

"By Default, I Think of Male Criminals when I Think of Sexual and Violent Crimes"
– A Quantitative Study on the Effect of Gender-Inclusive Written Language when
Referring to Sexual and Violent Crime

Although up to 20% of sexual and violent crimes are committed by women, they are rarely perceived as perpetrators in the public perception. As a result, a significant proportion of sexual violence and victims are 'overlooked'. Firstly, a quantitative online study was conducted to examine the extent to which German gender-inclusive written language forms – masculine forms (-er) compared to feminine forms (-in) as well as gender star and colon forms (*(in); :(in)) – influence whether women are also considered as (potential) perpetrators. The results show that in German, masculine forms do not have a gender-neutral or cross-gender effect. Feminine forms are currently effective and indispensable for drawing attention to women as (potential) perpetrators. Therefore, paired forms with a masculine first element (for example plural *Täter* (male) *und Täterinnen* (female)) are currently and as a first step best suited to make the actual perpetrators mentally visible to the audience. This also does not distract from the predominance of male perpetrators. The second part of the article presents findings on existing gender-binary perpetrator prototypes.

Keywords: *sexual violence, gender inclusive language, female offender, gender stereotypes, taboo*