GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, STALKING AND FEAR OF CRIME

Country Report Germany

Authors:
Prof. Dr. Thomas Feltes M.A.
Dipl. Pol. Katrin List
Dr. Rosa Schneider M.A.
Dipl. Soz. Wiss. Susanne Höfker

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1. Introduction

Between 1994 and 2002, 23 young women were raped near the Ruhr University in Bochum. This series of incidents generated a great deal of media publicity in the city and surrounding areas and led to a special police commission being set up which is still operating even today. The DNA of ten thousand men in the region was profiled and stored in a database. Understandably, these events caused a great deal of uncertainty particularly among the female students at local higher education (HE) institutions. Conforming to the "classic pattern" of the unknown sex attacker who jumps out from behind a bush and subdues his victim using a weapon, these incidents of sexual violence have remained firmly fixed in the collective consciousness of female students and have an influence on young women's sense of safety on and around the Bochum university campus.

This background formed the basis for an academic project that eventually attracted funding from the European Commission as a European research project for the years 2009 to 2011. Starting out from the question of whether female students are affected to a greater extent by sexual assault due to their age and life situation as students, the aim was to gather data pertaining to the extent and circumstances of sexual violence and thereby to establish the knowledge base needed to create an awareness of the importance of this sensitive issue. This did not mean merely filling in the research gap regarding unreported sexual assaults: the results are also intended to serve the practical goal of providing a basis for recommendations regarding prevention and intervention measures for HE institutions/universities that wish to take action against sexual assaults on campus.

Quantitative and qualitative data from sixteen selected German universities were collected and analysed, providing well-founded insights into the factual situation regarding the range of gender-specific sexual assaults from sexual harassment through stalking to criminal sexual acts involving the use of force and threats. The data also enabled conclusions to be drawn regarding the nature of the victim-perpetrator relationship and its impacts on disclosure and thus on the victim's use of support services. The impacts of experiences of violence on a person's health and studies can give rise to obstacles and interruptions in that person's life and career path, and for this reason they also pose a challenge for HE institutions. This raises the question regarding each university's responsibility when it comes to the difficult social problem of experiences of sexual violence among female students: both in terms of moral responsibility and with regard to German legislation, this is an issue universities need to address.

This study provides HE institutions with valuable information about the (everyday) experiences and fears – as well as the needs and wishes – of their female students. They can use the results and recommendations to examine and possible optimise their existing services.

The country report for Germany is a concise presentation of the German research results from the European comparative study. The full report is available on the World Wide Web at www.gendercrime.eu.

2. Brief description of the tertiary sector in Germany

a. Higher education system and number and type of HE institutions

Tertiary level education in Germany occurs at 379[1] HE institutions in 165 locations that are either state run or state approved. They include (traditional) universities, technical colleges and colleges of art and music. The universities comprise 30.9% of total HE institutions, the technical colleges 54.6% and the colleges of art and music 14.5%. In terms of their administration, 63.3% of HE institutions belong to the state sector and 36.7% are state-approved institutions, of which 71.2% are privately run and 28.8% are church-based institutions[2]. A total of 14,744 courses are currently on offer in Germany, 65.2% of them at universities. It is possible to study the entire range of academic disciplines at universities and comparable institutions, and only here can students study for a doctorate. Colleges of art and music, with their training in the fine arts, design, performance and music, are of equal status to universities. The technical colleges offer a more practice-based approach, and their degrees are oriented more towards specific professions.

The proportion of the population holding a professional qualification gained in the tertiary sector (ISCED-5) is 26% (the OECD average is 29%)[3]. 16% of the German population aged between 25 and 64 has a university degree. Overall, the proportion of men with a university degree (17%) is higher than that of women (14%)[4]. However, gender-specific differences exist in terms of the distribution of university degrees among the individual Federal states, or Länder: in the southern Länder there are 4-5 percent more men with a university degree than women while in the northern and eastern Länder, just one percent more men than women have a university degree. Only in Berlin is the proportion of female graduates higher than that of men (9% compared with 7%)[5]. Overall, women aged between 15 and 34 are more likely to have a degree (20% compared with 18% of men).

The implementation of the 1999 Bologna Declaration led to the establishment of a common European Area of Higher Education, necessitating the restructuring of the German tertiary education system and, with it, the reform of its structures and course content. The two-tier degree structure – Bachelors

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[1] Hochschulrektorenkonferenz: Hochschulen in Zahlen 2011, Bonn www.hrk.de
[2] Ibid.
[3] Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Internationale Bildungsindikatoren, 2011, Wiesbaden, p. 18
[4] Ibid., p. 21. If these figures are compared with the OECD average, the figures in the latter are not only disproportionately higher but also the other way around: 28% male, 31% female graduates ISCED 5A
[5] Ibid., p. 20f.

and Masters – largely replaced the previously familiar qualifications and is aimed at making higher education more flexible and at achieving international compatibility among the courses on offer. Realigning the structure and content of Bachelors and Masters courses in a gender-equitable way is an important objective of the Bologna process, which was due to be completed by 2010: "*The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level.*"[6] Establishing flexible courses, including part-time study options, along with improvements in course structure was intended to accommodate women's career and life paths and to contribute towards making it easier to combine study/ work and family life. However, analyses of the reform that looked at its impacts on women's educational and training opportunities indicate that these may actually have declined. A higher proportion of women appear to leave tertiary education after completing their Bachelors degree: while 53.9% of women complete their Bachelors, only 40.7% go on to gain a Masters degree[7]. Whether or not they take up a Masters course at a later date – after a period of work or raising a family, for example – is as yet unknown.

b. Number of students relative to types of HE institution, and proportion of female students

Currently 2.2 million young men and women are students in Germany. 1.47 million of these (66.2%) pursue their academic education at a university, 32.3% at a technical college, and 1.5% at a college of art and music. 442,607 students took up their studies in 2011, comprising 46.1% of the population of the same age[8].

Young women accounted for 47.5%[9] of German students during the winter semester 2010/11, a figure that had fallen slightly in comparison with previous years since 2008 (48.4%)[10]. While just under half of all new students (49.7%) were female, 51% of the graduates were women[11].

With regard to the individual types of HE institution, 51.5% of university students during the winter semester 2010/11 were female, 39.3% of students at technical colleges (not counting technical colleges for administration) were female. These latter include education colleges, where women account for 76.6% of total students, and colleges of art, where 57.4% of the students are female[12]. Regarding choice of subject, certain gender-specific preferences can

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[6] Realising the European Higher Education Area: Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, 19th September 2003, Berlin

[7] Statistisches Bundesamt (2008) Fachserie 11, Reihe 4,1. Bildung, Kultur, Prüfungen an Hochschulen. 2007. Wiesbaden

[8] Ibid., p. 1

[9] Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 11, Reihe 4.1, WS 2010/2011, p. 13.

[10] Statistisches Bundesamt, Internationale Übersichten zur Bildungsstatistik, 2010, p. 22

[11] Hochschulrektorenkonferenz: Hochschulen in Zahlen 2011, p. 1

[12] Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 11, Reihe 4.1, WS 2010/11, p.13. Differences of around 1% emerge when the sample is differentiated into students/female students generally and

be identified: 30% of first-year students in the tertiary sector chose the general subject group "health and social welfare", 22% social sciences, law and economics, and 19% humanities and art[13]. Female students enjoy greater success in nearly all subject areas, i.e. more women (77.4%) than men (73.5%) manage to complete their degree[14]. Within this, differences are reflected in the success rates in subject groups (not in subject preferences): whereas women were much more successful in the subject areas of linguistics, cultural studies, agricultural sciences, forestry, nutrition studies, law, economics and social sciences, engineering, veterinary medicine and sport, they graduate in roughly equal numbers in medicine and mathematics/natural sciences. Only in the area of art/ history and theory of art was the proportion of successful male students higher[15].

The average age of first-time female graduates in 2008 was 27.1, slightly lower than that of their male counterparts at 27.8 years of age[16]. Almost just as many women (46,321) as men (46,470) obtained their Bachelors or Masters degree in 2009. 16,671 women as opposed to 9,449 men obtained their teacher training qualifications, while 30,166 women and 42,642 men graduated from the technical colleges[17]. 44.1% of all successful PhD candidates in 2009 were women, as were 23.8% of those who obtained their university lecturing qualification (Habilitation)[18]. Women constituted 39% of all academic and artistic staff in 2009, 18.2% of full-time professors, and 10.5% of C4 professors[19]. These figures indicate a small but steady increase in all areas.

German students/German female students. The German data set shows a smaller proportion of females. Generally speaking, reference is made here to the data set "students generally".

[13] Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Internationale Bildungsindikatoren, 2011, Wiesbaden, p. 40. For comparison: 29% of men choose engineering, manufacturing and construction, 25% social sciences, law and economics, and 15% natural sciences, mathematics, and information technology. 10% choose the humanities, art, or health and social welfare.

[14] Statistisches Bundesamt, Hochschulen auf einen Blick, 2011, p. 16f.

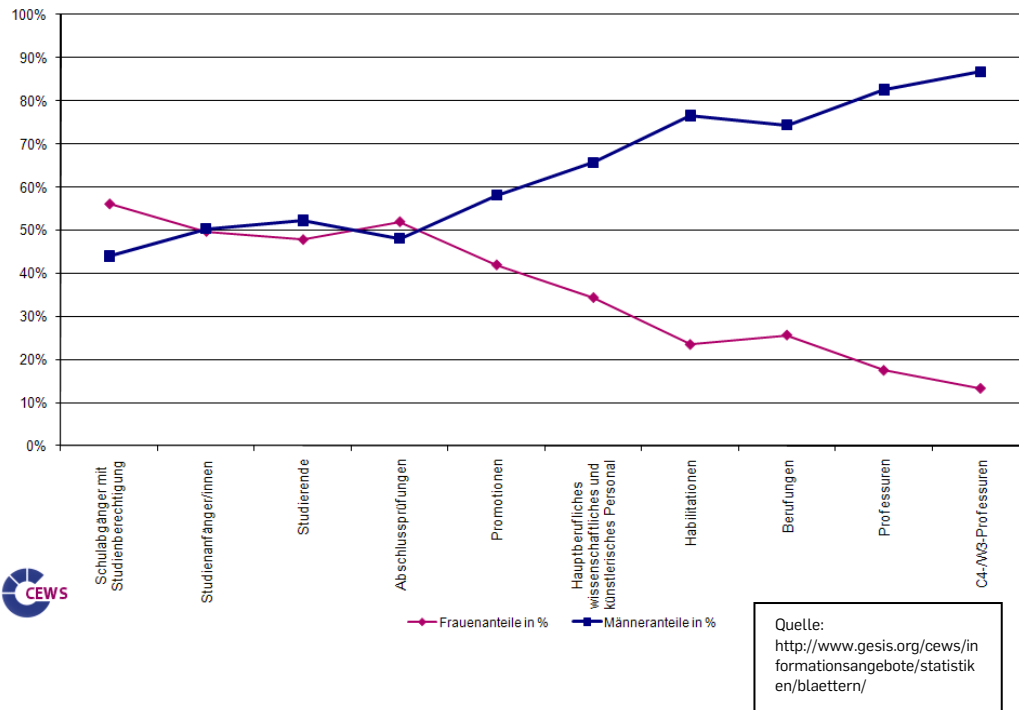[15] Statistisches Bundesamt, Hochschulen auf einen Blick, 2011, p. 16f.

[16] Ibid., p. 18

[17] Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden Oktober 2010

[18] Ibid..

[19] Ibid.

Proportions of women and men at each stage of the academic career path, 2008

Chart axis labels (x-axis): Schulabgänger mit Studienberechtigung · Studienanfänger/innen · Studierende · Abschlussprüfungen · Promotionen · Hauptberufliches wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Personal · Habilitationen · Berufungen · Professuren · C4-/W3-Professuren

Legend: ◆ Frauenanteile in %   ■ Männeranteile in %

CEWS

Quelle: http://www.gesis.org/cews/informationsangebote/statistiken/blaettern/

c. Form of HE institutions in terms of size

The smallest HE institution in Germany is the *Evangelische Hochschule für Kirchenmusik* (Protestant College of Church Music) in Dresden, which currently has 49 students, of which 32.6% are women. The largest is the FernUniversität (Distance Learning University) in Hagen with 75,950 students, of which 45% are women[20]. Nine universities in Germany have more than 30,000 students. These include LMU Munich (43,807), the University of Cologne (42,127) and the Goethe University in Frankfurt (38,244). With its 34,055 students (48% women) the Ruhr University Bochum is one of the six largest HE institutions in Germany. In addition there are the so-called academic conurbations such as the cities of Berlin (approx. 134,000), Hamburg (approx. 74,000), Munich (approx. 96,000) and the Ruhr area with its catchment area containing 20 HE institutions. The "university alliance metropolis Ruhr" alone, with its three participating universities, has 89,000 students. The small HE institutions include above all private, specialised and church-based institutions. The proportion of female students varies depending on the type of institution and the courses offered. Whereas women make up 62.4% of all students at the University of Munich (as at winter semester 2010/11), the proportion of female students at the predominantly technical university RWTH Aachen is 31.2%[21].

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[20] http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/universitaet/profil/zahlen/index.shtml

[21] RWTH Aachen University Zahlenspiegel 2010. Even in the humanities and social sciences and in the medical faculties alone, the proportion of women is significantly higher (67.5%/65.8%) than that of male students.

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d. Form of HE institutions in terms of design

HE institutions in Germany are highly varied in terms of their design. The newly established universities of the 1970s in particular were conceived as campus universities. However, some of the traditional universities such as Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz are also campus universities, in which teaching and research facilities, accommodation for teachers and students as well as other aspects of university infrastructure along with green spaces are brought together within a limited area. The concept of "scattered universities" refers to the way university buildings are distributed around different locations in a city. As a result of historical developments, several of the large universities have evolved as scattered universities. The example of the "academic conurbations" described in 1.c) illustrates the development of an academic location in the context of an overall city planning strategy or regional strategy, which can also operate as a regional driver of development.

In addition to HE institutions in large and medium-sized cities, there are also institutions located in rural areas or by the side of lakes – in part due to their specific subject focus. One example is the university at Rottenburg, which offers courses in forest management, bioenergy and wood utilisation and was the winner of a competition entitled *Image and Cooperation – excellence strategies for small and medium-sized HE institutions"* in 2008, organised by the [*Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft*](#) (an innovation agency for German science) and the [Heinz Nixdorf Foundation](#). Currently 679 students, of whom 20.2% are women, study there. The Jade-University Wilhelmshaven/ Oldenburg/ Elsfleth, which offers predominantly maritime-related courses as well as engineering and economics courses, currently has 6,200 students, of whom 36.9% are women.

The varied design of HE institutions entails benefits and disadvantages which have an influence on the courses offered and how they are organised as well as on students' experiences regarding the condition of the university as a whole, the buildings and rooms, the surrounding areas, and public transportation routes. Women's feeling of safety is a significant factor in the use of public and semi-public space, which is what a university embodies. This applies especially to the hours of darkness. Taking into account their architectural and town planning specificities, it is important that universities also avoid building "fear-inducing spaces" and that they support students in feeling at ease in and around the university environment.

3. Brief description of German legislation on sexually motivated assaults

In the following we list the types of offences that are subject to civil and criminal legislation in Germany in the context of sexual violence against young women.

Criminal legislation:

Sexual assault by use of force or threats; rape

Sexual violence is legislated in § 177 Sexual assault by use of force or threats; rape StGB (Strafgesetzbuch: Criminal Code).

The two crimes of sexual assault by use of force or threats and rape were combined in § 177 StGB by means of the 33rd Amendment to the Criminal Code in 1997.

Under § 177 para. 1 StGB sexual assault by use of force or threats means making another person engage in or submit to sexual acts against their own will.

Anyone who coerces another person by force, by threat of imminent danger to life and limb or by exploiting a situation in which the victim is unprotected and at the mercy of the offender to suffer sexual acts by the offender or a third person on their own person or to engage actively in sexual activity with the offender or a third person is liable to imprisonment of not less than one year.

Rape is not dealt with as a separate criminal act but rather, under §177 para. 2 No. 1 StGB, represents an especially serious case of sexual assault by use of force or threats. It carries with it the higher minimum penalty of not less than two years imprisonment. Incidents in which the offence involves penetrating the body of the victim or the participation of more than one offender constitute especially serious cases.

If the offender is carrying a weapon or any other dangerous instrument for the purpose of threatening the victim, or if the victim is seriously physically abused during the offence, the penalty increases to not less than three or five years respectively.

If the offender through sexual assault or rape causes the death of the victim at least by gross negligence, the penalty is imprisonment for life or no less than ten years (§ 178 StGB).

The key factor in establishing whether a criminal act has been committed is the will of the victim. Actions taken by the victim to defend herself / himself are not strictly required to fulfil the conditions for a rape.

Abuse of position of trust

Sexual abuse of dependents is legislated in §174 to 174c StGB. Distinctions are drawn between the sexual abuse of persons entrusted to the offender's care (§ 174), sexual abuse of prisoners, detained persons, patients and institutionalised persons (§ 174a), abuse of an official position (§ 174b) and abuse of a relationship of counselling, treatment or care (§174c).

The penalty for these offences varies depending on the kind of abuse involved. A distinction is made between committing sexual acts on the dependent person

and either engaging in sexual acts in front of the dependent person or getting the depending person to engage in such acts themselves.

The penalty may be either imprisonment between 3 months and five years or a fine. In all cases the attempt is also punishable.

Stalking

The term stalking describes a situation involving persistent pursuit or harassment of or threatening behaviour towards another person. There is no universally valid definition of stalking because it manifests in such varied ways: constant telephone calls, hundreds of emails, text messages and letters, or lurking in wait for a person are the usual methods of stalking. In many cases, offenders have no qualms about using violence as well. Given that stalking represents a serious infringement of a person's personal sphere and often involves considerable danger for life and limb, German law makers have included stalking as a criminal offence in the Criminal Code from 2007 onwards. The intention is to provide better protection to victims as well as to deter potential offenders from committing this kind of criminal act. Both civil and criminal legal measures are available for this purpose[22]:

1. Civil law:

Under the Protection from Violence Act (Gewaltschutzgesetz, *GewSchG*) the victim can take out a civil law protection order against the stalker such as a ban on communication or establishing an exclusion zone around the victim's home. This protection order can be enforced by – among other options – imposition of a fine or imprisonment.

2. Criminal law:

§ 238 StGB (Stalking) punishes with imprisonment for up to three years or a fine anyone who unlawfully stalks another person using the means described in the ordinance and thereby seriously infringes that person's lifestyle. Heavier penalties are imposed for those offenders who place the victim, a relative of or another person close to the victim in danger of death or serious injury by stalking. Offenders whose actions cause the death of the victim, a relative of or another person close to the victim face imprisonment of between one and ten years.

Many acts of stalking simultaneously constitute other crimes contained in the Criminal Code. Depending on the circumstances in each specific case, these other crimes may be burglary, insult, sexual assault by use of force or threats, deliberate or negligent bodily harm, using threats or force to cause a person to do, suffer or omit an act, threatening the commission of a felony, and acts that constitute a violation of privacy.

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[22] Bundesministerium für Justiz,
http://www.bmj.de/DE/Buerger/gesellschaft/Stalking/_doc/Stalking_doc.html

The Violence Protection Act (see above) in force since January 2002 provides for legal protection. Any violation of a protection order granted through a civil court renders the offender liable to prosecution. This can be either imprisonment of up to one year or a fine (§ 4 GewSchG). This ensures that those acts of stalking which are not covered by the criminal acts described in the Criminal Code can also be made subject to criminal prosecution.

A man who harasses another person by means of an act of exhibitionism is punished under § 183 StGB by imprisonment of up to one year or by a fine. The act is only prosecuted upon request, unless the prosecuting authority deems it necessary to prosecute due to special public interest.

Under § 184 of the Criminal Code, the dissemination of pornographic written material constitutes a crime and is punishable by a fine or by imprisonment of up to one year. Among other things, the law protects adults from being exposed to pornographic material without prior consent.

Civil law:

Sexual harassment
Sexual harassment was classified as a criminal offence in 2006 in the context of the General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG*, §3 para. 4) and the Works Constitution Act (**Bet***riebs***v***erfassungs***g***esetz, BetrVG*, § 75 para. 2). A person's behaviour is regarded as sexual harassment if it is unwanted, behaviour of a sexual nature, and if this behaviour has the purpose or the effect of violating the dignity of another person. Such behaviour includes unwanted sexual acts and requests to carry out such acts, physical contact of a sexual nature, comments of a sexual nature as well as the unwanted showing or public exhibition of pornographic images.
Under § 13 AGG and § 85 BetrVG, the employee has the right to lodge a complaint. Under § 12 para. 3 AGG the employer has the duty to investigate the complaint and to take suitable measures to stop the behaviour from occurring. As previously laid down in §4 para. 1 No. 1 of the Employee Protection Act (Beschäftigtenschutzgesetz, BschutzG) such options include issuing a disciplinary warning, transferring or redeploying the offender, and dismissal.
Outside the employment context, charges can be brought for insult (of a sexual nature) under §185 StGB.

Domestic violence
The 2002 Law for Civil Legal Protection from Violent Acts and Stalking Offences (*Gesetz zum zivilrechtlichen Schutz vor Gewalttaten und Nachstellungen*, GewSchG) marked a considerable improvement in the situation for victims of domestic violence. They can now access support at an early stage to take action against violent aggressors or stalkers from their close circle of social contacts and do not have to wait until "something actually happens". The police now have the option of barring violent offenders for a

period from the victim's home and immediate social environment before an official court order is available[23].

Violating an enforceable court order under the GewSchG constitutes a criminal act which, under § 4 GewSchG, is punishable by imprisonment of up to one year or by a fine.

4. Summary of national research on sexual violence experienced by female students

There has been little research to date on the prevalence of sexual victimisation specifically among female students in Germany. The study by Kury/Choaf/Obergfell-Fuchs 2002 is the only German study in which students were surveyed in some detail about their experiences of sexual violence. In the context of his "Gießen Surveys on Delinquency" (*Gießener Delinquenzbefragungen*) Kreuzer (2005) regularly surveys female students about various forms of victimisation, including the issue of rape, although this is not addressed in a very differentiated way. Nonetheless his studies are interesting to the extent that he has successfully tested the method of surveying female students online.

A number of national and international victim studies have shown that students in particular seem to be affected by sexual victimisation (Myhill/Allen 2002, 21 f and 26 f; Barbaret/Fisher/Taylor 2004, 2 ff; Müller/Schröttle 2004, 87). According to results from small-scale studies at German universities, between 1 and 3 percent of female students have fallen victim to completed rape at least once in their lives (Kury/Choaf/Obergfell-Fuchs 2002, 243; Kreuzer 2005; Fischelmanns 2005). One US study shows that between 8 and 13 percent of female students become a victim of sexual crime during their time at university (Fisher u.a. 2003, 6 f). It is not only victims of rape who suffer from the long-term psychosocial effects – particularly with regard to their studies – but also those who have experienced sexual harassment. In the German representative study of 2004 conducted by Müller/Schröttle 6 % of victims of sexual harassment in the respective age group said that they had changed schools or training placements or had discontinued their studies (Müller/Schröttle 2004, 148). Many female students express a general fear of crime. This fear of crime also relates to certain areas on campus, which they consequently avoid (Barbaret/Fisher/Taylor 2004, 37).

It is only over the past ten years that a greater amount of research has been done in Germany on *stalking*, too. In addition to the study by Müller/Schröttle (2004), which also included acts of stalking, three fairly large-scale studies of

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[23] Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/BMFSFJ/Gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen.html

stalking were conducted in Germany between 2002 and 2004 (Stadler 2006; Voß/Hoffmann/Wondrak 2006; Dreßing/Gass/Kühner 2005a; Dreßing/Gass/Kühner 2005b). Comparing their results is rendered problematic, however, by divergent definitions of stalking and how they are used in the studies (with and without reference to the victim's feelings of fear, the period of time over which the stalking occurred, and the number of incidents). Likewise, little explicit knowledge exists about stalking among *students*. Several surveys have found that far more young people than older people have experienced stalking at some point in their life. The prevalence rate for experiences of stalking among individuals aged 30 or less proved to be twice that, for example, of people aged 55 (Budd/Mattinson 2000; Purcell/Pathé/Mullen 2002). This tendency is confirmed by studies using student samples (Bjerregaard 2002; Fremouw et al. 1997). A representative population-based British study (1998) found the highest risk of stalking to be among young women aged between 16 and 29 (45% in total), particularly those with A-level school leaving qualifications or with a university degree (Müller 2008:106 f).

5. Brief description of how the national study was implemented

Due to their age and lifestyle, female students as a group are especially at risk when it comes to sexual violence: the aim of the European research project "Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime" (2009-2011) was to verify this hypothesis, to collect corresponding data in the participating countries, and to analyse and compare these data.

The victimisation of women through sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence, their fear of crime and their support needs were surveyed using an online questionnaire at higher education (HE) institutions in Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland and Britain. A total of 21,420 students took part in the questionnaire. In addition, focus group interviews with female students at the five partner universities were conducted and analysed, as were one-to-one interviews with experts and representatives of law enforcement agencies.

The aim is to use the insights gained from the surveys for strategic prevention and response measures to combat sexual victimisation and stalking. The intention is to reduce young women's constant fear of crime and to ensure there are better support systems and greater safety/security at their HE institutions. To this end the research groups are working closely with the relevant contact people at the different universities.

a. Quantitative data collection: the online survey

Having carried out a pre-test of the online questionnaire at Ruhr University during the winter semester 2009/10, the survey was conducted in winter/spring 2010/11 at 16 German HE institutions that had expressed interest. The HE institutions had been selected for this according to representative criteria: from all corners of the country, large and small, classical universities through to specialised technical universities, campus-

based and scattered universities. 12,663 female German students responded to the questionnaire.

The survey instrument

The main part of the questionnaire was taken up with questions relating to women's experience of violence, three aspects of which were asked about: 1) sexual harassment, 2) stalking and 3) sexual violence. After a general opening question on how often respondents had experienced each specific aspect of violence, they were asked, with the aid of item lists in which specific acts of violence and harassment were clearly described, about the nature of their experiences and when they had experienced them (life time prevalence/period of study). If a respondent indicated she had experienced one or more of the named forms of violence during her time at university, she was asked to give further details about the incident/s she perceived to be most serious. In addition to questions about the person involved in the incident, the place where it occurred, the time of day and the effects it had both generally and in relation to the student's studies, the respondent was asked to rate her subjective sense of threat and the violent character of the situation and to provide information about whether and with whom she had spoken about the situation or why she had not done so.

Participation in the survey was via anonymous access to the online questionnaire. The students had been invited to participate by their HE institution, which sent an email or else drew their attention to the questionnaire on relevant university web pages.

b. Qualitative data collection: the interviews

The interviews were conducted exclusively at the EU project partner universities in order to provide a basis for the qualitative data (i.e. in Germany at the Ruhr University Bochum).

Focus group interviews

The online questionnaire gave the students the option of expressing their willingness to take part in a focus group interview. At the centre of the discussion with the twenty young women was the question of what kinds of support are necessary to genuinely help female students, as well as questions about how they feel about existing advisory services at the university. An interview guideline served as the basis for moderating the group discussion and was adapted where necessary as the discussion developed.

Expert interviews

One-to-one interviews were conducted with eleven experts based both at the university and elsewhere. These focused on the issue of the extent to which the experts thought female students were affected by sexual violence and on options for improving the existing advisory services on offer.

6. Presentation of the main results of the study

In the following, we study the student respondents' experiences of violence with particular regard to sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence. First, we present the situation regarding the women's experience in general, that is, whether the respondents have experienced any of the situations mentioned at any time in their lives. After this we show the prevalence of specific experiences related to the respondents' time at university. Finally we look at the case of those female students who said they had experienced one of the most serious situations during their time at university and had felt seriously threatened in the course of it.

This differentiation is based on the crime of stalking and on Paragraph 238 StGB (German Criminal Code), which explicitly emphasises the significance of the feeling of fear in relation to the complex and elusive phenomenon of stalking. "Sense of threat" is also applied as a filter to the studies on sexual harassment and sexual violence for purposes of obtaining a comparative analysis of the students' experiences of violence. By showing the prevalence figures both with and without the "sense of threat" filter it is possible to capture, first, the extent of all the violent situations (some of which are defined very broadly) and, second, the significance of the sense of threat.

For ease of reading, the following analysis will refer in shorthand manner to situations experienced in general, situations experienced during the students' time at university, and situations involving a sense of threat.

Following this are the analyses concerning the person who committed the assault and a comparison of the places where the students feel unsafe with the places where assaults have actually occurred. Then the disclosure behaviour of the students affected by violence is highlighted, and the influencing factors affecting their willingness to tell someone about what they have experienced are presented using the example of sexual violence. The above mentioned analyses of stalking and sexual violence that take account of the woman's sense of threat are conducted against the background of the studies on disclosure in which the sense of threat is especially relevant.

a) Prevalence and nature of sexual violence against female students

Sexual harassment
As was to be expected, forms of sexual harassment were the type of violence experienced most frequently by the students. A broad spectrum of acts was included in this, from those not covered in criminal, labour or civil law (such as wolf-whistling) to criminal assaults such as exhibitionism. Both verbal and non-verbal assaults, as well as physical assaults, were captured.

Whereas 10,207 (81.0%) of the female students surveyed said they had experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives, 6930 of them (54.7%) said they had done so during their time at university. This prevalence

rate falls to 9.8% (1135 students) if the sense of threat is additionally taken into account.

In comparison with the results from the German representative study on violence against women in 2003, these figures are very high: in that study, just below 60% of the women surveyed said that – in relation to their lifetime as a whole – they had experienced sexual harassment. The categorisation into age groups undertaken in the representative study shows, however, that twice as many young women aged between 18 and 24 are affected by sexual harassment as women aged between 35 and 44, and more than three times as many compared to 45 to 54-year-old women. The RUB study thus confirms one of the results of the representative study: **Young women are affected to an above-average extent by sexual harassment.**

Figure 1 gives a comparative overview of the extent of situations of sexual harassment experienced in general as well as those involving a sense of threat during the students' time at university. The women's experience of these situations is differentiated according to the different forms of sexual harassment. Taking account of multiple responses, the following picture emerges:
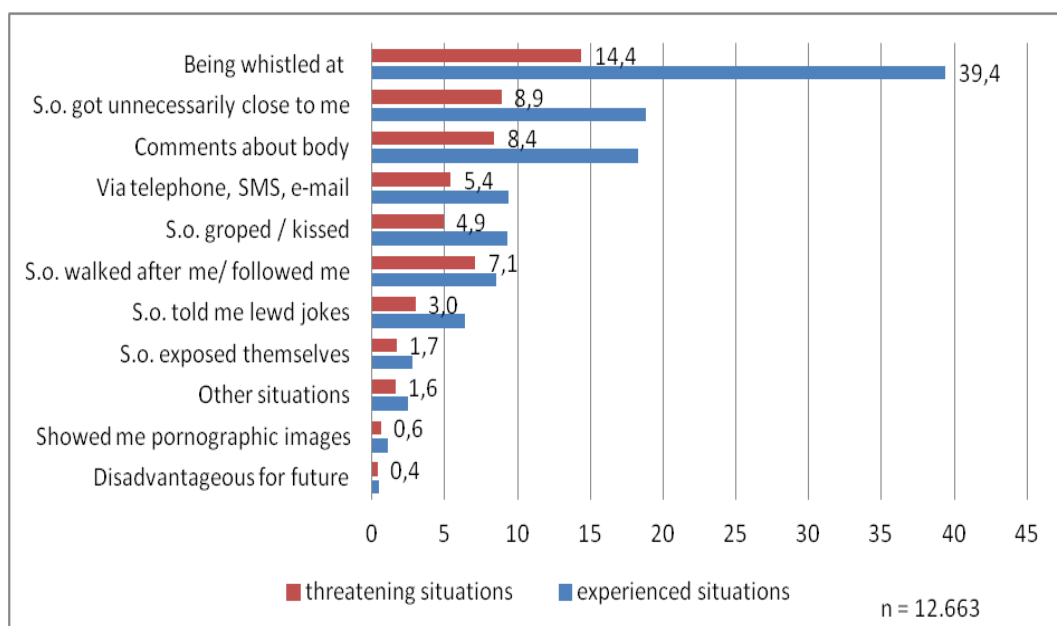

Figure 1: Sexual harassment item list: situations experienced and those involving a sense of threat during time at university, taking account of multiple responses (in %)

Independently of the sense of threat felt in the situations, the students named wolf-whistling, unnecessary proximity and comments about physical appearance. Once the sense of threat is taken into account these proportions drop by roughly two thirds, from 39.4% to 14.4% for wolf-whistling, from 18.8% to 8.9% if someone has come unnecessarily close to the student, and from

18.3% to 8.4% if the student affected has had comments made to her about her body, her private life, etc.

Much further down the scale are – independently of the sense of threat – the items telephone calls (9.4%), unwanted groping/kissing (9.3%) and stalking/following (9.3%). The discrepancy between the figures for situations in general and those involving a sense of threat is smaller here: more than half of the students affected feel seriously threatened when they receive phone calls (5.4%) or when they are groped or kissed (4.9%). The difference is even smaller for the item stalking/following. Here, just over two thirds (7.1%) of the respondents feel seriously threatened.

Stalking

The range of stalking acts is diverse and extends from repeated harassment by telephone and internet through to murder threats and actual physical attacks. 11,514 students worked through the general item list on stalking and thus constitute the reference sample for the following presentation of various prevalence rates. 42.5% of the respondents (5203) have experienced a stalking situation at some point in their lives and 22.8% (2627) during their time at university. If we additionally take the sense of threat into account, the proportion of those who have experienced stalking during their time at university falls to 9.8% (1135 students).

This prevalence rate for stalking can also be regarded as comparatively high. Whereas the only German representative study to date on stalking experienced by women at some point in their lives gives the figure of 10%, the students in the present study were shown to be affected to a similar extent in relation to their time at university alone (9.8%). Thus the data collected at the 16 German HE institutions confirm something for the first time in the European context to which American research has been pointing for years, namely: By virtue of being mainly young women, female students are part of the group at higher risk of stalking.

Figure 2 gives a comparative overview of the stalking situations experienced in general and those involving a sense of threat during the students' time at university:
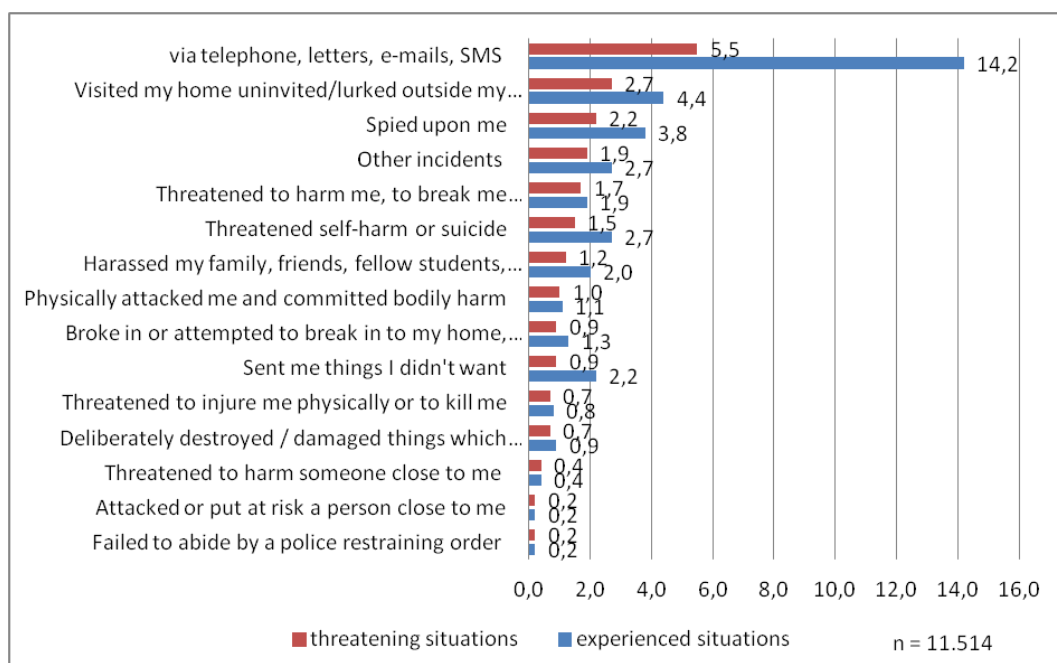

Figure 2: Stalking item list: situations experienced in general and those involving a sense of threat during the students' time at university, taking account of multiple responses (in %)

Overall, the prevalence rates are lower than those for sexual harassment. Most of the students (1630, that is, 14.2 %) named stalking by telephone, email, and SMS. This figure falls by around two thirds, to 5.5%, if the sense of threat is taken into account. The second and third most prevalent forms of stalking mentioned – unwanted visits/lying in wait and spying on the victim – were mentioned by far fewer students. Taking the sense of threat into account, the prevalence rates here drop by almost half in each case, from 4.4% to 2.7% for unwanted visits/lying in wait and from 3.8% to 2.2% for spying.

Sexual violence

In an introductory question about sexual violence the students were asked how often they had experienced sexual acts involving the use of force. 11,161 students answered this question and serve in the following as the reference sample. The 9086 students (81.4%) who said they had never experienced this kind of situation were not asked any further questions about this, and were instead directed to the general questions at the end of the questionnaire.

Whereas 10.9% (1,219) of the students had experienced some kind of situation involving sexual violence at some point in their lives, 3.3% (363 students) said they had experienced such a situation during their time at university. If only those students are considered who felt seriously threatened during the situation, this figure drops by 1.1 percentage points to 2.2% (246 students).

In the German national representative study mentioned above, 12% of the women respondents aged between 15 and 86 said that they had been forced to engage in sexual acts at some point in their lives. Here too, then, the national results confirm what is widely accepted among researchers, namely, that young women are especially often the victims of rape and other serious sexual assaults.

Figure 3 gives a detailed overview of the extent of the situations experienced during the students' time at university and those experienced as threatening:
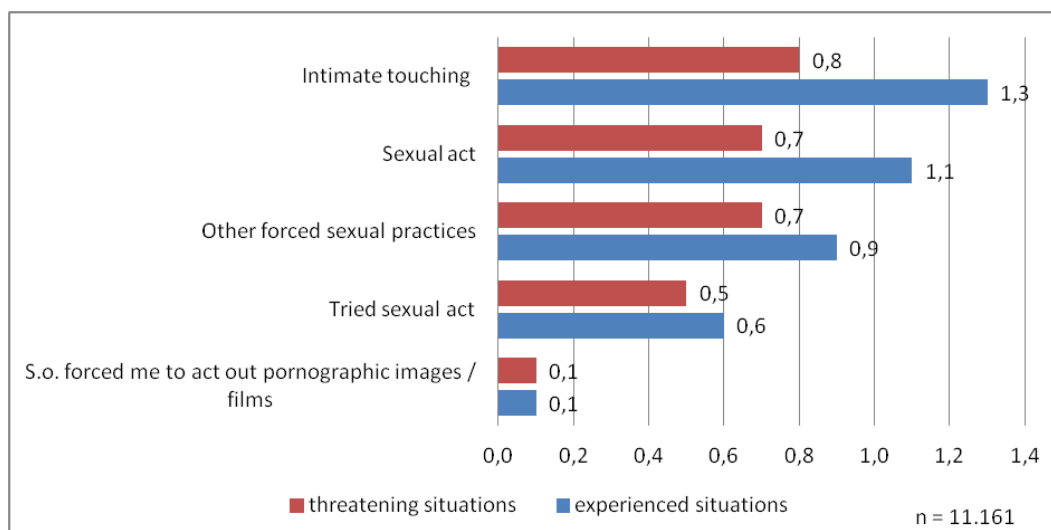
Figure 3: Sexual violence item list: situations experienced, including those felt to be threatening, during the students' time at university, taking account of multiple responses (in %)

The items listed in the survey at this point refer to violent criminal acts defined as such in law. This does not apply to the item "other sexual acts", as the latter were not specified. This item was included nonetheless in order to bring out the full extent of the students' experiences of violence.

The case numbers are far lower overall for sexual violence than they are for sexual harassment and stalking. The crime experienced by most of the students (141, or 1.3%) was forced intimate physical contact; the number of students affected falls to two thirds of this (94 students) when the sense of threat is taken into account. The same proportion between situations experienced and those felt to be threatening also emerged in the case of rape. Of the 123 students who had experienced rape, two thirds (82 students) said that they had felt threatened.

b. Fear-inducing places vs. places where crimes occur

In the first part of the questionnaire the students were asked about their feeling of safety at their HE institution. The question of how safe the students feel when they walk alone in the dark across the university campus was answered by 12,590 students. Of these, 40.9% (5,158 students) said that they tend not to feel safe or that they don't feel safe at all.

In addition, 7% (882 students) said that the question did not apply to them in any case, as they do not walk alone in the dark across the university campus. Since the reasons for this were not asked about in the online survey, it is not possible to quantify the number of students whose reason for not doing so is fear. Comments made by students in the focus group interviews, however, indicate that fear poses considerable constraints on many students' freedom of movement.

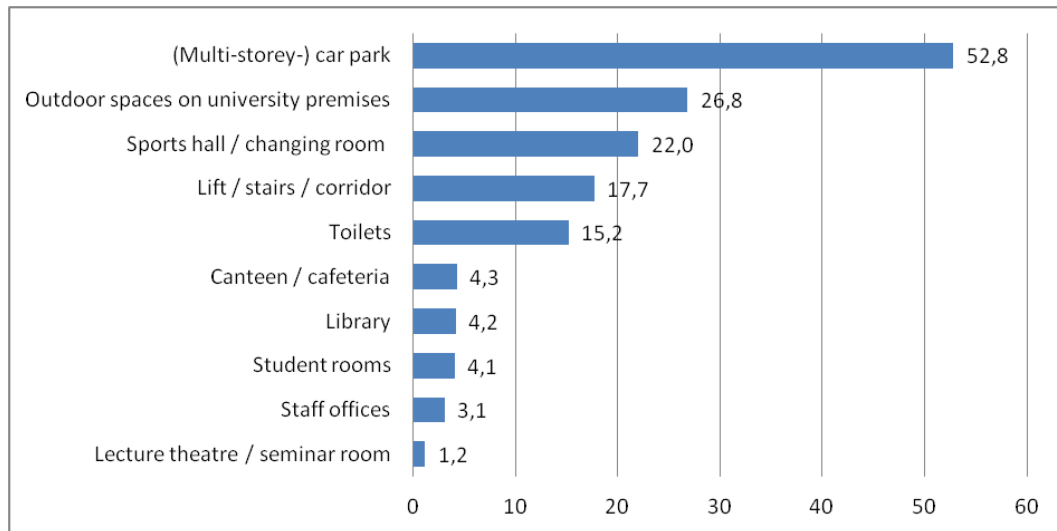Figure 4 shows the lack of safety felt by the student respondents in different places at the university:

Figure 4: Percentage of students who feel unsafe in certain places at the university

The students feel most unsafe in places outside the university, although just over half of them also feel unsafe in underground and above ground car parks at the university. It should be noted here that 33% of the respondents said they do not go to these places. However, as with the question regarding students' feeling of safety in the dark at the university, it is not possible to establish for certain whether this is due to fear or for other reasons, such as that the students do not come to the university by car.

The students feel unsafe to a far lesser extent inside the university. Spaces such as toilets and stairwells, which are accessible to more people while also being more anonymous, are associated much more with lack of safety than, say, seminar rooms or the library, which imply a degree of familiarity. Fewer than 5% of the students feel a lack of safety in such rooms, whereas slightly more than 15% of the students feel unsafe in the toilets and the stairwells.

The places where students feel afraid are not the same, however, as the places where incidents actually occur at universities.

The students are aware that their ideas are shaped by fear-inducing scenarios about the unknown perpetrator lurking in the bushes: *"...and what you're actually thinking is: you're walking across the campus at nine in the evening and you're dragged into the bushes by someone or other"*.

In actual fact only a small proportion of the assaults mentioned took place outside or inside the buildings on the university campus. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of places where students have experienced their most serious situation involving sexual harassment, stalking or sexual violence during their time at university:
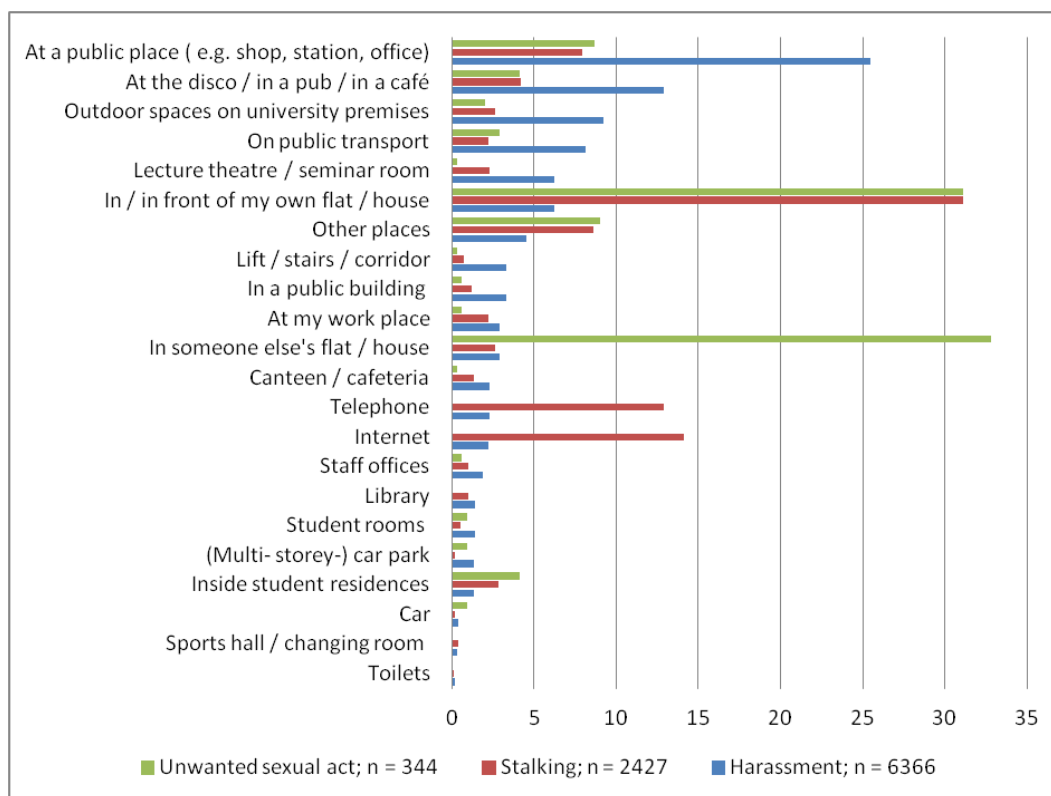
Figure 5: Places where the students experienced what they perceived to be their most serious situation involving sexualised violence during their time at university (in%)

The large majority of experiences involving sexualised violence that were perceived by the students to be most serious did not occur at the university. In the case of sexual harassment 27.5% of the most serious cases occurred at the university, in the case of stalking this is 10.1% and in the case of sexual violence just 5.3% of incidents.

One third of the most serious cases of sexual violence occurred in or in front of the students' own home or someone else's home, thereby confirming the current status of research. 31.1% of the most serious stalking situations, by contrast, occurred mainly in the student's personal space, 14.1% via the internet and 12.9% over the telephone. Just under half of the most serious situations of sexual harassment were experienced in public places such as on the street, in the park, as well as on public transport, in public buildings and in the disco/bar.

If we wish to understand students' experiences of violence not as a purely university-related phenomenon that ends at the university gates, the low case numbers for the university as a place where violence occurs provides too little information about students' actual experience of violence. In this respect it is import to consider the close interconnections between the students' university and personal environment. For this reason the survey included consideration of students' experience of violence in its broader context, that is, in terms of those who perpetrate it.

c. Individuals involved in assaults

A depressing majority of those who perpetrate sexual harassment and sexual violence as well as stalking are men: 97.5% of cases of harassment and 96.6% of cases of sexual violence involved men. Whereas sexual harassment and sexual violence thus present as a virtually exclusively male behaviour against women, the figure in the case of stalking was somewhat less gender-specific: here, the students said in 90.9% of cases that they had been stalked by a man. This result – shown in Figure 6 – is also largely in agreement with the status of current research.
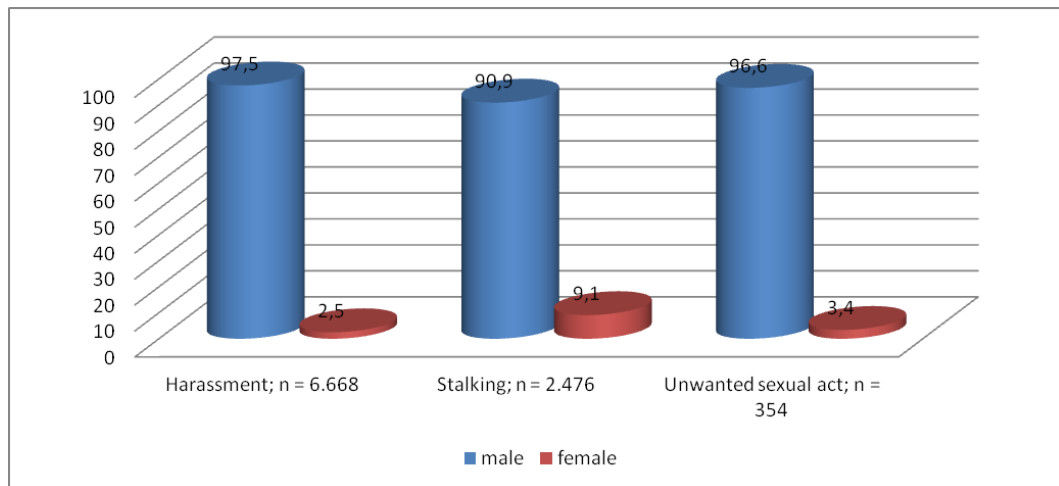

Figure 6: Comparison of the gender of the person involved in the assault in the three forms of violence: sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence (in %)

If we now compare the figures for the people involved whom the students assign to the university environment and to the non-university environment, the following picture emerges, shown in Figure 7:
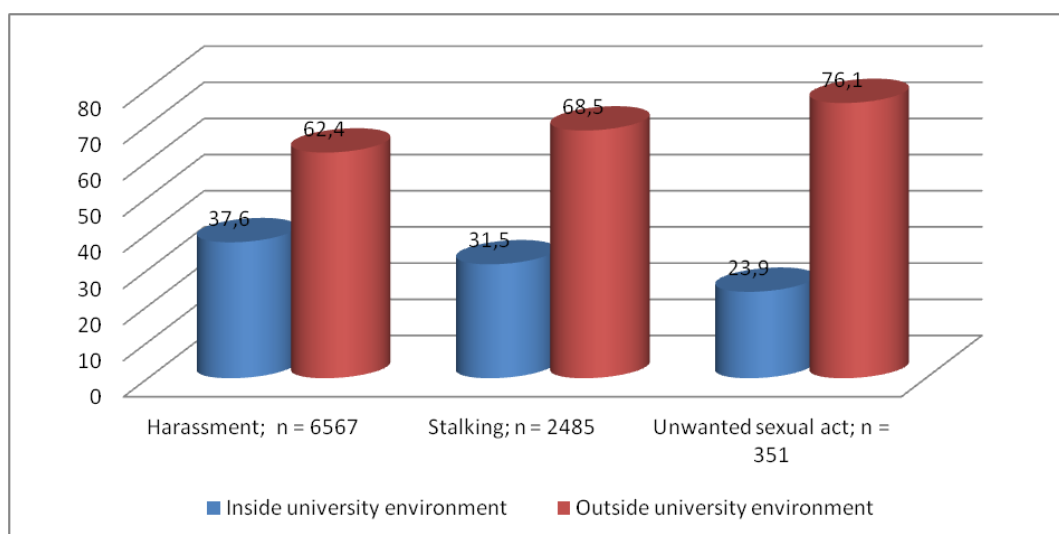

Figure 7: Person involved from university/non-university environment: a comparison (in %)

25

Whereas just over one third of cases of the most serious situation of sexual harassment experienced in the university environment involved a person from the university environment, this figure falls to 31.5% in the case of stalking and to 23.9% in the case of sexual violence.

Those who committed the assaults and who belong to the university environment include fellow students as well as teachers and other university employees. These three are shown in Figure 8 separately and in comparison:
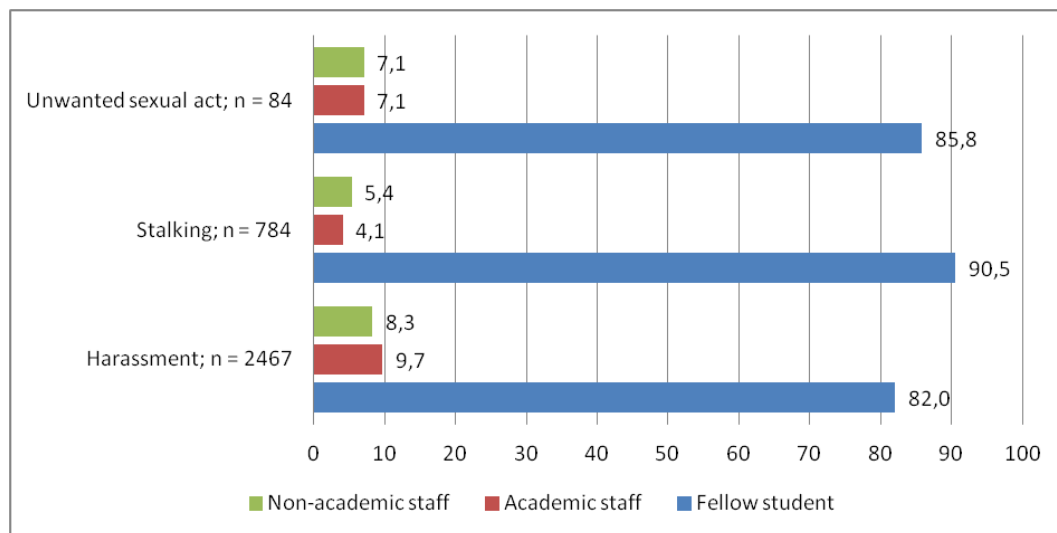

Figure 8: Differentiated representation of persons involved in assaults from the university environment (in %)

This shows that the majority of cases of the most serious experience of sexual harassment and stalking as well as sexual violence involved fellow male or female students. However, the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence carried out by teaching staff took up much of the group discussions. Thus most students rated their chances as very poor in terms of successfully pursuing a complaint if an assault involved a member of teaching staff, especially if the person was a professor. Indeed they were afraid of being heavily disadvantaged when it came to their future professional career. Furthermore, they generally agreed on the assumption that, if it came to the crunch, the university would place its own reputation and that of its academic representatives above the concerns of an individual female student: "*Because I take it as given that the university is actually a fairly closed construct, [...] a lecturer is more likely to be given cover if they've done something* [...]: *That's a poster boy for the faculty, we can't just remove him all of a sudden, just because a student has made a complaint.*" (Student during focus group interview)

Since the majority of students affected said that the person involved in the assault was not from the university environment, this sub-group is also presented in a differentiated manner, as shown in Figure 9:
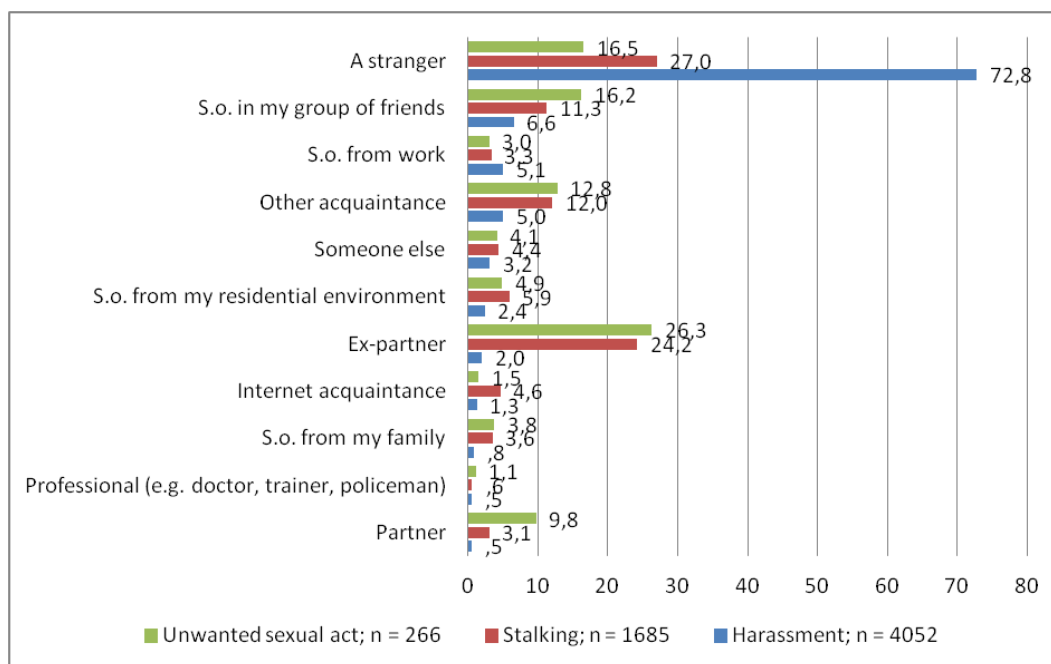
Figure 9: Overview of those involved in assaults beyond the university (in %)

In 72.8% of the most serious situations of sexual harassment, the person involved was not known to the student. In the case of stalking, roughly a quarter of cases involved an unknown person (27.0%) or the student's ex-partner (male or female, 24.2%). 26.6% of the most serious situations of sexual violence involved the student's ex-partner (male or female). In 9.8% of the cases the person involved in the assault was the student's partner and in 16.5% of the cases it was a person completely unknown to the student.

d) Feeling of safety

Sexual victimisation and fear of crime are phenomena which often have extremely serious impacts on those affected, as they often entail longer-term physical and psychological harm (Schneider 1999, 236 f). Even less serious forms of assault such as sexual harassment can have psychological effects such as constant brooding, anger and lowered self-esteem (Müller/Schröttle 2004, 143). Similar effects are reported in relation to stalking: here, feelings of anxiety and even panic attacks are prevalent (Voss/Hoffmann 2002, 8). Feeling unsafe is often accompanied by protective responses, curtailing certain behaviours and avoiding certain places.

These previous findings are confirmed by the present study. Increased anxiety and avoiding certain locations or situations – as a result of the effects of sexual harassment, stalking or sexual violence – constitute 24.1%, 25.7% and 14.1% respectively of the student respondents affected by these effects. This in turn affects the students' actions and behaviour in terms of their social life and their studies: depending on the type of violence they have experienced, the feeling of fear associated with the assault in question, and the person involved in the assault and to what extent the student knew the person, the women affected use practical and psychological strategies of avoidance in order to cope with

what they have experienced and to avoid experiencing anything similar in the future. A further observation, however, is that socially accepted myths regarding who is most likely to be a victim of such violence and under what circumstances "overlay" the women's feeling of safety and their way of coping with what they themselves have experienced. This became especially apparent in the interviews with students at Ruhr University Bochum. Asked about their notions of sexual violence and the profile of perpetrators of sexual violence, the students became aware that these notions are shaped by fear-inducing scenarios involving an unknown perpetrator lurking in the bushes. Thus one important objective of the survey should be to make young women aware that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the violence they fear does not actually occur in the fear-inducing places they imagine but rather in the places they least expect: in their immediate social circle, involving fellow students at start-of-term parties, teachers in lectures, or their own partner in their shared home.

Sexual harassment

Female students often seem to be helpless in the face of sexual harassment; they trivialise it while at the same time saying that it is such a ubiquitous problem that, as individuals, they can do nothing about it. Surprisingly, for example, the students were much more reluctant to mention the less serious assault (in contrast to sexual violence) because they are aware that it seems to be a matter of social consensus to put such assaults "in proportion" and therefore to have to "put up with" them. 72.4% of those students who clicked this item said that "what happened didn't seem so serious to them at the time". In the focus group interviews with students at Ruhr University Bochum it also became clear that the reaction they (expect to) get from other people is also relevant: the stressful effects of what happens (repeatedly) might not be taken seriously and one might be seen as being "oversensitive" or "uptight". In this way, the socially accepted trivialisation of such assaults is internalised and the woman affected no longer trusts her own feelings. Of course, this process begins long before young adulthood, usually having its roots in childhood experiences. For this reason, some experts issued an urgent call during the interviews for measures aimed at raising people's awareness of sexualised acts that constitute an assault. The aim of this is to prevent young women developing a "thick skin" as a way of protecting themselves against emotional harm from sexualised assaults and to give both genders a surer sense of when boundaries have been crossed.

Stalking

According to the German data from the student survey, the stalker was known to the respondent in about two thirds of cases (73.0%). A large majority of the stalkers (90.9%) was male. Incidents also involved former or current partners (27.3% taken together) and strangers (27.0%) in equal proportion. Given the much shorter time period to which the study data refer (time at university) and therefore the fact that students are probably looking back on a shorter period in which they were in a relationship, the national (ex-) partner stalking rate

measured in the national survey can be considered rather high, suggesting that the student age group is more at risk. International studies also confirm the risk of female students being exposed to acts of violence within a partnership. For example, studies conducted among American college students show the rate of physical violence in relationships to be between 11.2 and 32.5 percent (Böhm 2007: 244). The rate of incidence for the use of violence for younger couples (19-29 year-olds) is, at 32.9 percent, three times higher than that for older couples (46-64 year-olds) (Böhm 2007: 2). The representative study conducted by Müller/Schröttle also notes that there is a close connection between experiences of violence in partnerships and incidents of stalking: more than half the victims of domestic violence (55.1%) have been confronted with stalking behaviour on the part of their ex-partner after splitting up (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* 2004: Appendix 39). Experiences of domestic violence were not included in the national student survey. Nonetheless a worryingly high number of students have experienced physical violence or the threat of physical violence. Whereas in the representative study 11.9% of the women said that at some point in their lives they had been threatened with violence, physical harm or being killed, the figure from the present survey was 12 percent. In the case of actually experienced physical violence this ratio becomes even more marked: compared with 9.5 percent in the representative study, the rate for those in the survey affected by physical violence (15.5 percent) is even higher than the rate for those only threatened with violence (12%). These alarmingly high figures indicate that violence within partnerships is a huge problem among young women and one that needs to be taken seriously. Since the phenomenon of domestic violence in Germany has so far been discussed predominantly in the context of marriage relationships, this constitutes an important finding in terms of further research.

Sexual violence

In discussions about sexual violence against female students with relevant professionals (psychologists, advisory service staff, police), they say they have the impression that students report assaults to the police disproportionately rarely. With regard to those women who do report assaults to the police, few of them tend to be students – this is the impression the police have, even if there are no statistics available to back it up. Although all the experts agree that the majority of assaults tend to occur within relationships, they nonetheless see the temporary life situation of students at university as entailing a degree of risk when it comes to experiencing sexual violence: in particular, the supposedly larger number of – loose as well as closer – contacts to other people made by the students in this phase of their lives implies a higher risk of falling victim to unwanted or even forced sexualised contact, that is, sexual assault.

e) Impacts of experiences of violence on the student's studies

It is initially positive to note that the large majority of students who had experienced some form of sexualised assault said that it had not had any negative impacts on their studies. Such potential impacts might include a reduced ability to study effectively or delays in progress through to discontinuing studies completely.

Nonetheless, the negative effects on a sizeable number of students' studies should not be underestimated. Whereas 11.0% of students affected by sexual harassment said they had experienced negative effects on their studies as a result, this figure increases to 26.2% in the case of stalking. Of those who had experienced sexual violence, 45.3% said that it had had an impact on their studies.

In relation to those for whom the situation they experienced had had an effect on their studies, the specific effects are presented in Figure 10:
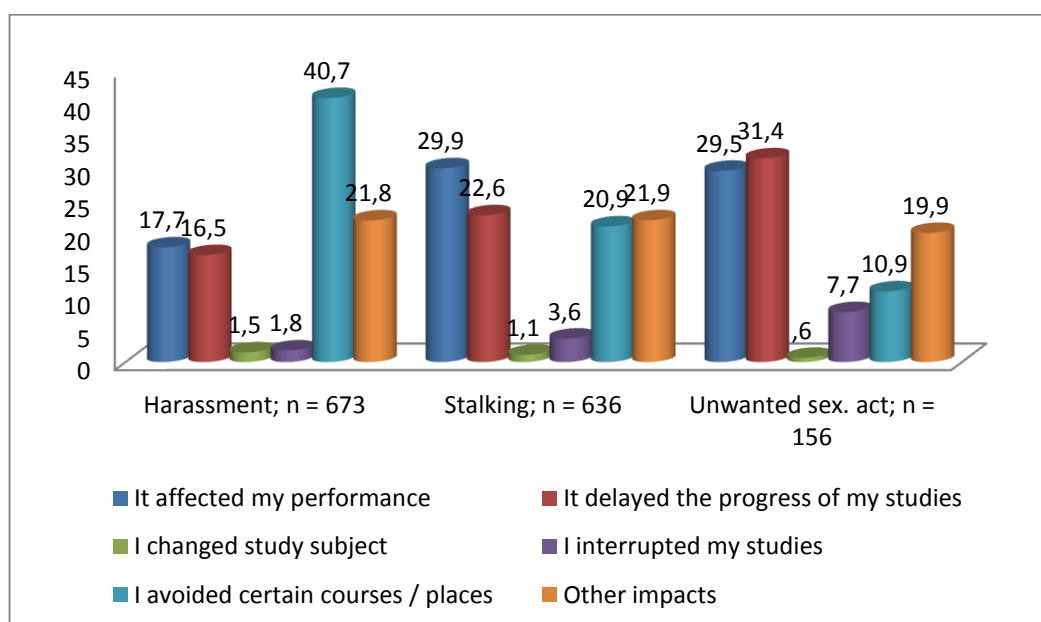

Figure 10: Effects of situation experienced on studies (in %)

In the case of sexual harassment, 40.7% (274 students) said that they had avoided certain seminars/lectures or places following the situation they had experienced. The much lower figure of 17.7% (119 students) said their studies had suffered while 16.5% (111 students) said their studies had been delayed.
In the case of stalking only 20.9% (133 students) said that they had avoided certain seminars/lectures or places. The proportion of those who said their studies had suffered as a result of stalking – 29.9% (190 students) – is just over 12 percentage points higher than in the case of sexual harassment, while the proportion of those whose studies had been delayed (22.6%, or 144 students) was 6 percentage points higher than the figure for sexual harassment.
Of those students who had experienced sexual violence, only 10.9% (17 students) said that they had avoided certain seminars/lectures or places. The

largest effects were apparent in relation to delayed studies (31.4%, or 49 students) and in relation to poorer academic performance (29.5%, or 46 students).

7.7% of students (12 students) said that their experience of sexual violence had involved them interrupting their studies. This proportion was 3.6% (23 students) in the case of stalking and just 1.8% (12 students) in the case of sexual harassment.

Since victimisation and fear of crime can have an adverse impact on students' studies, it is understandable that, alongside general research into sexual and sexualised violence in the USA, campus-based research is widespread and most universities have set up special prevention programmes aimed at reducing women's victimisation (Söchting/Fairbrother/Koch 2004). In England and Wales, too, interest has grown in campus-based research and in developing prevention programmes (cf. Barbaret/Fisher/Taylor 2004, 1; McCreith/Parkinson 2004). So far this has not been the case in Germany, where the present study constitutes a first step in this direction.

f) Disclosure

It is initially positive to note that the majority of students who have experienced violence talk to someone about it. However, looking at the figures more closely, it becomes apparent that the willingness of the young women to talk about an assault they have experienced depends largely on what kind of violence they have experienced. It is striking, for example, that just 14% (359 students) told nobody about having been stalked whereas 29% students who had experienced sexual harassment and 46% students who had experienced sexual violence said nothing about it, as shown in Figure 11:
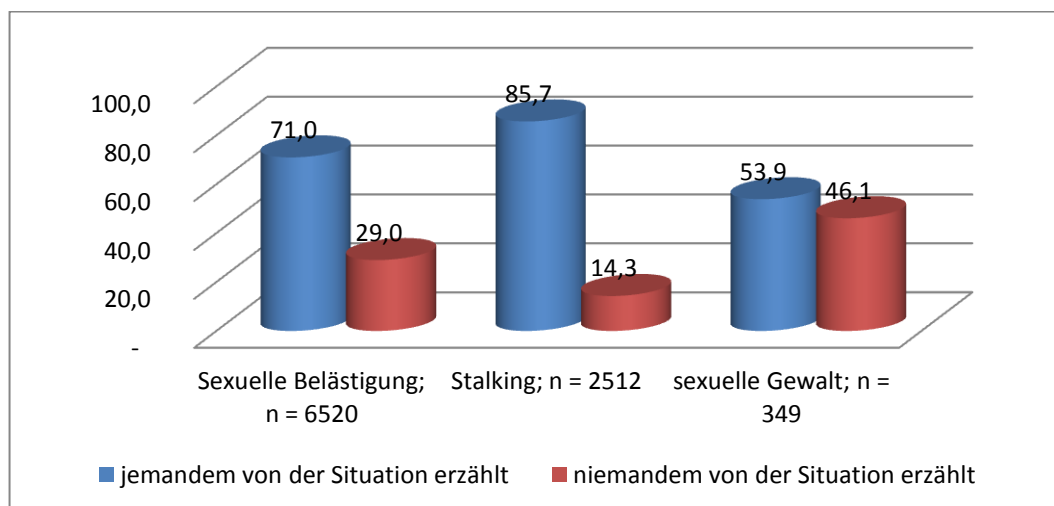

Figure 11: Proportion of students who told someone about the situation they had experienced (in %)

If we then look exclusively at those who confided in no one and consider additionally the sense of threat they felt during the most serious situation, the following finding emerges by comparison:

Figure 12: Comparative presentation of the proportion of students who confided in no one, both with and without consideration of the sense of threat (in %)

In relation to all three types of assault, the students who felt seriously threatened during the most serious incident were less likely to tell anyone about what they had experienced. The largest discrepancy between the students' willingness to confide in someone about what they have experienced generally and about experiences in which they felt especially threatened is greatest in the case of sexual harassment (9.2%).

The young women's willingness to go to the police in cases of stalking and sexual violence is shown in Figure 13:

Figure 13: Proportion of students who went to the police (in %)

In proportional terms, women's disclosure to the police differs only minimally between stalking (10.7% or 184 students) and sexual violence (12.2%, or 19 students).

If we differentiate again here between experiences in general and those involving a heightened sense of threat, the following picture emerges regarding the proportion of those who have gone to the police – as shown in Figure 14:
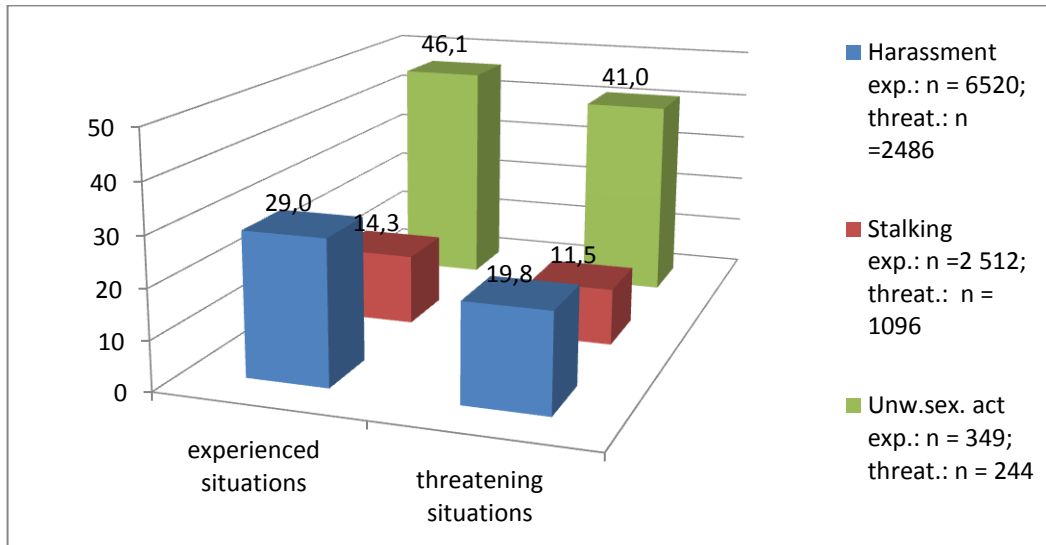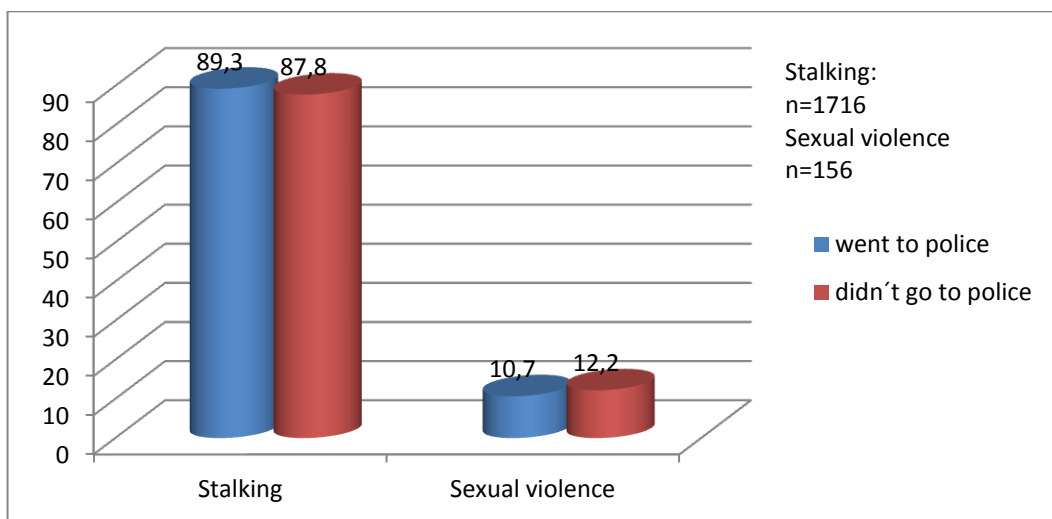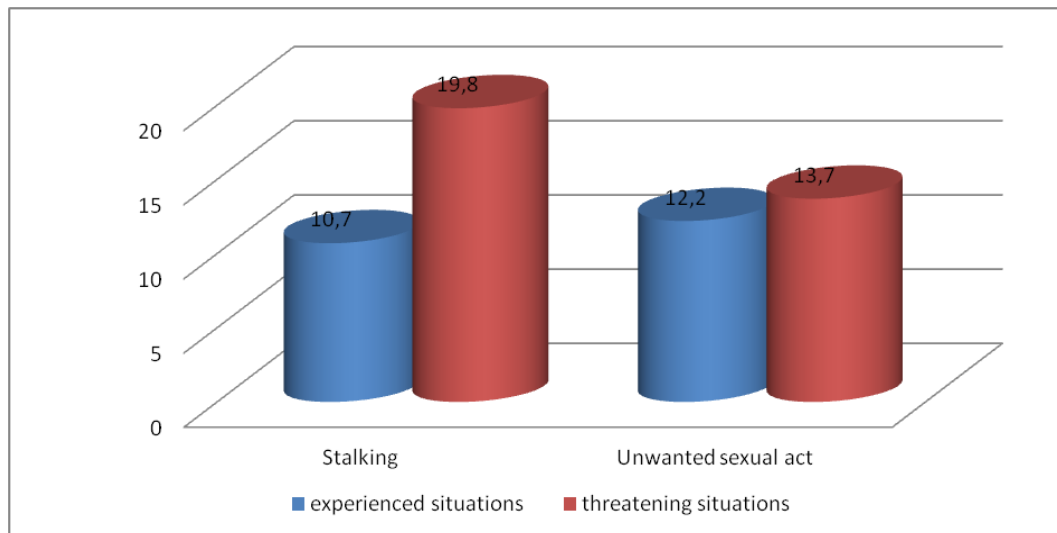

Figure 14: Comparative presentation of proportion of students who went to the police, both with and without consideration of the sense of threat (in %)

Whereas students' willingness to tell someone about what they experienced tends to decline the more they felt threatened in the situation, their disclosure to the police paints a different picture. Whereas in situations involving sexual violence their willingness to go to the police increases by just 1.5 percentage points if they felt seriously threatened in the situation, the proportion of those who told the police about a stalking incident increased by 9.1 percentage points – from 10.7% to 19.8% – if they felt seriously threatened.

Most of the students who had experienced a situation involving sexual violence told no one about what they had experienced. Furthermore, this proportion fell further if they felt especially threatened during the situation. In order to explain why this is the case, the reasons why the students did not tell anyone about the incidents were examined. These are shown in Figure 15, which additionally takes account of multiple responses:
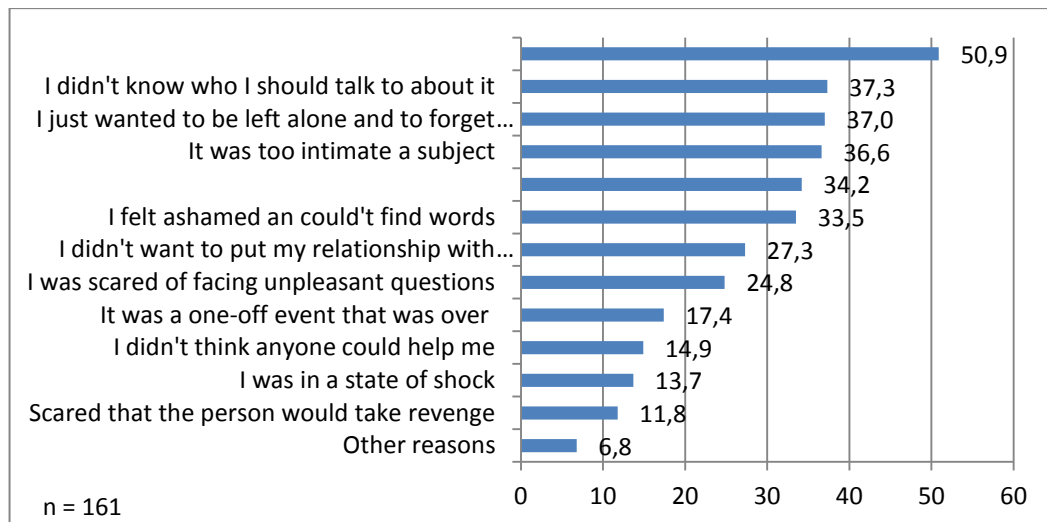
I didn't know who I should talk to about it	50,9
I just wanted to be left alone and to forget…	37,3
It was too intimate a subject	37,0
	36,6
I felt ashamed an could't find words	34,2
I didn't want to put my relationship with…	33,5
I was scared of facing unpleasant questions	27,3
It was a one-off event that was over	24,8
I didn't think anyone could help me	17,4
I was in a state of shock	14,9
Scared that the person would take revenge	13,7
Other reasons	11,8
	6,8

n = 161

Figure 15: Reasons why students affected by sexual violence told no one about it, taking account of multiple responses (in %)

The most prominent reason (51%) why students affected by violence did not tell anyone about it is that they blamed themselves for having misjudged the situation and having partly contributed to it happening. A statistical calculation of the factors that influenced the German students' disclosure confirmed this finding. A logistical regression revealed that the student's perception of her experience and her relationship to the person involved in the incident had by far the greatest influence on disclosure: if she knew her aggressor and/or felt partly responsible for the incident, this had a particularly adverse effect on her willingness to tell anyone about it. 33,5% of students said that they were too ashamed to tell anyone about what had happened. This result confirms results from previous research on sexual violence.

37% of the students wanted to be left alone and to forget what had happened, while only 17% of the students felt it was a one-off event that was over and done with. 15% of the students thought there was nothing and no one who could help them.

For 27% of the students it was too intimate a subject to talk to anyone about, and 37% didn't know who they could talk to about what had happened. The latter point highlights the need for HE institutions to remove the taboo from gender-specific sexual violence and to communicate more effectively to students affected by such violence what university-based support services are available to them.

7. Analysis of qualitative data at Ruhr University Bochum

In addition to the quantitative data about students' experiences of violence and their disclosure behavior, described above, qualitative data in the form of focus group interviews with students and one-to-one interviews with experts within and outside the university were collected at the Ruhr University Bochum in winter 2009/10. These contain valuable information for developing prevention

and response measures. In the following this information is divided into four key themes.

a. Significance (range and extent) of the topic

Experts both within and outside the university are largely unanimous in their assessment of the extent to which female students are affected by sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence: in terms of both available figures seen in relation to help-seeking and reporting behaviour and the assumption of a large number of incidents that go unreported, the experts agreed that only a small number of students turn to relevant support services and that probably a much larger number has experienced sexual harassment and violence as well as stalking. One comment was that it was not possible to say anything about the precise number of unreported cases in relation to reported cases due to a lack of data: "*the number of unreported cases is much, much higher – that's what I assume, anyway.*" Even if the university or external contact persons are made aware of only a few incidents, they said, this was no reason not to question the low rate of inquiries as an indicator of actual need or of the number of incidents. One expert pointed out, for example, that students' willingness to make contact with the university's own advisory services, to talk about their experiences and sometimes even to choose to make an official complaint increases after information events on gender-based violence. This also applies to members of the teaching staff who use such events to get information about existing guidelines for dealing with such incidents, thus helping them overcome their uncertainties in this respect. A similar impact was noted subsequent to the online survey conducted by the project.

It emerged that experts both at the university and outside it have so far had no reliable data about female students' experiences of violence. A study such as the present one was welcomed by all the experts who were interviewed:

> "*What I'd actually like would be for academia, for teaching and research, to take on these issues to a much greater extent and to inform them at the same time. I feel there's not enough of that, in terms of furthering knowledge as well. (…) as a whole, you have to say that the state of research and that of the literature too is more like from yesteryear, not really up to date. And, as I said, not at all in the sphere of higher education.*" (University expert)

The students who were surveyed were also unanimous in their opinion that gender-based violence is a widespread phenomenon at the university and that it influences their everyday lives as students.

According to the students who took part in both the online survey and the focus group interviews, they did so because they think the existence of the whole spectrum of sexual violence at the university should be talked about and thereby made visible. There should be an opportunity to gain access to information and to discuss the issues at relevant events and – on this basis – to have existing support measures for female students reviewed and optimised:

> "*But I think it is interesting and important, too, that something like what we're doing here, otherwise we wouldn't be here, that a workshop like this*

is on offer, where you can just exchange views and where you can say, yeah, this issue is important." (Student in focus group interview)

The students were also clear about the university having responsibility for the safety of its students. The fact that the university has implemented the EU project and conducted the survey and interviews gives the impression that it cares about its female students – and this is welcomed by the students:

"I think it's wonderful that a test like this is being done, it shows me that it's important to the university that its students feel safe and at ease on campus." (Student in focus group interview)

In this regard, conducting regular surveys of students regarding their experiences of violence can serve several important functions in a university violence prevention strategy. The data collected will enable the university, first, to obtain more precise figures regarding the numbers of female students affected by violence, on which it can then base its prevention and response measures. In the long term, routine surveys can be used as a form of monitoring to review existing measures in terms of their effectiveness. In addition, regular surveys will make the university's students more aware of this issue while at the same time making them realise that the university is not ignoring incidents of violence but rather is keen to remove the taboo around the issue and to guarantee support for those affected by it.

b. Trivialisation

All the interviewees confirm that the media convey an image of women as being available, and that this image is closely associated with a certain type of appearance. Female students too are confronted daily with these judgements and expectations – not least from their fellow male students. However, whereas a few female students think they are "not the intended targets" of such images, which they say circulate only in "uneducated circles", others feel that these images exist in all social classes, even if they don't influence everyone in the same way. The problem, they say, though, is that in the university environment in which students spend their time day in and day out, the issue is denied and ignored:

"I think at the uni it's a bit of a problem that people don't talk about it much. It's always said at the uni that we're simply a research institution. And the fact that these other, sexual processes are going on, that that's swept under the carpet, I think that's the problem." (Student in focus group interview)

Indeed this supposedly "neutral" approach by the university makes female students think that they shouldn't take unwanted advances seriously and that they have to deal with them on their own. This applies especially to gender relations in the sphere of sex and power. Open debate is thus avoided, and even female students tend to think in cases of verbal or physical sexual harassment, "*Oh well, that's ok, that's just the way it is*". If they protest or put up a defence, they are faced with accusations of being "prudish" or "uptight". However, the students are uncertain as to whether this image of women is conveyed through the media or taught during upbringing. Of course, this applies

to both genders, albeit with different starting assumptions: men have internalised the message that "*Anyone who puts on a skirt in the evening, you're quite at liberty to grab their arse and no one minds*". Women wonder about the extent to which they themselves share the blame when sexual violence happens to them:

> "*You basically have to justify to yourself EVERY time, at what point is it getting too intense for me, at what point is it getting sexual and at what point is it no longer just a bit of fun that's getting out of hand*". (Student in focus group interview)

In order to support students before any incident occurs and to protect them from assaults, the female students regard awareness raising as necessary and helpful:

> "*Well, I think there still has to be a whole lot more awareness raising going on, about what the situation is, about abusive behaviour. Where it can begin. Because I think if you're in a situation, you don't really think about it very much, if you're already in it*". (Student in focus group interview)

c. Feeling of safety

The fact that only a very small proportion of the violence experienced by female students occurs on the university premises or in university buildings is positive, although this constitutes only a part of the reality experienced by them. It emerged from the focus group interviews with the students that many of them feel unsafe on the university campus and that many limit their own freedom of movement to a considerable extent on account of the fear they feel. Students' sense of safety and the actual places where assaults occur are in a contradictory relation to one another: the students feel especially afraid in those places where, statistically speaking, the fewest assaults occur. Sexual violence actually occurs much more often in places which, in turn, the students don't perceive to be especially scary. A discrepancy between subjective perception and factual experience also exists in relation to experiences of sexual harassment and stalking. In order to illuminate this situation more clearly, the students were asked in the focus group interviews about their reasons for feeling unsafe. This elicited accounts of the rape myth phenomenon: contrary to the criminological fact that the large majority of cases of sexual violence take place in a woman's immediate circle of friends or family – and despite much more awareness raising work having been done in schools – the image of the unknown perpetrator lurking outside in the dark stubbornly persists in young women's imaginations. The students are aware that their ideas are influenced by fear-inducing scenarios about the unknown perpetrator hiding in the bushes: "*…what pops into your head first, of course, is when you're walking across campus at nine in the evening and then you're dragged into the bushes by some bloke or other*".

It also became clear in the interviews, however, that architectural factors often have a negative impact on students' feeling of safety. For example, the huge building complexes of campus universities are perceived as being labyrinthine,

with numerous small spaces that are partially concealed from view and poorly lit and are felt to be especially threatening in the evening hours. Many students are generally reluctant to stay on the campus after dark and sometimes avoid going to seminars that take place at this time of day. The poor condition of some buildings is also experienced as a fear-inducing factor.

Thus to boost female students feeling of safety effectively, it is important for the university management to take several kinds of actions. First, it should ensure that places perceived as scary in the existing architecture are redesigned or removed and that, when new buildings are constructed, such features are excluded in the design from the start. However, its efforts should not be limited solely to construction and infrastructure related changes. Instead, the aim should be to contribute through targeted awareness raising campaigns towards expelling the common rape myths and their associated false assumptions about dark places and unknown perpetrators. This would be an important way of countering feelings of lack of safety at their origin. This kind of information policy, which makes it clear that the university does not tolerate violence, can help to counter female students' fear of crime and give them a greater freedom of movement that is conducive to their own personal and professional development.

d. Measures to combat sexualised violence

In relation to the situation at the university, the students would like to see a number of changes aimed at creating transparency with regard to university policy, support services and procedures. This includes encouraging the university to be willing to address openly the issue of sexual violence and incidents of sexual assault at the university. One particular concern the women have relates to the impacts of sexual violence in the relationship between students and lecturers, which adversely affect the student herself and her studies. In this regard they want the university management to speak out clearly in their favour. This strategy should be accompanied with corresponding activities to communicate this message. This may involve written communications (from a business card with contact addresses through to posters), verbal communications (information and discussion events) and practical actions (a range of support services, removal of architectural and organisational problem areas, visible and accessible security service). Given that young female students spend a large majority of their time at the university – also relative to their lifetime to date as a whole – the "personal" issue of sexual violence should be a "public" one in the university context.

The experts see the existence of a "political atmosphere" at the university as a prerequisite for developing and implementing suitable support provision. It is the university's task to make its staff and members aware of the problem and to encourage those affected by it to actively resist assaults. In this context, several experts feel that a complaints office is an especially promising instrument. They agree with the need for a guideline against sexual violence, which emerged from the General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG) passed in Germany in 2006. Nonetheless, what is needed beyond the mere existence of

such a guideline are specific instructions for practical action and the creation of permanent advisory and complaint services that are available not only to university employees but also to students. They said the main thing to keep in mind when setting up such a complaints service is that as many different representatives of different groups at the university as possible should work together without making the organisation unwieldy and unable to act decisively. Before any woman decides whether or not to make an official complaint against the person who assaulted her, she should first receive confidential advice/counselling from a qualified advisor/counsellor. The advice given would focus on possible ways of taking the matter forward. With regard to the focus on an initial advisory session, all the university-based experts agreed that the decision about how to proceed must be left to the women themselves: "*That's more or less the key point of the consultation: We don't tell anyone what they should do; instead we try to find the right solutions for and with the person concerned.*" Apart from a complaints procedure, psychological counselling can also take place if needed:

> "*You can have both things running separately, in parallel, or you can say, I only want to go down the complaints route, I don't want anything to do with the counselling side – or vice versa. That's completely up to the woman herself, just as she wants it to be.*" (University expert in interview)

Should the woman affected decide to make a complaint, a hearing takes place with the woman, and the accused person is given an opportunity to make a statement. After this, the mode of proceeding with the complaint needs to be established in a standardised process. Unless the incident officially constitutes a crime, in which case, with the woman's consent, the prosecution services need to become involved and a charge brought, the university is obliged to enact its duty of care by investigating all the evidence and, where necessary and appropriate, applying sanctions. In the case of employees who overstep the line, these may include official measures such as issuing a warning or initiating disciplinary action. In the case of students or non-university individuals, civil law measures need to be taken (such as a total or partial house ban or withdrawal of an internet account in the case of cyberstalking or cyber-bullying). An official annual report detailing the complaints pursued and their outcomes would make it possible to assess how effective the measures have been and to improve them where possible.

This kind of "zero tolerance" policy at the university, institutionalised in a pro-active system of complaints management, can bring about a number of important changes. For example, communicating this policy publicly helps to convey support and care to female students, which strengthens their self-confidence in defending themselves against assaults. At the same time all the groups at the university receive the necessary information regarding appropriate means of prevention and how to respond and act if a response is necessary; (potential) perpetrators are sent a clear signal about the repercussions of their actions on themselves. Once the issue is no longer subject to a taboo and once people have been made aware of the issues, the "atmosphere" at the university changes with regard to debate and action. In this way, future incidents can be dealt with which, up to now, had been a cause for

shame. Thus a number of measures go hand in hand: tightening university policy, strengthening women's self-confidence, giving those in positions of responsibility more confidence to deal with incidents, crime prevention measures and a concomitant reduction in sexualised assaults at the university.

e. Assaults by teaching staff

As the quantitative data indicate, assaults are also committed by academic and non-academic staff at the university, most often in the form of sexual harassment. The low case numbers mean that it is not possible to make a statistical study of the power gap as an influencing factor, but the qualitative data do provide significant indications of the fact that students mistrust the university as an institution. The student representative body expresses the fear many students have that, once an incident has become public knowledge and perhaps once a complaint has been made, the student may be disadvantaged in their studies or otherwise subjected to adverse treatment. It therefore appeals for an independent contact point to be set up that is independent of the academic sphere. The university's unambiguous "zero tolerance" declaration is seen to be important in this context, too, for the complaints office to work properly and to be used.

> It "*would have to be made clear that there's no connection to the faculties. In other words, that it's a separate set-up. […]the first thing I thought was […]: would I go there? And then I thought: […] if the lecturer finds out, will I be given a bad mark on my work? Or will my studies suffer? So it would have to be made really transparent that it won't have any negative consequences for you.*" (Student in focus group interview)

The power gap between students and tutors when assaults occur is also addressed repeatedly by the students in the interviews. They assume that, when it comes to the crunch, the reputation of the university carries more weight than an individual student's complaint. They are also afraid of being disadvantaged in their future academic and professional development:

> "*There are structures where you could say, he's a poster boy for the faculty, we can't just suddenly remove him just because a student made a complaint. 'Cause normally, the professors we have, they're not very interchangeable. They've usually got a whole lot of research projects on the go, so that pretty much ties them to the university.*" (Student in focus group interview)

Doctoral candidates find themselves in a doubly dependent relationship with their boss, who is simultaneously their PhD supervisor, so that an important part of their career is linked to his ongoing goodwill.

If a university qua institution wishes to combat gender-specific sexual violence over the longer term, it should create a general awareness of the fact that sexual harassment and violence are neither the personal problem of the person affected by them, nor are they tolerated in the university environment. It is only in this kind of atmosphere that people who harass or otherwise infringe the personal space of female students can no longer benefit from the fear, shame

and internalised guilt of their victim. This institutional discussion about the issue goes far beyond optimising the advisory and counselling services available at the university: it constitutes an across-the-board task for all members of the university in the sense of a shared ideal. The implementation of programmes that advance awareness of assaults and encourage – but don't force – students to talk about their experience and to seek help from contact persons both within and outside the university is obviously a task for management. This can be done effectively over the long term only if the university management initiates, funds, and evaluates progress over time using a monitoring system.

8. Summary of recommendations: Prevention and response measures for tackling sexual violence at HE institutions

As far as the authors are aware, no university-based measures aimed at preventing and responding to sexual or sexualised violence have yet been fully elaborated or evaluated in Germany. One key objective of the present research project was to fill this gap by developing a catalogue of measures based on the quantitative and qualitative results generated by it and designed to provide these institutions with recommendations that might assist them in devising their own tailored strategies.

The following are practical recommendations aimed at reducing sexual violence at HE institutions:

- **Publicity that draws attention to support services**

There are two major reasons why female students only rarely make use of existing counselling/advisory services in cases of sexual violence. One is that they tend to harbour feelings of shame about their experience, and the other is a lack of information about how the university services work. This is why it is important that female students know about the university's counselling/advice services.

- **Easy-access advisory/counselling services**

In order to make the points of contact in their present form more accessible to victims, it is necessary to lower the barriers facing women who wish to access services. Given the widespread use of new media among students, online (chat) advice sessions are also regarded as helpful and useful.

- **Training and networking among experts within and outside the university**

Ideally the existing university points of contact would network at the following three levels: with contact persons throughout the university, with affiliated, informally used contact persons and services, and with local external contact services.

The aim of networking would be to exchange information about ways of working, about who the relevant contact persons are and about ways of making contact. Ideally, a set of shared procedural guidelines for dealing with those seeking help could be developed. It would also be conceivable here to provide training opportunities in terms of the basics of advice and crisis intervention for those involved, so that informal contact persons can be trained in dealing with those seeking help in crisis situations.

- **Improving women's feeling of safety on campus**

Many of the students surveyed said in the online questionnaire that, by filling it in, they had been encouraged – in many cases for the first time – to think in detail about the issue of violence and their own experiences. Thus in addition to its function as a tool for collecting data on the prevalence of violence, a survey can also be seen as a useful instrument that not only sheds light on unreported crime, but also heightens individuals' awareness of their own attitudes towards the violation of personal space they have experienced.

Improving women's feeling of safety can be achieved by means of:

- **Information campaigns**

The university can publish a report about the results of this study or its own studies. Presented in the form of an information campaign, it could help to make clear to the students that the violence they fear does not actually occur in the places they assume it does but rather where they least expect it to: within their close circle of family and friends.

- **Self-assertiveness courses**

Repeated references were made during the focus group and expert interviews to self-assertiveness training as a means of violence prevention. The experts emphasise the three main impacts of such training: boosting women's self-confidence, improving their perceptive faculties, and reducing fear and avoidance behaviours.

- **Architectural measures**

Depending on the type of campus and the condition of the university buildings, consideration should be given to the latter and to the institution's architecture, as these factors play a considerable role in female students' subjective sense of safety.

- **Evaluation of measures**

An issue so far neglected but urgently necessary is the evaluation of previously established measures aimed at reducing gender-based violence or at supporting women who have experienced such violence at HE institutions. Such an evaluation would be based on collecting data on sexual assault among students at regular intervals and thus being able to identify any changes in prevalence or in ways of dealing with the assaults. The data would also make it

possible to check the extent to which the supporting measures on offer are useful and are accepted by those for whom they are intended.

Table: **"Good practice" recommendations aimed at combating and reducing sexual violence at HE institutions***

	University	Students	University staff
University policy	➜ **Zero tolerance policy:** ➜ zero tolerance policy for students and members of the university that is binding and formulated unambiguously ➜ create an atmosphere of openness that serves to remove the taboo surrounding the topic and to make people more aware of it ➜ embed the policy in the university's self-description, statutes and service agreements		

Publicity / information campaigns	➔ press, website, ➔ information events at schools, Girls Days, ➔ school projects	➔ routine information materials upon registration ➔ information events/presentation of contact persons/points at first year events, flyers, card with emergency contact addresses, first year folder, website info) ➔ posters on campus, exhibitions, student newspaper ➔ regular anonymous online surveys ➔ teaching seminars as an option within the topic of gender-specific violence	➔ routine **information materials** (AGG and guidelines, advanced training courses) when employment begins
Advisory services		➔ expand range of on- and offline advisory services ➔ anonymous advice outreach advice work ➔ option for female students to receive counselling from a female psychologist ➔ option for female students with migratory background to receive counselling from a counsellor with migratory background ➔ other options (self-assertiveness courses, self-help group)	➔ **advisory service** for members of the university exposed by their students

Practical services		➜ self-assertiveness training ➜ escort service to bus/tram stop or car park during hours of darkness ➜ peer discussion groups for victims	➜ **discussion groups** for contact persons from the faculties / institutes
Further training			➜ **further training courses** for contact persons from faculties / institutes on legal regulations and situation regarding providing advice or counselling
Networking	➜ **Vertical and horizontal networking between points of contact within the university:** ➜ **Networking with affiliated, informally used points of contact/contact persons:** ➜ Student residence admin./student union at Bochum (AKAFÖ), student religious communities, International Office, Service Centre for Advice on Social Welfare and Disability Issues (SZB) ➜ **Networking between internal points of contact and local support services:** ➜ Advice centres, therapists, doctors, legal practitioners, police, women's shelters)	➜ **Networking among the points of contact with the university:** ➜ horizontal: central/departmental Equal Opps. Officers, **student representatives** and contact persons (student deans, personal tutors etc.)	➜ **Vertical and horizontal networking between points of contact within the university:** ➜ horizontal: central/departmental Equal Opps. Officers, **student representatives** and contact persons (student deans, personal tutors etc.) ➜ vertical: between the levels of hierarchy (academic/non-academic staff, students)

Measures	➔ **Organisational and technical improvements** ➔ Adequate signposting for (escape) routes ➔ Alarm buttons Presence of Security staff (especially in (women's) car parks ➔ Escort service and/or meeting points on campus ➔ **Architectural improvements** ➔ Remediation of architectural defects (heavy doors etc.) ➔ adequate lighting (on paths, in corridors, in car parks)	➔ Complaints centre with executive powers	➔ Complaints centre with executive powers
Evaluation	➔ regular online surveys among students and members of the university regarding ➔ experiences of sexual violence ➔ feelings of safety on campus ➔ satisfaction with university services ➔ levels of awareness regarding services and points of contact		

* The recommendations are not gender-specific and are therefore aimed at students of both sexes

9. Recommendations for further research on sexual violence against students

Future research which, like our project, is to be guided by the standards for violence-related data collection needs to generate additional long-term gender-disaggregated data and statistics on gender-based violence against female students. In doing so, the following issues (among others) should be elucidated further:

1) Research on perpetrators

2) Research on gender-based violence against young men

3) Research on mutual/reciprocal violence by women and men

4) Research on gender-based sexual violence against young women with comparative samples

5) Research on survivors of sexual assault as being at increased risk for repeat assaults

In the course of conducting the current research project, it became apparent in a number of ways that university managers had a generally reserved attitude – albeit to varying degrees – when it came to the research topic. Concerns were expressed (in either subtle or more explicit ways) that raising the topic might alienate students and damage the university's reputation or hinder it in the competition over a good ranking position. In order nonetheless to obtain a clear political commitment on the part of university authorities to combat gender-based violence, what is needed are not just one-off statistics for prevalence and disclosure rates that are hurriedly filed away by alarmed university officials, but rather long-term, continuous statistics that make it possible to observe positive developments and the degree of effectiveness of any measures undertaken. With these tools at their disposal, the issue of gender-based violence can lose its capacity to alarm university managers and instead may even turn into a form of positive publicity for the university: The message the university sends to the outside world then is that it sees its educational role in a holistic light and, as a result, takes the issues of gender justice and equal opportunities seriously. Having more differentiated and more comprehensive data in future will give university managers a better understanding of the incidental costs incurred by university and students alike, enabling them to assess the effectiveness of violence prevention programmes and policies.