’s work in tackling domestic violence. Having worked as a student at the MEGA under whose attributions, domestic violence is one of the areas of work, the author had already been familiarised with the topic and the stakeholders over the summers of 2017 and 2018.

The following table presents the interviewees in a chronological order along the organisation or institutions they’re working for.

*Table 1 - List of Interviewees*

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Anonymous</b> <i>held on 03/05/2019</i>	Social worker currently working with people in need of <b>economic aid</b> and who in the past worked with <b>refugees</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Chantal Ronkar</b> <i>held on 03/05/2019</i>	<b>SAVVD</b> —Service d’Assistance aux Victimes de Violence Domestique, (Femmes en Détresse asbl <sup>2</sup> ), The Domestic Violence Victim Support Service
<b>3</b>	<b>Kristin Schmit</b> <i>held on 04/05/2019</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> <b>Police</b> Chief Superintendent and Secretary General at the National Police
<b>4</b>	<b>Ralph Kass</b> <i>held on 06/05/2019</i>	<b>Ministry</b> of Equality between Men and Women
<b>5</b>	<b>Isabel Da Silva</b> <i>held on 07/05/2019</i>	<b>Visavi</b> —Vivre Sans Violence <sup>3</sup> (Femmes en détresse asbl), an information and consultation service for women facing relational difficulties and/or violence
<b>6</b>	<b>Stéphanie Figueiredo</b> <i>held on 07/05/2019</i>	Social worker at Pétange <b>commune</b> and <b>medical-social scholar services</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Francis Spautz</b> <i>held on 08/05/2019</i>	<b>infoMann</b> (actTogether asbl), a service for men in distress, facing difficulties, seeking for support
<b>8</b>	<b>Céline Gerard</b> <i>held on 17/05/2019</i>	<b>PSYea</b> —Service Psychologique pour Enfants et Adolescent(e)s victimes de violence domestique (Femmes en Détresse asbl), The Psychological Service for Child and Teenage Victims of Domestic Violence
<b>9</b>	<b>Laurence Bouquet</b> <i>held on 20/05/2019</i>	<b>Riicht Eraus</b> (Red Cross), The Service Responsible for Supporting Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

<sup>2</sup> Association sans but lucratif = non-profit organisations

<sup>3</sup> To live without violence

The purpose in interviewing these different people is to collect various perspectives on various situations in order to ensure a relative representativity of the situation of domestic violence in Luxembourg. Interviewing people other than the police and the different services for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence allows for insights in different contexts. The first pages of the analysis specify these contexts and perspectives as well as the procedure and technique of analysis of the interviews.

The content of the interviews was divided into the following categories:

- Homo-/Heterogeneity of cases
- Gender
- Decision-making and independency
- Relational behaviour and dynamics
- Children

Within each of these topics, more specific questions were asked, which can be looked at in greater detail in Appendix 1.

In all this, this thesis finds limitations in several aspects.

### **c. Considerations**

The 1<sup>st</sup> limitation concerns the target population of the interviews. Interviewing professionals, rather than direct victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, may have influenced the provided information by their professional stance and approach. Furthermore, and as the analysis shows, the interviews reflect different perspectives creating a divide between two points of view: the victim perspective and the perpetrator perspective. The problem in this divide is that it is not clear whether the victims that the victim services encounter truly represent a different population than the population that the perpetrator service encounters. The content of the interviews indicates that these two population are rather separate but given that there is no centralised information about the connection between the cases of both types of services, this uncertainty remains.

A further limitation of this thesis concerns the generalisability/specificity of the research. Case studies allow for in-depth understandings of a problem in their real-world context making the findings of this thesis specific to the Luxembourg context. However, although not generalisable in terms of populations and context, the findings are likely to be generalisable and representative in terms of the theory (Yin 2018: 53).

A final limitation is created by the theoretical framework. Naturally, when choosing specific theories in academic research, one also chooses focal points. Theories don't touch the whole picture but do investigate specific dynamics and explanations. Hence, the focus on control and gender that the theoretical framework puts into place creates a scope of analysis, which as the discussion shows, is not able to integrate important dynamics which may have an important weight in explaining domestic violence in Luxembourg.

Now that the methodology applied in this thesis has been covered as well as its limitations that need to be considered, the following chapter provides an overview on theories on domestic violence before digging deeper into the specifics of the two chosen theories for the analysis.

### **3. Theorising Domestic Violence**

#### **a. Background and Emergence**

Although only problematised about 50 years ago, violence within the family, household and relationship can be historically traced back to, as far as, the times of the Romans BC. In fact, in many societies and religions, violence was condoned. Women and children were, by law, subordinated to the husband whom held all legal rights to physically discipline and use force on family members (Harne & Radford 2008:1, Kelly, Gonzalez-Guarda & Taylor 2010: 56).

Although laws that condone physical force within the household are now in process of vanishing, anything that concerns marriage and family life were considered private business up until the 2000s. It is only through the feminist movement in the 1970s, that domestic violence escalated from being a private family matter to a public problem that could now be addressed. Consequently, governments, agencies and civil society started responding through the creation and implementation of policies, services, shelters, intervention programs and campaigns (Leisey 2007: 9, Harne & Radford 2008:1).

As domestic violence gained increasing attention, it also became a research topic within different fields with efforts to define and theorise underlying processes, dynamics and causes (Leisey 2007: 9-10; Singh 2015: 112-113).

The 1<sup>st</sup> understanding of domestic violence was a gendered one, since its rise in awareness was framed within a feminist movement. As seen later in the theoretical overview (Chapter 3.c.iii.), feminist theorists define domestic violence as male-perpetrated violence between intimate partners. Although this feminist perspective was and still is a widespread one, the conceptualisation and causal explanations of domestic violence vary. This variation is reflected in the numerous denominations, definitions, theories and policies on domestic violence, which is why it is essential to understand the nature of domestic violence and to specify what definition is used in this thesis (Leisey 2007: 10, Singh 2015: 113). On that account, the following part digs into the nature of this problem.

#### **b. Understanding Domestic Violence: Definition and Nature**

Domestic violence, as framed in the feminist movement of the 1970s, was first understood as physical violence between husband and wife with the latter being the victim. Within this lens, domestic violence took on different denominations such as intimate partner violence, wife

battering and violence against women<sup>4</sup> (VAW). And with the feminist perspective being a common one, the term “domestic violence” is often used as a synonym to “VAW” or “intimate partner violence”. VAW is indeed a prevalent issue but domestic violence *per se* refers to different types of violence within relationships other than couples (Cares 2009: 305-308, Leisey 2007: 9-16, WHO 2012: 1).

There is no single universal definition of domestic violence; however, various international institutions and organisations have published definitions that are widely used and adopted. But before coming to domestic violence, how does one define violence in itself?

In 2002, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined *violence* as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (WHO 2002: 5).

When it comes to *domestic violence*, the definition becomes narrower: the act remains intentional but is directed towards another person or group of people. Here, the nature extends to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence and occurs “within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim” (Council of Europe 2011). This definition of domestic violence is presented in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, also known and henceforth referred to as, the Istanbul Convention<sup>5</sup>.

As Luxembourg is a signatory of the Istanbul Convention and since the country has integrated this definition of domestic violence in its national law, one shall use the definition as put forward in the Istanbul Convention (view previous paragraph).

“It is more this relational element, rather than location that defines the violence as ‘domestic’”: victim and perpetrator know each other well and their relationship is or was intimate or familial.

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<sup>4</sup> VAW, or also referred to as Gender Based Violence, is defined as any act of violence that either disproportionately affects women or is directed towards women and girls on the basis of them being women and girls. This violence can manifest itself sexually, physically, psychologically and even economically and can occur or be embodied within the family, the community or the state (VAWG Resource Guide n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> The Istanbul Convention was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011 in Istanbul, hence the name. It is the first internationally binding document that holds every signing country accountable for domestic violence on its territory. Signed in 2013, Luxembourg ratified the Convention after a reviewing process of its existing national policy and laws on domestic violence, adapting them to the main points of the Convention (Comité 2018: 34, MEGA 2018).

By including different forms of violence and relationships, this is the most well-rounded and objective definition (Harne & Radford 2008: 2).

Now that the definition of domestic violence used in this thesis has been specified, the following sub-chapter provides a theoretical overview. Due to its the complex nature, there are countless theories on domestic violence as different fields have studied this topic since the beginning of its study in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **c. Theoretical Overview**

Domestic violence has occupied several fields of study such as sociology, law, criminology and psychology, and researchers have attempted to identify causal factors and processes that sow the seeds of domestic violence, a phenomenon that crosses social, economic, religious, racial and ethnic categories (Jackson 2007: 19, Singh 2015: 112).

Among these theories, one can identify three general streams: ontogenetic/individualist theories, interactional/family/systems theories and sociocultural/structural theories.<sup>6</sup> Although the placement and the categorisation of the theories can be discussed, what is relevant here is to achieve an understanding of the different approaches offering different views and emphasise factors in different spheres and contexts (Lawson 2015: 17, Miller et al. 1999, Scottish Government n.d., Singh 2015: 110-116, Stets & Osborn 2007: 375).

#### **i. Individualist Theories**

First, ontogenetic/individualist theories (hereinafter individualist theories) explain domestic violence through individual, personal characteristics. These characteristics range from elements such as psyche, genetics, biology, pathologies to personal interests, personality characteristics and negative childhood experiences. Numerous theories fall into this family, but the major theories that will be looked into include *Cycle of Violence Theory*, *Psychopathology Theory*, *Physiological Theory*, *Social Cognitive Theory* and *Social Learning Theory* (Lawson 2015: 18, Miller et al. 1999, Scottish Government n.d., Singh 2015: 110-116, Stets & Osborn 2007: 375).

*Cycle of Violence Theory* postulates that “violent behaviour is learned within the family” and is transmitted from one generation to another: a child who has experienced domestic violence, would have a tendency to imitate this behaviour, see it as acceptable and develop such

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<sup>6</sup> The different streams are known under different but similar names and regroup the same theories, which is why they have been set together, separating them by slashes.



behaviour as an adult. Hence, domestic violence is a result of learnt violent behaviour during childhood (Scottish Government n.d.: 4, Wallace 2007: 286).

A further theory is the *Psychopathology Theory*, according to which perpetrators of domestic violence tend to have specific personality factors, hormonal, brain abnormalities and/or mental disorders which provoke violent behaviour. The presumable profile of perpetrators would be defined by antisocial, narcissistic, bipolar and borderline traits (Lawson 2015: 22, Singh 2015: 135, Wallace 2007: 286).

The *Physiological Theory* focuses on physiological and biological characteristics. This theory has many derivatives which focus on different aspects of the body. The evolutionary and instinctive approaches postulate that men are predisposed to be violent due to evolution and genetics. The idea here is that aggression and dominance preserve the human species. Other derivatives focus on “brain structure, chemical imbalances, childhood attention deficit disorders, dietary deficiencies and hormonal factors” (Lucea, Glass & Laughon 2010: 6, Singh 2015: 138).

Similarly to the Cycle of Violence Theory, the *Social Cognitive Theory* claims that violent behaviour is learnt. Through conditioning, family members learn that violence is an acceptable and effective means of solving conflicts and maintaining control in relations. Here, the claim that males who have been exposed to violence during developing years are more likely to adopt violent behaviour in future relations, is often supported by biological and physical factors such as strength and physical size (Lawson 2015: 20).

Similarly to previous one, *Social Learning Theory* claims that exposure to and observation of domestic violence as a child results in the transfer, imitation and participation of such behaviour also in the present and not only in future (Burman & Duffy-Feins 2007: 158, Mihalic 2007: 645).

These few examples of individualist theories emphasise past experiences, psychological pathologies and abnormalities, types of personality, genetics and biological features in explaining violent behaviour (Kahler & Garick 2007: 671, Stalans 2007: 696-697).

## **ii. Interactional Theories**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> type of theories explaining domestic violence are interactional/family/systems theories (hereinafter interactional theories). This perspective focuses on relational, familial and intimate

interactions within the microsystem<sup>7</sup> and how these affect individual behaviour in a way that people become violent. Major theories here include *Family System Theory*, *Social Exchange Theory*, *Identity Theory*, *Attachment Theory* and *Control Balance Theory*, all of which will be briefly depicted in the following (Lawson 2015: 18, Miller et al. 1999, Scottish Government n.d., Singh 2015: 110-116, Stets & Osborn 2007: 375)

According to *Family System Theory*, violent behaviour is determined by a combination of multiple elements embedded in the structure of the family system: violence is driven by the internal hierarchical order, interactions between relatives, family rules and sexual division of labour. Here, violence is a means to maintain the continuation of the hierarchy and role assignments in the family system (Lawson 2015: 24-25, Singh 2015: 115-116).

*Social Exchange Theory* postulates that domestic violence is generated by “the victim’s increased dependence on the abuser”. Here, dependency is determined by the im/balance of responsibilities and/or access to resources such as money, taking care of one another, chores and alike. This theory is mainly used to explain elder abuse: the growing amount of responsibilities of the caregiver creates a materially based dependency of the elderly towards the caregiver who will have “a tendency to exploit and abuse” the elder (Lawson 2015: 18, Wallace 2007: 286).

Another major theory here is the *Identity Theory* which focuses on symbolic interactions between role identities. According to this theory, the societal structure attributes individuals multiple identities to which different behaviours are tied. Identities interact with each other and contain multiple meanings and dimensions which open space for conflict between these meanings and dimensions. Here, domestic violence is explained by a lack of identity confirmation and the consequent instability influencing “people’s sense of control” which they tend to compensate with violent behaviour (Stets & Osborn 2007: 375-380).

A further major interactional theory is the *Attachment Theory* which offers developmental, neuro and social-psychological explanations and suggests that people become violent in relationships<sup>8</sup> because they are unable to cope with attachment and separation as a result of

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<sup>7</sup> In social sciences, especially in Sociology, the society is seen to function on three different level which are connected but have different dynamics. These levels are known as the micro, meso and macro levels and each of them defines a different scale of analysis. The microlevel focuses on the individual, the mesolevel focuses on groupings of people in the form of communities, organisations and alike and the macrolevel looks at the society from above, its political and economic dynamics, institutions, norms, values and alike (DeCarlo: 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Relationships are not to be understood solely as intimate relationships but can take any form of relationships regardless of whether the other person is an intimate partner or a relative.

“insecure attachments” experienced as an infant/child. When separated from their parent, infants/children usually experience distress and anxiety, and when experiencing these emotions, infants/children have specific coping mechanisms to deal with this distress. However, those who experience violence at home, do not have a coping mechanism and this has a long-term effect on how they function in relationships as adults: with unstable coping mechanisms, these people may experience cognitive and affective breakdowns “resulting in uncontrollable rage and dissociation” (Burman & Duffy-Feins 2007: 158, Lawson 2015: 22-24, Sonkin 2007: 41-48).

The final major interactional theory is the *Control Balance Theory*, according to which domestic violence happens because of an imbalance in control/power between two people. The person with surplus of control tends to express this through different control methods: psychologically, financially, physically, sexually; usually as a means to maintain or expand this surplus of control. However, the person in lack of control may potentially also turn to violence in order to gain or balance control in the relationship. A common example of imbalance in control is the one created through financial resources where usually but not necessarily the person with the higher or only salary automatically becomes superior in control and expresses this control through violence (Lilly et al. 2002: 99, Morgan 2007: 198-199).

Interactional theories find common ground in the idea that non-balanced and/or negative/conflicting relationships may result in violent behaviour from either end of the relationship.

### **iii. Structural Theories**

Lastly, structural/sociocultural theories (hereinafter structural theories) explain domestic violence through macro-elements like culture, ideologies, religion, media and norms. Major theories include *Feminist Theory*, *Structural Functional Theory*, *Theory of the Subculture of Violence*, *Conflict Theory* and *Social Bond Theory* (Lawson 2015: 18, Miller et al. 1999, Scottish Government n.d., Singh 2015: 110-116, Stets & Osborn 2007: 375)

*Feminist Theory* builds on gender inequality and how this inequality between men and women shapes politics, power relations and intimate/sexual relations. Here, domestic violence is seen as a result of “men and women’s unequal status in society and the differential socialisation of male and female children”; focus is put on how differential sex role conditioning during developing stages shapes ideas and beliefs that support and justify male dominance and sexism, sometimes reflecting patriarchal systems. Accordingly, any form of VAW and domestic

violence discriminate women on social, sexual, economic and psychological levels and keep women from being equal to men (Frances 1995: 395, Hanser 2007: 321-326, Lawson 2015: 21, Singh 2015: 113-115). Moreover, Feminist Theory has numerous derivatives such as *Intersectional Feminist Theory*, which has a broader approach by including further elements other than gender. Intersectional Theory explains domestic violence through an intersection of gender, race, class, culture, religion and sexual orientation focusing on minority groups with the idea that each of these groups have unique characteristics and may provide different observations (Lawson 2015: 21, Kelly, Gonzalez-Guarda & Taylor 2010: 65, 76-77)

According to *Structural Functional Theory*, two elements inflict violent behaviour: “structural or situational stress” and acceptance of violence as a result of such socialisation. This theory claims that people who face economic stress due to low income, low education and “low-class” occupations are more likely to have been socialised in way that sees violent behaviour acceptable; and domestic violence becomes a “response to certain structural and situational stimuli”. Advocates of this theory are aware that domestic violence is present across all professional categories, income classes and education levels but claim that the majority of perpetrators “are male, poor and unemployed or underemployed” (Singh 2015: 127-128).

*Theory of Sub-cultures* claims that domestic violence “is a reflection of normative support for deviant values” of subgroups. Members of such sub-groups have a belief-system, that is different from the general system of society, and these may justify and accept domestic violence. Subgroups that are most prone to engaging in domestic violence are lower social and economic classes, oppressed minorities and male peer groups which support patriarchal values and male dominance (Singh 2015: 128-129).

*Conflict Theory* states that conflict is inevitable, and that domestic violence reflects societal tensions and power inequalities. The idea is that intimate relationships and families naturally reflect the society they live in, because they are embedded entities of society. So for example, dynamics of patriarchal societies where the male is dominant over the female tend to spill over to family relations. What may cause conflict is for example women entering the labour market and increasing their personal financial resources which conflict with the original patriarchal tendency of men holding more power and more resources (Singh 2015: 134-135).

Finally, the *Social Bond Theory* claims that men become violent towards their partner when insecure, frustrated and anxious: they “feel at a disadvantage [...], [are] demanding and jealous or [have] doubts about [their] sexual proficiency or attractiveness as a male”. These

insecurities, frustrations and anxiousness arise from the failure to adjust, attach and commit to the social system, the culture and their personality. The main idea is that personally, socially and culturally frustrated people are prone to be perpetrators of domestic violence (Singh 2015: 138-140).

All in all, structural theories of domestic violence attempt to go beyond characteristics of the individual, one's direct surroundings and family to integrate factors such as norms, belief systems, culture and societal structure, attempting to take in the bigger picture.

The different approaches provide different arguments and points of interest and before discussing these, the following table briefly sums up all the theories of above.

*Table 2 - Synthesis of Domestic Violence Theories*

Individualist		Interactional		Structural	
Theory	Focus	Theory	Focus	Theory	Focus
<b><i>Cycle of Violence Theory</i></b>	Learnt behaviour due to exposure during childhood, intergenerational transmission	<b><i>Family System Theory</i></b>	Conservation and control of family hierarchy and role assignments	<b><i>Feminist Theory</i></b>	Gender inequality, social conditioning, patriarchal norms
<b><i>Physiological Theory</i></b>	Genetics, evolution biology, hormones etc.	<b><i>Social Exchange Theory</i></b>	Dependency and imbalance in responsibilities	<b><i>Structural Theory</i></b>	Structural stress and socialisation accepting violence
<b><i>Psychopathology Theory</i></b>	Mental illnesses, psychopathology, personality traits	<b><i>Identity Theory</i></b>	Lack of identity confirmation and instable identity	<b><i>Theory of Sub-cultures</i></b>	Subgroup belief systems supporting violence
<b><i>Social Cognitive Theory</i></b>	Learnt behaviour due to exposure during childhood, biological factors	<b><i>Attachment Theory</i></b>	Inability to cope with separation/attachment distress due to exposure during childhood	<b><i>Conflict Theory</i></b>	In-home conflicts as a reflection of societal conflicts
<b><i>Social Learning Theory</i></b>	Learnt behaviour due to exposure during childhood	<b><i>Control Balance Theory</i></b>	Control imbalance, motivation and attempts to gain, maintain or rebalance control	<b><i>Social Bond Theory</i></b>	Frustration as a result of social, personal and cultural maladjustment, unattachment and noncommitment

#### iv. Theoretical Debate

All theories which were presented are relevant in explaining domestic violence but, as it is with any theory, each of them has a specific focus and explains particular causes and dynamics of domestic violence.

Individualist theories remain on the micro-level, strictly focusing on personal, physical and psychological factors. Evidence has shown that genetics, strength and mental pathologies can have considerable influence on aggressive and violent behaviour; however, this evidence is often not generalisable. Moreover, interactional and structural theories counter the individualist stream with the argument that human behaviour is not innate, nor a result of instincts but rather shaped by the environment people are in. By restricting their focus on micro elements, individualist theories tend to overlook the environment in which domestic violence happens and processes which are external to the person but have significant influence as to why domestic violence happens (Lucea, Glass & Laughon 2010: 11-12, Singh 2015: 118).

Looking beyond the microsystem, interactional and structural theories offer broader perspectives. Interactional theories for instance, put weight on different types of interactions in parental and intimate relationships in relation to resource accessibility, control balances and identity conflicts. However, especially in the case of Family Systems Theory, relationships are supposed static, whereas relations to other people are everchanging, as one evolves over the years. Furthermore, theories which focus on the idea that violence is learnt behaviour or a result of trauma during childhood, cannot account for non-violent adults who were past victims of domestic violence. In fact, about 2/3 of past victims do not adopt this behaviour within their adult relationships and family relations (Lydia Mutsch in RTL 2017).

Nonetheless, the interactional approach offers a broader view on domestic violence as compared to individualist theories. What is unique is its focus on interactions, an important factor in studying domestic violence: domestic violence, even if unidirectional, is a violent and interpersonal interaction between two people: committed by the perpetrator, received by the victims, resulting in harm and suffering; and because domestic violence is something that happens between at least two people, one has to go beyond individualist explanations and include the context of its occurrence. Human behaviour, violent or not, is context related, a result of human socialisation, interaction and integration in society and this is where structural theories can offer even broader explanations by going beyond the family context (Lucea, Glass & Laughon 2010: 12-14, Singh 2015: 123, 133).

Structural theories look at the bigger picture by working on the macrolevel examining demographics, politics, culture, belief systems and alike, looking at how violence in a micro setting can result from developments on a larger scale. Human behaviour does not evolve in isolation but in contact with friends, family, school, media, politics and alike, all of which is

embedded in larger structures. However, structural theories remain their focus on one specific structural topic which can range from gender to structural conflicts or sub-cultural dynamics. Whatever the focus, structural theories are able to cross different spheres of society such as politics, education, media, legislation and even the family and the individual. For instance, Feminist theory focuses on gender dynamics but is able to navigate between politics, how gender is embedded in the government, education, how gender roles are transmitted in scholar settings, and also households, namely how gender roles are endorsed, often subconsciously, by families and individuals (Lucea, Glass & Laughon 2010: 14-16, Singh 2015: 135, 140).

Each of these approaches offer valuable arguments as to why domestic violence happens. As domestic violence is a complex issue, universal across cultures, ethnicities, societies and countries, its study demands a comprehensive theoretical framework which is able to work on different levels and bring forth the complexity of this issue. For this reason, two theories from different streams have been chosen which the author deems far-reaching for this study, namely *Feminist Theory* and *Control Balance Theory*.

The reason why individualist theories are ruled out is because these play down external dynamics. Individualist theories argue on the basis of psychological and physical characteristics of people, which are relevant but since domestic violence is a problem that goes beyond the individual and happens in every country around the world and crosses ethnicities, cultures and societies, one has to go further. The human person is not violent and aggressive by nature and conflicts arise in specific contexts and environments. For this reason, this thesis remains its focus on both interactional and structural theories because they go beyond the individual.

Among interactional theories, Control Balance Theory is deemed the most relevant because it conceptualises control as an essential feature of domestic violence and is applicable to various types of relationships, families and societies. It looks at how control shapes domestic violence. The fact that it doesn't restrict itself to for example intimate relationships makes it an interesting theory which might be able to highlight features of domestic violence common to different contexts, especially in a multicultural country such as Luxembourg. Moreover, Control Balance Theory raises the possibility of both ends of the relationship to become violent and not only one, making it an interesting approach to apply.

Furthermore, given that domestic violence primarily concerns women as victims and men as perpetrators, it is significantly interesting to adopt Feminist Theory. As a structural theory,

Feminist Theory allows for a bird's-eye view, looking at how superstructures influence individual behaviour in a gendered perspective. With a common focus on power, both theories support each other in understanding domestic violence beyond exclusively feminist explanations by featuring control/power dynamics.

The dual focus on power relations is in fact of central concern: “victim control is a core policy issue [and is a] unique character of intimate violence” and Control Balance Theory enables to investigate this feature of control also in other types of relationships beyond intimate relationships (Morgan 2007: 198).

Due to the evident gender gap and prominence of power relationships in domestic violence, the theoretical framework set up by Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory is able to capture the scenery and processes of gender inequality and the crucial role control supposedly plays.

To get a better idea of the main ideas and reasoning behind these two theories and how they complete each other, the following runs through the specifics of both theories starting off with the broader theory, being Feminist Theory, and then Control Balance Theory.

#### **d. Feminist Theory**

Feminist Theory on domestic violence emerged within the feminist movement of the 1970s. The purpose of this movement was to raise awareness about female abuse and domestic violence and for these problems to be publicly recognised and addressed. As previously seen, domestic violence remained a silent and private matter up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hanser 2007: 322-323, Singh 2015: 113, US National Library of Medicine 2015).

Through this movement, feminists were able to stage the seriousness of domestic violence, especially intimate partner violence, creating a shift in attitude, effort, help and policymaking in addressing the issue. Consequently, domestic violence and VAW became research topics within various fields of study, shelters were set up, prevention programs were created as well as specific legislation and policy (ibid.).

The Feminist Theory rose to find itself among the most prominent theories in explaining domestic violence, especially because data from around the world show that most perpetrators are men and most victims are women (ibid.). But before going into detail of feminist explanations of domestic violence, one must understand the different perceptions of domestic violence.



### **i. Perception of Domestic Violence**

Over the years, there have been debates over the perception of domestic violence. Let alone the various definition and denominations show that there have been disagreements on whether domestic violence is primarily male perpetrated and partner-oriented or whether men and women are equally prone to be perpetrators of domestic violence. Some argue that domestic violence is gender symmetric, some argue that it is primarily male perpetrated, and others argue that it is rather an issue of parental violence. The evidences often depend on the nature of domestic violence that is researched on. Parental violence is mainly a topic in Asian and “Southern” countries, where domestic violence is culturally accepted and seen as a method of conditioning and disciplining children (WHO 2002). However, in Western countries and especially in Luxembourg, what is mostly observed by professionals in the sector, is that domestic violence is primarily violence between intimate partners; and here, often the nature of domestic violence determines either gender symmetry or a gender gap. For psychological violence, there is a tendency towards gender symmetry whereas for physical violence, there is a clear gender asymmetry.

Beyond the nature of domestic violence, one must also distinguish between the type of violence that is driven by power and control and the type that is not; and here there are two types of evidences. Although domestic violence has been a research topic since the 1970s, differentiating violence that is driven by power and control from those that are not, is recent. Gender symmetric results tend reflect *situational couple violence*, which is not driven by power and control, and gender asymmetric results tend to be found in situations characterised by *intimate terrorism*, driven by power and control. Situational violence is often the result of conflicts which escalate; it is not systematic, nor long-lasting. Intimate terrorism however, is lasting and systematic violence, a control tactic with the attempt of one partner to take control of the other one. The problem in cases of intimate terrorism is that many victims do not reach out for help and above all avoid and refuse participating in such research out of fear of exposure; hence, it is hard to evaluate the weight of gender symmetric and asymmetric results (Johnson 2007: 257-259).

Nonetheless, in all this, one has to remember a very distinct feature of domestic violence: what is specific to domestic violence is that it is usually “embedded in a larger pattern of power and control that permeates the relationship” and when it comes to power and control, acts of domestic violence prove to be gendered and indeed predominantly male-perpetrated.

Furthermore, researchers state that gender symmetry in couples is more visionary than real and its measures are often narrow sensed. Because of these elements, domestic violence is generally not considered as a gender-symmetric phenomenon. Therefore, Feminist Theory has grown and it is also the reason why, when referring to domestic violence, many scholars refer to wife battering and intimate partner abuse. And although Feminist theory focuses mainly on intimate violence, this theory also acknowledges the presence and even, direct or indirect, use and maltreatment of children (Johnson 2017: 259-261).

As the analysis will show, intimate terrorism, i.e. domestic violence that is led by power and control is indeed the prevailing type of domestic violence in Luxembourg and in this pattern of power and control, specific causal elements leading to this pattern are put forward by both theories; the following specifies Feminist explanations.

## **ii. Feminist Explanations of Domestic Violence**

In the occurrence of inequality and discrimination, no matter its nature, feminists argue on the basis of differential gender socialisation/conditioning<sup>9</sup> during developing years in parallel to patriarchal influences (Hanser 2007: 321-322, 326, Singh 2015: 114-115, Yick 2001: 548).

Feminists perceive domestic violence as “male coercion of women”: abusing women means exploiting and/or controlling their freedom and opportunity to be equal to men. Advocates of this theory namely believe that violence in the family/household reflects gender inequality and is visible in terms of power and control. Gender inequality runs on different levels from gender conditioning to asymmetric power relations embedded in the social structure (Hanser 2007: 321-322, 326, Singh 2015: 114-115, Yick 2001: 548).

Operating on mainly structural but also smaller scales, Feminist theorists look at different elements. On a smaller scale, the theory puts forward how perpetrators of domestic violence view domestic violence as “an integral part of the institution of the family and one of the means to control the family”. This is influenced by micro elements such as average biological differences between men and women in terms of physical size and strength and is further supported by gendered socialisation. Looking at the larger scale, domestic violence is seen as

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<sup>9</sup> Gender socialisation/conditioning refers to the differential socialisation of boys and girls during developing years, i.e. the tendency to raise children with rather traditional norms and ideas and even when minimising these, children might be influenced by friends, teachers, toys and clothes: “boys learn to be boys and girls learn to be girls”. Gender socialisation shapes the belief system: what people believe to be gender-appropriate behaviour. This is carried and adopted later during adulthood and influences the working environment, politics, family life and alike and determines gender inequality (Balvin 2017).

a systematic result of a gendered social structure—a society “that is built on male superiority and female inferiority, sex stereotypes, roles and expectations and economic, social and political predominance of men and dependency of women”. In such societies, men and women are assigned and are expected to follow specific roles and behaviours due to gendered beliefs within society but also within themselves as a result of gendered socialisation (Hanser 2007: 322, Johnson 2007: 263 O’Toole, Schiffman & Edwards 2007: 12, Singh 2015: 114-115).

By operating on these different levels, Feminist theory highlights the way gender inequality supports and is embedded in the social, political and economic structures and also how it is endorsed on an individual level; hence domestic violence is accepted by the perpetrator and supported by the structure he<sup>10</sup> and his family live in. So, domestic violence becomes a mean for perpetrators to maintain the power that is attributed to them on a macro scale to a micro scale. Any type of VAW is considered a “violent social statement”, driven by and serving to preserve asymmetrical systems and balances of gender and power (Hanser 2007: 322, Johnson 2007: 263, O’Toole, Schiffman & Edwards 2007: 12, Singh 2015: 114-115).

In the analysis, the author will specifically look at the following indicators which prove the ir/relevance of this theory in the Luxembourgish context:

- On an individual level, personal endorsement of traditional gender norms which often results from gender conditioning during childhood or through media, education and society, serves as an indicator.
- On an interpersonal scale, elements such as independency/dependency on/of the partner/relative and traditional role division in terms of responsibilities in the household serve as indicators.
- On a larger scale, the author will look at how gender norms are incorporated in society, politics and legislation. Societies that are based on rather traditional and patriarchal norms and values embody gender inequality from a top-down perspective.

These elements are the main “pinpointers” for assessing the relevance of feminist explanations in Luxembourg. However, given the multicultural context of Luxembourg, one has to consider that the concept of women’s status and gendered belief systems might differ on different scales: the society may seek to be egalitarian in its constitution and legislation while subconsciously people might still endorse gendered belief systems and families might still embody very

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<sup>10</sup> “he” because Feminist Theory claims that perpetrators of domestic violence are predominantly male.

traditional gender roles or vice versa. Thus, the effect of gender inequality on domestic violence can strongly differ according to level of analysis (societal, political, individual etc.) and domain (politics, education, media etc.).

Furthermore, although Feminist theory might be applicable, how does one explain domestic violence in families that are not headed by man and woman? What role does gender inequality play in cases such as homosexual relationships, transgender relationships and mono-parental families? In fact, there is a knowledge gap about how violence in heterosexual relationships differs from homosexual relationships. Studies suggest that cases in non-conventional relationships and household rather go unreported.

To bridge these limitations of the Feminist Theory, Control Balance Theory has been chosen to take the lead in the analysis given that its approach is not limited in terms of relationships and explains domestic violence through an element which transgresses any type of relationship, violence, society, culture and alike: namely control imbalances. With Feminist theory highlighting that the combination of power and control with gender inequality is an overarching cause of domestic violence, Control Balance Theory allows this study to dig deeper into the elements of power and control.

#### **e. Control Balance Theory**

As seen in the theoretical overview, Control Balance Theory explains domestic violence through asymmetrical control balances between two people. The theory as such does not have any racial, cultural or gender strictures but given that most cases concern male perpetrators and female victims, researches using this theory have found themselves focusing mainly on heterosexual intimate partnerships. The theory is based on Charles Tittle's Control Balance Theory, a criminological theory on deviant behaviour, but has been used in many instances in regards to domestic violence and has hence evolved and been adapted to the remit of domestic violence (Castro, Nobles & Zavala 2017: 3-4, Morgan 2007: 197-203).

#### **i. Background**

Control Balance Theory as a theory for domestic violence finds its roots in the early 2000s in the US, as several cases of domestic homicide between partners gained increasing attention in the media. Because those cases of relationships had been violent for several years and ended with murder or severe injuries, scholars started asking themselves why the victims had

continued to endure domestic violence for so many years, why it happens and why victims do not leave violent relationships (Morgan 2007: 197-198).

With the same curiosity, Drew Humphries, a Sociology professor in the US specialising in women and family, raised attention to a unique character of domestic violence: victim control. This unique connection between victim control, power and domestic violence led to the exploration of Charles Tittle's Theory of Control Balance in regard to domestic violence (Morgan 2007: 198).

Charles Tittle theorised about general deviant behaviour and how "a person's proclivity towards criminal acts is based on his or her need to obtain control of a given situation" (Tittle 1995: 135).

According to Tittle, humans live in three possible states of control: control surplus, control equilibrium or control deficit (Lilly et al. 2002: 98, Morgan 2007: 198). Control surpluses refer to situations of greater control available/in use over subjected control, control deficit refer to situations of greater subjected control and control equilibrium refer to situations of equal amounts of available/used and subjected control (Castro, Nobles & Zavala 2017: 5). These three states of control reflect different *control ratios*: "the amount of control to which an individual is subject, relative to the amount of control [s/he] can exercise" (Morgan 2007:198, Tittle 1995: 135). If this control ratio is not balanced—in the case of control surplus or deficit—a person is more likely to engage in deviant behaviour. Different types of delinquency relate to different states of control: in the case of control surplus, the person is more likely to be exploitative and controlling whereas in the case of control deficit, the person is more likely to be submissive (Lilly et al. 2002: 99, Morgan 2007: 198).

Moreover, a person is more likely to become delinquent when *motivated* to do so and this motivation is linked to the control asymmetry (Tittle 2000: 320). The main motivation to engage in delinquent behaviour would be to either overcome the control imbalance, in case of deficit, or to enlarge the control imbalance, in case of surplus (Lilly et al. 2002: 99, Morgan 2007: 198). After the media blast of domestic homicide, these elements were adapted to the context of domestic violence.

## **ii. Relating Tittle's Theory to Domestic Violence**

Violent relationships have one unique characteristic: "a pattern of intimidation and control that includes the use of physical violence by one person against another" (Wright 2000: 5). This

control manifests itself in different ways, often going as far as controlling the victim's lifestyle, network and social life (Morgan 2007: 199).

When it comes to perpetrators of domestic violence, they most commonly, but not always, find themselves in a situation of control surplus (Wright 2000: 5-8). The perpetrator usually holds a large amount of control and expresses this control through different *outlets*:

1. Psychological control: verbal and psychological abuse, threats and manipulation
2. Financial control: controlling the victim's access, resources and support and thus freedom to engage in outside activities
3. Physical and sexual control: abuse, rape, battering (Morgan 2007: 199).

The perpetrator makes use of his/her control through these different methods in order to preserve or expand the existing control asymmetry (Lilly et al. 2002: 99). And these power differentials are often accompanied by attitudes of "entitlement, dominance, traditional heterosexual beliefs", hence also the relevance of combining this theory with Feminist theory (Castro, Nobles & Zavala 2017: 3). So although inherently gender neutral, the theory highlights how patriarchal belief systems often support control imbalances wherein men hold control of their wives and have more power and privileges not only in the household but also in the society (Castro, Nobles & Zavala 2017: 6, Morgan 2007: 200).

In cases of control deficit, the person will most likely find themselves in a situation of *submission*, showing traits of inferiority, self-perception of worthlessness, vulnerability and forgiveness, contrary to cases of control surplus, where the person is most likely to be *exploitative*, controlling resources and income, showing traits of possession, jealousy and dominance (Delisi 2002: 268).

However, Control Balance theory also puts forward that the person with a control deficit, who may or may not already be a victim, can engage in violent behaviour towards his/her partner in an attempt to rebalance the control asymmetry (Lilly et al. 2002: 99, Morgan 2007:199).

Whether the relationship is intimate, parental, professional or friendly, imbalance occurs through the same dynamics. Given that this thesis studies domestic violence, solely parental and intimate relationships are looked at. Imbalances of power and control can be seen financially speaking, emotionally speaking but also in terms of responsibilities and attributed importance (Delisi 2002: 265, 267, 268). Consequently, specific indicators on control imbalance are the amount of control the person has or is subject to in terms of:

- Resources: Is the person free to decide how to spend money? Does the person have free access to the bank account? Does the person have free access to transportation? To food?
- Emotions, bonding and intimate behaviour/activities: Is sexual intercourse forced? Is the person free to decide how they will spend time together? Is the person free to decide what to wear? Is the person manipulated to believe certain things? Is the person verbally aggressed, belittled, denigrated?
- Outdoor activities and private life: Is the person free to have any kind of friendship? Is the person free to spend time with those friends? Is the person free to spend time alone, go shopping, going to the doctor and alike? Does the person have free control over his/her own phone and social media? (Castro, Nobles & Zavala 2017: 10-11).

Answers to these questions will determine the extent of self-control a person has or whether the person is controlled by the partner or is controlling the partner in any of those areas. Putting these elements in harmony with Feminist theory, Control Balance theory works on the individual and interpersonal level and less on the structural level, whereas Feminist theory transgresses all of these levels.

In all this, one must keep in mind that although control may be a central factor in explaining domestic violence, the concept of control might be a very abstract element to work with and to analyse. Furthermore, other relevant processes might intersect with this element of control but which this theory is not able to bring forward (Delisi 2002).

Putting Control Balance Theory and Feminist Theory into action naturally divides the analysis into two parts. After thoroughly explaining how the content of the interviews are analysed and how they shape the analysis, Control Balance Theory will be the main theory in the 1<sup>st</sup> part and as a 2<sup>nd</sup> step, the same will be done with Feminist Theory. Before passing onto the analysis, first, an overview on Luxembourg with some basic facts and a statistical outline of domestic violence in Luxembourg is necessary.

#### 4. Background Knowledge on Luxembourg

The present chapter serves as an *état des lieux* of domestic violence in Luxembourg: what do the numbers say, what is the prevalence, how many incidents have been recorded in the previous year, what is the policy and legislation in addressing the issue, who are the stakeholders and what services exist. It is important to have this basis of knowledge because it is on this that one can build on in the analysis and it allows for a better understanding of certain findings and dynamics which might be unique to Luxembourg.

The last available statistics on domestic violence were published in 2018 in the national report to the government with an overview of data on the preceding year, 2017. These national reports are published on a yearly basis by the Committee of cooperation on domestic violence who meets about 4 times a year to discuss recent observations. But before digging into those statistics, the following runs through basic facts about Luxembourg for the purpose of ensuring a better understanding of the weight and sense of the statistics provided in the national report.

##### a. Country Profile

Luxembourg is a country within the European Union that borders Belgium, France and Germany and has three official languages, which are French, German and Luxembourgish. Although it is one of the smallest countries in Europe with a current population of 613,894 people and 2,586 km<sup>2</sup> of surface, it is also one of the most multicultural with 47% of its population being foreign. The country counts more than 170 nationalities, which makes Luxembourg a meeting point of numerous cultures, religions and languages (BBC 2018, STATEC 2018, STATEC 2019, Government of Luxembourg n.d.).



Figure 1 - Map of Luxembourg

Figure 1 shows Luxembourg's shape and borders, its two judicial divisions (Luxembourg for the South and Diekirch for the North), as well as the names of the 19 major cities among which Luxembourg City is the capital. Each of the 19 cities that are visible unite further towns and villages, smaller in size and population (Government of Luxembourg n.d., STATEC 2019).



Population wise, the population density is higher in the Luxembourg judicial district due to access to a larger variety of jobs, offices, schools, shops, events, major highways etc., whereas the North offers less in terms of infrastructure, education and alike. The most populated communes are Luxembourg holding almost 20% of the population, then Esch-sur-Alzette with 6%, Differdange with 4% followed by Dudelange and Pétange with 3% each; and each of these communes has further towns and villages under its administration. Comparing the numbers of the South to the North, cities of the Northern judicial district do not figure among the 14 most populated communes in the country, showing that the North is far less populated (STATEC 2019).

The relevance of this demographic scenario is to be able to relativise statistics and facts collected from the annual report on domestic violence. Some locations might show higher prevalence of domestic violence than others, which does not mean that those locations are more prone to domestic violence, but it simply reflects the population density of those places. With this brief overview in place, the following part shall go over the national policy and stakeholders in order to understand the background of the statistics and observations in the national report to the government.

### **b. National Policy and Stakeholders**

Luxembourg's engagement in tackling domestic violence dates back to 1979 when Femmes en Détresse, a non-profit organisation, was created by the women's liberation movement. It's first shelters for female victims of domestic violence opened in 1980 and since then they have created numerous shelters, meeting centres, training facilities, information desks and support services for women, children and families who experience domestic violence (Femmes en détresse n.d.).

In 1995, Luxembourg put up the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, as of 2018 known as the Ministry of Equality between Men and Women. MEGA's work focuses on making gender equality a reality and in their mission in promoting gender equality, fighting domestic violence is one of its priorities and is integral part of the National Plan of Equality between Men and Women. Efforts in tackling domestic violence were further concretised in 2003, the year a legislation specific for domestic violence was adopted, shaping the national policy and standards in addressing the problem (Hetto-Gaasch 2009, MEGA n.d.).

The law on domestic violence created a legal framework in addressing the issue, which in July 2018, with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, was modified accordingly.

At the same time of the introduction of the law on domestic violence, following article IV, a Committee of cooperation (hereinafter the Committee) was created, bringing together relevant stakeholders (Comité 2018: 3, Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015: 7).

### **i. Committee of Cooperation**

The Committee is an important organ with multiple responsibilities: collect and analyse statistics, investigate the implementation of the law and eventual issues/barriers and to deliver a yearly report to the Government. Statistics are collected by the police, prosecution services and support services, all of whom meet about 4 times a year to discuss their observations and perspectives on domestic violence in synergy with each other.

The involved parties in the Committee are:

- Ministry of Equality between Men and Women
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Homeland Security
- National Police
- Prosecution Service of Luxembourg District
- Prosecution Service of Diekirch District
- Support services for victims (SAAVD, PSYea)
- Support services for perpetrators (Riicht Eraus)

Appointed members of the Committee create a report on an annual basis which reflects on domestic violence during the preceding year. It is a situational analysis of domestic violence in Luxembourg with an update on statistics, observations of developments and eventual propositions. The report is delivered from the Committee to the Government through MEGA (Comité 2018: 3-4, Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015: 7).

### **c. Outreach**

Beyond the stakeholders in the Committee, there are further organisations and services under convention with MEGA who accommodate victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The population that reaches out to these organisations and services often do not reach out to the police. The difference here is that these organisations offer shelter and anonymised consultations when desired, which might be more appealing to people who fear possible consequences of reaching out to the police.

However, for cases that are reported to the police, there is a clear procedure to follow. When incidents are reported to the police, the police intervenes at the household of happening, where

they separate victim and perpetrator<sup>11</sup>, evaluate the situation and provide both perpetrator and victim with an information sheet containing the following support services<sup>12</sup>: SAVVD for adult victims of domestic violence, PSYea for child and adolescent victims (up to 21) and Riicht Eraus for perpetrators. However, not every intervention leads to a removal order; these are requested if the police detects physical violence and need to be granted by the prosecutor. Post-intervention and post-removal order, the police creates a report and, like the support services, is under the obligation to register data about the event (Comité 2018: 4). The cases are then forwarded to the support services whose mission it is to “assist, guide and advise” the victims and perpetrators (Comité 2018: 14).

The numbers of interventions and removal orders are the main indicators used in the national report and when evaluating prevalence, tendencies and rises or falls of domestic violence in Luxembourg.

However, one must keep in mind that police interventions usually represent peaking moments, situations of domestic violence that reach a certain seriousness for the victim, the witness or the neighbour to call the police, where the police is the last resort. As the interviews will show in a later stage, situations where the police has intervened are usually situations where there has been a long history of violence. Hence, the numbers provided by the police do not reflect the entire picture but do certainly provide important insights. This thought must be kept in mind throughout the thesis.

#### **d. Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Luxembourg**

The numbers of interventions and removal orders serve as the main indicators of the prevalence of domestic violence in Luxembourg. Along with these numbers, the police records demographic data which can be completed with the inputs of the support services. Given that the cases are forwarded to those services, the data should be compatible. Accordingly, the

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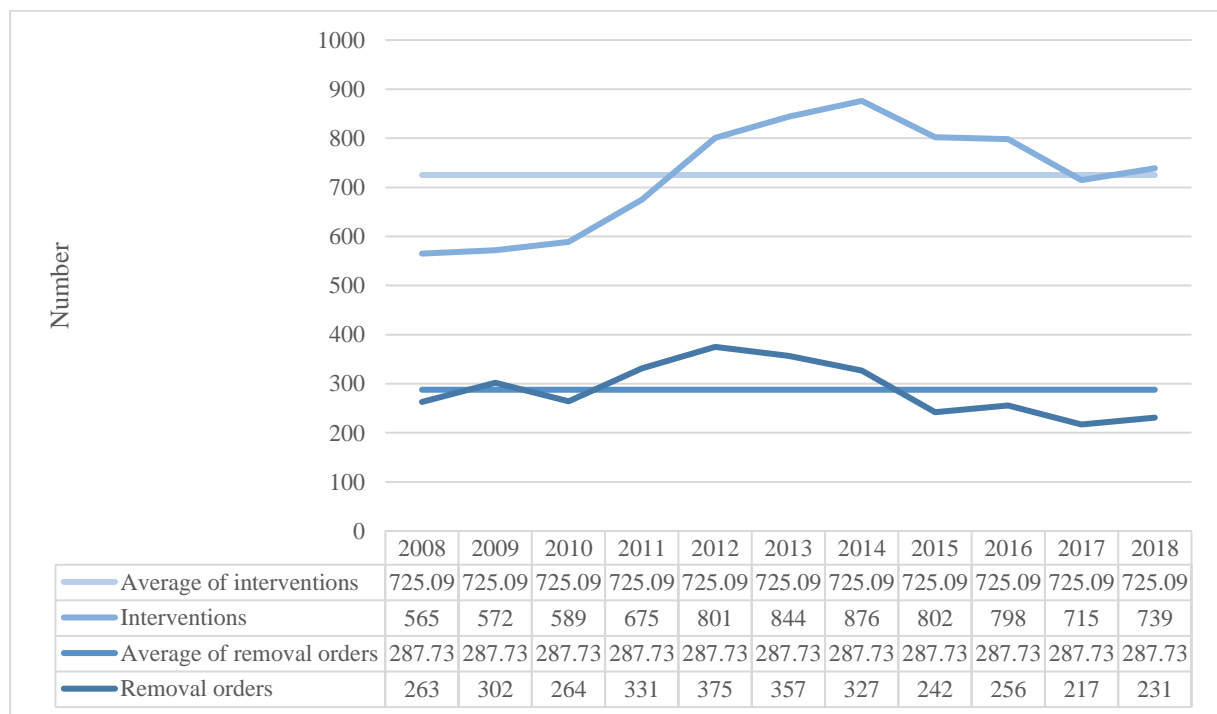
<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that the involved people are labelled as victim or perpetrator as seen at the moment of intervention which may not necessarily reflect victimisation and perpetration in the preceding occurrences of domestic violence in the given household.

<sup>12</sup> Other support services working with domestic violence and providing consultations and therapy also exist but are not appointed to work with the victims and perpetrators specifically after a police intervention. These three organisations have the specific mission of dealing with victims and perpetrators in the event of removal orders, where consultation is obligatory, and in the event of interventions, where the victims and perpetrators are informed about the services. Up to 2017, SAVVD was the only appointed support service for victims and Riicht Eraus for perpetrators. However, PSYea, established in 2005, whose responsibilities were first defined as a psychological consulting service for minors experiencing domestic violence, was in 2017 appointed to be the support service for minor and adolescent victims within the framework of the national law (Comité 2018: 18, Femmes en détresse n.d., Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015: 7).

following paragraphs combine information provided by the police, SAVVD, PSYea and Riicht Eras.

In all this, one needs to consider that these reports do not provide an exhaustive understanding of domestic violence in Luxembourg but significant insights. It is also important to note that not every case of domestic violence is reported to the police and that many people that are affected by the problem remain invisible. These numbers maybe only scratch the surface.

*Figure 2 - Police Interventions and Removal Orders 2008-2018*



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Over the last decade (2008-2018), the police intervened on an average of 725 times a year, which corresponds to almost 2 interventions a day. Out of these, about 287 lead to removal orders. Rising up to 2013/2014, the numbers have stabilised in recent years (Comité 2018: 6-7, Goffin 2019). Relating this to Luxembourg’s demographic growth, the increase of interventions and removal orders reflects the population which has been constantly increasing by several thousands of people each year, making it hard to tell whether domestic violence has become a greater problem or not.

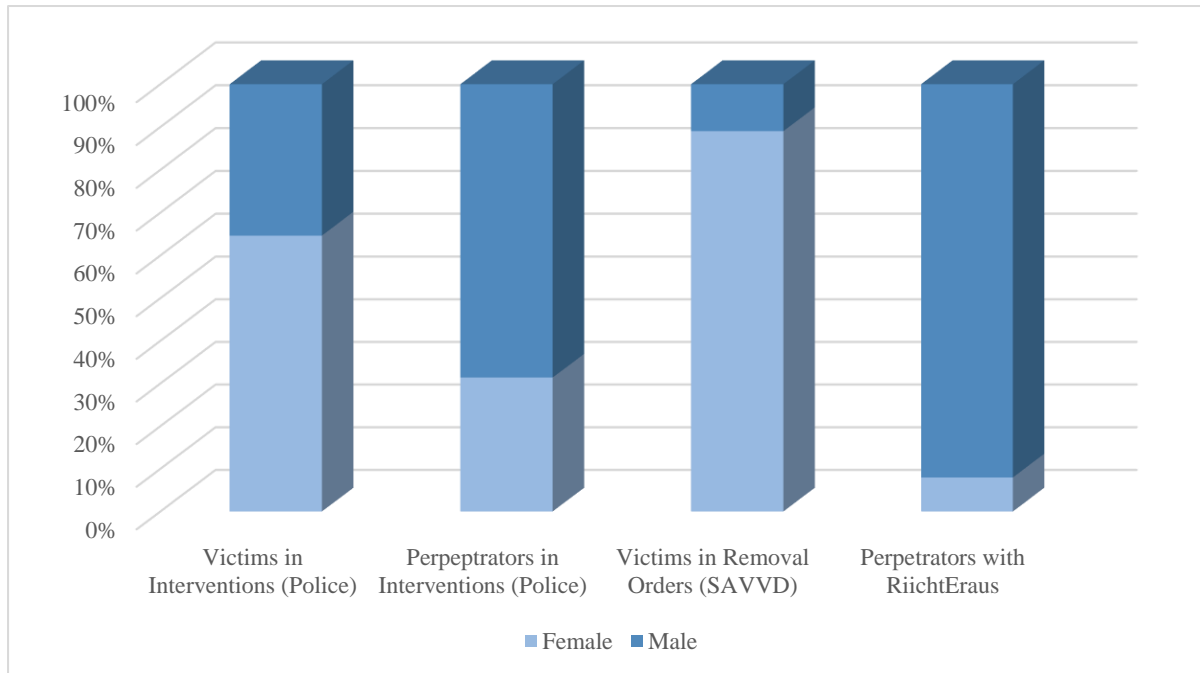
In the same way, the geographical distribution of the interventions proportionally reflects the geographical distribution of the population: almost 9 out of 10 interventions occur in the

<sup>13</sup> Sources: Comité 2018, Police in Goffin 2019

Luxembourg judicial region, where Luxembourg City is the most concerned with 147 interventions, followed by Esch-sur-Alzette with 61 (Comité 2018: 6-7).

### e. Profile of Victims and Perpetrators

*Figure 3 - Gender of Victims and Perpetrators*



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Throughout the years, data shows that direct victims are mostly adult and female. More specifically, in 2017, out of the 1151 victims recorded at interventions, about 2/3 were female and 1/3 male and about 1/10 minors. For those 1151 victims registered by the police, there were 1016 perpetrators: about 2/3 were male and 1/3 female. A small minority of 2.4% were minors. The slightly higher number of victims than perpetrators shows that, in some cases, there is more than one direct victim. Looking at removal orders, the proportion of female victims is higher than in interventions: about 90% of the victims are female. Information provided by Riicht Eraus confirms this gender gap for perpetrators: only 8% of perpetrators that have consulted with them are female and 92% are male, making the problem of domestic violence a dominantly male-perpetrated issue (Comité 2018: 11, 14-15, 27).

Again, one has to reflect over those numbers. Putting together the gender of victims and perpetrators with the nature of violence detected during interventions, one can observe a correlation between physical violence, male perpetration and female victimisation. However,

<sup>14</sup> Sources: Comité 2018

given that domestic violence often lasts over years, the information provided in the national report does not necessarily reflect the nature of violence throughout the relationship, whether physical violence only occurred at the moment of the intervention, whether other forms of violence were more common and whether the perpetrator recorded at the moment of the intervention was the same throughout the relationship. The issue with these statistics is that they can't account for past processes, which is what the content of the interviews will be able to expose in the analysis.

In terms of age, most perpetrators range between the ages of 30 to 50 years, putting together the statistics of the police and the different support services (Comité 2018: 11, 27). The same goes for victims, who are mostly of 30 years and above with a concentration around ages ranging from 30-60 (Comité 2018: 11, 14-15). These numbers indicate that domestic violence is rather a problem within adult ages.

Nonetheless, children in the household aren't spared from violence, even if not directly abused. For the 217 removal orders in 2017, there was a total of 274 victims recorded by the police, out of which 37 were children. However, SAVVD points out that beyond those 37, there was a total of 193 children living in the concerned families, who might have been at least witnesses of domestic violence but weren't registered as such by the police (Comité 2018: 11).

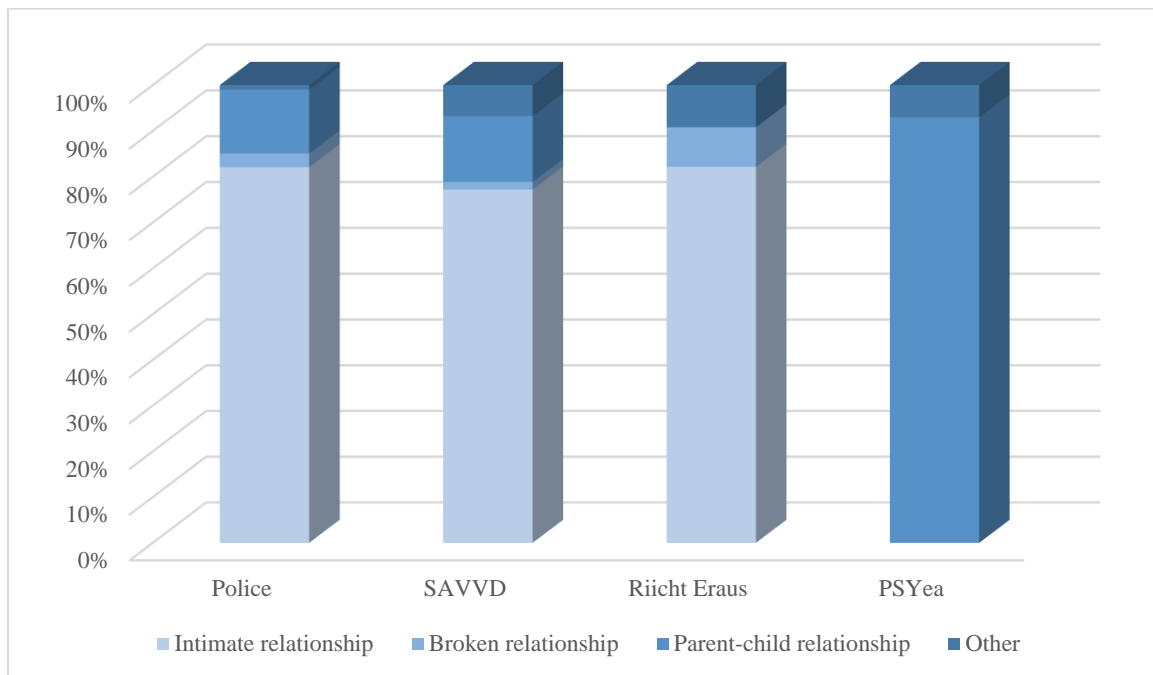
In 2017, PSYea received 123 cases of removal orders where children<sup>15</sup> were involved as direct or indirect victim. Within those 123 cases, there was a total of 219 victims, about half of which were male and the other half female. Beyond cases of removal orders, PSYea also consults with children outside the context of removal orders. The ages of these victims seem to be spread out but putting everything together, teenage children seem to be the most concerned with more than half of the children being aged 7-17 (Comité 2018: 21).

Looking at the victim-perpetrator relationships PSYea registered, 99% of the cases concern first (3/4) and second-degree parental violence. More than 9 in 10 of these perpetrators are male confirming that it is a mainly male-perpetrated issue, even when directed towards children (Comité 2018: 19-20, 23).

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<sup>15</sup> Up to the age of 21

Figure 4 - Perpetrator-Victim Relationship



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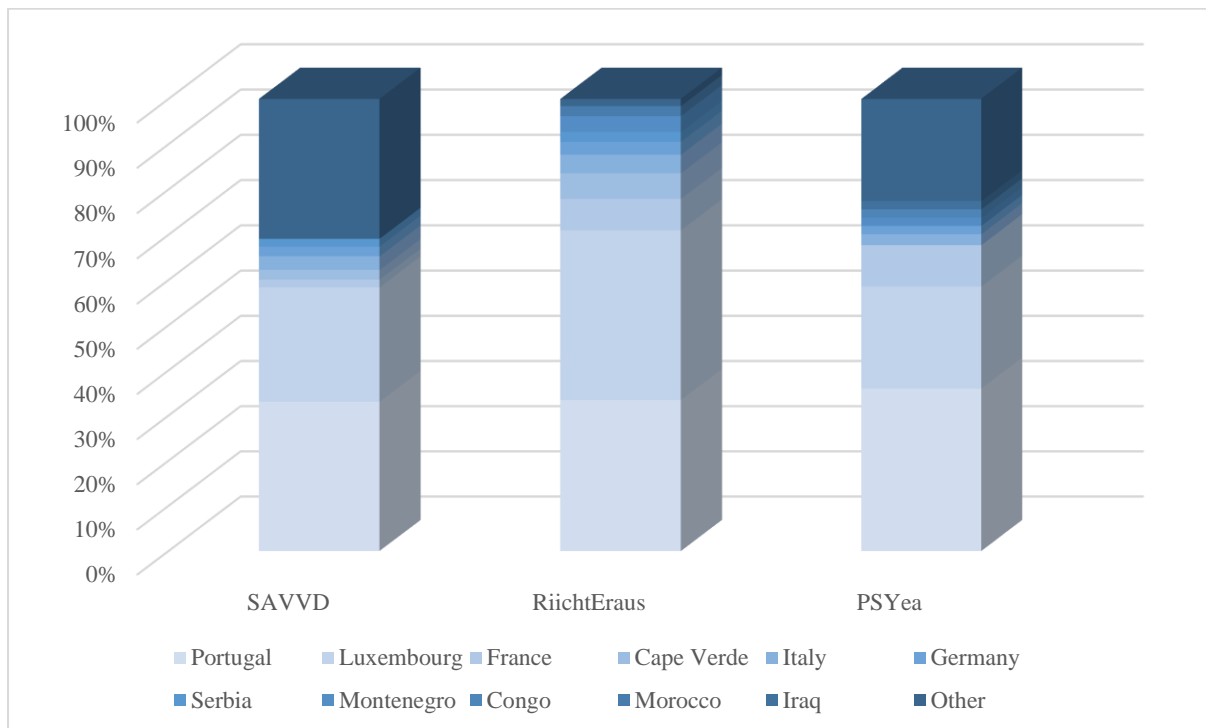
Looking at the relationships as registered by the police, SAVVD and Riicht Eraus, at least 80% concern any form of intimate relationship: marriage, concubine, PACS<sup>17</sup>. Within those relationships, most perpetrators, again, were male (Comité 2018: 11, 27).

We can notice that domestic violence, as recorded in the moment of intervention as well as when consulted with the support services, is primarily a problem of adult male-perpetrated intimate partner violence, where the theoretical framework will be able to look into processes that would lead to male perpetrated violence towards women, without undermining other types of relationships.

<sup>16</sup> Sources: Comité 2018

<sup>17</sup> Civil Solidarity Pacts

Figure 5 - Nationality of Victims and Perpetrators



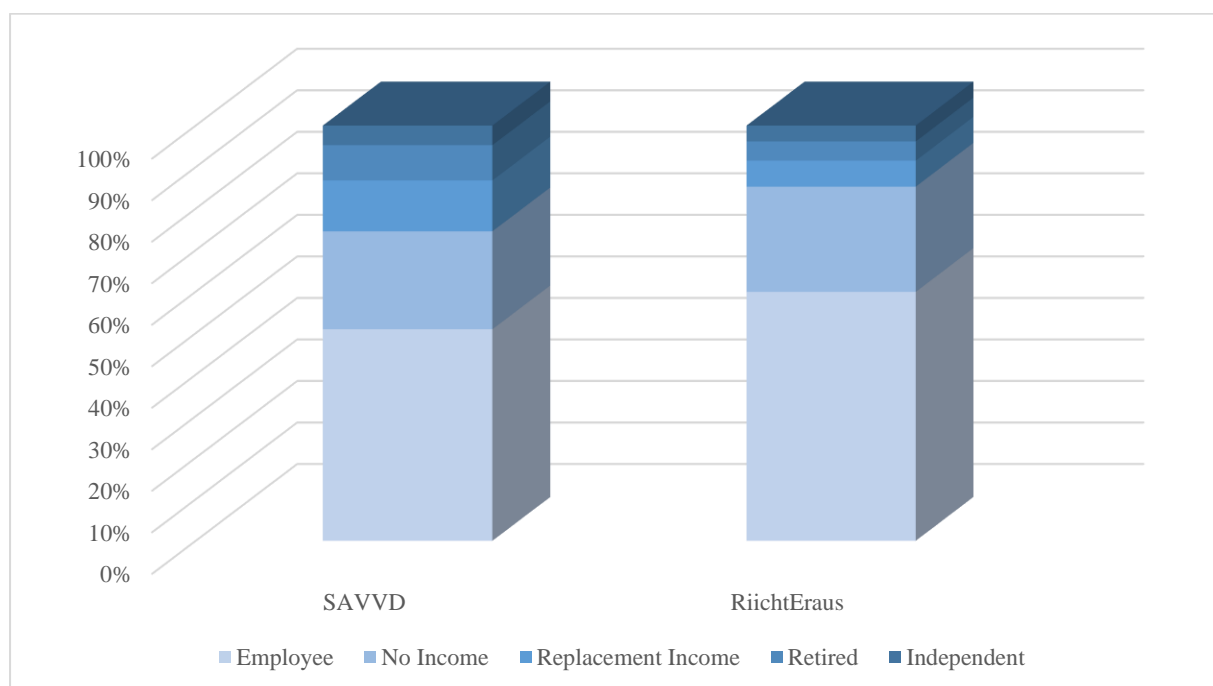
18

In terms of nationality, the support services recorded more than 20 different nationalities in 2017, among which one can see that the Portuguese and Luxembourgish occupy a large proportion (Comité 2018: 15, 22, 29). This distribution of nationalities represents the same distribution of nationalities among the general population of Luxembourg. After the Luxembourgish, the Portuguese represent the largest population of foreigners followed by the French, the Italian and others. This shows that, in proportion to Luxembourg's multicultural profile, all nationalities are more or less equally affected as none of them seem to be disproportionately represented.

<sup>18</sup> Sources: Comité 2018



Figure 6 - Professional Situation of Victims and Perpetrators



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What concerns the professional status of the victims and perpetrators, one can see that at least half of both populations are employed. Among the employed population in Riicht Eraus, more than half are workers. The unemployed represent 21% of victims and 29% of perpetrators and those benefitting from income replacement represent 11% of the victims and 6% of the perpetrators (Comité 2018: 16, 28). Although domestic violence transgresses different social and economic conditions, one can notice that a large proportion deals with unemployment, income replacement or a rather low-income profession such as workers.

Looking at the Luxembourgish population in its whole, as of March 2019, there is an unemployment rate of 5.4% and about 3% is under income replacement (Damiani 2018, STATEC 2019). Unlike nationality and geographic distribution, one can notice a difference between the general population and the one affected by domestic violence: the concentration of unemployed people and people under income replacement is higher than in the general population. In fact, the proportion of unemployed is the quadruple of the national average and the proportion of those under income replacement is more than the triple of the national average.

<sup>19</sup> Sources: Comité 2018

However, what is not known is how the professional situations of the victims connect to the ones of the perpetrators and what the gravity of social and/or economic stress is. For example, couples where one person is a public servant and one person is unemployed, do not necessarily live under stressful conditions. This is where the information gathered from the interviews will be able to enlighten us.

#### **f. Form of Violence**

Out of the 237 victims that SAVVD consulted with in 2017, 100% have been victims of psychological violence, 92% of physical violence and 18% have received death threats. The same observations go for child and adolescent victims. In the context of removal orders, they're mainly victims of physical violence but outside of this context, "only" half of them are victims of physical violence (Comité 2018: 17, 21).

The high rate of physical violence is explained by the fact that most of these victims are victims where removal orders have been granted. One has to keep in mind that because most of the statistics here concern police interventions and removal orders, it is not known whether these numbers also reflect cases of domestic violence where the victims seek help with other support services or who voluntarily consult with the support services part of the Committee. In order to integrate perspectives of cases where the police was not involved, to see whether victims who do not get into contact with the police suffer from the same circumstances, services other than those part of the Committee were interviewed.

Additionally, Riicht Eraus provided insight into relapses. In 2017, the service started paying more attention to cases of relapses leading to removal orders as well as repeated interventions which did not lead to removal orders. That year, 20% of the removal orders concerned relapses and for almost 40% of the cases where a removal order was granted for the first time, the police had already intervened in the past (Comité 2018: 24).

Putting all this information together, this *état des lieux* provides important insights into the scenario domestic violence in Luxembourg. What can be deduced for now, is that, with about 725 cases a year, domestic violence in Luxembourg is mainly a problem of adult and male-perpetrated violence towards their partner with a large representation of the ages 30-50 and a slightly stronger presence of low-income classes as compared to high income classes. All of this needs to be considered relatively to Luxembourg's demographic profile and to the fact that the police intervenes at peaking moments of domestic violence.

In all this, one must point out that the statistics do not allow to dig into interpersonal and structural factors such as control and gender, the focus of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

With basic knowledge of demographic patterns of domestic violence in Luxembourg in place, the analysis of the role of gender and control as causes of domestic violence will follow.

## 5. Analysis

Chapter 4 finds its limitations in that, based on solely that knowledge, one isn't able to dig into the causal processes which lead to domestic violence, nor able to explore academic and theoretical perspectives. To bridge this gap, and as mentioned in the methodology chapter, interviews with professionals in direct contact with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, were held. The intent of the interviews was to provide a deeper understanding of the violence the victims experience, how they experience it, how the perpetrator treats and behaves towards the victims as well as the nature and dynamics of the relationship between perpetrator and victim.

In order to get a grasp of the relevance and in order to argue the relevance of Control Balance Theory and Feminist Theory in the Luxembourg context, the interviews ran through targeted topics in relation to both theories; the topics are the following:

- homogeneity or heterogeneity of the encountered cases of domestic violence in terms of gender, economic difficulties, nationalities, age, form of violence, pattern of violence and alike
- the perception, embodiment and support of traditional, stereotypical gender roles
- decision-making and independence
- relationship dynamics in terms of jealousy, control, communication
- the role, suffering and involvement of children

Within each of these topics, the interviewees ran through different aspects of society and life such as socialisation, politics, technology, media, friends and family and how each of these aspects relate to domestic violence. These topics addressed by the interviewees organised the content of the interviews into 'nodes'<sup>20</sup> which are represented in Table 3 on the following page.

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<sup>20</sup> Nodes is a used term in the Nvivo Data Analysis Program and can be seen as categories. Researchers are able to create nodes and code the content of their data according to the nodes.

*Table 3 - Nodes for Content Coding of the Interviews*

Node	Description	
1	Children	How are children affected and how do they affect the situation
2	Control and dependency	Existence of dependency and/or control; how do the people involved experience this; how is this control/dependency seen, created, shaped
3	Criminality and invisibility	Involvement of other crimes; visibility of domestic violence
4	Culture	Cultural background; construct of domestic violence
5	Cycle or pattern of violence	Existence/visibility of a clear pattern, cycle or motive of violence
6	Drugs or alcohol	Involvement of drugs or alcohol
7	Economic situation	Socio-professional category, economic distress, un/employment, under economic state benefits
8	Gender	Presence and weight of gender stereotypes; traditional belief systems about men and women; a/symmetry between men and women
9	Geography	Influence of geographic location
10	History of violence	History of violence in the family, in the partner's family, in one's past
11	Nature of violence	Physical, sexual, psychological, economic, other?
12	Outreach	Who reaches out to what organisation/person, motivation for outreach, work of the organisations the victims/perpetrators reach out to
13	Population	Age, gender, nationality, socio-economic category, location
14	Pre-police	Steps/situation before reaching out to the police; cases that reach out to other services rather than the police
15	Police	Involvement of the police, outreach to the police, work of the police
16	Relationship	Type of relationship between victim and perpetrator, dynamics in the relationships, characteristics
17	Self-blame	Self-blame of the victim and its reasons
18	Society	Social dynamics, characteristics of Luxembourg society, influence of and on Luxembourg society

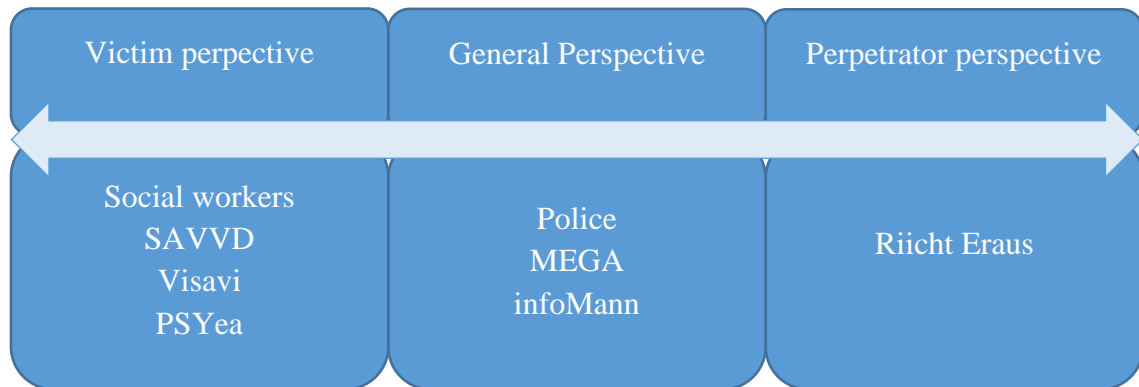
Putting these categories next to the theories, certain nodes serve as specific indicators in proving or invalidating the theories, specifically content coded under 2, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 18 without disregarding content coded under the remaining nodes.

Some of the topics were given more or less attention according to the profession and outlook of the interviewees. To give a little more context to this, the interview with Kristin Schmit from the Police focused on police work and peaking moments of domestic violence, while the interviews with the different support services put more attention to the relationship between victim and perpetrator, dynamics between them and their history. The interview with Francis Spautz from infoMann was more enlightening in terms of gender in Luxembourg society as a whole and the perception of the male whereas the interview with Laurence Bouquet from Riicht

Eraus offered perspectives on their work with perpetrators and how they view and deal with domestic violence.

Visualising the various perspectives on a spectrum illustration with one extreme representing the victim perspective, the other the perpetrator perspective and the middle representing a general perspective, the distribution is as follows:

*Figure 7 - Perspective Spectrum of the Interviewees*



Although the interviewees are professionals working directly or indirectly with domestic violence, they provided a variety of information and perspectives. According to the perspective, there are different arguments for and against Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory. Nevertheless, in this variety of perspectives, there is also common ground.

In all this, consolidating the content of the interviews with the knowledge from the overview and the theoretical framework, the analysis is systematically divided into specific sub-chapters which analyse domestic violence on different scales and in different domains. The author will start off by analysing the role of control as a predominant trait in domestic violence and in how far Control Balance Theory is able to explain domestic violence. Control Balance Theory will serve as the main theory in the first part, but it will show that it is not possible to completely separate both theories. Hence Feminist Theory will fill in where needed. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part, the analysis looks at domestic violence from a larger scale looking at how, mainly through a Feminist lens, society, education and politics influence domestic violence in Luxembourg.

#### **a. Control as a Common Denominator?**

Given that the environment of its happening is so diversified, the question arises whether domestic violence in Luxembourg finds common ground and more specifically in the context of Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory, whether gender inequality and/or control asymmetry are the causes of domestic violence in Luxembourg. Due to the occasional

intersection of gender and control, it is not possible to completely keep both theories apart. However, this part of the analysis is led by Control Balance Theory.

The overview showed that women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence and that 80% of the cases concern intimate relationships, making it mainly, but not only, a problem of intimate partner violence, supporting the general approach of Feminist Theory. The author will further dig into these feminist thoughts later on in Chapter 5.b., but still, one has to highlight that male perpetrated violence against their intimate partner has been the focal point in the working approach of Luxembourg policy and its professionals on the field, some of whom were interviewed and all of whom highlighted male dominance over the woman. In all this, the following sub-chapters demonstrate that there are different types of male perpetrated intimate violence which reflect different states of control ratios and hence different control dynamics.

Recalling the perception of domestic violence presented in Chapter 3.d.i., researchers differentiate between situational violence or intimate terrorism. If one takes a look at the interviews, both types of domestic violence clearly exist in Luxembourg:

- a more interactive violence as a result of heavy discussions, arguments and conflicts between partners which escalate into violence, referring to the definition of situational violence (Interview 2, 8),
- a more intimidating violence where one partner is domineering over the other and where violence is an expression of authority, referring to the definition of intimate terrorism (Interview 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8).

Both types of domestic violence have very particular and different dynamics and reasons of happening; and according to the interviewed social workers and victim services, situational violence concerns a minority of cases as compared to intimate terrorism. As a matter of fact, not much attention was given to situational violence in the discourse of the interviewees; most interviewees pertain to intimate terrorism and as seen in a later stage, the population that social workers and victim services receive, does mostly concern intimate terrorism (Interview 1, 2, 5, 8, 9).

However, the interview with Laurence Bouquet providing the perpetrators' perspective suggests the existence of a 3<sup>rd</sup> type of domestic violence which does not seem to fit into either typology of violence but appertains to a specific situation of control asymmetry as put forward by Control Balance Theory (Interview 9).

### **i. An Unexplored Type of Domestic Violence**

Laurence Bouquet from Riicht Eraus confirms that most cases of domestic violence concern intimate partner violence. However, when asked about control dynamics, her perspective seems to diverge from the victim perspective, seemingly pointing towards a reversed situation of control than the one that characterises intimate terrorism. According to the experience of the professionals in Riicht Eraus, the typical control dynamics of intimate terrorism do not concern their population.

When questioned about the distribution of responsibilities and control of household budget, finances, purchases and alike, Laurence Bouquet highlights that these tasks and responsibilities are mostly laid upon the woman in the relationship/family who, in most cases, is a “housewife”. In alignment with Feminist Theory, she explains how the stereotypical roles of a woman staying at home, cooking, taking care of the children and of a man as the breadwinner, are clearly visible and common in Riicht Eraus’ population. However, this traditional role distribution does not lead to a suppressed woman and a dominant man as Feminist Theory and Control Balance Theory would typically put forward, but rather the contrary. It is the man who feels neglected, although he financially provides for the family:

*“But I have no say any longer at home” (Anecdote, Interview 9).*

*“I do go to work and I provide the money, but actually when I come home, the system at home, it works. And I don’t belong in it anymore” (Anecdote, Interview 9).*

Looking at this in the perspective of the Control Balance Theory, one can notice an asymmetric control ratio, but not with the ulterior motives. An original thought of this theory is that the person with the only income in the household develops a “superior” position in terms of control; in this scenario, control would be materially based. However, the anecdotes show that their daily absence, although sustaining the family, confers most responsibilities to the woman: buying clothes for the children, managing the budget, managing social life and free time activities (Interview 9). Consequently, the woman finds herself in a position of control surplus because of the tasks and responsibilities that she holds as a housewife and not because she is the provider. The traditional gender roles do not create a situation of dependency of the woman to the man, as one might usually think. Here, financial dependency does not correlate with control deficit; actually, the control deficit is disproportionate towards the financial provider.



The presumptions of Feminist Theory are unable to explain this kind of situation. However, Control Balance Theory offers a unique perspective: the person in control deficit (man) becomes violent in an attempt to put a halt to the dominance of the person in control surplus (woman). Control Balance Theory does in fact allege that in any situation of control asymmetry, any person can become violent for various motives. The main motive of this situation of deficit is to “pause” the continuous denigration of the man by his partner, to block further control deficit and in some cases, to even reduce the control surplus of the other in an attempt to get closer to a situation of control symmetry (Interview 9).

This imbalance is mainly seen in terms of responsibilities and decision-making as shown above but looking closer at the dynamics in the relationship, this can be accompanied by further forces. Laurence Bouquet put forward the following:

- verbal pressure towards the man: “suffocating him with words” creating tensions,
- lack and inability of open communication between family members in sharing emotions and boundaries,
- feeling of exclusion by the men in the family in terms of responsibilities and decision-making,
- the need of the men to affirm themselves and prove their position as a “man”,
- incomprehension of the women in recognising the need of the men to have more space and say,
- jealousy from both sides,
- alcohol consumption by both sides,
- increasing autonomy of the woman through employment opportunities and salary raises turning her into the main wage earner of the household (Interview 9).

An accumulation of these circumstances creates intensifying tensions within the couple where the man’s position and say become increasingly insignificant creating “an atmosphere or a setting [...] where violence is the last ultimate step, the last resort” (Interview 4). This situation reaches its peak when the “final offender”<sup>21</sup> decides to turn violent to put a halt to this situation of suppression. The final offender only becomes violent when he does not see any other way out of the struggle (Interview 4, 9).

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<sup>21</sup> In this type of domestic violence, the distinction between perpetrator and victim is not evident. There is no clear border. The term “final offender” here is used with the idea that up to the point of escalation, of physical violence, the final offender might not have been the main perpetrator of (any kind of) violence.

Violence becomes the last possible means to have a moment of peace, to stop the situation of control deficit (Interview 4, 9). And this is where this type of domestic violence differentiates itself from situational violence or intimate terrorism. In this type of domestic violence, violence is not motivated by the purpose of creating hurt and increasing power, nor is it an escalation of a verbal fight. Here, the final offender turns to violence with the purpose of putting an end to his/her personal subjection, denigration, belittlement:

*Violence happens “because of powerlessness and not because of power” (Interview 9).*

Control Balance Theory is able to bring forward the unique position that control holds in the domestic violence experienced by the perpetrators of Riicht Eraus’ population: a perpetrator in control deficit where violence is a means of putting a halt to the extension of this control deficit. One could refer to this type of domestic violence as “reversed intimate terrorism”; reversed because the perpetrator is in a situation of control deficit and not surplus and because the motive of domestic violence is not to expand the control one holds towards the victim but to put a halt to the control that the “final victim” held to the point of physical violence.

In “reversed intimate terrorism”, domestic violence seems to happen in two phases separated by the very moment preceding the moment the “final perpetrator” turns violent:

*Figure 8 - Phases of Reversed Intimate Terrorism*

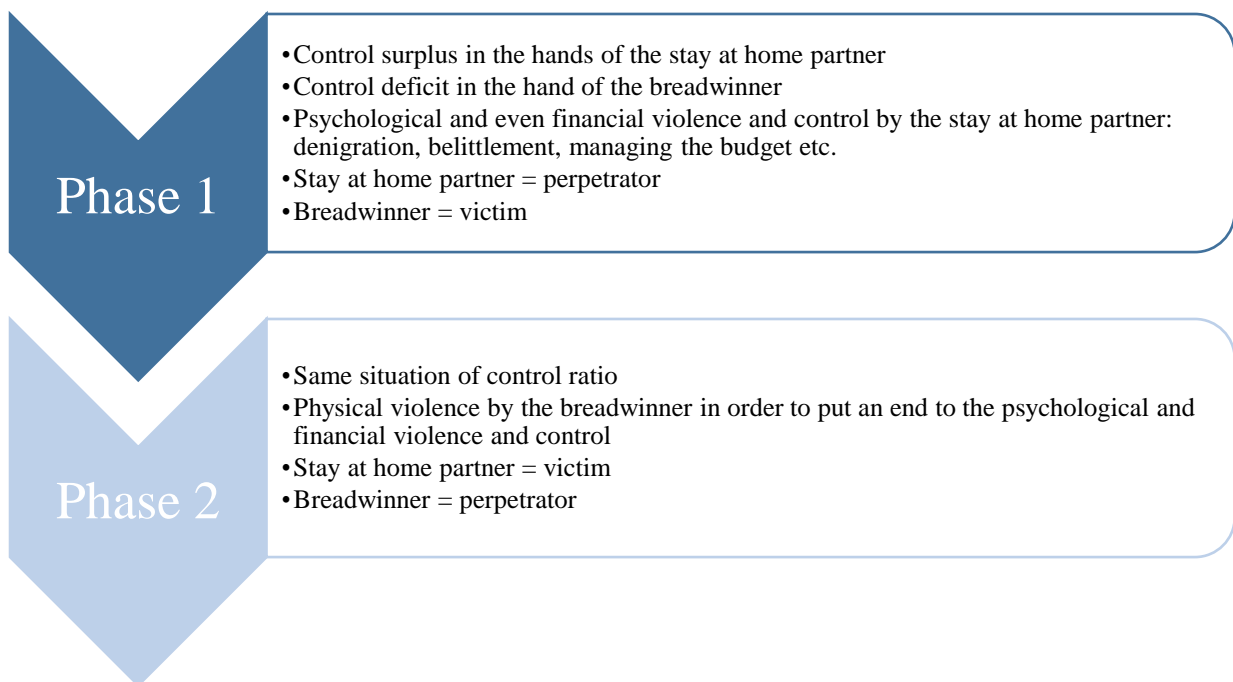


Figure 3 illustrates the “chronology” of the types of violence that occur in this situation and what role each partner plays in both phases. However, this is not the same dynamic experienced

by the population of victims that social workers and victim support services are in contact with. It seems that we're facing two distinct populations with two distinct situation of control ratios.

## **ii. Two Populations, Two Types of Control Dynamics**

As the only organisation specialised in dealing with perpetrators of domestic violence in Luxembourg, Riicht Eraus offers a unique perspective amidst the gathered findings, a perspective which derails from the victim perspective. Comparing these two angles and as Laurence Bouquet herself mentioned, one has to distinguish between two types of populations, which do not coincide in terms of relationship and control dynamics (Interview 9).

On the one hand, there is the kind of domestic violence as previously depicted and analysed: a perpetrator in control deficit wanting to put an end to his submissiveness and turning to violence as a last resort.

On the other hand, there is also a different situation of control imbalance where control lies in the hands of the perpetrator whose motive it is to expand this control by systematically intimidating his/her victim, who in most cases is his/her partner. It's the type of violence that most victim services come across in their population (Interview 1, 2, 5, 8, 9).

These two dynamics are population specific and in the same logic, these populations relate to specific control imbalances. Moreover, these two populations seem to be separated by the type of support service they consult with:

- Victims of intimate terrorism consult with support services, but the corresponding perpetrators of intimate terrorism do not consult with Riicht Eraus (Interview 9)
- In the same logic, victims of perpetrators that consult with Riicht Eraus do not consult with the support services with the exception of obligated consultation after a removal order.

Moreover, amidst the removal orders transferred to Riicht Eraus, 40% of the perpetrators do not present themselves, half of which were unreachable but for the other half, the reason remains unknown (Comité 2017: 24-25). It is not possible to tell whether these 40% represent cases of intimate terrorism, but for the average of 400 perpetrators that Riicht Eraus works with on a yearly basis, most of the situations fall into the typology of reversed intimate terrorism (Comité 2017: 25, Interview 9).

The same observation can be done for the victim services and the social workers. For the majority of cases that they encounter, a strong majority of the cases fall into the category of intimate terrorism, which will be investigated in the following stage (Interview 1, 2, 5, 6, 8).

### **iii. The Inherent Role of Control in Intimate Terrorism**

With the exception of Laurence Bouquet, most interviewees put forward observations of power and control of the male over the female. And this feature of control and power is more or less pronounced depending on the interviewee. To define this type of control and power in the perspective of the victim, when talking about violence, the interviewees consistently refer to a violence that is characterised as:

- systematic, daily, pressuring, patterned, regular, lasting, dangerous, distressed, intimidating, concealed, controlling, creative, disrespectful, manipulative, hidden, threatening, harassing, aggressive, complicated, dictatorial (Interview 1-8).

And when analysing the content of the interviews in further detail, one notices the reoccurring use of the following expression: a dominator-dominated (“*dominant-dominée*”) relationship where man is dominating over the woman, an imbalance of power which appertains to Control Balance Theory’s vision of control surplus-control deficit with the person in control surplus acting as an exploitative and controlling person and the person in control deficit being in a position of submissiveness (Interview 1-8).

In fact, when asked about relational dynamics, more specifically how victims describe the relationship and/or perpetrator, the interviewees used following terms:

- dictatorship, power, control, domination, suppression, possessive, isolation, power structure, dependence, jealous, imbalanced relationship, economic dependent, sequacious, manipulate, losing her feeling of self-worth, disobedient, harassment, liar, trauma and fear (ibid.).

These terms relate to authority and imbalanced power relationships, its outlets and its consequences and indicate how control and power are strong elements of domestic violence.

A reoccurring thought within the victim perspective was how domestic violence is a clear expression of power of a person who desires and uses this power in order to bring the other person down, confirming not only the typical situation of control asymmetry of Control Balance Theory but also Feminist Theory’s view that domestic violence mirrors male authority

(Interview 2, 4, 5, 6, 8). Hence, violence becomes a means to hold up the authority of the person in control surplus creating an environment of domination, dependency and fear around the victim who is in control deficit. And this environment often is imperceptible by the victim:

*“It is the only reality they know”* (Interview 5).

According to Chantal Ronkar, a surprising number of women are suppressed and dependent on their partner in an environment that she believes provides space for female emancipation rather than female suppression. As she goes on to explain, in some cases, this dependency is materially determined by a potential lack of resources but for others, this dependency does not have a material basis (Interview 2). This statement shows how dependency can even exist in a context that does not favour dependency, such as a situation of unemployment for example where one depends on the income of the partner.

The fact is that often this dependency and control aren't apparent for the victim because it is the “reality they know”, meaning that these victims are not (yet) able to step out of the situation, look at it from above and recognise themselves as victims (Interview 5, 8). It is hard for victims to recognise violence, especially psychological and verbal. This can be reinforced by personality traits; for instance, some victims have *“poor self-esteem, a bad image of themselves, then they think that, when the perpetrator says that kind of things, it is to help myself. If he says ‘hey look at yourself, how you look, [and gives commands], you have to do this and this’; they don't see this as violence”* (Interview 8).

This inability to recognise their situation can also be supported by a certain degree of “acceptance” of the violence and control that these victims are subject to. Here, the background of the victim plays a role in terms of their level of tolerance of violence:

*“We see a difference, for example in the case of women who already experienced violence as children or who have seen that the father hit the mother. [We have noticed] that they have another [...] ‘tolerance’ of violence [...] because they have learned it”* (Interview 5).

In the lens of Control Balance Theory, this shows to what extent that the element of control can go, and how the monopolisation of control in a relationship can create an environment of superiority, where the person in control surplus takes the opportunity to exploit this position of superiority and authority to strengthen his/her position and weaken the partner's position.

In all this, the typical traits of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence that Control Balance Theory suggests, can be recognised. This depiction of both the victim and the perpetrator reflects the profile of a person in the corresponding situation of control deficit or surplus, as put forward by the Theory: victims can be identified by their “traits of inferiority, self-perception of worthlessness, vulnerability and forgiveness” and perpetrators tend “to be exploitative, controlling resources and income, showing traits of possession, jealousy and dominance” (Chapter 3.a.).

More than these specific personality traits, the relationship itself also holds specific dynamics that are unique to situations of intimate terrorism.

Relationships of intimate terrorism have a particular feature created by unequal power relationships which also plays in the fact that victims don’t perceive the signs and patterns of violence. This unique feature creates a favourable environment for domestic violence to occur in: it is the imbalance and hierarchy between victim and perpetrator, which can also be pictured as the “encapsulation” of the victim’s life into the perpetrator’s life (Interview 2).

When conceptualising a relationship between two people, where each of them represent an ‘entity’ encompassing their personality, personal interests, network, income etc., a healthy relationship is one of “*two entities with an intersection, that is what is common and for the rest, each of them has their own space as it should be in a balanced relationship*” (Interview 2).

In imbalanced relationships however, one of the entities is encapsulated in and subordinated to the other with the latter one making decisions, deciding what the “lower” entity is allowed to do or not allowed to do, how the relationship should function and alike (Interview 2).

This conceptualisation of relationships of intimate terrorism is able to visualise the concept of *control asymmetry* of Control Balance Theory. The element of *control deficit* refers this “encapsulation”, subjection of the victim’s life, as put forward by Chantal Ronkar from SAVVD. Moreover, the description of violent relationships by the interviewed social workers, Céline Gérard from PSYea as well as Isabel Da Silva from Visavi allure to this unique structure of relationships of intimate terrorism. These interviews allow for insights into the specific methods and patterns of control, which are set in these controlling and dominant relationships.

#### **iv. Methods of Control**

This encapsulating feature can be observed through the access and freedom, or rather non-access and non-freedom that the victim has to certain resources or to engage in certain

activities. The different methods of control put into action by intimate terrorists are proof and indicators of continuous imbalanced power relationships which shows that control is an essential factor of intimate terrorism. Recalling the relational description put forward by Control Balance theory, violent relationships bear a “pattern of intimidation and control that includes the use of physical violence by one person against another” (Chapter 3.a.). In intimate terrorism, this pattern of intimidation and control emanates from the perpetrator and this pattern can be seen through the different anecdotes of the interviewees to illustrate the different observations of control that they have made.

This situation of subordination creates a situation of non-access/freedom of the victim who needs to ask for permission to do something, who has no overlook of the household budget and expenses, who is expected to please the male and who does not know any reality other than this (Interview 1, 2, 5, 6, 8). If one looks into the specifics of this non-access/freedom, they reflect the three main outlets of control presented by the Control Balance Theory: psychological control, financial control and physical control going as far as controlling every single aspect of the victim’s life. And each of these methods of control relate to specific forms of domestic violence: psychological, financial/economic and physical/sexual.

Financial control is one of the most frequent methods that can be observed; it’s a method of control the victim often is not able to recognise and even perceives as ‘normal’ (Interview 5, 6). In contrast to the population that Riicht Eraus encounters, where it is not unusual for the perpetrator ‘to be in charge’ of the household budget, here, victims are often not involved and even excluded in anything related to income and expenses:

*“They are not allowed to do groceries without him knowing that they bought something, or [even if they have a personal income], they simply have no account, they have no insight. They don’t see half of the things [...] or they have no access or [even] usual daily letters. They are for example not able to tell me how much they pay for communal taxes [or they don’t know how much they pay for the electrical bill] [...] because the Mr. takes care of everything”* (Interview 6).

This financial control creates a significant level of dependency of the victim and this level of financial in/dependency also plays a role in the likeliness for a victim to put an end to his/her situation. People who “work freely, have a salary, then it’s easier to help yourself” (Interview 3, 9).

As mentioned earlier, the control imbalance must not necessarily have a material basis, such as being dependent on the partner's income. However, a materially based dependence is an obstacle for the victim to escape the relationship. This also explains the population that the police and victim services are in contact with. If the dependence is not materially based, it is less likely for the person to reach out to the police and/or victim services whereas a victim who is materially dependent on his/her partner is more likely to contact the police and/or victim service because this victim would be unable to sustain her/himself in the event that s/he would leave the relationship (Interview 3, 9).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> outlet of control concerns pastime activities and social life. Social isolation of the victim indicates the reality of a controlling relationship. Social isolation is a result of the perpetrator's desire to control the social network of the victim, restricting his/her interaction with other people and the world outside. What often adds on to this social isolation of the victim is extreme jealousy and possessiveness, not supporting that the victim has interactions outside of the relationship/family (Interview 1, 3, 4, 5, 6). This outlet of control can have several consequences which put the victim into a weak and passive position. In extreme cases of social isolation, the victims do not know the language, do not have any contacts and consequently do not have any sense of orientation outside of the household (Interview 1). To set some examples, Isabel Da Silva from Visavi describes how she has encountered victims who aren't allowed to greet strangers and where the perpetrator secretly follows the victim around in her daily life (Interview 4). This need to continuously control the victim can go as far as faking a sickness in order to be granted a sick leave which allows perpetrators to stay at home, close to the victim, where s/he can continue to exploit him/her under his/her command (Interview 5, 6).

In what concerns the last outlet, physical control, it is the most extreme form of control and expression of the perpetrators' superiority over the victim, further strengthening the relevance of Control Balance Theory. Physical control seems to occur in a latter stage, once financial and social control are well established (Interview 2, 5, 6):

*“Often it starts with verbal violence, then comes along psychological violence, control, [...] scolding, denigrating etc. and then [comments like] ‘you are nothing, you know nothing, you can’t do anything, without me you can’t manage anything, you are fat, you are ugly, you are here, you are there’ and then there is [...] this pressure because of the children: ‘if you leave, I will take the children away from you’ and [...] then*



*eventually there is hitting, pushing, hitting, anything, locking them up and in terms of sexual abuse, there, people often don't speak directly about it" (Interview 2).*

Physical control is what turns the invisibility of domestic violence somewhat visible but is not the most common form of control (Interview 5). As already seen in the overview, cases that concerns police intervention are cases of physical control and what the support services often notice is that those are situation of violence that have lasted over years and years (Interview 2). Physical violence seems to be the most extreme stage of intimate terrorism where victims, who over years never dared to reach out to the police or support services, finally do in order to put an end to this situation of extreme control which the perpetrator in that moment expresses through physical violence.

Although control can be categorised into these three outlets/methods of control, this control transgresses all aspects of the relationship and all aspects of the victim's life, and this is often linked to permanent dissatisfaction of the perpetrator. Whatever the victim does, it is never good enough, even when following orders of the perpetrator, making the acts of violence systematic and standardised, without any apparent trigger:

*"I had a boy here who was able to sum it up very well: My father tells my mother, speak, and then she speaks, then he hits her. Or he tells my mother to shut up, and then she keeps quiet, and then he still hits her. Nothing is ever good enough" (Interview 8).*

This shows that control is truly the main motive of intimate terrorism. There are no triggers, no events, no actions other than the imbalance of control that causes domestic violence.

Furthermore, these imbalances of control create a dependency of the victim towards the perpetrator as well as extreme denigration of the victim, all of which feeds this asymmetric relationship of "dominator-dominated". In all this, the outlets and methods of control serve as a means for the intimate terrorist to maintain his/her position of power and control towards the victim (Interview 5, 6). All these different methods shape a general pattern of control accompanied by intimidation and fear where the victim here becomes more of a possession than a partner (Interview 1, 4, 5).

And in the era of modern technology, this pattern of control is reinforced by different technological means integrating a type of control and violence which differs from the different outlets put forward by Control Balance Theory (financial, social and physical) and from the different forms of domestic violence (psychological, financial, physical and sexual). This new

category can be denominated as cyber control, or more generally cyber violence, due to its technological nature.

#### **v. New Type of Violence: Cyber Violence**

Digital violence is one of the most recent forms of violence that has emerged with the rise of technology and this violence is also much visible in cases of domestic violence and more specifically as a means of control in intimate terrorism (Interview 4, 5, 8, 9).

In what concerns reversed intimate terrorism, where the perpetrator is in control deficit, technology also plays a role. However, it is more a source of jealousy and tension, rather than a means of control (Interview 9). The role that technology plays in this type of relationships does not take the same weight as it does in intimate terrorism.

In intimate terrorism, technology is a new opportunity for the perpetrator to continue to exercise his/her position of superiority, further supporting the relevance of Control Balance Theory (Interview 5, 8).

And the main problem here again is that the victims can't protect themselves. This impossibility to protect oneself increases the possibility of control. In fact, it is nearly impossible to live in today's society without a smartphone and even when blocking a person, it is easy to contact someone via a third person, a fake profile or even the children. In cases where children are involved, they become a bypass for the perpetrator to access the primary victim that s/he desires to control, who is most often the ex/partner (Interview 5, 8). Furthermore, it becomes even more difficult in the event that victims aren't very tech-savvy:

*“Just recently, we had women who suddenly said, ‘but I don’t understand this, he always knows where I am’. Well, he had activated the GPS on her phone, and she didn’t know this. Or now, you have these spying apps which you can install if you know a minimum of hacking, then, when you know the phone number of another person, you can install an app without them knowing and that person is permanently controlled. I had a woman here whose man literally deleted messages on Messenger, deleted contacts, and this at distance, not directly on her phone. So, this new technology does not make things easier” (Interview 5).*

It is a truly visible means of control that facilitates the exploitation of the victim. Technology allows the intimate terrorist to always be updated about the victim's location and possible plans,

to control every single digital interaction, taking over the victim's digital world in favour of his/her interests.

And although, it is most often the partner who is the primary target of control, children are not spared of the atmosphere that is created through intimate terrorism between the parents.

#### **vi. What is the Children's Position in all this?**

Although domestic violence primarily concerns intimate relationships, children aren't spared of it, even if they are not the primary victim. However, the experience of the children does not seem to find the same divide as the two previously depicted categories of domestic violence; they seem to mainly relate to intimate terrorism.

In fact, the insights given by Céline Gérard from PSYea mirror the dynamics of intimate terrorism and the fact that children experience the same kind of dynamics of intimate terrorism, even when they are not primary victims, proves how, in the lens of Control Balance Theory, control is an elementary explanatory factor of domestic violence.

Children often experience domestic violence as "secondary victims". Almost the totality of the children that frequent PSYea are children of violent relationships. Children as primary and sole victims of domestic violence is rather a rare incident among the population at PSYea, but as secondary victims, they experience psychological violence and different methods of control of the perpetrator (Interview 8).

Looking deeper into the relationship between parent and child, parents are by nature hierarchically superior to their children due to their role in providing for them and raising them. This natural superiority of the parent creates pre-existing imbalanced power relations. However, in cases of domestic violence, the parent-child relationship mirrors an imbalanced father-mother relationship where father is the controlling entity of the relationship (Interview 8).

Children often suffer the same controlling relationship and non-access/freedom as their victimised parent. The reason for this is because a perpetrator in control surplus has a controlling and exploitative personality, which is embedded in his/her personality. Control acts out not only in the intimate relationships but also in other close relationships, for instance in the parent-child relationship:

*“It is the manner of the perpetrator to function, it is his/her manner to function in relationships” (Interview 8).*

In fact, children describe everyday life at home as a “dictatorship”:

*“Whatever they do, it’s not good. There is no freedom. They aren’t allowed to do anything. They always have to give notice when going out, especially when they get older, because if we talk about 5-6-year olds, then they’re with the mother and then the mother has to give notice about where she goes. But when they grow older, [...] when they start to become more autonomous, that is a problem for the perpetrator because when the [children] gain in autonomy, then the perpetrator does not hold as much power on the children anymore. And this is why they speak about dictatorship. [...] This has really to do with power” (Interview 8).*

The fact that a rise in autonomy is a threat to perpetrators shows how control drives domestic violence. Increasing autonomy means increasing control from the child’s position and this increase in control decreases the parents’ original situation of quasi control monopolisation.

However, there are also cases where the perpetrator uses the children to be part of his/her dictatorship by creating a “intergenerational coalition” by spoiling the child and providing them with everything (Interview 8). The child becomes an object that the perpetrator can use against the primary victim:

*“It is simply to show the victim ‘look, the two of us are well off and you are incapable of doing anything, you know nothing, you are nothing” (Interview 8).*

This strategy of the perpetrator to put the child at his/her level, integrating the child into the superior entity of the relationship, is an illusion because in reality the perpetrator only uses the child for his/her proper desires in exercising control (Interview 8).

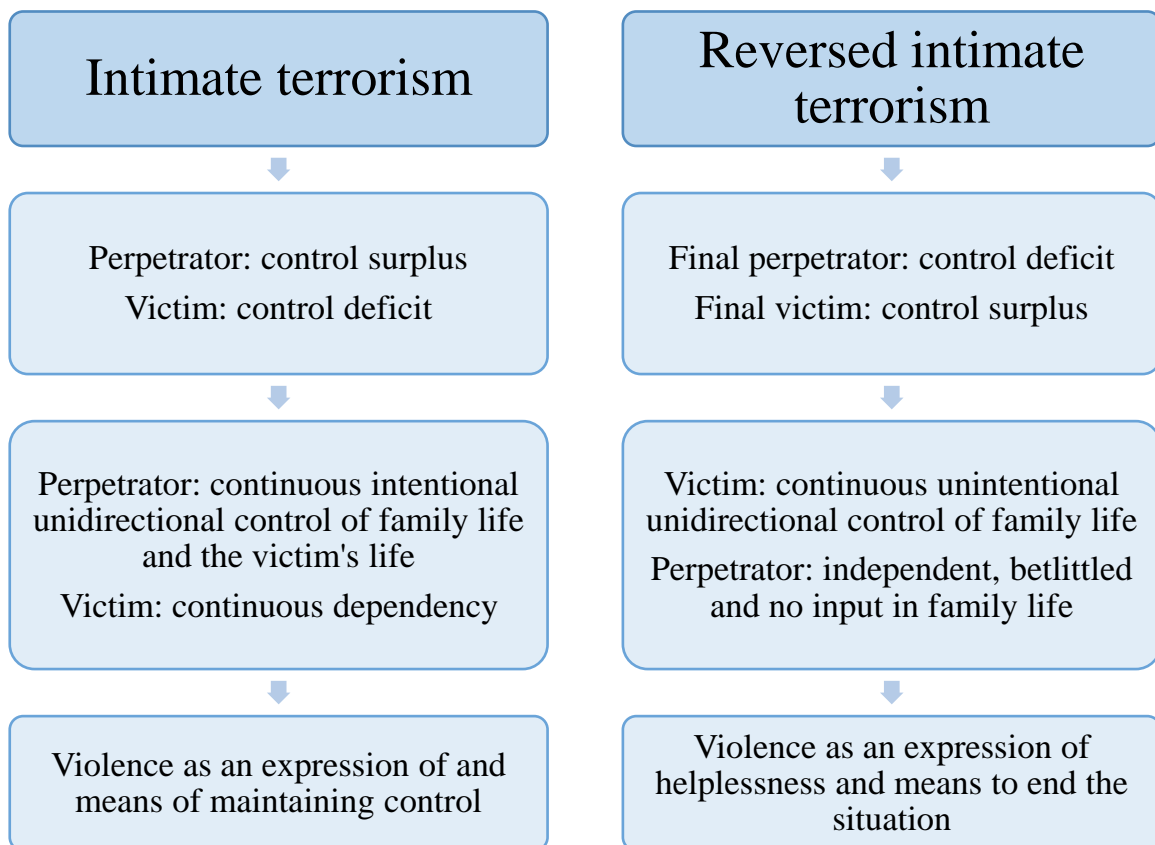
More than suffering the perpetrator’s exercise of control, children also become an intermediary between perpetrator and primary victim either by becoming an access point or a means to get back at and hurt the primary victim. First, through the need and desire to control the primary victim, who most often is the mother/wife/girlfriend, children become a medium for the perpetrator to access the mother by asking questions or even by locating the child through GPS location on their phone. In this aspect, children become an enabling element contributing to the continuation or extension of control of the perpetrator. Second, in some cases, children can also become a means for the perpetrator to hurt the primary victim by ignoring the children, not

providing them with the father figure that the mother often deems important in a child's growth (Interview 8).

In all this, Control Balance Theory is able to prove through the different outlets of control, the role of the children and the two scenarios of domestic violence, that control is an explanatory factor of domestic violence in Luxembourg.

Recalling both categories of domestic violence, the two populations that are divided by the victim/perpetrator perspective put forward two distinct dynamics of control, represented in the following figure.

*Figure 9 - Visual Representation of Intimate Terrorism and Reversed Intimate Terrorism*



This 1<sup>st</sup> part of the analysis which was mainly guided by Control Balance Theory comes to an end here. The theory was indeed able to bring forward interesting control dynamics of domestic violence in Luxembourg and to unveil control asymmetry as a primary cause of domestic violence which crosses different populations and relationships.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part that will follow now, the thesis focuses on Feminist Theory. Although Feminist Theory was not able to contribute much in this 1<sup>st</sup> part with the exception to highlight the gender asymmetry that exists among victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and how many families still embody traditional gender roles in the household with the male being the main breadwinner and the woman the housewife. Hence, the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the analysis will investigate the relationship between gender and occurrence of domestic violence.

### **b. Gender as a Reinforcer?**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this analysis consists in showing to what extent Feminist theory is able to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence in Luxembourg, i.e. to what extent gendered ideas are present on the societal level in terms of politics, culture and the construct of the problem as well as the family level by looking at the endorsement and embodiment of gender traditional roles within the family.

#### **i. The Construct of Domestic Violence**

The author starts off by inspecting the construct of and the work surrounding domestic violence in Luxembourg: how is it perceived, defined, disseminated? Do people talk about it? Is it a taboo topic? The construct of domestic violence namely reflects gendered societal elements and as it will show, the construct of domestic violence influences the phenomenon on a micro-level.

Internationally and nationally, domestic violence is constructed in a feminist lens. In Luxembourg, the issue of domestic violence is enshrined in the attributions of MEGA, making an institution promoting gender equality responsible for tackling domestic violence (MEGA n.d.).

With this specialised Ministry in place since 1995, gender equality is one of the national priorities and this value is in fact enshrined in the national constitution and legislation, making Luxembourg one of the only countries worldwide to have a governmental department exclusively in charge of promoting gender equality. And in their proactive work in making gender equality a reality, the government runs campaigns, sets gender quotas and makes efforts in promoting equal opportunities for all (Government of Luxembourg n.d.).

In all this, the issue of domestic violence is of primary importance with numerous awareness raising campaigns, events as well as agreements and cooperation with other institutions such as the Police and the Ministry of Justice, and also with numerous NGOs such as Femmes en

Détresse, ProFamilia and the Red Cross who have created more specific services specialised in working with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence (Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santana-Deutschle 2015).

The construct of domestic violence in Luxembourg is, similarly to other visions worldwide, primarily considered as an issue of gender (in)equality. Although basing their work in tackling domestic violence mainly on a feminist approach, MEGA as well as the legislation present a non-gendered definition because of the necessity to recognise and include victims and perpetrator whom do not fit into the “typical”, gendered vision (Interview 4).

With this non-gendered point of departure, Luxembourg differentiates itself from international documents such as CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention (ibid.). Yet, MEGA and the agencies and organisations it cooperates with, adopt a feminist approach with the belief that it is a structural problem that goes beyond the individual (Interview 2, 4, 7).

With a gender equal constitution and legislation, a Ministry for Equality, a specific law on domestic violence and constant awareness raising efforts, Luxembourg is considered a rather gender equal state, at least as seen from a bird’s eye view. Although only presenting a score of 69/100 in the Gender Equality Index rating, Luxembourg has made and is still making progress to this regard (EIGE 2018).

Now the question that arises is how the gendered characteristics of Luxembourg society relate to domestic violence.

According to the previous Minister of Equality between Men and Women, Lydia Mutsch, domestic violence is a topic that is not commonly spoken about. Both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence rather not share their sufferings, even anonymously. In fact, for the LIH study on domestic violence, anonymous surveys were sent out to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence via organisations in the field and out of more than 3000 forms, only 144 were sent back (Luxembourg Times 2015).

Albeit being governmentally and willingly gender neutral and albeit the national policy and efforts in place, domestic violence remains a taboo topic in Luxembourg. From this, the question arises whether the vehiculation of a non-gendered belief system is a reality in Luxembourg because taboo topics are embedded in greater structural dynamics, an issue one needs to dig into. The interviews and more specifically those with Ralph Kass from MEGA

and with Francis Spautz from infoMann, allow for further insights into possible structural influences on domestic violence.

## **ii. An Involuntarily Inegalitarian Society?**

Although the phenomenon of domestic violence exists in Luxembourg, violent behaviour and domestic violence are not condoned by Luxembourg's society, its norms and values (Interview 1, Fond-Harmant, Santerre & Santina-Deutschle 2015). Yet, it still remains a taboo topic among the general population.

As previously seen, Luxembourg may not be a country led by traditional gender norms, playing down the relevance of Feminist theory in explaining domestic violence from a structural point of view. At least constitutionally and outwardly speaking, Luxembourg is a rather advanced and progressive country in what concerns gender equality with it being a fundamental value of the country, with a Ministry for Equality between Men and Woman and with a movement on domestic violence which dates back to the 1980s. However, looking deeper into political dynamics, gender equality might not be as much a reality as Luxembourg wishes it to be (Interview 7).

Illustrating this is the political gender quota which sets 40% as a minimum of female representation on the candidate lists. However, 40% on the candidate lists does not result in the same representation of women in the parliament, which in reality is of 28% (Interview 7, Women Political Leaders n.d.). This is connected to the fact that the representative candidates, the candidates that are sent to panels, to the television, to the radio, to the newspaper, are nonetheless men, men who do support gender equality but who are unaware about the male privileges which are still deeply rooted in Luxembourg's society (Interview 7).

And these gender ideas are often fed by the images of men and women that circulate on the internet and media. Societies, even when progressive and constitutionally non-patriarchal like Luxembourg, are exposed to a saturation of gendered advertisements and discourses which embody traditional gender stereotypes; meaning that even countries, that tend to be gender equal and continuously make progress to this regard, aren't spared of global gendered dynamics (Interview 5).

In this regard, it is questionable to state that Feminist Theory is able to explain domestic violence from a structural, macro point of view. Luxembourg is not a traditional patriarchal



society promoting male superiority in its constitution and politics, although patriarchal dynamics can be noticed on this level, yet are countered by numerous efforts of MEGA.

However, although not endorsed on a political and constitutional level, traditional visions about how a man and a woman should behave remain deeply anchored in Luxembourg's society distorting the discourse around domestic violence and contributing to the fact that the problem remains a taboo topic.

### **iii. Manhood**

According to Ralph Kass and Francis Spautz, the main contributing factor to why domestic violence remains a taboo topic in Luxembourg is because the problem is thematised in a way that doesn't reach the general population and the reason why it doesn't reach the general population is because efforts in tackling domestic violence are led by traditional stereotypical gender discourses rather than a discourse that deconstructs them (Interview 4, 7).

Statistics do show that women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, but the question still remains whether these statistics are representative of the actual situation in Luxembourg. Looking back at the 1<sup>st</sup> type of domestic violence that Control Balance Theory was able to unravel: reversed intimate terrorism, a two-phased situation of domestic violence with a final perpetrator who consistently is in a situation of control deficit but who up to the moment of physical violence rather falls into the category of victim than perpetrator and turns into a perpetrator in the escalating moment s/he decides to put an end or pause to his/her situation of control deficit. This is the situation of the population that Riicht Eraus encounters, a predominantly male population.

Considering that this population of males were at first victims of mainly psychological violence, the societal gendered vision of domestic violence might have created an obstacle in preventing the situation to develop and escalate. The fact is that stereotypical gender ideas about how men and women should behave are still deeply rooted in one's belief system and daily behaviour (Interview 4, 7). Men do not consider it to be "manly" to talk about their personal problems, to say things such as the following:

*"I haven't slept well, I'm worried, I don't know how it is going to continue in my relationship, I am afraid to talk with my wife, she freaks out"* (Interview 7).

According to Francis Spautz, this is a type of conversation which men usually do not have and which are rooted in the stereotypical expectations of what a man is, what a man does and how a man behaves.

Looking at this population through a Feminist lens, gender does play a role, however more in explaining the nature of male outreach rather than explaining the roots of male perpetration, which Control Balance Theory was able to bring forward. The fact is that the main motive of domestic violence in reversed intimate terrorism is helplessness, helplessness in a situation where the male is suppressed and this does not truly correspond to the feminist idea of domestic violence, where domestic violence is the most extreme expression of male authority over the female, when up to the point of physical violence, the male did not hold any authority in the family/relationship.

Although one can find gender elements in this category of domestic violence, they rather seem to accompany control as the cause of domestic violence rather than being the main cause. Recalling some of those gender elements, they reflect possible threats and corresponding reactions of the male such as the need to reaffirm his position as a “man” as well as being threatened by increasing autonomy and independence of the wife. However, in the discourse of Laurence Bouquet during the interview, those factors were not given as much importance. The need of the male to reaffirm his position seems to be more of a consequence of being belittled and denigrated by the partner who has taken most of the control of their family life. The motive of male affirmation does not necessarily come from the male’s need to affirm his position as a “man” but rather to affirm his position as a person.

Furthermore, what Laurence Bouquet highlighted and what the analysis showed was that although the family is often run by traditional gender roles with the mother staying at home taking care of the children and the husband being the primary breadwinner, this gendered family structure does not reflect gendered dynamics of domestic violence where the male holds all control in the family and where the male uses violence to support his control.

And the problem with the efforts, campaigns and events in tackling domestic violence, is that the language and discourse surrounding domestic violence in Luxembourg does not give men, who are the most registered perpetrators, the incentive to reach out because this discourse does not correspond to their own personal discourse which is deeply anchored in gendered ideas about men’s behaviour (Interview 7). What, according to Francis Spautz is missing, are more tailored campaigns, deconstructing stereotypical role models of man and woman, tackling the

issue of manhood and promoting a safe space for not only women, but also men to speak up (Interview 4, 7). With more tailored campaigns, maybe the men, perpetrators of reversed intimate terrorism, would have been inclined to reach out before turning to violence as a solution to their intimate problems.

From this one can say that although there are various and apparent efforts in tackling domestic violence, these only scratch the tip of the iceberg. The efforts show that there is a gap between what is done and what actually needs to be done. Subconscious ideas about how a man and a woman need to behave seem to influence the inclination of outreach rather than the causes of reversed intimate violence. However, in cases of intimate terrorism, gender seems to feed on the control imbalance.

#### **iv. Gender as a Reinforcer in Intimate Terrorism**

In cases where domestic violence takes the shape of intimate terrorism, Feminist Theory is able to illustrate how gender reinforces the dynamics of unequal power relationships.

As previously analysed, intimate terrorism are mainly situations of unequal power relationships between man who finds himself in a superior position and woman who finds herself in a situation of dependency which is not necessarily materially based. In contrast to the previous population, Feminist theory allows to further dig into the control dynamics of these relationships relating them to gender dynamics.

Recalling the conceptualisation of relationships as composed of two entities with an intersection or here, a subordination, intimate terrorism is characterised by male authority, superiority and female objectification, subordination and inferiority (Interview 1, 5). His superior position in the relationship is often supported by gendered ideas. The fact that male intimate terrorists allow themselves to control every single aspect of the female victim's life, taking away all of her freedoms, belittling her and treating her more as a possession than a partner indicate the reality of female objectification, the reality of extreme gender inequality and the endorsement of this gender inequality on a microlevel.

And this male authority over the woman can sometimes be culturally influenced. For people coming from countries and cultures where rather traditional gender roles are still commonly accepted and visible, Feminist Theory becomes more relevant in explaining domestic violence. In a Luxembourg society, with a mass inflow of different cultures, it is not uncommon to have

people originating from cultures where the role and expectations of the female are different from the role and expectations in a society that aims to be gender equal (Interview 4).

Although Luxembourg may be a progressive and non-patriarchal society, the fact that half of its population is foreign means that part of the general population and also part of the population that experiences domestic violence, may envision gender and domestic violence differently. In fact, several anecdotes during the interviews referred to people originating from countries such as Portugal, Cape Verde, Syria or Morocco highlighting how the norms and beliefs about the position that men and women hold in their original society and culture influence their stance on domestic violence (Interview 1, 2, 4, 5, 8).

For instance, interviewee 1 worked with applicants for international protection among which s/he encountered cases of domestic violence. The applicants originated from Northern Africa and Arabic countries and according to the interviewee, the societal attitude about male dominance over the female is clearly visible in those relationship/families. The relationships were not only characterised by strong unequal power relationships reflecting the dynamics of intimate terrorism but were also influenced by the gendered belief that a male is superior to a female and that a male has the right to control his wife (Interview 1).

In fact, there are family cultures in several countries that condone domestic violence and those family cultures stand in conflict with Luxembourg's family culture where domestic violence is not condoned and, legally speaking, even considered a crime (Interview 8).

This multicultural characteristic of Luxembourg's society renders the stability of Luxembourg's norms, values and culture and the place that gender holds in its society, unsteady. The fact that several interviewees face this cultural issue more frequently shows that foreigners living in a country that progressively moves towards gender equality, often "import" belief systems from their country of origin which are possibly gendered and patriarchal. Given that about half the population that experiences domestic violence in Luxembourg originates from "Southern" countries, where the position of the woman is a different one than in Luxembourg, gender is a cause of domestic violence, however not the primary one.

To conclude this 2<sup>nd</sup> and final part of analysis, one can deduce that gender inequality is also a cause of domestic violence, however not a primary and extensive one. The role that gender plays in cases of reversed intimate terrorism seems to be rather vague whereas in cases of intimate terrorism, it does substantially contribute as an explanatory factor. Feminist Theory as compared to Control Balance Theory does not prove to provide as strong an argument for

causing domestic violence. Feminist Theory failed in its structural ambition to explain domestic violence from a top-down point of view due to Luxembourg being a rather progressive country to this regard. However, due to its multicultural setting, Feminist Theory allowed the author to recognise that gendered belief systems from the country of origin tend to be “imported” and endorsed on a micro-level, confirming that gender does indeed play a role in causing domestic violence.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to understand the underlying processes and the roots of domestic violence in Luxembourg through Control Balance Theory and Feminist Theory, recalling the research question:

*Why does domestic violence happen in Luxembourg?*

Based on the findings, the author concludes that control is an overarching cause of domestic violence and that this control can be supported by gendered attitudes and belief systems.

As analysed in this thesis, domestic violence in Luxembourg takes three shapes:

- Situational couple violence,
- Reversed intimate terrorism,
- Intimate terrorism.

Situational couple violence has been overshadowed by the importance that the interviewees laid on reversed intimate terrorism and intimate terrorism which occupy the focal points of the analysis. In both situations of domestic violence, control imbalance is the common denominator. Although control imbalance is the overarching cause of those two categories of domestic violence, both categories present distinct dynamics and circumstances on which this control is based along with different motives of violence.

On the one hand, reversed intimate terrorism reflects a two-phased course of domestic violence. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase concerns psychological and financial violence by, most often, the female who is in a situation of control surplus. This control surplus is not financially based but is engendered through the responsibilities that are conferred to her as the caretaker of the family. The breadwinner is in a situation of control deficit, contradicting his role of financially sustaining the family and due to his continuous absence in the family and presence at work, is continuously belittled and denigrated. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of domestic violence is the phase that starts after the moment the original victim turns into the final perpetrator and turns to violence not with the motive of power and control but out of helplessness and despair. The situation of control asymmetry in both phases engendered the occurrence of domestic violence but the role that gender plays in this 1<sup>st</sup> situation of domestic violence is vague. Gender does not feed on the roles of perpetrators and victims but more on the fact that the male does not reach out for help during the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of violence due to the circulated image of how a man should behave.

On the other hand, intimate terrorism reflects a completely different situation of domestic violence where control is almost entirely in the hands of the perpetrator and where the victim, who is in control deficit, is subject to the perpetrator's authority. There is a large gap in terms of power and control which puts the victim into an inferior position and the perpetrator into a superior one. In this situation of domestic violence, gender plays a bigger role than it does in the previous situation. With the perpetrator most often being male and the victim female, gender reinforces the power structure within the household/family/relationship and in the same way, this power structure reinforces gendered attitudes and belief systems.

All in all, Feminist Theory supplemented Control Balance Theory by supplementing gender aspects into the explanations behind control as a dominating cause of domestic violence.

To discuss this thesis, there are various aspects that neither Control Balance Theory nor Feminist Theory are able to study within their scope, but which are relevant, especially in the Luxembourgish context.

First, a reoccurring topic during the interviews was a specific pattern of violence known as the *cycle of violence*. It is an internationally known and widely used model, which also most of the stakeholders in Luxembourg use in their work in addressing domestic violence. According to this cycle, domestic violence passes through three phases in rotation: tension-building phase, explosion of tensions, honeymoon phase (Interview 2, 5). It is an interesting cyclic pattern of domestic violence to investigate, however this would require more time and resources. The most appropriate method to access in-depth insights into this cycle would be to interview actual victims and perpetrators and run through their history of domestic violence and their relational dynamics. However, as already seen, victims and perpetrators tend to avoid speaking about their experience.

A further interesting topic mentioned by Kristin Schmit during her interview, is the role of neighbourhood relations. Investigating more on the geographic locations of the incident of domestic violence would provide an interesting aspect in terms of outreach. Neighbourly relations in cities versus villages or the countryside influences one's inhibition threshold in calling the police when hearing that there might be domestic violence happening at the neighbour's. According to Kristin Schmit, people living in big cities like Esch-sur-Alzette or Luxembourg city have a lower threshold because their relationship to their neighbour might be non-existent or very superficial, hence there are no obstacles for one to call the police. However, people on the countryside or in villages who tend to know their neighbours might be

less inclined in calling the police when domestic violence is suspected because of this relation (Interview 3).

Moreover, what the theories failed to account for, although highly relevant in the Luxembourg context, are the cultural influences. In the analysis through Feminist Theory, influences from foreign cultures were detected, where the position of a man and a woman is another than in Luxembourg society and where using force on children can be tolerated as disciplining children. Intersectional Feminist Theory would have been more relevant for the Luxembourg context due to its multicultural profile and the presence of nationalities, cultures and languages from all around the world. Intersectional Feminist Theory would have been able to dig into the specific experiences each nationality experiences and in how far their original belief system and other possible elements such as economic stress, intersect with the fact that they are perpetrators and/or victims of domestic violence.

A final aspect which is worth mentioning but which the framework and analysis weren't able to cover is structural violence created by economic stress, expensive living standards in Luxembourg and a tight housing market. This is an aspect that was addressed in several interviews but wasn't within the scope of the theory of this thesis but what Structural Functional Theory would have been able to analyse. The expenses of living in Luxembourg can be a burden, even with a national minimum wage of € 2,071 (Government of Luxembourg 2019). A combination of a low-income job, a tight housing market, a partner who lives under income replacement and having multiple children to care of is not a rare setting in Luxembourg (Interview 4, 6, 7). This socio-economic stress is often combined with alcohol problems and can create tensions within the family and the relationship. And as seen in the statistical overview, a significant proportion of victims and perpetrators are in situations of unemployment or replacement income. To this, one can add the relational pressure that can sometimes exist in relationships: the determination to be strong, to provide, to spoil and to keep the family happy (Interview 7). The combination of these elements creates a structural violence which would have been an interesting input in this thesis because the author believes that it might be a heavy element in contributing to the occurrence of domestic violence specifically in Luxembourg.

The list of further aspects or topics that could have been included in this thesis is endless. In all this, the author was able to argue the relevance of Control Balance Theory and its unique contribution it makes in that it allowed to dig into the inherent role of control in causing



domestic violence and to unravel an unexplored type of domestic violence: reversed intimate terrorism, as labelled for now. Unexpectedly, Feminist Theory was not as relevant as initially thought, but it still contributed to the analysis in unveiling hidden gender dynamics that influence domestic violence in Luxembourg.

To conclude this thesis, domestic violence is a universal problem that is difficult to apprehend and respond to. However, it is crucial to bring domestic violence to an end for the children in this world, for their parents and families, for a sustainable society, for the present but most importantly for the future.

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