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Against gender-based violence: from Italian debate to intercultural dialogue

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editors: Ines Testoni, Adriano Zamperini, Gabriela Moita and Mihaela Dana Bucuţă

Foreword-Ines Testoni VIII
The paradoxical Italian situation as Latin and Mediterranean prototype

THE TOPIC
-Paola Degani 3
Gender security between human development and human security. Recent issues in the political international agenda

-Maria Silvia Guglielmin, Ines Testoni, Ingrid Pogliani, Marta Prandelli, Alice Bertoldo, Sibylla Verdi 29
The mother who cannot provide liberation: family atom analysis of women victims of domestic violence

-Caterina Peroni 46
Gender violence and sexism in Italy. Norms, control and sexuality

-Maria Rosaria Pelizzari 66
A big bad wolf in sheep's clothing. Case studies of accounts of sexual abuse from trials taking place during the early 1900s

-Isabella Corazziari, Maria Giuseppina Muratore 88
Intimate partner violence: short and long term consequences

-Caterina Arcidiacono,Gabriella Ferrari Bravo 117
The war in the nest

MATERIALS
-Lorenza Perini, Margherita Verzola 141
The contended body: the construction of public discourses on women's body that makes violence possible. A study case in the Italian North East

-Giorgia Margherita, Gina Troisi 166
Gender violence and shame. The visible and the invisible, from the clinical to the social systems

-Ines Testoni, Alessandra Armenti, Lucia Ronconi, Sibylla Verdi, Michael Wieser, Mihaela Bucuta, Gabriela Moita, Galabina Tarashoeva 186
Developing spontaneity and well-being in women victims of domestic violence

-Beatrice Venturini, Cristina O. Mosso, Massimo Bellotto 202
We are diverse but belonging to the same team: an empirical study on the relationship between diversity and identification

-Gabriella Ferrari Bravo,Caterina Arcidiacono 215
Family scenarios and violence: a clinical case story

POSTCOLONIAL AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS

-Neus Roca Cortes 243

¿Violencia íntima o violencia machista de pareja?. Su visibilidad desde una perspectiva de género y feminista. Notas de la experiencia en España.

-Barbara Biglia 275

Marcos legislativos y prácticas educativas sobre violencias de género y juventud en Cataluña

-Alexander Hochdorn, Paolo F. Cottone, Brigido Vizeu Camargo, Bruna Berri 304

Textos generizados em contextos afetivos: Experiências e relações podem prevenir a violência de gênero na prisão?"

-Zahra Tizro 327

The role of orthodox jurisprudence in dealing with domestic violence against women in Iran

THE AUTHORS 359

Foreword - Ines Testoni

The paradoxical situation of Italy as the Latin and Mediterranean prototype

Gender based violence and human rights

Violence against women can be considered the first obstacle to achieving equality and development of a progressive society. In all societies, although to a different degree, women are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. Many studies illustrate how low social and economic status can be both a cause and a consequence of this violence. This condition is the result of the historically unequal power relationship between women and men, which is perpetuated by traditional and customary practices that do not recognize the right of self determination of women. Any kind of violence against women is a clear expression of male dominance and both a cause and consequence of women's serious disadvantage and imbalanced position compared to men. In many regions of the world, women are still expected to endure being subjugated by men, since the strength and weight of traditions is such that many women even find it justifiable to be dominated.

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"[1]. The core document of the Fourth World Conference on Women of Beijing (FWCWB), named Platform for Action Governments, declared that violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and that it is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Since FWCWB, there has been a general worldwide concern about violence against women and domestic violence in particular.

In spite of that, the problem continues to grow. This means that it is necessary to further develop an analysis of the factors that maintain such a tragic situation.

[1] The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/

There are different forms of gender based violence, from domestic abuse to forced marriages, vetriolage, rape, trafficking and female genital mutilation. Furthermore, in the whole world, women are forced to bear various kinds of sexual acts and humiliating sexual activities, verbal harassment, stalking, acts of exhibitionism, persecution and homicide. This is partly due to the fact that men occupy and exploit positions of trust and intimacy, as husbands, boyfriends, fathers, fathers-in-law, stepfathers, brothers, uncles, sons, or other relatives, that permits them to exercise all forms of cruelties, expressed through emotional, psychological, verbal, social, economic, spiritual, physical and sexual forms of abuse. In most cases, the violent behavior is part of a male range of means to exercise their power over women, which can be both criminal and non-criminal and almost always invisible, especially when it takes place in the home. This is because in our common traditional culture we consider close relationships like a secret area where society cannot enter. Furthermore, in many societies, women are taught to accept, tolerate, and even rationally justify domestic violence and to remain silent about such incidents, so that this condition remains intact over time. Indeed, intimate partner violence and cultural family relationships involve any form of abuse and control over females, including the psychological and physical dimensions.

Not only has domestic violence been acknowledged as a violation of the basic human rights of women, but an increasing amount of research highlights the health burdens, intergenerational and demographic consequences of such violence.

The Italian case as model to study in-depth

Whether we consider domestic violence the ultimate expression of violence, and since in Italy the family dimension (familism[2]) is central to social life and parallel to the subordinate female condition, a specific analysis on the Italian condition may be useful, especially in order to consider it similar or prototypic to Latin cultures, like the Spanish, Portuguese, or Mediterranean ones. In fact, during the 20th session of the UN Human Rights Council, on

[2] Familism is a concept indicating a form of social structure in which the needs of the family as a group are more important than the needs of any individual family member or of the society. See: Testoni I. (2007). La frattura originaria, Liguori, Napoli. Testoni I., Ronconi L., Boccher D. (2006). The question of the mafia-style sub-culture role in female subordination. Traditional culture, religion and gender role representation in both emigrated and non-emigrated Albanian women, *World Cultural Psychiatry Research Review*, 2, 1, pp. 164-181

June 25th, 2012, the Special *Rapporteur* on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, opened the session with an important report denouncing gender violence in Italy. In her report, Manjoo underlined that: "*violence against women remains a significant problem in Italy despite efforts to combat such violence, and there is an urgent need to address the underlying structural causes of inequality and discrimination*". In the latter part of her report, she expressed her concern that: "*most of the violence is underreported in the context of a patriarchal society where domestic violence is not always perceived as a crime; where victims are largely economically dependent on the perpetrators of violence; and perceptions persist that the state responses will not be appropriate or helpful*". The Special report concluded that, *although the Italian legal framework largely provides for sufficient protection for violence against women, it is characterized by fragmentation, inadequate punishment of perpetrators and lack of effective redress for women victims of violence*". In this regard, she stressed that the weak political will and the lack of funds available for programs in the area of women's rights: "*affects the responsibility of the Central Government to fulfill, with due diligence, its international and national obligations to effectively address violence against women*"[3].

Actually in Italy, the revolutionary theories of the Second and Third Feminist Waves are widely known, but discussed only in an academic gender studies setting, and this situation has not developed in parallel with women's ability to enjoy the benefits of change. Indeed, it seems that women are mostly entangled in regressive environments, which keep them in a state of backwardness compared to the rest of the Western world. Feminist culture gives the impression of being unable to involve the masses of young women and of being intrinsically powerless to indicate solutions for the serious discrimination that women experience. Despite the great efforts of the Western world that are aimed at resolving this injustice, the gender gap in Italy has remained the same for decades[4]; furthermore notwithstanding the considerable efforts made by European policies in order to reduce this gap, nothing seems to be able to reduce the persistent humiliation of women and their submission to traditional logic that keeps them strongly subordinate to men, making incompatible the dimensions *de jure* and *de facto. A*lthough there

[3] See: Wideplus, 2013: http://wideplusnetwork.wordpress.com/news/un-special-rapporteur-on-feminicide-and-violence-against-women-in-italy/

[4] ISTAT, *Rapporto annuale: La situazione del Paese nel 2010* (Roma: Istituto nazionale di statistica, 2011), http:// www.istat.it; WAVE, "The Daphne Toolkit," http://www.wave-network.org/start.asp?ID=23303

are more female university graduates that work in numerous areas, gaining significant expertise in every field of intimate relationships and social life, they fail to improve their position consolidated from WW2 to the present day[5]. Since equal access to positions of higher status is an indicator of democracy and individual freedom, it is important to ask what factors contribute in determining the imbalance[6].

The mission of this volume

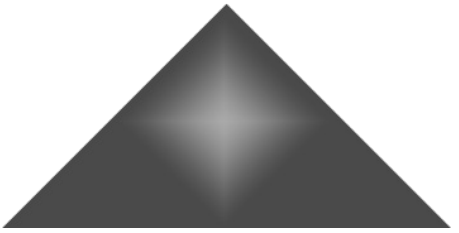
As Michael Foucault discusses, the first effect of inhibition is learned helplessness that derives from being externally controlled. The second effect is the predictable fall into victim relationships. Italy is in fact one of the countries where domestic violence and femicide are particularly large problems.
In Italy many new initiatives to combat these phenomena are being created. These initiatives are centered on the contention that Italy is a paradoxical Country where on the one hand different cultures are busy constructing a society able to mutually recognize diversity and on the other hand, in spite of the progress guaranteed to women such as equality with men, Italy remains a country that is substantially traditional. In feminist terms, we can say that traditionalism means colonialism or phallogocentrism,
This monographic number of *Camera Blu* discusses the ways in which the Italian paradox may be considered engendering a sensitive framework of meaning linking the background of many Latin and Mediterranean cultures that are still unable to leave behind the old inherited ways that hinder true social development and the right of everyone to be a free and self-determined person. To better illustrate the elements of an effective community response that is able to fight against gender violence, this volume examines what kinds of priorities must be considered in order to change the current situation and create comprehensive and individualized approaches for psychosocial intervention. Indeed, the volume maps a discourse on violence against women considering substantially two kinds of themes: a theoretical

[5] See: Alma Laurea, "Indagine 2008. Profilo dei Laureati 2007," http://www.almalaurea.it/universita/
profilo/profilo2007/; see also: Testoni I. (2012). Essenzialismo tra psicologia sociale e studi di genere: paradossi italiani intorno alla differenza (Essentialism in social psychology and gender studies: Italian paradoxes around the difference), *Psicologia sociale* – 2, pp. 285-299.

[6] In this area of discussion, it is important to consider the work of Patrizia Romito, Caterina Arcidiacono and Alisa Del Re, whose work analyzes in a systematic way the phenomenon of violence, offering psychosocial and political alternatives to change the situation in Italy.

discussion and the description of some specific interventions together with the research results in this field, keeping a particular focus on domestic violence and the social factors determining it.

Our analysis of the Italian evidence, inherent to a number of difficulties not fully overcome in feminist history, is inevitably limited but at the same time strategic. Indeed, we think that it is worthwhile to underline again various issues that democracy still has to insist on, with stronger determination both in Italy and in other Countries, which are in a similar condition. With this perspective, we want to define what has happened in the last few decades in Italy: forced and/or exploitive (immigrant) prostitution has increased and guaranteed profitable gains for the national and international mafias, Italian television celebrates women with degrees only as stupid, boring and trite sexual-things, parliament is filled with escorts and sexy showgirls and kept the percentage of women in politics equal to that in the seventies, female occupation is decreasing, motherhood is celebrated as sacred, but artificial insemination and assisted reproductive technologies are prohibited, no social structures exist to help mothers in their daily care of the children and the number of femicides is increasing faster than in any other European country. Almost every day a woman is murdered by her husband, boyfriend or ex-lover, because he can't accept changes in the relationship, including changing roles in the couple. All this is happening at the same time as the field of Italian academic gender studies has achieved increasing International success.



THE TOPIC

Paola Degani

Gender security between human development and human security. Recent issues in the political international agenda

Abstract

Issues regarding security, for a long time have been proposed, both in the scientific literature, that in the writings of popular character, without taking into due consideration the specificity of the effects that certain threats can cause the different subjectivity or on specific groups rather than on other . In particular, very rarely takes into account the fact that, in relation to the condition of women, we can talk, referring to certain areas or aspects of the problem, think of the problem of violence, of a real security crisis. The safety cultures sedimentation processes of socialization through everyday practices, can be considered an integral part of the internal structures of states. The issues relating to the in / security for women are on the agenda institutional, only a few years, do not fall within the traditional framework of interventions aimed at regulating sector profiles of women, in line with a vision of the subject recipient of this policy individual as "neutral." These are issues that today are also of inter-governmental organizations, in particular the United Nations, a central political role with respect to the adoption of policies related to the affirmation, respect and the effectiveness of human rights and at the same time enrich and innovate in order substantial guidelines and decision-making processes in the field of security.

Keywords: public policies, status of women, gender security, human rights, the international community.

Gender security: a human security point of view

For quite a long time now, both the scientific literature and more popular works, have tended to discuss security issues without adequate attention to the ways in which specific kinds of threats may affect certain individual

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psychologies or certain groups differently from others. Rarely did one consider that in the case of the status of women, it is possible to speak of a true *security crisis* in various areas or sectors of the issue. Numerous sources, both inter- and non-governmental, denounce that fact. Taking on consistency in socialization processes through daily practices, the cultures of security may be considered an integral part of States' internal structures. Evoking the idea of a learned behaviour, the very concept of *security culture*, implies the way in which such ideas are selected over time, transmitted, re-proposed and modified in policy-making processes (Rosa, 2010).

Themes touching on women's in/security have appeared in institutional and political agendas for only a few years; they are not included in the traditional framework of intervention aiming to regulate the different aspects of the woman's condition, thus reflecting the vision of the beneficiary of this policy area as a *neutral* individual. Issues classified today, in the political debate, under the heading *gender security* have crucial political relevance for the development of public policies directed at the recognition, respect and effectiveness of human rights. Indeed, they substantially enrich and innovate orientation and decision-making processes in the area of security. The very concept of *human security*, advanced by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1994 in the 5th Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994), has undergone substantial review from a gender perspective. As it is well-known, in its first systematic discussion on security, UNPD did not dedicate any specific attention to women[1], but did define a series of security areas, such as the economic, food, health, environmental, personal, political and community spheres, as important in shaping a hypothetical security paradigm based on the centrality of the person, rather than on the pre-eminent scope and importance of defending a country as a territorial entity: a sovereign one, armed, and defined by

[1] The concept of human security first received widespread attention in 1994 when it appeared in the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report (HDR). The 1994 Human Development Report defined human security as people's "safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life." Seven types of security were listed as components of human security: economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal (physical) security; community security; and political security.

borders. The concept of human security takes its shape from the human being: the vital core that is to be protected. It's an idea of security deliberately protective.

This orientation not only follows the pathway traced by the United Nations Charter, the developing international human rights law and the international machinery connected to it (Newman & Richard, 2002); it also tends to foster the development and implementation of policies which, with particular attention to women's condition, are devoted to meet the target of gender equality. Gender equality then helps to decrease and combat poverty among women, create development processes sensitive to women's needs, favour peace, and foster respect for human rights.

In its original formulation, "human security" presents four main characteristics: the *universality* of threats, both in type and territorial extension (unemployment, poverty, drugs, crime, terrorism, environmental pollution, human rights violations); *interdependence* among its different components; *prevention* as crucial tool in achieving goals; *centrality of the person* in satisfying the fundamental needs/rights. In other words, the power of the human security concept is absolutely and clearly evident when it is contrasted with the traditional concept of national security. In the human security approach, it is the welfare of human beings around the world that is the object of concern rather than the military and strategic interests of a particular state. The defence of human life is more important than the defence of States, and personal integrity is as important as territorial integrity.

From a gender perspective, the policy areas involved in the concept of *human security* are particularly complex, given the specific nature of certain risks affecting the status of woman, and the total neglect of women's needs by the traditional model of security, still understood under the prism of political realism and its most relevant variant, neorealism. This prevents the concept of "gender security" from fully realising its full potential, both on an analytical level and on the level of policy legacy, in relation to possible alternatives in terms of *policy change* based on the chance to break with institutionalized practices of the past.

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Gender dualism (the division between male and female) is firstly characterised by hierarchies rooted, to various degrees of depth, in the various social and cultural contexts. The issue of women's equality reflects this complexity, since the discrimination still affecting women makes them more vulnerable to living conditions incompatible with the very idea of "human security."

Feminist movements have been unable to structure a discourse capable of including the gender dimension within the framework of the security analysis carried out under the realism paradigm. However, with the 1990s, and with clearer reflection on a more person-oriented security, it became easier to think about states of insecurity taking into account distinctions which traditional conceptual instruments had failed to reveal.

With the great number of humanitarian emergencies arising from the spread of ethnic, religious and national conflicts, and from the atrocities afflicting the civil populations and the numerous social tragedies threatening the capacity of millions of individuals to reproduce and sustain themselves, it has become clear that the respect of men and women's rights has to be crucial to the political agenda in the community of nations.

The 1990s were fundamental both in the process of multiplication and progressive definition of rights, and in promoting and protecting human rights, particularly women's rights. One only need to recall the instruments adopted during that decade –both binding and non-binding– concerning violence against women. They were adopted thanks to the role played by segments of the civil society through lobbying activities, especially in the context of international meetings: the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Copenhagen Conference on Social Development (1995), and the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995[2].

The strengthening of women's participation in discussions within the civil society, however, seems unable to radically influence the dynamics of

[2] A/CONF.157/23, World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 14-25, 1993; A/CONF.171/13, United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, September 5-13, 1994, A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 4-15, 1995.

inequality in the social construction of public space or to increase the attention to the private dimension of gender relations.

Numerous emergencies, however, have recently created the right conditions for developing greater awareness concerning the insecurity of women. Such emergencies include the recent and on-going economic recession, even in European countries; changes affecting labour relations; female migration, in its different expressions; the trafficking of young women for sexual exploitation and the proliferation of *sex business* on an industrial scale; the spread of ethnic conflicts; ideological and religious fundamentalisms; the advent of violence as a social reality transversally added to all the other peculiarities that might characterise women. Such situations of crisis during the last 20 years have brought about a radical change in the way of considering women's security: in times of war, the need to prohibit a series of conducts, now recognised by international criminal law as crimes against humanity or war crimes, has been formally acknowledged; in times of peace, the feminist concept of violence as well as its causes have been re-thought as problems where the public and the private dimensions intermesh and influence one another, both on the level of values and on a material level (Pickup, Williams & Sweetman, 2001).

The human security debate has been steadily enriched in recent years by proposals made by women at the international level. The possibility of creating a special dimension for *gender security* within the concept of *human security* has become more and more manifest.

The search for a modern, shared concept of *gender security* focusing on the needs of women and with them those of the communities they belong to, has encouraged a wholly new kind of discussion regarding the presence of women within those intergovernmental organizations, particularly the United Nations, considered as the most relevant political space in which to develop new dimensions of governance, with a view to global reform.

The discussion has coincided with a progressive tendency of the bodies belonging to the United Nations human rights machinery towards a concept of gender aimed at fully encapsulating the principle of non-discrimination on the ground of sex and at delivering policies directed to mainstreaming and women empowerment. At the same time, the trans-national political

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participation by women has intensified. Such participation presents an increasingly complex organizational dimension, and a growing pervasiveness at the practical level of political action. The growth in participation is a concrete indicator both of civil society's capacity for organizing on a transnational level, and of the need for justice expressed by women when opposing a whole series of nationalistic, war-mongering attitudes (Breines, Gierycz & Reardon, 1999).

The human security debate within the international community institutions

In order to include gender issues in discussions concerning security, it is necessary to consider the categories defined by UNDP in 1994, interpret them from the viewpoint of women, and expand them to embrace the human security dimensions which that first categorisation had not contemplated.

On the strictly politico-institutional level, it is possible to date distinct stages in the evolving notion of *human security* and, in the overall prospect, recall the first moment when a security concept strictly tied to the political realism paradigm underwent review and redefinition. That moment came in 1992, with the *Agenda for peace*[3] presented by the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In the early 1990s, in light of the growing world interdependence, this document offered an analysis of the changes occurring on the international geopolitical scenario and proposed a series of initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts. Also, it indicated guidelines sustaining the role of the United Nations in building and maintaining peace, in consonance with the principles set forth by the General Assembly that same year, focusing on relief activities in humanitarian emergencies[4]. Later, in 1995, the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* re-proposed the same goals mentioned in 1992; it also examined both the issue of using sanctions in light of emergencies linked to ethnic and nationalistic conflicts, and the

[3] Report commissioned by the Secretary General at the conclusion of the extraordinary meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, following the Declaration adopted during that same summit meeting, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping,* UN doc. 147/277–S/24111, June 17, 1992.

[4] A/Res/46/182, December 19, 1991.

issue of disarmament[5]. During those same years, while the search continued for new political instruments for peace and international security, new interest arose for other dimensions of human insecurity. That is, the real dimension of daily life started to be considered as the reality of referral when thinking about security, even when referring to standards established by international human rights law and to the universalistic value framework informing it.

In 1995, the *5th Human Development Report* published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1994) advanced a multidimensional concept of security bound to the vital needs of persons and communities as well as to the capacities of institutions formally responsible for guaranteeing it. In a context of growing influence of civil society organisations, the Report, proposed new forms of development and co-operation based on the human rights paradigm.

In May 2003, as a follow-up of the proposal launched by the then Secretary General Kofi Annan during the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, the Commission on Human Security presented its final report, *Human Security No*[6]. The document called for a rethinking of the concept of "security" and stressed the need to devise comprehensive and integrated strategies in order to promote the management processes of global interdependency.

In essence, the report acknowledges the fact that in an interdependent, globalized world, security can only be "multidimensional", encompassing human rights, "good governance" and defined by the freedom from want, the freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit an healthy natural environment. Human security, in short, means creating political, economic, environmental, and cultural systems that together give people the building block of survival, livelihood and dignity. That same year, the Millennium Declaration itself[7] defined a number of targets to be met by 2015, considered crucial to human and gender security in particular.

[5] A/50/60-*S*/1995/1, January 3, 1995/1, "Report by the Secretary General on work by the organization," Supplement to the *Agenda for Peace.*

[6] The report can be fully downloaded from the Commission site, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org.

[7] Approved by heads of state and government leaders during the United Nations Millennium Summit, September 2000, General Assembly Resolution 55/2. United Nations Millennium Declaration**.**

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They include the struggle against poverty and hunger, universal access to education, gender equality, the improvement of child and maternal health, the struggle against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability, and the development of global partnership for development (UNIFEM, 2012).

Although efforts made in recent years demonstrate a mature level of awareness concerning the need to globally reconsider the social and political relations among various human communities, the complexity of issues embraced by the notion of *human security* is all too palpable. Indeed, one only need to recall the incapacity of the current model of development even to guarantee the survival of entire populations, to understand the urgent need to intervene in the increasingly intolerable situations where economic, social and cultural rights are violated.

Undeniably, the international community's activities in support of the status of women proceed in a global context marked by the advancement of neo-liberal policies which seem to aggravate gender inequalities, rather than favour an improvement in women's standard of living. Numerous voices today denounce an overall worsening of the woman's condition, due to policies of deregulation and privatization. Precisely because of these tendencies' direct effects and the mechanisms they have triggered, especially on the socio-economic level (only think of the growing feminization of poverty), the commitment of international politics to the full implementation of human rights is of particular relevance.

Towards a full incorporation of the gender perspective into security issues

As regards *gender security*, the political awareness concerning violence against women sheds light on the urgent need to intervene on various levels. With reference to the conflicts of the 1990s, to traditional practices affecting women and to the consequences of poverty, unemployment and precarious living conditions, the need to discuss the issue of violence against women in terms of *security crisis* appears evident.

Indeed, the situations of discrimination, injustice, and subordination oppressing millions of women throughout the world testify that violence is a

universal and glocal problem, despite the peculiarities marking the various geographical and social contexts.

The pervasive nature and the existence of many forms and manifestations of violence against women are so serious to justify the use, not only by feminist analysis but by official documents as well, of the term *femicide* (Spinelli, 2008). One example will suffice: the Report presented by the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly in July 2006[8].

The issue of violence belongs to the historic patrimony of feminist debate. However, only in the last two decades has it came to prominence allowing, first, the collection of data and statistics on the phenomenon on an international level; and later, the understanding of gender violence as a human rights concern, and as such, to be considered in the framework of international legal obligations expressly accepted by States parties and in light of international law in general. In this sense, worth of note is the growing attention at the international level toward the drafting of comprehensive legislation as a tool for an effective and coordinated response to violence against women. States are more and more aware of the fact that they have clear duties under international law to enact, implement and monitor legislation addressing all forms of violence against women. Over the past two decades, many States have adopted or revised their national legislation on violence against women, but significant gaps remain. Many States still lack legislative provisions that specifically address violence against women. Even where legislation exists, it is often limited in scope and efficacy; even more frequently, it fails to be enforced and implemented. The adoption and enforcement of national laws addressing the issue of violence against women and girls, in line with international human rights standards, is one of the five key outcomes which the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" aims to achieve in all countries by 2015[9].

Violence against women can be viewed as a watershed between male and female insecurity. Certain factors combine to create a scenario of social

[8] A/61/122/Add.1, July 6, 2006, "Secretary Report. In-depth study on all forms of violence against women".

[9] For further information regarding the Secretary General's campaign UNITE to End Violence against Women, http://endviolence.un.org.

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subordination in which gender discriminations, a manifestation of violence itself, are systematically perpetrated. They include violations of women's economic, social and cultural rights, preventing their access to and control over the resources necessary for satisfying human needs; women under-representation in leadership positions and decision-making processes; failure to capitalise on women's potential in times of crisis as vital actors of change. Moreover, besides the traditional settings in which violence against women is typically perpetrated, that is the family, the community or the State, whether directly perpetrated or condoned, a fourth level where women are encountering vulnerabilities is the so-called *transnational arena* (UN Human Rights Council, 2009).

The connection between male culture and violence is much more complex than would appear at a superficial glance. Institutionalized violence today demands an analysis of the culture of force taking into account the multiple facets characterising the manifestations of power.

As a matter of fact, violence is tightly linked to inequality, that is to the power unbalances between men and women. The current legitimation of differentiated treatments among individuals or groups is based on a different attribution of value, and on the recognition of different functions and roles attributed to those individuals and groups. These very attitudes, translated in each others minds and bodies, combine to define that fundamental condition known as "gender". Gender is essentially based on an unequal distribution and enjoyment of opportunities and resources between men and women, and on the consequent, on an implicit justification of a different status.

Inequality is tied to violence with a double cord. First of all, inequality breeds and favours violence, which is an expression or effect of inequality itself. Second, inequality is fuelled and fostered by violence. Today's research into security issues has widely proven that the issue of gender violence is a true emergency. The continuing nature and magnitude of gender violence are so worrying that, in fact, it represents the real gap between a "male" and "female" concept of human security.

For the very same reasons, violence against women sheds light more than any other phenomenon on the universal character of certain forms and manifestations of gender discrimination.

The centrality of violence against women in the human development and human security discourse

As part the instruments offered by international human rights law, the Report of the UN Secretary General is fundamental to understand the complexity of the process which lead violence against women to be integrated into the human rights law paradigm.

The international community's commitment to fight violence against women, formally expressed during the World Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993[10] (Sullivan, 1994), finds expression in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in the same year[11] (Charlesworth, 1990). In the Preamble, violence is explicitly recognized as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to discrimination against women by men, and more precisely, is seen as one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men[12].

As part of a series of developments towards the recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation, worth to mention is also the appointment by the United Nations Human Rights Commission of the *Special Rapporteur on violence against women*[13] (Coomaraswamy, 1999; Kois, 1999). The work of this last mechanism was remarkable in this sense during the 1990s.

Regional organizations, as well, increasingly integrated women's perspective into the scope of their work and committed to promote women's rights. In this regard, the first to be mentioned is the "Inter-American

[10] A/Conf. 157/23.

[11] The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations during the plenary session of December 20, 1993 (A/Res/48/104).

[12] In this text the idea of violence includes physical, sexual and psychological violence, and ranges over such violent acts or behaviours as beating, spouse rape, genital mutilations and other practices harmful to women, dowry-related violence, violence linked to exploitation, workplace molestation, trafficking of women, and forced prostitution. However, this Declaration still lacks any specific consideration of women's right not to undergo violence, understood as an autonomous human right.

[13] E/CN.A/Res/1994/4S; besides editing reports for the Commission, the speaker, Radhika Coomaraswamy, is the author of significant contributions concerning violence against women.

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Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women"[14] adopted in 1994. A more recent instrument is the Optional Protocol to the "African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights" on "The Rights of Women in Africa"[15]. The Optional Protocol, reaffirming the principle of equality enshrined in article 2 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, sets forth *ad hoc* measures to eliminate discrimination against women. Currently, another treaty of international-regional scope dedicated to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence is being negotiated (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Hesise & Watts, 2005). Since the beginning of 2008, the ministers of justice of the Council of Europe (CoE) Member States, encouraged by the "Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence" within the CoE itself, initiated a series of negotiations aiming at setting up an *ad hoc* Committee within the Commission of Ministers to be charged of the drafting of a convention based on Recommendation n. 5 of 2002. This last document, adopted in April 2002, represents the most important reference text for CoE Member States in combating violence against women. The Parliamentary Assembly of the same organisation has for some expressed a firm political stance on the issue of violence against women adopting a number of resolutions and recommendations essentially aimed at fostering the adoption of a binding legal instrument. The proposed new convention would define standards on prevention of violence, protection of victims as well as obligation to criminalise specific conducts. Admittedly, in the drafting process of the convention, the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, the monitoring body established by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as the decisions of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) are gaining in importance. The text now being elaborated by the *ad hoc* Committee opted for a holistic approach, assuming that the response to violence against women requires a comprehensive

[14] Also called the Convention of Belém do Parà, adopted on June 9, 1994, and not enacted yet.

[15] Adopted in Maputo on July 11, 2003 during the 2nd ordinary session of the African Union Assembly.

strategy with a multi-agency and multi-actor co-ordination. The drafting of the future convention shows that international consensus on the importance of preventing and combating violence against women is growing worldwide. Without a doubt, given the importance of the issues it will deal with, this convention could not only deeply impact on the protection of women's rights but also effectively promote a wider concept of equality.

The growing attention toward the issue of violence leads to the development of specific in-depth studies on the social impact and social costs related to it. In this perspective, studies carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the link between health and violence, document the severity of certain situations, especially in light of the trans-generational impacts stemming from individual or collective experiences (WHO, 1997, 2001, 2002). Moving along these lines, the Report of the Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, highlights the risks faced by women in situations where minimum economic and social standards are not provided and where inequalities between men and women are so harsh as to prevent adequate protection of reproductive rights.

The unequal power relations between man and women has heavily contributed to the feminization of AIDS: one can only recall that in sub-Saharan Africa alone, 60% of all infected persons are women. The situation is all the more dramatic due to other factors: women's role as caretakers of other diseased individuals; women's fear to bring up with the partner the issue of contraceptive use; women's difficult access to health-care services. Reproductive health services can contribute both to prevent the transmission of HIV, including mother-child transmission, and to modify risky sexual behaviour. Today, maternal mortality is one of the most pressing health problem to be tackled worldwide, representing the main cause of death for women of reproductive age in development countries[16] (UNFPA, 2004). Approximately 530,000 women die each year from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and 99% of these deaths occur in developing

[16] WHO defines maternal mortality as the death of a pregnant woman or a woman dying within 42 days after the end of pregnancy, independently of the duration or context of pregnancy, by any cause tied to pregnancy or aggravated by the condition or its progress, but not by incidental causes or accidents. For an overall view see the WHO website, www.who.org., and that of UNFPA: www.unfpa.org.

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countries. More than 25% of women living in developing countries, that is approximately 300 millions, suffer from short- or long-term postpartum complications and bear the risk of becoming permanently disabled. Inadequate access to reproductive health care services is a major cause of women's risk of undergoing permanent pregnancy-related physical damage. Obviously, maternal mortality and pregnancy-related disabilities are the result of systematic violations of women's rights and are at the same time strictly related to restrictions of women economic autonomy.

The United Nations Population Fund estimates that deaths and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth could diminish by 20% if family planning needs are taken into account. That is a remarkable percentage, if one consider that in developing countries only around 5% of women have access to adequate post-partum care. This low percentage is due to various factors, including the inaccessibility and costs of health services, the low level of decision-making power of women within the family and, above all, women's isolation from social community life. In addition, problems linked to distance to health care facilities should not be underestimated. Taken together, in the last decade, these difficulties have meant that progress in reducing the maternal death rate has been insufficient. To worsen the situation, many countries are ravaged by internal or international armed conflicts and the social expenditure has been cut to abide by the international financial institutions impositions to reduce public debt[17].

Another dimension showing a gender risk is disability. The fact that women are more at risk than men for suffering disabilities is confirmed even by official documents of the United Nations and the European Union. The disability issue itself is a perfect example of the progressive incorporation of a "gender perspective" in all international community policies and programmes as well as in the work of all human rights bodies. The need to consider the gender dimension plainly emerges, as well, in more recently adopted international instruments. In this context, the most advanced

[17] For an overview on the most recent developments on the gender approach as related to a series of different types of indicators, see Progress of the World's Women 2008-2009, Who Answers to Women? and Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009, Gender & Accountability.

document is the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[18] which, in relation to the situation of women with disabilities, introduced the notion of multiple discrimination (Makkonen, 2002).

The growing importance given to the issue of violence against women is partly linked to the strong media impact of a number of emergencies wielded during the 1990s. Reference here is made in particular to ethnic conflicts where sexual violence has been used as an instruments of war. Women continue to suffer the most horrific abuses in times of conflict. The last year has seen the persistence of brutal rapes on a massive scale in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) of which recent events in the Walikale region, where armed groups terrorized the population over four days, raping over three hundred people, were yet another appalling reminder. From Afghanistan to Sudan, Iraq, Chechnya and Colombia, sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon of war. Indeed, the extent and harshness assumed today by this phenomenon point to the absolute need to strengthen international instruments devoted to the protection of women's rights, and more accurately to reconsider the acts committed against women as part of genocidal violence, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. In this framework, the capacity of women's movements to raise together with the question of violence in armed conflict a number of other issues till that moment neglected at the international level, has found expression in the request for immediate intervention by the international community, both for a different approach to gender issues during emergencies and for a redefinition of international institutions' role in protecting women's rights.

Since the 1990s, the adoption of a "women's empowerment" and "gender mainstreaming" approach has led towards the strengthening of the status of women. At first, in the process of recognition of women's rights and later, on the side of their judicial enforceability. In this area, a certain symbolic and concrete relevance can be attributed to the "criminalisation" approach to the protection of human rights, that is the growing attention of international criminal law towards the recognition of grave violations of women's rights within the scope of war crimes, crimes against humanity and components of the crime of genocide. Historically speaking, the condition of women in

[18] General Assembly, Resolution 61/106, December 13, 2006.

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armed conflicts has not been the object of particular attention under international law. Sexual violence in armed conflict is, of course, proscribed and punished under international humanitarian law but the efficacy of these provisions in preventing and providing accountability for these crimes has never been outstanding. Rape, in particular, rather than being condemned by the military structures involved, has not only been tolerated, but sometimes seen as an adequate reward to fighters. The use of sexual violence against women in a situation of armed conflict far exceeds the asserted needs of sexual satisfaction for troops. Very often such conducts become an integral part of war efforts, both on the symbolic and the concrete plane, as part of a strategy of ethnic cleansing or sexual slavery. Viewed as unfortunate accidents of war, rather then crimes, such behaviours were not accorded specific recognition before criminal tribunals.

Under international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Optional Protocols of 1977 set forth several provisions for the protection of women even thought the primary intent was to protect the community in general, especially children, rather than the category of women itself[19]. A significant steps towards the recognition of gender-based crimes as crimes punishable under international criminal law were then made with the adoption of the two Statutes of the *ad hoc* International Tribunals for ex Yugoslavia and Rwanda. As a matter of fact, the progressive development of the international human rights law system deeply conditioned the evolution of international humanitarian and criminal law towards a more victim-oriented approach.

Women, peace and security: recent trend in the international community

From the outset, the United Nations activities for the promotion of the status of women and the protection of women's rights have been characterised by the link between peace, development and equality.

[19] Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, August 12, 1949. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), June 8, 1977; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), June 8, 1977.

The need to consider together these three fundamental policy elements was already apparent during the First World Conference on the International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975 even though, a more developed conceptualization of the issue at the policy level, was only development in the framework of the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. In the subsequent years, the elaboration of the linkages between these three objectives (peace, development, equality) formed the basis for the political discussion and activity not only of the women's movement but also of the international institutions devoted to the protection of human rights.

A recent evolution in the discussion over the effective equality between men and women, especially as regards decision-making processes, involves the role of women in the prevention of armed conflict as well as in peace-keeping and peace-building activities. At the international level, this discussion focuses on two major aspects. The first one relates to the need to overcome the under-representation of women in leadership positions within the United Nations infrastructure and other inter-governmental organizations in general, a commitment reaffirmed in 2000 during the UN General Assembly Special Session devoted to the five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action. The second one touches on the need to device strategies fostering women's role in conflict resolution at the community level as well as their participation in official peace negotiations. In other words, the importance of increasing the representation of women at all level of decision-making, including those dealing with situations of conflict or humanitarian crises, has emerged in the political agenda of international bodies for several years now. This commitment is to be understood in light of the need to establish a supra-national collective security system based not only on the political and military dimensions, but also on the economic and humanitarian ones. That is, a system embracing a multi-dimensional concept of security where the role of women and the importance of gender mainstreaming policies are reinterpreted so to uncouple the binomial "victim/combatant". In such a new system, the specific needs of men and women as well as their peculiar resources and capabilities are systematically considered in all areas and at all levels.

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Practically speaking, there is the need to enhance women participation at all level of decision-making, starting from the local dimension to the most relevant political bodies at the international or regional level where traditionally women face more difficulties in accessing offices.

Peace agreements do not put an end only to hostilities. More than that, they serve to redefine the existence, the role and the functioning mechanisms of the most significant political, juridical, civil, economic and social structures of territories involved in conflicts. Negotiating peace, therefore, does not simply imply a cease-fire. It means devising future structures within a given geopolitical area and for this very reason it is of utmost important considering the identity of actors involved as well as their level of representativeness.

Of fundamental importance is the recognition of the role of women in situations of crisis and of their struggle to contribute to the well-being of their communities. The specific skills and capacities expressed by women in the context of decision-making processes, in fact, appear to be opening up new spaces for the recognition of their individual and social value, even in classically male controlled domains. An early response to this new awareness, though debatable in relation to women's needs, emerges in the numerous efforts undertaken in many countries in order to increase women's presence in the national military forces and, as a consequence, increase their number in international policing operations.

An equitable gender representation in peace negotiations ensures the social legitimization of such decision-making processes and, democratically speaking, provides for more acceptable solutions to those members of the society bearing the highest costs of war.

The negotiations table represents only one part of a complex process which often starts before the end of the armed conflict and continues through various transitional phases in the pursuit of peace. It is not only a fundamental step along a path where all the different aspects of peace-making should converge, in particular those touching on the definition of new institutional and government structures, but also a crucial arena for the definition of the future normative and constitutional framework.

There is no doubt then that women's participation in decision-making process in the context of conflict solution offers women a chance for advancement in numerous areas touching upon the recognition of their rights and of gender equality such as economic security, social development and political participation.

In relation to these issues, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325[20] on Women and Peace and Security is an important step toward the recognition of role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in encouraging the expansion of the contribution of women to international policing mission. The Resolution thus recognizes women's potential contribution in peace, in conflict resolution and, more generally, in assisting post-war reconstruction efforts and the rehabilitation of victims. In its 18 paragraphs, the Resolution expresses the commitment of the most important body responsible for the maintenance of peace and security to enhance the involvement and full participation of women in all efforts towards peace and security. It does so considering all dimensions relevant to women's participation: decision-making processes for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; good offices and mediation; field-based operations; peacekeeping; humanitarian action and reconstruction efforts.

In this important document, the Security Council urges States to increase their commitment for gender-sensitive training for peacekeeping personnel and calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls. In other words, there is a clear recognition that security sector reform (SSR) should meet the different security needs of men, women, boys and girls. The inclusion of gender issues, in fact, is crucial to the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector, and to the local pertinence and legitimacy of SSR processes. Preceded, and in part foreshadowed in content by the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in

[20] S/RES/1325 (2000), October 31, 2000. The Resolution was adopted after a debate in the Security Council, held on October 24-25, 2000, during which 40 Member States voted in favour of greater involvement of women in decision-making processes, and expressed their willingness to define and include a gender perspective in peace processes.

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Multidimensional Peace Support Operations[21], Resolution 1325, given its wide-ranging goals and unanimous approval, is considered a milestone in that it inaugurated a new kind of commitment which from 2000 has led to the adoption of other important resolutions in the area concerned.

In the accompanying documents of Resolution 1325, the Security Council highlights the fact that complex political emergencies threaten the socio-economic and political advancements which have cost women such a dear price. A gender analysis of each single crisis would be necessary, not only to highlight the different impact an armed conflict can have on men and women, but also to avoid elements which would further worsen the status of women, and to better understand what kinds of intervention may foster emancipation and development in a later phase. Practically speaking, from the viewpoint of the status of women, the identification of local dynamics, including family dynamics, can help in defining interventions aimed at creating greater opportunities for women, both at the economic and educational level. It is thus evident that the growing attention towards populations struck by humanitarian emergencies must adequately address the gender dimension of peace negotiations if such interventions are to be effective.

Over the last decade, the United Nations Security Council has adopted three other resolutions concerning women, peace and security. These resolutions highlight some of the particular consequences of armed conflict afflicting women and girls. They also provide guidance for States, regional organizations, the UN system and other stakeholders in addressing the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflict, and in promoting their empowerment. The resolutions call on States and UN institutions to ensure the full inclusion of women, their needs and viewpoints, in peace-building, stressing the importance of protecting women by preventing conflict-related sexual violence.

If the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognizes the peculiar negative affects of armed conflict on women, and the important contributions women can make to peace, security and reconciliation, these other documents are more directly oriented to combat violence against

[21] A/55/138-S/2000/ 693, July 4, 2000.

women and sustains the participations of women. In particular, UN Security Council Resolution 1820[22], adopted in June 2008, demands that states take special measures to protect women and girls from sexual violence in armed conflict and to ensure access to justice and assistance for victims. Resolution 1820 emphasizes the role of peacekeepers in protecting civilians, and advocates an increase in the number of female peacekeepers. It also requests that the UN, in consultation with women and women's organizations, develop mechanisms during disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration, as well as in security sector reform, to protect women from violence. UN Security Council Resolution 1888, adopted in September 2009[23], focuses on sexual violence in armed conflict as well. It advocates for the inclusion of sexual violence issues in peace processes, DDR and SSR arrangements and for justice reform to address impunity and ensure access to justice for survivors. It also defines new mechanisms within the UN to intensify the struggle against war-related sexual violence, and foresees the establishment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General on the issue. It again gives priority to women's representation in mediation and decision-making processes, and the inclusion of female personnel in UN missions. Finally, UN Security Council Resolution n. 1889, adopted in October 2009[24], widens the Council's focus on and commitment to women's participation in peace-building, emphasizing the role of women in political and economic decision-making (Bastik & Torres, 2008).

Conclusion

During the past two decades, the discourse on gender security has touched upon areas of analysis which did not classically contemplate a gender dimension.

In the discussion over the effectiveness of security, the problem of human rights judicial enforceability is of outmost importance. Once more, however,

[22] Resolution 1820 (2008), adopted by the Security Council during its 5916th meeting, on June 19, 2008.
[23] Resolution 1888 (2009), adopted by the Security Council during its 6195th meeting, on September 30, 2009.
[24] Resolution 1889 (2009), adopted by the Security Council during its 6196th meeting, on October 5, 2009.

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current tendencies clearly show women's greater vulnerability in situations of danger and precariousness. Without a doubt, in recent years, significant progresses have been made. Still, today, the risk of regressing with respect to the results achieved or of failing to share those results with a part of the female (and male) world population, is dramatically growing. The most recent approach adopted by the international community on the issue of human security and the status of women, adamantly contradicts the classical interpretations on the relationship between the gender dimension and armed conflicts emphasising, on the contrary, the impact of armed conflicts on the civil population and in particular on women and girls. Contrarily to the idea that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises are separate phenomena not hindering on women's life and on the human reproductive dimension, they deeply impact on the female population. If anything, contemporary armed conflicts have forced women to change their attitudes in the individual and community care so to make their direct confrontation and total participation in the conflict inevitable. The fact that women's risk of dying and get injured is higher then that of combatants proves how drastically the impact of armed conflicts has changed over the times.

Disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration are the most recent chapters in the discussion taken up by several organizations in the international community in the context of gender dimension of security (Department for Disarmament Affairs, 2003). These additional elements, which are formally dealt with in official peace agreements, represent also important dimensions of the peace process of particular relevance for women's life and security.

To confirm the importance of the gender dimension in emergency situations, since 1998, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, thanks to a close cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, started developing a gender perspective of disarmament.

Another consequence of armed conflict particularly affecting women is the problem of forced displacement. More than 4/5 of war refugees and internal displaced persons are sexual abused women or girls. In this regard, data released by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) shows that women and girls make up the vast majority of people in need of humanitarian protection. Today this population is about 43,3 millions (UNHCR, 2010). The UNHCR committed to carry out coordinated efforts to raise awareness among staff and humanitarian workers on gender-related risks faced by women and girls when fleeing a combat zone and in refugee camps as well. The *Guidelines* developed 1995 by UNHCR (UNHCR, 1995, 2003) as well as other documents later adopted by the organisation, opened up a new way of approaching the issue of security among refugees favouring at the same time the development of a gender perspective to the international protection regime. It should also be considered that one of the consequence of humanitarian emergencies and current migration flows is the phenomenon of family disintegration. In this context, a large number of family households, often including elderly or persons with disabilities, are headed by and thus totally dependent from a women. Once again, then, strengthening the woman's economic security status, thus promoting their economic, social and cultural rights, is of fundamental importance. It would not only enables women to fully participate in decision-making processes, whether in times of emergency or transition, but also confers full citizenship on them.

Instead of advancing a paradigm of security centred on military control, there is a need for an integrated approach to security centred on peoples' needs. In this way, security, intended as a part of the wider move towards global governance, becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individuals live in safety. Only through such a political project marginalised individuals and communities are empowered to let their voices be heard, thus contrasting the State security paradigm focused on aggressive and adversarial designs.

In other words, it is unrealistic to confront the issue of violence against women and along with it the issue of security if the focus is not on gender violence, a phenomenon based on a patriarchal culture, relations of dominance, and unequal power relations between men and women. Gender violence, then, cannot be reduced to a question of equal opportunity between men and women as it widely affects the relations between them in the public and private sphere, concretely demonstrating to what extent the

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personal dimension is at the same time political as well as the private one is at the same time public.

Whether violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relations between man and women, it is also interpreted within the human rights framework. Addressing the roots causes of gender violence implicates radical changes of social structures and community systems on which the communities are found as well as the recognition of women's autonomy, decision-making skills and empowerment. Today, while the goal seems the promotion and protection of the rights of women victims/survivors of violence the final objective, in line with the historical feminist movements, should be the recognition of the right to a different and violence-free society for all women. Understanding violence against women within the patriarchal nature of society allows for a politicization of violence, thus eliminating the barrier existing between victims and non-victims and creating forms of solidarity and awareness.

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The mother that cannot provide liberation: family atom analysis of women victims of domestic violence

Abstract

The present contribution presents the discussion about the analysis carried out on family atoms that were completed in the first psychodrama group meetings carried out in all the Empower Daphne III program partner countries. The issue of the relationship with the mother is central to the aim of the project, in that we hypothesise that the mothers of victims are incapable of educating their daughters about personal autonomy in relation to men, due to the traditional culture in which they grew up in. The article presents information about the use and processing of the survey tool "Family atom " created by Jacob Moreno and the analysis of the data that emerged in parallel to the reports sent periodically by the psychodramatists to the monitoring and analysis team. From the results three types of maternal relationships emerge (positive, negative and incongruent) that enable us to confirm the initial hypothesis of this action research.

Keywords: Empower (Daphne III), gender violence, family atom, domestic violence, Psychodrama, maternal relationship.

Introduction

The concept of family atom comes from Morenian sociometric thought based on the concepts of "tele" and social atom (Moreno, 1980). The first concept indicates the "strength" that defines the Gestalt of groups in which individuals are empathetically united through relationships that engage in mutual emotional exchanges learned in primary socialization and advanced in secondary social relationships. Sociometry is the technique that Moreno developed to describe the type of relationships that constitute the relational

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map of groups. From this comes the concept of the social atom, which is considered by Moreno (1985) as the smallest irreducible social unit in which a person participates in order to satisfy their own emotional-affective and relational-cognitive needs. Everyone is part of many social atoms: family, work, study and entertainment ... Similarly to what is discussed by Kurt Lewin (1935), the forces (vectors) that make up these atoms can be positive or negative and can be represented through either the scenic action of socio-dramatic theatre or graphically, according to a sociometric technique (Moreno, 1985) that enables to render visible the nature of relationships called into question.

The social atom was therefore selected for the collection of data about family relationships in women victims of domestic violence as part of the European project Empower, which is a European project carried out within the parameters of the Daphne III Program and aimed at supporting women that have been victims of violence. Since these same victims also have a sociatry problem, the victims of domestic violence need psychological help, not because they are mentally ill, but because they have to find new coping strategies to change the course of their lives (Testoni et al., 2012). The design of the research-intervention planned in the assessment used the "family atom" to capture a map even just indicative of the most meaningful relationships of the victims. The instrument was preferred to others because Empower used psychodrama as an elective intervention strategy and although very simple, unlike some other similar graphical tests, it allows us to also capture the emotional closeness and the quality of the relationship with the different figures that appear (mother, father, aggressor).

The Empower project gets it's origin from European policies created to fight against gender violence and changing the role of women that are still very much subordinated to the will of men (Antrobus, 2004). The choice of the psychodramatic technique is based on the fact that psychodrama enables individuals to process the roles taken on. According to Moreno (1985) in fact, roles are operative forms that an individual takes on when he relates with another person or with an object. As there are elements that are in a constant dialogue in the internal world of the individual, they can be as much personal as social as both are affected by the cultural context. Em-

power is committed to promoting the agency of women victims of violence by enabling them through psychodrama to become aware of the personal and social roles of subordination they play, thanks to which it's possible to construct new experiences that dramatize critical events and meaningful situations.

The choice of the Family social atom

The social atom is the smallest social unit that is not further divisible in which an individual participates in order to satisfy their need for affective expansion. Each person belongs to various social atoms, among these is the family, or the family social atom. Thanks to sociometry, it's possible to visualize, and therefore quantify and qualify, "teliche" (empathetic) relationships of an individual (Boria, 2005). According to Moreno the social atom defines the structure of interpersonal relationships where the personality is developed, and the objective of the psychodramatic intervention is to repair the damage caused by social dysfunctional relationships. (Engelhardt et al., 1989). This instrument has been used a lot and has undergone various modifications. Jay Edwards standardized and validated the Moreno Social Atom Projective Test (MSAPT) in 1996. The delivery of test results is divided into four steps: think about significant others and indicate with a symbol that is inserted either far or near, use the same pattern for the family; describe the amount of energy that each relationship takes, the degree of positivity/negativity and define the exchange between loss and gain (Edwards, 1996) (see for example Figure 1).

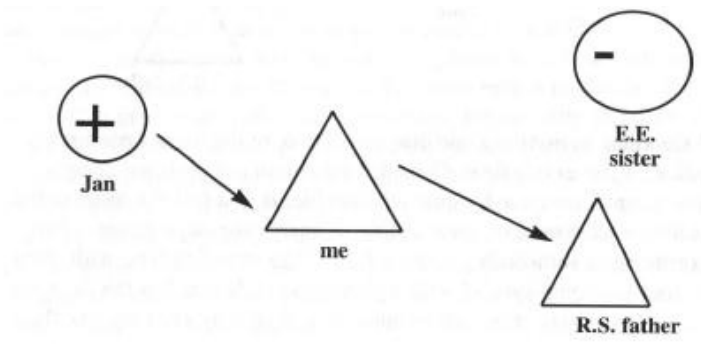

Figure 1. Source: Edwards, 1996.

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Empower focused on family relationships, in order to understand the role of the mother in relation to the daughter and to the context. The victims of violence were asked to think about their families and to draw their own family atoms, placing themselves in the center of the page and positioning the individuals indicated either near or far from themselves based on how close they are perceived to be emotionally from them (Boria, 2005). Since there were six countries involved in the project, we only gave participants essential basic instructions, thus leaving a certain margin of freedom in the use of the instrument.

The choice of the MSAPT in it's family version (Familial Social Atom: FSA Boria, 2005) was made after a thorough analysis of various similar instruments that could have in part guaranteed a similar data collection.

In the literature there are a number of graphical tests that are able to investigate the relational dynamics of an individual that can be compared to the FSA. Among these we can include the Comfortable Interpersonal Distance (CID) by Duke and Nowicki (1972), that explores interpersonal distance, resulting, according to the authors, from the interaction between the previous history of the subject and the context in which the behaviour takes place. The CID has a similar section to the FSA because it detects levels of closeness/distance of the subject in relation to others. Unfortunately, however the administration is particularly binding. In fact, the individual is given a sheet of paper that has at the center a common point from which eight equally distanced branches, 80 mm in length branch out, at the end of which there is a random number from one to eight, symbolizing various entrances to those that are described as imaginary rooms. The task of the individual is to imagine themselves at the center of the diagram (room) and to imagine that they have to answer to imaginary people (stimulus) who approach them along one of the branches. After having imagined a specific individual for each single branch, the individual has to mark a point on each of the eight lines that indicate the limit beyond which the subject feels that the person-stimulus are too close and no longer in a zone of optimal distance. In the end, the points from each branch are joined together making it possible to visualize the optimal interpersonal distance. The specificity of the test does

not reflect the completeness of the data collection needed at the outset by project Empower in that proximity is only one factor to take into consideration. Among the other tests that were assessed in comparison to the FSA were: Family Life Space by (FLS) (Gozzoli & Tamanza, 1998) that investigates family cohesion and critical events that influenced it's evolution. The basic theoretical basis it rests on is the field theory of Lewin (1935), therefore very close to the FSA, according to which the environment in which individuals live is a psychological field featuring internal forces that drive the relationships between the components. The subject or the entire family is given a white sheet of paper where a circle is drawn, and in the circle the subject has to represent all the things that the subject feels that are part of the family, while on the outside of the circle the subject draws all of the things that the subject feels are part of the external environment. To represent themselves, the subject chooses a symbol that will later be utilized to represent other important people, he will then have to choose a second symbol, that is different from the first, to indicate organizations, groups and institutions that have been or are important to them. Lastly, a third symbol will indicate positive and or negative events that are emotionally significant for the subject. Only at the end will the individual draw the type of relationship, in this case understood as meaning the quality of communication, that exists between the self and others (continuous line: good relationship; broken line: so-so relationship; a continuous solid line marked by double transversal lines: poor relationship; continuous line marked by an X conflictual relationship). The mode of administration and the graphical representation of the relationships make the FLS similar to the FSA, but the two tests differ in that the first is focused much more on the quality of communication between individuals than on the strength of the bond itself and requires a large amount of information on the various aspects of the individuals life that perhaps not all people are willing to share.

Another instrument that is often compared to the FSA is the drawing of the family circle (DCF) (Quaglia, 2000), based on the FLS but that deviates from Lewin's theory. It resembles perhaps even more to the FSA, in fact the structure of the DCF was designed to investigate the emotional ties with the family of origin and differentiating these from those with the existing fami-

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ly: the subject in fact is given two sheets of paper that already incorporate a drawing of a circle representing his family, on one sheet the subject is asked to mark the space that the subject himself and the members of his actual family occupy inside it and the same task is repeated on the second sheet of paper thinking back about a past period in time. Likewise the FLS and the DCF lack the graphical representation about the type of bond that the individual has with members of his family (reciprocity, closeness/distance) nor is there a possibility to include significant external references outside the family. This distinction is however the characteristic that makes the FSA more similar to Genograms (McGoldrick *et al.*, 1985) that aim to visualize the internal representations that individuals have of their own family or their entire family system. This technique comes from a perspective that is simultaneously structural, functional and relational (Montàgano &Pazzagli, 1989), in fact, the Genograms show the individual roles that each member plays within the family, family affairs are narrated according to the meaning they have here and now and both canonic family ties (mother, father, siblings ecc.) and parafamiliar ties (e.g., the trainer that was a father figure) are included), thereby providing emphasis to important relationships irrespective of kinship. What makes the Genograms different from the FSA is it's graphical layout, apparently very loose but nonetheless more restrictive: in fact the subject is required to use a circular symbol to represent women, and instead a square for men and the same symbols dotted for the parafamiliar figures; the relationships that are marked are not those of reciprocity and distance/proximity between the subject and significant figures that he has chosen to represent, such as in the atom, but only the parental bonds that bind the individuals are represented (a continuous line connects two married people, a broken line indicates a relationship, a perpendicular mark to the relationship line indicates a break-up between the relationship of two people and a double line means a divorce). The Genograms are also more complex because they must establish a temporal development. (the eldest members of the family are located above and at the bottom the youngest), parafamiliar members are placed on the same timeline of the generation to which they belong.

Project Empower and the use of the FSA

One of the research objectives of the Empower project was to elaborate on the mother-daughter relationship. Previous studies have highlighted how culture deeply influences relational modes between men and women acting through primary socialization and in particular the maternal generational mandate (Testoni, 2008). Even today the confinement of women to the realm of primary socialization, of the domestic type, implies that the main agency of transmission of emotion and moral values comes through the mother figure. The maternal figure represents a pivotal point in the process of females auto-determination. From this starting point the project sought to explore the importance of the mother-daughter intergenerational relationship, in particular to investigate whether some educational approaches may be responsible in teaching daughters to be "victims" and to intervene to change this situation through the use of psychodrama.

Six countries participated in the Empower project and 70 women were included in psychodrama groups. Table 1 lists the participating countries and the number of women that took part in the psychodrama groups by country.

Table 1. socio-anagraphical description of the women psychodrama participants

	Group	**Age (years)**			**Education (years)**	
Country	**PG**	**Range**	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Italy	8	26-58	38.64	9.37	13.21	3.86
Austria	19	16-68	41.15	12.78	12.13	3.26
Bulgaria	9	22-66	39.71	12.02	14.33	2.49
Portugal	7	24-68	46.4	12.72	7.9	3.26

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Romania	15	19-62	33.18	9.15	11.48	3.55
Albania	12	15-24	20	3.38	7.38	3.10
Total	70	15-68	36,6	12,95	11.28	3.98

The protocol developed by Daphne Empower involved the collaboration between specialized anti-violence centers and classical Morenian psychodramatist associations.

The protocol for the qualitative analysis of the project included:

Monthly reports prepared by the psychodramatists including the transcripts of the psychodrama sessions;

b) FSA executed by female participants;

c) Cards especially made by the research team and filled out by social workers about personal data and information concerning family life and violent incidents.

During the psychodrama sessions, family atoms were created with the psychodramatists at the beginning of the sessions. In project Empower we used both graphic and action sociometry (that is the representation of the atom in the psychodramatic theatre). The features of distance-closeness and positive-negative reciprocity that the FSA enables to capture offered a lot of important information in order to steer the psychodramtic intervention. The psychodramatists provided the women of the various groups with the same supplies and instructions, namely to draw themselves at the center of a sheet of paper and to place around themselves various family figures with whom they have had or have a meaningful relationship with, both positive and negative and the distance to each (of these) dependent on the importance of this relationship. Some countries provided women with already marked sheets with concentric circles, others left it up to the women to draw themselves and others still gave the option of inserting within the atom hobbies and favourite activities.

The analysis of the atoms was facilitated by the reports made by the psychodramatists, in which they transcribed the comments and the descriptions

of the atoms made by the women while they presented their own atom to the rest of the group. In the analysis that we present herein we used the atoms completed in the initial stages of psychodrama.

The 67 FSA's analyzed were as follows: Albania 12, Austria 19, Bulgaria 12, Italy 5, Portugal 7 and Romania 12. Of those atoms, we describe the major relational figures, their position (near/far) with respect to the center and the quality of the relationship.

Table 2. FSA in the partner countries

Country	# Analized atoms	Presence Mother	Presence Father	Presence Brothers/ Sisters	Husband/ Partner/ Ex	Sons/ Daughters	Grandparents	Uncles	cousins
Albania	12	12	11	9	3	2	7	5	4
Austria	19	16	14	15	14	10	0	0	0
Bulgaria	12	6	6	2	6	12	4		
Italy	5	5	5	4	3	5			
Portugal	7	4	3	4	3	7			3
Romania	12	12	11	9	5	8			

Description of Family Atoms

From the analysis of the atoms you will note that the method of creating the atoms was different from country to country, but they maintained a similar basic structure. The Albanian atoms were colored, to draw them we used colored pencils, grey pencils and colored crayons. These were shaped like the traditional atom, at the center of the page was a mark that symbolized the woman and from this center there are rays that represented the various

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bonds. Arrows of various shapes are used to describe the relationship. We did not use circular or square symbols in order to distinguish males from females and we did not use plus or minus symbol to establish if the relationship was a positive or conflictual one. The atoms of the three Austrian groups differ from one another by various features. Women in group 1 were given a sheet of paper that already had a circle at the center. The atoms of this group were grouped together by the use of triangles to depict men and circles to depict women, in some cases inside them we found names, in others initials and in others still some interpretable numbers. Another distinguishing feature is the lack of arrows present to describe the type of relationship between the woman and other individuals. All the atoms were drawn holding the sheet of paper horizontally and the individuals depicted outnumber those in the atoms of the other countries. The atoms of the second group were drawn with brightly colored fine tipped pencils. There was a central core around which concentric circles were drawn that were useful for evaluating the distance and closeness of relationships. The names of the various individuals that are represented are written inside the circles. In regards to the third group, the common element among the atoms is that the women were represented by a circle and the men with a triangle. For all the atoms, except for one, where the ties are not marked, the center is connected to the people within the atom via a straight line (Figure 2).

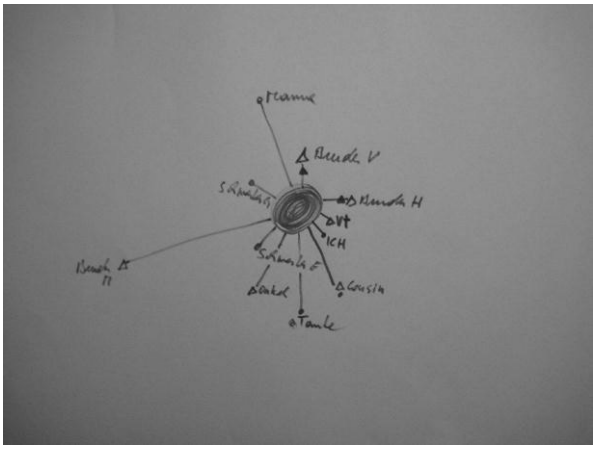

Figure 2. Austria

In Bulgaria the women were asked to draw themselves at the center of the sheet of paper and to draw the individuals with whom they have or have had any type of relationship with, placing them at a distance from themselves that symbolizes their degree of importance. The drawings were very different from one another, only one person used a more traditional atom structure even using letters to identify individuals and activities that they chose to represent, while the other women complied with their own personal criteria.

In Italy the atoms were drawn with colored pencils (Figure 3), the names of the men were placed inside the triangles, while those of the women in circles. The woman is in the center of the page. The bonds were represented by two arrows, one going out and another one entering that were of different shapes to identify the relationship.

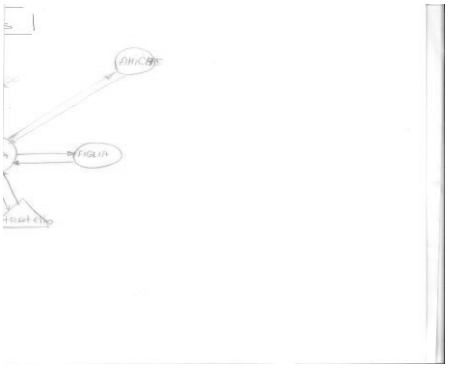

Figure 3. Italy

In the Portuguese atoms (Figure 4) the woman's name is inserted at the center of the nucleus and around the nucleus a number of concentric circles made up by broken lines are drawn that enable to better determine the distance of the bonds; arrows are used to determine the connection among individuals.

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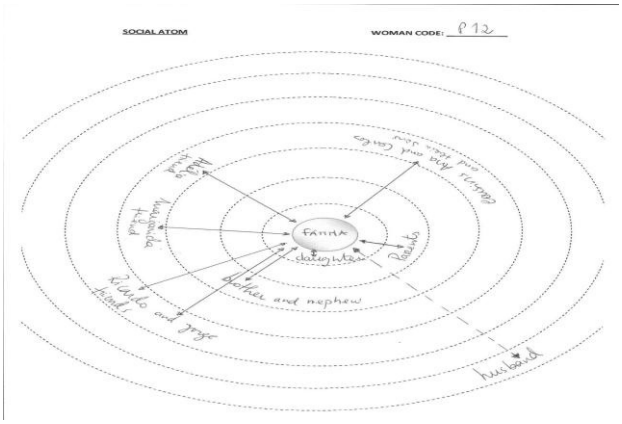

Figure 4. Portugal

In Romania there were two groups, in the atoms of the first group (Figure 5) the woman is always positioned at the center of the page and there is just a single line that symbolizes the relationship and the + and – symbols are used to "describe" the relationship in question. The line is thin (like a ball-point pen) and the structure of the atoms are basic without too many peculiarities. The common features between these atoms are: that the women drew concentric circles around the central nucleus with broken lines to better define proximity and distance. The woman is always at the center, men and women are respectively represented by triangles and circles, these are broken if the person is deceased. Arrows are used to describe the relationship between people, in cases where the relationship is appealing, these arrows are red, they are in black to indicate a repellent relationship and they are broken to indicate an indifferent relationship.

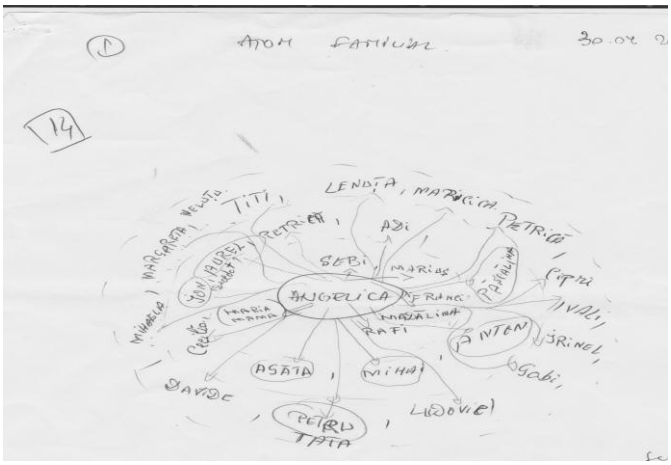

Figure 5. Romania

Analysis of the relationship with the mother

The relationship with the mother figure

The analysis enables to identify three types of descriptions of the relationship with the mother:

"positive relationship" includes all relationships that have been illustrated (through graphic signs) or verbally explained as positive ones. This type of relationship is described as a close one where mothers are perceived as close and loving. The mother is described as a person that is able to support her daughter, and who takes care of the difficulties and concerns of the family. A mother that has taught what is right and what is wrong in life: "my parents were very supportive and loving. I miss my mom and I feel lonely since she passed away. As a mother I tried to be like her, but I have failed".

A "negative relationship" is one in which graphically and in the verbal feedback reports the relationship is described as difficult. The mother is seen as a person that is unable to support her daughter and that does not take care of her. She is a judgemental mother, critical, degrading and at times violent, a mother that is unable to protect the daughter from her father's or step fathers abuse. and takes their side more often. A mother who in turn has been abused and that is unable to deal with her husband and sons. A mother that teaches her daughter to be a victim. Following are some significant phrases provided by the victims and referred in the reports: "I missed her love, she is ashamed of me and she has never kept her promises", "she does not want to

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communicate with me, I don't speak to her because I feel judged by her. She judges me because she has never wanted me, even as a child"; "I do not have a bad relationship with my mom, but what do you expect one person to do against three (she is referring to her father and two brothers)"; "my mother always told me that I was incapable of doing anything, that I was stupid, ugly and worthless", "my mother died a few years ago, she was depressed, she was unable to be a mother, and she taught me to be a victim, she was unable to recognize my needs".

An "inconsistent relationship" is defined as a relationship with the mother that is both a good relationship and a difficult one at the same time or it's represented graphically as a good relationship, but described verbally as a difficult one. In the first example, the women are aware of the inconsistency in the relationship but in the second example they are unaware. At the beginning of the interventions the relationship with the mother is often depicted and verbalized as a positive one, but is subsequently described as difficult, the mother is described as someone that is unable to grasp her daughters difficulties, that does not encourage, is contrary to any change, worries more about others opinion than the welfare of her daughter. A mother that is fragile and weak, that has not managed to teach or covey anything to her daughter. Even in this type of relationship the mother can be violent. Below are some sentences taken from the reports: "I have a very good relationship with my mother, I talk about everything, I have only lied to her once about one thing. I was married, my husband was aggressive and we divorced. Then I began living with a man, but my mother did not approve because according to her it was a disgrace and according to her I should have stayed home to take care of my two children". The psychodramatists point out: "her parents were always opposed to any change, expecting everything to remain immobile"; "the mother gave too much importance to others opinion. During the discussion a mother as cold as ice comes to light, one that sides with the step- father"; "the relationship with the parents is defined as a positive one.

Afterwards the woman says that "she did not learn anything from her mother, both parents drank and beat each other up. Her mother has

epilepsy and is mentally retarded due to trauma resulting from the blows of her husband".

In Table 3 we illustrate how the women in the psychodrama groups from the various countries are distributed across the three possible types of relationships with the mother.

Country and number of atoms	Atoms containing the mother	Negative relationship	Positive Relationship	Inconsistent Relationship	Death or abandoned in childhood
Albania 12	12	4	1	5	2
Austria 19	16	16			
Bulgaria 12	6	1	3	2	
Italy 5	5	2		2	1
Portugal 6	4	2	2		
Romania 12	12	2	4	6	
Total	55	27	10	15	3

Table 3. Description of the mother-daughter relationship

From table number 3 we can see that 27 women define their relationship with their mother as negative, 10 as positive and 15 as inconsistent.

Conclusion

The representation of their relationship with their mother through the use of FSA enabled the women to become aware of their condition, fostering in this manner their agency, that is, the power to give importance to events according to their own subjective reality in order to change their situation and distance themselves from maternal models. While recognizing the complexity of the mother-daughter relationship, this psychodramatic action research wanted to enable victims to see the principles that they have internalized that make them unable to free themselves from domestic violence. Be-

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ginning from the FSA, the psychodramatic action has enabled them to "face" the issues that have arisen as a consequence of adopting the maternal model. Related to this is the experience of using and learning a new language in order to provide room for the possibility of developing empathy and awareness, on which to set the course for new personal and social roles.

At the end of project Empower, we can state that the FSA can be useful to help women victims of violence become aware of family relationships and dynamics in order to process them later and modify them and break generational scripts. (Boria, 2005). Nevertheless, we note that no country used the FSA in a standard manner. For the next project implementation, we believe it could be useful to follow the four steps of the MSAPT and ask participants to only mark members of their own family, while adding some variations utilized in some countries that appeared interesting. For example, while the MSAP allows the subject to represent himself on the sheet of paper wherever they want, Boria (2005) recommends the FSA to begin from the center. In this respect, the graph that already contains concentric circles that was provided by the Portuguese group was exceedingly useful as it enabled to define the distance between the woman and the other individuals in a more schematic and measurable manner. Therefore, over the next few interventions we will use this scheme of reference integrated by the four steps of the MSAPT.

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Caterina Peroni

Gender violence and sexism in Italy. Norms, control and sexuality[1]

Abstract

Gender-based violence and prostitution are social facts that historically in the way they are represented and socially constructed processes produce ethnicization, essentialism, culturalization of female bodies and deviant than the heterosexual norm. In this paper we compare two different waves discourse, on the one hand that securitarian (2007-2009) that has seen violence and prostitution both devices to agitate social alarms, justify repressive measures, reproduce rhetorical securitarian and at the same time reaffirm social gender roles essentialized, on the other the next (2010-2012), in which violence against women, in part thanks to the power of word of Italian feminists, yes is given in the home, but how did outstanding and without questioning the state of relations gender in our society, while the sex scandals linked to Berlusconi and the spread of a discursive order distorts neo-moralistic terms such as prostitution, violence, self-determination and freedom. These two cases are epiphenomena of a trend that sees women's bodies and their sexuality object of devices and discursive orders useful to reaffirm the heterosexual norm, asymmetrical gender relations, and more generally a given social order based on the control of body.

Keywords: gender violence, prostitution, criminalization and victimization, eteronormativity.

Introduction

In this paper I try to highlight how and why the feminine body still represents, within the public sphere, the center of the definition of social order and its social and legal norms. Around the female sexuality much of

[1] This article is the update of a previuos study appeared in Simone 2012, pp.111-130.

the discursive orders develop, in order to affirm the heterosexual norm and, at the same time, to expropriate the self-determination and the voice of women.

Here, I compare two different discursive waves: on the one hand, the "securitarian" one (2007-2009), started with the murder of Giovanna Reggiani, during which violence and prostitution were utilized as ways to produce social panic, justify repressive acts, and re-affirm gendered social roles; on the other hand, a period during which gender violence "goes back home" (where it has always been) – whilst the public space is filled with the sexual scandals of the prime minister Silvio Berlusconi and the subsequent moralistic response. From leftwing to rightwing parties violence and prostitution were distorted and exploited in order to set up the gender relationships order and to vanish the voice of women in the public sphere.

The analysis of sexuality made by Foucault is still a suitable tool to understand the apparent contradictions present in the public discourse on sexuality, prostitution and self-determination. Instead of being a monolithic, grounded theorization about straight or wrong sexualities, the public representation of these phenomena moves through a power-knowledge network:

> rather than referring to all the infinitesimal violences that are exerted on sex, all the anxious gazes that are directed at it, and all the hiding places whose discovery is made into an impossible task, to the unique form of a great Power, we must immerse the expanding production of discourses on sex in the field of multiple and mobile power relations (Foucault 1978, pp.97-98).

The "Reggiani affaire". Genealogy of the good victim

The murder of Giovanna Reggiani, which occurred in October 2007, marked a paradigm shift for what concerns the normative and media representation of gender violence in Italy. As Shannon Woodcock outlines (Woodcock, 2010), the episode strongly highlighted the centrality of gender in the ethnicisation of the public enemy as a sexual offender. As the wife of a retired admiral (as the mainstream media reported repeatedly), Giovanna Reggiani symbolised a well-respected middle class woman, middle aged, who, nevertheless, had been a victim of a brutal rubbery, homicide and rape.

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The institutional reaction was strongly repressive and alarming: in few days the bill 181/2007 "Urgent norms in matter of expulsion from national territory due to public security" was approved, including the so-called "*anti-Roma*" norm, that allowed the expulsion from the national territory not only of overseas people, but also of European citizens to preserve national security in extreme circumstances.

Hence, the bill started the informal legitimisation of pogroms in several cities, whilst police evicted many gypsy camps with violence. The bill remained active only temporarily, but the institutional debate, and social alarm fueled by the mass media cemented the process of criminalisation of immigrant people, implying the relationship between foreigners and sexual abuse of native women, causing increasing fear and the perception of migrants as criminals.

In May 2008 Berlusconi won the Italian elections. He exploited the increasing fear of migrants amongst Italians, making "safety" a keyword during his campaign. The government who came into power approved the so-called "*Pacchetto sicurezza,*" which consisted of a series of norms and laws concerning social control and security which made possible the military control of territory and Italian cities, and the management of operations against gypsy settlements in the Campania, Lazio, and Lombardia regions, within the jurisdiction of the Army.

Less than one year after, in February 2009, following new episodes of sexual violence for which foreigners were blamed, a new legislative decree on sexual violence and harassment was discussed in Parliament. This decree was called "*Misure urgenti in materia di sicurezza pubblica e di contrasto alla violenza sessuale, nonché in tema di atti persecutori*" ("*Urgent measures regarding public safety, contrast to sexual violence, and harassment*"). This decree linked together immigration and gender violence, along the paradigm of security policies. In fact, it aimed to introduce norms against sexual harassment, and deportation measures against illegal migrants at the same time. Furthermore it allowed the organisation of the so called "*ronde*" (Simone, 2010), which consist in groups of people with explicit xenophobic tendencies organised in defense of their local territory in response to the presence of immigrant people. These norms were then

expunged but still they influenced public opinion intensively marking a link between gender violence and immigration.

Throughout all this, mass media played a decisive role. It is important to analyse how significant the relation between offences, the media representation of these crimes (both in qualitative and quantitative terms), and the perception of safety. Combined data from the second report on the perception of security in Italy published by *Demos & Pi* in collaboration with the observatory of Pavia *Media Research* on behalf of Fondazione Unipolis, *La sicurezza in Italia. Significati, immagine e realtà. Seconda indagine sulla rappresentazione sociale e mediatica della sicurezza* (Demos & pi, 2008), show a clear trend: whilst crimes decreased in 2007, it's representation in the media increases. It is important to note that this was during the political election campaign. 47% of the pool declared to perceive immigration as threat to safety (it is also funny to note that interviews took place a few days before the homicide of Giovanna Reggiani, therefore when the feeling of fear towards migrants was already spreading wild). As I said earlier we have to remember that this was happening during the electoral campaign, exactly when the topic of safety and security was utilized as a media catalyst both by central-left wing parties and the right wing opposition (Woodcock, 2010).

The public debate about violence towards women was not mentioning anymore the data of research run by Istat (Italian Institute of Statistic) in 2007 called "*Violence and abuses towards women inside and outside domestic environments*", "*La violenza e i maltrattamenti contro le donne fuori e dentro la famiglia*", that shown an unforgiving snapshot of the reality of violence towards women in Italy, calculating that almost 70% of abuses happen in domestic environments, and are committed by people known by the victim, such as ex-partners, and relatives.

The stereotype of the foreign offender made once again explicit the intrinsic link between sexuality and the ethnicisation of the public enemy, through the media construction of a *moral panic* (Maneri, 2001; Bonfiglioli, 2010; Giomi, 2010). This portrait is perfect for the public representation of Roma people (it is not important to specify ethnicity, nationality, etc). This

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is enough to trigger public opinion towards fear and ethnic hate, and to produce waves of violent racism). In this sense:

> The creation of a racial stereotype of Roma people is based on sexualized characteristics: Roma men are seen like primitive abusers and as a threat for Italian women; Roma women are seen as kidnapped children. Both of them result from a wider stereotype that describes Roma people being ethnically uncivilised and incapable of controlling his/her innate biological characteristics: sex (male), and maternity (female).

However it is evident how powerful rape can be to mobilize and focus the attention of 'public opinion' on social constructed alarms which are useful to shape the character of a *folk devil* against which we can project social anxieties and concern. This is not new news though: scapegoats have always been used to build public debate around an imminent threat, such as a public enemy which make our cities dangerous, degraded, and unsafe. In this scenario the enemy is the migrant, the other from us, who puts our identity in danger (which is thought as unique and monolithic), simply with his/her simple presence. And this leads us to the core issue. In the case of rape, what is important is that who abuses is someone who is not "us," someone different, and this defines an insurmountable border between "us" and "them:" this border is then, between others, a cultural, civil, religious border. In other terms violence against women is a social fact that classifies an identity before defining the difference between victim and abuser. The emotional mobilization that arises from the abuse or the homicide of one of "our" women defines what women represent: an ethnic, national, religious community opposed to foreigners, enemies, and sexual offenders.

This process of victimization of women (in this case Italian and respectable women) has also another substantial function to perform. It pushes social actors into predefined roles (in this case the role of the offender and of the victim), that are neutralized and detached by the materiality of social and human relationships. These roles do not take into account ambivalence and contradictions within relationships and conflicts, so that the cultural and social aspects of violence against women do not emerge, and women have no voice. But there is more.

The distinction between a good and a bad victim (accused), beyond identifying communities to which the victim belongs, is also used to define what being one of "our" women means, and to say how a legitimate victim must behave to be qualified as a woman to defend. The respectable victim, as in the Reggiani affair, is used to define the behaviors which a decent women has to stick to in order to be recognized by society as a victim, and not guilty (or accused) (Simone 2010, pp.46-49).

Thus gender violence is a powerful bio-political tool through which we can define ethnic identities and public enemies, normal or aberrant sexual behaviors, gender roles, and so on. This is how women are treated by Italian laws concerning violence and abuse, which reduce the complexity and stigmatise and divide women into two groups: victim and accused. We have a "good" victim, who is the one to defend, when a woman is not raising requests of emancipation and autonomy, and when she can be used to confirm a symbolic subordinated female role. The "bad" victim is somehow also guilty since her behavior does not correspond to the definition of the female role supported by the penal and social norms. Paradoxically, consent is the fundamental condition to distinguish sexual abuse from sexual love, but it is also a concept that can lay down the concept of freedom.

The other side of the coin: criminalised bodies

Through the victimisation of the *native* female, ethnic identities, hetero-driven social roles, and a specific social order are defined by society. In this way feminine sexuality is exploited to mobilise society against deviant sexual behaviors that exceed what is considered as normal and acceptable. Particularly, it is interesting to analyse how prostitution is socially and juridically ruled to reinforce and maintain the boundaries of the standard heterosexuality, and to affirm when a woman is sexually deviant. However this also introduces several political ambivalence within the public debate in Italy which is important to investigate.

During the peak of the media's attention on safety and security, when abuse of women committed by immigrants were over-reported, and the consequent victimisation of the "*good"* Italian women, a new problem was

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found in street prostitution. Also in this case, the role of media and it's moral commentary were extremely influential.

The issue of prostitution began to be the focus of the political debate when several restrictive laws were approved by some local governments, and with the Carfagna-Maroni-Alfano[2] bill proposed on September 2008. It is significant that the bill was enacted by the Equal Opportunities, Interior and Justice Ministers, meaning that prostitution was considered as a matter of police and criminal justice, and public order.

Even though the bill was never approved by the Parliament, the public debate was utterly influenced by this way of interpreting the matter. In fact, the mass media paid much more attention to the press conference and to the rhetoric words used by the Ministers introducing the new proposal, rather than to the content of the bill. Media reported the press conference highlighting the state of emergency tone used to talk about this new and urgent safety need, which was exactly the same used by the same mass media when referring to the social perception of safety and danger. Thus, this security framework created a tautological circle, as we can read in the press release:

> The conditions of moral and social destitution in which prostitution mainly takes place require the State to intervene with measures to preserve the dignity and values of human beings and their freedom in the first place, and furthermore to prevent the causes of a spread of social panic due to a lack of public order and safety (Department for Equal Opportunities, 2012).

Thus, "the spread of social panic" caused by prostitution produced a higher level of social alarm, looking like there was no way to escape the problem and to reach safety without introducing more restrictive laws.

On the other hand, the repressive approach at the base of the bill was completely embedded in the contest of "war on urban blight" and fear of diversity spread by the mass media, and by the local and national governments. In fact, the target was the presence of sex workers in the streets, which is the most evident and problematic form of prostitution,

[2] Respectively the Equal Opportunities, Interior and Justice Minister.

since the bill aimed to punish what could be visible, so both clients and sex workers if caught in the act (Department for Equal Opportunities, 2012).

Sex workers were highly stigmatized, but there was no mention in the implementation of any action against trafficking of prostitutes, or of any more substantial safety policy. The mere intention was to "clean the streets" to the eyes of respectable citizens by moving the sex workers to more marginalized areas, thus feeding the social perception of fear and a lack of safety.

Besides the contradictions and the social conflicts produced by the thorny problem of urban safety, the representation of prostitution produced by the media also highlighted a deeper and broader aspect of Italian society, related to the relationship between genders and self-determination, and the definition of it.

These policies also have an ethical connotation and concern social order *tout-court*, social order, and safety ("Prostitution has always been a matter of dispute for its ethical, cultural, and social order implications") (Department for Equal Opportunities, 2012). The criminalization of prostitution is deeply connected to the size of the political space of sexual freedom in a society, for its defining the basic characteristics of legitimate heterosexual relationships.

The public debate was merely about the fact that a prostitute is a deviant, also in sexual terms, and that this is an objective fact:

> every form of prostitution, or better, female prostitution, is categorized in the frame of guilty. It is assumed that women's sexuality is naturally non-violent and tender, as much as the male sexuality is aggressive and unbridled. When this relationship is overturned, it opens a wide breach in the social and symbolic order which is not acceptable and that creates chaos (Pitch 1998, 189).

Therefore if prostitution, as gender violence, includes the definition of roles and relationship patterns in it's symbolic representation, hence allowing the discrimination and criminalisation of whatever diverts from what is sexually "normal", this also means that we are facing a deep ambivalence regarding what is natural for a woman: are prostitutes victims or culpable? Does it depend on other factors? If so what does it depend on?

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The point is that for women subjectivity, self-determination is not recognized at all, so that their criminalisation –or safeguard– contributes as well to the construction and enhancement of the paradigm of security policies.

Bodies at risk, beyond the security wave

Bodies, sexuality, safety, deviance, control. According to Tamar Pitch violence towards women is a comprehensive social factor as it involves multiple social spheres. It affects symbolism, social and juridical norms, sexual identities, the definition of who we are through what we do not want to be, and so on. It is a criterion to classify the entire of society which limits freedom and capacity of self-determination for human beings, in particular women, and has effects on the use of public spaces, and on power. The link between violence and prostitution, the way they are described, and the way we perceive them, makes evident how sexuality pervades the governance of society.

This control tool is still very powerful, despite the fact that the media rhetoric on immigration as main menace to social safety, and fear of crime have decreased after 2007. According to a report published by the European Observatory on Social Safety "*Safety in Italy and in Europe. Meanings, images and realities*", in the first trimester of 2011:

> Compared to few years ago, social fear due to the presence of foreigners seems to have reduced. As for delinquency, immigration was valued at its higher level of risk in 2007, during the "criminal syndrome" period: this two topics have always shown a close correlation in the public opinion. Nowadays only 6% of the pool mention immigration as a main concern, while in precedent years it went above 10% (with a peak of 13% in 2007). The matter is now in the 6th position, after inflation (9%), and environmental issues (8%) (European Observatory for security, 2011).

Many things have changed since 2007. The global economic crisis, environmental issues, and unemployment are now on the agenda of media and politicians, who are no longer pointing to immigration as the main social problem.

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However criminal offences still make the "news." They are significan in the media, and this way of reporting does not reflect the real trend of crimes. Once again the most reported and visible episodes are regarding homicides of women: Yara Gambirasio, Sarah Scazzi e Melania Rea.

In Spain every time that there is the suspicion of an abuse of a woman, the mainstream media update the list of the victims, so that it is contextualised, for instance: "*This is the 40th victim of male violence this year*" (European Observatory for security, 2011). Our media report the news without a proper contextualisation, so that these facts seems far and unlinked from the real state of things. On the contrary, violence towards women in Italy is a fixed constant inherently due to the asymmetric gender relationships that we find both within and outside the family. Thus the Italian men who kill their wives, girlfriends, and lovers become:

> different from foreigners," "different from "others." The issues related to male sexuality and identity are justified by uncontrollable jealousy. Gender violence is consigned to marginal zones and its cultural and social aspects are masked. These facts are described as products of an individual deviance or madness. The fact that violence is not an exceptional fact but an ordinary phenomenon is hidden and described only as a monstrous accident so that the dominant symbolic order is untarnished (Giomi, 2010).

At the same time victims find their place in this binary frame. As we said, only certain women deserve the attention of the media and to have their status of victims recognised. Even here their subjectivity disappears behind the urgency of representing women as weak and devoted to their husband, children, and relatives.

Who killed Melania Rea?

> Too many facts still are not clear. In San Marco park, or at the kiosk, Melania, once she had found out that she had been misled, would have reacted, shouted, cried. Or, maybe, she would not have got on that car […]. For what concerns the motif of the murder, it might be that Melania had a secret lover? Was she a woman of easy virtue, which would have quickly jumped on the first car and hurriedly made love in the forest, leaving the little daughter to the father? The officers investigating on this crime have sifted out her entire life, which resulted clean and transparent.

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Melania Rea was absolutely devoted to her husband, and, most of all, she had high principles. She was the wife of Gabriele and the mother of a beautiful girl, that's it. So, why was she murdered?

The off-screen voice follows the images of *Ripe di Civitella* wood, where Melania's disfigured body was found. It's a disturbing, broken, destabilizing sequence of frames, which spreads a deep feeling of solitude, anxiety, fear amongs the audience. The crime scene's reconstruction, drawn as a cartoon, shows a naked body that has been outraged and wounded by a syringe on the chest. The effect of dramatization (Gili, 2006) is immediate.

Chi l'ha visto?, a prime time tv programme about missing persons and murders, episode of September 29, 2011.

The case is a well-known one. It's about the murder of Melania Rea, the 29 years wife of a non-commissioned officer of the Army, Salvatore Parolisi. The woman was found atrociously murdered in April 2011 in the *Ripe di Civitella* wood, close to Teramo, Italy. It was a ferocious and violent homicide, and a big mystery at the same time. Police could not find a clue for weeks, until investigation led to the arrest of Melania's husband who was accused of "voluntary homicide, aggravated by the intimate relationship and by the cruelty and the contempt to the body, probably in league with others."

For the Media Observatory of Pavia (European Observatory for security, 2011), this is the second most reported criminal case in the national prime time news (21 times) during the first months of 2011. A media case, as Aldo Grasso wrote (Grasso, 2011), which catalyzed mass media's attention so much so that in May 2011 it was presented via all the national TV channels throughout all day schedule, becoming one of the most important episodes of media communication about gender violence and its construction of symbolic and discursive meanings. The importance of this case is linked to several aspects which show some ambivalences and reversals from the recent public debate on gender violence and its public representation.

Firstly, the case of Melania Rea is precisely a "case": it is selected and reported on every crime news channels, during talk shows and news programs, and it contributes to shape public opinion and social perception on the phenomenon of gender violence in Italy. Immediately mass media

made an analogy with another well-known crime case, even though the most significant aspect of this analogy is indeed its partiality: in fact, the homicide of Melania Rea calls back to mind another "excellent" murder, Giovanna Reggiani's, which occurred in October 2007.

As Mrs Reggiani, Melania Rea was the middle-class, Italian, and well respected wife of an officer of the Italian Army, and in this sense, she appears as the perfect suitable female victim. In this sense, each of us could have been in her place. Then why, *Chi l'ha visto* wonders, Melania has been killed?

This question is rather ambiguous, as it supposes that someone else deserves to be killed: probably, those women who do not have a transparent life, get rides with strangers, and by doing so show to be available, easy and, therefore, guilty and less defensible, as they do not conform to what a good woman should be.

But Melania was a "good victim" for the prime times on tv, as she embodied the exception that confirms the rule. Within the heterosexual family, in fact, these kind of violence do not take place; then, we must consider it as an extraordinary, shocking event for the social order.

The other face of the coin: the Berlusconi sexgate

The other face of the coin, now, is actually less "other" than one would expect.

After the "securitarian" wave, the public debate has shifted towards the victimization processes of women in the public sphere, focusing on the symbolic construction of female body within the national borders. What is at stake is sexuality, power, freedom, and self-determination of Italian women in Italy. Another way to speak about prostitution. This issue began with the public scandal on the so-called "Berlusconi sexgate."

In the April 2009 Veronica Lario, wife of Silvio Berlusconi, wrote an article on a national newspaper about the sexual scandals linked to her husband. In the article she criticized the way of recruiting candidates for the European elections as a practice of co-opting young and beautiful women lacking any political experience. Veronica Lario denounced the dissolute life of her husband, opening the public debate on the affaire that caused

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gossips, critics and scandals for months (Tonelli, 2009). The matter was associated to the "thorny question" of the relation between power and sex, which had two kinds of consequences: a judiciary one (due to the exploitation of juvenile prostitution and the political corruption) and a political-ethic one (about the status of freedom, emancipation and self-determination of Italian women). The media debate was saturated with scoops about private parties crowded with young women, in which sex, money and political favors were the main ingredients (Sonnino, 2010).

In 2009, a new scandal exploded. Patrizia D'Addario, a sex worker who had a relationship with the Prime Minister, released the recordings of their sexual encounters. After that, Berlusconi got involved in another scandal, the Ruby-gate: dozens of young women, even minors, resulted implicated in orgiastic fests, called "Bunga-Bunga", with Berlusconi and his flunkeys.

The media –especially the leftwing political parties and newspapers as «la Repubblica», «l'Unità», «il Fatto Quotidiano»– represented such scandals voyeuristically, mobilizing the public opinion in a debate about sexuality and prostitution.

Even though the main issue was the corruption of the political power, this ethical mobilization shifted to an ambiguous moral sphere, which involved and challenged the feminist groups on their own ground. The debate on these sexual scandals developed *on* and *between* women covered any aspect of the "escort-gate": the connection between power and sex, the meaning of freedom and self-determination, and the relation between gender roles and models.

Synthetically, we can focus on three main arguments: the "anti-Berlusconi" front, the radical feminism (sex-workers and GLBTIQ movements), and the comments published by the national newspaper «**C**orriere della Sera». Here I will analyze the first one, for it shows interesting ambivalences and contradictions about the issue of sexuality and freedom.

The main aspect is the moral one. Prostitution has been represented as a moral crime, in which the labels "victim" and "guilty" have been utilized to judge the girls who have participated to the sexual parties in the house of Berlusconi. What was criticized is how these young girls behaved, who

were disapproved for having complied with a corrupted and perverse model of power, but, at the same time, were considered victims of the wicked intentions of Silvio Berlusconi. The point, in sum, was about the dignity of women in Italy –dignity being the moralistic obligation to be modest and not promiscuous.

The first step was moved by the director Concita De Gregorio on the newspaper «l'**U**nità» (De Gregorio, 2011). Her point was how the "cultural disease" and the lack of dignity, education, consciousness have damaged the young generations of women in Italy. Obviously the fault of this decadence is due to fifteen years of Berlusconism. But, as De Gregorio put it, there are still good and well-to-do women: they are mothers, daughters, nieces of some men, thus separating the "good" girls from the "bad" ones. The "others," the bad girls, are prostitutes, we, the good ones, are mothers, daughters and so on. Such "familistic" and heterosexual terminology leads to a normative collective imagery, which has been deconstructed by the feminist movements since the beginning. Good women are represented as an essentialized entity, without voice, but exclusively under control of their family, their men, their sons. The "others", the prostitutes, have no voice as well, for it will always be a man choosing for them; but, at the same time, they are considered "bad", victims of a corrupted ideal of success in life.

After the analysis made by De Gregorio, a second call was published by "Se non ora quando?" a women's network created to criticize the moral decay and the machist tendency of Italian society in the Berlusconian age. Here the issue of dignity is even stronger, and it is directly linked to the self-sacrifice of Italian mothers, workers, students. The motherhood is symbolically utilized to enforce the ideal role of Italian (not stranger) women, being referred not only to the family, but even to the creation of the nation itself.

Otherwise, terms like "indecent", "public morality", "social pollution" are utilized in order to outline a ethical and conservative framework within which prostitution appears as the least and the worst of the activities a woman must undertake in order to be considered a well-to-do person.

Many critics were struck by such discourse –mainly for its normative ideal of woman, strongly linked to an heteronormative, patriarchal model. In

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fact, it is referred only to Italian, middle class, heterosexual women lacking subjectivity and voice. The de-subjectivation process of women and the criminalization of deviant sexual behavior is contextualized within a broader contradictory discourse, which, on the one hand, aims at defending the self-determination of women; whilst, on the other hand, imposes a conservative model of gender relationships and roles in the society.

Conclusions

Returning to the television show *Chi l'ha visto?*, inquiring the murder of Melania Rea, we can find in the vocabulary used to describe the feminine characteristics of Melania stunning analogies with the public debate on the "Berlusconi sexgate", and the relative gender models imposed to the public opinion. Respected women are those who correspond to the heterosexual feminine roles: motherhood, care, love, devotion. The "good" victim must fit her gender role and expectations –thus helping us in placing ourselves within a hetero-social order where conflict is depicted. Otherwise, our social identity could be put under discussion, and our cognitive world might be subverted: what is wrong what is not? Victimizing and criminalizing processes work through the construction of stereotypes, essentialized roles, culturalized bodies.

Indeed, as noticed by Foucault, the rhetoric of securitarianism exploits the female bodies both in the cases of violence and prostitution, in order to justify repressive and racist acts, performing blood-and-flesh bodies (sexualized, different, mixed and exceeding). In this sense, gender violence and prostitution are situated deeply inside the cultural processes of sexual construction, of naturalization and culturalization of bodies and genders.

After the decreasing of the security emergency, gender violence as an alarmist event remains at the center of the media representation, and confirms the set of ideas on the victimization of women on which the structural asymmetry of gender relationship in our society is posed. These two tendencies are different but coherent: in fact, the public debate around the sexual scandals of Berlusconi has obsessively attracted the media attention on his perverse sexuality, demonstrating the deep connection between sex, power and freedom, gender stereotypes and morals. Both the

arguments enforced ideas about a "normal" sexuality to be protected as a public goods against deviance and degeneration. Once again, the point is that issues concerning prostitution and female bodies' exploitation have imposed to the political debate the necessity of a new reflection on sexuality, emancipation and social transformations.

At the same time, the leftwing opposition, by condemning the sexual behavior of Berlusconi, defended the "healthy" and "normal" forms of gender and sexual relationships, by stigmatizing the behavior of the young escorts invited at Berlusconi's home, and labeling them as not adequate to the moralistic perception of sexuality.

Gender violence and prostitution are social facts which produce ethnical, sexual and cultural processes of control and discipline of bodies, starting from bodies and sexuality, which are the core of the governamental strategies of power. But this power is not univocal or monolithic; on the contrary, it spreads along the power relationships that run through the entire society. As Foucault wrote:

> Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy. We must not expect the discourses on sex to tell us, above all, what strategy they derive from, or what moral divisions they accompany, or what ideology-dominant or dominated-they represent; rather we must question them on the two levels of their tactical productivity (what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure) and their strategical integration (what conj unction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary in a given episode of the various confrontations that occur). (Faucault 1978, p.102)

This discursive order is indeed crossed by ambivalences and contradictions, but all of them contribute to the construction of the deployment of sexuality as Foucault has outlined:

> Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation

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of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (Faucault 1978, pp.105-106).

That's the point of the real scandal of the Berlusconi sexgate: as claimed by Lidia di Cirillo over the course of a talk held at a public meeting organized by the historical feminist group Libreria delle donne, the unsaid and paradoxical problem was that:

A misbehavior man like Berlusconi defends the most conservative catholic morality, pledges the promulgation of an anti-protitution act, implements a law forbidding the medical analysis of embryos in the in vitro fertilization, denies the civil rights to lesbian, gay, trans couples in order to defend the heterosexual family (Cirillo, 2011).

Anyway, if the female body has always been exploited in order to justify and enforce the control of society, the cultural representation of bodies is useful to affirm a gendered social order, in which women are definitely expropriated of their subjectivity and voice. As a victim or as a culprit, there will always be someone else speaking for them – thus depicting a structural conflict and freedom process which is steadily going through our society.

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during the period immediately following the discovery of the episode, word of mouth seems to involve mainly the women of the neighborhood. In the reconstruction of the narration of the sexual abuse, women emerge as the protagonists at crucial moments: they provide first aid, they carry out perfunctory 'check ups' on the victim, help the mothers to find a doctor to verify and attest the circumstance in the event of a formal complaint and the type of abuse and harm suffered.

Keywords: History of sexual abuses, rape trials in the early 1900s, criminal Court of Naples, sexual Violence and public opinion.

State of the Art

Historical studies on violence generally, in particular those relevant to sexual violence have to date, failed to encounter much interest in Italy. With some relevant exceptions[1], which show how over the last ten years the issue – linked above all to the cultural mentality underlying the subject of sex, from the perspective of juridical discipline, its practice and public opinion and debate on issues such as "honor", "modesty", "homosexuality" and so on − is beginning to interest an ever increasing number of scholars and historians. In the more general context of Women's Studies, English and

[1] Here I refer to some basic scientific studies for those wishing to examine the issue in more depth: Donato e Ferrante, (2010); Arrivo (2006); Arrivo, 2002; Guarnieri, *L'ammazzabambini*, (2006); Guarnieri (1998); Guarnieri (2003); Gribaudi (2002); Lucrezi, Botta, Rizzelli (2003). On the concept of virility and virilism, see Bellassai (2011). On public debate in Italy, relative to sexual behavior between the 1800s and the 1900s, see Wanrooij (1990). For an analysis on the notion of public scandal, see Rizzo (2004); e Rizzo (2003). Ongoing research is mentioned in the section *Il genere della violenza. Linguaggi e rappresentazioni*, a cura di Maria Rosaria Pelizzari, in press (2013), in Laura Guidi, Maria Rosaria Pelizzari (Ed.), *Nuove frontiere per la Storia di genere*, Padova: libreriauniversitaria.it Editore Webster, with contributions from Arianna Bonnini, Giulia Castelnovo, Annalisa Di Nuzzo, Roberta Galeano, Lola Gonzalez Quijano, Vitulia Ivone, Annamaria Musilli, Maria Rosaria Pelizzari, Federico Sanguineti, Giuseppe Maria Viscardi. The issue of domestic violence was recently debite at the VIth Congress of Società Italiana delle Storiche (Padova-Venezia, 14-16 febbraio 2013) in the panel *Il nemico in casa*, a cura di Claudio Azzara, with contributions from Arianna Bonnini, Cecilia Cristellon, Ermanno Orlando and Guido Panico.

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French works in particular, with a focus on sexual violence in various historical and geographical contexts can be traced to the end of the 1970s[2].

Recently, new bibliographical and electronic resources have enhanced the scientific scene. Stefan Blaschke, who has put together a vast bibliography dedicated to sexual violence throughout history, entitled *A History of Rape: Bibliography*, has also set up a blog on the issue: *The History of Rape Blog*[3]. In effect, this sort of global bibliography on violence, is a work in progress, unfettered by limits of time or space or by any thematic or disciplinary approach. Not only the historical aspects of sexual violence are taken into account but also the literature dealing with such issues in the context of human and social sciences: ranging from philosophy to sociology, from psychology to literature, from medicine to criminology, from art to forms of representation of violence in the mass media. The works analyzed touch upon "borderline issues", in that they trigger reflection on gender violence throughout history as well as in more general terms: physical attributes; gender and militarism; sexual abuse in wartime; theoretical considerations on masculinity, the male-female relationship, not to mention profiles, images and social constructions relative to gender.

Some preliminary considerations

The aim of this paper is to analyze by means of historical case studies, the reaction of the common people in urbanized Southern Italy at the beginning of the 1900s on discovering criminal behavior which for convenience sake, I define as 'sexual abuse'[4]. In this sense I have outlined the proceedings rela-

[2] Many of the studies on criminal issues and gender, not to mention on *body history* provide interesting starting points for historical analysis: Brownmiller (1975); Chesnais (1982); Shorter (1984); Tomaselli, Porter (1986); Ackley (1990); Corbin (1992); Arnot, Usborne (1999); D'Cruze (2000); Vigarello (2001); Davidoff (2005); Palk (2006); Sabean, Teuscher, Mathieu (2007); Bourke (2009). As concerns Latin America, a useful reference is to be found in Stabili (2009).

[3] See Ermacora, Tiepolato, (2011). The bibliography is online at: http://de.geocities.com/history_guide/horb/index.html

[4] The 'sexual abuse' I refer to concerns the morbid attention both manifest and covered up, paid to children by persons who are not part of the family context. As regards the time and place in which the abuse takes place this varies from case to case even though there is evidence of recurring places and circumstances. In this respect, it should be noted that in the Codice Zanardelli dated 1889, sexual crimes were defined in the Criminal Code as "crimes

tive to trials for "libidinous acts", "rape", "indecent behavior" concerning children, in act at the Tribunal of Naples[5]. It should be underlined in this respect that in the process of Criminal Court trials for sexual crime it is possible to glimpse, by means of "criminal facts" and their representation in the Halls of Justice, the fleeting and certainly not negligible cultural aspects and mindsets as concerns carnal violence. The issues are complex and require in-depth observation. Case studies are ideal for this kind of historical-cultural investigation as they lend themselves to illustrating the assumptions and prejudices of the parties concerned.

By means of the documents relative to the trial proceedings, a preliminary analysis can be put in place in order ascertain the way in which the narration of sexual crime is constructed according to the evidence of the various witnesses, summoned to court by the Authorities. Such evidence ranges from and includes the version of the accused and that of the victim to that of the witnesses, from red tape jargon expressed in the language of the Court Minutes to the scientific lexicon of medical-legal reports which all concur in tracing the outlines of an event that reflects facets of life experience and consequently, of socio-cultural history. In other words, behaviors and attitudes are delineated in which predictably, roles and stereotypes relative to gender, impact to a great extent. However, nothing as will be seen, can be considered obvious or taken for granted. Some cases enable on the contrary, the reconstruction of a scenario which is much more complicated and articulated than might have been expected.

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against public decency and family morality". Illicit sexual behavior was recognized as such only when the act had been perpetrated using threats and violence and not when there had merely been explicit opposition on the part of victims undergoing the sexual abuse The distinction between bodily violence (rape) (art. 519) and sexual molesting (art. 521) was commonly applied. The seriousness of such illicit sexual conduct was determined on the basis of specific criteria: the age of the victim, state of health and the relation in place between the abuser and his victim. In the case of children being involved in acts of bodily violence, the Criminal Code envisaged illegality only if corruption of the underage victim could be proved.

[5] The documentation, relative to the reporting of the crime to the appearing in court, from the medico-legal reports to the defense counsel's petitioning, to the records of interim sentencing up to the pronouncing of the final, definitive sentence is all conserved at the Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASNA), in the dossier Tribunale Penale (TP), *Processi* (*PR*). Reference is to facts occurring in Naples and the surrounding province.

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Our *case studies*, relative to the denouncing of crimes committed in the city of Naples and in the surrounding province, on victims (both male and female) under 15, seem to renege the idea, widely diffused, of a female world, belonging above all to the working class, incapable of reacting publicly to sexual violence. The sample involved is quite limited, however, it reflects a model of social behavior which could probably be extended to the wider context of working class areas and the suburbs of Naples. The cases selected involve victims and the accused who live in the same building, in the same street or nearby in the same neighborhood[6]. Issues in our paper concern how children were protected in the event of effective or attempted violence. How in the neighborhood 'gossip' was spread relative to the abuse, what effectively triggered police intervention and finally, how the neighborhood reacted as concerns the victim or the accused and the prejudice emerging from the documents reporting the Court proceedings. From such documents the reality of routine daily life emerges clearly; made up of shadowy corners, dark, isolated alleyways, lunch breaks or tea breaks from work during which, far more often than we might possibly imagine, children, small boys and above all small girls were prey to sexual interest on the part of adults who used to hang around their houses or their families for one reason or other. The 'big bad wolf' was generally not a stranger but rather as we have already mentioned, a neighbor or even a frequent visitor to the house. In the cases narrated we often find the involvement of youths rather than «dirty old men»[7]. About 50% of the accused are aged between 26 and

[6] Preliminary reflections relative to 40 cases are proposed, classified at the time as "rape", "sexual molesting", "acts of sexual violence", "indecent behavior", young persons aged 15, occurring in Naples and surrounding province during the period between 1902 and 1904,and between 1915 and 1917, present in the trial proceedings relative respectively to 1904 and 1917. These are the preliminary findings of a wider analysis relative to trials for sexual crimes against victims aged under 21, heard during the period 1901-1904, 1917,1936 and 1938. These periods were chosen because they are the first in the 1900s in which the recording and classifying of trials electronically it in place at ASNA and labeled with the type of crime committed.

[7] Out of 20 cases, relative to sexual abuse against little girls, only one man is aged 63. In general, ages range from 16 to 29 (9 out of 20) and from 30 to 59 (8 out of 20). In 2 cases, both are under 15. As concerns victims of the male sex, they are even younger, above all when groups of three or more individuals are involved. In fact, out of 20 cases relative to sexual abuse on children of the male sex, 11 defendants are under 15, 8 are aged between 30 and 59 and one person is over 60.

59, they are usually married at the time of the accusation, or widowed. They are neither socially marginalized nor dropouts. In effect, all the accused surprisingly, are distinguished by their 'normal status'. The environment is mainly working class. The context in which most of the soliciting occurs is framed is the street, often lived as an extension of the home.

The discovery of the fact.

As concerns the reactions following the discovery of the abuse, it is possible to delineate models of behavior which are more or less constant[8]. Above all during the period immediately following the discovery of the episode, word of mouth seems to involve mainly the women of the neighborhood. In the reconstruction of the narration of the sexual abuse, women emerge as the protagonists at crucial moments: they provide first aid, they carry out perfunctory 'check ups' on the victim[9], help the mothers to find a doctor to verify and attest the circumstance in the event of a formal complaint and the type of abuse and harm suffered. These women are generally quite competent, they are district midwives, capable of giving injections, they know how to prepare medicinal brews and tisanes and so on. Women emerge in the front line in rows in public between the families involved: the victim's mother on the one hand and the mother or wife of the alleged guilty party on the other. It is above all, the mothers and/or wives of the accused who intercede to ask the complaint to be withdrawn, offering money or threatening reprisals in an attempt to save their sons or husbands.

How can such a decisive presence of the families with the women at their head reacting publicly to the discovery of the abuse suffered by their children, be interpreted? We are examining cases, linked probably, to what can be explained in part by the experience of Southern Italian (in particular Neapolitan) communities, who habitually shared their every day existence in the narrow streets . Furthermore, an important element should be consid-

[8] For the year 1917 the trials filed electronically number 6545. Those relating to crimes of a sexual nature against women or children (either male or female) number 172 (circa 2,62%), include those for indecent behavior: 21 (12,2%); sexual molesting , 33 (19,2%); and rape, 118 (68,6%) . Relative to 1904, classification is still ongoing. To date, I have calculated 252 trials for sexual crimes. These include: indecent behavior and sexual molesting of children, 23 (9,14%); for rape against children, 40 (13,09%).

[9] Of particular significance, the case described in ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1917, fs. 14/ 664.

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ered: the cases I am referring to, as I have already mentioned. are not cases of abuse perpetrated by members of the same family as that of the victim, but cases involving neighbors, blatant episodes resulting even in venereal disease. Neighbors having the run of the child's house are often involved; they would coax the designated victim into their own house or shop or they would abduct and take them into some country lane or other secluded place[10]. While reading the documents of the trial proceedings one is immerged in situations and circumstances that seem quite similar to those that we have often read or heard about nowadays, rather as though particular facts repeat themselves over and over again from one place to another, from one epoch to another. But what has changed and what has remained the same over such a long period of time? Circumstances (dark corners, neighbors considered above suspicion, small gifts, soliciting, fear, shame and so on) seem to be repeated more or less in a similar fashion. On the contrary, the ways in which the discovery of the abuse is experienced seems to have changed. In particular, the way in which the young victim would be taken under the wing of the community. A kind of informal court would be set up, it seems to me, based on the most accredited 'authority', in the neighborhood. The 'court' would pronounce a preliminary judgment or sentence relative to the fact thus orienting behavior. Cultural and mental mechanisms would be triggered which helped to guide opinions. These consisted in common points of view of the kind that become deep rooted day after day from each person's experience or contact with their peers.

Particularly dramatic for the neighborhood was the discovery of habitual soliciting on the part of an adult resident of several young girls living in the same area. In these cases it would happen that an episode of sexual molesting, come to light by some quirk of fate, would trigger the reactions also of the other victims and their families who, up to that moment, had preferred to

[10] I have not taken into account cases relative to sexual crimes occurring within the family; the nucleus of the family or extended to relations living in the same house, as these cases, precisely because of their profound psychological implications, will be the object of a specific future study.

keep their silence[11]. As already mentioned, various family groups of both the victim and the accused formed the framework delineated. We could also say at the risk of appearing banal, that environments typical of the culture of Neapolitan alleys are often the same everywhere; homes or communities take on a significant role in the network of family relations. Resorting to the law in some subsequent cases, became common practice on the part of the women involved all of whom previously had always tried to punish the aggressor with their own hands [12]. They had always preferred as far as possible to avoid going to court, above all during wartime while all the men were at the Front[13]. In our view, it might be interesting to compare similar processes in other Italian scenarios of the same period.

Some accounts furthermore, mention useful elements for delineating the relation between mothers and adolescent offspring. Documents of court proceedings report mothers who were wont to control the sexual habits of their children and therefore, were well aware of anything that was not quite right in that sphere. This was not only the case during the prolonged periods of absence of the head of the family. Women emerge who report of attentively watching over their children and noticing periods of confusion, fatigue and physical pain caused by scenarios that generate suspicion. Some mothers, beset by suspicion, describe getting up during the night and turning back the top sheet of their children's beds to look for noticeable signs of abuse on their children's (male or female) bodies[14]. They would do this right up to the age of adolescence (14 years of age) in order to detect evidence of any alarming manifestations.

[11] Exemplary is the case reported/narrated in the trial against Michele Mennella, known as *Naso di cane*, (*Dog-nose*) a man accused of molesting several little girls from the neighborhood, aged between 8 and 14. ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1904, 186/11345.

[12] The mother of a little girl abused by a farm worker, had stabbed the man in the face and on his hands with a knife. ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1917, 96/4881.

[13] An emblematic case in 1916 is that of the mother of a little girl molested by a twenty year old mentally disabled youth, who with her sister and a neighbor, organized a raid to look for the youth and beat him. ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno/Year 1917 , 29/1506.

[14] An emblematic case in ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1917, fs. 14/ 664.

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Relations between the big bad wolf and his victim

From the particulars that emerge in the reports, it appears that already well before 12 years of age, children of both sexes had fully grasped the implications of behaviors linked to sex, collocating them in the sphere of sin and immorality. This did not stop them from accepting in some cases, being touched in their private parts and even allowing an adult to rub his genitals against theirs for a due recompense. The acceptance of money or small gifts was indicated by the defense lawyers as a sign of precocious perversion, above all in the little girls, defined in more than one case as blatant prostitutes. Mainly poverty stricken, the children - it was often insinuated in defense of the accused - were immoral because of the "bad examples" they were exposed to in the family. During the debate ongoing in Italy between the 1700s and 1800s, the cause of juvenile prostitution was indicated in general, as the result not of male demand, but rather, of the immorality that distinguished the lower classes. In practice, the origins of prostitution could be traced to the sexual precociousness of the young proletariats. The argument for the natural «immorality» of the working classes offered a "scientific explanation" for these widespread sexual practices that were no threat either to the established public or social order or to male power as such[15]. As concerns infancy, prejudice of a social nature was recurrent at the time: anthropological research and the Lombrosian studies were concentrated on the children of the poorer classes even though the idea of congenital perversion in young children, regardless of their social condition, was not unknown in the Italian scientific culture, even before the advent of psychoanalysis[16].

The expressions most frequently used by little girls and boys to indicate that they had been asked to do something of a sexual nature were of two kinds: «he wanted to do disgusting things with me» or «he wanted to have fun with me». Disgust/enjoyment co-exist with an equally negative value in the reconstruction of the facts on the part of both the victims, the accused and the witnesses. The smaller children despite their naiveté were usually capable of describing sexual organs realistically. Generally, they would use

[15] See Gibson, Rafter, *Introduzione*, in Lombroso, Ferrero (2010), pp. 1-43.
[16] Cfr. Guarnieri, *Un piccolo essere* (2006), pp. 253-284.

local slang as in the case of the little girl who declared: «he took me to his house one day and sat me down on the inside window ledge then he put his *pesce* on my *sciaccarella* and hurt me»[17]. The use of dialectal expressions shows the backdrop against which everything to do with sex was quite familiar: from traditional slang on the subject to information on basic notions.

The victim – except in the case of the abuser being discovered red-handed – would generally prefer to keep the fact secret due either to shame or to parental reaction or because of intimidation by the big bad wolf'[18]. Initially, the little boy or girl tended to keep silent about the event because, on the basis of current psychological interpretations, they did not fully realize they had suffered any abuse. They would remove the fact from their mind or deny it. Their rationale was the following: the less the use of force involved, the more responsible and guilty the victim felt for the violence he or she had suffered. The silence of the victim seemed to derive from the shame of having been the "object/subject" of " disgusting things". The confines between guilty party and abused victim was at that time, as is often the case today, culturally tenuous. According to Jean Claude Chesnais, «sexual violence remains the only crime where the perpetrator believes he is innocent and the victim feels only shame» (Chesnais 1982, p. 155). If the victim kept his/her silence, they did so because from a very early age it was impressed upon them that their intimate and genital sphere represented something secret and demanded discretion, in a word: unmentionable. The shame for what had happened and the fear of punishment were widespread both among the girls as well as the boys, Both the object and the subject of sexual abuse had been conditioned by deep rooted taboos, consequently, anyone abusing children knew that they were to some extent, abusing not only the body of the victim but also the spirit or if you like, the soul of the abused child.

[17] ASNA, *TP*, *PR*, anno 1904, 190 / 11479. The word(s) are underlined in the Court Minutes. [«mi condusse un giorno a casa sua e facendomi sedere sul poggiolo interno della finestra mi pose il pesce sulla sciaccarella facendomi sentire dolore»].

[18] This kind of behavior emerges in periods, places and socio-cultural scenarios which are quite varied, see Sohn, in Corbin (1992), for some interesting similarities.

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Sexually abused little girls

The female body is always present even when the word body itself is not expressly mentioned: everything revolves around the female body, it is the object of the abuse but it has to show over and over again that it is also the victim of what has happened. The flesh of the victims of rape during trials is observed, analyzed and studied through the signs of its past, offered to the perceptions of strangers and immodest or brazen onlookers[19].

As can easily be imagined, the actual body of the victim in relation to the offence suffered and in order to establish the guilt of the accused, had a different value deriving from various circumstances that determines its consistency. It would be evaluated/assessed on the basis of several factors: age, social class, economic conditions, public acclaim and above all, anatomical integrity/virginity. Integrity that was observed in detail, described and measured, as upon this concept the positions of the accused and the defense were based.

The female body was presented in the first place, as a source of provocation. In any circumstance, even if a little girl of six years old was involved. As in the case of Anna Romano, a child who lived in a warehouse at Soccavo, an area in Naples, at the time not yet urbanized. Her case, similar to many others that could be cited, enables us to delineate, clearly, the mechanism with which the account of the accused's defense plea was structured, and within which the victim's sexuality in practice, is made responsible. Anna was only seven years old, yet she was described by the accused as «a seven year old girl characterized by vices and lascivious behavior. She looks much older than she is, being quite well developed, taking into account her age»[20]. A child's body that reveals in other words, the signs of lasciviousness, evidenced by blossoming development, 'guilty' of fostering provocations of a sexual nature and consequently looking deceivingly older than her real age. Whatever their age, female victims in rape trials are always de-

[19] In this respect see Pelizzari (2007), pp. 101-118

[20] *Processo contro Russolillo Antonio*, anni 24, /trial against Russolillo Antonio, aged 24, (ASNA, TP, PR, anno 1917, b. 96, fs. 4881, cc. nn.). [Trovandomi solo a lavorare in campagna fui visitato dalla bambina Anna Romano, la quale scherzando mi faceva mille moine. Eccitatomi cominciai a toccarla nelle parti genitali ed appena misi l'asta virile tra le gambe senza introdurla nella vulva e senza coire. Oltre a ciò alcun altro atto o meno commisi sulla bambina].

scribed as sending out explicit signals of sexual incitement which are almost unconsciously received by the male who gives in to nature's call. Here in fact is how Anna's seducer described to the judge the scene of the sexual violence:

I was working on my own in the fields when the little girl Anna Romano came up to me. She started to make a great fuss of me and I got so excited that I started to touch her genitals, I merely put my organ between her legs without penetrating her vulva and without having intercourse. That's all I did to the little girl[21].

Confirming his client's plea, the defense lawyer described the event. He told how the man an honest laborer who, while working hard at his job, was seduced by the "brazen hussy" aged 7: «The Court is asked to reflect on the fact that Russolillo while working in the fields in his shirt sleeves and wearing only underpants, was subjected to caresses and tickling by the girl»[22]. The fact that he was provoked was made clear. Another example of standard scenarios is the case of Anna Rampone, who had confided to an aunt, receiving unwelcome attentions from the husband of the woman in whose house she was in service. Her aunt denounced the fact and this started an investigation relative to the moral status of the little girl and her family[23]. The girl, aged only 11, was described with such a wealth of particulars as to result sordid, lascivious and a liar, well versed in blackmailing and threatening to denounce so called victims. Orphan of both parents and above all the daughter of an alcoholic who had never instilled in the child any sense of honesty, her accusation of having undergone sexual abuse on the part of the husband of her employer was easily demolished by the defense, considering that the man involved was an extremely respectable citizen. If in fact it was

[21] [Trovandomi solo a lavorare in campagna fui visitato dalla bambina Anna Romano, la quale scherzando mi faceva mille moine. Eccitatomi cominciai a toccarla nelle parti genitali ed appena misi l'asta virile tra le gambe senza introdurla nella vulva e senza coito. Oltre a ciò alcun altro atto o meno commisi sulla bambina]. The word is underlined in the Court Minutes.

[22] [«Pensi la Corte al Russolillo, il quale, lavorando in campagna in maniche di camicia e sole mutande, veniva accarezzato e solleticato dalla ragazza»].

[23] Processo contro Ricci Antonio, anni 30/Trial against Ricci Antonio, aged 30/ (ASNA, *TP*, *PR*, anno 1917, b. 8, fs. 347, cc. nn.)

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not easy to demonstrate that sexual abuse had taken place against little girls and adolescents from modest working class or middle class families, it was practically impossible, for a little girl from a broken home or from a family with a bad reputation, to demonstrate or prove that they had suffered such abuse. Their pleas would not even be heard: public opinion in the vicinity did nothing but spread and confirm the idea of the man's integrity and honesty considering him accused unjustly for the sole purpose of blackmail on the part of «a lurid and tattered brat». The defense invoked the degradation of the family environment as proof of the fact that the girl could not be anything but habitually engaged in fraud and calumny. The passage below is decisive in preventing proceedings going to court:

The Rampone child brought up badly, often left to her own devices and obliged from a very early age to earn her own living in service here and there, more often than not living rough, was reared with the malignity that is often a reaction against misfortune, showing herself dedicated to telling lies, ready to defraud and used to resorting to calumny[24].

Male adolescents and abuse

In the case of underage males, either victims or perpetrators of abuse, a medical check-up was necessary in order to find signs of a precocious disposition for «lurid intercourse against nature». Above all in the case of male adolescents aged between 12 and 13, victims of abuse on the part of slightly older boys or even boys of the same age, the defense would cast serious doubts on whether the victim effectively wanted to rebel with all his strength against the violence: in other words, consent deriving from curiosity was indicated, insinuating future 'perverse' sexual inclinations. Even though, in some defense proceedings based mainly on medico-legal examinations, considerations emerged that tended to include 'games' young boys played together (stripping off their clothes, touching their genitals up to the point of asking one another to indulge in mutual masturbation, not to men-

[24] Id. [La Rampone ormai oggi giovinetta cresciuta ai mali esempi, spesso abbandonata a se stessa, costretta a buscarsi fin da tenerissima età duro tozzo di pane, facendo la serva appresso questo o presso quegli, vivendo spesso randagia, venne su con quella malignità che sovente è una reazione contro la mala propria sorte, mostrandosi capace a mentire, facile alla frode, corriva alla calunnia].

tion more or less successful attempts at anal intercourse) within the range of those typical of the age of transition from boyhood to manhood and consequently, not manifestations of future inclinations for the so-called sexual acts against nature[25]. In more than one Court case for sexual abuse and rape, episodes taking place among small groups of adolescents occur over and over again. The age of the boys involved range from 11 to 17 years of age, often they were workers and were used to spending time together all day long. The groups had a well established pecking order where the older and stronger boys would exert their influence and leadership, playing an active part in the sexual act.. The various accounts of the 'fact' sketched borderline cases, not very clear scenarios that needed to be contextualized in order to be better understood[26].

Once the fact had been denounced and the witnesses had been heard, it had to be established whether the boys, above all those of under thirteen years of age, were physically capable of committing sexual violence. Consequently, particular importance was attributed to medical check-ups. The examination had to establish the stage of development and the potential of the child's sexual organ. The Italian Criminal Code Zanardelli was extremely severe, in particular when the sexual abuse in all its forms concerned a victim who had not yet reached his 12th birthday[27]. Cases of violence on little boys of six or seven years old committed by their peers aged eleven or

[25] See the case of Amedeo, aged nearly 7, who had been subjected to a 'game' on the part of a group of three adolescent aged between 11 and 12, all next door neighbors who, offering the child 25 centimes «wanted to persuade him to *let them sexually abuse him*». ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1904, 186/ 11315.

[26] Collocated between 'forbidden' game and attempted sexual abuse would seem to be the case of Vincenzo aged 14 and Anselmo aged 17, both mill workers at Torre Annunziata. ASNA, TP, *PR*, anno 1917, 14/664.

[27]The Law regulating sexual crimes was art. 331 (children under 12 were contemplated in paragraph 1 of art. 331). The legislator was concerned above all about the potential psychological and social ruin of the young victim. As children of 12 were involved it was not necessary to show that abuse had effectively taken place, as this was established exclusively by the age of the victim. The age limit established relative to the victim was high (paragraph 2 of art. 331) - 15 years of age when the person perpetrating the abuse was a guardian, trustee or tutor. The higher age limit was introduced as in such cases the reverence and fear that the abusers would transmit given their status subjected the young victims even more to their will. See *I delitti contro il buono costume e l'ordine delle famiglie*, in Pessina (1909), pp. 1-267.

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twelve were frequently reported. Despite their very young age, the 'perpetrators of abuse', in some cases were even arrested. They were considered in practice, men in miniature, with all the responsibilities and duties that such precocious status could imply. It is likely that the interest and the severity shown towards manifestations of this kind, defined at the time as 'libidinous acts', concealed the will to repress, at the source, any type of sexual intimacy that could 'degenerate' into homosexuality. The reasoning used by the lawyers reflected well, and contributed at the same time to their shaping, the judgments and opinions linked to sex and its 'degenerations'. One eleven to twelve year old adolescent, accused of sexual abuse was defined indifferently as a «rascal», based on his age, but also «depraved», as he was guilty of disgusting behavior which if not corrected could lead to future sexual perversion which was feared by both legislator and the society at large[28].

I will at this stage defer from examining other specific cases and analyzing the details albeit quite significant of the various accounts. On the contrary, I would like to underline however, that in the many proceedings held to ascertain whether the child victim had a normal personality, nursed leanings towards perversions or was in fact a passive pederast, various elements emerge. Above all, such elements include the type of erotic games common amongst adolescent males, often preliminary to adult sexual life which as some medical examinations stated, certainly did not indicate signs of future 'perversion' tendencies but rather a kind of initiation in the rituals of sex which in the future might quite easily have evolved either into heterosexuality or homosexuality. The exceptional nature of the trials as a source consist in the possibility of their providing precious elements relative to the history of the victims' childhood and adolescence, not to mention consenting by means of medical-legal reports, to clarify the history of the science of sex in its shaping during the 1800s and 1900s. The greatest preoccupation of the magistrates and experts concerned the possibility that an erotic game played by children of the same sex could eventually lead to the 'pathology' of homosexuality. In this respect, it is worthwhile noting that the modern medical concept of homosexuality appears towards the mid 1800s in the context of legal-medical treatises and reports, above all with reference to individuals of

[28] Relevant is the case of Amedeo in ASNA, TP, *PR.*, anno 1904, 186/ 11315.

the male sex, on the basis of which, anatomy and behavior sets were examined[29]. Medical examiners during the trials had to render comprehensible the hidden and apparently undecipherable motives underpinning certain illegal acts such as male prostitution; or provide a psychological explanation for sexual relations between males that bordered on illicit manifestations such as sexual molesting and abuse. Consequently, it is of interest as concerns the studies on homosexuality, to analyze the relative medico-legal reports. From the original way of reporting the behavior of the individuals observed, during the 1800s and the 1900s, a detailed scientific account of pederasty emerges: from an in-depth analysis of the anatomy and physiognomy both of the victims and of the guilty parties, to the investigating of their childhood, their sexual habits of how and when their primeval sexual instincts and passionate desires were first manifested[30]. Medical studies began describing in detail even those who were traditionally, distinguished by the term of pederasts or sodomites, revealing the symptoms of a latent sexual malaise and imagining a sexual causality underpinning their behaviors. Although not representing the only factor at the origin of the interpretations on pederasty, it is worthwhile noting that precisely the ever more frequent provision of medico-legal reports during the trials gives a decisive contribution to the construction of the new anthropological statute of homosexuals[31]. Consequently, even for homosexuality, on a par with violent and perverse heterosexual behavior, juridical accounts provide areas of historical knowledge. The scientific theories on the perverse nature of children as well as that of homosexuals are compared with specific cases in a context of dramatic debate, i.e. court proceedings.

Concluding remarks

Within the framework delineated, I would like to re-examine some particular aspects of gender, useful for integrating the interpretation of the doc-

[29] Particularly relevant is the reading of the Clinical history" drawn up by Prof. Almerico Radice, and Dr. Ettore Mariotti. ASNA, *TP*, *PR*, anno 1917, 14/664.
[30] See, Rizzo (2004) e Vigarello (2001). See Schettini (2011) for interesting points of reference.
[31] See Scurti (2005), pp. 283-317.

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uments of the trial proceedings. What is the role of the victim's gender in these circumstances? The child's body as mentioned previously, had a fundamental role throughout the trial, therefore, besides stating the obvious, it should be noted that the gender of the victim implies specific attitudes of judgment or opinion involving all the parties concerned.

Statistics regarding trials involving sexual abuse suffered by male children and adolescents on the part of slightly older peers, report mainly the debate between accused and defense centered on the consequences of the future sexuality of the victims. Would «those initiating rites or sexual games» lead to homosexuality or not? Again, were the behaviors of the victims to be considered the revealing of a kind of a sexual nature in terms of « passive pederast»? Naturally, the debate during the trial, utilizing the bundles of medical reports, would make reference to the child's body or rather, to its purely biological function. During those years, studies on homophile behavior, although on the increase, were moving on concepts of a positivistic character. To be expected then were investigations relative to genital organs. There was no mention on the other hand, in psychiatric studies nor more pertinently, in juridical studies, of elements of knowledge linked to psychoanalysis, at that time in Italy, more or less unknown. Despite the naiveté of the little girls, the child's body remains the core element or focus of attention. To be expected are the reports on the child's hymen requested by the defense lawyers in their search for attenuating circumstances. Less expected perhaps is the insistence on the part of the defense in requesting an evaluation of the good name of the particular victim's family, a good name which in most cases is decisive for establishing the claimant's good faith. In this respect, it should be underlined that the court tended to believe the word of little girls belonging to families recognized as honest even though of a modest social status. Another element which was assessed most carefully in order to establish the degree of chasteness and modesty in which the little girls lived, was linked to their lexicon. The words used to describe the fact could prove a looseness of language relating to environments wherein sexuality was quite explicit and even exhibited. Exemplary was the denomination direct −obviously using dialect or slang − of the male and female sexual organs. How did the little girls describe the abuse inflicted on them and

how naive was their account of the fact? In the case of a sexually abused little girl, particularly when the abuser was a boy aged between 13 and 16 years of age, the fine line between abuse and erotic games between adolescents was difficult to draw or define. This justification however could only be applied in the case of males. It was as is obvious, far too different from that of males, the relation with sex that a little girl on the threshold of adolescence could possibly have, made up of discretion and defense of her intimacy, her physical and moral integrity which had to be preserved until marriage, when then and only then, her sexuality could be expressed, the aim of which, at least officially, being that of procreation. Acts of sexual abuse could never be configured as moments of erotic experience: a male could have precocious sexual initiations, a woman certainly not. Thus, paradoxically, we can say that in these cases a little girl usually succeeded in proving the sexual abuse afflicted.

At this stage, another element emerging from our study should be taken into consideration: ranging from female protagonists reacting in public at the moment of discovery of the abuse, not to mention the conspicuous presence of the mothers, their constant observation of the 'strange' behavior of their children and the request for help from the other women of the neighborhood and rendering public the fact to encourage public disapproval of the alleged guilty party. All this publicity might be surprising, seeing as the operative words are shame and modesty in denouncing sexual abuse or violence. It should be emphasized however, that protesting on the part of the neighborhood occurred above all in cases of children being sexually abused by individuals who were not members of the victim's family. It should be underlined furthermore, that the source of the information we have gleaned is from the content of accusations deposited with the Police Authorities or from evidence given during court trials. Consequently, noting the repetitive nature of the accounts, a basic structure can be hypothesized which remains more or less the same over and over again in numerous episodes. The desire to render the episode public, the attempt to involve other people, or the need to resort to midwives or experienced old wives to have their daughter or son examined, all most likely, also conformed to the need to construct a kind of consolidated framework on which to base the accusation, wherein

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the parents of the sexually abused little boy or girl intended to show at least the following elements: their incredulity and surprise on discovering something that they had never even remotely imagined happening (which consequently did not foster suspicion that blackmail was being planned); The incontrovertible signs of sexual abuse on the little girl's or boy's body; the involvement of various witnesses. Everything in short, irrespective of awareness on the part of the protagonists, tended to construct a public reputation in opposition to that proposed by the defense lawyers. The little boys and above all, the little girls certainly did not live in environments dominated by lust and vice. Their behavior was not allusive, their families were ever present. How genuine or spontaneous or in good faith the mothers were in trying to build up such a reputation, one might ask, depended on the extent of the difficulties they knew would be encountered or they would be subjected to o during the long trial after denouncing the episode?

Does this scenario refer only to the beginning of the 1900s? The follow up to my research which traces events up to the eve of the break out of the Second World War could perhaps provide an answer. One observation in any event, should be made: it seems almost as though once the discovery by the victim's family of the sexual abuse comes to light, the desire emerges to inform other people not only in terms of a predictable request for help logistically so as not to remain isolated in such terrible circumstances, but also I would say, to guarantee the evidence of witnesses in court. Discretion, the desire to keep the episode secret, are factors that surprisingly, do not emerge. Consequently, with reference to the cases examined which, it should be underlined, have in any event, been tried in Criminal Courts, it would be feasible to conclude that the desire to render the episode unrestrictedly public had the principal goal of obtaining justice.

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Isabella Corazziari, Maria Giuseppina Muratore

Intimate partner violence: short and long term consequences

Abstract

The work analyses the short and long-term consequences of intimate partner violence and the strategies that women have developed to get out of violence. A causal model is developed to analyse five different multivariate dimensions characterising intimate partner violence, based on the last and unique national representative population survey about violence against women. In a second step the stories of repeated violence will be analysed focusing on the strategies the victims have used to cope with violence. The most effective strategies will be contrasted with the less ones. Less effective strategies are associated with an increasing risk of the cycle of violence, that is those who have suffered violence as a child are likely to accept it enduring in their adult life.

The analysis of the physical, moral and psychological consequences, shows a mixed picture, linked to both the severity of the violence, and to the type of suffered violence; focusing on the history of violence, the various strategies to cope with it are closely linked to the framework of severity, to the characteristics and dynamics of the violence and to the specific history that each woman lives.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, history of violence, dynamics and consequences of violence, get out of violence, multivariate analysis, logit models.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence has many facets, often related each other: threat of physical violence, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological and/or economical violence and stalking. Sometimes intimate partner violence, also the one considered as very severe by most of people, is not recognised as such by the victim. Familial or social influences, self-esteem is-

sues, the very nature of the relationship which constitutes an intimate relationship, perhaps the most intimate that the woman is able to have, can be among the main reasons of such misleading. Be the violence by partner recognised or not, also in the most severe cases the victim could speak to none about it, and could have great difficulties to get out of it.

Available population data (ISTAT, 2008) show that the main violence against women is indeed domestic[1]. Psychological violence and stalking from the former partner are often the background of a compromised framework of relationships.

Instead of being the place where women traditionally should feel more protected, and where there should be no need for defences, the family is the place where it is easier to implement mechanisms of power, and where wrong psychological, economic, physical and sexual relationships based on abuses can take shape and substance (UNICEF, 2000). Such sick relationships are unfortunately widespread and commonly accepted.

Due to such complicated relationships within the family, it is difficult for a woman victim of violence by the partner, to succeed in getting out of the violence.

Furthermore the family is the context of the intergenerational transmission of violence, suffered and acted. Within the family young girls see their mother battered, or are battered themselves, and learning the violent relationship as normal, they become potential victims once adult. In the family little boys see their mother battered by their father, or are battered themselves, and the risk they will be violent partners becomes real (Corazziari & Barletta, 2012). The family can welcome back a maltreated daughter who is running away from a violent situation, but at the same time it does not help her enough to get free from it, as in the name of the myth of a close family and the well-being of the sons, it urges the woman to come back to a nightmare life (Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2013).

[1] Such data can be considered unique due to their national representativeness, allowing to generalize research outcomes based on them. See for example "Italy Research Report" by Virgilio Maria, retrieved from: http://lexop.org/produzioni.asp/, p. 2.

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Aim of the present work is a focus on the short and long term consequences of intimate partner violence and on the strategies women have developed to get out of it.

Consequences of intimate partner violence are both at macro and micro level (UNICEF, 2000). Violence against women has a social and economic cost in term of days lost at work, or of daily life, of medical care need to face injuries or psychological consequences. Intimate partner violence has strong individual costs for the victims who often struggle in finding a 'normal' life after violence. And it has also costs for sons, both direct victims by themselves or only witnesses of it.

In the present work we are not interested in the levels of violence, widely disseminated and discussed in other previous works (ISTAT, 2008; Musumeci, Signorelli, Arcidiacono & Aguglia, 2012; Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2013; Bramante, Filocamo & Mencacci, 2010). Instead we are interested in investigating the underlying structure of violence model, and possibilities to escape from it. Such structure is resistant to changes or improvements (Sartin, Hansen and Huss 2006; Payne, Wermeling 2009; Clark 2009). As outlined in many recent studies there is a lag between the individual and social consciousness (Ogburn 1966; Woodard 1934) about the problem and the reaction of the victims and of the whole society against violence, a reaction that could be translated in a measurable change of habits, manners, way of thinking, and finally ways of acting and living.

Considering Istat population data representative at national level, surveyed in 2006 about violence against women, the underlying structure of intimate partner violence will be investigated. Both the background of the woman and the consequences (short and long term) of the suffered violence by partner will be investigated, focusing on the difficulties found by the victims in recognising the violence and escaping from it.

Istat data about violence against women, being representative at national level, and being population data, that is not clinical nor only from shelters (that in fact exclude victims that remain in the silence), allow to investigate the complicate framework of violence, controlling for some relevant sources of variation such for example geographical variability of the phenomena.

The analysis of the physical, moral and psychological consequences, shows a composite framework, related both to the severity of the suffered violence and to the different type of it; the analysis shows also that the developed strategies are strictly related to the severity and the characteristics of the violence but also to individual features of the history each woman live.

Data and methods

The data

The Women's Safety Survey conducted in 2006, has allowed for the first time the estimation of the number of women victims of violence (ISTAT, 2008).

The screening technique was used in the questionnaire, that is a preliminary battery of questions describing events of victimization in which the victim can recognise her own experience. The term violence is never mentioned.

Only after having collected such data the interviewed woman was asked to give more deep information about the dynamic of the violence.

For the aim of the present study, ISTAT survey information about the physical, psychological and economical consequences of the suffered violence, the individual, familiar and social costs of the violence, also regarding children; the abilities to talk of the violence and report it to the police, or reason for not reporting; the possible risk and protective factors at an individual and social level; will be interconnected according to specific hypothesis and models about the inner structure of violence.

The research hypothesis

After a preliminary analysis of the main types of violence and their combinations, the dynamics and short term consequences of the last event of violence in terms of physical and psychological illnesses will be addressed. All the dynamics and gravity of the violence are considered affecting woman abilities to ask for help to get out of violence. This last occurrence will be related to long term consequences. The main hypothesis is that women able to get help, by reporting to the police or going to shelters or asking help to doctors or lawyers or relatives, experience better scenarios and possibility to

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solve their critical situations (Musumeci *et al.*, 2012). Such scenarios will be measured in term of long term consequences of violence: current physical illnesses, psychological and/or behavioural problems, difficulties in relationships (Romito, De Marchi & Gerin; Woods, Hall, Campbell & Angott, 2008; Arcidiacono *et al*., 2013).

A particular focus will involve victims of repeated violence by partner (the *cycle of violence*), and the strategies victims have found to get out of violence, described according to their effectiveness and efficacy (Musumeci et al., 2012). Involvement of institutions will be found related to more effectiveness and efficacy, together to the role of the presence of children in the history of violence and the relationship with the family the victim was born in (Traverso, 2013). Indeed it is very interesting the identity of the woman victim of violence considered in her role of mother by one side and of daughter on the other side.

The methods

The statistical analysis is based on the joint application of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to summarize the indicators characterising the different dimensions to be studied and the cluster analysis (CA) of the factors obtained by the MCA. The aim is to find informative partitions of the universe of interviewed women according to the analysed dimensions (Fraire & Rizzi, 2005). In the first part of the work a causal model will be evaluated relating the various dimensions of the intimate partner violence. Logit models will be used (Agresti, 2002) to describe different dependence levels among the studied dimensions, levels that are hypothesised in the following conceptual models.

The conceptual model

The causal model

In the first causal analysis, the dynamic of violence is summarised by 5 dimensions:

1) the type of violence (only threats, only physical, only sexual[2], both physical and sexual);

[2] When identifying sexual violence, victims of only humiliating or not desired sexual intercourses has been dropped out from the total count of victims.

2) perceived and objective severity of the last event reported in the interview. From the Istat data: objective severity is described by the short term consequences as type and severity of injuries, days lost at work or in ordinary life due to injuries or health problems related to the suffered violence; while the perceived severity is described by the victim's opinions about the event (if it is a crime, how much severe, if she felt her life in danger);

3) the context of the violence (if the author was drunk or doped, used a weapon, who started provoking degeneration in violence, the main actions acted by the woman to defend herself);

4) the victim spoke with someone about the violence (relatives, friends, police, lawyers, doctors); went to some shelters or asked for some psychological or psychiatric help with or without medicines;

5) long term consequences in term of health illnesses (headache, stomach-ache, teeth-ache, heart problems, depression, memory/concentration problems) and difficulties in relationships (if she has relatives or friends she can count on, if she meet friends in her leisure time, go to cinema/theatres, makes sport, makes social-volunteering activities).

The causal model that will be evaluated is based on the following hypothesis:

1) The types of violence affect both the objective and perceived severity.

Both the objective and the subjective severity are asked referring to the last event. If the woman has suffered more than one events during her life, both the perceived and objective severity of the last one, not necessarily the most severe, could be affected by the whole experience of violence, especially if more severe than the last asked event (Musumeci *et al.*, 2012). So the whole intimate partner violence types suffered in the relationship are considered, not only the last event ones reported in the deepening section.

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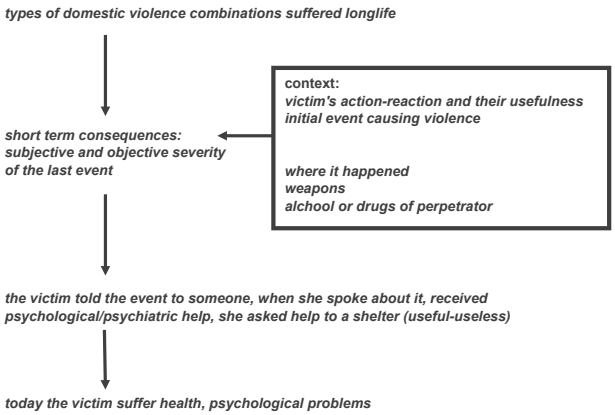
The context[3] of the last violence is hypothesised as affecting the severity, at least the objective one.

2) It is assumed that the severity of the event has an influence on the post reactions of the woman: if she spoke about it with someone, if she needed a psychological/psychiatric help with drugs or not, if she asked help to a shelter. The more the event was objectively severe, the more it is desirable she asked help to professional figures as doctors or lawyers, and she found help from closer friends and relatives. In case of severe injuries it is more likely that the victim received a specialised help as she could have needed medicines and medical care. Yet, the relation between severity and reaction of the victim is not always so linear. In some cases the subjective perception of severity can be the most important stimulus to look for a help.

3) If the woman succeeded in asking and obtaining help, long term consequences of violence (psychological-physical problems, depressions) (Woods et al., 2008) could be less frequent and severe, and the woman social life could be more satisfying and dynamic (Musumeci *et al.*, 2012).

The following directed graph summarises the above hypothesis:



[3] If the author was doped or drunk could have increased the risk and severity of the violence, provoking more injuries, so as eventual defending actions by the woman. The effectiveness of such actions or their possible exasperating effect on the partner could affect both how the victim perceive the event and the consequent injuries (respectively subjective and objective severity).

The "escaping from violence" model

The focus on the victims of repeated violence, that is involved in the *cycle of violence*, will be investigated in descriptive terms by MCA and CA applied to the MCA dimensions.

Three dimensions have been chosen to depict the history of violence: the gravity and its consequences in term of physical or psychological problems (Romiti *et al*., 2008; De Marchi *et al*., 2005; Woods *et al*., 2008) and on the relationship with own sons (Romito 2011; Traverso, 2013); the ability to ask for a help or to speak about the violence with someone; behaviours to leave the violent partner (Romito 2011, p.10). Each of these dimensions has been summarised by an MCA.

The reciprocal association among the underlined dimensions of the cycle of violence, and mainly their affecting the ability of the victim to escape or not from violence, will be explored applying a CA to the above dimension and the information about the ability of the woman to escape from violence (if she has definitely left the partner or not). Such exploring analysis is aimed at getting a preliminary indications about the inner structure of violence, to be confirmed in further analysis, especially when the new population data about violence in Italy will be available.

Results

Overall causal analysis of consequences of violence

Severity analysis: how the types of violence affect severity

The objective and subjective severity have been summarised each by one factor from the corresponding MCA. The two dimensions (objective and subjective severity) have been then analysed by a CA, classifying the objective severity in three groups of increasing gravity, and the subjective one in four groups of increasing perceived severity.

As regards objective severity:

1. the first group represents less severe situations. It is characterised by the highest percentage of victims of only threats (28% along their life) and by the fewest of women that suffered both sexual and physical violence. Very few of them had injuries in the most recent event, with no need for medical care, lost working or ordinary life

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days due to illness by violence; most of victims perceive the event as not so severe.

2. The second group represents a situation of medium objective severity. 92% of victims have suffered only physical violence with or without threats in the last episode, and more than 40% suffered both physical and sexual long-life violence. The last episode is characterised by some elements of objective gravity (95% of victims had injuries in the last event, 30% internal injuries; half of victims required medical care and lost day of ordinary life for health problems, 22% lost some day at work for the same reason), but victims seem not fully aware of it: despite 96% consider the episode grave and 55% thought their life was in danger, only 61% consider it a crime.

3. The third group collect more grave situations, not enough perceived as such. 91% of victims in the group have suffered physical violence in the last episode; the percentage of victims of both physical and sexual violence during their life is the highest. All the victims have got injuries that for 98% have required medical care. In 30% of cases there were internal injuries, in 93% of cases fractures. 83% of victims had to recover due to injuries losing daily activities (48% lose some day at work). In spite of 99% of victims considering grave the event and 82% of them perceiving their own life in danger, only 57% consider the last episode as a crime. Maybe the group represent women resigned to their domestic situation.

Considering the subjective or perceived gravity:

1. the first group describes situations perceived as less serious. In fact victims had no injuries, 35% have suffered only threats long-life and 52% physical violence.

2. The second group too represents less severe situations perceived as grave, but not as a crime or a threat for the victim's life. 30% of victims have suffered only threats, 53% only physical violence. 20% suffered injuries, only 2% required medical care (mainly internal injuries 1,5% or fractures 1%). Only 3% of victims lost daily activities and 4% work days due to injuries.

3. The third group represents victims who consider serious the suffered event (99%), who feared for their lives (57%) and partly consider it a crime (44%). The percentage of only threats victims is high when compared with the other groups (about 16% both long-life and in the last episode of violence), but also the percentage of victims of both physical and sexual violence during then whole life is high (21%). In spite of having suffered only threats in the last episode it is conceivable that when evaluating the last event, victims be influenced by their past experience of violence, charging the last event with a compounded gravity summarising in someway the whole violence experienced at home during their life. 33% reported injuries (8% requiring medical care). Less than 10% have lost days of ordinary life or work due to illnesses related to the violence.

4. The last group represents women considering very severe what they have suffered, as they feared for their life, and consider the episode be a crime. Indeed their life experience is quite severe: 77% of victims have suffered physical violence in the last episode, and more than 44% suffered both physical and sexual violence along their life. 58% had injuries, 27% requiring medical care (12% had internal injuries and 9% fractures). The group has the highest percentage of victims that had to lose daily activities or working days due to illnesses by violence: 23% e 14% respectively. Women belonging to the group seem to be the most aware of what they have suffered.

From the above analysis the objective seriousness of the last episode seems to be more related to the intrinsic characteristics of it, while the subjective or perceived gravity seems to be more affected by what the victim has suffered in the whole history of the relationship with the partner. That is why the two dimensions were studied separately. A logistic regression model applied to the two dimensions considering alternatively one as the response and the other as the explicative variable, confirm that they are two independent dimensions describing two complementary aspects of intimate partner violence gravity.

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The first working hypothesis is that the types of violence (only threats, only physical, only sexual, both physical and sexual violence) affect both objective and subjective severity.

Logit models considering the two dimensions of severity as response and the types of violence (in the last episode and during the whole relationship) as the explicative variable, show that the types of violence of the most recent episode does not affect the objective gravity, while the types of violence the woman suffered during the whole life by the partner, clearly affect the subjective or perceived gravity, as it was underlined above.

More in dept: being victim of only threats increases the probability to belong to lower perceived severity clusters. Being victim of only physical violence or of both physical and sexual violence increases the probability to belong to clusters characterised by perceiving gravity as higher.

The context affects gravity

The context or dynamic of the last event is summarised by MCA by two dimensions: the first one describes on positive values more serious situations where a weapon was used, the police has been called (negative values regards non responses and cases of only threats in the last episode); the second dimension distinguishes more severe situations with the use of weapons, the partner was doped or drunk, the victim has called the police or asked for someone help (positive values), from less severe ones (negative values) characterised by no weapons where she has provoked the episode of violence in some way. Intermediate values regard woman reaction less involving the partner, as trying to run away, or on the contrary involving him entirely, trying to mediate, reasoning with him, holding him.

The CA of the two dimensions provided 4 groups differing each other according to the dynamic of the last event. When discussing these groups only the last event types of violence will be considered.

The first two groups are similar as regards the type of violence: more than 75% were victim of physical violence, about 13% of only threats. In both groups the partner was the starter of the violent event (about 75% of cases) and he was no doped nor drunk, violence was perpetrated mainly in the victim home. The main difference between the two groups is that in the first one few victims made something to react to the violence: mainly tried

to run away (14%), at a lesser extent victims tried to make him reasoning, begging or supporting him, holding him. The victims' defending actions were mainly useless, maybe the event was not so severe.

In the second group the victims' actions express a more conflicting and aggressive situation, and they did not ask for help to others: they defended themselves, attacked him unarmed (33%), tried to reason with him also begging him (41%). In the 74% of cases women declared their actions were useful to limit damages.

The third group represents more severe situations characterised mainly by only physical violence (85%), started mainly by the partner (88%) who was drunk or doped in 40% of cases and in 49% of cases had a weapon threatening the victim. Violence occurred at victim home in 54% of cases, (27% outdoor). Victims mainly tried to run away (51%), or to ask for some help (37% to others, 20% called the police), at a lesser extent they have tried to make him reasoning, begging or holding him, they have cried due to fear or pain (about 25%), few of the victims tried to attack him with a weapon (12%). In 68% of cases such actions were useful. The context and dynamic typical of this group is more grave and dangerous, and the main actions by the victims were devoted to find a help outside the family.

A residual group with very few cases represents more severe situations where he had a weapon and he started the violence, mainly physical violence.

From the above it emerges that when the event took place at the victim home she tried to reason with the perpetrator to make him stop, or she tried to run away, while if the event took place outdoor it was easier for the victim to ask for a help.

The analysis of the influence of the context and dynamic of the last event on the gravity of it[4], controlling for the type of violence suffered during the life, shows that the first group (women only tried to run away), is related to less severe situation both objectively and subjectively. Belonging to clusters characterised by the fact he was drunk or doped and had a weapon, and the victim asked for a help outside the family, characterises more severe situations both objectively and perceived.

[4] Logit model with objective and perceived (subjective) severity as response.

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Gravity affects call and acceptance of help in the short time

Short term actions of the victims were the following: if she went to a shelter to get a help and if it was useful, if she needed psychological/psychiatric help, if she has spoken to someone about the violence after few time from it.

To obtain a synthetic indicator of the victim disclosure, a joint MCA and CA has been applied, identifying 4 groups differing for whom victims spoke to about violence and after how much time from the event.

The first two groups are similar about the type of violence suffered by the victims: about 75% suffered physical violence, more than 12% only threats, about 10% both physical and sexual violence.

The first group represents victims that have spoken to none about the suffered violence and did not report it to the police: most of them have spoken for the first time with the interviewer.

The second group represents victims that spoke only with relatives or friends (more than 50%), in 75% of cases soon after or after few days from the violent episode. Only 6% reported it to the police.

The third group victims spoke about the event to relatives (80%) or friends (64%) but also with colleagues (21%), medics (35%), most of them with lawyer or policemen (61%), and have spoken soon after or after few days (81%). 49% of cases reported the episode to the police. In this group 82% of cases suffered physical violence only, only threats in 13 % of cases. Victims had experienced worst situations than the previous two groups.

The fourth group represents more critical and serious situations, as in 67% of cases victims reported the episode to the police, but also soon after they spoke of the event with first medical aid operators (52%), after few days with lawyers or policemen (81%), 57% with association giving aid to maltreated women, most of them with relatives (95%) or friends (81%), many spoke about the violent episode with a priest (38%).

A logit model has been applied modelling the actions/reactions of the woman as dependent on the two considered dimensions of gravity. Action/reaction of the victims is in term of victims disclosure, but also in term of asking for help to shelters, psychologists, medicinal. Objective gravity coefficient have not statistical significance. Considering the perceived gravi-

ty, less severe situations are associated with no need of psychological or medical aids, more satisfied victims if they went to ask help to shelters, but they have spoken less frequently about the last violent episode. More severe situations are instead associated with the need of psychological and/or medical care, with having spoken with first medical aid operators and overall with policemen or lawyers. When the aid of shelter was asked, victims were not much satisfied.

If the victim received help, positively affect long term consequences

Long term consequences are summarised by current presence of physical illnesses of various type, and by the woman relational skills as described by herself in term of currently meeting friends, making social and cultural activities (cinema, theatres, museum, dancing), if she makes sport, if she is involved in volunteering activities.

As long term consequences are described by a variety of different indicators, the same strategies as in the previous analysis has been applied: MCA to the above dimensions, followed by a CA to identify profiles of victims by different long term responses to violence. From the MCA it was considered the second dimension (the first one summarised mainly non responses), and it has been clustered in 6 groups.

The first one manifests the major inconveniences in terms of both social life and debilitating physical ailments. Friends are met sometimes or never by victims (49%), victims go never to cinema or theatre, do not make sport, nor volunteering or other social activities. 86% of cases have friends or relatives they can count on (the lowest percentage among the 6 groups). Physical illnesses are important: at least 90% of victims often suffer of head ache, stomach-ache, hearth problems, feel weak, sleepless, depress, have memory or concentrating problems and other type of illnesses.

The second group is similar to the first one as regards social life and activities. Similarly victims suffer the same physical illnesses of the first group, but at a lesser extent (about 70% of victims).

The third group still report few social life and a limited and limiting level of physical and psychological well-being. Only 15% of women often meet friends, do not live social activities (56% never go to the cinema or theatre, 75% never make sport), 94% of them have friends or relatives they can

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count on. 72% of cases often suffer headache, 50% stomach-ache, 63% hearth problems, weakness in 83% of cases, 62% sleeplessness, depression 54% of cases, memory problems in 62% of cases and other illnesses in 66% of cases.

The fourth group is again characterised by few social activities (71% of victims never or hardly ever meet friends), go to cinema/theatres, make sport or volunteering or other activities, but they have relatives or friends they can count on (98%). More than 50% suffer headaches or weakness (71%). The overall situation in this group seems better than the previous ones.

The fifth group (CL6) has a more dynamic social life, meet often friends in 47% of cases, go to the cinema/theatre in 20% of cases, makes sport (34%), volunteering (13%), can count on relatives and friends (99%), reports less health problems.

The sixth group represents the better situations: 79% of victims meet friends regularly, go often to cinema/theatre (50% of cases), 63% make often sport, 24% make often volunteering, most of them have friends and relatives they can count on (99%). Few illnesses reported.

The causal analysis by logit modelling the influence of the ability of the woman to ask for a help on the long term consequences of violence, shows that victims belonging to groups depicting worst situations have had more problems in asking help, and if they went to shelters they were few satisfied. Victims not needing psychological or medical aids, today feel and live better, so as victims that have spoken to friends, lawyers, policemen and reported the violence to the police.

The history of violence

An history of violence is characterised by the fact the woman suffers repeated violence over time by her partner (cycle of violence). The cycle of violence victims represent a subgroups of the victims of the previous analysis.

Three dimensions have been chosen to depict the history of violence: the gravity and its consequences in term of physical or psychological problems and on the relationship with own sons (Musumeci et al, 2012; Traverso,

2013); the ability to ask for a help or to speak about the violence with someone (Musumeci et al., 2012; Arcidiacono et al., 2013); behaviours to leave the violent partner (Musumeci et al., 2012; Arcidiacono et al., 2013). Each of these dimensions has been summarised by an MCA whose outcomes have been further analysed by a CA, providing 5 groups particularly interesting.

1. From the MCA applied on the gravity dimension two factors have been extracted. The first one contrasts less serious situations (threats and mild physical violence, no injuries, violence perceived as "only something happened"), to more serious one (violent episodes causing injuries, often needing medical care, as internal injuries, cuts, bleedings, abortions and head injuries, requiring also psychological aids; days for daily activities and/or working days lost due to injuries from violence) through a continuum of increasing gravity. The second dimension indicates the presence or absence of children when violence happened, contrasting situations with no children to situations in which children witnessed violence, violence happened when the woman was pregnant, or also the children were victims themselves. The worst violence characterised by the most of gravity in terms of injuries is associated to the fact children are victims themselves.
2. MCA applied to variables describing the victims' ability to spoke about the suffered violence, shows two different factors: the first one indicates the relation between the victim and institutions (police, Judicial Authorities) the second one contrasts victims that are able to speak about the suffered violence and victims that choose the silence. In more details: the first factor contrasts victims not reporting and corresponding reasons why not reporting (as for example lack of trust in the police, the fear of not being believed, thinking to be able to solve by own self, not reporting due to fear for the safety of the children and their well-being) to victims reporting violence to the police and the Judicial Authorities, with corresponding satisfaction or lack of it. Reporting victims felt satisfied when the police actions provided the arrest of the author or protection for the victim, or there has been a

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trial provoking conviction of the violence author; they felt unsatisfied when the police made nothing or when, if there has been a trial, it is still in being. It is very important supporting the victim who decides to report authorities about the offender (Cucino, 2012).

The second factor contrasts silent victims with victims that have spoken with institutions as medics, shelters, lawyers, or also relatives.

3. The third and final MCA regards variables describing attempts to get out of violence. The first factor contrasts victims that did not leave the partner, even for a very short period, and victims that did not live with him (fiancé), with victims that were separated. The second factor contrasts separated victims that did not came back to live with the violent partner with victims that instead came back to live with him. It is interesting to note that women that left the partner and went to live in their original family usually came back to live with the violent partner, for the well-being of their children or because they loved him and they hoped he would have changed or due to economical reasons. On the contrary women who left the partner and went to live at friends or other relatives houses or made him go away from their home, did not come back to live with him. Due to information redundancy only the second factor was retained for the further cluster analysis.

The CA has been applied to the factors extracted in the above MCAs, corresponding to the three conceptual dimension of the cycle of violence, to investigate their reciprocal association. The CA has provided 5 groups, differing by the strategies victims have developed to cope with violence. Different strategies are to be read according to the gravity of the violence, to the violence consequences for the victim herself and her children, to the involvement of institutions.

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Table 1. Clusters

1° group - 73,5% **Starting violence: the silence**	**Less severe violence by the actual or ex partner**, psychological violence, threats, physical violence usually not really serious, sexual violence. The violence is endured, victims speak few about it, violence events started recently, most of them with no injuries, victims consider the last episode as something wrong or only something happened. Most of them has no children; when they have, most of children did not witness violence and were not victims themselves. Lost of self esteem, desperation and anxiety are the most common consequences, jointly with sleeplessness and lack of appetite. These victims have often been battered by their parents and were witnesses of violence by their father against their mother. Few of them have tried to go away from the house where they live with the violent partner, but most of those who have tried, have come back. Mainly married or single victims.
2° group - 13,7% **Young women victims by their ex-partner**	**More severe violence by the ex fiancé**, physical and psychological violence. More frequently women from the North-West, single, younger. In some cases the author of violence was doped or drunk during the last violent episode, more than half of victims have felt their life in danger. A similar percentage consider the suffered violence as a crime, and the last episode is considered very severe. Violence is more serious with respect to the previous group but less severe than the following one. Part of victims reports the violence to the police but without signing the report, they speak to many people about violence, finally they have left the partner but as a consequence they have been victims of stalking. In their original family victims have been bat-

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	from home and did not come back. Many live in the North-West.
5° group - 1,2% **Older women: effective steps but in loneliness**	**Women with personal strategies to cope with violence, the older, now widows**; sexual or physical violence, threats, psychological violence. They feared for their life and their children were involved in the violence. Heavy consequences. Victims reported to the police without signing the report, they went away from home without coming back, they were hosted by friends or relatives or the violent partner had to go away from home instead. Victims asked for a help to shelters. When they were child, they witnessed the violence by their father against their mother.

Women considered in the above analysis are victims of repeated violence from their partners (cycle of violence).
Victims of abuses more or less serious make different choices to cope with violence: some of them chooses the institutional alternative to report the violence to the police; others leave the partner; others do not find a solution. Different patterns, more or less advantageous and complex, always painful.
The first group in the analysis, that is also the most numerous, is characterised by patience and tolerance. It suggests a starting point characteristic of victims enduring less serious violence, that begin to react with less effective strategies. Such victims have also received messages to be tolerant by their family of origin: they have seen their mother battered and they have been battered too by both their father and mother.

Violence perpetuation

This is a useful interpretation (Baldry & Ferraro, 2008; Coumarelos & Allen, 1998; Cumings, Pepler & Moore, 1999; Dauvergne & Johnson, 2000) identifying in the intergenerational transmission of violence a basic problem. Violence suffered or witnessed by a man when he was a child should increase the risk that he could repeat the violent behaviour as a partner, at the same time violence suffered or witnessed by a woman when she was a

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child, should increase her risk to be victim of intimate partner violence by the partner (Corazziari & Barletta, 2012).

Data show both the passive model for the woman victim "I witness violence between my parents" and the active model "Also I am battered by my parents", in some cases mainly by the father but often mainly by the mother. Such models are interrelated and reinforced with and by the role the woman will embody as a mother.

In the 2° and 4° group victims have been battered mainly by their mother when they were children; such victims have found more clear and coherent strategies to get out of violence, indeed they did not choose tolerance.

The passive model starting from the witnessed violence (typical of groups 1, 3 and 5) makes women more enmeshed, submission to the partner is higher; in these cases the involvement of children is strategic in driving women reactions. For example in the first group women endure repeated abuses but violence is less severe and children are mainly excluded by it, on the contrary women belonging to the fifth group find personal strategies or strategies with some external help to get out of a strongly violent situation in which children are heavily involved (this group collect very few cases so it could be affected by strong statistical error).

Victims of the third group live a very violent situation in the family, but they are enmeshed in it, they try to get out of it, also children are involved as witness and often as victims themselves, but again for the well-being of children they decide to remain with the violent partner, playing again their mother behaviours of tolerance and submission. Their strategy backfires on themselves: if they take refuge in the family of origin where mother had been not able to stop the cycle of violence, they accept to start again to live with their violent husband, as they love him, they think he will change, and they think that coming back to him is the right thing to do for their children well-being.

Discussion

In both the above analysis (causal model and cycle of violence) intimate partner violence has been analysed in its various dimensions: gravity of the

event, types of violence, dynamic of the event, actions/reactions of the victim, long term consequences.

In the first analysis all the victims of at least one type of intimate partner violence have been considered. In such analysis a causal model relating the different dimensions of violence has been evaluated by separated logit models. When an ordered temporal relation is clearly defined between two dimensions, the dependency is easily modelled considering the prior (over time) variable as the explicative and the succeeding one as the dependent one. That is the case for having spoken of the violent episode with someone, or aids needed to cope with violence, where these dimensions are later in time with respect to the gravity of the event. The same for the long term consequences with respect to the disclosure dimension and ask for help. In some cases time ordering is not available from the information, as in the case for example of types of violence, gravity and the context. In these cases the causal direction has been arbitrarily chosen considering gravity as dependent by the violence types and the context.

The second type of analysis is focused on a subgroup of the first, characterised by the repeating of violence over time by the same partner. This is the history of violence, with different characteristics, dynamics and consequences in the life of the woman with respect to isolated episodes. In spite of the analysed dimensions can look the same, the focus in the second analysis is on the possibility and ability of the victim to get out of violence. The analysis is descriptive, based on three MCAs followed by an overall CA to cluster units according to the extracted factors summarising the considered dimensions of repeated violence. The analysis also involves information about violence witnessed or suffered as a child by the woman. This last information has been discussed as a risk factor of intimate partner violence (Baldry & Ferraro, 2008; Coumarelos & Allen, 1998; Cumings et al., 1999; Dauvergne & Johnson, 2000; Corazziari & Barletta, 2012).

From the above analysis the following considerations can be made.

Violence attracts violence

The possible violent context of the family of origin is associated with the level of violence that characterises the current history of abuses: women that

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have witnessed or directly suffered higher level of violence in their family of origin, face more serious and violent situation in the current family by their partner.

Studies on victims asking helps to shelters show that the perpetrator of violence increases his aggressiveness as the victim appears more submitted to him (Gainotti & Pallini, 2008). Also from the Istat outcomes it is evident that reaction of the victims against the violence are useful, with the only exception of when the victim try to defend herself without weapons and when she tries to get help by external people. If the victim defends herself with weapons is surely more effective, so as calling the police or trying to go away (ISTAT, 2008).

Being socialized to consider violence as normal

In both the main analysis in the paper, less serious violence are considered as normal or at most something wrong, but also the most serious ones are sometimes considered as something wrong but not a crime. In the second analysis (history of violence) it is clear that victims considering the suffered serious violence as something wrong but not a crime have more difficulties to get out of it. In fact if victims consider violent relationship as normal, where and how can they found the ability and strength to react against it? A right perception of the violence is very important and is to be taught. Condemning violence is part of a good process of socialization. Dangerousness of unclear and ambiguous relationships where violence is considered as something happened, is an outcome also of the study about victims of rape, based on the same ISTAT survey data of 2006 (Sabbadini & Muratore, 2007). Other studies underline the problematic related to a wrong socialization. People have to be educated to recognize violence as such (Chasteen, 2001; Weiss, 2003). For many years in the past, before feminism, the public and juridical attention was mainly or only on the rapist, victims were in the shadow, so as many consequences of violence, both social and individual.

The current situation is partially different, but violence interpretation are not the same among women, as can be seen from many studies: education, variety of cultural skills among women, belonging to different cohorts provide different interpretations of the reality, some of which aiding in getting

out of violence, in making women more aware of themselves with higher self-esteem, while others hiding the problems that remains as such, unsolved. According to the authors opinion, educating to recognize and condemn violence should be the work that families, schools, peer group, media and most of all the political, should care most.

Tolerant messages about violence should be modified properly: for example the opinion that touching a young woman or a girl, with a sexual attitude when she does not want, be a normal experience in the growing up of younger… Or the opinion that the abuse of peer against the most weak be normal and results in an experience that make the weaker growing up better... All of those kinds of opinion should be revised.

All of the above misleading opinions with which people could be educated are correlated to the victim problem of recognizing rape or violence by their partner. The above are incoherent messages. In fact how much underestimating the meaning and consequences of some behaviors undermines a right relationships between genders and cause tolerance versus violent, or that could become violent, behaviors? The above are messages assuming the normality of the men sexual needs that have to be satisfied (sexual drive to be met regardless of with whom, how and of the will of the other involved person) and on the contrary the same messages assume that women willing is to be denied. A consequent message is that the woman is by definition a weak actor in the life, a sort of object for the other's wishes that likes to be conquered. Such message is easily reinforced in the intergenerational transmission of violence. Another consequence is also the scarcity of the female identity, so reinforcing the male world.

Dangerousness of the above messages is easily understood considering how much such opinions are rooted in the Italian society and families, in spite of the contact with the female emancipation. For example such roots are easily individuated in all of those cases of rapes where women still continue the relationship with the abuser fiancé (Sabbadini & Muratore, 2007).

Contacting Institutions helps

In both the above analysis it is clear the strategic importance to involve the institutions to be able to get out of violence. Not only the police or the judiciary, but also the services, both social and medical. We could say that it

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could be important for the victim to be able to see at the suffered violence with somebody else eyes, to be able to recognise it as such. Naturally the first steps to get out of solitude are confidences, but it is largely more effective to ask help to the authorities or to lawyers.

But in many situations victims remain alone, too alone, in a way that after having reported the suffered violence to the police they still remain or come back within the violent situation, with their partner. In fact they have no economical independence, they have no work, they have no places where to go to live. Only a well-conceived and joint cooperation among different services can be really effective and useful to really help the maltreated women (Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2013).

Conclusions

To properly cope with violence against women, to deeply understand its characteristics, its wideness, gravity, consequences on victims and their abilities to get out of it, in the present work we started from the very multiplicity of the types of perpetrated violence against women and from the different perceptions women have of it. Indeed each woman is a universe by herself, responding in personal ways, so it is not always possible to code such differing behaviours**.** Notwithstanding the statistical point of view preferred in the present work focusing on the constant and common part of the phenomena, it is important to be aware of the intrinsic sensitiveness and subjectivity of the topic we are studying, and of its difficult definition.

The use of population data (ISTAT, 2008) allows some generalisation of the above results that can be appreciated also as they confirm many of known in the literature considerations about the structure, consequences and costs of intimate partner violence.

A complexity of situations emerges, from objective to subjective consequences, differing strategies undertaken to cope with violence and get out of it. From data only 33% of victims spoke about violence to someone. To speak about violence is certainly an important help to cope with violence or get out of its cycle, especially if the interlocutors are social services or the police or some professionals outside the family (Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2013). Gravity of the event seems to be the main spring to get out of silence

and then of violence. Consequences affecting the woman quality of life are heavily serious (Romito et al., 2008; De Marchi et al., 2005): victims not speaking with someone and not acting effective strategies lose health but also self esteem, relational capabilities, get stressed, anxious, panic. Victims not speaking have to cope with the children suffering, and are not able to stop the intergenerational transmission of violence (Cummings et al., 1999; Dauvergne et al., 2000; Traverso, 2013).

An awareness campaign can help both in increasing victims awareness of violence, and social sensitiveness to the problem, in the hope to widen the capacity to shelter victims both in the family than outside, receiving their reporting of it (Campaign "Recognise violence", 2006)[5]. Training of all the operators of the social and medical services, of the police, of judges and lawyers, and the coordinated work of all the actors in the field of helping maltreated women is essential to receive them, to make violence cases known and to help in solving them. Policy and legislative initiatives would be very useful to help the victims of violence, a *gender mainstreaming* and prevention policy by eliminating gender discrimination in various fields it is perpetrated (family, school, work, society) would be very useful, allowing to work in order to eliminate violence against women (Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2013).

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[5] For more information see: http://www.sicurezzadonna.it/.

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Caterina Arcidiacono and Gabriella Ferrari Bravo

The war in the nest

Abstract
The article deals with the topic of domestic violence against women by describing the current state of affairs of the Italian social and cultural context as well as the dangerous influence of media and the actions of the welfare system. The need of disclosure and protection of the women victims of violence is also enlightened. A further aim of this contribution is to discuss some principles for the clinical and therapeutic listening and treatment directed to services and shelters since this form of violence is generally underestimated, silenced, and denied. It finally introduces some principles of institutional mediation and re-negotiation of emotional bonds that refer to the Neapolitan Centro per le Famiglie's experience.

Keywords: femicide, domestic violence, family law, Italian case-study, social changes.

In Italy, as in many other Western countries, the legislative assets are formally embedded in laic and democratic principles of equality and respect for the rights of women and minors alike. The existence of these principles, which are based upon numerous judicial rules, has driven the welfare system to plan, organize and provide accessible services for women, apart from those already available for children and the family in general.

In particular, 2009 saw the introduction of legislation to combat sexual violence and stalking; these measures provide for the creation and funding of different kinds of initiatives, services and ad hoc-designed structures[1].

[1] Law n. 3823 23rd April 2009 "Conversion into law, with modifications, of the legislative decree of the 23rd February 2009 n. 11, bearing urgent measures upon the matter of public security and contrast to sexual violence as well as persecutory actions".

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However, this is not to say that all the Italian regions, which are endowed with great autonomy for actualizing the above-mentioned legislation, have fulfilled their commitments on their schedule and brought to bear adequate resources. In order to understand the reasons for the uncertainty, the delays and even the unequal implementation of services by the Italian welfare system to combat sexual violence, it is necessary to briefly outline the cultural and legislative Italian frame.

Of course, since the beginning of the 20th century many things have changed. At that time, the organization of social relationships, even at an institutional level, was still embedded in a principle of authority, and society would find in this principle its reference point. However, it was not until 1975[2] that a law was introduced to ratify the passage of parental authority, previously understood as a prevalence of paternal rights upon offspring over maternal ones, to a shared authority and from marital authority to equality between the spouses.

However, this period of time is too short to allow for a radical transformation understood in terms of implementation of cultural and human rights.

As far as infancy is concerned, a number of recent laws have strengthened and given voice to children's rights from a relational perspective. Cases in point include the law validated in 2006 on the shared custody of minors in case of separation[3], and the more recent one of 2012[4] that abolishes any difference whatsoever in treatment between children born of de facto unions and those of conjugal ties; this identification, regardless of the relationship between the parents, provides identical effects with regard to kinship and ratifies the child's right to have and maintain ties with both families of origin.

[2] Law n. 151 19th May 1975 "Family Law Reform".
[3] Law n. 54 8th February 2006 "Dispositions in the matter of parental separation and shared custody of the offspring".
[4] Law n. 219 12nd December 2012 "Dispositions upon the matter of the recognition of natural children".

Change Vs Permanence

The family framework, even in the traditional and catholic Italy, is changing. This is happening not only because of the long-term effects brought about by the introduction of divorce[5] but also by the many changes made to family law. The most remarkable element is, in our view, the increase in cohabitation, which has risen from about half a million in 2007 to 972,000 during the two-year period of 2010-2011. The number of children born out of wedlock is also rapidly increasing (about 80,000 every year, almost twice as many as ten years ago)[6]. The "father law", which took root in the soil of the Roman law, has been uprooted. However, it is still too early to witness a consolidated change in relational culture. The affirmation of a new awareness of individual rights, albeit one still to be recognized in either a different ethic of relationships or in new principles underlying human ties and affects, nonetheless lays the groundwork for the acknowledgement of women's individuality and their right to decisional and responsible autonomy. This constitutes a thoroughgoing innovative element, although it still needs to be defended and supported. Primarily, traditional social expectations still see women as the only sex capable of taking care of children. Consequently, the reciprocal expectations imposed upon the couple and the parents-children ties have widened the gap between the expectations of the two sexes and brought about a new form of unsustainability in human relationships. Women, especially youngsters, enjoy equality of rights on one hand as a given gain and, on the other hand, suffer the consequences of a context in which social conditions, such as low rate of female occupation, and social customs are seldom modified. On this matter, one might consider the scarce use, despite the apparent enthusiasm with which they have been accepted, of the recent regulations[7] on "parental leave", which are meant to foster a more even distribution of the burden of the offspring's care.

[5] Law n. 838 1st September 1970, put to an abrogative referendum in 1973 with a negative outcome.

[6] Data provided by ISTAT: "Il matrimonio in Italia: un'istituzione in mutamento" (2012).

[7] Law n. 53 8th March 2000 "Dispositions upon maternal and paternal support for the right to care and education as well as the urban coordination times" and further modifications,

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This draws a picture in which men hold fast to the husband/father's decisional right and are consequently unable to understand and face the changes of which wives and offspring are the bearers.

Likewise, the inter-generational transmission of social conquests obtained so far has yet to be achieved. The secular abusive violence inherent in patriarchal families seems to have been ruled out of the social discourse. Newspapers, however, are keen to bring it to our attention and show the kind of effects still occurring today. Yet, in the great majority of cases, violence is linked with diverse phenomena: migration and marriages between different races, permissive sexual habits, and the so-called "drowning of traditional family values".

On the other hand, the media withdraw and convey stereotypes of women completely enslaved by the gender discourse. This is why it is worth asking ourselves: "what kind of family do we mean when we talk about "traditional family values"?

Family and Violence

It is known that violence and rape occur in a privileged scenario, i.e. in people's private residences. In Italy, 62% of denunciations are made against spouses and partners, although, on average, only 7% of women resort to denunciation.

Likewise, the number of homicides occurring in family and partner relationships amounts to around a quarter or a third of the total figure in Italy. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that the so-called "crime of honour", a motivation according to which it was justifiable to kill a flagrantly adulterous partner and receive only a minimum sentence, was excised from the Italian penal code only in 1981. Thirty years is still a short period for creating a new culture of social relationships, in particular when it comes to the relationship between the sexes.

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the last of which, dated 1st January 2013, introduces the possibility of enjoying "hourly paternal leave" along with other measures aimed at fostering participation in the offspring's care by working fathers who, having an overall higher income than women workers, lose a higher economic quota than the latter as a consequence.

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Moreover, at a psychological level, the victim of a no-longer-reciprocated love is often the object of compassion whereas the partner who does not reciprocate the feelings and the requests of the other is seen, paradoxically, as a torturer: the roles played are swapped within a perverted perception of faults and merits. In this scenario, the person who attacks and then kills is recognised as the "victim" of a non-reciprocated love. Women, i.e. the real victims, are instead regarded, in the majority of cases, as guilty for having created the conditions under which the aggressor has acted (Greer, 1999).

Femicide and family conflict in the view of the Italian media: Some news and many stereotypes.

When talking about women killed in Italy, the risk of focusing on numbers[8], while overlooking the gravity of the motivations of those who kill, is quite high. The emphasis placed on numbers may indeed be rather misleading. For example, it would be a mistake to underestimate infanticide and consider this not to be a grave and troubling phenomenon simply because it amounts to "only" twenty cases a year.

The term 'femicide' and its concept were introduced by Diana Russell in 1992 in order to identify a criminological category, i.e. an extreme act of violence by a man against a woman simply "because she is a woman"; in other words, this is a kind of violence that bears the fruit of misogyny.

The Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagrande used this concept in 1993 in a study on the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez. Lagrande analysed hundreds of cases from which it emerged without any doubt that the great

[8] In 2012, 124 women were murdered in Italy. This figure is slightly lower than the one reported in 2011, which was 129. Sixty per cent of the murders occurred within on-going or concluded relationships between victim and murderer. In 25% of the cases, these women were either about to put an end to the relationship or had already done so. In 63% of the cases, the murders were committed in private homes. The victims were Italian in 69% of the cases, while 73% of the murderers were Italian. (In: "Rapporto sul femminicidio in Italia" 2012, Casa delle donne di Bologna, Pdf) http://www.casadonne.it/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=65.

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majority of women had been killed by their relatives in the privacy of their homes. From this stems the suggestion that it is necessary to change the stereotypical images of gender and introduce severe laws to combat domestic violence as the most effective way of opposing "the idea according to which violence against women has a 'natural' character" and that this is a distinctive feature of humankind.

That the theme of femicide must be faced primarily in cultural terms as an expression of misogynist attitudes verging on paroxysm is demonstrated, as if we needed any further confirmation, by the thesis of the Parish of Lerici (Liguria region). In a leaflet handed out during the Christmas period and in a message pinned to the notice board of his church and entitled "Women and femicide, let's make a self-criticism. How many times do they provoke?" Don Piero Corsi maintains that rape is "caused by women who provoke men by wearing revealing clothing. Women must make a self-critique, how many times do they provoke, end up being arrogant and too independent? If they get raped, they had it coming"[9]. Even worse, this leaflet was none other than an extract from an apostolic letter entitled *Mulieris dignitatem*, written twenty years ago. Indignant women occupied the church and the local bishop asked for the "thesis" to be removed from the notice board. Yet, the parish priest has not been dismissed, but merely admonished.

To conclude, we are in no doubt about the role of the media. Sometimes they amplify the requests for intervention and the creation of laws for social control; at other times, such as in 2009 after a request to set up "security patrols" by the Lega Nord political party, the media has sought to make it clear that they do not seek to "control" specifically, but are concerned only about migrants and Romanians.

Judging from the statistics, in fact, if they wish to prevent more murders, patrols ought to be entering Italians' houses rather than overseeing city streets. Meanwhile, further news is approaching over the media's horizon on the family. Newspapers often underline that violence is the direct consequence of break-ups involving mixed-race couples, who have obviously broken up because they are "mixed"! This message is conveyed through

[9]Corriere della Sera, 25/12/2012. http://www.corriere.it/cronache/12_dicembre_25/femminicidio-lerici-colpa-provocazioni.

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headlines such as "Clash between cultures" and others of that sort, in a continuous trivialization of events that are seen as threatening and perturbing. Nevertheless, only a few are calling for adjustments to family services, which are places of cure and relief, and of the new realities that they are representing.

Services and Family Violence

Among the news stories that have most stirred public opinion in recent years is this one: "a foreign father", already denounced by his "Italian ex-wife", committed suicide and killed his 9-year-old child inside a Milanese family counselling centre". This begs the question: How can a public service turn into the scenario of a family tragedy? How can a space dedicated to attention and work with families turn into the scene of a crime?

We believe that if a child cannot be deemed safe from the devastating anger of his parent, not even in a family counselling centre and in the presence of professionals, a remedy must be sought through belated recourse to a psychological, social, health welfare system-based form of help.

Moreover, this shows the inadequate integration of this system with the juridical arena, which is the elective place for addressing the problems of conflicting families. Finally, we believe that the attention paid to family pathologies is, on the whole, very superficial and distracted. The sharp language used by juridical enactments does not take on further meaning outside the civil or penal proceedings.

Furthermore, the majority of citizens still think that asking a public service for help is a source of shame, like a loss of family autonomy, rather than a type of support, help or resource.Thus, the recourse to public services becomes a last resort that marks an unrecoverable predicament, which has long since turned into a thoroughgoing pathology. It would be more appropriate to refer to these institutional scenarios as the places in which the symbolic funeral of the family is celebrated. In clinical psychological terms, this is a deathly monument erected to the construct of "acting out".

Talking over prevention and cure in this specific arena can appear impractical and of little connection to reality considering the current condition

of the family welfare apparatus, partially out of commission and assailed by constant cuts, without the construction of alternative paths.

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This enables us to better understand the recourse to reassuring stereotypes such as the crisis of values, the fragility of human ties and so on. Moreover, it can give voice to decrepit thoughts that were kept apart in a corner of the mind, such as the common saying "choose wives and cattle from your hometown" brushed up by the deputy mayor of Treviso during an interview given to the popular show "Porta a porta". What struck us about the declarations of the deputy mayor was the extent to which he dwelt on the analogy between wives and cattle. Women are neither ruminants nor four-legged, it could so be said that they are a far cry from cattle. This represents a form of information, in that "information is the news of a difference" as Bateson claims. On the contrary, it seems that today, as well as in the past, the news is anther, to wit: foreign wives and cattle are equally different from the local ones. The only possible difference between wives and cattle lies in their geographic location.

The so-called folk wisdom clings on defiantly, which is why we happened to read, on 20th of January 2013, comments by the Lega Nord political party's deputy mayor of Bernareggio, a town in the Milanese hinterland, about the murder of a forty-five-year-old woman by a man who originated from Morocco and was cohabiting with her and their two children. The deputy mayor expressed his thoughts in these words: "I appeal to Italian women's intelligence; let's stop getting involved in relationships of this kind with immigrants!" […] "I can understand a short-term relationship, but when it comes to such long relationships it's all too apparent that sooner or later it ends up in this way"[10].

As far as we are concerned, we can offer no proverb or glib expression that might have an equal media impact to dedicate to all those women killed by their Italian partners except, perhaps, two very southern thoughts, such as: "Whoever knows you, can hurt you" (evil comes from known people, not from strangers) and "You can open up your home door only from the inside."

[10] Leila Codecasa, Corriere della sera, 20th January 2013.
http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/13_gennaio_20/donna-uccisa-ex-marito-bernareggio-vicesindaco-leghista-tornaghi-musulmano

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The former sentence is obviously not sufficiently taken into account by the shallow analysts of the phenomenon of domestic violence. The meaning of the second sentence, instead, often stands out from stories of male infidelity and expresses an exculpatory idea according to which unfaithful men are always provoked by women who are guilty of inviting them into their own houses. After all, this is exactly what don Piero Corsi claims when he refers to the encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem* 25 years after it was written[11].

There are some statistical data to indicate that the most dangerous place for women and children alike seems to be their own home and that, in Europe, of about one hundred murdered women around half are victims of their partners or ex-partners who are unable to accept the separation; such cases exemplify how these data can melt away in a general process of amnesia while we are more concerned with cultural and more or less tolerant religious differences etc.

However, as a matter of fact, the number of women victims of murder has been decreasing over the last ten years. Had these not been incontrovertible data, one might even have thought they represented a pitiful, comforting lie. On the contrary, given their veracity, these data help us understand how the way in which public opinion spreads perturbing news, such as the aforementioned stories, can be manipulative rather than positive. "The biggest lie is produced by media [...] this is a reactionary operation, which creates monsters where there are changes that are overthrowing old equilibriums (Arlacchi, 2009, p. 14). Thus, it is all the more important to recognize that conflict among couples and families, whatever its matrix and pathological corollaries might be, it is a very dangerous fact.

This kind of conflict, along with other untold forms of ill-treatment, oppression, limitation of individuality and offences against dignity and self-integrity, which range from derision to beatings to femicide, is linked mainly with the difficulty women experience in affirming their right to self-determination and separation from their partners as a consequence.

[11] 15 August 1998, "Apostolic letter Mulieris dignitatem upon woman's dignity and vocation, written by his highest pontiff Giovanni Paolo II on occasion of the Marian year. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_15081988_mulieris dignitatem_it.html.

A further example showing that couple conflict has its roots in the necessity for women to emancipate themselves and "get out of tutelage" is represented by the strong increase in requests for separation coming from the women themselves, despite their low rate of employment and their disadvantaged economic condition.

These data are quite remarkable in demonstrating the contradiction we are faced with when a woman reports the unbearable nature of an emotional bond.

It is of paramount importance to give straightforward and transformative answers to these issues within the service settings and in terms of empowerment. Public services and those of the third sector, through the knowledge of those who work in them and those who are committed to research and training on these themes, are calling for a redefinition of the whole system of protection aimed at those sections of the population at risk. The need for a systemic intervention aimed at family contexts has now been acknowledged. However, it is less clear and a matter of debate which modality of clinical intervention should be used when the health treatment is carried out at the edge where social, health and judicial arenas meet (Ferrari Bravo, 1997; Arcidiacono, Ferrari Bravo 2009; Ferrari Bravo & Volpe 2012). The work carried out by the team from the "Centro per le famiglie" (Family centre) (Arcidiacono, 2008), which was founded in 1996 by a group of enlightened psychologists[12] with many years' institutional experience in judicial and primary services, constitutes one of those rare Italian initiatives that has not only located the clinical intervention within primary services in the foreground but has also attempted to propose an action guideline for the services and for the personnel that work there (Arcidiacono, & Ferrari Bravo 2009). This is useful for taking charge of those situations in which violence, although explicit, is but hinted at, almost as if it were an ineluctable component of daily life (Arcidiacono, & Di Napoli 2012; Arcidiacono *et al*., 2012; Arcidiacono & Esposito, 2012).

[12] It is worth mentioning the collaboration of: Angela D'Addio, Giuseppina Fioretti, Francesca Laccetti, Sergio Maresca, Gaetano Morrone, †Macario Principe, Annibale Vitiello.

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The strategies of taking charge and intervention at the Centro per le famiglie of Naples

The main strategy of intervention and taking charge at the Centro per le famiglie of Naples lies basically in deeming the family to be both a collective subject, i.e. as a user with full rights to access specific services, and an observational unity even when the request for help concerns personal problems or problems regarding more than one of the family members. This helps to inscribe personal feelings in a wider frame including the power relationships upon which family ties are built. It also includes justice as well as inequality between the different members of the family.

This strategy of intervention has led to the outlining of a work practice centred around a service-focused policy of taking charge, which can be understood on the one hand as a need for predefined inter-institutional intervention procedures, and on the other as the capacity to provide every user with a unique as well as uniform service, in that it is shared by the entire working team (see Arcidiacono, & Ferrari Bravo, 2009).

Cigoli (2009) describes its peculiarity in terms of three factors: 1) the capacity for networking; 2) high clinical competence; 3) low-threshold access.

This methodological setting is very simple and yet very difficult to ignore, especially if we consider that each situation of which this centre takes charge is always a prototype; therefore, a "mass-production" approach to this kind of work is seen as unacceptable and damaging.

The guideline foregrounds shared competencies and rules between users, personnel and institutional referents. This sharing will be even more necessary considering the complex and variable cases the professionals will have to face and, as such, it represents a thoroughgoing precondition for good networking. To this, we must add the necessity of paying selective attention to reconstructing power relationships, hence hierarchy, and prioritizing instances between the different members of the family, as well as reconstructing the feelings of every single individual and the entire relational context.

Competences/Organization

It is hard to give an organizational shape to the set of competences necessary for working with families in conflict, especially if these are accompanied by violent behaviours. In the case of separations and divorces, the interventions aimed at mending the damage brought about by conflicts or even forced cohabitations characterized by episodes and habits of violence are akin to those bad restorations in which, to the signs of old and recent scars, one must add the traces of bad reparations. Sometimes, then, this kind of work must also take into account the necessity to "undo and do it again", especially in those situations in which urgency is expressed by a severe malaise or imminent danger.

The previous attempts seem to show, in many cases, how much they served the purpose of mainly representing and containing conflicts; therefore, they are themselves part of the problem so as Romito and Melato remark (2012).

From a welfare perspective, and especially in the socio-assistance field, this means that we are facing the task of turning an enormous "invalidation apparatus" based on the criteria of deficiency, need, and void to be filled, into an empowerment-based validation-oriented system.

From a Community Psychology standpoint, according to which psychosocial well-being is linked with the personal perception of "mastery" of one's own desires and needs, this means valuing potentialities and the capacity to be an active subject as well as protagonist of one's own life and of the life of the whole community.

As such, the strategy of taking charge and tackling violence against women should have its own specificity and peculiarity. Here, the emphasis is placed on the necessity to denounce violence and on the consequent judicial intervention. Likewise, the emphasis is focused on supporting the woman in the construction of her own personal life's pathway. In that sense, the seasoned professional acts not as a substitutive Ego but rather as an escort of the relational and psychical process in the making. This perspective, while offering relational support, presents itself as a catalyst of a new form of relationship with the violent partner and the children, who are voiceless victims (Arcidiacono, 2013).

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We wish to report here some preliminary theoretical and methodological considerations, which have been our starting point in planning an integrated service in the marginal and intersectional land of psychological and social competences and the judicial field, along with the conjunction of different know-how and competences. These are the underlying elements for taking charge of a family in a predicament, especially when its members are facing the prospect of violent behaviours (even witnessed violence), which is detrimental to women and children alike.

1) Services able to welcome

Usually, the access to specifically problem-focused services follows a rigid linear system (request/need-answer/service) within which the family as a user receives only a confirmation of its malaise. In other words, it obtains ratification through a diagnosis. This does not bring about any change; on the contrary, it usually pegs the malaise by labelling it with a diagnosis that is consistent with functional and internal parameters inherent in the organizational logic of the healthcare system and, hence, extraneous to the family system. To put it bluntly, the family "exports" its conflict into the service but it receives in return neither any indication nor any valid help for modifying its functioning. The service-centred, assistentialist, curative model puts a predefined rigid system before the flexibility of the family. The more rigid this is, the more it weakens the family system and risks bringing on further traumas instead of changes. The rigid assistentialist system shows all its fragility in its interactive inadequacy, which shows itself through scant efficacy, low social relevance, and high wastage of human as well as economic energy. Conversely, the more we make the help offer flexible by projecting systemic-oriented services targeted to the family at risk, the more the interaction between the latter and the help offer is able to create a "help network" that is resistant and effective.

Indeed, the social and psychological work is primarily a reconstructive work and an act of meaning, of giving sense to family history and its narrative, a search for different meanings in which to find and support thriving and changing perspectives (Testoni, Pogliani, Guglielmin et al., 2012).

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The word "risk" is generally used in a negative manner to connote dangerous situations. Here, instead, it indicates the positive potentiality of the sentence "to take up the risk", i.e. to take the chance to do something new and different. This is the reason why we chose the phrase "families in crisis or in becoming?" as a slogan for our project "Psychosocial risk for families". In this case, the word 'crisis' implicitly conveys the possibility of a choice, an option and it is used to highlight the moment in which decisions regarding a dysfunctional equilibrium are made.

Dwelling on a dysfunctional equilibrium leads, in fact, to the stabilising of pathological elements and the paralysing of family functions. In fact, violence is the daughter of a paralysed affectivity.

Therefore, when we talk about help interventions for women and families at risk or in crisis, we talk about decisional processes that are at an impasse, i.e. a block, in which competences are kept in check.

We believe that the work carried out by services could be a process of help if, and only if, it is geared to strengthening, raising, and networking the competences of the individual subjects and the entire family system alike, leaving the conflict understood as a representation of the relational family system in a given moment and context.

2) Services able to contain conflicts and pain

A specific problem faced by psychologists in regard to family crises is precisely the fact that the family is always on the move (Scabini, & Cigoli, 2012). This is often felt as a sense of uncertainty and blurriness. It stems from those emergency-based answers that have no bearing on care-focused work, thereby colluding with the family emergency.

It is, instead, necessary to regard the instable equilibrium of the family situation upon which the intervention is built as the most important of its constitutive variables. This forces us to depart from the rails drawn by diagnosis, shedding the labels that are thoroughgoing individual and relational ghetto-like ideas, to change points of view and take up the changeable and multiform ones of those with whom we interact. To use a simple metaphor, we can say that the professional must swap chairs.

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This does not necessarily mean that a chair that is not ours, belonging rather to the family, the woman or man here in front of us, is much more comfortable; quite the contrary, we usually perceive it to be much more unstable. However, if we agree to sit on this lurching chair, we can set up collaboration with the family system and manage, in doing so, to achieve the first objective of good care work, i.e. a reciprocal recognition. This is the first step towards the mutual assumption of responsibility, which means recognizing the basic rights of all the members of the family from a relational perspective.

However, the sense and effect of a shared action are not immediately visible, precisely because of its characteristics of circularity and complexity. On the other hand, within a situation of grave family disorganization, even a protective intervention, if it takes away a possible resource, can turn out to be collusive with the family situation and even bring about perverse effects, as it may stabilize and perpetuate the inadequacy of the woman seeking protection from the context in which the damage has been determined.

From the point of view of Community Psychology, working on the relationship by recognizing and assuming mutual responsibility for family and institution alike as well as listening and valuing the need, even when this is itself an expression of the conflict and pathology, means working on a healthy part of the family functioning. In contrast, from a service-based and diagnosis-focused perspective, working on the emergency and deficits means taking account of those sick and incompetent parts of family functioning.

3) Services able to promote interactions

Promoting interaction may appear to be an arduous and even erroneous objective in the presence of grave relational conflicts and pathologies that are characterized by violence and mistreatment of women and children. However, it is necessary to understand that when a couple or a family agrees to meet at the service, they bring with them more than just the conflict, i.e. the incompetent part: otherwise, they would never have turned up.

Apparently, there must still be a "resistant bond" in terms of its double meaning: they (the members of the family) are still resourceful/strong but

are also, at the same time, resistant in that they block the necessary changes to recuperate personal and family well-being. This is a hard knot to untangle.

If we accept that there is always an aspect of "competence" in every request for help, even in the most conflicting cases, it is necessary to wonder "what the person I am facing right now, through the specific request characterizing his/her position, is considering in order to do good for him/herself, his/her children or family." It is thus possible to trace the need, starting from the request, which is apparently merely an expression of the conflict.

This requires a dynamic and active attitude towards the users. Conversely, lingering on the conflict and considering it as an expression of incompetence leads to the consultant playing the role of substitute in family functions that are stuck in the conflict. In a way, this would be like ruling out the diagnosis that the patient is expressing through the symptom and the way in which this contributes to constructing the pathology itself.

In cases of difficult separations and badly managed divorces, to escape the conflict arena and enter that of agreement means assuming a relationally-oriented circular logic and a flexible attitude, which is typical of a family system, rather than reinstating the linear logic of contrast.

The solutions tried by dysfunctional families usually seem to serve the purpose almost of maintaining a state of conflict as a way of giving the family bond a final chance of representation. In taking charge of the family, it is irrelevant whether the solution/problem comes from an internal choice made by the family itself or from an institutional request. Professionals must, in both cases, face disorganization and confusion, or in other words, face the twisting needs and solutions elaborated by the family.

Therefore, what are the best tools to use in order to mend the damage? Our proposal is based on the "fine-drawing" model, which will be explained in the following paragraphs through the brief description of a case-study.

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4) Services able to shield and protect

A consultation session with a non-cohabiting separated couple, who had been fighting for seven years and whose level of conflict was so high that it was hindering even the possibility of reaching an agreement about a possible divorce, had left the psychologist discouraged (by no means unusual in this kind of job) about carrying out a burdensome intervention that was likely to founder, with a consequent price to be paid in terms of further disorganization and malaise for the family in general and the children in particular.

This feeling had been expressed, during a supervision meeting, through the metaphor of "gluing potsherds" that seemed to be moved by the will to be shattered again into smaller and smaller fragments. This metaphor brought to mind the Walt Disney cartoon episode "The Sorcerer's Apprentice", in which the broom's splinters incessantly multiply themselves and become an element of disorder instead of being useful. Another practitioner, evidently an expert in therapeutic mending techniques, introduced the concepts of patching, darning, and mending into the discussion, describing these techniques at length, which is interesting to report here. Incidentally, the word "mending" was completely ignored by the male professionals present, thus necessitating a lengthy explanation from their female colleagues on the matter. This is further confirmation that sewing is a "women's business"!

Among the above-mentioned techniques, "fine-drawing" is acknowledged as the best form of remedy for rips and holes. It is, indeed, resistant, made by using the same fabric as the clothes, and links warp and frame again while respecting the original pattern of the clothing. It is practically invisible and only an expert eye could recognize it (usually to extol it). "Fine-drawing" is particularly suitable for large holes and requires some preliminary finishing work around the frayed edges to make them even; it also requires neat cuts. Mending is itself a noble art that stems from embroidery and it takes from this the same technique and precision; however, although it retains the same fabric of the clothing it does not retain its warp and frame. Moreover, it is rarely invisible, and it does not offer much resistance to further rips. Patchwork is the roughest form of remedy

since it involves overlapping, generally visibly, a different fabric with the original one; the patch is its golden example.

Everybody in Naples knows the negative meaning of the common saying, "apply a quick-to-use coloured patch", which conveys the sense of trying to put things right in any way, sometimes even worsening the state of affairs. For, if the patch is showy it will always be there to remind us of the underlying hole. Sometimes, if one wishes to save the clothing it is necessary to take off a previous patch and carry out more accurate work by means of one of the aforementioned techniques. At any rate, each of the interventions described serves some noble purpose, such as saving an item of clothing that would otherwise be useless and making it last a little bit longer, partially reinstating it, and economizing by making do with what one has.

Afterwards, the authors of this paper began to devise new metaphors such as knitting, as an example of the systemic work of interconnecting and networking aimed at "retying dropped stitches", Penelope's web, referring to the physical web made of threads and the symbolic one linked to strategic thoughts, and so on.

The metaphorical use of the techniques described here helps us to understand that the intervention within services is basically aimed at reinstating relational functions that are still vital, albeit gravely compromised by rips, holes and wear. The destructive image of potsherds was completely abandoned after that supervision meeting in favour of the (re)constructive mending one.

The metaphor of weave and network conveys the image of connection aimed at retying and redefining frayed life pathways and can help picture the intervention, which employs and centres on the competence of the subjects, who are seen as capable of weaving their own existence. The metaphor of "fine-drawing" conveys the action of retying the threads of one's existence, the "knots" of one's own life. Furthermore, this metaphor

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allows us to distinguish between an adaptive activity, i.e. a "patchwork", and the more complex activity of "fine-drawing".

Likewise, the "fine-drawing" is so finely that the join is scarcely noticeable, not even by the person wearing the clothing, thereby erasing the immediate memory of the rip; on the contrary, it reinstates the memory of the fabric as a whole. Is it an advantage to erase the memory of the rip or might this bring about a loss of meaning, as an arbitrary interruption of the family narration, a more or less extended hollow that gives up not so much the ghost of the narration but, rather, the possibility of itself having a narration? We have attempted to provide an answer to this far-from-secondary issue.

In our view, reconstructing the family memory by means of "fine-drawing" without highlighting the trauma, the rip, is possible provided that we transfer the memory of the trauma and entrust it to a specific alliance between professionals and users. This alliance helps to re-edit rather than re-write the family story in order to conclude it and drive it towards a new project. Eventually this "new memory", which has been constructed through shared work, serves the purpose of restoring the family weave by shifting the focus from conflict and violence to different possibilities: renegotiation of emotional and affective bond or oblivion.

In this kind of repositioning, violence is by no means negated; however, it assumes a different image since it loses its catastrophic traits, its negative halo, and its perverse bond strength. This is recognized as an absolute negation of a more important alliance that is grounded on the peculiar relationships of the emotional bond, i.e. on the protection and vitality of the family system's alliance, which can endure beyond the separation of the couple.

Therefore, a good intervention to restore the family weave is particularly necessary, even for the most conflict-centred and destructive cases in which the conflict between the parents seems to be stronger than the impulse to care for and protect their own children.

In this regard, it is worth adding that the restoration of the family weave can be the start of a positive process of oblivion, which stands against amnesia, i.e. the traumatic, unrepaired break. The latter, by contrast, produces a hollow tie and an absence of certain and safe boundaries as a consequence.

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Our proposal is, thus, neither reparative nor substitutive. Indeed, the peculiarity of the intervention lies not in a pitiful, welcoming sympathy but, rather, in the support and offer of protection geared towards ending violent and abusive family ties and reconstructing the meaning of the client's own existence. The main aim of the intervention is to restore to women their full ownership of the organization and management of their emotional bonds and relational assets. From an operative standpoint, the action of the service is aimed at supporting the denunciation of inflicted violence; at the same time, it seeks to safeguard women or other members of the family from any possible collusion with violence by offering a context-focused possibility of retying the relational weave based on a reciprocal recognition.

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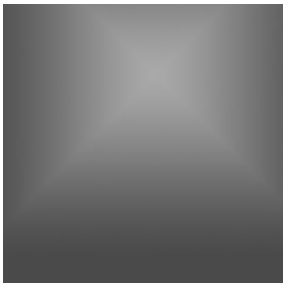

MATERIALS

Lorenza Perini and Margherita Verzola

The contended body: the construction of public discourses on women's body that makes violence possible. A study case in the Italian North East

Abstract

The present work historically framed the issue of citizenship of women's rights, such as continuing discrimination that continually reproduces itself through the way in which the female body is represented by the media. Stereotypes and prejudices that build the imagination of common sense with respect to the role of women in society reproduce a scenario of extreme depersonalization up to the dehumanization of their body, scenery that makes it possible to consider the violence of that body made object an act possible. Examines some recent cases of femicide long remained under the media spotlight.

Keywords: citizenship, media, body, femicide, policies.

The problem of a multi level citizenship

About twenty years ago in a famous study entitled *The Sexual Contract*, Carol Pateman (1997), feminist and political scientist, highlighted that the French Revolution was the moment when the modern concept of the so-called "universal citizenship" was founded, but it was also the moment when the estrangement of women from this "universe" was sanctioned. The citizen as a "free and individual subject of the new era" was not to be considered representative of all human beings, since his freedom and uniqueness was based on what Pateman calls "a sexual contract," which effectively excluded those who were identified as "dependents"primarily women, and certain specific categories of people of low social class. The exclusion of women from

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political citizenship is therefore strongly linked to an actual denial of individuality, since they were considered lacking the two vital qualities that, after the Revolution, defined the modern concept of the "individual:" the possession of one's own person and the control of one's own body.

In the nineteen-fifties, the redefinition of the concept of citizenship made by the English sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall in "Citizenship and Social Class" provided a quick and schematic view of the transformations of modern society by an increasing participation and integration of the lower classes. However, women's citizenship was still far from being conceived: in this lexicon the concept of citizenship implied the sense of belonging to a political community. According to Marshall & Bottomore (1987), in the modern age this membership is inseparable from a comprehensive set of rights that can be grouped into three distinct categories: *civil rights,* including the basic conditions of human beings, i.e. the rights of freedom of the individual (personal freedom, freedom of speech, thought, conscience, right to have properties and sign contracts, right to seek justice before the law); then *political rights*, i.e. the right to participate in the exercise of political power (voting and being elected for example); finally *social rights*, a subset of rather indefinite tools ranging from the right to minimum economic subsistence to the right to effective access to corporate wealth in its various components: labor, health care, education and so on. It is therefore clear that the sequence identified by Marshall, not only has a different historical basis for women, but also sees a different timing and a lot of discrepancies between the two sexes. Indeed, as the political scientist Alisa Del Re highlights, if citizenship is a set of duties and rights, women seem not only to have a different chronology from men but also they always seem to have more duties than men- at least most of the duties of the reproductive sphere. This situation corresponds to a decreased intensity of citizenship's rights. Women are definitely "lower-level citizens" (Del Re, 1997).

This "lower level citizenship" is an issue that even the political journalist Rossana Rossanda questions: "Women have always entered

the wars, they were holy martyrs, writers, scientists, they got through periods of power, they were queens and they were always working as a real leading force of every economy, they had large estates and they administered them wisely," says Rossanda. In the course of History women have always been all this, but in the political sphere, from the outset the structures of the institutions were stubbornly founded without women, limiting their horizons by confining them to the private sphere in the name of their primary maternal function. The places of sociality and of the making of rules have always determined and regulated the self-exclusion of women, so it is the law itself that enshrines them as "unequal" (Rossanda, 1987).

In the Western world men have been citizens since the eighteenth century, from the time of the Declaration of Human Rights, which followed the French Revolution (with adjustments in relation to political rights in our country until 1912, the year of universal male suffrage). Instead for women, the same story follows a very different path: when men became citizens, women were not yet considered and for a long time they remained without most political rights, like children, illiterates, criminals, the mentally ill and exiled. In order to explain this "scientific" and obstinate exclusion, one must ask who really benefits from this situation (and it is not a mere economic issue). It is convenient to have one sex subject to the other: at any time in history someone has been declared "lower" and for this reason exploitable. Slaves are useful, that's what History teaches us. Luckily, over the past sixty years, in all the European countries the path of women towards equality-though slow-has been undertaken throughout, so, even if infinitely few, they are now everywhere almost without preclusion and, at least on paper, they have a good availability of rights.

However, it remains implicit that, once they have achieved access to the "polis," what they have been compelled to do was (and in some cases still is) to learn how to move and act in the new public space "as a man," given that the rules of the political playground are neither "made by" nor "made for" women. They are "male rules." The institutions

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responsible for the government of the society, for shaping the cities and for scheduling the daily life of citizens are not all ruled to permit decision making by both sexes, but rather by just one of them; everything is set on a division of the spaces that sees women in the private sector and men in the public one, and women are asked simply to adapt to manage an increasingly burdensome "double presence" without support, without sharing, without choices.

Asking why these rules didn't change in the past and are still not changing now, is an idle question. It seems normal to assume that a change should take place when the institutions receive –in their male chauvinist, archaic tissue- the "other" half of mankind. It sounds logical, but as we can see, sometimes the course of History is not logical. The situation we are facing now is that women in the "polis" are still few and even awkward, and when numbers are so low, you can be happy to have your rights "written on paper," but you still have no voice. Without the cooperation of men and without working together, loading the weight and the responsibilities of the building of our society on the shoulders of both sexes, as Simone de Beauvoir wrote, there won't be any sort of step forward.

From no other place have women been so tenaciously excluded as from the "polis," from the public space that governs the existence of a democratic society. In the globalized society of the twenty-first century it seems increasingly necessary not to lose sight of, or better yet, to make a point of, observing the local dimension since this is our very existence, our daily life in the cities we live in, made up of women and men in constant relations. This –the gender space of relationship– is the primary dimension of life and it must become the primary dimension of the polis, the space of decisions and the formulation of laws. Within this context, we must work to ensure that the discrimination that occurs on a sexual basis would be the first to be eliminated.

Something is still going wrong: a female body that "doesn't matter"

In the context of *political rights* a conflictual relationship between women and politics persists, beginning with the denial of the belief

(which in the past was common –for different reasons– both among suffragists and anti-suffragists) that the granting of the vote would have created half –or more– of the parliaments formed by women. This has obviously not occurred anywhere in the known world. In the range of *civil rights*, the self-determination of the woman's body remains a key point, challenged over time by male visions of the world and society, and never truly and ultimately achieved. Why is it so difficult to consider women "human rights holders" as much as men?

Why has this ongoing and historically unjustified discrimination been perpetrated by one sex toward the other since the Stone Age until today without interruption?

The truth is that today we are faced with everyday concepts, statements by politicians and intellectuals, continually repeated by the media, that can be classified –to put it mildly– as misogynist, sometimes causing outrage in the listeners. And alongside all these reasons, we can add some others, due to discriminatory practices and cultures, automatically put into action within organizations and political institutions.

Mechanisms of exclusion also pass through the simplifying and mystifying vehicle of linguistic stereotypes. As stated by the psychiatrist and sociologist Francesca Molfino, stereotypes are now required to solve the "mystery" of sexual difference, to make people able to think and justify the diversity which we could not account for on any logical basis. They also represent one of the most change resistant areas, especially in Italy, because, "compared to other European countries it seems to be affected by a peculiar imperviousness of the institutions to gender issues" (Molfino, 2006).

In the field of stereotypes, the structuralism oriented toward "language and power" (Foucault, 2001) helps to reveal how, on the basis of what we believe to be "natural," there is actually a solid social and cultural construction. Everything is given in the language; all human activities are operations in the language and even what seems to be as immutable as the biological difference between the sexes, is made

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up of discourses, meanings, interpretations. The language thus becomes a constructive value, holding the power to train, orient, decide and rule. It is an organizational element for society, not only on how to talk about a topic, but the language represents the same argument. It is what draws the boundaries that determine what "can be said" and what "is said": "the Limits of Acceptable Speech," as defined by Judith Butler. In this perspective, the relationship between women and men may not be simplistically interpreted as: "men have power, women will stay behind." In a context of this complexity, we must analyze the meaning of (the discourse on) categories of "men" and "women," wondering about their construction, understanding how the power of language can create true images of them and how to organize their difference and their imbalance, presiding over their intelligibility.

In *Bodies That Matter* Judith Butler (1993) clearly emphasizes the importance of putting in place a discourse on the body of men which is necessarily different from the discourse on the body of women, thereby exceeding the guidance of Foucault and raising the issue of "differently sexed bodies that produce –necessarily– different languages." Therefore, the language is not a set of universally given rules, but there are as many speakers as languages, as many interpretations as the possible points of view of each single person.

In political action the question of language is certainly crucial. Ideas and world views take shape through language, as well as ideological differences that determine actions and laws, making language even more significant in a society that has given a lot of power to the media (Crespi, 2005; Ciofalo, 2007). Political discourse is no longer measured just by the contents. Rather, we take for granted a common interface that simplifies, summarizes, frames, refers to an imaginary, acquired knowledge through which we automatically build both our pre-formed opinions (useful for understanding the world in which we move without constantly asking why) as well as prejudices and *stereotypes:* sort of synthetic forms of unverified and simplistic coding (Mazzara, 1997). In this process, a specific kind of gender speech (seen as a relationship

between –at least two– sexes) may be easily grasped in the words and in the images that are historically attributed to femininity or masculinity.

The main point is that none of the languages in the world can be considered completely neutral, not only because each speaker leaves traces of his own personal statement in the discourse, revealing his subjective experience, but also because the language –especially the Italian one – symbolizes, in its internal structure, the sexual difference, in an already hierarchical and oriented form. Therefore, the claim of the male sex to be universal, imposing itself as neutral, absorbing the feminine, has become, in all its forms and expressions –but above all in political language– totally unacceptable. In addition to sex discrimination, stereotypes sediment languages (in relation to other components such as belonging to a particular ethnic group, practicing certain religions and crafts), deeply affecting and transforming themselves in social and cultural representations, taken –sometimes at an unconscious level– as if they were *natural.*

In addition to this complex mechanism, the almost exclusive attention to the vicissitudes of the body and the everyday objects that are historically attributed to women produces knowledge and adaptations of language reflecting this sense. These adaptations, however, do not explain, do not fully speak, do not recognize women as well as men, and they do not submit to the entry into the public scene of the feminine body. Attention to the language's tools that represent and are represented by not only the standard grammars and vocabularies, but also by special languages by which women are described, their description changing over time, becomes, therefore, crucial to understand the tenacity of many –too many– common places that we still accept, suffer and help to create.

All discourses on "citizenship of rights" continue, in the twenty-first century, to be almost blind toward the biggest part of society. Language still considers women invisible, even when they are the main subject of political and social debate; it sees –and has always seen– neutral citizens

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even when it is clear that we are referring to sexually different persons. Numerically poor in decision-making politics, women do not affect the collective stereotype that governs the creation of a law, so that the stereotypes tend to conform to a "language of power" without going forward in a systematic point of view.

Inside and outside the institutions, the speeches on women's bodies are somehow still very male oriented, filled with an imaginary sometimes very far from real. It is still a taboo in most societies and – still responsible for profound social fractures. Discussing this particular matter in a 90% male Parliament is uncomfortable and when the rights related to the female's body are "reproductive rights" (abortion for example), the use of stereotyped images and the question of how to construct the language in order to approach and describe these rights becomes even more difficult and awkward. It is the historical problem of the male patriarchal culture in which –today as thirty or fifty years ago– our socialization takes place that binds women to the figure of "eternal mothers" in order to fix their identity in a culture imbued with sexist language and "male produced" reference models.

Now that we are aware that one of the hardest obstacles to overcome towards "equality of rights in the difference of sexes" are definitely the stereotypical social construction on women's body, since it lies in the deep conscience and in the oldest layer of the culture of our society, a second concrete step must be taken, because rights must exist in substance, not only in theory or in formal laws and this second step consists in make people aware and responsible. Something that seems obvious but it is not.

Beyond laws, beyond codes: a matter of accountability

Fortunately, in recent decades, tenacious and evident forms of violence have been defeated, since their purpose was to legitimize the domination of men on "their" women –honor killings, shotgun weddings, condemnation of abortion and forced motherhood, all coming from a culture historically based on the concept of honor, always accompanied (and strengthened rather than weakened) by the Catholic

religion. On the other hand, many subtle kinds of violence are still continuing to remain hidden in our culture, living "under carpet," free to undermine our way and emerge at some particular times of crisis and then disappear again. As Anna Rossi Doria points out, there isn't a more creeping, ineradicable and durable form of violence than the reduction to silence of women's bodies (Doria, 2007) and no act of violence is more subtle and stubborn than being kept in ignorance about the consequences of sexuality, than the exposure of the female body to a linguistic and media system capable of suppressing all its human characteristics. Doing so is quite easy: no outward acts are needed; we can remain perfectly within the perimeter of the law and yet build all sorts of deadly devices in order to reduce the female body to a desired, dominated and then possessed object. It's a sort of bias, a distorted frame, in which the media system "asks" men to own "things" to show their strength, to demonstrate power deriving only from "having," while women are told that they are worthy only because of their bodies, a body that no longer needs to be "human," but is just an object, a tradable, buyable object. In a frame like that, the silence of women is essential and necessary, to the point that, as Lea Melandri stated, they are not even given the possibility to identify themselves as "victims," because "sometimes women are the first to assume the prerogatives that men recognize in them, trying to turn the minority status in which they've been historically rooted to their advantage" (Melandri, 2011).

Nowadays, a silent body exhibited almost everywhere by the media system, is not the result of women's emancipation of the seventies, but a perverse form of it, in which "the feminine" is set free as a body without a voice, a body that believes to be living modernity while instead it finds itself in the old world of men.

A woman's body "torn apart" and without a face is stuck on almost every billboards, to advertise a brand of frozen foods –thighs and breasts– or to sell a pair of jeans only legs and buttocks are needed– or even her swollen eyes to advertise beauty products, effectively covering any "imperfection:" cut in pieces. But maybe this is not enough to

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understand that not only are we not facing a form of liberation but rather a new problem of slavery ("the bright slave girls" mentioned by Virginia Woolf is in front of us. What's more, the environment in which we produce these representations is not healthy. Something is seriously undermining the foundations of the mutual recognition of dignity between sexes that was the very legacy of the struggles of thirty years ago (Giomi, 2010). Instead, what happens is that these situations are not categorized as demeaning the dignity of women any more. On their own, since they are not recognized as violent as they are, these images are catalogued immediately as something possible, an acceptable behavior, and a legitimate way of acting. In a word: plausible representations of ourselves.

And, even though this applies to a living body, the dead body of a raped woman suffers no better fate. What caused her death is something with no proper name, generally defined as a "a degenerated love-affair," or at the least "manslaughter" and thus not premeditated, so implicitly someone can argue that the woman may have taken an active part in her own death. But words like passion, love, sentiment in this case are very misleading terms. Even though a newspaper can choose to condemn the murderous violence of a man against a woman as such, calling it with its real name – "femicide," it is quite probable that in the next page, the same newspaper would not hesitate to give space to women's bodies treated as objects in an advertisement, forgetting that violence is primarily a phenomenon of cultural construction, in which the media themselves contribute for the most part with their messages. Then the media try to look for the reasons behind a fact of violence, in most cases the strategy is to trace the origin of the problem to the community. At first glance the crime always takes place "somewhere in the urban space," in a sort of nowhere populated by foreign and strange figures, where everything suddenly happens in the dark, perpetrated by unknown hands; a space that defines the "violent city" and that determines –conversely– the house, the private space, the closer family circle, as the only safe places for a woman.

The measures identified as suitable to combat degradation in the public space show that violence leads to exasperation and control, to the marginalization of the foreign and the self-marginalization of the women themselves as potential victims. But it has been clear for a long time that the violence issue is neither an alien nor a weirdo from another planet. Violence is something that comes out of the tightest human relationships we have, nested and hatched very often in the family itself, within the "safe" walls of our homes (Istat, 2007). The construction of narratives of this type, in which violence always comes from the outside, is not just a simple (and useful) invention of the media. It is the result of the fact that the communication system is not intended to inform the public, rather it assumes the role of Public Opinion acting as the mouthpiece of the "power," telling us what to think, telling us that the monster is outside, outside of our communities, hiding the fact that, if violence against women is now a sort of daily ritual this is simply the consequence of the same measures that condemn the public space as "the space of violence," that burns social relations and tries to keep women at home for fear of the alien enemy.

From violence to death: a matter of numbers

According to the first survey on a national scale dedicated to violence against women in Italy (Istat, 2007), the true extent of the phenomenon has been estimated in these terms: a third of women between 16 and 70 years of age are involved; 6,743,000 women throughout life have suffered at least one form of violence (physical or sexual); 7 million have also suffered psychological violence perpetrated by their partners and about half of them are now still suffering (or very often suffer) from this kind of oppression. This means that 1 in 5 women who has a partner undergoes a form of psychological violence (control, isolation, devaluation and economic violence). But what is most striking is –as we have already mentioned– the silence of women. Research has brought to light a vast submerged land, where more than 90% of the cases of violence are not reported at all. Women can

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experience violence from a variety of sources: partners, acquaintances, friends, colleagues (and also strangers, of course). Dividing the sources in the macro categories of partners and non-partners, it is important to emphasize that in most cases the perpetrator is well-known to the victim; he is a man with whom she has - or had- some form of relationship, both in the case of physical abuse and in cases of more serious forms of sexual violence. Rape and attempted rape are primarily committed by acquaintances, friends, colleagues and relatives, and occur mainly at the victim's or at the perpetrator's home. In 69% of cases the perpetrators are the partners, while only a small proportion, 6%, can be attributed to strangers. Violence inflicted by partners thus appears as the most serious, not only for the type of conduct engaged in, but because the violent action is often multiple and repeated: about half of the 2,938,000 women subjected to violence by their partners have suffered it several times. The survey confirms what women's movements have always reported: violence is not an exceptional event, owing to individual forms of deviance or disease, nor can it be circumscribed to situations of marginalization and social disadvantage. The high number of women who suffer a form of violence is the sign that, on the contrary, is has become a phenomenon of ordinary lives and normal relationships.

In Italy, between 2005 and 2011, 767 women were killed (Ioriatti & Crociati, 2012); more than 100 women were killed each year, thus roughly one woman every two or three days. Although it is impossible to determine whether the phenomenon is decreasing or increasing (as it depends a lot on the role played by the media), it is evident that the trend of femicide is at least constant and this is a sign that it is not an exceptional and sporadic event, but a structural problem, deeply rooted in our society. In 2011, 68% of women killed were killed by men with whom they were having or used to have a romantic relationship. In most of the cases a reason could be found in separation: it was the will of the woman to put an end to the relationship and the inability of her partner to accept the decision. Femicides are mainly concentrated in the north of the country, due to the fact that women in this area are almost fully

employed, and this allows them to exercise autonomy and independence, adhering less to the traditional female role (Giari, Karadole, Pasinetti & Verucci, 2009). It's quite impossible to trace the antecedents of violence of a specific case through the media's reconstruction of a fact, however, national and international studies have shown that in most cases of women being killed by their partners they had been raped previously (Adolfi et al., 2011). That's why domestic violence can be considered an important risk factor that can have lethal consequences for women.

Newspaper coverage: an overrepresentation of murders and an underestimation of violence

But how is violence against women represented by the media? And what is the relationship between the reality of the problem and its representation? Today the media are our main source of knowledge of social reality; our experience of the real world is increasingly mediated by means of mass communication that inform us about issues and problems of the society we live in. So it is important to investigate whether they help bring about a deeper knowledge and increase public awareness on this issue or, on the contrary, if they contribute to reproduce the myths and stereotypes that impede a full understanding.

Many research studies on media treatment of violence against women have shown how the mass media often provide a misleading and distorted view of the phenomenon. The frames and the language used in reporting the news do not return a real image of the problem –its dimensions, causes and implications. Often episodes of domestic violence and killings of women by their partners are represented as punctual and occasional events, concerning only the parties involved, rather than considering them as part of a larger social problem.

One must distinguish between an "episodic frame" –a frame that focuses on violence by considering each case an isolated incident, finding explanations for it in the perpetrator's own individual problems– and a "thematic frame" –a frame that focuses on the broader social

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context in which the case is inserted (Carlyle, Kellie, Slater, Michael & Chakroff, 2008). Research shows that the former frame is the predominant one (McManus & Dorfman, 2003). In most cases the social origins of violence and the power imbalances in gender relationships, as well as social and cultural factors that contribute to these imbalances, are completely ignored, and violence appears to be only an individual matter. Berns highlights that a frame-type based only on individual responsibilities inevitably suggests solutions on an individual basis, particularly that the female victim must take responsibility for putting an end to the violent situation she is in. The social and collective responsibilities are not even called into question. The frame-type chosen is thus decisive for the effects on public opinion. As argued by Taylor and Sorenson, "News story frames influence how people think about issues and how they assign responsibility for causes and solutions. Responsibility for solving problems is assigned more often to government or society when an incident is discussed in its broader social context than when it is described as an isolated event" (Taylor & Sorenson, 2002).

Another aspect of media coverage of domestic violence is the sensational nature, as it is focused mainly on its extreme forms, i.e. on those cases ending with the killing of the victim. The reason why murders receive more attention from the media than "simple" violence cases is because of their particular "newsworthiness." Compared with the treatment of other forms of violence, the tendency to prefer the most sensational cases is greater when the scenario refers to "domestic violence." (McManus & Dorfman, 2003). This overrepresentation by the media of women's murders contributes to distort the vision of domestic violence, not only because it is represented as more lethal than it really is, but also because it tends to focus only on one aspect of the problem instead of paying attention to the less visible –but much more widespread– forms of violence occurring in the home. In this way, relevance is given only to physical violence, underestimating psychological and economic forms that, in addition to physical signs, produce severe consequences for the mental and physical health of

women victims, and that are considered important risk factors for physical violence itself. However, most cases of femicide are not contextualized in their broader scenario of domestic violence; the use of the "episodic frame" prevails, and such events are discussed as isolated and unrelated incidents, thereby failing to grasp the continuity and common aspects that bind them. Murder being the ultimate consequence of previous domestic violence fails to emphasize that it is the last "event" of a larger problem and a widespread phenomenon.

As demonstrated by Bullock and Cubert, these episodes are rarely referred to in terms that specifically mention the word "domestic violence" (Bullock & Cubert, 2002), making it comparable to other types of crimes, such as killings or generic conflicts in the couple, not allowing one to fully grasp the specificity of the problem. Indubitably the use of language is very important: a key element produced by feminist analysis on male violence is to label violence through the introduction of gender terminology capable of unequivocally bringing out the actors and their responsibilities. Not labeling these episodes as "gender violence," or using gender-neutral terms, highly conceals the comprehension of the real entity of the problem. Furthermore, there isn't any reference in the media narratives to the violent situation in which a woman was in before being killed (Bullock & Cubert, 2002; Adolfi et al., 2011), but femicides are almost never unpredictable events, rather they are the outcome of a crescendo of violence that persists over time, not reported to anyone or not well investigated. So when we hear the words "excessive jealousy" or "fit of madness," which are terms emphasized in the Italian press, we may have the impression of a reduction in the size of the entire issue: the language is used to reproduce the stereotype of violence against women as an illness, a particular mental disease of the perpetrator.

Failing to talk clearly about "domestic violence" can have important consequences for the perception of risk by the woman who suffers the violence, who may underestimate the potential danger of the situation she is living. While there is evident difficulty in tracing the whole story

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of violence against women due to the fact that they rarely talk about their conditions, on the other hand, as Taylor suggests, it is possible to rely on the fact that, in most cases, a woman's murder is associated with a previous situation of domestic violence (Taylor, 2009).

Immigrants as scapegoats: the tragic story of Sanaa

In the Italian context, this gap between reality and media treatment of violence against women has an additional element that distinguishes the media representation of violence. In recent years, media attention has focused on violence occurring in public spaces, producing an over-representation of rape, with particular emphasis on those cases in which an immigrant is held responsible. The insistence on the fact that we have to expect violence against women as coming from "somewhere outside" has produced a real "ethnicization" of rape and has given rise to a series of alarmist waves, associated with phenomena of moral panic, that have influenced the perception of safety of women in public spaces in our country. This representation of facts has allowed for political manipulation which has produced a myriad of ordinances and regulations related to public safety, but with the real target of hitting immigrants, without giving any solution to the problem of violence against women. The overrepresentation of rape committed by immigrants not only reduces the problem of violence to one of the possible manifestations of men's behavior, but it is totally at odds with the findings of the 2007 Istat survey, which showed that the probability of undergoing a rape is the higher the closer the relationship is between the author and the victim. When an Italian man inflicts violence, the news about the rape or the murder is less visible than when the perpetrator is an immigrant. In the latter case the news appears on the front page, remaining there for several days, giving rise to all sorts of comments and reactions. As Giomi demonstrated in a recent study on national news, there is a profound disparity between the number of femicides committed by foreigners and the number of news items that these events produce (Giomi, 2010).

The media in this way help to reproduce a series of stereotypes that have always surrounded the issue of violence against women. By placing the problem in the dimension of alienation conveys the idea that only the "others" would pose a threat to women, and that sexual violence and women's safety in public space are problems linked to immigration.

In our research we analyzed the way in which both the press and the politicians commented on a case of femicide that occurred in September 2009, in a small town of a North East Italian province, an area where the immigrant population is very consistent. Sanaa, a young woman of Moroccan origin, who had been living in Italy for 6 years, was killed by her own father who did not accept his daughter's relationship with an Italian youth, with whom she had gone to live without her parents' knowledge. In particular, we analyzed the fact as it was represented by one of the major national newspapers, «la Repubblica», and by «il Gazzettino» a local newspaper from the area where the crime occurred.

The fact obviously received a great deal of media attention, occupying the front pages of all the newspapers for several days. The vital importance that was attributed to the episode was evident by the number of items (services, comments, news stories) published and the number of days that the news about the episode remained in the newspapers: «il Gazzettino» between 16 and 22 September, released 20 articles; «la Repubblica» between 16 and 21 September, released 11. But the focus was not only limited to the days after the crime: a pathological attention was ready to be reactivated as soon as anything happened involving Sanaa's family. One of the main factors keeping alive the readers' memory was the father's trial which took place one year after the murder. In 2010, «la Repubblica» published 3 other items, for a total of 14 articles; «il Gazzettino» 5 more, for a total of 25 articles. Greater attention was paid by the latter probably due to the territorial roots of the local newspaper. This was probably also the basis for the difference in placement of the article in the two papers: in «il Gazzettino» the story almost always ran on the front page with a big

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headline and followed on the first inside pages; much less for «la Repubblica» where instead of appearing on the front page, the news could only be found in the inner pages with a medium or small headline. This location changed slightly on September 18, when a story appeared reporting an attack against Italian paratroopers of the "Folgore" military unit in Kabul that killed six soldiers. The event inevitably overshadowed the news about the murder of Sanaa, which disappeared from the front page of national commentary. It still appeared in «il Gazzettino» but moved to the last pages of the newspaper.

What the concomitance of these tragic facts produced was the rise of comments in which the girl's death was associated with the deaths of the Italian soldiers. From the beginning of Sanaa's case both the national and the local newspapers reminded their readers of other episodes in which young girls of foreign origin had been killed by their families, thus establishing a continuity between the events and placing Sanaa's killing in a broader context, suggesting the existence of a problem of relationships with "the foreigners." Some news reports also investigated in depth the history of Sanaa and her family, providing many elements of the context in which the crime took place, highlighting how the father was a violent man and how difficult the domestic situation for Sanaa and her female relatives (mother and sisters) was. The articles made explicit that there was a precise social and cultural origin of that violence, that there was a clear conflict of gender and even a generational conflict, i.e. the father's control over his daughter and his opposition to her self-determination. The headlines immediately defined this relationship as the act of the father and the expression of the will of the girl, so Sanaa became "the woman killed because she was in love with an Italian man."

The issue of male domination was thus explicitly or implicitly evoked by both newspapers. Terms such as "patriarchy" "father" "master" "patriarchal violence" appeared in the national newspaper thanks to the intervention of experts who contextualize the event within the gender and generational conflicts exacerbated by the problems of migration. The local newspaper, on the other hand, although showing

these elements as a main frame, effected a modification, adding to the story a frame which was different from that of violence against women, thereby producing a sort of cultural bias. By showing a lot of data about the failure of mixed marriages between Muslims and Italians, «il Gazzettino» suggested that, behind everything, there was a problem of integration. The same point of view was clear in an interview with an expert, a Muslim writer, alluding to "the problem of violence" in Islamic culture, and reducing the problem of male violence to violence tout court of an entire culture. These frames were also recurrent in the statements of many politicians, representatives of the center-right government, as well as in the words of representatives of the local institutions belonging to the Northern League party that in the North East has its main reservoir of electoral support, characterized by a strong form of racism. The local newspaper, unlike the national issue, left plenty of room for these actors to speak, giving voice to all the instrumental readings that interpreted what happened.

There were three main frames within which the politicians' speeches were usually developed: the first was "integration" the second was "clash of civilizations" and the third "freedom for women." As was natural to expect, many politicians used the story as proof of the impossibility of integration of Muslim immigrants in our country and to reaffirm unbridgeable differences between the two cultures. The dominant frame was the "clash of civilizations," in which words like "fundamentalist" or "war of religion" were recurrent, clearly evoking the idea of a threatening presence in our society. After the case of Sanaa's murder, the Minister for Equal Opportunities declared explicitly that "the episode is the result of an absurd war of religion carried right into our homes."[1].

The bombing in Kabul that killed six Italian soldiers lent itself to further arguments in favor of the "clash of civilizations" and the story of Sanaa was used to legitimize the presence of Italian troops in

[1] «il Gazzettino», September 17, 2009.

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Afghanistan. A journalist of national repute, merged together the killing of the girl and the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London of 2004 and 2005. The mission that killed the Italian soldiers acquired a meaning for this journalist because the soldiers were engaged in a war to reduce the number of "slaughtered girls like Sanaa" and the terrorist attacks in our country. This association between Sanaa and the terrorist attacks around Europe also appeared in another column, then it gradually produced a semantic change such that an episode of extreme violence against women seemed to be linked to religious terrorism, and the presence of a dangerous enemy within was linked to phenomena that had nothing to do with gender violence.

The third frame –"women's freedom"– was evoked to discuss the status of women in Islam through the Western stereotyped imagination that considers Muslim women as the symbol of female subordination (Bruno, 2008). Violations of women's rights were denounced, as well as the normality of male violence within the Muslim culture that, quoting a politician, "is stuck to the times of the caravans and desert." The normality of violence against women is admitted within a different culture, linking it to forms of cultural backwardness, as if they were only "the others," "the different ones" who commit brutal acts against women. But politicians did not limit themselves to statements; some of them moved directly to action, such as the leader of the "Movement for Italy," who "in order to honor the death of Sanaa" immediately launched a demonstration against the burqa worn in those places where few days later the end of the Ramadan would have been celebrated. The provoking demonstration ended with some moments of tension in which Muslim women were greeted with boos and shouts from the protesters who also shouted "take away the veil". The most significant action symbolically shown at the trial of Sanaa's father was that three public institutions served as plaintiff, together with the Minister for Equal Opportunities in person, a public figure who, more than any other, has a crucial role in combating gender violence. The strong presence of institutions inevitably affected the progress of the trial, which ended with a life sentence for the man. A very strong verdict, not only because

the man asked for a summary judgment (which usually allows for a reduction of one third of the sentence), but mainly because the maximum penalty is rarely inflicted for this kind of offense.

The general mobilization of politicians in defense of Sanaa and the rights of women was actually quite instrumental, aiming to pursue a stigmatizing discourse about immigrants and throwing attacks against Muslims. When these crimes are committed by Italian subjects we do not see such strong protests and denunciations of women's freedom. It's as if there were some cases of violence to which we must show our indignation and other cases that can pass in silence. The body of the murdered girl was used to raise and to further reinforce the symbolic boundaries against "the others." Nothing was said nor done to address violence and to prevent this from happening again. Although male violence is now considered unacceptable, and condemned by the whole society, in public arenas, misleading narratives by media and in political discourses continue to circulate. This shows great irresponsibility and the inability to adequately face the problem, which if dealt with properly would promote greater awareness and stimulate reflection on the conditions that allow the recurrence of violence within our culture and our society.

The distance between men and women. a lack of understanding as a political and social problem

The design of a place (the "city of stone") has a lot to do with the "social capital" that we carry as citizens, in terms of relationships and public participation (Bourdieu, 1980) and with the "care" we put into making up the "living city", which coincides with the "cities of difference", a dynamic category that on a daily basis puts citizens into relations, and through which the city learns and evolves (Crosta, 2010). But if the message is "keep out the others and only take care of your own garden," there is no way out: the problem remains unseen and "femicide" simply continues. As stated by Sweet and Ortiz Escalante (Sweet & Oritz, 2010). "The issue of women's safety in public spaces

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should be incorporated into the design of the cities and their parks, in recreation planning, in public transport systems, housing and health care facilities as well as in urban arrays". This means that there's no need for protective walls if what you shut out becomes a living hell, just as street lamps are not enough to secure the road, nor is the existence of an antiviolence center or an emergency phone number enough to make a good policy against violence.

The problem is that women's behavior in contemporary cities and public places is intolerable for most men. Women are rarely their colleagues, rarely at the head of public services or politicians as men are; we don't see them next to men in managing big companies. Women are more frequently bodies on billboards, legs and breasts in TV shows and advertisements; in most of the cases they are a sort of "living stereotypes" with whom it is hard to imagine having a relationship of equality. For the most part, in the men's world profound relational impairments are evident. The hand that strikes is a male hand. But people are still hesitant to assume this or simply to become aware of it. A lack of understanding is now making the real difference between men and women.

The policies that counteract gender violence in an urban space, even though initially "designed for women," work only when the whole community –men and women living in that place– can benefit from their effects. They work if the practices they are made from are able to create a network of responsibilities among people; rather than an excluding procedure, they should weave a net between public institutions and the private lives of individual citizens. It's a job of "putting things in common," of sharing an asset that generates a different narrative of men and women in the public space of the city.

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Considerations, from trauma to beyond

The statement according to which psychoanalysis began as theory of trauma is well-known.

At the beginning Freud (1895-1920) links trauma to a seductive action by an external object, giving rise to the organization of the neurotic structure. This action is divided into two times: the time of the event and the time of memory (in *après coup*) that provokes an afflux of sexual excitement which sweeps away the defences of ego, leading to the value of trauma only later.

The event is, therefore, first considered real and only in a second phase does Freud face the issue of fantasy of seduction, opening himself to the concept of psychic reality where the trauma is related to original ghosts that are part of the internal reality of the individual.

The economic point of view (1920 - 1939) opening to the analysis of the effective external reality marks the paralysis of the subject facing an increase of stimulus that is excessive for the *Ego* and its defences. The mental apparatus must accomplish the task of linking the excitement to the aim of its subsequent discharge. The clinical translation is the neurotic pathology driven by the compulsion to repeat.

Freud gives, therefore, a distinction between neurotic pathology of internal origin and of a sexual nature and the traumatic pathology born from an external event. The aspect that links the trauma to the narcissistic wound becomes more central, deepened by Ferenczi (1933), who inscribes the trauma into the internal aspect of the object's relation. The reference is to precocious traumas in the adult-child relationship, where a "confusion of languages" occurs when a demand of tenderness by the child is answered as a sexual demand. To deny the anxiety of being at the mercy of the other, the assaulted comes to identify himself with the aggressor and to introject the sense of guilt and the idea of being responsible for the excitement of the seducer and of seduction itself. This is the "terrorism of suffering": in order to preserve a relation to receive tenderness, one is willing to take on the guilt of the aggressor and to please him and his desires.

Khan (1974), continuing with Winnicott's studies, believes that the lack of the auxiliary function of environment causes damages to the maternal function of *protective shield.* These damages considered separately are not

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traumatic, but they add up silently, invisibly and retrospectively in the course of time, giving birth to a "cumulative trauma".

The *traumatic setting* also adds to the *trauma*. This involves not only the presence of the subject and an infraction in the antistimulus defensive barrier that, but also a vital situation in which the relational world is implicitly involved (Baranger, Baranger & Mom, 1988).

Beside this it is necessary to deepen the role of memory and of mnestic activities in the process of codification and elaboration of the real event and in its reconstruction and signification through the narration of the subject. One of the most open questions on trauma besides the one between internal and external reality seems to be: memory or reconstruction?

Both cognitive studies (Schacter, 2001; Pugh, 2002) and neurosciences (Tulving, 1972; Le Doux, 1998) agree in the overcoming of unique memory considering the existence of an implicit – *non declarative memory* where the implicit and procedural memories are stored. While in *declarative memory* autobiographic and episodic memories are stored. The implicit memory stores archaic, pre-verbal and pre – symbolic experiences, carrying structure of a precocious *unresolved unconscious*. Those aspects in analytical terms can be recovered in the therapeutic relations in transference – countertransference dynamics, as a relational scheme that acts implicitly (Stern et al*.,* 1998) acquiring narrability and meaning.

Research has centered itself on the different modalities of recording mnestic traces and their consequences in the organization of the psychic area (Volbert, 2004) showing how the memory of trauma stores memories differently to the autobiographical explicit memory (Van der Kolk et al. 1996).

Owing to the extreme emotional stimulus caused by the event the memory is divided into images, affective states and somatic states, they are implicit memories, which share the objective experience but cannot be integrated into a narrative memory. And that is why the content appears non-modifiable, and the historical truth cannot be re-signified.

The debate therefore concerns the possibility of elaboration of those memories, which seem incapable of a narrative reconstruction[1].

[1] Although Lansky (1995) has shown that the post-traumatic nightmares and flashbacks are derivable from this dissociative state of consciousness, they are still subjected to the work

Despite the functionality of memories there are difficulties in finding appropriate ways of expressing representations. The traumatic memory closes the preconscious space, which gives birth to the transformative operations of thought; the fantasy born from trauma becomes an extraneous body, separated from the historization process.

The difficulty of mentally representing the impact of external events and the demand of the internal world appears as a common element at the basis of the clinical aspects of the traumatic experiences (McDougall, 1995). Broadly, it can be said that the vicissitudes not susceptible of representative psychic elaboration will be traumatic. That is to say those, which bring about the collapse of the process of the construction of meanings, destroying the trust in a world symbolically shared (Bohleber, 2007).

Social and private trauma

Amati Sas (1989, 1992) examined the psychic conditions of those who survived extreme forms of violence, torture, genocide and disappearances and observed a complex development of feelings, identifiable in the experience of *numbing* and in the invasion of ambiguity on the Ego. In situations of catastrophic anxiety, such as state violence, there is a regression of the subject to that *agglutinated* or *ambiguous* nucleus (Bleger, 1967), the undifferentiated space between internal and external worlds where indiscriminate affections without any organisation or hierarchy are found, where opposites coexist.

This regression towards ambiguity plays the role of defence mechanisms against the anxiety of disintegration; the push becomes "the ability to adapt to all things" to make the traumatic context familiar and reassuring, when naturally it isn't at all (Amati Sas, 1989).

Situations of violence lead to a particular form of traumatic regression in which the persecutor forcibly takes the place of internal objects: the subject is bereft of the relation with himself, annihilated, paralysed.

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of dreams. This proves that traumatic memories are not entirely separate from the flow of current psychic dynamics and transformations detectable within the therapeutic relationship in the processes of transference and countertransference.

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The guilty party begins to destroy all of his victim's usual references, those on which his narcissistic, objectual investments lean (…). The victim then accepts the systems of thought of his (her) persecutor even if contrary to his (her) previous ideals, as a condition of his (her) mental survival (Tisseron, 1992).

In extreme situations the victims are forced to go over their principles, to accept being released from their belonging to the human race. When all the internal and external references are lost, what rules is not only a simple inadequacy but a global sensation of confusion as if a catastrophe had razed to the ground the feeling of internal continuity of the subject and this lead to extreme shame which leads the subjects to cling to everything included the persecutor.

This is, for example, what happens to the prisoner submitted to extreme conditions, «who behaves in a way of which he himself disapproves» (Bettelheim, 1943).

The victim degraded to the level of partial object can be overwhelmed, therefore, also by affections of shame, compelled to renounce his own individuality, his (her) own choices, his (her) ideals, this thoughts and thereby becoming a receptacle for the projective identification of the aggressor and of his omnipotent manipulation (Cohen, 1992).

Gaburri (2009) on connecting the intrapsychic and the relational level, describes a model according to which shame and trauma are situated at conflictual crossroads between the instinctual drive to individuation and the exciting desire to remain in the parasitic relationship with the other.

In the specific case of violence against women, the relational world becomes damaging without a means of escape, humiliation occurs because the experiences of shame is often deliberately inflicted, more or less consciously, organized to produce the subjection and the annihilation of the other.

Violence as non- appealable trauma is accompanied by shame, which can be declined primarily in shame of the body: A body that is no more warrantor of the narcissistic identity, above all when it has been the object of ill-treatment.

Often the shame that comes out from traumatic conditions can give birth to trauma, because it attacks the identity immobilizing the evolved psychic functions, causing confusion and impotence. So the effect of shame rein-

forces the already invalidating and disarming effect of trauma (Pandolfi, 2002).

An ulterior form of violence seems to emerge, the export of guilt from the guilty party (incapable of feeling it) to the innocent, as described by Ferenczi (1933), in the process of identification with the aggressor.

Sexual violence, therefore realizes the fantasy that is on the basis of the affections of shame: to be naked at the mercy of the other, who, as in the primary impotence at the origin of the life, has the power of life and death over the subject.

The wish of sadistic control over the other has stopped any movement materializing an extreme form of occupation of the mind of the other up to the loss of self. This terror of annihilation could partially explain the acquiescence, the difficulty of getting out of the situation of dependence and of taking that step which leads to a report to the authorities.

The silence surrounding violence and its concealment is sometimes a defence mechanism of transformation of shame into guilt; to feel guilty is to find a cause to uneasiness and to justify the partner of his guilt in order to keep the connection to him. To transform shame into guilt is a defensive mechanism because shame can be considered a more archaic and more destructive affection than guilt (Lewis 1992, Pandolfi, 2002; Tisseron, 1992), because it has no admittance to atonement and deals with a total failure of the identity of the individual forced to face his impotence.

Shame, guilt and victim blaming

Freud, with the advent of second topic and the clarifications of the different functions of the Super Ego (self-observation, moral conscience, ideal), made the first distinction between guilt and shame. Shame should be more linked to the ideal of Ego and to the narcissistic expansion and guilt to the Super Ego, to prohibition. In kleinian terms, fin regards to its distinctive features, shame can be considered close to the schizoparanoid position; the latter is a more archaic and destructive affection than guilt, which appears, instead, in depressive phase as possibility to go to the atonement[2].

[2] Regarding the subject of shame, Janin (2003), introducing the anthropological discourse of Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) believes that phylogenetic devel-

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With Kohut (1971) and the psychoanalysis of Self, the shame enters overbearingly on the scene of psychoanalysis, where the tragic man is preferred over the guilty one[3]. Shame thus involves the Self and identity, it is the affection that "reflects a sense of failure or a deficit of Self", "the eye turned to the internal" (Morrison, 1994); it is also, an emotional system that rules the social link.

Guilt, instead, isn't concerned with self but with what one does in real or fantasy terms, transgressions or omissions, which damage the other (Lansky, 1999).

According to Lewis (1992): "Shame literally alters the Self, felt as unarmed in the guilt the Self attempts the objects of the world, altering them". Guilt is always linked to a moral transgression and shame to failure, accompanied above all to a suffering that passes through the body. Actually, blushing is the demonstration of how it is a visible affection. In shame the Self in a state of passivity, captured in the vacuum and in the negative perception that sent again to it, in the guilt the Self remains active and absorbed in the action.

Shame leads to hiding and to concealment and its antidote is either the desire for revenge, or the acceptance of the inadequate and faulty Self. The remedy for the guilty part is not searched for in the concealment but in the atonement, in the confession of the misdeed to the other, therefore, in the reparation. In a certain sense guilt is dischargeable, sharable but in shame the emotions appear to be blocked[4].

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opment has conducted the Western man from shame to guilt, considering the society of guilt linked to a major capacity of abstraction and the civilizations of shame, like the oriental ones, linked to the image and the unthinkable.

[3] The consolidation and the cohesion of Self according to Kohut (1971, 1977) depends on the empathetic answers of sustaining of environment. The psychopathology is the consequence of a narcissistic wound, of a deficit significant caregiving. The vision of trauma goes from the territory of the intra-psychic to that of the relationship. The care will consist in the reactivation of the narcissistic needs (to be admired, valued, looked at, and joined with an another that is idealized), to whom the shame and the vulnerability had blocked the access.

[4]The symptoms of shame would be more closely linked to pathologies like depression and hysteria, while the guilt is more closely linked to a paranoid mechanism and to the psychic process connected (Lewis, 1992).

If shame and guilt are intimately linked they differ in their object, in the origin of stimulus, in the result, outcome, and in the means of defence.

Guilt can be in some cases a defence from the primitive shame that has as a consequence forms of psychic disintegration and social exclusion. Shame excludes the subject from the community, breaks the connection with the group. A masking of shame through guilt can permit an easier path to forgiveness, through a reparative gesture, assuring the reintegration of the "guilty" part into the social group (Pandolfi, 2002).

Some studies show how women victims of violence tend to put the blame on themselves. Phillips (2000) interviewing young women notices how they take the responsibility of the rape on themselves by saying: "I decided to go out with that boy", "I accepted to kiss him". To take the responsibility of the event allows them to pass from a passive to an active position, which assures the reestablishment of control of situations.

When, then, the reactions of the environments are negative, the victim tends to take the blame on herself more (Luo, 2000; So- KumTang et al. 2002), in a kind of *anaesthesia of the conscience* (Mathieu, 1991).

Besides the need to go from a passive to an active position, the other element that can induce a feeling of blame is the state of confusion, that can cause uncertainty about what really happened and its meaning, and the feelings of joint responsibility and shame (Romito, 2005; 2011).

The victims are not able to mentally represent the event. Even if they are able to describe the experiences suffered, they are incapable of naming and describing it as violence (Phillips, 2000).

As for the shame as archaic affection we have to say that it shapes the development of female gender identity.

Chodorow (1978) says that shame expresses feelings and fantasies of Self, onto the body of other people, because it involves gender and the relation with the mother, whose links is inscribed in the corporeal.

The primary narcissistic wound provoked by the necessary separation from the body of the mother is made more necessary in women by the risk of entering an undifferentiated space. This may provoke feelings of contempt and self-devaluation, embittered even further by the experiences of separations that follow, which are difficult to be transformed mentally.

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Beside the invisibility of the female genital organ, transmitted as unnameable from mother to daughter as a vacuum of word and/or meaning, have around meanings of loss, bringing feelings of guilt and shame, that "sexualisation is unnameable", has no representative equivalents (Nunziante Cesàro, 1996; 2007).

Shame can be linked to having a body without male organs, but also without female organs, doubly without anything, sexuality transmitted in a negative way as absence (Quinodoz, 2003).

The major predisposition of a woman to the affection of shame is maintained by empiric studies that link it to mechanisms of internalization and feelings of hostility and anxiety to defend the Self: taken from the women since childhood and linked to the cultural stereotypes (Lewis 1976; 1978; 1980).

To go deep into the unconscious dynamics that come together in terms of vulnerability, to expose women to violence, it is a delicate issue and we risk falling into the phenomenon of victim blaming which, as is well known, makes the tendency to blame the victim real at different social levels.

Psychoanalysis teaches us that even an interpretation can be violent (Aulagnier, 1975)[5], if it is given an "abuse" and overload of meaning. So either in the clinical therapeutic relation in general, and in particular in patients in which the trauma has manifested, or in the interpretation of some theoretic constructs which contribute to understanding the phenomenon of violence against women, the choice of appropriate non-intrusive, language becomes delicate. No word can suitably represent the experience.

In emotional terms, victim blaming seems to be the social strategy to deny something unthinkable, the thought of the violence itself is stemmed, the horror is placed outside the victim, and the weak element feels guilty.

On the social level all the research shows a representation of abused women as provoker of the violence or masochists (Kristiansen & Giulietti, 1990) and at the same time men as ill and, therefore, lacking in free will

[5] The text has an evocative title *The violence of Interpretation.* The first reference is to a maternal word that leaves on the child a flow creator of the meaning; a sort of violence. But there is a primary violence that is structural and is linked to the indispensable maternal interpretation, important for the child's mind; then, there is a secondary violence, that is practiced against the Ego, with the aim of preventing the autonomisation, as in psychosis.

(Garcia & Herrero 2006; So-KumTang, Wong & Cheung, 2002). As far as attribution of guilt is concerned, we notice significant gender differences; men would assign more probably the guilt to the victim of violence, more than the women (Bryant & Spence, 2003). Such ideas are deeply rooted in the beliefs of those who should protect and take care of women (Gonzo, 2000; Romito & Paci, 2000).

Is not surprising that women who have been denied and dominated for a long time deny the oppression's violence (Romito, 2005).

"Symbolic wounds" social systems and gender violence

The strategies of collective hiding, for example, as in a legitimate crime (a 'crime of honor'), the denial, the discredit of the victim are described by Romito in a text of the emblematic title: "The Deafening Silence", where the silence dealt with is not only the one of the missing complaints by the subjects but also the helping silence of institutions. Last year in Italy the "*If not now, when*"? Network of women made a web appeal that collected millions of signatures in few hours. In the petition women asked men to mobilize to put an end to this horror and to the media to change the slant on stories of violence *not to erase with words the responsibilities.*

Although the law[6] has gone some steps further, and public opinion nowadays more sensitive, the representation given by the media of violence against women is mainly altered by images so spectacular so that they shade faces, words and silence that is the stories of women. The choice of language, of words to deal with the violence against women, is an ethical theme to face on several social levels from information to prevention and to healing[7].

Hidden and omitted aspects have always accompanied the violence against women; the traumatic element characterizing the psychic dynamics in family or couple relationships seem to come back even at a wider level in

[6]In Italy, only in the 1996, sexual violence (rape) ceased to be a crime against the public morality and is identified as "crime against the human being".

[7]Let us think for example, how the large communicative campaigns against the female genital mutilation on the young African immigrants have reached the opposite effect of closure, and concealment by existing as an underground phenomenon.

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terms of social links proposing a culture that to become free of the "guilt", in a certain sense masks the phenomenon.

Psychoanalysis of groups and institutions has shown how much the social systems confuse different levels of reality by mixing up social, cultural and not least psychic processes at the same time.

Institutions are warrantors of the individual's safety and security needs through the creation of defence systems which protect from the primitive – basic anxieties (Jaques, 1955) and, at the same time, are *storage* and receptacle for the primitive nucleus, of undifferentiated and hardly integrated of subjectivities and identity areas (Bleger, 1967) .

Individual and social violence can be considered a consequence of a form of "civilization and its discontent" (Freud, 1930) that are particular to post-modern society that is characterized by what Kaës (2005; 2007; 2009) re-working the sociologist Toureine's studies calls "the loss of meta-social warranties" (authority, myths, beliefs and ideologies) to which correspond a mourning of *meta-psychic warranties*, specific mechanisms that articulate the meeting space between the subject and the inter-subjective wholes.

In this way some psychic formations, *unconscious pacts*, agreements and alliances, which preserve social links, are based on the collective removal. From generations to generations, what has not been elaborated psychically is transmitted even if it reappears on the scene of life of the individual and collective subjects in a confused dimension.

Thus according to Kaës (1993) the theory of trauma as "psychic catastrophe" the space of the individual is inscribed in relation to the trans-objective wholes. It is as if the traumatized subject found it impossible to keep the burden and the representation of trauma in his subconscious or in the one of someone else.

The lack of signification is inscribed in the lack of transformation of the traumatic event connected to the violence in psychic represent able material.

The same violence seems to be a consequence of the psychic apparatuses and the social containers fails to represent, interpret, and build meanings to the advantage of an overload of perception. Languages change from be-tween media in which pompous images prevail and the relation with reality becomes distorted.

The risk is described by Baudrillard (2004) as the loss of meaning, of symbolization and disappearance of imaginary.

The possibility of treating and transforming violence comes when the social system represents the emotions without emptying them. It is possible then to bear different levels and logics, integrate and differentiate the real plane to the fantasy, it's possible a space of developmental transformation where connections, meanings are created, and where it is possible to think.

Cinema represents a powerful instrument of this kind, because it is a description of the unconscious movement of human society and reflection, denunciation, elaboration, all at the same time.

Through structure, plot and the evocative power of images, the iconic becomes a step for symbolizations, a level of transformation of emotions placed in a new dimension in which they can acquire psychic and relational sense.

To elaborate social guilt: the Magdalene case

The movie "The Magdalene Sisters" by Peter Mullan (2002) which won the Golden Lion in Venice for its great expressive power and uncountable value as witness seems to be very important because of its depiction of social and family violence against women.

The movie, set in Ireland in 1960's, shows extreme violence, abuse and humiliation in the Magdalene Asylum, founded by the Nuns of Mercy in the XIX century.

The Asylum housed "fallen girls" sent from their families and orphanages to "wash away" their presumed sins of lust through prayer and the hard labor of laundresses. Considered social waste, the *Maggies,* secluded, from the external world and forced to silence were forever separated from their children.

During their days they would be mistreated, beaten, physically and morally abused and deprived of every human right. The violent actions were legitimated by cultural assumptions, that adolescents embodied immoral desire; therefore it was possible to annihilate their bodies, their maternity, their dignity, and their female identity. All this absolved to prove guilt or shame.

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The movie starting from four real stories[8], and tells the lives of the following young girls: Rose, an unmarried mother from whom the father pulls away her son to give him up for adoption, Margaret, raped by her cousin, considered by her family as the instigator and responsible for the misdeed, Bernadette, orphan secluded because she spoke some words with boys of her age, just outside the orphanage.

Two of them will escape and will find the freedom, one lets herself die.

The movie opens with the rape of Margaret by her cousin during a wedding party. The director contrasts the scene of rape to traditional Irish folklore ballad of sung by the officiating priest, the lyrics tell the story of a girl raped repeatedly and made pregnant by the men of her family. In this way the abuse and the infanticide appear legitimate by history.

The intense images depict the young girl who, in spite of the torture undergone, fights to not break down and preserve her integrity to not go backwards to that *agglutinated nucleus*, (Bleger, 1967), that psychic space of confusion and loss references: Margaret who recited the Lord's Prayer with strength in front of her slave driver, the Mother Superior; Crispina, possibly slightly mentally retarded, who accused the priest who abused her of not being a man of Christ, both distinguishing between the traumatic context and their more internal experience of faith. Not everyone will succeed in repairing the harm their bodies have undergone, Crispina, actually, dies from anorexia.

With the description of the reality of Magdalene the director Mullan brought to light an unspoken but well-known secret of Irish society that is a party to a traumatic reality of violence delegated to religious institutions.

Through the power of cruel images the movie has the power to be both a witness and to denounce the events (Smith, 2007), and it is perhaps a way of forcing society to take its own guilt into consideration assuming the shame and ethical conflict.

[8] The movie is inspired by the documentary *Witness: Sex in a cold climate (1998),* in which the real witnesses of the secluded women, in the Magdalene Asylum, appear.

To Recover shame: reactivating representation

Recovering shame both clinically and socially means to give this affect its full value as a signal to the Ego that warns of the risk of becoming ambiguous about one's ideals and vulnerability towards external manipulation (Amati Sas, 1989).

This affect must emerge to be recognized and elaborated to proceed from *toxic shame* to *humanizing shame,* with its depressive function leading to the recovery of connections. While the former is associated to punitive isolation, anger and 'attacks on linking' (Bion, 1959), the latter, recognized but the other and the self is the sign of a desire for incorruptibility and coherence which offers structural value (Kilborne, 2002).

To elaborate the traumatic experience through shame and to reduce its totaling and toxic effects, secondary processes must be emphasized to limit disruptive effects and to reconstruct events, gradually collocating them in temporal-space coordinates, which seemed to have collapsed. Memories may appear as discordant fragments, as pieces of elements, which, without a coherent story may prove difficult to talk about.

In treatment, thanks to the affective-cognitive patient/therapist relationship, the traumatic event has a chance to be resignified and rewritten in the subject's story. In counter-transference terms, the therapist is often surprised to feel shame in the patient's place, through a sense of impotence and unspeakability (Janin 2003; Ferrant, 2004; Tisseron, 1992). Passing through primitive elements, and the interpretative clarity of the distinction between the agent of violence and fundamental internal objects (Amati Sas, 1992), will allow the therapist to assume a role as witness to conserve memories, thought, affects, all so necessary in terms of ethics and conscience.

Tisseron (1992) proposes a therapeutic approach, which utilizes the verbal image, metaphorically, as a mediator between unspeakable affects and representations, because the metaphor is often associated with a shared collective symbolization. Furthermore, the use of images is particularly present in the description of shame, illustrated by expression such as 'hitting rock bottom', 'wishing the ground would swallow me up', 'wanting to disappear off the face of the earth'. The use of verbal images allows the metaphor to take root into the body, and to translate into somatic feelings, while keeping

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its semiotic identity, which precedes its symbolic acquisition (Kristeva, 1974).

In addition, this is an operation which lies at the preconscious level, and promotes association and relations, forming a transitional 'intermediate area' meeting point (Winnicott, 1971), whilst allowing a protective distance.

The group, constructed in our case as a homogenous setting (violent traumas experienced by all members), appears to be a privileged system for the elaboration of traumatic aspects. It functions as a transformative tool (Bion, 1961), through intersubjectivity, offering each participants mind that which seems unavailable to that of the other (Kaës, 1993).

The expansion of the thinkability of the event allows for a new narrative and repairs, through its containment qualities, the laceration within the subject. The narrative (Bruner, 1991; Ricoeur, 1984), in particular, transforms the trauma of a foreign body into a new, more fluid representation, to reintegrate into the subject's own experience of the group and of the individual. The physical implications (alternating between listening and watching), mirroring, (Lacan, 1949; Winnicott, 1971; Kohut, 1971; Foulkes, 1964), the sharing of painful experiences, possibly also the use of instruments to favor the contact with deeply emotional elements, such as psychodrama (Margherita, 2009), are all aspects specific to the group that can lead to the elaboration of affects that do not have to necessarily pass through a secondary process.

In conclusion, we can consider that work on the representation of shame following traumatic experiences can act in the reconstruction of relations between the psyche and the body, and in the renewal of previously broken relations between the individual and social group.

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Ines Testoni, Alessandra Armenti, Lucia Ronconi, Sibylla Verdi, Michael Wieser, Mihaela Bucuta, Gabriela Moita, Galabina Tarashoeva

Developing spontaneity and well-being in women victims of domestic violence

Abstract

In this paper we present the results of the last stage of the research project Empower Daphne that involved the participation of six countries belonging to the EU in two phases: I) validation of the theoretical model on which basis rests the construct of well-being and spontaneity; II) analysis of Morenian psychodrama intervention efficacy. 407 university students were part of the non-clinical sample in the first phase and 136 women victims of domestic violence made up the clinical sample for the second phase. During the six month the women took part in psychodramatic sessions, together with individual interviews. At the beginning and the end of the six month, a questionnaire was administered consisting of a well-being and a spontaneity scales. In the article we present the results that compare well-being and spontaneity between clinical and non-clinical samples, and between the clinical cut-off scores highlighted in the literature and the scores of clinical sample. The findings demonstrate interesting differences between two sample: observed lower levels of spontaneity and well-being in women victims of domestic violence, both before and after the psychodramatic intervention.

Keywords: psychodrama, well-being, spontaneity, domestic violence, European project.

Developing spontaneity and well-being in women victims of domestic violence

Introduction

Project EMPoWER (Empowerment of Woman Environmental Research) is part of the DAPHNE III Program, sponsored by the European Union. The Empower Daphne Program is a research-intervention project that focuses on the problem of gender-based violence, particularly within the family and the mother-daughter relationship. The aim is to end the cycle of re-victimization of women that have been victims of violence, helping women that have been victims of violence become aware of their co-responsibility in taking on the role of the victim and unconsciously perpetuating this pattern through their daughters. This is accomplished through the use of two intervention methods: the ecological and psychodramatic method (Testoni, Cottone, Armenti & Guglielmin, 2011).

The theoretical background supporting our project intervention originates from the hypothesis that socio-cultural factors contribute to promoting violence against women and that these factors are transmitted over time by the women themselves to their daughters through an upbringing where submission is implicit (Testoni, Guglielmin, Pogliani & Silvestrin, 2010). It follows therefore that the intervention should begin from the women that have been victims of violence, so that they themselves can become aware of the mechanism of transmission of violence which includes taking on a victim role so that they can bring about a change in their lives (Testoni & Codato, 2011).

We utilized a longitudinal research design separated into two stages: the first stage consisted in validating the cross-cultural hypothesis model and the second stage instead, was the intervention phase conducted with women victims of violence, this phase was further divided into two stages: pre-intervention and post-intervention.

Objectives and hypothesis

According to Moreno (1947), the psychodramatic method is an elective intervention method for supporting women who are caught up in victim-perpetrator relationships.

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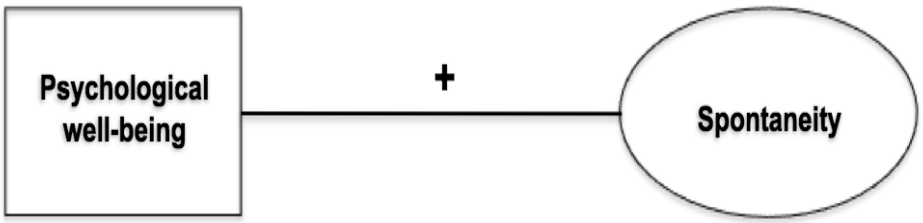
We used a longitudinal research design and structured it into two stages: the first stage of validation with a non-clinical sample, aimed at verifying the theoretical model, and enabled us to set the underlying assumptions for the six countries studied in the project (Italy, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania) and make cross-cultural comparisons; the second stage of the intervention used a clinical sample, and was aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the psychodramatic method.

Our hypothesis is that high levels of spontaneity are associated with psychological well-being and that women who have been victims of violence demonstrate levels of spontaneity and well-being that are lower than in the general population, levels that would increase after the intervention (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main Hypothesis



Participants and instruments

The participants in the first stage of the validation were 407 university students, aged between 18 and 24 years (M= 20.58, SD= 1.48). Table 1 illustrates the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample for each country investigated.

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Table 1. Non clinical sample

		Age (years)		
Country	***N***	***Range***	***M***	***SD***
Italy	83	19-24	20.99	1.38
Austria	73	18-24	20.68	1.38
Bulgaria	63	18-24	19.88	1.73
Portugal	67	18-24	20.73	1.61
Romania	52	18-24	20.44	1.16
Albania	69	18-24	20.57	1.27

There were 136 women that took part in the second stage of the intervention, these women were victims of domestic violence, aged between 15 and 68 years (*M*= 36.6, *SD*= 12.95), and on average had 11 years of education (*SD*= 3.98). Table 2 highlights the sociodemographic characteristic of the sample for each country investigated.

Table 2. Clinical sample

		Age (years)			*Education (years)*	
Country	***N***	***Range***	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Italy	14	26-58	38.64	9.37	13.21	3.86
Austria	33	16-68	41.15	12.78	12.13	3.26
Bulgaria	21	22-66	39.71	12.02	14.33	2.49
Portugal	17	24-68	46.4	12.72	7.9	3.26
Romania	33	19-62	33.18	9.15	11.48	3.55
Albania	18	15-24	20	3.38	7.38	3.10

The construct of *psychological well-being* was investigated by administering the CORE-OM (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measure) (Evans at al., 2002), while the construct of *spontaneity* was meas-

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ured using the SAI-R (Spontaneity Assessment Inventory- Revised) (Kipper & Shemer, 2006).

Results

The results of the analysis carried out for each country confirm the hypothesis that high levels of spontaneity are associated with psychological well-being and that in a clinical sample, levels of spontaneity and psychological well-being increase after the intervention. For a detailed view of the results relative to the validation of the theoretical model in the six different countries that took part in the Empower Daphne project, please refer to the earlier work of Testoni et al. (2012a, 2013a, 2013b). Also with regard to the findings relative to the efficacy of the Empower project intervention, please refer to the earlier work of Testoni et al. (2012b, 2013c).

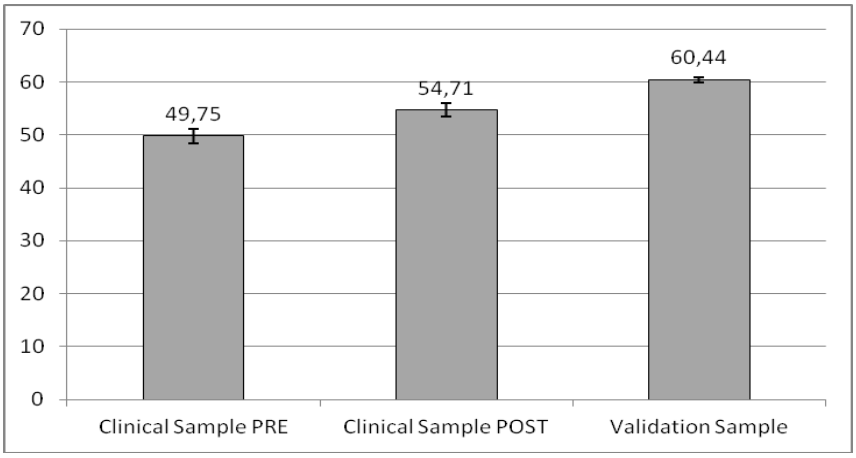
We will now present the results that compare levels of well-being (CORE-OM) and spontaneity (SAI-R) between the clinical sample and the non-clinical sample, both prior to the intervention and after the intervention, and the comparisons with the clinical *cut-off* scores.

Spontaneity

We calculated the averages of the non-clinical and clinical samples on the scale of spontaneity using the SAI-R. During the validation phase, the respondents in the non-clinical sample had an average response rate of 60.44 (*SD*= 9.76); while the average score for the clinical sample was 49.75 (*SD*= 16.48) in the pre-intervention phase and equal to 54.71 (*SD*= 14.74) in the post-intervention phase.

Chart 1 show the differences between the mean scores of the non-clinical sample and the clinical sample. The analysis showed significant differences between the mean scores of the non-clinical sample and the mean scores of the clinical sample, both pre-intervention ($t(541)$= -9,12 p< .001) as well as post-intervention ($t(541)$= -5,14 with p< .001). Therefore, women that are victims of domestic violence display indices of spontaneity that are lower than the non-clinical population both before the intervention as well as after the intervention, despite the fact that in the latter case there is a significant improvement. (Testoni at al., 2012b, 2013c).

Chart 1. Differences between mean scores of spontaneity



Psychological well-being

We calculated the averages of the non-clinical and clinical sample on the scale of psychological well-being using the CORE-OM. During the validation phase, the respondents in the non-clinical sample had an average score equal to 1.17 (*SD*= .52); while the total average in the clinical sample was 1.65 (*SD*= .56) in the pre-intervention phase, and equal to 1.41 (*SD*= .59) in the post-intervention phase.

As for the different domains underlying the construct of psychological well-being, we reported the following average scores

For the dimension of **subjective well-being,** the average score in the non-clinical sample was 1.17 (*SD*= .52), while the average score in the pre-intervention clinical sample was equal to 2 (*SD*= .74) and 1.41 (*SD*= .59) post-intervention. For the dimension **symptoms,** the average score of the non-clinical sample was 1.25 (*SD*= .74), while the average score of the clinical pre-intervention sample was 1.97 (*SD*= .81) and 1.53 (*SD*= .83) at post-intervention. For the dimension of **functioning**, the average response score in the non-clinical sample was equal to 1.44 (*SD*= .63), while the average score of the clinical sample prior to the intervention was 1.79 (*SD*= .59) and 1.69 (*SD*= .66) after the intervention. For the dimension of **risk,** the average score of the non-clinical sample was equal to .15 (*SD*= .34), while the aver-

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age score in the clinical pre-intervention sample was .48 (*SD*= .63) and .33 (*SD*= .54) post-intervention. Lastly, for the dimension **non risk,** the average score of the non-clinical sample was equal to 1.39 (*SD*= .60), while the average score for the clinical sample prior to the intervention was equal to 1.90 (*SD*= .61) and 1.64 (*SD*= .65) post intervention.

Chart 2 and 3 highlight the differences between the average non-clinical and clinical scores on each domain of the CORE-OM. A review of the figures demonstrate significant differences between the mean scores of the non-clinical and clinical samples, both before the intervention ($t(541) = 9.09$ as well as $p < .001$) after the intervention ($t(541) = 4.51$ with $p < .001$). These results illustrate how women that are victims of domestic violence demonstrate indices of psychological distress that are higher compared with the non clinical population both before and after the intervention, even though in the latter case there is a significant improvement (Testoni at al., 2012b, 2013c).

Chart 2. Differences between total mean scores of psychological distress

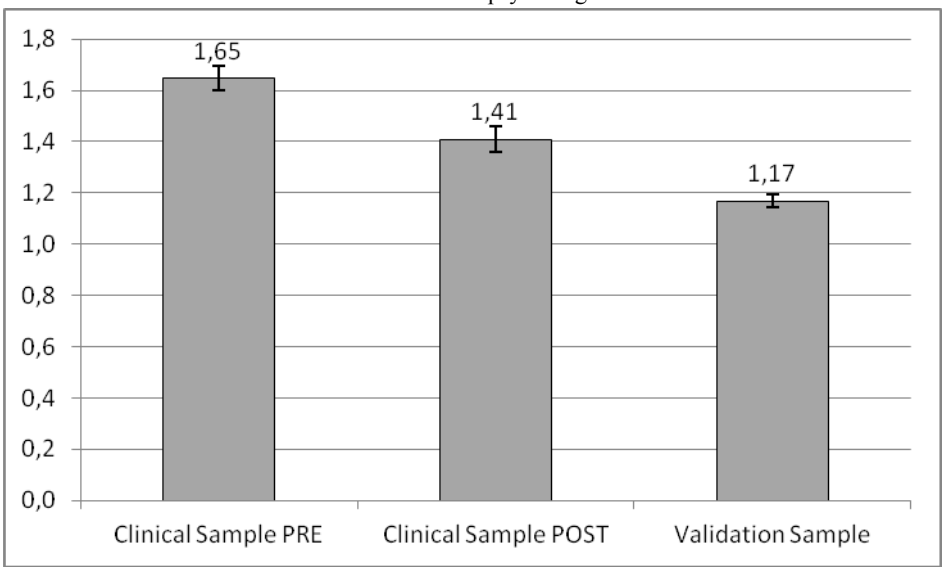
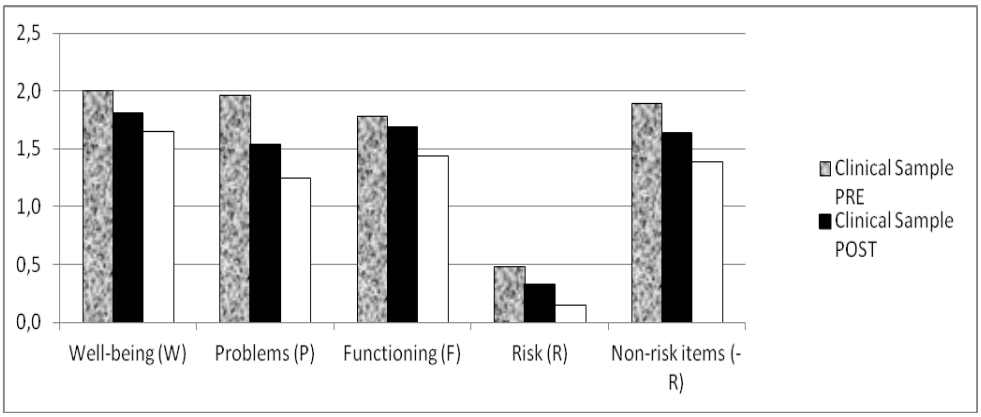


Chart 3. Differences between total mean scores of psychological distress domains



Note: Well-being (W), Problems (P), Functioning (F), Risk (R), Non-risk items (-R)

A review of the scores demonstrate significant differences between average scores obtained by the non-clinical sample and the scores obtained by the clinical sample both before the intervention (Table 3) as well as after the intervention (Table 4).

Table 3. Students *t* (non-clinical vs. clinical ex-ante)

CORE-OM Domains	***t***	***df***	***sig.***
Subjective well-being	4.59	541	.001
Problems	9.58	541	.001
Functioning	5.76	541	.001
Risk	7.75	541	.001
Non-risk	8.58	541	.001

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Table 4. Students *t* (non-clinical vs. clinical ex-post)

CORE-OM Domains	***t***	***df***	***sig.***
Subjective well-being	2.12	541	.034
Problems	3.76	541	.001
Functioning	4.01	541	.001
Risk	4.45	541	.001
Non-risk	4.21	541	.001

These results illustrate how women that are victims of domestic violence demonstrate indices of psychological distress that are higher compared with a non clinical population both before and after the intervention, even though in the latter case there is a significant improvement (Testoni et al., 2012b, 2013c).

Comparisons with the clinical cut-offs

Evans et al. (2002) and Connell et al. (2007) have identified some cut-off scores that provide a guideline for placing individuals into either clinical samples or non-clinical samples. Evans et al. (2002) provided cut-off scores of 1.19 for men and 1.29 for women (Table 5); the more recent work of Connell et al. (2007) identified a single cut-off score of 1 for both men and women.

Table 5. Clinical Cut-off, CORE-OM (Evans et al., 2002)

	Male	***Female***
Well-being (W)	1.37	1.77
Problems (P)	1.44	1.62
Functioning (F)	1.29	1.30
Risk (R)	.43	.31
Non-risk items (-R)	1.36	1.50
Total	1.19	1.29

In order to verify and evaluate if the scores obtained in the intervention group (pre and post) are above or below the cut-off scores, we carried out an analysis that took into consideration the clinical cut-offs reported in the literature, in each domain of the CORE-OM, compared to the average scores obtained by the intervention group of every partner country in all CORE-OM domains in the pre-intervention and post-intervention phase.

Table 6, reports on the average scores obtained in the initial stage and in the final stage of the intervention with respect to all CORE-OM domains.

Table 6. Average scores on the CORE-OM (intervention sample)

	PRE		***POST***	
Country	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Italy	**1.69**	**.80**	**1.19**	**.72**
Well-being (W)	.22	.13	.18	.11
Problems (P)	.68	.37	.42	.36
Functioning (F)	.59	.26	.49	.26
Risk (R)	.20	.19	.09	.08
Non-risk items (-R)	1.49	.72	.09	.66
Austria	**1.71**	**.56**	**1.39**	**.74**
Well-being (W)	.25	.10	.20	.11
Problems (P)	.76	.22	.63	.31
Functioning (F)	.63	.22	.52	.31
Risk (R)	.07	.08	.04	.08
Non-risk items (-R)	1.63	.51	1.36	.70
Bulgaria	**1.73**	**.46**	**1.54**	**.38**
Well-being (W)	.25	.04	.22	.07
Problems (P)	.73	.28	.57	.25
Functioning (F)	.70	.15	.75	.13
Risk (R)	.06	.11	.05	.06
Non-risk items (-R)	1.67	.39	1.50	.35
Portugal	**1.83**	**.35**	**1.70**	**.40**

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Well-being (W)	.26	.07	.24	.03
Problems (P)	.77	.23	.66	.27
Functioning (F)	.72	.14	.72	.12
Risk (R)	.08	.08	.08	.10
Non-risk items (-R)	1.75	.32	1.61	.33

(Continued)

	PRE		***POST***	
Country	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Romania	**.20**	**.40**	**1.46**	**.37**
Well-being (W)	.23	.06	.24	.06
Problems (P)	.69	.28	.50	.25
Functioning (F)	.69	.15	.67	.14
Risk (R)	.06	.08	.04	.06
Non-risk items (-R)	1.61	.36	1.41	.33
Albania	**1.19**	**.66**	**1.10**	**.69**
Well-being (W)	1.19	.11	.17	.12
Problems (P)	.58	.33	.41	.28
Functioning (F)	.39	.20	.43	.20
Risk (R)	.09	.12	.08	.17
Non-risk items (-R)	1.09	.56	1.01	.54

Subjective well-being

In regards to the comparisons carried out for testing the domain of subjective well-being, the Mc Nemar test result was significant with a score of p= .005. The percentage of women that went from a score above the clinically significant threshold during the pre-intervention stage to a score below the threshold after the intervention (22,8%) is significantly higher than the percentage of women that went from a score under the threshold during pre-intervention, to a score above the threshold after the intervention (8,8%). The percentage of women whose score remains stable below the cut off scores both at the first and second test administration was equal to 25,7%, while the percentage of women that remained stable above the clinically significant cut-off scores was 42,6%.

Problems

The results of the McNemar test that were conducted to compare *Problems* items were significant ($p< .001$) in that the percentage of women that went from a score above the clinically significant threshold in the pre intervention stage to a score below the threshold after intervention phase was (26,5%) and this is significantly higher than the percentages of women that recorded opposite results (5,1%). The percentage of women whose score remains stable below the clinically significant cut off scores both at the first and second test administration was equal to 27,9%, while the percentage of women that remained stable above the clinically significant cut-off scores was 40,4%.

Functioning

With regard to the *functioning* domain of the CORE-OM, the Mc Nemar test results were insignificant ($p= .169$) in that the percentage of women that went from a score above the clinically significant threshold in the pre stage to a score below the threshold after the intervention phase was (12,5%) which is not significantly higher than the percentage of women who had reverse results (6,6%). Eleven point eight percent of women had a score that remained stable below the clinically significant cut-off scores both at the first and second test administration, while the percentage of women that remained stable above the clinically significant cut-off scores was 69,1%.

Risk

The results on the McNemar test that compared the *Risk d*omain for all the countries involved in the project were statistically significant ($p= .002$). The percentage of women that went from a score above the threshold to a score below the threshold was 24,3%, while in 8.8% of cases the women went from scoring under the threshold to above the threshold. Thirty-seven-point five percent of women had a score that remained stable below the clinically significant cut-off scores both at the first and second test administration, while the percentage of women that remained stable above the clinically significant cut-off scores was 29,4%.

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Non risk items

The Mc Nemar test results were statistically significant for the comparisons carried out for the non-risk items, ($p< .001$). The percentage of women that went from a score that was above the threshold to a score that was under the threshold was clinically significant (23,5%) and in fact, is significantly higher than the percentage of women that went from under the threshold score to above the threshold. (3,7%). The scores remained stable and under the threshold in 17.6% of cases, while the percentage of women whose scores remained stable over the clinically significant threshold was 55,1%.

Totals

The Mc Nemar test carried out for comparing totals was significant ($p< .001$). In fact, 24.3% of women scored above the clinically significant threshold scores in the pre-phase and finished under the threshold in the post phase, while only 5.9% of women's scores took the opposite direction. The percentage of women that remained stable under the clinically significant threshold scores both at the first as well as the second test administration was 17.16%, while the percentage of women that remained stable above the clinically significant threshold scores was 52.20%.

Conclusion

In the present article, we outlined that the main objectives of project Empower was to first of all check the validity of the theoretical model on which the project hinges, through the administration of the SAI-R and CORE-OM, that measure indices of spontaneity and psychological well-being; secondly, another objective was to test the efficacy of various intervention models (ecological and psychodramatic) In the previous studies by Testoni et al. (2012a, 2013a, 2013b, 2012b, 2013c) it's possible to observe how the results confirm the hypothesis (in all the countries examined), that high levels of spontaneity are associated with psychological well-being and confirms that the two interventions used in our project, appear both to be effective support techniques that are appropriate in addressing the needs of women that are victims of domestic violence. In

fact, the findings recorded by the test instruments seem to indicate that these interventions promote an increase in spontaneity and therefore psychological well-being. This is in line with the theoretical assumptions from which the project developed: to trigger the process of empowerment of women that have been victims of domestic violence, understood as the recovery of spontaneity and psychological well-being.

In specific, in this paper we presented the results concerning comparisons of levels of well-being and spontaneity between the clinical and non-clinical sample, and between the clinical cut-off scores highlighted in the literature and the scores of the patient sample.

The results show noteworthy differences between the non-clinical sample and the clinical sample. We measured lower levels of spontaneity and psychological well-being in women victims of domestic violence compared to the normal population, both before and after the psychodramatic intervention, although in the latter case there was a significant improvement (Testoni at al., 2012b, 2013c). Furthermore, the results that refer to the comparisons with the clinical cut-off scores in the literature, highlight how women victims of domestic violence exhibit indices of psychological distress that are higher with respect to the non-clinical population, both before and after the intervention, in all the domains underlying the construct, although in the latter case we witnessed a significant improvement.

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Beatrice Venturini, Cristina O. Mosso, Massimo Bellotto

We are diverse but belonging to the same team: an empirical study on the relationship between diversity and identification

Abstract

The present study aims to highlights the role of work group culture and gender diversity on work group functioning. Gender diversity is an aspect of organizational life and research on the effect of workgroup composition has yielded ambiguous results. The categorization elaboration model (van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004) addresses this issue and suggests examining factors influencing the relationship between work group diversity and work group functioning. The present study proposes that the group gender diversity affects group identification and that this effect is contingent on group norms. 18 work groups in an information technology enterprise were involved. Results confirmed the hypothesis. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: diversity, gender, identification, work group.

Introduction

The gender differences are present and pervasive, especially in contexts in which the interpersonal relationships are role.

In fact, the organizations are characterized by an increased presence of women and they will become more heterogeneous over time (Robbins & Judge, 2009) in labor and social needs. In the organizational context the term gender means a variety of issues such as inequality, the wage gap, stereotypes, discrimination in career perspective, the reconciliation of work. For example, the question of the wage gap is rather problematic in Italy. Let's consider the last edition (2010) of the World Economic Forum Gender Gap in Italy: on

114 countries surveyed, it belongs to the minority of 14% of countries has deteriorated in the last 4 years. According to the report, the Italian women earn on average 50% less than men, yet the number of women in leadership positions in Italy almost a third of the total (33%). These data show how important are the gender differences and equality in the Italian labour market and how organizational cultures are still not neutral with respect to differences, but are oriented to favour a style or ethnicity (Walenta & Hanappi-Egger, 2007).

Another relevant question for the organizations is how to deal with the work group diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). It' s a current challenge realizing the potential benefit of diverse groups either for scholars who study organizational behavior and who are responsible of the personnel management.

The focus on the group level analysis means the understanding if and why the heterogeneous groups perform or behave better than homogeneous groups.

Moreover, the interest of gender diversity is relatively recent in the research and is significant considering the growing presence of women in the labor market and the tendency to organize work in a team.

Over the last forty years of research[1], results regarding the effect of diversity in work groups have been produced into the scope of the two main perspectives: social categorization perspective which also reports of negative effects (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), the perspective of information and decision making (Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991; Homan, 2006) which account for positive effect. The results of the two main perspectives showed that the differences within the work groups may have both positive and negative effects on performance, satisfaction and behaviour of the members.

In order to overcome the ambiguity of such results and to understand how to get the benefits from the presence of heterogeneous people together in work groups, van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan have proposed a theoretical model in 2004, the categorization

[1] For a review see: Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007.

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Elaboration Model (CEM).

This model proposes a unified interpretative framework of the two perspectives, and offers new insights in urging consideration of moderating variables that show the conditions under which heterogeneous groups (for example, by gender) are more effective than homogeneous groups.

It has been suggested (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003) one of these conditions can be the diversity beliefs. Diversity beliefs refers to the value of diversity for the functioning of a work group. It is described that relationship between work group diversity and identification with the work group is dependent on diversity beliefs. Moreover, Homan and colleagues (2007) have shown that in heterogeneous groups by gender, beliefs stimulate the processing of information, which in turn improves performance. In line with this, a study by van Dick, van Knippenberg, Haegle, Guillaume and Brodebck (2008) confirmed the moderating role of beliefs on identification in heterogeneous groups by nationality.

In addition, Hobman et al. (2004) verified the assumption that aspects of work group culture like team openness to diversity norms (defined as the perception that the team members about the availability of their group in to diversity) could play a role in the relationship between diversity and functioning of the work groups.

This research is part of this specific model development examining the effect of gender diversity on the group identification. It depends on the openness of work groups rules against gender diversity.

Group diversity: a look on the literature

The term diversity includes many meanings, some of them overlapping each other, such as dispersion, iniquity, intra-group variability, consensus, heterogeneity, homogeneity, deviation, difference, distance, relational demography, sharing of attributes, and so on.

The most widely accepted meaning of the term “group diversity” is the one that refers to the amount of differences in a social unit

(Harrison, 2004). A second meaning is more specific, and refers to the extent to which a group, unit, department share common demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, education level, length of service (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

In this study, the diversity describes the degree to which there are objective or subjective differences between people who work in organizations (van Knippenberg & Schippers 2007, p. 519).

The perspective of social categorization refers primarily to demographic differences and makes use of the principles of the theory of social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This perspective takes account of the negative effects of diversity seems to have on the performance and behavior of the work groups. The perspective of information decision making is mainly focused functional diversity (background experience, cultural diversity) and accounts for positive effects. According to this perspective in heterogeneous teams may be encountered higher levels of creativity, innovation and performance than homogeneous teams (Amabile, 1996; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; West & Farr, 1990). Social categorization processes can promote the distinctions in subgroups (ingroup vs outgroup), within a diverse group. Such subgroup distinctions can in turn lead to the formation of intergroup bias, due to the processes of similarity attraction (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) that in turn lead us appreciate to encourage and give confidence to people belonging to the ingroup (Brewer, 1979; Brewer, 1995). This would lead to divisions within groups, attitudes preferably with negative effects on communication, information sharing and interpersonal trust (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) of the members of the work group.

Several research demonstrated that heterogeneous groups, in comparison with homogenous groups, are characterized by less cohesion (O'Reilly, Caldwell & Barnett (1989) and lower performance (Homan, van Knippenberg, van Kleef & De Dreu, 2007) more turnover (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) and increased levels of conflict (Tluchowska Chattopadhyay & George, 2004). In line with this, a study by O'Reilly and colleagues (1989) showed how the teams

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homogeneous than heterogeneous, are characterized by better communication and higher levels of socialization. Moreover, it has been found that the presence of diversity in attitudes and values has a negative effect on interpersonal relationships in work groups (Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998; Harrison, Price, Gavin & Florey, 2002).

As van Knippenberg et al. (2004) pointed out, whether the differences in gender, age, nationality, status, values, the presence of differences within the working groups often seems to be a problem for the people involved and sometimes seems an advantage.

The Categorization Elaboration Model

According to Knippenberg De Dreu and Homan have proposed in 2004 Categorization Elaboration Model (CEM) the effect of diversity on group functioning can be understood in terms of two separate processes: the information processing (i.e. the exchange , sharing and communication of information relevant to the task), and the social categorization process that leads to distinctions "us-them" and possible consequences in terms of intergroup bias (Mehra, Kilduff & Brass, 1998; Randel & Jaussi 2003).

Reaction to diversity: group culture and norms

Beliefs and attitudes toward diversity vary from person to person. Based on stereotypes, past experience and other factors, group members may have beliefs about how the composition (homogeneous vs. heterogeneous) affects the group functioning. The beliefs of the diversity (pro diversity or pro homogeneity) may cause members to respond positively or negatively to the others in your work group (van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003). In line with this notion, research by Homan et al. (2007) shows that in heterogeneous groups (informational diversity like information granted to different experimental groups), pro-diversity beliefs influenced the relationship between diversity and performance. Conversely heterogeneous groups with pro homogeneity beliefs showed limited levels of information processing with reduced performance in problem solving.

In line with this notion, the concept of openness to diversity norms refers to the perception that each member has with respect to availability and openness toward diversity in the group. Hobman *et al*. (2004) have enhanced this construct showed that the openness to diversity norms may be an important moderator variable in the relationship between diversity and functioning of the team (Mor Barak, Cherin & Berkman, 1998).

The objective of this research is to demonstrate the role of openness to diversity norms as a moderator in relationship between gender diversity and group identification. Group identification is important dimension that can depend on the responses of group members to diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Turner et al., 1987). In line with this a study by van Dick *et al*. (2008) clearly confirmed the moderating role of beliefs on identification in nationality diverse groups.

Objective and Hypothesis

The general objective of the current study is to investigate weather openness to diversity can help organizations to make better use of their team and to make such team more identified with their own organizations. The specific objective of the current research is to verify if openness to diversity norms moderate the relationship between gender work group diversity and group identification.

Method

Sample

The study sample consisted of 18 work groups of an information technology enterprise took part in the research (N = 127, 41 males) working in small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the Northern-Eastern Italy.

The sample is aged between 20 and 66 years (M = 36.5, SD = 10.2). Organizational tenure ranges from a minimum of a few months, to a maximum of 39 years (M = 7.8 years; DS = 9.12) and team tenure ranges from a minimum of a few months to a maximum of 25 years (M = 4.27, SD = 5.83). Participants were 81% from of Italy (of which

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82% come from northern Italy, 6% from Centrum and 18% from the Southern or Islands). 44% are employed, 15% of executives, executives 4.7%, and 4% indicated "other".

Measures

The study was conducted by a self-report questionnaire All the questions were measured on a five point Likert scale (1 = completely disagreement 5 = completely agreement). However, demographic variables needed to be answered by indicating which option applied to the respondent. The within group agreement measure was measured according the Rwg(j) index (Bliese, 2000; James, *et al*., 1984). The following measurements were included in the questionnaire

- Work group diversity was measured by using Blau index (Blau, 1977; Harrison *et al*. 2002).
- *Openness to diversity have been* measured using a scale developed by Hobman *et al*., (2004). It measures how group members group is willing to support and encourage cooperation with people who differ from each other in this case in relation to gender. Cronbach's alpha for openness to diversity 0.73.
- *Group identification has been measured using the six-item scale developed* by Ashforth and Mael (1989). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.74.
- *Control variable.* Gender was used as a control variable according Tsui, Egan and O'Reil (1992). Also group size was used as a control variable cause it may have an effect on group identification (van Dick et al., 2008).

Results

Data were analysed at the group level. Table 1 provides mean values, standard deviations, Pearson correlations index among variables, alpha index and the Rwg(j).

According to the hypothesis the openness to diversity norms moderates the relationship between gender diversity and group

identification was tested was analysed using hierarchical regression. The regression analysis was conducted in three steps (see Table 2). In the fist step the control variables were entered. Nor gender neither group size showed a significant effect on dependent variable group identification. In the next step independent variable (level of gender diversity) and moderator variable (openness to diversity norms) were entered: no main effect was found ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, *F change* (2,13) = .09, *p ns*). In the last model the interaction between level of gender diversity and moderator variable was entered ($\Delta R^2 = .35$ *F change* (1,12) = 9.13 $p < .05$). As show in Table 2, the results of regression analysis provide support for the hypothesis ($r = .34$ $p < .05$). The significant interaction is reported in Figure 1. Furthermore a s*imple slope* (Aiken & West, 1991) was conducted. Results show a significant and positive relationship between level of gender and group identification ($b = 1.77$, $\beta = .67$; $p < .05$) for those group with high level of openness to diversity norms. For group with low level of openness to diversity norms no significant relationship was found ($b = -.13$, $\beta = -.52$; *p ns*).

Discussion and Practical Implications

The objective of the current study was to investigate whether openness to diversity can help organizations to make better use of their team and to make such team more identified with their own organizations. The results supported the proposed hypothesis: openness to diversity norms moderate the relationship between level of gender diversity and group identification. The results of this study are in line with the basis of the Categorization Elaboration Model and with the Homan et al. (2007) findings. They showed that when teams see value in diversity they are able to perform better. Allowing to CEM model, the consequences of intergroup bias may vary according to what people about diversity (van Knippenberg *et al*., 2004) and may be positive if people in group are open to diversity. Such results are also in line with the notion that organizational climate (Paulus, Nakui, Parthasarty & Baruah, 2004) and the attitudes toward work diversity may represent a critical dimension for understanding how people

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behave towards diversity itself. Our results show that openness to diversity has a positive influence on group identification. This mean that it is likely that group identification is positively influenced with higher openness to diversity norms of the people who belong to the group.

Future research may look to the antecedents of such openness to diversity norms (personal experiences, individual differences, age, culture).

The current research has several limitations. First, the numbers of teams that could be included in the research is relatively small. Convincing the employees to hand the questionnaire was not easy. The relatively small number of teams means that the results should be interpreted with caution. Second, the current research looked at the gender composition as an index of diversity. It would have been interesting to have also a *self-report* measure of perception of diversity and a measure of subjective cognitive salience of gender diversity (Randel & Jaussi 2003). In fact, the identification may depend on the subjective perception of diversity as well as by the real composition. Consequently, the subjective perception of differences could be an important indicator of how people are categorized within the group, and therefore could have an impact on the sense of belonging.

The current research has several implications for practice. At managerial level the results suggest that there are organizational dynamics reflecting mind systems that hinder the effectiveness and functioning of the work groups in which there is coexistence of men and women. Our results show that it is likely that group identification is higher with openness to diversity norms of the group. Therefore, better group identification is probably realised when open mind people are placed in diverse team.

Moreover, such results suggest that make sense for managers to study such beliefs and attitudes toward diversity and to take such attitudes into account and try to elaborate them with the followers.

Thanks to these studies, it is possible to have tools able to perform analysis in specific contexts and to plan diversity training in order to overcoming the "normative" and "inclusion" such as "equal opportunities" (equal employment opportunity - EEO) and "affirmative action" that if not anchored in belief systems suitable ineffective. Such strategies, coming from federal and state regulations and measures aimed at correcting an imbalance in population, have adopted an orientation exhortation, which sought to persuade people to behave in a more tolerant, more ethical, or more simply, politically correct. If diversity can be approached from a cultural point of view, it allows us to understand what characteristics or skills could be generative relations of coexistence and organizational effectiveness work adapted to the new organizational contexts and more generally social.

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Gabriella Ferrari Bravo and Caterina Arcidiacono

Family scenarios and violence: a clinical case story

Abstract
This article describes the acceptance and taking-charge process of a history of incest involving a father and his daughter. This case arrived through an ad hoc telephone line set up by a territorial service aimed at listening, counselling, and treating problems and conflicts inherent in family life. The mother made the first contact with this service, ten years after the event. The case story is geared to outlining the development of the relational events within the parents' relationship and in relation to their daughter as well as the interactions with the family service (CPF). The purpose is also to show the procedure of the intervention and taking-charge process carried out by the psychologists of the service as well as the counter-transference feelings that have accompanied the clinical intervention and the effects they have had on the relationships between the individual members of the whole family.

Keywords: incest, public services, telephone counselling, clinical intervention.

We decided to describe a clinical case[1] relating to incest in order to show how the family often conceals emotional bonds-related violence and perversion, sometimes even under extreme circumstances, by referring to codified, predefined, and deeply introjected statuses of power (Bianchi, 2002; Cirillo, 2005; Arcidiacono, Testoni & Groterath, 2013).

Moreover, this can happen even without calling into question either the roles effectively played by the members of the family or the substantial loss of the care roles related to these (Boszormenyi-Nagi & Spark,1973; Malacrea & Vassalli, 1990; Furniss, 1990).

First and foremost, we wish to specify that this case was followed in a

[1]This case-study was originally presented by G. Ferrari Bravo, L. Farina, and S. Madia at the international conference "Quale psicoanalisi per la coppia e la famiglia?" with the title "Incesto: dalla domanda d'aiuto telefonico alle prime due sedute".

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healthcare service called the Centro per le famiglie (Family Centre) set in the city of Naples (Arcidiacono & Ferrari Bravo, 2009). The CPF acts as a space for reading and providing answers to family crises as well as to the pathologies related to the separation processes working therein. The Centro per le famiglie is not, strictly speaking, a specific service aimed at counteracting domestic violence. However, the case we shall soon describe can be deemed a possible reference model for every service that intends to offer attention and support to women, especially in the phase in which this kind of suffering is neither fully recognized nor determined as a spontaneous request for help from specific services. On the contrary the request for help usually bears another nature. It is possible, however, for previously unreported and actively concealed episodes of violence to emerge during periods of crisis between the couple or during a separation. These critical phases represent a chance to shed light on the domestic violence once it has occurred and bring it to the attention of the help network. In that sense, the separation crisis acts as a magnifying glass through which it is possible to observe and recognize the violence perpetrated against women and children (Di Napoli, 2012; Ferrari Bravo & Volpe, 2012).

It is worth noting that we often work, as in the case we shall describe, with couples who are still cohabiting and in whom the very perverse feature of their bond is quite plain. When we are faced with a narration hinting at either a suffered or an inflicted violence, which are often ruled out of the narration or downplayed by the very woman who tells it, it is necessary to wait patiently and vigilantly. Through a rewriting of the couple's story and those of the individual members, we can give people time to prepare, face, highlight, and address the family's problematic hub without letting them abandon the service or, even worse, rejecting every other possible *space for listening* for both the users themselves and their family (Arcidiacono, 2013; Nunziante Cesaro, Stanziano & Riccardi, 2012).

This story, regarding an incestuous relationship between a father and his only daughter, who was eleven years old at the time of the abuse, also involves a mother who explicitly affirms that she did not intervene "in order to safeguard the unity of the family" and "to not bring shame upon the latter". *Ten years later* she approaches the Centro per le famiglie to ask for

help. She starts the process anonymously by means of a series of phone calls to the telephone counselling line of our service, but subsequently makes a request for individual psychotherapy and for the 'taking charge' of her family.

This case is a good example of the process necessary to construct a help setting in cases of family violence and abuse. In these cases the codified objectives of the care process are as follows:

To interrupt the abusive bond both at a material and psychological level;

To mend the damage to which the victim has been subjected through a psychotherapeutic process;

To make the abuser assume responsibility even by means of a denunciation;

To make the parent who did not fulfil his/her task of protecting the offspring ready and willing to assume responsibility;

To renew the parental functions, inasmuch as it is possible, perhaps with the support of other members of the family and the care system (Arcidiacono & Di Napoli, 2012).

The description of this case story focuses on the acceptance and decoding of a request for help, and ends with the definition of a taking-charge process, as well as a subsequent phase of psychotherapy, upon which both mother and daughter agreed. The decision to fully describe how this case was accepted by the service, the definition of the setting, and the proposal for help all stem from the difficulty the psychologists faced in dealing with this kind of request. Indeed, in cases of severe violence, careful attention, professional caution, and a sound competence aiming at a successful outcome of the intervention are made paramount by the necessity to overcome the obstacle represented by the "haze" of the family context in which the abuse is present and by the "re-emerging" of painful feelings that tend to arise if they are not dealt with from the beginning with clinical and relational competence.

An explorative and listening-oriented approach to malaise and violence-related domestic pathologies represents a sort of fathom for locating and

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bringing painful dimensions out of the shadows, which would have been left unsaid, tolerated, and suffered otherwise. During the listening phase, protection mechanisms are often kept on stand-by due to the reticence and resistance of women themselves to change. We should not overlook a parallel resistance among professionals in adjusting to a definition of "normality", a label which women themselves often apply to their victimization (Ferrari Bravo, Volpe 2012, p. 95-110).

"And, above all, it is necessary to maintain a good distance"

The first contact

This case begins with a telephone request for help regarding a family comprising two cohabiting spouses and their only daughter, aged twenty-one. A serious incestuous issue seems to emerge after the first contact with the service.

This phone call comes from a man, who presents himself as a "health worker". He enquires about the service and its functions and then expresses his concern about some friends of his, a family that seems to be in crisis. His suspicions centre on an incestuous tie between the father and his daughter. The mother of this family has asked him, as a friend and a professional, for help. This woman seems to be living in a phase of impasse since she has not managed to obtain a clear and straightforward explanation from her husband about her suspects. The event narrated by the mother dates back ten years although she received confirmation of this incest only three years ago. The person speaking on the phone feels helpless and worried, albeit somewhat doubtful. Indeed, he describes the daughter as a "liar", "seductress" and "actress", insinuating that she may have made everything up. He also describes the difficulties encountered in talking to the woman on this matter and suggests that the helpline might be a reference point for her. The phone call ends with the practitioner suggesting that the woman phone in person while underlining the seriousness of the service and the professional competence of the psychologists, as well as the paramount necessity of a direct approach in regard to such a matter. According to the standard procedure of the helpline, the psychologist gives her full name while specifying that, should the prospective clients wish to find her again next time, they would need to call

during her time shifts. The man says that he will follow this advice, leaving his own details as well.

Remarks

During the supervision meeting, it emerges that this phone call elicited contradictory emotions in the psychologist who received it. This call has highlighted a very delicate and involving theme, as only incest can be, in a way that has been deemed superficial and characterized by the denigration of the "victim" (Vegetti Finzi, 1998). The psychologist feels intended and so compelled to do something to "rescue" this girl. Eventually she decides, along with the supervision team, to wait for the woman's phone call, should she decide to make one.

The second contact

A series of circumstances (the psychologist who received the first phone call had to change her shift, the working team was still settling in and could not take note of the phone calls addressed to the service) meant that the Service was unable to establish, whether or not the lady had called the Centre. Having failed to receive any explicit request after two weeks, the group considered that, since the man who called the first time had left a name and address, this constituted an authorization to get in touch. During a brief phone call, we reinstated our availability to listen to his views on the case.

The third contact

After a month, the woman, whom we shall call Mrs Adele, gets in touch: she knows that the service has a basic idea of what has happened, so she immediately goes into details by describing the abuse and confirming that it happened about ten years before this phone call, although she discovered it only three years ago.

She tells about two episodes involving father and daughter, which made her suspicious because of their incongruity. In the first one, she casually overheard an argument in which her daughter addressed her father in a very bad manner (her language was out of character and, even stranger, her father did not seem to resent it). When asked by Mrs Adele, they both denied that there were "something strange" going on. In the second episode, the mess

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left by the renovation of her house enabled Mrs Adele to read her daughter's diary. Although no details were expressed, it seemed quite clear to her that her daughter, whom we will call Maria, blamed her father for having "destroyed her childhood". The mother sought confirmation of this and talked to her daughter, who told her that these abusive episodes dated back to when she was about ten years old. At the time, Mrs Adele was not getting on well with her husband so she used to sleep on her own while her daughter would sleep in the bed with her father.

Mrs Adele did not dare to ask her daughter any further questions. On the other hand, Maria merely said that she wanted to put the past behind her. She even showed disappointment at her mother's indiscretion in reading her diary. Once, Mrs Adele told her mother about the whole event, but the woman was opposed to a possible separation between Mrs Adele and her husband, suggesting that she should not have to "dig up the past again".

Mrs Adele spoke to her husband, whom we will call Mr Giovanni, about this matter only after a considerable amount of time had passed. He did not deny what had happened but downplayed the episodes in terms of both frequency and "seriousness". He said that this thing, which was now buried in the past, had resurfaced in Maria's mind only because talking about paedophilia and abuse of minors had become "fashionable" nowadays.

Three years after this disclosure, the life of this family carries on as normal: the "facade" remains intact. The very conformist spurs, which have contributed to underpinning a "shaky marriage" in terms of affective and sexual desire lacking since the "honeymoon", contribute to holding up an apparent normality. However, this apparent normality works in the husband's favour – according to whom these past episodes have no impact or influence on "the feelings he proves towards his daughter" – and in his daughter's as well – which of her parents would ever comprehend her profound suffering? She may as well remain silent. By contrast, this situation no longer meets the mother's disclosure needs.

In fact, she has recently tried, without success, to convince Maria to consult a psychologist since she is concerned about her difficulty in studying and forming emotional relationships. The latter are, in fact, characterized by inconstancy, promiscuity, and they also often end in failure. Mrs Adele con-

fided in a family friend (she does not say so explicitly, but it easy to imagine that it is the man who first got in touch with the service through the helpline) in whom she found comprehension, sustenance, and affection. She also vaguely touches upon the emotional bond formed between them.

This kind of help allowed her eventually, after so much time, to "narrate" the abuse and also to imagine a possible separation from her husband, although she still has many doubts and much guilt about her own family (am I going to further hurt Maria who is already so disgraced?), not to mention the social and working environments, which she perceives as judgemental. Eventually, Mrs Adele leaves her phone number after being invited to an interview at the Centre. A few days later, she cancels the appointment, mentioning a problem at work.

Remarks

During the first telephone conversation with Mrs Adele, certain element had struck the helpline psychologist: the long period of silence between the moment when the mother finds out about the incest and the moment when she talks about this with the psychologist; the attempt to "pathologize" her daughter, as though she were the only one in need of psychotherapy; the focus on the separation (Mrs Adele's main dilemma is not "how could it have happened" but rather "now that I am in a new relationship, should I separate from my husband or not?). The psychologist is frankly bewildered.

During the supervision meeting it is possible to clarify what appears to be a visible maternal inadequacy with regard to the care and protection she is supposed to provide for her daughter; this has left the psychologist facing contradictory emotions of sympathy, indignation, and anger during the long phone conversation with Mrs Adele.

If sympathy favoured a welcoming and comprehensible conversation, anger and bewilderment were decanted and turned into a feeling of urgency and gravity. These are returned to the interlocutor in order to prevent family relationships becoming bogged down in a further phase of silence. The "urgency" felt by the psychologist parallels the mother's "block", as she feels petrified and helpless in facing the incest.

Afterwards the elements determining the development of this case are evaluated: it is quite clear now that inviting Mrs Adele for an interview has

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been hasty since this did not respect the times and needs of the user, who intended, for the time being, to address the helpline for counselling, putting a certain distance between her and the psychologist. The time required for the mother to "see" the incest is traced back, at a symbolic level, along with the time of consultation. The fantasy characterizing the phase of consultation is that this woman is not yet ready yet to face the psychologist's insights and *vice versa.*

Besides, the open secret, which in this case is being kept by the grandmother apparently without provoking any particular reaction, is confirmed once more as one of the most recurring features of intra-family abuse.

On the basis of the comments that led us to deem the hasty proposal for an appointment an error, we decide, after three weeks, to call Mrs Adele again and attempt to redefine the listening setting, driving it to a sustainable and adequate relational field. Mrs Adele states that "her job will never allow her to respect the planned appointments", implicitly confirming, in doing so, our feeling that we have overestimated her readiness to pursue the issue further by inviting her for an appointment. However, Mrs Adele asks to continue the phone interviews with the psychologist, who reinstates her availability.

We wish to highlight how useful it can be, in order to create a trust-based tie between users and personnel, to accept what the counselee is bringing in, without trying to modify the request even when this appears inadequate to resolve a problem that has been explicated since the first communication or contact. At any rate, the emphasis placed by Mrs Adele on the separation from her husband and, in a subordinate manner, on the necessity of protecting her daughter from "further traumas" can be considered an initial indication of the centrality of the conjugal crisis as an element that has given rise to acting-out-like abuse. In the urgency to separate from her husband, this woman sees the perverse relationship with him as the grounds on which the abuse of her daughter by the father has taken root.

The fourth contact

After a month and a half, Mrs Adele telephones again. This time she is greatly shaken because of "news that is messing my life up..." Many contents of this conversation, which allude to problems between the couple, will

be clarified in the course of the following sessions.

Mrs Adele is extremely angry with her husband, who appears to have recently placed her new relationship in the public domain while she was away. Her husband denied this, so she held his psychosexual problem against him in response. Until that moment, Mrs Adele had not spoken a word about this matter both because she was disinterested and because she would do anything for a quiet life. But now she could stand it no longer and asked her husband to go and see a specialist; he eventually admitted that there had been some episodes of touching his daughter. Surprisingly, Mrs Adele did not want to pursue the matter further this time.

Meanwhile, Maria knows nothing about this conjugal crisis. Both her parents decide not to tell her anything because she is committed to her studies.

However, Maria has become very aggressive to her mother lately. On every possible occasion, she blames her mother for not taking care of her and being more interested in her job than her family. A new holiday period is approaching and that seems to unveil new scenarios. (Is everybody going to spend time on their own, that is, the wife somewhere, and father and daughter elsewhere?) We suggest to Mrs Adele that she tells her husband that she has talked about their situation with us: if he wishes to do so, he, too, can call us for a counselling session.

Remarks

The telephone interview leaves the psychologist with a sense of apprehension, having witnessed this woman's concern with her new love and the possibility of a separation from her husband while overlooking the "key fact", i.e. the incest. It appears that she now no longer wishes to even talk about it with her husband, although she bitterly blames him for never having discussed the incest before or, at least, never plainly. The psychologist's desire is clearly to take up the matter with the daughter whom she imagines to be traumatized and at severe risk, surely in more danger than the other members of the family. By examining this counter-transference feelings and the emotion linked to it, we saw once again the necessity to *"get a move on"* along with the unease caused by waiting for the call from whoever made the request, along with the desire to intervene on the contents of the request itself in order to fit it into the psychologist's expectations and

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awareness.

The fifth contact

Mr Giovanni telephones the Centre and immediately asks to tell his own version of the event that happened with his daughter, as though he wanted to get it off his chest and then move on to the question that lies at the heart of the whole matter: how to convince his wife not to leave him. What follows is his narration:

According to Mr Giovanni, it was Maria who "made the first move"; these intimate contacts found her "participating and lustful". Afterwards, four or five times overall (on another occasion he said two or three times) his daughter was subjected to his advances while being in an almost hypnotic state "as though she were asleep" or as though she were not completely aware of what was going on.

In the years that followed, the severe parental attitude would drive his daughter to rebel and blackmail her father, according to him (if you don't let me out, I will tell everything).

When asked to describe his current relationship with his daughter, Mr Giovanni replies that it is good: "I apologized to her... after all, my daughter knows that I am like a friend for her, I am always there for her if she is ever in trouble".

Mr Giovanni confided in only one other person, who is unrelated to the family-and-friends context. He has also sought some support regarding the conjugal crisis: he says that, for more than three years (that is, since his wife discovered the incest), she has moved away from him more and more, although he does not link this discovery to her detachment from him. According to him, nothing would ever have happened had Mrs Adele not become involved in an extramarital affair. He seems very anxious and dejected and, when asked to meet his wife at the Centre, he replies that he would rather have an individual interview. Therefore, we set up an appointment.

Remarks

The psychologist is bewildered by the mundane way in which the incest is described. It seems as though this event has left no emotional mark on the father, who is more concerned about the separation from his wife. The psy-

chologist doubts that Mr Giovanni will turn up for the appointment. It is quite easy to interpret this doubt as the desire to avoid a face-to-face contact with "the monster", i.e. the perturbing.

The two counselling sessions with Mr Giovanni

The man arrives very punctually for the interview: he is garish, bearing a sad expression; physically and behaviourally, he looks older than his age. The conjugal crisis is his dominant concern. He constantly asks for advice on how he should act with his wife.

During the interview, it is possible to retrace, at least in part, the history of this couple. It started with a meeting between two people who had just been through relationships that ended in failure. She fell in love with him, as he was a "mature and more reliable" man, while he did not love her (he had already lived through the "passion" and had now given up on it); he was attracted by her appearance "small, almost puerile" and, at the same time, the fact that she was "a good housewife". They both come from good families: he is the son of parents who were always out at work (Mr Giovanni describes his parents as a couple tied "by a strong emotional bond from which he has always felt left out").

His childhood had been lightened by the presence of a distant relative, who acted as his "real mother" as she was always present and affectionate to him. He recalls the separation from this woman, who left his home to get married, as a great trauma in his life. Afterwards, he was entrusted to the care of strangers. Only as an adult would he come to know that his "aunt" was an "unmarried mother". This particular is referred to as the main hub around which the family climate turned, being this characterized by secrets and subterfuge. He claims to have been in love only twice: the first time with a woman who ridiculed and repeatedly cheated on him, the second time "a real reciprocated love". However, his family opposed this union because the girl with whom he was in love came from a lower walk of life, so he eventually broke off the engagement.

By the time he meets his future wife he is disenchanted. This relationship limps along for a while, until circumstances drive them to get married. Since the beginning of the marriage, there has been an underlying incomprehen-

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sion on the sexual level: she would stimulate him, he would let her down, she would give up, and he would think that, after all, her initiative was not truly felt...

He blames his wife for thinking only about her job while never accepting domestic help, putting a strain on and causing dissatisfaction in their relationship as a consequence. Indeed, according to him, his wife thinks that she has to take care of her husband and daughter as well as working because of a misunderstood sense of duty.

Mr Giovanni outlines a family state of affairs in which his wife is a sort of "bionic woman" in her efficiency who, nevertheless, neglects both him and her daughter who are united in complaining about her absence.

Mr Giovanni seems to downplay some of his behaviours that had been previously alluded to by his wife as determinants of the failure of his marriage. One of these was his sexual coolness, which led him to prefer watching porno videos to the company of his wife, even during the first month of their marriage when they were living with his parents: "It was the time when private television started to broadcast these kind of films... it was the only way I had to share something with my father".

During the second interview, Mr Giovanni says that the relationship with his wife is less tense. Nonetheless, she is still evasive regarding her holidays, which she will not enjoy with her husband and her daughter: it would be the first time in many years that this has happened. In fact, they always holidayed together in the past, with or without their friends.

In this interview, the discourse revolves around the daughter: her father defines her as "tough, brusque, rough, apparently not very affectionate, but deeply tender". He nonetheless admits that she was more expansive before the abuse. He says that Maria is closer to her mum, even though she is temperamentally more akin to him. Yet, when all three are together, Maria tends to be tougher to her father, whereas when she is alone with him she is more affectionate. His wife says they are "accomplices and allies against her".

The father claims to be concerned about the promiscuity of his daughter: according to him, Maria throws herself into relationships that are based only on physical attraction, and the absence of emotional involvement with these partners is the very cause of her relational failures.

Remarks

During the supervision meeting, when asked about her reactions during the first session with Mr Giovanni, the psychologist replies: "I was afraid that he might read my emotional reactions to his words on my face, I was concerned about having to force myself to keep an expression as neutral as possible". The unbearable sight, the vicinity, marks the difficulty of passing from the "protected" relationship expressed via the telephone line to the presence. The psychologist also hints, as it may be easy to sense, at the difficulty of looking at the scene of the incest while repressing the twofold desire to look both at and away. The incest, in a way, fascinates and digs up repressed and unconscious contents, which emerge without any mediation or defence except the imperturbability that the psychologist displayed on her face with such difficulty.

The psychologist considers the desire of the husband to talk to her twice without the presence of his wife as a step towards a possible meeting with the couple. This can now take place both because the individual interview represented a place/room for representing many contents too disturbing to be expressed in the presence of the other (see the emotional opacity of the narration) and because, at least as far as we can tell, Mr Giovanni has had the chance to test his ability to "face" the meeting with the psychologist, as he wanted, in a way, to test the waters.

Further contacts and sessions

The sixth and seventh telephone contacts

During the period of time between the first telephone call made by her husband and the interview with him, Mrs Adele has kept in touch with the psychologist of the CPF (Centro per le famiglie). She mainly used her phone calls to determine her husband's intentions and his commitment to change, while complaining about the lack of clarity between them and his evasive attitude in leaving her without answers. We decide to apply leverage on this feeling and on the fact that "as a matter of fact, she is there even when she is not physically present" to propose a meeting with the couple geared to help them overcome this moment of crisis. She accepts, but re-asserts that she has now decided to separate and, in her view, the problem revolves mainly around her husband: thus we arrange a meeting with both spouses, making

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clear to them that this will be attended by a couple of psychotherapists (the psychologist and her supervisor).

During the interview, we have the feeling that Mrs Adele is trying to keep herself "out" of her husband's narration for a number of reasons, the most important of which seems to us to be a strong resistance to speaking plainly about the abuse of Maria, for which she probably feels jointly responsible. It is also worth noting the apparent strangeness of the fact that Mr Giovanni had accessed the service twice before we came to know Mrs Adele in person, even though she was the first to break the silence. We believe we recognize in this behaviour a very traditional behavioural trait, i.e. an adhesion to a patriarchal relational model according to which a woman is not allowed to speak about "facts regarding her husband" unless he does so first. As a matter of fact, only after the interviews with Mr Giovanni, she accepts our appointment. At the same time, it seems as though the will to blame her husband does not stem from a real awareness of the traumatic implications of the abuse to which her daughter has been subjected. It seems, instead, almost a defensive distortion of meaning, which, in fact, downplays the abuse itself.

The session with the couple

Mr Giovanni and Mrs Adele arrive at the meeting together. Mrs Adele begins by saying that she has come because she thinks that the whole family (she, her husband, and indirectly her daughter as well) needs help. She would have asked for help had she not become involved in a new relationship, which she points out has developed only because her marriage was extremely deficient. Mrs Adele says that she has dug up some episodes from the past regarding the excessive familiarity between her husband and her daughter, which she now sees in a different light. She then speaks about the porno films that were the main interest of her husband while their sexual life was really poor. Mr Giovanni rarely intervenes and does so mainly to downplay what his wife is saying. Mrs Adele describes her progressive detachment from the conjugal relationship. She prioritizes her job and her social life, which keep her out of the house a lot, as a sort of compensation.

When asked whether she thinks that this capacity to detach herself from her husband can now be used to keep her daughter away from her father,

Mrs Adele appears puzzled. She thinks it is unseemly to keep a daughter away from her father. Only upon careful reflection she admits that "the closeness between them is excessive".

After this plain allusion to the incest, we ask them whether it would be possible to discuss it here, and with much more clarity.

The father outlines two or three episodes, and claimed that "by the second episode", his daughter "could not be traumatized because she was like half-asleep". When asked directly, he denies having had other episodes of this kind with other children, as his wife claimed more than once. Mr Giovanni instead continuously steers the conversation towards Mrs Adele's extramarital affairs, which "have upended the family tranquillity".

Towards the end of the session, we offer our availability to carry on with the counselling and also our possible availability to undertake a further process of help. When Mrs Adele asks whether or not her daughter ought to come along next time, we reply that the space for the meeting is open to the whole family, no matter how they decide to use it, apart from the subsequent evaluations that we will take into account in considering a possible therapeutic taking-charge process.

The eighth telephone contact

The mother calls to let us know that both her husband and her daughter have turned down the proposal to carry on with the meetings. She is discouraged, unsure, and sees her husband and her daughter teaming up against her. On the one hand, Maria shows herself to be indifferent to the development of the conjugal crisis and, on the other, the husband let every request for separation to drop. Since this phase is characterized by an underlying indecision with regard to the conjugal separation, we restate what we said to the woman at the end of the previous meeting, i.e. this family has at its disposal a space for meeting up, in the way they prefer, including individual consultations. As Mrs Adele is going through a phase of indecision with regard to the conjugal separation, she decides to schedule an appointment.

Remarks

Both the psychotherapeutic session with the couple and the subsequent phone conversation with Mrs Adele are worrying in that we see a reluctance

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to focus on the gravest family events and on the psychological damage that these might have inflicted on Maria. Mrs Adele's attempt to "explore" her husband's alleged attraction to his grandchildren, which he indignantly denied, seems to cast a shadow on the attempt to label this man as a perverted paedophile, and shifts the attention to the central hub, i.e. the abuse of his daughter. This element must have a crucial importance for Mrs Adele in that she can make up a role in which her maternal responsibility to take care of her daughter has met the obstacle not of her "inattention" but, rather, of the alleged inescapability of her husband's pathological tendencies.

The fact that she could say to herself "he did it with his grandchildren as well" must have, in the reconstruction of her story, an almost reassuring virtue in that it would make her less responsible for her behaviours. We agree in thinking it rather improbable that a second meeting with the couple will come about. "These two people seem to have nothing to say each other about the incestuous relationship between father and daughter" we bitterly note.

The second session, with mother and daughter

Mrs Adele and her daughter turn up to the next appointment. The mother is happy that the girl has come and she immediately affirms that Maria is not "guilty" and must not feel "responsible" for the disagreements between her and her husband. She will show, many times during the meeting, the fear that her daughter cannot overcome the trauma brought about by the separation of her parents, which is mainly understood as the fact that her mum will leave the family home.

All possible alternative hypotheses to the separation geared to a family reorganization are marked by Mrs Adele as impracticable both for "practical" reasons, which are in fact inconsistent, and because she affirms that "she wants to separate" so she must be the one to leave. However, she thinks that her husband would be completely incapable of fending for himself and become prone to depression and discomfort if she were to leave the house. Mrs Adele never seems to ponder the idea that her husband could move over. She is more concerned about the possibility of leaving her daughter to "take care" of her old father and take up a "housewife" role.

Maria is physically like her father. She conveys the impression that she is only here to accompany and humour her mother and not because she is interested in the argument that, as she already knows, has been already discussed with her father. Maria seems to show good self-confidence but also a certain annoyance – slightly exhibited, almost as though she wanted to highlight it – in speaking about herself and her life. When asked directly, she says she envisages three separate houses for each of them. When we point out the strange situation in which her daughter ends up giving advice and approval to her mother, instead of *vice versa,* as is normally the case, Mrs Adele confirms that she often consults her daughter in search of suggestions, as Maria is a wise and level-headed girl. The latter repeats to her mother that, if it is true that her parents' marriage never worked out, as is quite plainly the case, and if her mother "woke up and smelled the coffee" at last, she cannot understand why she is still hesitating to declare it: "Do you want to wait other twenty years" she says in conclusion. This spontaneously introduces the metaphor of the Sleeping Beauty who, once she wakes up, finds out that the whole castle has shared her bewitched dream. Maria replies that, in her case, her mother is the only one who "slept" whereas she had carried on with her life and no longer wishes to go along with the family inertia.

In summary, the daughter catches the metaphor and adjusts it to the family state of affairs while her mother appears puzzled and talks about the price she has had to pay in terms of strain in bringing out the family crisis and the events that caused it.

Both of them agreed that the cohabitation is becoming increasingly unpleasant and filled with arguments and heavy silences. It is her daughter herself who tells Mrs Adele that she can no longer stand her parents' uncertainty and their behaviours, which tend to involve her in their discussion and decisions. "If you have to make up your mind" she says "just do it and think about your own relationship; what I might think about that is not your business. And, most of all, it is important to keep a distance". Over this last sentence, which is accompanied by what we thought was a significant symmetric gesture of spreading her arms, we conclude the session while returning to the daughter the meaning of this gesture, which aims for an autonomous po-

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sition away from her parents' couple.

We offer, nonetheless, the possibility for Maria to undertake, when and if she thinks it opportune, individual psychotherapy with a professional unrelated to the service or, perhaps, a chance to use the psychotherapeutic service of the Local Health Care System.

Although the topic has not been touched on during this session, we decide nonetheless to ask Maria if she would like us to denounce her father for the abuse that he himself confirmed. We remind her that we can do so as her abuse happened when she was still a child. As we were expecting, Maria does not seem surprised at all by the fact that her parents talked to us about the abuse. However, she states that she is absolutely opposed to us denouncing her father as she is now an adult and does not believe that this decision can be taken by anyone but her. She also has no intention of dragging her father and herself to court, saying, "What would be the good in it? It would be like killing him. And nobody would profit from that. This is a business between my father and me. Actually, I don't care about my father, this is something I must deal with, in my own mind".

Remarks

During the whole session, the mother addresses her daughter many times, looking at her and asking her questions or seeking her opinions. They remained in an up-and-down position until the girl made an attempt at release through the idea of having three different houses, one for each other, which conveys the desire to escape the entangled, suffocating family bond and, implicitly, the untimeliness of the entire family undertaking psychotherapy. The next phrase she used, about keeping a distance, is strongly symbolic at both a physical and a spatial level.

We had the feeling that the girl came to explicate and ratify the position in which she would like to place herself with regard to the family crisis. After all, the plea she makes to her mum seems very straightforward: "I do not want stay with you anymore". She also makes clear, as though we still had any doubt, in which relational twist the incest had taken root, and it stemmed, or was at least favoured, from the parental request "to involve her between the couple". The same Mrs Adele reminded us, during her third telephone interview, that she swapped places with her daughter in her bed to

avoid sharing this with her husband.

Conclusions

The taking-charge process of the family continues but, after several weeks and a last telephone interview, the father departs the scene by letting us know that he has found a private psychotherapist who inspires trust.
The daughter appears released by her parents' separation, which has finally taken place and *did her justice*. The separation also drove Maria closer to her mother, with a renovated if cautious trust, as she still perceived her as dangerously collusive with regard to the episodes of abuse to which Maria has been subjected.

We remind Maria about some services that could take up a possible request for individual therapy, always if and when she needs it. Then, Maria, after another two sessions, departs the scene.

Her mother, instead, continues the individual clinical pathway, until the conclusion of her separation and the definitive choice of her daughter to live with her in a new home. Two years later, the penultimate session is characterized by a meeting with Mrs Adele's new partner: he has come to the CPF to pick her up. A few minutes before the end of the session, he knocks on the door asking to enter and meet the psychologist. Some years after the end of the therapeutic path we receive a call from Mrs Adele. From her we come to know that Maria did not see her father again after going to live with her mother. She underwent lengthy private psychotherapy and now she lives with her partner. Mr Giovanni has recently died. Maria went to see him only once, during the last days of his illness.

Some comments on this case with regard to the taking-charge process at the Centro per le famiglie

The evolution of this case leads us to consider the difficulty of turning a secret, which has been efficaciously enshrined within the family homeostasis, into a narration, that is, a story that has been soothed thanks to the peculiarity of communication by telephone, which was chosen first by the mother and then by the father to get in touch with the service. This kind of means of listening and welcoming allowed deeply internal contents, which were enshrined as a secret, to gain access to a conceivable mental space.

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The anonymity, protection and distance/proximity provided by the telephone contact represent a sort of flexible diaphragm that separates while allowing a connection to be created, and also permitting intrusions, and retreats within a sort of weaving of the narration that increasingly takes shape. This modality of contact, which represents a specific working setting, seems particularly suitable in this case as it resonates with the more urgent issue of the distortion and annulment of distances, as expressed by the daughter during the counselling session.

It is our firm conviction that allowing the access to a space of care to all the narrating voices, including the abusive father, which in this case had already been listened to, welcomed, and contained in the space of the telephone help, has made possible and facilitated the taking-charge process of this family. We still need to bear in mind that the theme of incest, which represents the extreme and most pathological example of concealed domestic violence, is also deeply concealed within the secret of the emotional bond itself.

In the light of our study, we believe that the Centro per le famiglie's guideline is extremely worthy. In other words, the work carried out by health services constitutes a help process if, and only if, it strengthens, raises, and networks the competence of the individuals and those of the whole family system. To this end, it is necessary to leverage the conflict, understood as a representation of the family relational layout.

The very category named "family risk", which is often used to define a specific as much as a complex area of care work, assumes a different meaning when the taking-charge strategy is defined by directly addressing the family both as a collective entity and as a user with full rights to specific services. These can be used even when the requests for intervention concern one or more of the family members, and even when they involve severe personal and relational problems.

This perspective allows us to develop strategies and interventions aimed at reconciliation. Yet, the recognition of the damage geared to a possible intervention of reconciliation and the activation of intra- family policies of reparation of the damage inflicted on a woman can develop only after he who has abused her explicitly accepts his own responsibility. This is an area of

intervention that also needs the professional to take responsibility for intervening, which, in our view, can take place only within the work of a supportive team and service. Regarding the tools to use, these must be chosen in accordance with the women and children who are the victims of violence and, afterwards, with their abuser and the entire family network, provided that this is available and ready to collaborate to elaborate and overcome their trauma. This area of intervention necessitates a solid preparation along with experience that is just as solid. This is nonetheless a difficult practice that requires coherence, i.e. no indulgent pietisms and not even hasty actions based on rigid and schematic guidelines that, if not accepted, often lead women's narration to sink back unsaid into the "haze area" of the family.
As we have already explained elsewhere (Ferrari Bravo, & Volpe, 2012), violence frequently emerges through "contradictory signals", in a narration in which it does not represent the main topic and to which no particular value is attributed, either by the victim or by the abuser (the latter are mainly husbands or partners), who have no awareness of the gravity and the pathology of violence. In the cases of requests for help made by couples only after a certain period of time, it is possible to access a more private area and hence the possibility, almost always for women, to express their suffering.
It could be interesting to carefully describe the protocol used by the Centro per le famiglie in counselling conflict-based separations:

- In cases of couple counselling, at the first hint of violence we encourage the client to narrate what happened, even in the presence of the partner.

- This policy, i.e. trying not to postpone the chance to listen to the individual to a future occasion, represents a form of protection in itself: we enter the story as actors as soon as we become witnesses to the narration.

- The presence of a third party, i.e. a witness – a person who will remember what has been said, who will share the burden of the choice that will be made and who will give his/her point of view – represents a promise of attention, regard, and help in itself; and

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- Only after listening, and hence establishing a significant personal relationship, can the service offer the possibility of a legal appeal and/or psychological and social help from specialized services, without necessarily interrupting the pathway undertaken with the service.

We should also acknowledge the strong resistance of the personnel themselves to adopting a guideline, which, in view of the ambiguity, evasiveness, and probable incompleteness of certain narrations, can seem like a hazard. In this regard, we should remember that, as in the case described above, we may be dealing with a couple who are still cohabiting, and between whom it is quite plain that the emotional bond has retained all its strength.
This is particularly important when the narration is about traumatic events that are downplayed by the woman herself as inherent characteristics of an emotional bond considered undeniable, both for herself and for her children. In that sense, we believe it is useful and productive to support the process of reconciliation with its own traumatic experience that includes a face-to-face meeting with the very author of the violence. In doing so, we can allow the woman to recover her dignity as a subject endowed with autonomy and value. It is, thus, necessary to explicate mechanisms that have caused the couple and family bond to endure even under sufferance. These mechanisms can be reconstructed and "purified" only if the person who perpetrated the violence accepts his or her responsibility. This is particularly important in the event of prosecutions since, even when these have a good outcome in terms of justice for the victim, they do not represent psychic reparation in itself.

Since this area of intervention still needs to be widely explored and developed, the possible reconciliation strategies constitute a necessary turning point for the treatment of domestic violence. The recognition of the specific role and responsibility within the victim-aggressor relationship is a key-point. Separations often disclose situations of violence that have been endorsed for years though never reported and sometimes made object of squalid relational negotiations or manipulated by lawyers as a revenge to win their trials. We ought to made the point that if many cases of violence are raised during a separation these are not only "manufactured" denunciation aimed at gaining possible benefits, but also a contextual data stemming from

an increased self-awareness of women. These, indeed, spurs women to take up protective decision for their children and themselves (Testoni, Pogliani, Guglielmin, Armenti, Alessandra, Verdi, Moita, & Wieser 2012).

Recently, some authors have described the effects of an absence of denunciation and taking charge (Romito, & Melato 2012). In our view, the debate on the modality of treatment should be wider and more circumstantial. In that sense, our contribution is intended as an accurate description of a treatment that is allowed to profoundly enter different relational and institutional dynamics. Indeed, simply by explicating different modalities of intervention with regard to different professionals (physicians, psychologists, judges, social workers, and police officers) and to the different moments (flagrancy, first aid, emergency, protection, recovery and clinical treatment), it is possible to take charge and support people both immediately and in the long run, and to allow public services and associations to meet the needs of women (Arcidiacono, Di Napoli, Tuccillo, & Coronella, 2012). To conclude, today it is necessary to strengthen the Italian public service network through inserting more personnel – given the impoverishment of social services after personnel retirement and the cuts to the health system – and giving the latter training (Arcidiacono, & Esposito, 2012) and updates with regard to femicide, domestic violence, and institutional family mediation.

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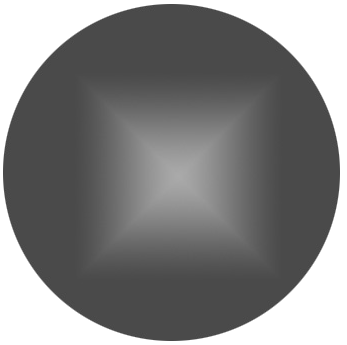

POSTCOLONIAL AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS

Neus Roca Cortés

¿Violencia íntima o violencia machista de pareja? Su visibilidad desde una perspectiva de género y feminista. Notas de la experiencia en España.

Abstract

The need of a gender perspective addressed to tackle violence against women also in psychology is argued Several terms used to name partner violence against women are discussed: from crime of passion to macho violence crossing intimate partner violence. Gender perspective in psychological intervention and research is also discussed. Social development of violence against women as a problem is described. This development has moved from silence as far as social intolerance and sensitivity to survivors. This visibility of hidden violence against women has been a lot of principal actresses in different levels and spheres. Their outcomes have been a lot of women's liberation and recovery from violence setting during the last twenty years and the actual preserved strength of gender perspective.

Keywords: gender violence, social transformation, psychological intervention.

> *No estamos acostumbrados [ni acostumbradas][1] a asociar el patriarcado con la fuerza. Su sistema socializador es tan perfecto, la aceptación general de sus valores tan firme y su historia en la sociedad humana tan larga y universal, que apenas necesita el respaldo de la violencia. Por lo común, sus brutalidades pasadas nos parecen prácticas exóticas o "primitivas" y las actuales, extravíos individuales, patológicos o excepcionales, que carecen de significado colectivo. Y, sin*

[1] Las palabras entre corchetes son de la autora.

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> *embargo, al igual que otras ideologías dominantes, como el racismo y el colonialismo, la sociedad patriarcal ejercería un control insuficiente, e incluso ineficaz, de no contar con el apoyo de la fuerza, que no sólo constituye una medida de excepcionalidad, sino también un instrumento de intimidación constante.* (Kate Millet, 1995, edición original en inglés de 1969).

La necesidad de la perspectiva de género

Utilizar la perspectiva de género para el análisis de la violencia interpersonal contra las mujeres e intervenir sobre ella es una necesidad no una cuestión de opinión. La perspectiva de género es un enfoque necesario para el estudio de la violencia interpersonal heterosexual.

Los datos sobre su prevalencia nos anuncian tozudamente que la mayoría de víctimas de esta violencia son mujeres, adultas o niñas y los infractores son hombres (ONU, 2006; OMS, 2005), que el 70 por ciento de las mujeres asesinadas en el mundo lo son a manos de sus parejas, ex parejas o familiares directos en contraste con la situación de los hombres que, en general, suelen ser atacados por personas extrañas o conocidas pero no de su círculo íntimo y que ésta es la principal causa de muerte y discapacidad entre las mujeres de 16 a 44 años de edad (Krug *et al*, 2002). Es una violencia que afecta transversalmente a todas las mujeres de diferentes la clases sociales, niveles de estudios y países. De estos datos se deduce que el mayor riesgo de sufrirla es solamente el ser mujer, como nos repiten continuamente los informes de la ONU.

Otra razón de peso para entender tal necesidad es por algunas orientaciones individualistas, psicopatologizantes, victimistas y paternalistas dominantes en la Psicología que en el caso de la violencia contra las mujeres la ocultan al desviar la atención hacia las víctimas con explicaciones o etiquetas técnicas desacreditadoras o culpabilizadoras (Romito, 2007).

La perspectiva de género y feminista, es el único punto de vista que siempre llama a esta violencia por su nombre, es el único enfoque que analiza este fenómeno desde las desigualdades sociales, las relaciones de poder entre los sexos/géneros y desde las atribuciones de roles, identidades

y estatus sociales heteroasignadas y rígidas. Este enfoque teórico entiende el comportamiento individual como social y político y por tanto no esconde la naturaleza moral de este fenómeno. La violencia machista hacia las mujeres atenta directamente contra su libertad de acción y de ser, contra el ejercicio de sus derechos y de dirigir su propia vida también en las relaciones cotidianas afectivas y no solamente en las agresiones externas.

La perspectiva de género, como el resto de perspectivas, sea cual sea, es una elección teórica para analizar, nombrar e intervenir sobre la realidad, las personas y sus relaciones. Se trata de una elección fundamentada en el pensamiento contemporáneo y de reconocida tradición teórica colectiva de los *Women's Studies* académicos (Amorós y De Miguel, 2005; Beltrán, Maquieira, Álvarez y Sánchez, 2001) producido en el activismo sociopolítico de las mujeres, en la cultura y en las universidades.

La perspectiva de género al fundamentarse en el marco de los feminismos, identifica, cuestiona, deslegitima la violencia contra las mujeres y propone alternativas democráticas de convivencia como vindicación colectiva (De Miguel 2003, 2008). Veremos este liderazgo feminista y su evolución en el caso de la sociedad española.

Y otro aval, no por último menos importante. La declaración de la ONU de 1993 sobre la "Eliminación de la violencia contra las mujeres", en su artículo nº 1, la define como "todo acto de violencia basado en la pertenencia al sexo femenino que tenga o pueda tener como resultado un daño o sufrimiento físico, sexual o psicológico para la mujer, así como también las amenazas de estos actos, la coacción o privación arbitraria de la libertad, tanto en la vida pública como en la privada". En todos sus informes reiteran esta perspectiva de género cuando señalan como factor de riesgo el ser mujer y sitúan el origen de esta violencia en una sociedad sexista que discrimina a las mujeres por el solo hecho de serlo (ONU, 2006). Estos organismos han reconocido esta violencia en el marco ético del paradigma de los derechos humanos

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Los nombres de la violencia

Los nombres no son neutros ni gratuitos. Al "bautizar" un fenómeno se le reconoce socialmente, se promueven significados literales y simbólicos que ocultan o visibilizan aspectos de su naturaleza. Las denominaciones utilizadas a lo largo de la evolución de la visibilización e ilegitimación social de la violencia contra las mujeres merecen ser analizados. Hace apenas veinticinco años en España se nombraba la violencia contra las mujeres en las violaciones pero no se nombraba cuando se trataba de violencia en la pareja dentro del núcleo familiar, ni siquiera como "maltrato" ni, por supuesto, como "violencia". Cuando se cometía un asesinato se visibilizaba en medios de comunicación marginales, apenas salían en televisión o radio y siempre explicados como "crimen pasional".

De crimen pasional a violencia doméstica

Esta denominación fue una de las más comunes (en algunos imaginarios aún sigue siendo así) y justifica implícitamente el asesinato. Tal implícito empezó a resultar tan moralmente grosero que fue desapareciendo a medida que la violencia contra las mujeres era denunciada. Fue sustituido por el término técnico psiquiátrico "celos patológicos". Ambas denominaciones aluden al mito patriarcal de la fuerza e incontinencia masculina de su fuerza y sus impulsos sexuales. El cambio a "celos patológicos" permitía también justificar la violencia en la pareja sin final de asesinato pero seguía indicando un comportamiento fuera de la normalidad. En cuanto se prestó más atención al problema de esta violencia se usaron otras etiquetas psicopatológicas de variados trastornos mentales, especialmente las que son más cajón de sastre como el trastorno límite de la personalidad.

Un intenso debate en medios especializados sobre el agresor como delincuente o como enfermo desterró estas denominaciones en los medios de comunicación. El debate fue ganado por quienes defendían el carácter delictivo de la violencia como vulneración de derechos (Pineda, 2000) y por quienes argumentaban que la patología mental entre los hombres agresores de sus parejas no es más alta que la encontrada en la población general (Bosch & Ferrer, 2002) y que la agresión de estos hombres en la mayoría de los casos era selectiva hacia "sus" mujeres y a veces también hacia otros

miembros de "su" familia (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994) . Mantener la creencia de la patología en los hombres violentos con su pareja era (y es) una estrategia sutil y eficaz de mantener la conocida irresponsabilidad del agresor por el ejercicio de su violencia hacia las mujeres, el mantenimiento de la impunidad, de la ocultación y de la misma reproducción de la violencia. A esta creencia contribuyen los enfoques más clínico-psicopatológicas y menos psicosociales de la psiquiatría y la psicología.

Dos etiquetas substituyeron a las anteriores: violencia familiar y violencia doméstica. "Violencia familiar" es la primera denominación que usa la palabra violencia pero desdibuja e invisibiliza la violencia específica contra las mujeres, puede indicar tanto la violencia llamada maltrato infantil como el maltrato a la mujer. El paso de "violencia familiar" a "violencia doméstica" representó una conquista más para la política de lo personal. Aún produciéndose en el "inviolable espacio de propiedad masculina" del marido o del padre, primero las feministas, luego los pro-feministas y la sociedad en general, podían señalar esas agresiones como violencia y como delito, como se hacia sin ningún ruido con otras agresiones.

Paralelamente al de "violencia doméstica", la etiqueta "maltrato a la mujer" fue bastante utilizada, provenía de los ámbitos de intervención social y del legal. Pero la pugna seguían siendo las palabras, era necesario nombrar la violencia hacia las mujeres como tal, como violencia. Una etiqueta entraba en el ámbito privado, la otra visibilizaba a la víctima. En ese momento, a favor de que el uso del término "violencia" no sonara extraño, desafiante, duro o rechazable, sino real y prevaleciera el énfasis en la denuncia, se utilizó la analogía con el terrorismo político de ETA que sin ningún miedo se le llamaba "violencia de ETA" y "violentos versus demócratas". Las feministas empezaron a llamar a la violencia contra las mujeres con los nombres de "Terrorismo doméstico" o "Terrorismo machista". Producía impacto, me acuerdo. En España el argumento es (y sigue siendo) contundente: en 43 años el terrorismo de ETA y otros grupos armados asesinó 1220 personas, solamente en los últimos 12 años (desde que se realizan estadísticas) el terrorismo de género ha asesinado 816

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

mujeres, el doble[2]. Los grupos feministas habían empezado a contar las mujeres muertas a manos de sus parejas o exparejas. Aparece socialmente cada vez con más fuerza el término genérico "violencia contra las mujeres".

Violencia de género y machista

Pero se ha ido más allá. ¿Por qué la violencia contra las mujeres es de género y sexista y no se trata de una violencia interpersonal a secas?. La relatora especial de la ONU sobre violencia contra las mujeres (Amnistía Internacional, 2002) lanzó una alerta a los estados miembros sobre el peligro de utilizar conceptos difusos como el de violencia familiar o violencia doméstica, porque esconden algo fundamental para analizar el fenómeno: el sexo de los autores y de las víctimas y reducen la violencia contra las mujeres a conflictos entre personas cuando se trata de un fenómeno de relaciones entre los géneros de alcance mundial.

La denominación "violencia de género", en España, proviene de la lucha intensa de denuncia y de visibilización social de un delito supuestamente privado y que pondrá en valor ley orgánica del 2004. Se autoriza así luna perspectiva de análisis de esa realidad que rehúye la ocultación bajo apelativos románticos, tecnicismos científicos o términos generales.

Pero las denominaciones aún pueden ser más específicas: ¿Por qué también la llamamos violencia machista? Porque refleja con más precisión, aunque suene más duro, a quien ejerce esa violencia y su posición social de dominio: los "machos". El epíteto sexuado se justifica en los abrumadores datos que lo avalan. Los diferente informes sobre violencia de los países europeos sitúan entre el 9% y el 12% las mujeres que han sido maltratadas por sus parejas hombres o algún otro hombre de sus familias (Krug et al, 2002; Sanmartín, 2006); en la reciente encuesta de violencia de Cataluña (2010) se sitúan en un 25% las mujeres que han tenido un episodio grave de violencia en su vida, ejecutado el 100% de las veces por un hombre que, en un 75% de las veces, era de su entorno (familia, trabajo, red social). Este

[2] Publicado por Angustias Bertomeu en E-Mujeres en http://www.e-mujeres.net/noticias/agur-eta-20112011 refiriendo sus fuentes de datos a la Fundación Víctimas del Terrorismo y Observatorio Estatal de Violencia sobre la Mujer del Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, Consejo General del Poder Judicial.

término fue puesto en valor también por una reciente ley *del Dret de les dones a eradicar la violència masclista* del *Parlament de Catalunya*, en 2008. Actualmente es usado en los medios de comunicación del territorio español, no solamente del catalán.

Algunos autores hombres van más allá, designando esta violencia como "violencia masculina contra las mujeres". Hombres militantes igualitarios y también psicólogos que apuestan para que la violencia sea calificada como masculina por el imprescindible compromiso de todos los hombres, no sólo de los machistas, con su erradicación (Lozoya, 2000) y para no seguir contribuyendo a su ocultación en esos actos cotidianos que todavía se callan, se banalizan o se justifican por el "carácter fuerte" y los instintos "varoniles" (Bonino, 2005).

Precisiones conceptuales en psicología

Actualmente en la investigación psicológica es común utilizar el término "violencia de pareja" en el área hispanoparlante, e *intimate partner violence,* en el área anglófona. Ambos nombres obvian el término patriarcal, género, machista o sexista. Con ello se pone en evidencia una sorprendente contraste entre la persistente evitación en psicología del término género o machista para calificar la violencia contra las mujeres y el decidido reconocimiento de los organismos internacionales y políticos sobre el origen de la violencia en el sistema social sexista.

Culpar a la víctima, tecnocráticamente

En la psicología y otras profesiones de ayuda, estas evolución conceptual con que se nombra la violencia machista tuvo su trayectoria específica. Cuando se empezó a nombrar en voz pública el maltrato específico hacía la mujer en el seno de la familia se diseminó la idea de "perfil de víctima". Dicho así y solo así, se daba a entender que la debilidad de la mujer la situaba ya en la posición de subordinación ante la violencia sin más explicaciones que el imaginario de la inferioridad o la perversidad. Esta estrategia de ocultación a través de la desacreditación de la víctima fue duramente criticada y rápidamente desapareció.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Frenado este desmán, la siguiente estrategia de desviación más que de comprensión se fue (y aún persiste) hacia la pregunta sobre el mantenimiento de las mujeres en una situación tan dura cuando en realidad no están secuestradas. Idea especialmente perversa cuando se conoce el importante riesgo para sus vidas en el momento de separación de las parejas violentas. Duró 15 años la lucha para que el manual internacional de clasificación de síntomas de trastornos mentales publicado por la *American Psychiatric Association*, ampliamente utilizado en la formación de los profesionales de la Psicología y la Psiquiatría aboliera en 1994 la atribución de un trastorno a la mujer superviviente de una situación de violencia, aunque pasara por nombres diferentes, desde trastorno masoquista (que se consiguió no saliera ni publicado) a personalidad autoderrotada (Romito, P., 2007). A pesar del contundente artículo de Lenore E. A. Walker (1987) argumentando con minuciosidad la incongruencia de esta denominación si se atiende al comportamiento activo de las mujeres en sus intentos de frenar la violencia de sus parejas, la hipótesis sadomasoquista sigue esgrimiéndose en algunas consultas de psicoanalistas según Marie France Hirigoyen (2006).

La psicóloga Lenore E. A. Walker ha sido pionera en el estudio y atención a mujeres en situación de violencia, desde una perspectiva feminista y de género por el que recibió un premio de reconocimiento de la *American Psycological Association*. La denominación *"Síndrome de la Mujer Maltratada",* título de su libro publicado en 1984, reeditado y revisado a lo algo de treinta años en el que describe con precisión las secuelas de la violencia recibió críticas[3] desde el feminismo por que esta etiqueta contenía el riesgo de victimización y la connotación de enfermedad para referirse a un delito.

La connotación de pasividad que tiene la noción de víctima aplicada a las mujeres es ambivalente. Por un lado, reconoce el daño causado y permite

[3] En una comunicación personal de la misma Lenore Walker a la autora de este artículo a raíz de su intervención en el Simposium Internacional de Violencia hacia las Mujeres celebrado en Barcelona en mayo del 2007, expresaba su tristeza por esta crítica que entendía como incomprensión y en cierta manera como injusta por su clara apuesta por la liberación de las mujeres que siempre había tenido y sigue sosteniendo en su práctica psicológica, científica y docente cotidiana.

restaurarlo, pero por otro lado, apoya el estereotipo sexista de falta de agencia. E impone a las mujeres a la obligación de ser víctimas como única manera de tener reconocimiento social y legal (Masià, 2000). Se ha optado por el uso del término "superviviente" pues reconoce la resistencia activa que las mujeres ejercen en una situación de opresión que saben es peligrosa. Asimismo, también se ha eliminado de nuestro uso el término "mujeres maltratadas" para pasar al de "mujeres en situación de violencia". Con este giro lingüístico se elimina una etiqueta cuyo uso esencialista sigue posicionando a la mujer en el victimismo, la subordinación, y se abre un camino de elección propia.

Estrategias de confusión[4]

No se debe confundir la agresión con la violencia, ni la violencia de pareja con el conflicto de pareja. Pero exagerar suele ser una de las "acusaciones" estereotipadas hacia las mujeres y más si tiene tintes "feministas". Pensaran: um!, son radicales. Pero en psicología se le va a llamar de forma más técnica: "error (profesional) de diagnóstico". Una mirada precisa y de género nos permite discernir.

Aunque agresión, violencia y conflicto pueden usarse como sinónimos, en el caso de la Psicología es imprescindible distinguirlos (Roca Cortés, 2011). La concepción de violencia de pareja tiene algunos puntos clave: la intención, la persistencia y la asimetría de poder. La agresión es una acción dañosa que surge como reacción defensiva y resulta proporcional al ataque recibido. La violencia, en cambio, es una agresión consciente, intencional, continuada y, habitualmente, selectiva contra las víctimas para conseguir su objetivo, la dominación. Así son también las guerras colonialistas. En el caso de la violencia contra las mujeres el objetivo es controlar y mantener la dominación sobre la pareja mujer, asociada a la identidad masculina tradicional, a través de debilitarla, anularla y en el límite, hacerla desaparecer.

[4] Este apartado forma parte del capítulo "Intervención grupal y violencia sexista: marco conceptual" de la misma autora.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

¿Violencia íntima o violencia machista de pareja?

Una de las resistencias más habitualmente oídas es la presencia de violencia mutua, es decir la violencia del hombre es defensiva o las mujeres también agreden. La agresión puede ser mutua, pero la violencia no siempre lo es (Roca Cortés, 2011). Algunas mujeres narran episodios esporádicos en los que frenaron la violencia física directa en el momento que se iniciaba porque agredieron físicamente a la pareja violenta, normalmente con objetos domésticos, o con agresiones verbales. Esto puede frenar la violencia solamente en ese instante, aunque habitualmente la aumenta. En cambio, la violencia como agresión continuada puede ser mutua, pero no suele serlo, ya que si la violencia consigue el objetivo pretendido, la parte debilitada tiene menos oportunidades para su defensa especialmente cuando opta por respuestas no agresivas. Esta distinción es necesaria para valorar aquellas escalas de medición del conflicto de pareja que no detectan la agresión defensiva, como por ejemplo la escala de tácticas de conflicto (CTS) de Murray Straus (1996).

Hay que distinguir violencia de conflicto. A diferencia de la violencia machista de pareja, en el conflicto de pareja que aparece alguna agresión defensiva hay una relación simétrica, las vulnerabilidades no se aprovechan para la dominación y, si en algún momento hay agresión intencionada, se reconoce como tal, se responsabilizan de ella, hay reparación (Garreta, 2005) y modificación de estos comportamientos, siendo por tanto una agresión intencional realmente esporádica.

Intervención psicológica y social: ¿también de género?

Las diversas denominaciones de violencia de género, sexista, machista o violencia masculina para designar las violencias de pareja contra las mujeres tiene que ver con un análisis que hunde su mirada en las raíces de una sociedad sexista que discrimina a las mujeres y utiliza la violencia para mantener ese sistema asimétrico en función del sexo. En el seno de este sistema social, patriarcal, encontramos los mecanismos fundamentales que generan, naturalizan e invisibilizan la violencia contra las mujeres, desde la más indirecta y sutil a la más evidente. Las violencia estructural, simbólica y manifiesta actúan sistémicamente (Roca Cortés, 2011). Correlativamente

son mecanismos de desigualdad socioeconómica, de atribuciones rígidas, heteronormativas y binarias de roles sexuales asimétricos cuyas transgresiones y críticas se castigan, y finalmente, la violencia institucional o interpersonal legalizada, o fomentada o permitida y hasta hace muy poco tiempo impune. En este estado de cosas, cuando las mujeres queremos usar nuestra libertad en condiciones de igualdad social encontramos dificultades de muy diferentes tipos que incluyen violencia más o menos virulenta y manifiesta contra nosotras.

Será la perspectiva de género y feminista la que nos permitirá abrir los ojos, guste o disguste el adjetivo, también en las relaciones afectivas. Una mirada especial que provendrá solamente de la lucidez ante el sentido de la justicia y de la libertad o de la conciencia informada. Para no ceder los ojos, hará falta una lucha interna que incluirá darse cuenta, con o sin vocabulario feminista, de las normas patriarcales en las que hemos sido socializadas que nos subordinan (desde la socialización en la agresión, en la autoridad, en las relaciones con los hombres, en el amor y la familia, en la sexualidad e imagen corporal, entre otras), nos mantienen en estado de miedo permanente o en situaciones de violencia en las relaciones afectivas. Darse cuenta de la opresión específica sexista guiará nuestras intervenciones psicológicas sean de prevención de la violencia, de detección y atención de mujeres en situación de violencia y también nuestra intervención rehabilitadora de hombres que ejercen la violencia contra las mujeres.

A la intervención y la investigación con perspectiva de género se las suele acusar erróneamente de sesgadas por no tomar una posición neutra y, por tanto, de dudosa credibilidad e incluso de sospechosa ineficacia. No se toma una posición neutra ante esta violencia machista contra la mujer de forma consciente y rigurosa, puesto que esta pretendida neutralidad elude las implicaciones psicológicas en el individuo de una realidad social inmersa en relaciones de poder. Una intervención neutra es, en realidad, solo supuestamente objetiva, imparcial, porque al no explicar sus criterios ideológicos de análisis de la realidad social tiene como efecto conservar la situación tal como está. Siendo el status quo un posicionamiento también ideológico, la intervención falsamente neutra es también ideológica, conservadora, aunque se intente eludirlo o negarlo (Roca Cortés, 2011).

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Al contrario, una intervención no neutra hace explícitos sus criterios ideológicos de análisis del sujeto y su realidad. Tomar posición no significa que en una entrevista de investigación guiemos ideológicamente las respuestas de las mujeres o que en una sesión de diagnóstico consideremos inadecuadas posturas tradicionales en la relación hombre-mujer o que en las sesiones de tratamiento y orientación se manipule la transferencia psicológica en favor de la adhesión a una determinada ideología o doctrina. La intervención rigurosa y científica, sea en una u otra dirección ideológica, explicará claramente sus concepciones de la realidad social sobre la que interviene, sus criterios sobre lo que es o no correcto, sin esconderlo detrás de tecnicismos científicos aparentemente inocuos. Así, la persona en tratamiento tendrá más información para elegir.

Una intervención social y psicológica con perspectiva de género, ya sea realizada por una mujer o por un hombre, se caracteriza por visibilizar lo oculto, por desnaturalizar la opresión social naturalizada por el sistema social patriarcal. La intervención de género analiza la realidad del sujeto y de la situación teniendo en cuenta la influencia de la estructura social en su subjetividad tanto como los componentes biográficos y físicos individuales. Una perspectiva de género entiende que la opresión de una mujer en particular forma parte de la opresión social de las mujeres y detecta en la vida cotidiana de las mujeres la losa de los prejuicios y mitos que nutren la violencia sutil y manifiesta contra las mujeres en la pareja (Graciela Ferreira, 1992; Pérez del Campo (1995); Lenore Walker, 1994; Leonor Cantera, 1999; Tamaia, 2000; Esther Ramos, 2007). En cambio, una intervención en apariencia neutra puede separar lo que es individual de lo que es social, sin establecer ninguna interrelación cuando atribuye los comportamientos individuales exclusivamente a las cualidades individuales de sus protagonistas, a su carácter o personalidad, aumentando la culpa en la dominada o reforzando el comportamiento cuando es dominador y, en definitiva, obstaculizando el cambio liberador.

Referencias profesionales también apoyan esta perspectiva. La Asociación Americana de Psicología presentó en la asamblea anual de 2001 el documento del grupo de trabajo presidido por Michelle Harway (2001) en el que establece las bases curriculares recomendadas para la formación en el

ámbito de la llamada violencia íntima de pareja. En los modelos causales de la violencia relacional se recomienda especialmente la necesidad de pasar de enfoques lineales mecanicistas a enfoques multidimensionales interactivos y ecológicos, enfatizando el hecho de que muchas marcas de vulnerabilidad que parecen características de los individuos pueden ser también identificadas como factores sociales, sistémicos, de socialización y de roles de género que condicionan a lo largo de toda la vida.

Lo personal es político: hacia la ilegitimidad de la violencia contra las mujeres

La evolución en España de la violencia contra las mujeres como problema social ha transitado del silencio a la intolerancia social y legal. Esta visibilidad de la violencia oculta contra las mujeres ha tenido muchas protagonistas en diferentes niveles y ámbitos constatando que ha sido posible por la confluencia del activismo feminista en tres bloques: el movimiento autónomo de mujeres, los grupos feministas de presión política y el feminismo institucional y, a su vez, esa influencia ha calado en una generación de mujeres ubicadas en un contexto histórico determinado.

Explicaremos este tránsito desde la actividad de estos tres bloques, a menudo entremezclados, pero con algunas marcas temporales que nos permitan narrar y, a su vez, reconocer el papel transformador del movimiento feminista de base. Sus críticos análisis, su valentía y compromiso decididos juntamente con el conocimiento de la realidad de las mujeres en situación de violencia que obtuvieron al ser las primeras en atenderlas y darles voz pública acreditada hizo posible difundir una perspectiva subversiva feminista y de género sobre la violencia contra las mujeres.

Mi intención, no es hacer historia, sino reflejar la confluencia de estas fuerzas sociales que permiten narrar y comprender la visibilidad desde una perspectiva de género y feminista. Por ello solamente citaré aquellos grupos, personas, organismos que, según mi conocimientos, sean más ilustrativos.

El movimiento feminista autónomo, inicios de los 80

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

El rastro de las acciones feministas autónomas nos ha llevado años atrás, a la segunda etapa de la época dorada del movimiento feminista español que se inició en los años 70 en el marco de la segunda ola del feminismo internacional. El movimiento feminista del estado español llega a la violencia contra las mujeres una vez conseguidas libertades básicas como la despenalización de los anticonceptivos, el divorcio y el aborto en la primera mitad de los 80. Y llega a través de sus análisis de la violación sexual derivado de sus vindicaciones de la liberación del cuerpo y la exigencia de la sexualidad autodeterminada de las mujeres (Vega, 2005).

La violencia hacia las mujeres en las relaciones familiares era invisible e impune. Hacía 10 años de la aparición en inglés del libro de Susan Brownmiller *Contra nuestra voluntad*. En este último se debatía la definición de la violación y alertaba de su utilidad para todos los hombres en tanto que sumía a todas las mujeres, también las no violadas nunca, en un estado de miedo permanente. Kathe Millet, en Política Sexual, también lo analizaba así.

A mediados de la década de los 80, se crean comisiones sobre las agresiones en el seno de los grupos locales feministas, se van celebrando en distintos lugares de la geografía española jornadas feministas cuyo tema principal son los malostratos y agresiones a las mujeres[5]. En estos documentos podemos leer ya unos análisis, vocabulario y conceptos que son, treinta años después, de amplia actualidad social y profesional.

En 1988 y 1989 se dan las más importantes movilizaciones feministas de denuncia de la violencia hacia las mujeres, con la participación de mujeres que habían pasado una situación de violencia (Vega, 2005). Durante esta década los grupos de mujeres del movimiento feminista crean (y seguirán creándolos a lo largo de los siguientes 20 años) espacios de atención

[5] Un rastreo inicial a partir de los datos de Cristina Vega y de la recopilación de las ponencias de las Jornadas Estatales Feministas contra la Violencia Machista de 1988 (del centro de documentación digital Emakumea), nos llevan a documentos variados sobre encuentros en Córdoba en 1986, en Euskadi en 1984, ponencias y encuentros de abogadas entre 1984 y 1989, informes sobre aspectos sociológicos de los malostratos realizados en centros de atención fechados en 1985 de Amparo Cardaño Díaz o por Alicia Herrera Rivera que seguro que otras profesionales feministas probablemente también hicieron.

psicosocial y jurídica a mujeres en situación de violencia, servicios abiertos y refugios residenciales.

El movimiento feminista con su radicalidad, compromiso, consistencia y tenacidad consigue influir socialmente para el cambio: nombrar la violencia más allá de la violación, denunciar su ocultación y trabajar para desnaturalizar el uso cotidiano de la fuerza contra las mujeres por el hecho de serlo. El movimiento feminista refleja la vida y la voz de las mujeres en situación de violencia, busca datos reales, cuestiona mitos y creencias de la cultura popular patriarcal que la justifican o culpan a las mujeres de la violencia que reciben contribuyendo así a su impunidad y a la irresponsabilidad de los hombres maltratadores del ejercicio de esa violencia.

En esta década, con la subida al poder del partido socialdemócrata obrero español, se crea en 1983 el Instituto de la Mujer que fomentará avances para el cambio de la vida de las mujeres. En 1988 la Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Senado presenta un informe sobre maltratos cuyo tratamiento en primera página por parte del periódico *El País* marcando un inicio en la visibilización de la violencia contra las mujeres en los medios habituales de prensa escrita.

Grupos de presión y el feminismo institucional

En ese trayecto de visibilización y desnaturalización, otro de los canales importantes de influencia social y política son las feministas institucionales y los grupos feministas de presión próximos a los poderes políticos, tanto en el estado español como en las instituciones internacionales. Recordemos que son de esta década las declaraciones[6] y resoluciones de organismos internacionales y los primeros estudios de la ONU sobre el problema de la violencia contra las mujeres como violación de sus derechos humanos y ejercen una fuerte influencia como referencia legítima de autoridad.

[6] La conferencia mundial de Mujeres de Beijing declara la violencia contra la mujer como una de las esferas que obstaculizan el progreso de las mujeres, en 1995; la Resolución del Parlamento Europeo de Tolerancia Cero ante la violencia hacia las mujeres en 1997; y la Resolución de la Asamblea Mundial de la Salud (OMS) declarando la violencia como problema prioritario de salud pública, en 1996.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

En estos años un grupo informal de presión, cercano al poder político central, autodenominado Impacto Feminista inicia su lucha señalando tres cargos públicos con sentencia por maltrato que seguían en actividad parlamentaria. La Asociación de Mujeres Separadas y Divorciadas publica en su web datos alternativos a los oficiales de víctimas que incluyen a las parejas y exparejas aunque no estan legalmente casadas, tal como realiza el Ministerio del Interior. Ellos será el inicio de los grupos feministas de presión. En 2002 se crea formalmente la Red Feminista contra la Violencia de Género que concentra la información sobre el tema y, a su vez, canaliza una interlocución coordinada con el gobierno, las administraciones y los medios de comunicación en la reivindicación de la Ley Integral (Boix, 2006).

Una de las acciones más influyentes de ese momento fue la creación en 1997, de una página web de feminismo en el mundo hispanoparlante, Mujeres en red. Su lista de violencia constituye un nodo de conexión para el aislamiento, par el solitario lugar de trabajo. Estas páginas de internet fueron y son fuente de referencia de estadísticas, de opinión y de lucha, de denuncias y de información, incluso de demanda de apoyo de mujeres en situación de violencia de pareja o laboral. El ciberfeminismo tendrá efectos multiplicadores por su gran capacidad de visibilización, de transmisión de información y de creación de conciencia colectiva. Las constantes campañas de denuncia son eficaces. La combinación y coordinación de movilizaciones virtuales y presenciales tendrá un fuerte impacto (Boix, 2006).

En estos últimos años noventa e inicios de la década del 2000, el poder ejecutivo no es ajeno a este impulso internacional y desarrolla medidas que promoverán más asistencia, protección para las supervivientes, información clara y visible, y una intervención en el sistema judicial. El Instituto de la Mujer pone en marcha el primer Plan Contra la Violencia Doméstica en1998, las encuestas poblacionales sobre la prevalencia de violencia de pareja y se crea el Observatorio contra la Violencia Doméstica y de Género por el Consejo General del Poder Judicial presidido por una magistrada de decidido talante feminista. Año tras año hay campañas oficiales de sensibilización que colocan en el espacio público general esta problemática.

A pesar de sus inconvenientes por centrarse en la denuncia y en la voluntad de las mujeres de alejarse de la violencia que simplifican el problema.

En el estado Español, el movimiento feminista ha disminuido su movilización reivindicativa en la calle, pero no su activismo que, en el caso de las violencias contra las mujeres, se transforma en un aumento de los servicios de atención en ciudades pequeñas, con un conocimiento cada vez mayor de la voz y las vivencias de las mujeres, en la promoción de campañas de denuncia y sensibilización y en su participación constante en foros de discusión profesionales e institucionales. Su lucha se centra también en el plano legislativo para conseguir modificaciones de un código penal que minimiza la violencia hacia las mujeres de muy diversas maneras (Marugán, 2000; Fernández Hierro, 2000). Estas presión consigue, a lo largo de una década, que en el código penal la violencia hacia la mujeres sea considerada delito sin necesidad de relación estable con el violento y sin necesidad de reiteración, que aumenten las penas irrisorias para los hombres maltratadores, que aparezcan nuevas formas de violencia como la psicológica y la sexual, y que se visibilice y se tome conciencia de que las prácticas judiciales apenas utilizan estas novedades. En esta década de los 90, se empiezan a celebrar en la calle los "25 de noviembre", empiezan a aparecer los primeros libros especializados sobre el tema desde una perspectiva de género, provenientes de Latinoamérica, feministas y editoriales feministas españolas y de feministas universitarias.

Los medios de comunicación

En esta década y durante la siguiente los medios de comunicación tendrán su contribución en la visibilización, denuncia y conciencia del carácter social y de la magnitud del problema, generando reacciones y discursos, y quebrantando la sensación de vergüenza de las supervivientes al desvelarse al gran público esta violencia como indignante e inaceptable. A raíz del asesinato de una mujer a manos de su exmarido inmediatamente después de haber explicado su caso por televisión se desvelaran las conciencias de muchas y muchos profesionales de la comunicación. Pero a su vez, la experiencias de violencia de las mujeres serán expuestas en los *reality show* de televisión, guardando mínimas reglas de decoro y precaución. A pesar

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

del uso morboso de sus vivencias, se oyen sus voces desde la credibilidad y desde la injusticia en un altavoz de amplísimo alcance. Algunas asociaciones de ayuda a mujeres y de abusos sexuales infantiles aprovechará estos platós para romper el silencio. Por otro lado, los noticieros de televisión muestran un día tras otro la cara más brutal de esta violencia. Ante los peligros de esa victimización galopante, las asociaciones de mujeres periodistas ponen coto a este desmán estableciendo unas reglas que guíen a los medios de comunicación en un tratamiento adecuado de la información sobre los temas de violencia contra las mujeres.

Según Cristina Vega (2005) ante la hiperfocalización del espectáculo de la agresión física se reduce y descontextualiza del campo de la violencia. Los medios de comunicación, y también algunas publicaciones especializadas centran el discurso en la victimización y la dependencia que conllevará más reduccionismo y una invisibilización de las actitudes de resistencia activa de las mujeres supervivientes. Al suprimir o difuminar las relaciones de poder que subyacen a esta violencia se individualiza en la disfuncionalidad familiar o individual. Pero este será un discurso en el que se estancaran también algunas orientaciones de la Psicología.

En plena ebullición

Toda la sociedad española está impregnada de esa lucha contra la violencia, de esa intolerancia: cineastas[7], cantantes, poetas, gentes del teatro famosas y amateurs, grupos culturales de barrio, y sus vecinas y vecinos. Las calles de toda la geografía española, ciudades grandes y pequeñas, se llenan de grupos de mujeres y plataformas colaborativas que actúan de forma local para la sensibilización social y la denuncia constante. Incluso ante asesinatos de mujeres a manos de su pareja o expareja, los políticos y políticas salen a la calle a mostrar minutos de silencio. Los medios de comunicación lo reflejan en reportajes o documentales de gran formato. Las

[7] Solas de Benito Zambrano, en 1999; Solo Mía de Javier Balaguer, en 2001 y Te Doy Mis Ojos de Icíar Bollaín en 2003 son tres ejemplos de la conciencia social de la violencia hacia las mujeres en el mundo del cine. Las directoras y guionista de Te Doy Mis Ojos estuvieron 4 meses en un grupo de mujeres en situación de violencia de una asociación. A estas le han seguido otras películas sobre el abuso sexual infantil desde las vivencias de las niñas y mujeres.

organizaciones no gubernamentales de lucha por los derechos humanos también se implican: Amnistía Internacional de España lanza una campaña de denuncia y publica un primer informe general en 2001 de los siete realizados a lo largo de la siguiente década.

En el mundo académico empieza a introducirse tímidamente la temática de la violencia de género en asignaturas existentes y en otras nuevas. La investigación académica sobre la violencia doméstica y de pareja también empiezan. Así se pone de manifiesto en algunos encuentros académicos como las Jornadas del Instituto de la Mujer sobre en 2003 sobre investigaciones en violencia. Empieza también la formación especializada sobre violencia desde una perspectiva de género de la mano de feministas académicas comprometidas[8] y de los servicios de atención de algunos grupos feministas o de profesionales feministas de servicios públicos, habitualmente municipales. Las convocatorias de encuentros profesionales son constantes.

La fuerza social que en esos momentos adquiere la denuncia contra la violencia hacia las mujeres podría quedar simbolizada por la valentía de Nevenska Fernández, una concejal del Ayuntamiento de una ciudad mediana de Galicia que en 2001 denuncia por acoso sexual al alcalde (máximo poder municipal) compañeros ambos del mismo partido de derechas. La persona pública que la apoyó fue la portavoz (mujer) del partido de la oposición, de izquierdas. El alcalde fue sentenciado y abandonó la política temporalmente por voluntad propia. El castigo para ella fue el vacío familiar, social, laboral y, finalmente, el destierro al extranjero (Millás, 2004).

En 2003, cuatro años más tarde de la última reforma del código penal se consigue que el gobierno de derechas de entonces cree las figuras de la "orden de protección" y las "medidas cautelares coordinadas" que permitirán a la mujer e hijos agredidos no tener que huir de su propio

[8] En 1997 se crea la primera formación universitaria de postgrado del estado español en violencia hacia las mujeres, dirigido por la Dra. Leonor María Cantera Espinosa profesora del Departamento de Psicología Social de la *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*. En este master, su directora trajo consigo la experiencia centroamericana para Catalunya y fomentó la alianza con profesionales y académicas del movimiento feminista.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

territorio cuando la violencia recibida así lo permite y, a su vez, atender con agilidad las necesidades de guarda y custodia de los hijos. Pero no es gratuito, además de la conciencia social, la presión es constante: el incremento incesante de denuncias, las persistentes demandas de ayuda y atención por parte de las supervivientes, los requerimientos constantes de colectivos de mujeres y profesionales que denunciaban la indefensión de las supervivientes ante las contradicciones de las medidas judiciales del momento y la conciencia del riesgo de violencia después de la separación a pesar de la denuncia.

Desde la ley orgánica contra la violencia de género

El hito político sobre la relación que la sociedad española tiene con la violencia hacia las mujeres es la aprobación de la Ley Orgánica de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género en diciembre del 2004. Esta ley largamente reivindicada por las feministas introduce claramente la perspectiva de género en el análisis y tratamiento de la violencia, en su sentido de construcción sociocultural, en su título, en su preámbulo y en todo su contenido. Veamos dos ilustraciones. En el apartado primero del preámbulo reza: "La violencia de género no es un problema que afecte al ámbito privado. Al contrario, se manifiesta como el símbolo más brutal de la desigualdad existente en nuestra sociedad… ". Y cita la conferencia de Mujeres de 1995 de la ONU "… las agresiones sufridas por la mujer como consecuencia de los condicionantes socioculturales que actúan sobre el género masculino y femenino, situándola en una posición de subordinación al hombre …". Su enfoque social y de género se refleja en el modo integral y multidisciplinar de su contenido. Se garantiza el derecho de acceso a la información y a la asistencia social integrada a través de servicios de atención permanente, de atención urgente y con multidisciplinariedad profesional, el derecho a prestaciones específicas y a la provisión de un fondo presupuestario para todo ello. Cabe resaltar que tanto en la atención a las supervivientes como en la prevención educativa, la misma ley incluye una formación preventiva en los valores de igualdad dirigida a su desarrollo personal y a la adquisición de habilidades en la resolución no violenta de conflictos.

La repuesta integral de esta ley tiene su expresión máxima en la creación de Juzgados específicos de Violencia sobre la Mujer, en la formación de los operadores sanitarios, policiales y jurídicos responsables de la obtención de pruebas y de la aplicación de la ley. Se establecen igualmente medidas de sensibilización, protocolización, detección e intervención en el ámbito sanitario y en el ámbito educativo. Se concreta el respeto a la igualdad y dignidad de las mujeres en el ámbito de la publicidad, se apoya a las víctimas a través del reconocimiento de derechos como el de la información, la asistencia jurídica gratuita y otros de protección social y apoyo económico. Asimismo se contempla la protección a los menores como víctimas directas o indirectas de la violencia sobre la mujer. Una de las medidas más decididas y a su vez más contestadas fue el incremento de la sanción penal cuando la lesión se produzca contra la pareja mujer. Se trata de una acción positiva que tuvo que ser reiteradamente explicada contra los ataques de supuesta discriminación hacia los hombres.

Al amparo e influencia de esta ley, diversos gobiernos autonómicos del estado español promueven leyes que fomentan un sistema estable de lucha contra la violencia de género y atención a sus víctimas. Se inicia un importante despliegue de recursos para la atención y protección a las mujeres en situación de violencia y se inician algunos programas de prevención. Se incrementan las denuncias, los juicios y las sentencias condenatorias. Algunos de estos recursos permanecerán y otros duraran tanto (o tan poco) como los gobiernos de izquierdas. Los medios de comunicación generales siguen abordando con intermitencia pero con constancia la denuncia de esta violencia, profundizando en la dinámica del maltrato y las formas de violencia, los debates entorno al desarrollo de la ley y también las reacciones en contra. Poco a poco las críticas des del movimiento feminista de una visión catastrofista y victimista logran introducir contenidos sobre la liberación y recuperación de las mujeres en los medios y en las campañas. También se realizan investigaciones sobre los procesos de recuperación (Roca Cortés, 2009, 2012; Cala, 2011).

En el mundo académico aumentan considerablemente las investigaciones sobre violencia al considerarse una de las líneas prioritarias del Instituto de la Mujer integrado en los planes generales de desarrollo científico I+D,

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

desde muy diversos ámbitos: la Psicología Social, la Psicología Jurídica, la Psicología de la Personalidad, del Trabajo Social, des del Sistema Sanitario, entre otros. La formación universitaria en temas de violencia hacia las mujeres ha aumentado considerablemente.

La historia de una generación de mujeres

Pero no comprenderíamos bien este recorrido hacia la intolerancia social bastante generalizada ante la violencia patriarcales, la gran sensibilidad social hacia la atención y protección de sus víctimas y su mantenimiento sin reseñar el contexto histórico del estado español. Las generaciones de mujeres que actualmente tienen (tenemos) entre 50 y 70 años, que actualmente ejercen su autoridad en su familia y su trabajo u ocupan cargos públicos de poder vivieron (vivimos) en sus (nuestros) años jóvenes, por un lado, la crudeza de un patriarcado en un régimen fascista religioso[9], y por otro lado, la segunda ola de un feminismo que estalló con mucha fuerza después de la muerte del dictador y, sin ser activistas feministas, constituyó un referente para su (nuestro) crecimiento personal, identidad e inserción socio-laboral.

A pesar de los grandes cambios democráticos de las mujeres en España, la rebeldía vivencial de la opresión machista aún pervive en su (nuestra) memoria y creo que esta es una de las razones por las que las acciones feministas, autónomas o institucionales han tenido y siguen teniendo un gran eco. La injusticia de las violencias patriarcales resuenan en los cuerpos de las mujeres que siendo parejas, madres, amas de casa, profesionales, pueden resignificar y renombrar distintas experiencias de dominación vividas y se vinculan con notable facilidad a iniciativas de lucha contra la violencia en sus lugares de responsabilidad. También es así en las mujeres amigas, hermanas, madres, abuelas y también en hermanos, padres y amigos cuando se trata de ayudar a las mujeres en situación de violencia de su

[9] Las conquistas conseguidas por las mujeres (voto, divorcio, aborto, propiedad, entre otros) en las Repúblicas en los años 30 del siglo 20 se abolieron con la victoria fascista en la guerra civil española, que reinstauró para el patriarcado leyes napoleónicas de finales del siglo diecinueve especialmente coercitivas para las mujeres y que duraron en su gran mayoría hasta finales de la década de los 70. Fueron cayendo con la muerte del dictador y un fuerte movimiento feminista.

entorno inmediato. El incremento del apoyo social inmediato ha sido espectacular a lo largo de estos últimos diez años. Actualmente muchas más mujeres llegan a los servicios públicos ya separadas y la mayoría de las que llegan a las casas de acogida no tienen red social.

Mantenimiento de la perspectiva de género y los peligros de su gobernabilidad

Uno de los resultados de esta lucha y con esta perspectiva de género y feminista han sido, sin lugar a dudas, la liberación y recuperación de situaciones de violencia de muchas mujeres a lo largo de estos últimos treinta años, por tanto, la consecución de mayores cotas de libertad y ejercicio de sus derechos para todas las mujeres. No tenemos datos sobre mujeres atendidas pero si los tenemos de denuncias: se han multiplicado por 9 las denuncias en 24 años, de 14.701 en 1988 (Informe del Senado) a 134.002 en 2012 (datos del Observatorio del Consejo General del Poder Judicial). Y aún así, se sigue luchando para que no se enfoque la denuncia como paso necesario hacia la liberación de la violencia. Muchas liberadas no lo han hecho: entre un 72,6% y un 80%[10].

Son esperanzadores los datos que podemos comparar actualmente son los de la Macroencuesta sobre una muestra representativa de la población española realizado por el Instituto de la Mujer (Sigma Dos, 2006) que detecta una disminución significativa de su prevalencia del 2006 (9,6%) a la del 2002 (11,1%) y también respecto a la de 1999, teniendo en cuenta que esta última incluía también las mujeres residentes en España aunque no tuvieran la nacionalidad. En el avance de datos la última Macroencuesta del IM (2012) se informa que la proporción de mujeres que ha logrado salir de la situación de violencia de género ha ido aumentando de forma significativa desde 1999, pasando de un 2,9% del total de las entrevistadas en ese año a un 4,2% en 2006 y al 7,9% en la del 2011.

A mi entender, otro de los resultados de esta trayectoria de visibilización e ilegitimación es el mantenimiento de esta perspectiva de género a nivel social general a lo largo de estos años posteriores a la ley, incluso con

[10] Datos de los avances de la macroencuenta el 2011 y de la encuesta de violencia machista hacia las mujeres del 2010 del gobierno catalán.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

gobiernos conservadores. El ámbito judicial fue uno de los ámbitos que más esfuerzo tuvo que hacer para desplegar la ley, pero parece ser también que es el ámbito que más resistencias está presentando en sus prácticas (Amnistía Internacional, 2011).

Ha habido resistencias neomachistas a la misma ley y una de las más fuertes es el mito-mentira de las denuncias falsas de maltrato de las mujeres que han sido contrarrestadas con inmediatez. Las primeras declaraciones al respecto se realizaron desde el interior del sistema judicial por parte de una Magistrada del Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Catalunya manifestando que las mujeres hacían denuncias falsas para ganar ventaja en los litigios de divorcio y que los jueces se veían movidos a sentenciar a favor de las mujeres a causa de la presión social derivada de la ley. Y las hizo sin ningún estudio ni dato previo. Estas declaraciones fueron rápidamente contrarrestadas como desacreditación de las víctimas. En aquellos momentos el incremento de las denuncias de las mujeres se frenó. Pero esta idea ha sido recurrente: en el mismo sistema judicial, en varias páginas web, en declaraciones de "famosos" y en el imaginario colectivo. Incluso después que el Consejo General del Poder Judicial en 2009, hiciera un estudio sobre sentencias y sólo encontrara tres sentencias sobre posibles denuncias falsas por malos tratos en el primer semestre del año, de un total de 23.762 fallos dictados, es decir, un 0,01 % del total de sentencias.

La denuncia y la crítica se mantienen en vigor aún actualmente también entre los medios de comunicación generales: ante escenas de degradación de las mujeres en televisión, de simbolismo de violencia en publicidad, hacia sentencias mantenedoras de la impunidad, hacia minimizaciones de las violencias; críticas a la ineficacia de los cursos alternativos a ciertas condenas a hombres que ejercen maltrato, al uso del síndrome de alienación parental en los juzgados, a su apoyo por parte de psicólogos colegiados; se realizan denuncias ante comentarios desacreditadores a mujeres que denuncian agresiones y abusos sexuales, ante los recortes de servicios y subvenciones especialmente sesgados hacia los intereses de las mujeres, a las cartas pastorales de la iglesia católica culpando a las feministas de la violencia en el seno de la familia o los embates públicos y mediáticos de las asociaciones de padres separados entre muchas otras.

Pero queda mucho por hacer y con la vigilancia puesta en las trampas de ese mantenimiento de las nuevas formas de violencia y nuevas narraciones de viejos mitos machistas. El movimiento feminista mantiene esta posición en sus continuados análisis.

Conclusiones

Una primera conclusión a la llegamos es que toda esa sensibilidad y compromiso social desde la mirada de género ganado a la impunidad de la violencia contra las mujeres no hubiera sido posible sin la conjunción tenaz y comprometida de la participación colectiva, no solo la individual, de las diversas actrices y actores sociales que hemos mencionado.

El análisis de las sociólogas Begoña Marugán y Cristina Vega (2003) alertaba sobre la gubernamentalización de la violencia y de la perspectiva de género como nuevo modo de regular el conflicto de género que pudiera gestionar solo las manifestaciones más excesivas y urgentes de la violencia y no se dirigiera a socavar las raíces patriarcales de la violencia de género. Al hilo de sus trabajos, debemos preguntarnos aún si la perspectiva de género llega a ilegitimar o solamente a visibilizar, desnaturalizar y contener la violencia patriarcal pero no a transformar la sociedad que la produce. El vigor con que actualmente aún se mantiene ese activismo social de la mirada de género, a pesar de algunos retrocesos, nos hace pensar que caminamos en el sendero de la transformación siempre que mantengamos una posición crítica. No podemos olvidar que se trata de una carrera de fondo.

Otra conclusión tiene que ver con la ambivalencia en la calificación de la perspectiva. Llamarle perspectiva de género ¿es un discurso reformista o también es transformador?. El uso del término "género" como sinónimo de feminista tiene la virtud de facilitar la aceptación social de un enfoque crítico; "género" es un término utilizado por organismos internacionales ampliamente aceptados como la ONU y es la denominación de los propios grupos de estudios feministas en las instituciones académicas. Sin embargo, como advierte Rosa Cobo (2009) se corre el riesgo de velar el carácter crítico hacia la dominación patriarcal que contiene el término feminista. En este trabajo utilizamos ambos términos como sinónimos aunque debamos

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

empezar a plantearnos las diferencias con el término "feminista" y si tales diferencias son necesarias para continuar la tarea de conseguir una vida libre de violencia para nosotras las mujeres, también en la psicología.

Si el protagonismo sobre el tema de la violencia hacia las mujeres y la perspectiva de género ha pasado al estado y del estado a los expertos, según las autoras mencionadas anteriormente, se corre el riesgo de ver la violencia patriarcal contra las mujeres como un problema individual y como una enfermedad. Es ahí donde reside el desafío para la psicología: incluir las perspectivas feministas en nuestra teorización, investigación e intervención, utilizar ese sentido crítico hacia un patriarcado que inunda la subjetividad y la vida cotidiana. A mi entender, no se trata de pregonar los discursos feministas sino de tener plena conciencia de que el análisis psicológico también tiene que ver con la libertad de las personas, no solamente con sus emociones y acciones. El carácter técnico-científico de nuestras acciones no puede velar su naturaleza ética. Debemos analizar los significados sociales que impregnan las vivencias más allá de la biografía individual y en su contexto social sistémico. En los consejos, orientaciones e interpretaciones que las psicólogas y psicólogos siempre damos debemos mostrar alternativas de vidas de igualdad, de relaciones de libertad y autoridad. No se trata de poner en riesgo a las mujeres, sino de informar desde la crítica al sistema patriarcal, respetando su libertad y sus decisiones, vayan en la dirección que vayan. Debemos reflexionar sobre el impacto en las personas y en la sociedad de los dispositivos psicosociales de comprensión, teóricos y de intervención de los que se ha dotado la psicología. Tenemos pendiente elaborar estos retos, en el caso de la violencia machista de pareja.

En nuestras últimas investigaciones sobre las fases de liberación y recuperación de las mujeres en situación de violencia se identifican como nocivas aquellas "ayudas" profesionales que no nombran la violencia ni los riesgos de esa situación. Este tipo de intervenciones generan retrocesos puesto que dan un cierto descanso a las mujeres, alimentan sus esperanzas hasta que vuelve a recrudecerse la violencia. Esto puede representar 2, 3 o 4 años, con una boda, un hijo o una emigración en medio (Roca Cortés, 2012).

Ese componente de agencia y conciencia colectiva que precisa la liberación de la violencia, incluso en una sola persona, tiene en la

intervención psicosocial grupal un escenario privilegiado de cambio. Los grupos de mujeres se convierten en espacios privilegiados de cambio positivo, en sus caminos de liberación de la violencia. En estos grupos las mujeres exploran la expresión de sus puntos de vista y malestares desde una comprensión específica de su grupo social tal como se hizo en los grupos de autoconsciencia. Sus vivencias teñidas del ser mujer serán rápidamente validadas por otras mujeres. Se reconocen mutuamente como iguales aunque no idénticas, con libertad y autoridad mutua. Su estar individual se torna así en un vivir colectivo que refleja las prácticas y discursos sociales pero que también los critica. Sus miradas van cambiando con la escucha y el reconocimiento de su propio deseo, con su darse cuenta, su reflexión independiente y con el contraste de pareceres y sentires. Así, en el grupo, el cambio tiene legitimidad, puede ser reforzado e interiorizado en el bagaje de la propia identidad y vida cotidiana. Las mujeres se encuentran de frente con la recuperación, con su empoderamiento, con la validación de alternativas de ser y actuar en libertad. Esta es una de las herramientas de transformación con las que cuenta la psicología.

He tenido ocasión de escuchar a algunas mujeres que después de liberarse y recuperarse de situaciones de violencia que por iniciativa propia se han asociado con otras mujeres en la lucha contra la violencia o en su ayuda mutua o nos cuentan entusiasmadas su apoyo decidido a mujeres de su entorno o su participación con el grupo de amigas a las manifestaciones en favor de los derechos de las mujeres. No es que las hayamos "convertido" puesto que han pasado, individualmente o en grupo, por muy diferentes manos expertas y de amistades, sino que después de elaborar su experiencia de la violencia vivida también desde el lugar social del ser mujer han tomado una opción de acción colectiva. Ellas también participaron en ese recorrido de visibilización e ilegitimación de la violencia machista de pareja.

En definitiva, la tarea es larga también para la psicología si queremos contribuir a la erradicación de las violencias patriarcales. La perspectiva de género es una opción teórica y de intervención rigurosa, necesaria y efectiva.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

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Barbara Biglia

Marcos legislativos y prácticas educativas sobre violencias de género y juventud en Cataluña

Abstract

In this article we wish to systematize and present to an international audience the state of the arts in preventive practices aimed at young people in the field of gender violence and an accompanying policy framework in the specific context of Catalonian society. This article is the result of the research we are carrying out in the Gap Project for training profesionals working with the youth around gender violence. We will justify at the onset the extreme importance of this topic by presenting some evidence of the grave situation for young people on this issue. We shall then continue with a critical contextualization of state legislation in order to proceed to highlight the differences and similarities of other regional proposals. We end our presentation by critically analyzing a selection of preventive resources directed to the youth as developed in the Catalonian context.

Keywords: prevention of gender violence, youth, educational policies.

Presentando el contexto

La implantación reciente de la democracia en el Estado Español ha conllevado un esfuerzo tardío de adecuación a los estándares políticos comunitarios (Gallego Calderon, Subirat, Gomà, 2003) que, en algunos casos, ha revertido en el diseño de legislaciones, como por ejemplo la ley integral contra la violencias de género, aplaudidas como muy progresistas en el contexto de la UE (Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2010).

Al mismo tiempo, durante la transición democrática, la inclusión de las demandas de los movimientos sociales en la agenda política estatal ha comportado, entre otras cosas, la creación de instituciones y organismos

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

dedicados a responder a las necesidades específicas de las mujeres (Bonet, 2007). De hecho "La creación del Instituto de la Mujer en diciembre de 1983 se considera no sólo el punto de partida del feminismo de Estado en España, sino también de las propias políticas de igualdad de género (Bustelo, López y Platero, 2007, 69).

Sin embargo, esta situación, aparentemente favorable para abordar las discriminaciones y las violencias de género, tiene su reverso de la moneda. Así, un análisis más en profundidad de la citada ley permite detectar muchas de sus limitaciones teóricas, al mismo tiempo que las experiencias de las y los profesionales nos muestran varias de sus debilidades en la práctica. Más aún, la hiper-protección política de cuestiones relativas a las mujeres ha llevado al desarrollo de una actitud social y legislativa políticamente correcta que dificulta a muchas jóvenes darse cuenta del camino que aún queda por recorrer hacia un futuro sin discriminaciones. Finalmente, la necesidad de defender los derechos de las mujeres, duramente conquistados gracias a los feminismos, ha conllevado en algunos casos cierta ceguera ante las experiencias de violencia vividas por personas no heteronormativas, y ha sido utilizada como escusa en un ejercicio de des-responsabilización de los varones hacia temáticas consideradas de competencia *femenina*.

En este artículo pretendemos analizar estos fenómenos en el caso específico de las violencias de género en poblaciones jóvenes de Cataluña. Para hacerlo presentaremos en el primer apartado evidencias empíricas de la gravedad del problema. Seguiremos nuestro camino con un análisis crítico de la legislación vigente, estatal y autonómica, en materia de violencias de género y de algunas de las principales políticas públicas derivadas de ellas. Acabaremos el texto presentando el incipiente análisis de unos materiales de prevención sobre violencias de género dirigidos a jóvenes para mostrar la necesidad de que éstos sean diseñados con mucho cuidado para que no reproduzcan de forma implícita estereotipos y discriminaciones, en lugar de promover la desarticulación real de las violencias de género.

Acercándonos al problema de las violencias de género hacia/entre jóvenes en Cataluña

Si bien hace años algunas feministas declaraban satisfechas el fin de la sociedad patriarcal hay muchos elementos que nos muestran cómo, desafortunadamente, estamos todavía muy lejos de este objetivo. Para poner sólo algunos ejemplos las diferencias salariales de género siguen siendo una triste realidad en todos los países (European Union, 2013), las mujeres continúan haciéndose cargo de la mayor parte del trabajo reproductivo y de cuidado (Vega, 2009) y la pobreza y la crisis afectan de manera específica y más grave a las mujeres (Vicent *et al*., 2013).

De la misma manera, si bien parece que se están dando transformaciones en los procesos de socialización diferenciada por género, muchas modificaciones han sido más aparentes que reales. Es más, si bien los estereotipos de género causantes del sexismo siguen siendo interiorizados durante la niñez y la juventud (Colás y Villaciervos, 2007; García-Pérez et al., 2010) las personas jóvenes parecen tener siempre más dificultad para reconocer el sexismo en su cotidianidad (Alberdi, Escario y Matas, 2000; Biglia y Luna, 2012; Biglia, Velasco, 2012). Algunas optimistas vaticinan que las violencias de género están disminuyendo entre la población juvenil pero, desafortunadamente, muchas investigaciones muestran una realidad muy diferente.

Así, de acuerdo con un estudio recién publicado por Carvajal y Vázquez (2009) las personas entre 18 y 30 años consideran las violencias de género más inevitables que las mayores y los chicos estiman "que se trata de una preocupación específicamente femenina en proporción mayor que los varones de más de 30 años" (ibdem: 230). Las jóvenes, nos sigue diciendo el estudio, tienen menos confianza que las adultas, e incluso que los hombres de cualquier edad, en que la educación sea el mecanismo más eficaz para luchar contra las violencias de género, siendo en cambio las que más apuestan por la influencia positiva del endurecimiento de las penas.

El *género como violencia* (Biglia, en este volumen) sigue afectando de manera importante, de hecho 6,5% de las chicas y el 0,8% de los chicos

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

entre 15 y 29 años se han sentido discriminadas alguna vez en por su sexo[1], siendo esta tendencia creciente con la edad (CIS, 2010). Los datos muestran además como la apariencia sigue siendo un factor de gran presión, sobretodo para las educadas en el rol femenino, siendo casi el 15 % de ellas las que *se sienten discriminadas por su aspecto físico* frente a un 8 % de sus compañeros. Los estereotipos de género entre jóvenes se reproducen también en el campo de la sexualidad; de hecho el 56% están muy o bastante de acuerdo con la afirmación de que *los hombres tienen más deseos sexuales que las mujeres* y sólo el 14,6% está nada de acuerdo con esta idea. Es curioso además que si bien las chicas parecen ser las que están más acordes con esta afirmación, los varones son los que consideran mayoritariamente la sexualidad como necesaria para el equilibrio personal (83% frente a un 75% respectivamente). Esto implica que la sexualidad sigue siendo vivida como un aspecto a controlar más por parte de las chicas, dato confirmado por el hecho que el 11,4% de los jóvenes y el 2,5% de las jóvenes creen que *está bien que los chicos salgan con muchas chicas pero no al revés*, tal y como muestran los resultados de la encuesta sobre Igualdad y prevención de la Violencia de Género en la Adolescencia del 2010 (Díaz Aguado-Jalón y Carvajal Gómez, 2011). Esta encuesta además visibiliza la presión normativa de género que hace que el 11,7% de los chicos crea que los *hombres no deben llorar*.

Esta normatividad de género está estrictamente relacionada con la heteronormatividad y con las violencias por preferencia sexual[2]. Volviendo a los resultados del CIS (2010) podemos notar que un 7,5% de las y los jóvenes (con una tendencia más marcada entre los varones) siguen estando muy/bastante de acuerdo con la afirmación de que *la homosexualidad es una enfermedad y como tal debe tratarse.* Los datos más alarmantes en este sentido son, sin embargo, que más del 77% de las y los jóvenes dicen *haber*

[1] En las referencias a las encuestas así como a la legislación usaremos la terminología específica (sexo, género, machista, familiar, domestica, hacia las mujeres etc.) tal y como se usa en los originales. Nos disculpamos por la confusión que este uso puede ocasionar pero creemos fundamental mantener esta coherencia con las fuentes.

[2] Delante del debate sobre la utilización del término más biologicista orientación, o el más constructivista opción, tal como se propone en los materiales de la Asociación Candela, decidimos seguir una tercera vía que intenta ser respetuosa con ambas vivencias: preferencia.

escuchado o presenciado insultos hacia personas LGBT, un 23% haber asistido a *amenazas,* un 18% a *agresiones leves* y más de un *6% a palizas*. Finalmente, aunque no menos grave, el 39% han asistido a actos de violencia psicológica como *dejar de hablar, ignorar y aislar a personas* LGTB. Esto es un problema social muy grave dado que, como muestra un reciente estudio del Cogam y de la Felgtb (2012), hay una alta incidencia del acoso homo-lesbo-trans-fóbico al que están sujetas las y los jóvenes LGTB y, con demasiada frecuencia, esta experiencia desemboca, trágicamente, en suicidio.

Muchos más son los estudios que se centran en analizar las violencias de género en parejas heterosexuales. En este sentido la encuesta sobre Igualdad y prevención de la Violencia de Género en la Adolescencia (Díaz Aguado-Jalón y Carvajal Gómez, 2011) nos muestra que el 7% de las adolescentes declara que su pareja la *ha intentado controlar* frecuentemente *hasta el más mínimo detalle* y otro 15% que esto ha ocurrido a veces. Un porcentaje un poco inferior (6%) siente que con frecuencia su pareja ha *intentado aislarle de sus amistades* al cual hay que sumar otro 15% que ha vivido alguna vez esta experiencia. Más alarmante aún es que más del 5% de las chicas declaran que su pareja les ha pegado en alguna ocasión.

De la misma manera, el estudio realizado por la Delegación del gobierno para la violencia de género (Carvajal, Vázquez, 2009) detecta un alto porcentaje de personas de menos de 30 años que han llamado al teléfono de emergencia sanitaria pidiendo ayuda por violencia de género. El estudio sigue remarcando como las menores de 30 años bajo medidas de protección judicial activa en 2008 representaban el 40% del total de mujeres en esta situación y que entre 2003 y 2008 las víctimas mortales de violencias de género en esta edad representaban el 29% del total. En el trabajo se denuncia, finalmente, la sobre-representación del colectivo joven en estas estadísticas teniendo en cuenta los porcentajes de habitantes por franja de edad.

Esta tendencia a la sobre-representación ha ido empeorando en los últimos años, de acuerdo con los datos de la Macroencuesta de 2011 (Ministerio de sanidad, 2012) que muestra un incremento del maltrato hacia jóvenes superior al que se da en la población en general.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Más aún, las personas jóvenes pueden tener experiencias en las que sufren los efectos de las violencias de género en parejas heterosexuales, sin ser miembros de las mismas. De hecho

> el 54,7% de las mujeres que tenían hijos o hijas menores de edad cuando padecieron maltrato de su marido/pareja o exmarido/expareja, indica que los menores sufrieron directamente situaciones de violencia en algún momento. Este porcentaje, además, es más elevado en el caso de las mujeres que lo están sufriendo actualmente (61,7%) que en el de las mujeres que ya han salido de la violencia (51,9%). (Ministerio de sanidad, 2012)

Por otra parte, la *Unidad de Apoyo a la Atención de las Víctimas* (USAV, 2012) considera que en Cataluña existe una gran prevalencia de violencia machista de ámbito comunitario (acoso sexual, explotación sexual, mutilación genital femenina, matrimonios forzados, violencia de conflicto armado, violencias relacionada con derechos sexuales y reproductivos) hacia las menores de 20 años. En este sentido los casos detectados por la Justicia en relación a otros tipos de violencias de género en personas jóvenes (Departament d'Interior, 2012), son alarmantes. En 2012 unas trescientas chicas[3], más de la mitad de ellas menores de 20 años, fueron agredidas sexualmente; 122 jóvenes fueron considerados agresores; 31 niñas sufrieron mutilación genital femenina y hubo 16 matrimonios forzados de los cuales 12 de mujeres menores. La gravedad de estos números queda aun más patente si consideramos que son seguramente muy inferiores a la realidad. De hecho en 2009 las víctimas de agresiones machistas consideradas delictivas han denunciado sólo en un 17,7% de los casos (Departament d'Interior, 2010[4]).

Finalmente no disponemos de datos específicos sobre jóvenes en relación a la violencia vivida en contextos laborales, sin embargo, la Encuesta de

[3] Para que se entienda la dimensión del problema hay que tener en cuenta que, según los datos del Padrón Continuo de Habitantes, a 1 de enero de 2012 residían en Cataluña 3.829.280 mujeres), volumen inferior al número de mujeres residentes por ejemplo en Lombardía en el mismo momento..

[4] Los datos completos de esta encuesta no se encuentran disponibles. Sólo se ha hecho pública una nota de prensa en la que, sin embargo,, no se presentan datos segregados por edad.

Violencia Machista Catalana de 2010 (Departament d'interior, 2010) revela que el problema sigue siendo grave en la población en general. Por ejemplo, las mujeres empleadas por cuenta ajena declaran haber sido objeto de una media de 3 comentarios o gestos ofensivos y de 1,2 tocamientos inadecuados en el último año. En el mismo intervalo temporal, casi el 15% sufrió discriminación en el trabajo por el hecho de ser mujer y, de media, las mujeres trabajadoras sintieron haber tenido unos 7 encargos inadecuados, más de 5 críticas maliciosas y alrededor de 4 menosprecios personales a razón de su inscripción de género. El espacio público parece ser una arena aún más común en la que las mujeres experimentan agresiones machistas, sufridas por el 12% de ellas durante el año encuestado.

Los datos aquí presentados no quieren ser exhaustivos, ya que no disponemos por ejemplo de informaciones sobre las violencias de género institucionales, ni de datos específicos sobre las violencias de género que se desarrollan en espacios virtuales o con el uso de las TIC. Esperamos sin embargo haber mostrado una pequeña fotografía de la gravedad del problema de las diferentes tipologías de violencias de género y de la necesidad de abordarlas desde la más temprana edad, tanto en chicas como en chicos.

Marco legal sobre violencias de género en el Estado Español

De acuerdo con Bonet (2007) las políticas sociales no sólo tienden a mantener el orden heteropatriarcal, sino que acaban frecuentemente configurándose como violencias de género ellas mismas en cuanto su dimensión performativa reproduce y reifica posiciones normativas en el orden heteropatriarcal. Deviene por lo tanto extremadamente importante analizar desde un enfoque crítico las leyes, y en específico las que se dirigen a cuestiones sociales generizadas. En este apartado realizaremos este ejercicio en el contexto concreto del marco legal sobre violencias de género en el Estado Español y en la Autonomía Catalana.

El contexto estatal

Las políticas de igualdad entendidas como "el conjunto de las decisiones, objetivos y medidas adoptadas por las instituciones publicas en relación con

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

el fomento de la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres y con la mejora de la situación socio económica, política y cultural de la mujer" (Bustelo, Lombardo, 2007:11) se empiezan a desarrollar a partir de los '70 en los países europeos y de los '80 en el contexto español. No será sin embargo hasta el 1989, con la reforma del código penal bajo presión del movimiento feminista, que se introducen cambios legales para un primer reconocimiento de los derechos sexuales de las mujeres[5]. La movilización que se crea a finales de los noventa después del homicidio de Ana Orantes, que había ido a un programa de tertulias a denunciar los repetidos abusos de su marido, es la que hace entrar en la agenda pública el caso de las violencias de género. Como consecuencia, en 1998, se empiezan a desarrollar Planes Integrales contra la Violencia Doméstica. La cristalización de las relaciones de fuerza presentes en lo social (Bonet, 2007) es la que lleva a la promulgación de la Ley integral contra las violencias de género (2004). En ella hay un desplazamiento conceptual importante respecto a la visión anterior en cuanto, como analizan Bustelo, López y Platero (2007) se reconoce explícitamente que el origen del problema debe de buscarse en las desigualdades generizadas que afectan a todos los sectores sociales. Sin embargo este desplazamiento no parece estar completamente acabado o asumido ya que en el texto de la ley los términos *violencias de género*, *doméstica* y *contra las mujeres* son frecuentemente utilizados como sinónimos (Biglia, en este monográfico; Bonet, 2007). Es como si en la legislación apareciesen contemporáneamente dos discursos paralelos y parcialmente incompatibles. Por una parte, una apuesta por el reconocimiento del problema como algo público (recogido en el pronóstico de la ley), la continua referencia a un abordaje integral, el discurso sobre la importancia de tener en cuenta los aspectos de la interseccionalidad, el uso del término mujer de una manera no esencialista reconociendo su construcción social, la tipificación específica de las violencias psicológicas, la definición de un pronóstico muy amplio y relacionado con múltiples sectores sociales. De la otra, en contradicción con lo expresado, en el

[5] En este contexto se pasa de la consideración de delitos contra la "honestidad" a la de delitos contra la "libertad sexual" que se reconocen inclusive en el matrimonio y en el que se consideran como violaciones, también, las penetraciones anales o orales sin consentimiento.

prólogo de la ley se restringe el campo de la regulación de las violencias de género a las que "nacen de las relaciones pasadas o presentes de afectividad entre hombres y mujeres" (Art. 3). Las mujeres aparecen mencionadas como los únicos sujetos diputados y responsables de poner fin a las relaciones violentas y no hay medidas preventivas dirigidas específicamente a hombres (Bustelo, Lápez y Platero, 2007). Tal y como analizan Coll-Planas *et al*. (2008) usar un marco de género cuando en realidad las medidas que se proponen se refieren sólo a un sexo, implica reducir erróneamente género a mujeres. De hecho hay un continuo énfasis en dicotomías como agresor/víctima, dominador/dominada, hombre activo/mujer pasiva (Osborne 2010) que reproduce, en lugar de superar, los mandatos de género y el papel sumiso de las mujeres.

Todo lo mencionado revierte en una des-responsabilización de los sujetos masculinos, en la negación de las violencias de género que no se dan en la pareja, o que no tengan carácter particularmente cruento (Coll-Planas *et al*., 2008); en la realización de campañas que hiper-responsabilizan (¿violencia de género secundaria?) a las mujeres que están en situaciones de violencia de género; y a la negación de las especificidades vivenciales de los sujetos no heteronormativos.

En la misma línea, otro rasgo específico de esta ley es que sitúa las violencias de género dentro de un contexto relacional atribuyéndoles carácter de excepcionalidad e individualizándolas (Coll-Planas *et al*., 2008), haciendo así perder valor a la importancia detectada de la estructuralidad de la violencia. Coherentemente con esto, el "sobre acento puesto en los aspectos penales en detrimento de los aspectos preventivos, asistenciales y de tratamiento, tanto de los agresores como de las maltratadas" (Osborne 2010, 87) lleva, por ejemplo a estipular la necesidad de denunciar para poder obtener ayudas económicas. Este tipo de abordaje no tiene en cuenta las diferentes subjetividades de las personas en situación de violencia, pues la ley actúa como ente homogeneizador de sus experiencias y tiende a crear estereotipos sobre las mujeres que la sufren (Cubells *et al*. 2010). No es infrecuente, por lo tanto, que se produzcan relaciones de conflictividad con el sistema penal, es decir, como decíamos al principio, que la misma ley que

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

pretende proteger contra las violencias de género acabe conformándose como una violencia en si misma.

Es más, la retórica interseccional y las referencias a diferentes áreas sociales esconde una realidad mucho menos integral y progresista de lo que podría parecer a primera vista. Como dice Bonet, se produce una "distancia entre la retórica socialmente avanzada de los déficits de implementación" (2007, 36).

En este sentido, es importante destacar por ejemplo como en la práctica, la inclusión de la violencia psicológica entre las tipificadas por la Ley no cambia la realidad de que, en un juicio (indispensable para tener derecho a protección y prestaciones), no hay apenas mecanismos para probar la existencia de esta práctica y por lo tanto muchas mujeres quedan desamparadas al tener que demostrar que sus problemas psicológicos derivan de la violencia recibida. Es más, si bien en la descripción de las causas de las violencias de género se describen las relaciones de poder discriminatorias en las que se basa, en el pronóstico no hay propuestas que se dirijan a desmantelar estas estructuras sociales (Coll-Planas *et al*. 2008).

Finalmente, un ulterior elemento importante a analizar en este contexto es que la ley recoge en el Capítulo I la importancia de los cambios educativos apostando fuertemente por medidas curriculares que profundicen en la coeducación, ya incluidas en anteriores reformas educativas y criticadas como no exitosas por muchas autoras (Biglia y Luna, 2012). Entre los cambios previstos por la Ley, en el Artículo 7 se especifica que las Administraciones educativas tienen que incluir en los planes de formación inicial y permanente del profesorado, una formación específica en materia de igualdad. Sin embargo, la ley no detalla las medidas para llevar a cabo estos contenidos curriculares, quedado esta normativa frecuentemente como papel mojado, de hecho, no encontramos formación específica, en la mayoría de los grados de recién formación (Biglia y Velasco, 2012 Ferrer y Bosh, 2005).

El contexto autonómico

Desde 1994 las competencias en materia de igualdad fueron trasladadas al ámbito autonómico y por lo tanto cada región se ha ido dotando de

instituciones, leyes, planes y programas de actuación propios. En 2008 se redacta la Ley catalana del derecho de las mujeres a erradicar la violencia machista (2008) que contó con la participación de numerosas asociaciones feministas en su redacción tal y como se reconoce en el preámbulo, en el cual se celebra "el papel histórico y pionero de los movimientos feministas" (ibdem: 34425), y en especial el de las mujeres de Cataluña. Los ámbitos de actuación de esta ley abarcan el desarrollo de políticas destinadas a la prevención, detección, atención y recuperación, sin hacer referencia a la dimensión judicial, que se encuentra regulada por la ley estatal y por el código penal.

La participación directa de los movimientos de mujeres ha dejado su huella en una ley que incorpora numerosos conceptos y demandas surgidos de la lucha feminista. De hecho, el documento catalán supone un paso adelante respecto a la normativa estatal en muchos aspectos. Sin embargo, como veremos, no está exenta de importantes limitaciones.

Una de la principales diferencias respecto a la normativa estatal es la adopción de un marco conceptual que se aleja de la narrativa de género para centrarse en el carácter discriminatorio fruto de la ideología machista. La ley catalana rehuye de *"perspectivas falsamente neutrales"* (ibid: 34426), en las que parecería que los sujetos implicados no tienen género y hace referencia explícita al sistema patriarcal y a las ideologías machistas que subyacen en estos actos. El intento es no banalizar los efectos de las relaciones de poder generizadas, visibilizando la importancia de reconocer el abuso de poder ínsito en la violencia de género y su efecto en los cuerpos y vidas de las mujeres. Sin embargo, como se explica con mayor detalle en Biglia (en este monográfico) esta retórica puede conllevar el ocultamiento de la existencia de otras expresiones de las violencias de género, tales como la homo-lesbo-trans-fobia, la violencia institucional, la violencia médica y el género como violencia; en las que los sujetos diana no tienen porqué ser exclusivamente las mujeres.

De hecho si bien, bajo la presión del colectivo LGTB, se incluye en la ley una referencia explícita a las transexuales, se hace de una manera muy confusa:

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Las transexuales que sufren violencia machista se equiparan a las mujeres que han sufrido esta violencia, a los efectos de los derechos establecidos por esta ley, siempre que se les haya diagnosticado disforia de sexo (Artículo 7 de la ley 5/2008:34452).

. Como primer elemento de confusión destacar que el término neutro *transexuales* parece utilizarse para referirse sólo a los sujetos que transitan del género masculino al femenino, ocultando así la existencia de los que se mueven en el otro sentido, al mismo tiempo que niega la posibilidad de quedarse en transito. Por otra parte, la petición de diagnóstico médico para poder ser reconocidas como mujeres y, por tanto, como "víctimas" de violencia machista, reproduce la violencia de género legal y médica que obliga a las personas transexuales y transgénero a vivir procesos de patologización y medicalización para poder ser reconocidas. Finalmente, quizás por el empeño puesto en no usar nunca el termino género, se habla de disforia de sexo, concepto no existente en literatura y que resulta muy difícil de interpretar.

Otra gran diferencia respecto a la legislación estatal es que en el Artículo 5 se reconoce que la violencia machista se puede producir más allá de la pareja, detectando otros ámbitos en la que se desarrolla como son los ámbitos familiar, laboral y social-comunitario. Sin embargo, algunas activistas critican como heteronormativo el hecho de no considerar como posibles agredidas a personas que se encuentran en relaciones con personas de su mismo sexo, mientras otras sostienen que sería un error esta inclusión[6]. Por otra parte, en el Artículo 4, se reconoce que la violencia machista puede adoptar formas sutiles de expresión tales como amenazas, violencia psicológica o económica (ICD, 2009) y se indica que puede ocurrir tanto de forma reiterada como puntual. En la identificación de las violencias en ámbito social-comunitario es donde se amplia particularmente la concepción de la misma, incluyendo de manera explícita: agresiones y explotación sexual, mutilación genital femenina, matrimonios forzados,

[6] No hay aquí espacio para entrar en este debate candente especialmente en la intersección entre el activismo y la academia, para quien quiera aproximarse a ello en el contexto español remitimos al numero monográfico de la revista feminista online Pikara Magazine (AA.VV., 2013).

violencia derivada de conflictos armados y aquella contra los derechos sexuales-reproductivos de las mujeres. Como vemos hay un abordaje más complejo de la violencia que el presentado en la normativa estatal, centrada sólo en agresiones que tienen lugar en las relaciones de pareja, o afectivas. Sin embargo, la decisión explícita de la normativa catalana de focalizarse en las violencias sufridas por los sujetos *mujeres* implica reforzar las dicotomías de género inscribiendo los sujetos en roles específicos estereotipados (posible víctima-posible agresor). Una de las consecuencias de este enfoque puede ser la asunción de una actitud resistencialista frente a una más propositiva. De hecho, el cierre de filas que se produce para resistir a los ataques neomachistas que intentan banalizar las violencias de género diciendo que los hombres también son víctimas, impide por otra parte un abordaje realmente deconstructor de las relaciones generizadas (Biglia, en este monográfico). Así las acciones preventivas con jóvenes acaban estando más dirigidas a reconocer la persistencia de las violencias de género o como mucho a gestionar la agresividad que no a hacerles entender que las violencias de género son un problema de todas las personas y que su implicación no debe ser sólo de apoyo y solidaridad con las mujeres (aunque, obviamente, también).

La ley catalana, que tiene como objetivo a largo plazo erradicar la violencia machista y las estructuras que la perpetúan, propone como objetivos pragmáticos establecer medidas para lograrlo así como para reconocer los derechos de las mujeres que la sufren. Sobre este último punto, en el Capítulo III se definen una serie de derechos a proteger que se despliegan en diferentes ámbitos: protección efectiva, atención y asistencia jurídica, personación jurídica de la Generalidat, atención sanitaria, económico (ayudas para vivienda, renda mínima inserción sin tener en cuenta ingresos de la pareja, prestaciones sociales de urgencia…), ocupación y formación ocupacional, y, finalmente, a la recuperación social integral.

De esta manera se intenta poner en el centro a las mujeres, reconociéndolas como sujetos de derecho, evitando enfoques puramente asistencialistas y victimizadores (ICD, 2008). Entender en esta óptica el establecimiento de garantías tales como las pensiones compensatorias en

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

caso de impago por parte de las parejas o la preferencia en la adjudicación de viviendas de protección oficial, significa subrayar que se trata de derechos constitucionales y no de acciones de protección de un colectivo indefenso.

Además, también significa no vincular las prestaciones a la actuación específica de las mujeres a las cuales no se les impone, por ejemplo, la necesidad de realizar una denuncia para poder entrar en la red de recursos que se ofrece. El Artículo 33 especifica, en este sentido, que pueden ser instrumentos de indicación de violencia machista documentos tales como órdenes de protección, informes de inspección de trabajo, informes del ámbito sanitario o servicios sociales y informes del propio ICD. Esto es, indudablemente, un elemento de mejora respecto a la excesiva judicialización de legislación estatal que denuncia Osborne (2010).

Otra de las limitaciones de la ley catalana es que las personas jóvenes no estén incluidas como colectivo especialmente vulnerable (aparecen como tales en el Título III: inmigrantes, personas con VIH, trabajadoras sexuales, personas mayores, entre otras). Las dificultades de acceso a recursos económicos o a servicios detectados en diferentes estudios (Donoso, Biglia, Massot, 2008; Olivella, Biglia, 2011) no parecen ser consideradas dignas de evidencia en este marco legal. Aún así, una conceptualización de la violencia machista que no se limita a relaciones de pareja estable o de convivencia permite, más fácilmente que con la ley estatal (Valls et al. 2008), detectar aquellas situaciones de violencia que suelen sufrir las personas jóvenes. Más aún, hay una mención explícita a las personas jóvenes en el Artículo 4, considerándolas especialmente vulnerables a la explotación sexual, la mutilación genital y a los matrimonios forzosos (con una cierta etnización de las violencias de género hacia las y los jóvenes).

Finalmente, y tal como ya aparece a nivel estatal, se establece la obligación de formación integral de los y las profesionales de la educación a través de la introducción de contenidos curriculares en los estudios universitarios y de capacitación del profesorado. Sin embargo este objetivo parece extremadamente lejos de concretarse. En las universidades catalanas, como en las del resto del estado, los nuevos planes de estudio de grado no han llevado consigo la supuestamente obligada inclusión de formación

específica de género, y solamente este año se ha empezado un proyecto piloto de inclusión de módulos específicos sobre violencias de género dirigidos a futuros animadores socioculturales en los que ha participado Tamaia, una de las asociaciones catalanas que participan en el proyecto Gap_Work.

Políticas públicas en materia de violencias de género

En el Título IV de la Ley catalana del derecho de las mujeres a erradicar la violencia machista (2008) se define que la principal institución encargada de su implementación es el Instituto Catalán de las Mujeres (ICD por sus siglas en catalán) y se pone especial énfasis en el papel esencial de los municipios para la programación, prestación y gestión de los servicios hacia las mujeres que sufren este tipo de violencia (Artículo 83). Se estipula, por otra parte, la creación de una Comisión Nacional para una Intervención Coordinada contra la Violencia Machista[7], órgano dependiente del ICD dedicado a coordinar institucionalmente el seguimiento, evaluación y control de las actuaciones desarrolladas en materia de violencia machista. De hecho, en 2012 se realizó la primera evaluación de la ley presentada a finales de enero a diferentes asociaciones ciudadanas (Alfama, 2012), sin embargo los datos completos de la misma siguen siendo inaccesibles.

Las medidas de actuación previstas por la ley catalana son similares a las previstas por la estatal. En el Título II se destaca la importancia de las acciones de sensibilización a través de campañas de información; el fomento de la investigación a través del Centro de Estudios de Investigación y Capacitación como órgano dependiente del ICD; la obligación de intervención por parte de todos los profesionales de la administración pública, especialmente aquellos vinculados a los ámbitos de la salud, servicios sociales y educación; y la creación de protocolos de comunicación para que se evite un lenguaje que pueda contribuir al fomento de la violencia machista y que evite la victimización de las mujeres.

[7] En este momento no se encuentra disponible ninguna información sobre este órgano http://www20.gencat.cat/portal/site/bsf/menuitem.cb7c44c1c72cf6b43f6c8910b0c0e1a0/?vgnextoid=a4b13ccdbd8aa210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextchannel=a4b13ccdbd8aa210VgnVCM1000008d0c1e0aRCRD&vgnextfmt=default.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

El principal instrumento de planificación para llevar a cabo estas políticas son los Programas de Intervención Integral contra la Violencia Machista (PIRVM), eje de los Planes Estratégicos de Políticas de Mujeres (PEPM) desarrollados por el ICD. Los PIRVM, que se establecen como programas marco para la implementación de la ley con una vigencia de cuatro años, presentan una lista de objetivos y actuaciones que establecen de manera precisa las acciones que el gobierno se compromete a tomar. Los PEPM en cambio, son una guía más amplia de implementación y marco conceptual de las políticas de mujeres y género del Gobierno Catalán. El primer PEPM que incorporó los contenidos de la Ley catalana del derecho de las mujeres a erradicar la violencia machista (2008) fue el relativo a los años 2008-2011, el PIRVM asociado giraba entorno a tres objetivos: desarrollo de estrategias de prevención y sensibilización; desarrollo de estructuras de coordinación – cooperación; y trabajo para garantizar los derechos estipulados por ley. Podemos considerar que el abanico de intervenciones institucionales propuestas en él era uno de los más potentes en todo el territorio estatal. Con el cambio de gobierno autonómico el PEPM 2012-2015, se presentó con un cierto retraso y sin incluir el PIRVM, resultando consecuentemente poco concreto en relación a compromisos y actuaciones. Este retraso ha conllevado más de un año de grave paralización de las acciones de prevención promovidas por el Gobierno Catalán. No obstante, acaba de hacerse público[8] el programa específico de prevención para jóvenes adolescentes bajo el nombre de *Amar no duele* (*Estimar no fa mal)* que sustituye el anterior *Corta con los malos rollos* (*Talla amb els mals rotllos)*. Si bien un primer análisis comparativo de los dos PEMP permite detectar la reafirmación del compromiso formal con la erradicación de la violencia machista por parte de la Generalitat de Cataluña y siendo un ejercicio precipitado el aventurarnos en un análisis comparativo, los nombres escogidos para los proyectos oficiales de prevención con jóvenes hacen suponer que pueda haber un desplazamiento del *focus* de trabajo desde los derechos individuales a la importancia de las relaciones sentimentales y afectivas.

[8] Al momento de escritura de este articulo en el 2013.

Análisis de materiales de prevención dirigidos a jóvenes.

Como afirman Grañeras *et al*. (2007, 5) en referencia a los programas de prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres, "buena parte de las comunidades autónomas han desarrollado en los últimos años programas preventivos, han llevado a cabo experiencias originales y han publicado materiales didácticos para trabajar el tema . La variedad de éstos da cuenta de la diversidad de momentos, espacios y actores educativos". Sin embargo, aunque como hemos visto la ley catalana prevé el fomento de la investigación sobre los efectos de la aplicación de la misma, en pocos casos hay un análisis y evaluación de estos programas y, cuando los hay, frecuentemente no se distribuye públicamente, no permitiendo el debate público entorno al impacto y utilidad de las acciones llevadas a cabo[9].

Creemos que el análisis de los materiales permite acercarse a la concreción de las voluntades políticas y sociales que les subyacen siendo los contenidos claramente marcados por la misión y la visión de la institución que los produce, así como por valores y discursos sociales. Por ello consideramos importante analizar los valores que reproducen y que tienen un impacto directo en la gestión de esta problemática pudiendo llegar a destapar, entre otros, procesos de doble victimización, responsabilización única de las mujeres en la transformación de las dinámicas de violencia, estigmatización y desprecio a ciertas prácticas culturales.

Es por estas razones que en este contexto, proponemos un ejercicio de análisis de algunos materiales de prevención actuales, diseñados con posterioridad a la entrada en vigor de la Ley catalana del derecho de las mujeres a erradicar la violencia machista (2008) y en uso en el momento de escribir el artículo. Hemos seleccionando los pocos materiales descargables

[9] En el marco del GAP_Work, convencidas de que los programas deben ser evaluados, estamos realizando una comparación internacional de los modelos de evaluación llevados a cabo hasta el momento para proponer un(os) diseño(s) de procesos de análisis en profundidad.

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

de la web del ICD[10] ya que creemos que estos nos ofrecen pistas sobre el enfoque político actual, en espera de la aprobación y presentación del próximo PIRVM. Hemos de destacar, en este sentido, que el cambio de gobierno ha conllevado una reestructuración amplia de los contenidos oficiales accesibles on-line. Muchos de los documentos anteriores (específicamente en materias de género, pero no sólo) han desaparecido como mínimo de las páginas principales, algunos de ellos pueden ser todavía encontrados en el cyberspacio a través de links inverosímiles, de otros no queda ni rastro.

Finalmente, hemos comparado estos materiales con uno de los producidos por la Asociación Candela, una de las entidades del tercer sector que colabora con la investigación GAP_Work al fin de comprobar si, y de que manera, los productos institucionales se encuentran influenciados por el punto de vista del gobierno actual y si los producidos por entidades del tercer sector responden más a los debates presentes en el movimiento feminista y LGTB.

Antes de adentrarnos en el análisis creemos conveniente introducir los documentos de los que presentamos las características más destacadas en la tabla 1. El cómic *Asegúrate* (*Assegura't)* ha sido editado por el Departamento de Interior de la Generalitat de Catalunya y los Mossos d'Esquadra (Policía autonómica) para acompañar sus charlas sobre prevención de la violencia machista en los institutos, en el marco del "*Pla de Seguretat i Atenció a les Víctimes de Violència Masclista i Domèstica*" (Departament d'interior, 2011). Este recurso consta de cinco pequeñas historias donde las y los jóvenes protagonistas viven o están en riesgo de vivir una situación de violencia específica: relación de pareja abusiva, mutilación genital femenina (MGF), matrimonio forzado, agresión sexual en una discoteca y violencia en la familia -de un hijo hacia su madre y hermano-. Al final de cada historia se presenta un listado de *cosas importantes a tener en cuenta* específicas para el tipo de violencia presentado. El material se acompaña de informaciones sobre los servicios

[10] Cabe recordar que el ICD es el organismo catalán encargado de dirigir todas las acciones en relación a la violencia machista.

básicos de la policía autonómica en materia de atención a las víctimas y por una guía didáctica para el profesorado de secundaria.

La exposición *¿Desmontamos Mitos?* (*Desmuntem mites?)* consta de diez plafones cada uno centrado en un mito sobre el amor romántico y la violencia machista, acompañados de ideas para transformar las relaciones. Los mitos presentados son: la necesidad de tener pareja, el hecho de que por amor verdadero se tiene que estar dispuesto/a a renunciar a todo, la idea que los celos son una expresión del amor verdadero, la creencia que el amor ha de ir acompañado de sufrimiento, la exterioridad de la violencia, la ineludibilidad de la violencia, la convicción de que nosotras estamos a salvo, el pensamiento que si no hay voluntad de hacer daño no hay violencia, el prejuicio de que quienes están en una relación violenta es porque quieren y la idea de tener que perdonar si alguien se arrepiente. Al final se ofrece el teléfono de atención gratuita a las mujeres en situación de violencia 24h.

El apartado *Sexo-Jóvenes* (*Sexe-Joves)* del *Canal Salud (Canal Salut)* virtual de la Generalitat, contiene mucha información sobre diversos temas en el campo de la sexualidad y la salud sexual y reproductiva. Uno de los apartados tiene que ver con las violencias de género, aunque no sólo, y es el que habla de Abuso (emocional, físico, sexual), Acoso y Agresión sexual. En cada apartado se explica una expresión de la violencia, siguiendo lo que la leyes catalanas dicen al respecto. En algunos casos hay un vídeo en el que se narra una experiencia personal, a modo de ejemplo.

Por último, el material producido por la Asociación Candela en colaboración con el Consejo de Juventud de Barcelona (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona) consta de una guía para chicas *No quiero ser princesa* (*Jo no vull ser princesa*) y otra para chicos *No quiero ser pelota de oro (Jo no vull ser pilota d'or)*, que tratan diversos temas vinculados a las violencias de género desde una óptica positiva y deseable de las relaciones interpersonales y con una/o misma/o. En ambas guías se trabajan los estereotipos de género, la sexualidad y placer, la reducción de riesgos en las relaciones sexuales, la preferencia sexual, las relaciones de amor y la autoestima. Además, en la dedicada a las jóvenes se presta atención a las relaciones de apoyo entre iguales, así como a la creación de un proyecto vital propio. En cambio, las

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emociones y el control del grupo son los temas diferenciales de la guía para

	Assegura't	**Desmuntem mites?**	**Canal Salut / Sexe Joves**	**Jo no vull ser princesa/ Jo no vull ser pilota d'or**
Formato	Cómic papel + virtual	Exposición itinerante en plafones + virtual	Página web (apartado)	Guías papel + virtual
Año de publicación	2010	2010	2012 (última actualización)	2012
Autoría de los contenidos	Departament Interior/Mossos d'Esquadra	Unitat d'Assessorament Psicopedagògic de la UAB	Departament de Salut	Associació Candela
Edición y publicación	Departament Interior	Institut Català de les Dones,	Departament de Salut	Consell Joventut

chicos. Los materiales ofrecen ideas y consejos para *chicas y chicos que quieren ser libres* y presentan direcciones y contactos de los recursos especializados en Barcelona para jóvenes.

En la siguiente tabla se pueden ver las características distintivas de los cuatro materiales seleccionados.

Tabla 1. Clasificación básica de los materiales seleccionados

	/Mossos d'Esquadra, Generalitat	Generalitat		Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Según Grañeras *et al*. (2007) en el estado español, "podemos identificar varias líneas en el trabajo preventivo, aunque todas coinciden en que el origen de la violencia se encuentra en las relaciones asimétricas de poder entre hombres y mujeres, favorecidas por pensamientos y actitudes sexistas muchas veces interiorizados de manera inconsciente" (2007:1993).

En los materiales, en primer lugar, es interesante analizar qué conceptos de violencia se utiliza. Detectamos que tanto el cómic *Assegura't* como la exposición *Desmuntem mites?* se centran en violencia machista así como se define legalmente: recibida por mujeres por parte de los hombres, incluyendo sin embargo en una de las historias del cómic la violencia machista en el ámbito familiar ejercida por un chico hacia su madre y hermano. El hecho de que un varón también reciba violencia machista, contradice parcialmente el marco interpretativo de la ley. Parece, en este caso, que desde el departamento de interior se estén fusionando las narrativas de la violencia machista con la anterior de la violencia de género.

Por otro lado, el cómic se centra también en la MGF y los matrimonios forzados, prácticas de raíces culturales diferentes a las autóctonas. Nos parece especialmente curiosa la selección de estos tipos específicos de violencia machista social-comunitaria frente a otras posibles, como la publicidad sexista, o los usos desiguales de los espacios públicos, que afectan, indudablemente un publico más amplio. También nos preocupa la asociación de estas tipologías específicas de violencias de género, frente a otras, con el control policial y por ende su judicialización. Cabe preguntarse desde qué perspectiva se gestiona en la actualidad el trato de estas violencias y si hay una reproducción de posiciones paternalistas, asimilacioncitas y eurocéntricas, así como una utilización de discursos (pseudo)feministas que encierran actitudes de rechazo a la diversidad étnico-cultural.

La web *Canal Salut / Sexe Joves* se centra en explicar qué se considera abuso, acoso y agresión según la legislación vigente pero hablando en términos abstractos e impersonales, desgenerizados (todos y todas podemos

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recibir estos tipos de violencia en diferentes contextos). Tanto es así que, aunque en todas las imágenes aparecen las chicas victimizadas y los chicos como agresores, la historia que ilustra el acoso es de un chico que en su lugar de trabajo es acosado sistemáticamente por su superior. Se sigue una lógica desgenerizada pero contemporáneamente ciega a las vivencia de sujetos no heterosexuales o trans. De hecho, no se presenta en ningún caso el acoso por motivo de la preferencia sexual y/o la identidad sexual y de género, problemática cotidiana para muchas personas jóvenes en Cataluña.

Por último, las guías *Jo no vull ser princesa/Jo no vull ser pilota d'or* hablan de las diferentes situaciones en las que se puede vivir violencia desde una óptica propositiva. En lugar de centrase en juicios morales o en cuestiones de legalidad o incidir en lo intolerable de las violencias de género, ofrecen recomendaciones en positivo para generar en las jóvenes empoderamiento, satisfacción, placer, autonomía y libertad que favorezcan la vivencia de relaciones y experiencias libres de violencias. Esta voluntad más propositiva y positiva también la encontramos en la exposición *Desmuntem mites?* aunque esta última se centre más explícitamente en las violencias entre parejas heterosexuales.

Otra diferencia fundamental es el público al que van dirigidos los materiales. Aunque en la ley catalana se explicita muy claramente la direccionalidad de la violencia, solamente las guías proponen mensajes diferenciales por género, las otras parecen dirigirse todas a las mujeres. En este sentido podemos ver que incluso en los materiales, como en la ley, hay un discurso de diagnóstico en los que se menciona la responsabilidad de los varones de comportamientos machistas, como las personas que ejercen la violencia. Sin embargo en los pronósticos se desresponsabiliza a éstos, volviendo a caer el peso en las mujeres. Así, tanto en el cómic como en la web se manifiesta explícitamente y como mensaje único que debe ser la chica la que diga no y pare la situación (pudiendo producir una violencia secundaria hacia las personas que estando en una situación de violencia no se encuentran en condiciones de salir de ella), con lo cual no se está dando un mensaje directo a quien ejerce la violencia y con quien se debería hacer la prevención. Finalmente en la exposición, al no visibilizar los roles de género dentro de las parejas hay una disolución de responsabilidades que

acaba con una hiperesponsabilización de los sujetos que están recibiendo violencia.

Breves conclusiones

En el camino realizado en este artículo esperamos haber ofrecido herramientas para entender el problema y el abordaje de las violencias de género entre jóvenes en Cataluña. Específicamente, y en contra lo que está ocurriendo con los recortes en un contexto de gobierno conservador, creemos importante seguir apostando por mejoras en el campo legal y político, así como por un continuo debate feminista que nos lleve a prácticas siempre más coherentes y eficaces.

Sostenemos que, con todas sus limitaciones, las leyes específicas en materia de igualdad y violencia machista, son un marco necesario y posibilitador para diseñar y subvencionar planes y programas específicos; para dibujar líneas de continuidad beneficiosas para la sociedad en general, y para las mujeres, niñas y otros sujetos no heteronormativos en particular. Ahora bien, pensamos que estos no son suficientes y tienen que quedar siempre bajo el atento escrutinio de la sociedad civil. De hecho, por una parte, los marcos en los que se inscriben estas normativas han de ser comprendidos en su vertiente performativa para que no acaben configurándose como nuevas expresiones de violencias de género legal. Por otra, se han de analizar las concreciones específicas de las propuestas generales que pueden dar pie a efectos perversos. En este sentido sostenemos la importancia de que los materiales y dinámicas de prevención y abordaje de las violencias de género estén todo el tiempo acompañadas de evaluaciones serias y profundas de sus resultados. En contra de la lógica de los números y de la acción, sostenemos la importancia de un trabajo capilar y minucioso.

En este sentido consideramos fundamental tener en cuenta que la formación de profesionales de la educación y otros agentes socializadores en el campo de género sea diseñada y realizada por profesionales capaces de transmitir una perspectiva feminista interseccional. En este campo, más que en otros, no es suficiente aprender conceptos o dinámicas sino que se tiene que realizar un cuestionamiento complejo de la interiorización y la

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reproducción de los estereotipos de género y una transformación de la propia conciencia de género (Colás and Jiménez, 2006; Giraldo, Colyar, 2012; Gárcia-Pérez et all., 2011).

Finalmente sostenemos que el gran reto de cara al futuro es fomentar, a través de la prevención y la formación, la co-responsabilización de los jóvenes varones y hombres hacia el desmantelamiento de las violencias de género.

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Textos generizados em contextos afetivos: Experiências e relações podem prevenir a violência de gênero na prisão?

Abstract

The following paper has been realized with regard to the (con)textual construction of violence and power in total institutions. Furthermore the affective role of relations has been investigated in order to understand how concepts, such as power and violence, are situated within the relational frame of everyday interactions. The topic of the research has been focused on transgender prisoners, detained in a special section of the female ward of the prison of Florence-Sollicciano. Interviewees with prison's staff and MtF transgender inmates have been gathered, concerning to the way how gender identity claims in a highly institutionalized context. Qualitative analysis, adopting the software *Transana*, has been used in order to study the implicit sense of ideological, historical and relational meanings within discursive production. Results show that everyday interactions, such as between trans-prisoners themselves and amongst them and the penitentiary guards, increase the affective value of communication and consequently of interpersonal relations. The affective variable, therefore, becomes an important aspect, according to which interaction can be considered pragmatic and situated actions. Empowering the pragmatical and strategical value of situated relations improves not only the difficult condition of detention, but also the hard and challenging tasks a those staff-members, who work in prison every day.

Keywords: trans-prisoners, violence, power, relations, affect, language, context.

Introdução

O interesse de pesquisar a realidade transgênera a respeito das instituições totais surge da presença de detidas transgêneras em algumas penitenciárias italianas. Tais detidas – todas transgêneras MtF – representam uma realidade marginal e discriminada dentro do sistema penitenciário porque resulta difícil resolver uma tal situação, seja em termos éticos seja organizativos. Efetivamente não é claro a qual estrutura enviar uma transgênera MtF que não retificou seu estado civil: inseri-la em um presídio para mulheres ao invés do que para homens apresenta similares discrepâncias no plano ético e administrativo. De fato, elas serão de qualquer forma mantidas segregadas respeito ao resto dos detidos, dado que se identifica na própria "particular" situação uma forte acepção de diversidade.

Especialmente focou-se a análise nas dinâmicas, sejam organizativas, sejam de interação, que se desenvolvem dentro das instituições totais, em quanto aparatos normativos formalmente administrados (Goffman, 1961/2003). As dinâmicas de gênero nas instituições totais são relegadas dentro de uma retificação linguística, fortemente ancorada dentro dos confins antinômicos do dualismo sexual. Nestes contextos o *fazer gênero* é caracterizado por heurísticas *idealtípicas* que resultam particularmente generizadas (Codd, 2003). Ao partir destes pressupostos, quer-se observar como uma organização reificante a respeito do gênero responde às particulares exigências de reconhecimento das transgêneras e no mesmo tempo como as detidas vivam esta experiência dentro de um contexto, que tende a atrofiar as identidades das detidas dentro predefinidas categorias normativas (Foucault 1975/1987).

A complexidade inerente à experiência da detenção é acentuada pela particular representação de uma identidade *in fieri* e também pela própria "diversidade cultural", sendo todas as detidas de origem brasileira. Para Vidal-Ortiz (2009), a identidade das transgêneras constrói-se, de fato, nos aspectos normatizantes da dicotomia sexual e em relação à própria colocação social. Ser transgênera, desempregada, clandestina e detida reflete uma realidade que muitas vezes se refere às migrantes sul-americanas, especialmente brasileiras, que constituem uma percentual significativa da prostituição transexual nas estradas dos países centro- e sul-europeus

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(Green, 1999; Farais de Albuquerque & Jannelli, 1994). Estas experiências, criam diferentes momentos de vida de exclusão que podem assumir a conotação de estigma múltiplo (Goffman, 1963/1983; Vidal-Ortiz 2009), sobretudo se escondidas dentro de um contexto extremo como as penitenciárias.

Objetivos

O interesse do estudo, portanto, é focado na relações, posicionamentos e contexto a respeito da função do afeto, em particular nas diferenças de expressão afetiva dentro de uma situação declinada para o masculino e feminino. Também é focado em função do impacto das diretrizes normativas a respeito do nível de institucionalização dos contextos, por último, em função das influências das superestruturas culturais e de poder na representação discursiva da realidade.

As dimensões de análise estarão articuladas diante das superestruturas e hierarquia de poder: o poder percebido na chave de leitura proposta por Foucault (1975/1987) como aquela forma de organização social finalizada ao controle e à categorização, difundida capilarmente em todas as inter-relações. Este mecanismo social manifesta-se na representação coletiva e cultural de papéis e hierarquias e refletem-se na representação que cada um tem de si mesmo, nos históricos subjetivos, na manifestação do agenciamento e da afetividade, aspetos que assumem conotações muito mais fortes em um contexto rígido como a penitenciária. A primeira pergunta de pesquisa, por isso, articular-se-á da seguinte forma: *O relacionamento entre os gêneros é também uma relação de poder? O gênero, além do contexto, poderia ser definido ou incluído em um discurso do poder?* Também estarão articuladas no posicionamento entre atores sociais e entre eles e o contexto: por meio das práticas de interação geram-se uma série de relacionamentos de poder, de diferenças de papéis, de históricos cotidianos, fundamentais para a compreensão contextual e relacional de uma realidade situada, com o correspondente grau de reificação constitucional. O presídio é um contexto, caracterizados por um *frame* simbólico e normativo das conotações culturais, as quais tendem a reificar categorias tipificadoras de personalidades definidas *a priori*, estabelecendo assim a própria margem de

agenciamento. Em específico, o contexto carcerário é considerado nos seu aspecto tríplice: estrutural, sendo os muros do presídio como lugar de exclusão e segregação, funcional, sendo o presídio como sistema de punição e reeducação o qual, tirando das detidas a própria identidade desviante, pretende modificá-la e substituí-la com uma outra socialmente aceita (Goffman, 1963/1983; Foucault, 1975/1987) e afetivo, sendo a reclusão expressa por meio de um processo de privação afetiva, caracterizado pela ociosidade, perda da intimidade e distância do *outro significativo* (familiares, parceiros, amigos) (Cood, 2003; Wodak, 1997). A segunda pergunta de pesquisa, por isso, articular-se-á da seguinte forma: *O quanto o gênero e sua representação são influenciados pelo quadro situacional, afetivo e relacional em que se vive?*

Observar as interações na cotidianidade da penitenciária permite analisar as modalidades de posicionamento, a respeito das quais as detidas transgêneros definem a própria identidade de gênero, a respeito de uma margem de agenciamento que varia dependendo do contexto de referência. Este último, enfim, pode alterar o grau de interação em um ou outro nível das situações sociais e então transferir a representação de si como agente "generizado" de um processo interno (linguagem, percepção do corpo) para um externo (relações, cenários simbólicos e diretrizes histórico-contextuais).

Quadro teórico

A pesquisa é focada nos processos de interação na prisão, definido para Goffman (1961/2003) como um contexto formalmente administrado e fortemente institucionalizado. O contexto carcerário, caracterizado por um elevado funcionamento normativo, define papéis pré-constituídos, restritas margens de agenciamento (Zimbardo, 2007/2008), disparidade de status e distribuição de poder (Foucault, 1975/1987). Neste contexto a margem de agenciamento resulta particularmente reduzida e, portanto a identidade se reduz a uma simples heurística classificatória, respeito á qual o indivíduo pode ser etiquetado e administrado conforme as caraterísticas funcionais e ideológicas deste tipo desta estrutura social.

Por isso delineiam-se as práticas normativas que veiculam a percepção e a representação da identidade *transgênera* em um contexto extremo, como a

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postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

realidade penitenciária. A penitenciária reifica dentro dos seus muros todas as acepções tipizadas e normatizadas, por meio das quais se criam cópias de identidades consolidadas, etiquetadas e generalizadas. Por meio das grelhas analíticas desenvolvidas por Foucault em "*Vigiar e punir*" podem-se achar uma série de princípios em que se baseia o funcionamento de uma instituição total. Estas disposições reguladoras, para o filósofo francês, fundam a própria lógica punitiva em três conceitos chaves que concernem essencialmente *o isolamento, o trabalho e a modulação da pena*. A instituição total torna-se por isso uma forma discursiva, ou seja, uma prática de negociação de significados implícitos e superordenados:

> A forma prisão preexiste à sua utilização sistemática nas leis penais. Ela se constituiu fora do aparelho judiciário, quando se elaboram, por todo o corpo social, os processos para repartir os indivíduos, fixá-los e distribui-los espacialmente, classificá-los, tirar deles o máximo de tempo, e o máximo de forças, treinar seus corpos, codificar seu comportamento contínuo, mantê-los numa visibilidade sem lacuna, formar em torno deles um aparelho completo de observações, registro e notações, constituir sobre eles um saber que se acumula e se centraliza (Foucault 1975/1987, p. 195).

A presença da detida transgênera dentro de uma dicotomização sexual tão reificadora leva a perturbar o princípio conceitual sobre o qual se funda o contexto penitenciário, isto é, como enfatizado por Foucault (1975/1987) desnuda o transgressor da sua identidade desviante para reconstruí-la de maneira mais apta às expectativas da coletividade como um todo. De fato, podendo definir o sistema penitenciário como discurso, dentro do qual se geram posicionamentos dicotômicos relativos ao gênero, o presídio torna-se o veículo contextual dentro da qual estes processos de interação são entendidos como ações dotadas de sentido individual e coletivo. A função da prisão nas sociedades pós-modernas consiste, além do aspecto puramente punitivo, em um processo de mudança psicológico-social, que se torna um remédio moral ao *iter* desviante feito pelo recluso: *"Retirando tempo do condenado, a prisão parece traduzir concretamente a ideia de que a infração lesou, além da vítima, a sociedade inteira"*. (Foucault 1975/1987, p. 196). Nesta óptica a detenção como instrumento administrativo, se vê um

duplo fundamento: por um lado jurídico-econômico e por outro técnico-disciplinar, que permitiu criar uma representação socialmente partilhada da prisão, "*como a forma mais imediata e mais civilizada de todas as penas*" (ibidem, p. 196). Então relegando o violador da norma dentro de uma estrutura fechada e longe dos lugares em que se desenvolvem as práticas de interação da grande coletividade, se espera oferecer proteção à vida social e ao mesmo tempo remédio às feridas materiais e, sobretudo morais sofridas. A penitenciária, nas melhores intenções, promove uma concepção linear com os direitos do detido definidos pela constituição, mas o princípio regulador permanece ligado ao dualismo "punição & correção".

> Mas a prisão excede a simples privação de liberdade de uma maneira mais importante. Ela tende a tornar-se um instrumento de modulação da pena: um aparelho que, através da execução da sentença de que está encarregado, teria o direito de retomar, pelo menos em parte, seu princípio. É claro que esse 'direito' não foi recebido pela instituição carcerária no século XIX, nem mesmo ainda no XX, salvo sob uma forma fragmentária (Foucault 1975/1987, p. 205).

Contexto e Corpo dos dados

Escolheu-se o Novo Complexo Penitenciário (NCP) de Florença-Solliciano para compreender como articula-se o tratamento psicológico e reeducativo individualizado, oferecido para a população transgênera reclusa na seção separada do setor feminino do instituto.

O NCP de Solliciano foi construído em 1982, durante a reforma do ordenamento penitenciário (lei 663), retomando na sua estrutura o símbolo de Florença, como explícita referencia simbólica ao contexto histórico e cultural e, portanto ao poder institucional presente no território. O projeto originário previa uma seção transgênera implantada no setor masculino, mas recentemente foi transferida para o setor feminino, por exigências de gestão e para atender uma reivindicação de identidade de gênero voltada para o feminino. A realidade transgênera, dentro do instituto, é sujeita a atenções especiais pelos funcionários penitenciários. A gestão dos percursos detentivos delas não recebe o mesmo tratamento dos outros presos; diante das suas identidades de gênero em forte contraste com o modelo binário dos sexos, fortemente reificado dentro do contexto carcerário, não podem ser

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postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

colocadas no setor feminino ou masculino. O espaço de reclusão então foi criado *ad hoc* para as exigências delas e, portanto foram mantidas segregadas das seções ordinárias da estrutura, ficando em uma seção reservada exclusivamente para elas, logisticamente colocada na seção feminina. Mas mesmo estando na seção das mulheres, elas são administradas pelos colegas homens mesmo porque pela lei italiana são detidos de sexo masculino e para o ordenamento penitenciário nas seções detentivas devem vigiar policiais do mesmo sexo dos reclusos.

A diversidade de gênero no que se refere a um modelo binário não pode encaixar-se em nenhuma das assim chamadas seções ordinárias, mas ela é relegada a um espaço separado, assim como ocorre para outras tipologias de detidos considerados pelo crime em si (violência sexual contra mulheres e crianças) ou pela periculosidade do sujeito (crimes políticos ou mafiosos) para manter o funcionamento regular da estrutura.

O corpo de dados coletado consiste em entrevistas semiestruturadas junto aos funcionários que trabalham em diferentes funções, dentro do Novo Complexo Penitenciário de Florença-Solliciano; e com as detidas, encarceradas na seção transgênero deste complexo penitenciário. O material discursivo foi dividido em função das duas categorias de entrevistados: seis entrevistas com testemunhas privilegiadas (o provedor, a vide-diretora, uma psicóloga, uma educadora, dois agentes da policia penitenciaria) e cinco entrevistas com detidas transgêneras.

Metodologia e Métodos

A análise é focada na dimensão situada do (con)texto, entendido como interação no *hic et nunc*. Nesta parte é interessante especificar as modalidades narrativas e as práticas discursivas que emergem durante as produções de significados verbais, evidenciando os gêneros narrativos e as proposições intertextuais (Wodak, 2001), por meio das quais é possível reconstruir uma representação de si mesmo a respeito do outro e do contexto. A corrente sócio-histórica da Análise Crítica do Discurso (CDA) (Wodak, 2001) enfatiza o impacto afetivo das interações a respeito das dinâmicas de gênero e ao hábito simbólico, determinantes uma situação específica enraizada no tempo e no espaço. Estas influências configuram um

gênero narrativo próprio, capaz de instituir uma prática discursiva distinta e intertextual. Esta perspectiva metodológica analisa os eventos discursivos dando atenção, não somente para as variáveis psicológicas que ligam a projeção cognitiva em direção à produção discursiva (por exemplo: perfil de identidade, níveis de envolvimento emotivo etc.), mas também e, sobretudo, as dinâmicas constitutivas dos contextos (diretrizes espaço-temporais, relações de papéis, macrocenários simbólicos, horizontes interpretativos). Wodak (1997) concentra as próprias análises nos aspectos afetivos da interação, nas problemáticas de identidade e na construção discursiva do "nós" que forma o grupo.

A identidade de gênero, deste ponto de vista, torna-se uma prática discursiva, ou seja, um *script* narrativo que é exibido no palco da cotidianidade. Esta não se torna somente um momento de interação, mas de concretização pragmática dos processos discursivos. A este nível as interações tornam-se práticas interiorizadas, ou seja, expedientes de posicionamento canalizados nas próprias representações cotidianas. As matrizes cognitivas, as motivações intrínsecas e extrínsecas, o objetivo da comunicação e a influência do tecido social representam esquemas de ação fluidos e mutáveis e os discursos, à vista disso, tornam-se a trama ao longo da qual se articula uma percepção compartilhada dos contextos situados.

A história, o afeto, as desigualdades sociais e as construções culturais geram uma representação social que entrelaça os enunciados em um fio condutor, transversal ao longo das produções textuais produzidas no mesmo contexto espaço-temporal. A interdiscursividade então, torna-se um objeto de estudo no qual porções de (con)texto apresentam-se como sequências de significado que refletem-se em todas as narrações produzidas dentro do mesmo campo social.

O programa qualitativo para a análise dos dados textuais, *Transana,* possibilita uma série de funções sejam técnicas, sejam conceituais, que permitem desfrutar deste suporte informático nas diversas fases da elaboração do corpo dos dados. As diversas produções textuais podem, para as características de sincronização direta do programa, ser associadas a grupos de palavras-chaves (áreas conceituais) e ser extraídas por meio de motores de pesquisa integrados no *software* a fim de criar unidades de texto

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

correspondentes a partes específicas do arquivo audiovisual (Malfatti, 2007). Combinando as categorias de significado com diferentes palavras-chaves, o programa permite realizar uma pesquisa qualitativa complexa e em vários níveis. Estes métodos de observação das práticas discursivas delineiam a relevância cotidiana da interação, considerando a fala como uma prática social em contínua redefinição entre atores, e entre eles e o *frame* espacial e cultural (Schegloff, 1991).

O discurso nesta perspectiva de análise torna-se um conjunto de significados que ultrapassam a simples estrutura de conteúdo dos modelos semânticos. O programa *Transana* resulta de fundamental utilidade para esse processo de análise, em que as categorias de significado isoladas delineiam a gênese do evento discursivo em nível implícito, e então, conforme o paradigma da CDA (Wodak, 2001), permite emergir os aspectos ideológicos do texto, onde os significados simbólicos devem ser procurados "entre as linhas e os enunciados". Essas áreas de significado foram associadas a conceitos-chaves específicos, os quais o *software* reproduz graficamente por meio de histogramas. Os conceitos-chaves evidenciados referem-se à pergunta da presente pesquisa, centrada no posicionamento de gênero entre relações e poder no contexto carcerário.

Resultados

O centro de análise é constituído pelas modalidades de interação nos contextos situados, ou seja, naquelas situações sociais as quais se caracterizam por uma forte acepção cotidiana. O software *Transana* responde às necessidades de realizar uma análise vertical das correspondências entre grupos de significado dentro de um mesmo repertório discursivo e entre repertórios discursivos diferentes. Estes repertórios, que o programa reconhece como séries, possuem peculiares modalidades organizativas mais que estruturais, por meio das quais atores que partilham um mesmo contexto e/ou situação social co-constroem uma representação semelhante a respeito do *self* e dos outros. No caso do presídio este aspecto emerge em maneira particularmente nítida. Os focos de análise, portanto, foram organizadas em três áreas conceituais a respeito da interação entre atores sociais e ente eles e o contexto: 1. Interação como

posicionamento físico e discursivo 2. Interação a respeito dos horizontes afetivos; 3. Interação a respeito das coordenadas espaço temporais no aqui e agora.

As perguntas da pesquisa queriam compreender quanto à representação social e pessoal das detidas transgêneras em relação à própria identidade, mudando dependendo da situatividade da interação e do quanto ressente de diretrizes afetivas, relacionais e funcionais, produzidas em nível dos posicionamentos no cotidiano. Portanto, estes expedientes de investigação estão articulados ao redor de aspectos relacionais (afeto, relação com o outro significativo), funcionais (gestão do contexto penitenciário e de trabalho) e reguladores (conjunto de regras organizativas e funcionais). A subdivisão destas áreas conceituais segue então a seguinte ordem.

1. Situação: estrutura – função – organização (192 porções de texto): A situação representa aquele *frame* estrutural e funcional dentro do qual se geram as interações no *hic et nunc*. Essa engloba todos os níveis de interação (do micro – cotidiano, ao macro – cultura). O *frame* da situação pode ser de natureza material ou simbólica.
2. Experiência: vivida – direta – meditada (113 porções de texto): No cotidiano as regras de interação dos níveis macro e micro tornam-se rotinas, ou seja, esquemas de ação cristalizados. A experiência a respeito do *self*, da vida social e do contexto articula-se entorno do grau de afiliação a respeito de uma determinada situação social, produzindo um conhecimento legitimado e compartilhado.
3. Afeto: relacional - íntimo – parental (82 porções de texto): As modalidades de conhecer o *self*, outro e contexto dependem do investimento emotivo que se cria nas relações com a alteridade. Por meio da afetividade que influi nas tomadas de decisões e na definição da situação podem-se criar mapas ontológicos que adquirem um significado pessoal e íntimo e, portanto, emotivamente significativo.

O componente afetivo no instituto é diretamente associado à experiência, portanto àquelas rotinas cotidianas por meio de gestos e breves diálogos em si funcionais, mas conotados, de alguma forma, a aspectos relacionais. De fato, as variáveis relacionais caracterizam fortemente o contexto carcerário. Entre estas entrevistas, como se verá no histograma seguinte, são,

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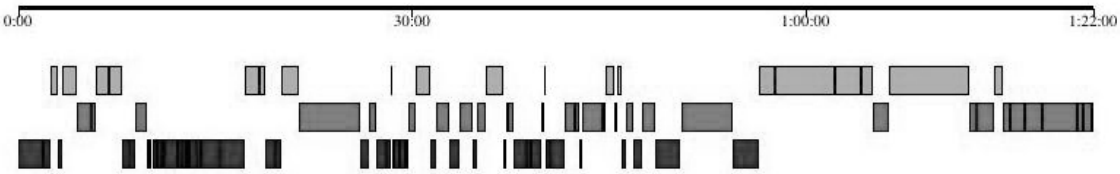
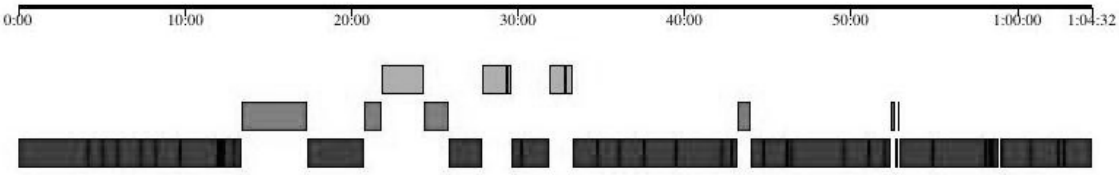
especialmente aquelas das detidas que se referem aos aspectos principalmente afetivos (a ligação semanal para a mãe, as cartas e as visitas de amigos), enquanto o provedor da administração penitenciária e a vice-diretora do instituto mostram menor atenção a respeito destes aspectos mais íntimos.

Histograma 1: *Corpo detidas*
Legenda: Rosa: afeto – Azul: experiência – Vermelho: Contexto



Histograma 2 : *Corpo funcionários penitenciários*



Legenda: Rosa: afeto – Azul: experiência – Vermelho: Contexto

Os testemunhos (histograma 2), em particular dos funcionários empenhados na administração da prisão, seriam mais sensíveis em relação aos aspectos meramente contextuais. A colocação das detidas, os turnos de vigilância, a separação das diferentes tipologias de presos são aspectos recorrentes da cotidianidade de quem opera no presídio. Em particular, as instâncias de poder superordenadas (direção, administração) têm uma experiência indireta do contexto, reduzindo então a possibilidade de interação e as ocasiões na quais se instauram uma relação com o outro. Pelo contrário, a respeito das entrevistas realizadas como as detidas, resulta

evidente quanto à importância da afetividade aumenta ao longo da entrevista, enquanto a componente contextual, no começo bastante presente nos discursos (histograma 1: barra purpúrea) tende a desaparecer no final das entrevistas deixando espaço para aspectos mais pessoais e íntimos.

A experiência, como conjunto de rotinas cotidianas, resulta mais difusa entre as detidas, o que faz pensar em um maior grau de interação com o contexto. Essa nas entrevistas com as detidas (histograma 1) é associada a processos relacionais (interação cotidiana com as outras parceiras), enquanto nos testemunhos dos funcionários parece bastante ausente. Por esta mesma razão, as matrizes normativas e contextuais tornam-se dois aspectos predominantes nos discursos dos funcionários (sobretudo a vice-diretora e o provedor), mas resultam pouco significativas quando as interações se desenvolvem entre detidas em nível cotidiano.

No primeiro extrato escolheu-se a entrevista com o provedor, pois ela representa a posição mais alta de poder em relação às hierarquias no contexto carcerário. A forma da linguagem é caracterizada por um uso redundante de recorrências retóricas, legitimadas pelo contexto institucional e pelo contexto formal da interação entre ela como representante política e o entrevistador como representante do sistema da instrução pública. Essa estrutura sintática é tipicamente usada pelos atores que ocupam altos cargos em contextos de elevado funcionamento normativo (De Francisco, 1997). Como será evidente no primeiro extrato, da entrevista com o provedor, a decisão de transferir a seção transgênera da secção masculina para a feminina, responde a uma pergunta ideológica, na qual se justifica esta escolha em termos de reconhecimento do outro.

Extrato 1: Provedor
90. eu apreciei muito a colocação em um setor
91. da seção feminina, pois na verdade era um
92. reconhecimento de um pedido do gênero, do alvo
93. transexuais, não!

Emerge um explícito referimento para a importância do contexto, ou seja, da estrutura e da própria organização do presídio, ao oferecer para a

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postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

população transgênera uma possibilidade de reivindicar a própria identidade de gênero. Identidade que, segundo o provedor, articula-se ao redor de um universo de significados declinados para o feminino. Devido a isso, na escolha de uma condição válida para as detidas transgêneras, optou-se dentro da divisão antinômico-sexual do instituto, para o setor feminino, sendo um contexto mais afim às necessidades das presas de serem reconhecidas como mulheres. O que se torna prioritário na gestão da seção transgênera é a colocação física das detidas: "*colocação em um setor da seção feminina*" (linhas 90-91), justificada por uma necessidade de reivindicação pessoal e social da identidade transgênera: "*pois na verdade era um reconhecimento de um pedido do gênero*" (linhas 91-93). Em nível semântico, destaca-se uma associação discursiva entre substantivos que definem uma situação estruturalmente delineada: "*colocação, setor, seção*" (linha 91) e substantivos que aludem a uma dimensão social e identitária: "*reconhecimento, pedido, gênero*" (linha 92). O estilo narrativo é então conotado de uma linguagem normativa que analisa o aspecto estrutural da realidade presidiária como expediente principal para a gestão de todas as dinâmicas que acontecem dentro dela. O posicionamento do Provedor, possui um valor ideológico-contextual.

De outro jeito articula-se o discurso de uma das detidas entrevistadas. A presa, além de demonstrar um bom conhecimento da língua italiana (tinha começado um curso de graduação), oferece uma narração muito crítica a respeito da motivação que justificaria a transferência da seção *trans* para o setor feminino.

Estrato 2: Detida 2
263. nada a ver! Sabe que em dois mil e quatro quando eu
264. passei por aqui, estávamos no setor masculino, em
265. dois mil e cinco efetivamente passamos
266. temporariamente no setor aonde estamos agora ao
267. feminino porque o nosso setor anterior foi
268. destinado a se tornar um polo universitário.

A interlocutora, vivendo no presídio como detida, demonstra uma

experiência direta e por isso a sua representação do contexto articula-se diferentemente em relação ao posicionamento do provedor. A resposta à pergunta do entrevistador, a propósito da sua colocação no instituto, afasta-se claramente de quanto explicitado no extrato anterior. Ela começa, de fato, com um evidente desacordo: "*nada a ver!*" (linha 263), para em seguida justificar o seu posicionamento na base da própria experiência. O imperativo: "*sabe*" (linha 263), convida o interlocutor à escuta de uma narração episódica; um relato dos *fatos* cotidianos.

Do ponto de vista lexical passa-se de uma linguagem formal e ego-distônica expressa por meio de um uso da terceira pessoa verbal (vê extrato 1), para um discurso focado no *self*, sendo ela parte da população detida. O estilo narrativo resulta, portanto, mais pessoal e permeado do uso da primeira pessoa singular e plural: "*eu passei*" (linha 263), "*estávamos*" (linha 264), e "*estamos*" (linha 266). Em nível de significado semântico, a interlocutora, por meio do discurso caracterizado por momentos de vida pessoais, enfatiza o seu desacordo a respeito das decisões tomadas pela direção e administração do instituto. Aquilo que o Provedor identifica como um ato de reconhecimento é percebido pela detida como uma solução paliativa e precária: "*temporariamente*" (linha 266): um movente retórico para conotar uma decisão puramente pragmática, de acepções conceituais. A sua colocação no setor feminino representaria uma mera colocação logística: "*efetivamente*" (linha 265), sendo que não existem outros espaços a disposição para as detidas transgêneras: "*porque o nosso setor anterior foi destinado a se tornar um polo universitário*" (linhas 267-268).

Os posicionamentos mudam, de fato, a respeito do papel, do status e do quadro estrutural. Posições diferentes dentro de um mesmo contexto produzem discursos e representações diversificadas, seja no estilo, seja no significado. Estas discrepâncias discursivas não emergem somente em nível de categorias sociais dicotômicas (direção e detidos), mas também entre diferentes papéis profissionais que operam no instituto. A mesma situação social (contexto e norma), a qual, sobretudo nos discursos produzidos pelas instâncias administrativas do instituto parecia revestir uma posição prioritária, torna-se secundária já na interação das detidas (para elas o presídio é a cotidianidade!). Em referimento a vida cotidiana, resulta

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

fundamental a percepção do tempo, muitas vezes em suspenso para quem transcorre um longo período dentro de uma instituição total. Este aspecto é referido por todos os atores envolvidos nesta pesquisa, porque as atividades propostas no instituto não conseguem cobrir completamente todo o período no presídio. Ademais, a superlotação da população detida permite só a um pequeno percentual dos presos de participar das atividades de trabalho, escolásticas ou recreativas.

A respeito do quanto foi formulado por Wodak (1997), as matrizes espaço-temporais relegam os discursos dentro de coordenadas específicas de significado implícito. Especialmente, uma detida abriu a interação com o entrevistador fazendo mesmo referimento ao passar do tempo no instituto que altera a percepção da própria cotidianidade. O tempo neste sentido torna-se uma variável psicológica e afetiva, ou seja uma dimensão existencial em base, à qual se define a vida de uma pessoa. O tempo, para além de ser uma unidade de medida, pode ser definido como o seguir-se de ações no período de um dia. De fato, a cotidianidade exprime-se por meio do que se realiza todos os dias. Sendo a dimensão temporal quase suspendida dentro de um contexto totalizante, as atividades de trabalho, ao invés de assumir um valor *de correção*, como defendido por Foucault, constitui muitas vezes um indispensável remédio ao tédio e à depressão.

Assim mesmo a interlocutora do próximo extrato representa o trabalho como um aspecto positivo, também para o significado que consegue dar ao tempo que transcorreu no instituto. De fato, a entrevista inteira é impregnada por explícitos referimentos ao tempo como demonstrado pelo próximo exemplo.

Extrato 3: Detida 3

509. o tempo para mim parou, por isso quando saio
510. sob permissão eu chamo minha família. Aqui dentro
511. para. Para, por isso trabalho cinco horas e como se
512. eu tivesse estado um dia fora.

Emerge claramente desta passagem como o tempo é principalmente associado, dentro da prisão, a duas dimensões sociais: o trabalho e o afeto.

De fato, a interlocutora afirma na primeira parte do extrato como o tempo sem emprego fique inalterado: "*o tempo para mim parou*" (linha 509) e que somente pode aproveitar do próprio tempo: "*quando saio sob permissão*" (linhas 509-510), procura os contatos com os atores significativos da vida dela: "*eu chamo minha família*".

Em nível lexical encontra-se uma reiteração retórica diante do construto de estagnação, que é repetido bem três vezes dentro de uma mesma sequência semântica: "*parou*" (linha 509), "*para*, *para*" (linha 511). Esta situação de bloco temporal e existencial parece resolver-se, para além dos contatos com os próprios familiares, mesmo por meio do tempo empregado em atividades de trabalho: "trabalho cinco horas e como se eu tivesse estado um dia fora" (linha 511 – 512). Especialmente esta última afirmação faz emergir claramente quanto o trabalho e o tempo sejam associados à liberdade e à vida fora das paredes do presídio.

O construto liberdade, entendido como margem de agenciamento individual e coletivo, é um dos aspectos mais importantes na vida dos seres humanos e este assume uma particular relevância, quando este é interrompido. O conceito de liberdade dentro do cárcere é discursivamente associado ao tempo, entendido não como parâmetro, mas como espaço dentro do qual construir relações, representações e conhecimentos. O conjunto destas três variáveis constitui o agenciamento de uma pessoa, ou melhor, a representação de agenciamento que um agente atribui à sua situação e ao contexto. Por isso na prisão tornam-se importantes duas variáveis na definição do espaço e do tempo: o componente do trabalho e aquele do afeto, como emerge do breve extrato de uma detida, que falava do relacionamento com seu ex-namorado antes de entrar no presídio. O extrato, que representa uma ligação analítica entre discursos produzidos dentro e fora da prisão, faz referimento a um aspecto fundamental do agenciamento: a liberdade de amar!

Essa última, dado que a função do sistema penitenciário prevê um afastamento espacial de todos os atores significativos da própria vida, mesmo para prevenir o mais possível qualquer possibilidade de reconstruir aquele sistema de contatos associados à trajetória criminal do recluso, torna-se uma falta daqueles aspectos indispensáveis da própria identidade que são

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

caracterizados da proximidade afetiva do outro. A identidade de gênero, para além do contexto e da cultura, ressente de uma série de gestos cotidianos, ou seja, procedimentos de decoro, por meio dos quais se atribui um sentido e, portanto uma legitimação à própria representação de gênero.

Extrato 4: Detida 5

140. me sentia uma princesa, me trazia comida na
141. cama, tantas flores me dava de presente, me comprou
142. muita roupa nova

As "flores" (linha 141) e a "roupa" (linha 142) poderiam ser consideradas *artefatos afetivos* para enfatizar e reconhecer cotidianamente uma identidade de gênero declinada ao feminino, assim como as atenções comunicadas por meio de gestos: "*me trazia comida na cama*" (linha 140/141). Estes procedimentos de decoro, culturalmente associados a comunicações afetivas, adquirem um significado relacional através de um gesto de conotação cotidiana: o presente. De fato, o dom representa na cultura ocidental uma demonstração de afeto com o fim de comunicar um reconhecimento do outro ao outro (Mantovani, 2000).

De fato, esta representação do *self* emerge de um conjunto de gestos cotidianos negociados na interação com os outros atores. *Flores e roupa*, além de serem objetos, tornam-se na situação dos posicionamentos no aqui e agora *Representações sociais*, em torno das quais se constrói um sentido do *self* como identidade generizada. No plano afetivo, por meio das atenções particulares, reforça-se uma representação do *self* como mulher, discursivamente circunscrita por imagens culturais ligadas ao universo feminino: "*me sentia uma princesa*" (linha 141). Este sentir-se mimada e paparicada torna-se uma prática afetiva, que delineia em nível cotidiano as invisíveis fronteiras entre sistemas de representações e construtos de identidade. O gênero narrativo que emerge deste relatório é impregnado lexicalmente por figuras retóricas descritivas que influenciadas por momentos de vida pessoais e então situados. O recurso à exemplificação, quanto o recurso à reificação, típica de um discurso normativo (veja-se o primeiro extrato), denota um enunciado de tangibilidade e concretude. O

que emerge dos histogramas como uma diversa distribuição de temáticas discursivas diante dos conceitos de situação, experiência e afeto, é exprimido na estrutura do texto por meio de uma organização diversa dos modelos semânticos: daqueles impessoais das autoridades penitenciárias aos diretos e figurativos dos detidos e dos operadores que interagem cotidianamente com a realidade carcerária.

O comandante, falando da própria experiência dentro da seção transgênera, compara a vida no presídio a contextos de interação que fazem parte da cotidianidade íntima da sua vida privada. De fato, emerge da produção discursiva dele um recurso a elementos figurativos e comparativos, expresso por meio de uma superposição narrativa entre a vida dentro do instituto e as interações que se geram na vida familiar.

Extrato 5: Comandante
259. depois nos damos conta quando um está, agora faço um
260. exemplo um pouco particular. Um pouco como quando um
261. está um pouco na própria casa, de manhã levanta, se
262. vir que a mãe, o pai, o irmão, a irmã, a esposa,
263. quem que seja não te chamam, não te respondem, não
264. e vira-se por outra parte, você se dá conta que
265. muito provavelmente levantou virado então você quer
266. saber porque ou coisa teve se há um problema
267. este discurso vale também dentro das seções.

Emerge do extrato um estilo discursivo, caracterizado por uma estrutura linguística de uso tipicamente cotidiano, porque mais do que ressentir de conceitos formalmente generalizados, ressente de experiências concretas e momentos de vida privada. De fato, sua narração é construída por meio das exemplificações, conotadas por acepções completamente pessoais e situadas: "*agora faço um exemplo um pouco particular. Um pouco como quando um está um pouco na própria casa*" (linhas 476/477). Este tipo de estrutura discursiva é caracterizada por elementos retóricos poucos formais e então menos institucionalizados.

Portanto, a realidade carcerária sai dos esquemas completamente

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

estruturalistas, assumindo conotações muito mais concretas e subjetivas. O componente afetivo emerge seja da linguagem informal: "se levanta, se vê" (linha 478), seja dos referimentos a um contexto afetivo por definição: a família. A transposição de dinâmicas interfamiliares diante da vida no presídio sublinha a cotidianidade das interações e do significado delas no aqui e agora. O presídio pode ser visto seja como um contexto a forte funcionamento normativo, seja respeito à sua cotidianidade, como uma realidade de interação comum. Estes posicionamentos quase familiares são enfatizados pelo uso exemplificativo de substantivos que se referem diretamente aos atores principais da vida familiar e então afetiva: "*a mãe, o pai, o irmão, a irmã, a esposa, quem que seja*" (linhas 262-263). Por meio de uma forte redundância destes substantivos, sublinha-se a dimensão confidencial das interações. O afeto, se referido a experiências em primeira pessoa, é conotado por elementos fortemente situados: associações, lembranças, experiências. De fato, são com frequência as pequenas coisas de todos os dias que definem aquelas situações e representações, que depois se tornam realidades reificadas em nível macro da vida social. O sentir-se mulher deve inserir-se de alguma forma em um panorama de cotidianidade afetiva e então das pequenas recorrências que circunscrevem as infinitesimais práticas dos posicionamentos no aqui e agora. Por meio da descrição de uma relação com o outro, emerge o sentido que uma pessoa dá às próprias representações e crenças.

Conclusões

O presídio é uma dimensão simbólica e um sistema de interação entre variáveis funcionais (contexto, estrutura, organização), relacionais (o posicionamento entre *self*, outro e contexto) e normativas (as regras sociais, as leis, as práticas institucionalizadas). O gênero nesses contextos assume um papel particularmente significativo, porque determina a inserção em uma das únicas duas categorias sexuais previstas por esse sistema social. Afastar-se desta lógica dicotômica implica um percurso de afirmação da própria identidade, permeado de processos de reivindicação, muitas vezes sofridos, negados e conotados de uma profunda sensação de solidão. A solidão é uma constante, um fio condutor que é transversalmente difuso ao longo de todas

as narrações coletadas. Nas entrevistas das detidas a alienante condição de estar sozinhas é enfatizada pelo percurso de transição e afirmação do *self*, por alguns versos extremos e certamente poucos comuns a respeito de escolhas de vidas mais legitimadas.

As narrações coletadas mostram, de fato, uma afinidade textual significativa em termos de representações sociais e construções de identidade. As estruturas retóricas das narrações, criticamente analisadas, estão permeadas por uma contingência de sentido quase transversal, difusa ao longo dos discursos produzidos em uma mesma situação espacial e temporal (Wodak, 2001). Nota-se uma correlação de conteúdo que reflete princípios normativos fundamentais, profundamente ligados à gestão do contexto observado, e às correspondentes experiências pessoais. Os histogramas do software *Transana* demonstram quanto os discursos possuem estruturas narrativas diferentes, quando se enfrentam assuntos de ordem pública (as normas, a cultura, a interação com o outro generalizado) ou privada (a representação do *self,* os afetos, a interação com o outro significativo).

Enquanto a variável contextual resulta particularmente relevante nos discursos dos funcionários (em particular a administração e a direção do instituto), as detidas mostram um posicionamento sensivelmente deslocado para o lado relacional, sendo que o contexto particularmente coercitivo de um aparado penitenciário tem uma função central ao longo do itinerário correcional, mas durante as interações cotidianas, normas e contexto apresentam-se de forma mais periférica do que os momentos de vida pessoais e as exigências pragmáticas. A vida na penitenciária não ressente só do efeito da estrutura cultural com os seus hábitos simbólicos, mas também da negociação constante e concreta destes procedimentos em nível da interação cotidiana, dos contextos no aqui e agora, das práticas que se desenvolvem cada dia, como a relação com os atores sociais significativos – familiares e amigos – como também com o outro generalizado – parceiros e funcionários.

De fato, a vida de todos os dias dentro das paredes de um presídio adquire um significado peculiar, bem mais concreto e pragmático diante das referências simbólicas e normativas do contexto, que pertencem a uma

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

ordem mais silenciosa e menos visível. Se for também verdade que o presídio representa um veículo que normatiza para restabelecer a ordem ideológica dos macrossistemas sociais, como afirmado seja por Foucault (1975/1987), seja por Zimbardo (2007/2008), seus reflexos subjetivos exprimem-se sempre em nível de posicionamentos no aqui e agora, como a relação que se instaura entre detidos e pessoal penitenciário que opera diretamente nas seções. O *sentido* no discurso nota-se no próprio significado mediado no momento mesmo da interação (Wodak, 2001). Então o presídio delineia *hábitos*, nos quais tomam forma aquelas *"regiões de fachada"* da vida cotidiana que ressentem da complexa interdependência entre sentido abstrato (a norma) e significados concretos (relações). Esse jogo de negociação constante entre esquemas de representações socialmente partilhadas e ações conotadas de sentido subjetivo produz realidades individuais e coletivas, tornadas acessíveis por meio da gênese de discursos. Estes últimos são, por uma parte, práticas de interações, como os sistemas de poder que criam hábitos sociais e culturais, enquanto, por outra parte, se submetem a uma ordem pragmática, que se produz e reproduz na interação entre sistemas de significados simbólicos, culturais e normativos (Foucault, 1975) e universos afetivos, relacionais e pessoais (Wodak, 1997). O que confere ao *entrelacement* das interações simbólicas um caráter tangível é a produção de discursos e narrações que descrevem momentos de vida, emoções, percepções, afetos e lembranças. A variável afetiva, por isso, torna-se um aspecto importante a partir do qual as interações podem ser consideradas ações situadas. Se para a direção e a administração do presídio a colocação (con)textual das transgêneras, sobretudo por meio da linguagem (uso do gênero feminino) e do ambiente (a detenção dentro do setor feminino), torna-se um fator fundamental para reconhecer as suas identidades; a polícia penitenciária e as detidas, ao contrário, negociam valores, status e identidades a partir de contatos diretos, frequentes e pessoais.

A experiência, por isso, torna-se um dos elementos mais importantes de se promover, para prevenir conflitos, tensões e situações críticas, que muitas vezes emergem em contextos tão extremos. Enfatizando o valor pragmático e estratégico de relações situadas, melhoram não somente as condições

difíceis da detenção, mas também o árduo e cotidiano trabalho dos funcionários do presídio.

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postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms postcolonial and transnational feminisms

Zahra Tizro

The role of orthodox jurisprudence in dealing with domestic violence against women in Iran

Abstract

This paper is concerned with the structure of power/knowledge in the orthodox Islamic discourses (as the mainstream discourse) in Iran, and the interrelationship between power, violence, and sexuality both theoretically and empirically. In the theoretical section of this study I employ a novel approach based on the economic theory of contract, in order to shed light on the internal logic of the Islamic formulation of marriage, how it is organised around a critical transaction of sexual submission for economic protection, and how this simple formulation may pave the way for violence against women, which turns into a source of perpetual tension in contemporary Iranian society. Empirically, drawing on fieldwork among 62 women, men and judicial officials in Gilan province (north Iran), this paper aims to report and reflect on the judicial official's narratives on marriage, marital relationship within the context of Islamic marriage and associated discourses of sexuality and violence.

Keywords: domestic violence, Islamic marriage, Iran, Islamic jurisprudence, Sharia[1] law, Islam, sexuality, Muslim women.

Introduction

Feminism pays immense attention to the control of female sexuality as the root cause of patriarchy. The interrelationship between power, violence, and sexuality has always been recognized in feminist analyses of male domination, in which it is believed that, through sexuality, patriarchal relations were formed and, in turn, sexuality is constructed through gender (Coveney *et al*. 1984; MacKinnon, 1982). According to feminist theories, the subordination of women is explicitly established in institutional and patriarchal

[1]Sharia or Shariat Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Qur′an and the traditions of the Prophet.

practices and is supported by some of the most prominent religious, political, legal, and literary figures. One of the most significant social-cognitive processes that contribute to levels of inequality is a shared belief in discourses that legitimise inequality, exploitation and violence. The detailed analysis of the myriad ways in which sexuality is conceptualised, normalised and subjectivised in the Background[2] is highly important. In the context of the Islamic marriage female sexuality is believed to be a tradable commodity which culminates in potential control being exerted over all aspects of women's lives, from dress to work and from sexual to social relations.

A number of feminists (Taylor and Vintges, 2004) found Foucault's oeuvre extremely inspiring in explaining various forms of oppressive practices including oppression against women. Foucault's oeuvre demonstrates that any experience, including the experience of violence against women, needs to be explored along three-dimensional axes; power, knowledge, and subjectivity (Flynn, 2005). According to Foucault (1980), the three fundamental elements of any experience are "a game of truth, relations of power, and forms of relation to oneself and to others." The logical implication of the Foucauldian nominalism regarding the experience of violence is multiplicity of violence rather than presumption of one essence for violence against women. The fragmenting force of nominalism serves to dissolve historical or any other "Experience" (Reason, Madness, Sexuality, Crime, Violence) into a plurality of "experiences" (reasons, madnesses, sexualities, crimes, violences). The historical nominalism calls for attention to the specificity and situatedness of any form of experience; implying that the interplay and correlation of power, knowledge, and subjectivity in the constitution of experience of violence against women in Iran is unique and different from any other.

The orthodox jurisprudence is an overwhelmingly powerful force in shaping the minds and lives of ordinary people in the Islamic countries

[2] Susan Hekman (1999, pp. 121-149) alludes to the work by John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995), and calls this structure "the Background". She perceives the "hegemonic masculinist discourse" as the Background. In the Iranian context, the orthodox jurisprudence is the Background.

(Mernissi, 1991), more particularly in Iran, as the mainstream structure of power/knowledge. The traditional religious order is theorized, propagated and largely implemented by the orthodox jurisprudence and its affiliated institutions and structures. Orthodox jurisprudence is the legal discourse of Islamic civilization (Coulson, 1969).

The two distinct elements in the fashioning of Islamic law are divine revelation and human reasoning of jurists. Orthodox jurisprudence has demonstrated a set of characteristics and traits in its historical evolution and in its reaction to challenges of time and place. It possesses and retains the monopoly of production of religious knowledge and jurisprudential rulings. The structure of power/knowledge (orthodox jurisprudence) unifies the interpretation of the religious sources with the religious sources themselves and with this discursive device buys a status of unquestionability and sacredness for itself. The sacredness of the text creeps in its language and methodology and becomes the only way to understand the text through professional activities and jargon of religious jurists[3]. That is why knowledge reflects power and creates power; and power produces and legitimizes knowledge. The rulings produced by the orthodox jurisprudence have two functions: law making and image making corresponding to two functions of any jurisprudential rulings. Foucault refers to these "twofold character as judicative and veridicative." (Flynn, 2005, p.34).

Due to the importance of 'orthodox jurisprudence' and its hegemonic role in contemporary discourses and law-making practices, and consequently, women's lives in Iran, in the following section I will present a brief picture of the orthodox formulation and definition of marriage as a contract and its implications and relation to domestic violence against women in Iran with particular emphasis on Shia[4] Iran.

The role of orthodox jurisprudence on marital relations: marriage contract

As Afshar (1998) points out, marriage in Islam could be considered as a 'commercial transaction' in which the women rent or sell their sexual ser-

[3] or *foqahah*.
[4] Also Shi'a, one of the two main branches of Islam.

vices to their husbands. As emphasized by Mir-Hosseini (1993, p.36) (although in different terms), every aspect (all rights and duties) of the Islamic marriage follows logically from the central concepts of an exchange; the exchange of sexual services for financial security (bride price, maintenance, household remuneration). There are many examples in the Islamic sources viewing marriage as a commercial exchange, for instance Shaykh Khalil, the most prominent Maliki jurist, sees the relationship in marriage as follows:

> When a woman marries, she sells a part of her person. In the market one buys merchandise, in marriage the husband buys the genital *arvum mulieris*. (Mir-Hosseini, 1993, p.32)

Such a conception is shared by the Shi'a jurists; Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, the most prominent scholar of thirteen century, gives a very similar definition of marriage or in its Arabic term nikah: "A contract whose object is that of domination over the vagina, without the right of its possession" (Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, 1982, p.39).

According to the contemporary Islamic ulema[5] marriage or "nikah is a contract for the ownership, tamlik, of the use of [the] vagina" (Haeri, 1989, p.34). Haeri argues that Hilli's view about marriage as a contract of sale is ambivalent, although he stated that "marriage is a kind of ownership". On the other hand, he argues there is a difference between marriage and ownership, and that one should not mix them together. For instance, he argues, a man can have sexual relationship with his slave girl without marrying her. Should he decide to marry her he must make her a free woman first. Thus, the 'complete ownership' over a slave girl, as Haeri (1989) argues, turns out to be a 'partial ownership' of a married woman. Thus, it is important to note that in the Islamic marriage only female sexuality is believed to be a tradable commodity and not the woman herself.

By applying the economic theory of contract (Pateman, 1988), it is possible to predict that the core of orthodox marriage, an exclusive exchange of

[5]A body of Muslim scholars recognized as expert in Islamic sacred law and theology.

sex (exclusivity condition) on demand (promptness condition) for financial provision, may, in the context of a legalist-based type of historical rationality (Abisaab, 2005), imply that the marital relation is transformed from the relationship between two independent and autonomous subjects to panoptical control of one subject, men, over the other, women. This in turn may lead to domestic violence, due to the demands of modern life which requires the active participation of women in social life. The requirements of active female participation may come into conflict with the codes of conduct invoked in the orthodox formulation of marriage with its two conditions of exclusivity and promptness.

One of the most important components of Islamic marriage is obedience (*tamkin).* The most important duty of a woman, in Islamic marriage, is *tamkin* or submission (1105 Iranian Civil Code), and the most important duty of a husband towards his wife is to support her financially (1106 Civil Code). The legal term for the wife's refusal is called *nushuz* (rebellion or disobedience), in response to which physical, psychological and economic chastisement by the husband can be justified. The husband's refusal to pay maintenance is punishable by law (he may be fined or imprisoned).

The perceptions of female sexuality in these discourses have profound effect on understanding of gender relation and its association to violence against women in Iran. Given the importance of female sexuality and its role in the marital institution and domestic violence, and subsequently, its role both in the legal system and in women's everyday lives, this paper investigates the effects of these discourses on treatment of women in Iranian society with Islam (in its Shia version) as the mainstream discourse and to explore the extent to which predictions of the economic theory of contract (Pateman, 1988) matched the reality of marital relations in Iran, as perceived by actual participants in this study.

Method

The data was collected during June-October 2004 and the research was mainly based in Gilan province[6]. I interviewed altogether 62 individuals: 40

[6] situated in the north of Iran along the Caspian Sea.

women, 14 men and 8 people involved in the judicial system (4 judges and 4 lawyers) for the prevalence of domestic violence and their perceptions of the legitimate/illegitimate reasons behind all types of act of violence against women. This article, however, reports the dominant themes emerged in the accounts of eight judicial officials. On the basis of their social and political backgrounds and current positions, the participants are divided into two groups: four male judges and four consultants (two of whom were male and the other two were female). With the exception of a young lawyer in her early thirties the rest of participants were middle age and all of them had degrees in higher education. One of the male consultants and university lectures was also a religious scholar[7] and he was a representative of Guardianship of the Islamic jurists[8] in the region.

To generate data in-depth face to face interviews (Oakley, 1974) with semi-structured questions were conducted in all cases of this group with most of my participants. Additionally, I used other qualitative methods such as focus groups whenever appropriate and possible. The highly sensitive subject matter of this research required a flexible approach and I had to tailor my interview techniques and research questions to my interviewees and to the situation in which the research encounter occurred. The duration of the interviews varied between 20 minutes to three hours and, in some cases, three days, depending on their time and conditions. Different places were selected to conduct the interviews: the courts (family court and criminal court), offices, the participants' houses, or a friend's house. I prepared an interview guide and I used tape recorder whenever possible and I took notes when it was not appropriate due to the sensitivities of time and place. I assigned the participants pseudonyms to respect their trust and observe the codes of confidentiality. The data was codified into some themes. I selected the common themes; however I did not ignore some of the specific cases.

[7] He was also a graduate from a religious school (*Hozeh-e Elmiyah-e Qom*) in religious studies.
[8] *velayate-faqih.*

Some of these common topics emerged as a result of the questions I asked each participant and a few others came about as a result of data analysis.

I approached judges and lawyers informally by snowballing technique. Through connections with a number of influential friends I could get access to professional men and women in the judiciary, which provided me with a unique and great chance to interview judges, lawyers and clients. I was granted permission to read the files and attend and observe the natural workings of the court, talk to the staff and a number of men and women interviewees.

I started my interview by asking how the system deals with domestic violence in general and then throughout the interview I asked more specific questions and finished the interviews by asking them about any personal views and opinions they wanted to add. Although the participants had different perspectives on domestic violence and the role of the judiciary, a kind of consensus emerged, in which the burden of peace and serenity in the family rests on women through the wholehearted embrace of men's right of control over women's affairs, and women's submission to this power. The question arises as to whether this control can be exercised through violence. On this point there were some differences within the participants' accounts, which will be discussed at length in the following sections.

The structure of power/knowledge: judiciary in Iran

The judiciary, a formal mechanism of conflict resolution, plays a major role in defining violence against women and designing various devices to tackle it. In Iran the law is categorised into public law and private law (Ebadi, 2002). Public law governs the relations between the apparatus of state and people, while private law addresses the relationships between private entities. The most important branches of private law are civil laws, which regulate the interaction between people based on their membership of society. One of the most important branches of public law is criminal law (in Iran it is called the Islamic panel law). The cases referred to the judicial system are resolved on the basis of these sets of laws.

Certain questions arise: How does the system view the problem? What are the assumptions of the judiciary? On the basis of these assumptions, how

do women and men formulate, conceptualise and resolve their disputes? How does the legal system use the resources and discourses of the community to make sense of and resolve disputes and violent confrontation along the gender divide? These questions will be addressed by analyzing the accounts of eight men and women involved in the judiciary.

Physical and psychological violence

Physical violence in Iran is addressed under criminal law (Hojatiy-e Ashrafi, 2003). If an incident leads to payment of *diyeh* or blood money (Criminal Codes 294-5), it is considered a criminal act, and the person who has committed the crime is charged and tried in the criminal court. If a husband, for instance, beats his wife and as a result leaves some injuries or bruises on her body, he is prosecuted and made to pay *diyeh*. The four male judges I interviewed agreed that beating a wife is a criminal act if it leads to payment of *diyeh*, and is therefore illegal. They believed that the law does not grant the husband such a right. One of the judges (Judge G.) stated:

> There is nothing in the law allowing men to beat their wives, and when we do not have laws we refer to the opinions of *foqahas* and scholars.

Judge A., however, admitted that there are sometimes differences between the law and the orthodox jurisprudence's textbook rulings, and further acknowledged that the legal system is dominated by the orthodox jurisprudence, according to which the husband's right to beat his wife in the case of *nushuz* is recognised. Judge G. did not see any problem in a husband occasionally beating his wife. If the wife has been proven to be *nashezeh* (disobedient), the court will discipline her by following a number of steps. The first of these involves "preaching her to righteousness". Next, the husband may deprive her economically, and isolate her. If none of these measures leads the woman to the right path (to submission), the court, and not the husband, has the right to punish her (Afshar, 1998). Judge A. admitted that in practice he makes his decisions on a case-by-case basis. This means that he sometimes disregards the instructions given by the orthodox jurispru-

dence, and tries to issue verdicts in favour of women. He explained that although the orthodox jurisprudence gives a man permission to beat his wife in cases of disobedience (*nushuz*), according to the law physical punishment is illegal, and the court should decide how to punish the woman:

> He cannot punish his wife because of her bad cooking. We confront such men in a serious manner in any court, even with a religious judge.

However, he believed that there are some occasions when a man may punish his wife:

> but if he thinks his wife is getting corrupted morally and betraying her husband by thinking about other men, then he has the right to take action.

Nevertheless, Judge A. had his own criteria about how this should be done. For instance, if a woman wishes to leave the house for legitimate reasons, such as going to work, shopping or visiting family members, she does not need her husband's permission. This is not disobedience, "unless her going out or her action results in breaking the family union or causing moral corruption [*fesad*]". Overall, Judge A. rejected the idea of a man's right to beat his wife, even when she is *nashezeh*,[9] but deemed divorce by the husband a fair course of action.

According to Judge Y., on the basis of the law of *osr va haraj* (hardship), if it becomes evident that it is impossible for the woman to live with her husband according to Article 1130 of the Civil Code, she may obtain a divorce. According to Article 115, if a woman claims that her life is in danger, or experiences financial hardship, she may obtain a separation. However, Judge Y. stated that, in practice, a woman's evidence does not provide sufficient grounds for enforcement of the rulings[10]. If the court is not convinced that the woman truly is trapped in a dangerous situation, it will take no action. However, he was very concerned that the system is not doing enough to protect women who really are in peril. He was shocked to hear on the ra-

[9] Disobedient.
[10] In Persian is '*maye-e hokmi'*.

dio that a woman had lost her life as a result of returning to live with her violent husband by the court's order. He said:

> Sometimes we hear that women who have to carry on living with their violent husbands because the court gave a verdict ordering them to go back home end up dead, or are at great risk. The court can give an order that a woman who claims her life is in great danger must live elsewhere.

Judge Y. drew attention to the major crisis currently faced by the legal system in Iran in relation to recognising women whose lives are indeed in grave danger. He suggested that the court's decision in individual cases should be based on the woman's claims (not the court's verdict), and she should not be sent back to her abusive husband. There seem to be no consensual guidelines for the judges that would enable them to identify women at risk. His suggestion also indicates the great need for the provision of safe places, or refuges, for such women.

On the other hand, when I discussed the legality of violence with Judge H., he first read the verse 3:34 (*Nisa* sura)[11] form the Qur'an and interpreted it to me. He asserted that Qur'anic verses should not be interpreted according to people's desires and whims because, in his opinion, they become flawed and fallible. He believed that:

> Although this verse refers to the chastisement of the women when they disobey their husbands, we have to regard this type of beating as different from a severe beating... if a man beats his wife it should not cause any harm to her body. If her skin turns red or black [as a result of beating], he must pay her *diyeh* [blood money]. Here the emphasis is more on psychological punishment than physical punishment.

Nevertheless, psychological violence cannot be diagnosed and detected by the court and a woman cannot support her claims if she does not provide the court with sufficient evidence. Judge H. acknowledged that physical vio-

[11] The verse discuss about women and their rights.

lence was more important than psychological violence in the eyes of the law. In his view, it is frequently difficult for a woman to prove her claims to the court, and occasionally she will be sent to see a doctor, or, in the case of psychological violence, to a psychiatrist or psychologist. My impression was that there was no campaign or even awareness of the issues associated with psychological violence, and such an approach appeared to be a luxury; either the system could not afford to concentrate on these cases due to the prevalence of physical violence, or there was widespread ignorance of the significance of psychological violence. The law does not address injuries caused by the husband's abusive behaviour where this leaves no clear visible scars. There is silence in law on such matters. According to article 167 of the constitution, when the law does not specify a response, the judge should refer to legitimate fatawa[12] or religious rulings. This leads to different interpretations of the rulings. According to Islamic penal law introduced in 1996, any behaviour which damages the individual's reputation, such as insult, slander, accusation of adultery and the spreading of rumours, is forbidden. However, gender has not been a matter of importance, and is not specially mentioned in the law (Sadat Asadi, 2004), and psychological cruelty has not been recognised either in law or in Sharia. While insults and harassment in the streets are addressed in law, the use of abusive language in the marital relationship has not been specifically mentioned.

The other four judicial professionals I interviewed maintained that physical violence is not approved by Iranian law. They maintained that in Sharia, such a right is reserved for a man in the case of his wife's disobedience. Mr P. (the cleric), by reading *Nisa* sura (4: 34) from the Qur'an, explained to me that:

> It may sound as if the verse is saying "If a woman disobeys, beat her", but it is suggested to avoid injuring or bruising the woman's body. The beating is symbolic, just to show the man's dissatisfaction – it must not lead to paying *diyeh*.

[12] An authoritative ruling on a point of Islamic law.

Mrs K., a female consultant, stated that if there were any clear signs of bruises or injuries or any evidence from the woman's doctor, then they can either order the husband to pay blood money, or they can put him in jail for six months to a year. She explained the difficulties and complexities involved in the cases of domestic violence in law and Sharia. She believed that these issues did not exist before the Islamisation of the judicial system:

> In 1974, our family law took many issues into consideration. The situation for women was better....Nowadays, when women don't have any explicit evidence, the court makes decisions on their behalf. Normally, they are sent home to submit to their husbands because they can't prove their cases...getting beaten to a certain level is considered a cultural norm, and the woman is expected to tolerate it.

She was referring to the laws introduced after the revolution, laws such as *tamkin* (submission) which will be discussed in the next sections. In her opinion, women are the "real losers" in the current system. In addition, the above passage shows that Mrs K. made a distinction between beating (as a social norm) and battering (which is deemed excessive and legally punishable). Submission or *tamkin* is a common theme emerging throughout the research and is the most crucial components of marriage which could be used as a basis to justify domestic violence. This is discussed in the next section.

Sexual violence: tamkin and its role in relation to domestic violence

One of the most important components of Islamic marriage is *tamkin.* The most important duty of a woman, in Islamic marriage, is *tamkin* or submission (1105 Civil Code), and the most important duty of a husband towards his wife is to support her financially (1106 Civil Code). The legal term for the wife's refusal of *tamkin* is called *nushuz* (rebellion or disobedience), in response to which physical, psychological and economic chastisement by the husband can be justified. The husband's refusal to pay maintenance, which is called *tark-e enfagh*, is punishable by law. As the four judges in my interview asserted, a man's job is to manage his family's financial af-

fairs, and if he refuses to do so without adequate justification, he may be fined or imprisoned. In relation to sexual violence, in some areas the law does not make any statement on certain violent acts such as rape or unwanted sexual relations. Rape in the marital context has not been recognised, as *tamkin*, or submission in matters of a sexual nature, is part of the transaction in the marriage contract. Given the importance of these terms, both in the legal system and in women's everyday lives, my next section attempts to unravel the relationship between the marital institution and domestic violence.

Judges' views in relation to tamkin[13]

While I was in court, a woman was seeking divorce as a result of her husband's refusal to pay *nafegheh* (maintenance). The husband complained that his wife did not obey him, the legal term for which is *adam-e tamkin* (non-submission). Generally, when a man complains in this manner, he intends to convince the judge that his wife's going out could lead her to be corrupted or seduced by other men, or is claiming that he doubts her or distrusts her. Interestingly, men and women who come to court usually bring their cases against each other using the terms *tamkin* and *tark-e enfagh* (non-payment of maintenance); whatever the root causes of their dispute, they try to formulate their complaints by way of these concepts.

As all the eight participants in this study stated, when a woman admits that she does not obey her husband she will lose the case immediately. Most women do not know how to formulate their cases, and are unaware of the legal details regarding their rights. Moreover, they cannot afford to hire lawyers. Conversely, when a woman claims that she obeys her husband and he refuses to pay her *nafagheh*, the onus is on him, and the judge's approach to the case becomes really crucial. I asked one of the judges how he verifies the woman's obedience, or *tamkin*. Judge H. made a distinction between two kinds of *tamkin:* general *(tamkin-e a'am)* and specific (*tamkin-e khas*) (this categorisation was also emphasised by my other interviewees). He be-

[13] Obedience.

lieved that women's obedience has some useful consequences for both parties; it makes men more fulfiled and, at the same time, paves the way for women to gain power through their submission to the master, and to become masters themselves. He elaborated his view further in the following analysis:

> It's quite different from slavery… The Islamic order brings some stability to society. A woman can be commander-in-chief of the family with her obedience...a woman's obedience satisfies her husband.

The above passage refers to *tamkin-e a´am*, a woman's recognition of her husband's authority over her and her appreciation of his being the head of the household. Judge A. and the other judges (together with Mr P. the cleric) held the view that the power designated by the orthodox jurisprudence to the husband is not absolute, but is limited through the imposition of a set of conditions. For instance, he does not have the right to intervene in her financial affairs or make her do the housework; the only punishment that he can apply is to cut off her maintenance. He does not have the right to beat her, or if he does he should do it symbolically, purely to show his dissatisfaction. Judge H. explained to me that as soon as a couple contracts a marriage, both husband and wife become obliged to perform a set of duties and the only obligation a wife has, in Sharia, "is to obey her husband and not to go out without his permission."

Tamkin-e khas, or sexual submission, and its relation to violence

In Sharaye-ol Islam, Hilli defines *tamkin-e khas* as "removing the obstacles in relationships between men and women without any limitations in time and place". A contemporary jurist (Araki, 1998, p.742) defined *tamkin* as "the woman's readiness for her husband's demands for satisfaction". The question is, to what extent can a husband advance his will and power over his wife, in order to make her obey him sexually? Or, to put it bluntly, can he use force or intimidation to achieve what he wants? How do the courts conceptualise and resolve such cases? There are many arguments on these

issues. Those who claim that Islam gave men permission to beat their wives for disobedience refer to the *Nisa* verse in the Qur′an. But others argue that the Qur′an does not suggest using violence by any means; rather it teaches men how to express their dissatisfaction to their wives symbolically, by beating them softly without inflicting any harm. The question on the extent to which a woman should obey her husband is a matter of dispute between jurists and judges. Some, among them Ayatollah Khomeini (now deceased), believed that a wife's most important duty is her sexual obedience (Mokhtari 1996, in Afshar 1998). However, according to the *ijmā-e foghaha* (jurists' consensus), there are some exceptions in relation to time and place. Three judges in this study stated that they take moral codes, social norms and acceptable excuses *(ozr-e sharie)* into consideration. Nevertheless, there is an overall agreement that in *tamkin-e khas* a woman should submit herself to her husband in order to satisfy his sexual demands. For that, as Judge H. stated, she is obliged to stay in her husband's home, and should not go out without his permission. Many men in court use this discourse to justify their misbehaviour towards their wives: "She's a vulgar woman – she goes out without my permission." Muslim women are permitted to work outside the home, but need to obtain their husbands' permission. Some, however, like Judge H., argue that if she has her husband's permission to work outside the home, or if the couple agreed in their marriage contract on her right to work, she cannot be prevented from going to work for her husband's own sexual gratification. He rejected the idea that a wife must always be available sexually, but added:

> In the case of a housewife, it's different. Because she doesn't have the time restraint and she's often at home, she doesn't have any excuses for not being ready for her husband.

In relation to sexual violence and whether or not a man can have a variety of sexual demands from his wife, Judge H. clarified the issues as follows:

> A woman should always surrender herself to her husband, and cannot simply say, 'I'm tired – leave me alone'. But that's not to say that she can't go to work, and

must always be available at home. The woman may fulfil her duty at an appropriate time. It's not like praying, which requires a specific time...Furthermore, he cannot have intercourse with his wife in other ways, because according to a Qur′anic verse, women are men's fields. Men may plant their seeds in them, but only in the right place. Therefore, doing it the wrong way is *haram*.

When I asked him about the term "field" and the ambiguity embedded in the verse, different interpretations of it and other judges' positions in this case, he explained:

In such cases, we ask someone like the *marja-e taghlid*[14], and I accept whatever he says. All judges should have a consensus [*ijmā*] on this, but they don't. A man cannot have sexual relations with his wife whenever and however he wants, and stop her from going to work. The judge shouldn't address the issue at stake here under the title of *tamkin*, and if he does, it's an infringement of his specified duties, and his superiors will impeach him...

In most legal texts, the term *tamkin-e khas* is extensively applied to women's sexual submission to men's sexual demands, and satisfying women's sexual needs does not seem to be at the forefront of legislators' attention. In theory, a woman is entitled to have sexual relations with her legitimate husband every four months and ten days (compared to men, who can demand to have intercourse any time). However, in practice, culturally and legally, it is very rare for women to complain about their husbands' disobedience in relation to sexual matters, including sexual violence; rather, if there is any problem, they prefer to wrap their complaints in economic terms. The most usual and acceptable way is to say, "He doesn't provide for me." Even if a woman could complain about her husband's forceful and aggressive conduct, the court does not seem to have the capacity to interfere in this highly private matter, as the judge above pointed out. The most a judge can do, when a woman complains about sexual violence, is to refer her to forensic doctors to find any injuries or marks that could be used to make a case for divorce.

[14] The highest authority in the orthodox jurisprudence.

Meanwhile, as the judge above stated, the judge's "hands are open": he is endowed with great arbitrary power. In practice, it is highly unlikely that a judge will undergo an impeachment process over a wrong ruling.

Moreover, if a woman stays with her violent husband (as a result of a court order to *tamkin*), how can she secure herself from his misconduct? In court I met a woman who had brought a case against her husband for his bad behaviour, and for not providing for the family adequately. She was illiterate, was not well informed about her rights, and had no lawyer. In court, she stated that she had left her husband's house, and her acknowledgement of this resulted in her losing the case immediately. In the eyes of the court she was a *nashezeh*. The judge urged her to go back to her husband's home and obey him so that she could be entitled to maintenance. Judge G. described the situation:

> It's in our law. A woman should obey [*tamkin*], and in return she can get her maintenance, but if she isn't living in her husband's house, she isn't entitled to any money.

In his opinion this was fair, because the man works hard and the woman and the rest of the family should appreciate that and listen to him. However, he admitted that if the woman claims that she obeys her husband and lives with him under one roof, and complains about his bad behaviour, then the court, after investigating matters further and after compiling evidence against the man, may fine him, or imprison him for a few weeks. Since the imprisonment of the man is likely to become a source of even further social and economic problems for the family, the woman often has to withdraw her request. Recently, the courts have been more flexible, and have accepted women's requests for divorce; however, this usually depends on the flexibility of the judges and the courts.

Mr R.[15] believed that bestowing power upon the husband as the head of the household, and giving him other advantages such as the right of polygamy and divorce, have a serious impact on women's lives. He said:

[15] A lawyer, and a university lecturer in law.

Giving power to the man, as head of the family, may result in authoritarian behaviour and end up with him beating his wife. Giving polygamy and divorce rights to men, according to our law, has a serious effect on husbands' and other people's opinions about women.

Thus, according to Mr R., *tamkin* could provide a breeding ground for domestic violence by bestowing excessive power on men. Women consequently become powerless. The opinions of the female consultant (Mrs K.) and the female lawyer (Ms M.) were in line with his. They also believed that introducing *tamkin* to the law after the 1979 revolution made their work very difficult, specifically in relation to domestic violence. One of the factors found to be important in domestic violence is women's dependence on men, and their sense of powerlessness. Karr (2001) argued that because the law-maker offers men the absolute authority of being the head of the household, this can expand into other domains of marital life such as sexual relations and thus sexual violence. Others who argue against this idea believe that the headship of the household is a managerial task, and it is expected that the man will act wisely and fairly (Mohamadi, 2004). However, they do not believe in government interference in family affairs, as it might damage the family's interests. They simply hope that the husband eventually acts reasonably. They argue that there should be no forceful interference in marital relationships, and no-one can compel a woman to obey her husband; rather, she is encouraged to do so in the expectation of a heavenly reward in the Hereafter[16].

Hence, the courts in Iran order the woman to return to her husband's home and obey him. Or they recommend that the husband does not beat his wife. Instead he can neglect her by starving her, or not providing her with clothes.

[16] Taking good care of a husband for a woman is equivalent to jihad (the struggle for God). For reference look at *Furu' al-Kafi* by Al Kuleini, *Ketab* Al-jihad; in *Resaleh-e Badieeye* by Hosseini Tehrani, M. H., 1997.

The reasons behind domestic violence, according to judges and others

An analysis of the accounts of the participants in this section of the study brought different themes to light: economic hardship, psychologism, sociologism (failure by family members to accept the gender roles assigned to them), upbringing, fear of scandal, moral bankruptcy and un-Islamic behaviour. These are discussed in the following section. First, I shall discuss the judges' views. I shall subsequently deal with others' points of view.

The judges' perspectives

Economic dependency on men, in Judge G's views, automatically leads to men becoming more powerful in relation to their wives. He believed that because women are physically, psychologically and intellectually weaker than men, they become vulnerable and need to be protected by men. He believed that in seeking amnesty and security, women search for men's protection, and thus become dependent on them. He, however, refused to see the problem from a different angle: that if women are weak (as he thought), it is because they are not given the same opportunities as men (in work, education and so on). He gave more weight to biological gender differences than any other factor. In response to my question that perhaps working and earning money could empower women and free them from dependency on men, he maintained that: "Women are easily seduced, and gullible."

In his belief, women need to have custodians because they are gullible, and men can deceive them easily. That is why he would not allow his wife to work outside the home. Overall, Judge G. had a negative and pessimistic view of women. He admitted, "I had to beat my wife sometimes, to bring her to her senses". To him, providing and satisfying her economic needs were enough to make her grateful: "Women must be appreciative." His personal experiences with his wife, and women in general, together with his belief system (he had been raised in a conservative, traditional family), had had a major impact on his professional views and practices. Initially, Judge G. placed the emphasis on poverty and economic factors; however, in our later conversations it became clear that, in his view, women's behaviour (disobedience, rebelliousness and sexual frigidity) and character (being

emotional, less rational, simple-minded and gullible) irritate men, and ultimately culminate in the men resorting to violence. Therefore, the primary reason behind the cases of violence against women was perceived to be the women's behaviour, and attitudes and economic reasons were deemed to have secondary significance.

In another judge's view, however, economic causes per se are not the root of violence against women. The woman's personality is more important. Judge H. believed that the real reason behind domestic violence is the lack of men and women's mental and psychological development. He rejected poverty, economics and other causes because, in his opinion:

> Some couples, in spite of their financial problems, live together happily because they have mutual understanding.

He defined mutual understanding as:

> A woman should obey her husband, as it makes him really happy and fulfiled, and a man should respect his wife and provide for her.

Therefore, women's obedience is regarded as the key to happiness in the orthodox order. Judge H. said that when he went to ask his wife's hand in marriage, he told her that he wanted nothing from her but "absolute obedience", and she accepted that. "By acknowledging it in speech and action, she became a commander-in-chief [e*mir*] herself" (the maid becomes the master of the master). In his opinion, a woman should have a great deal of tolerance, and should not get angry easily. Yet again, it is all in a woman's hands. The male judges approached the factors involved in domestic violence from a specific angle; they all agreed that a woman's role (as the main source of peace or tension in the family) is the most critical and profound in provoking, sustaining and practising violence.

According to another judge (Judge A.), "morality" can be a ground for violence. He sympathised with the man who beats his wife if she commits infidelity or even thinks about other men. Generally, in his opinion, a wom-

an should obey her husband. This was found to be a general pattern in male judges' views, and their differences, in this regard, were a matter of degree and not type. Judge A., however, tried to justify his position by saying that every office or institution needs to have a manager, and that families are no exception. If the family members do not listen to their "boss" (their father or husband), there will be turmoil and chaos, and everything will fall apart. Judge A., however, did not seem to comprehend the full implications of his sympathy with men who beat or even kill their wives in this relation. This is reflected in every girl's and every wife's life through heavy restrictions imposed on her dressing and freedom of movement, for fear of sexual scandal and to safeguard her modesty and chastity and the family's honour.

What fiercely restricts women's freedom of movement and participation in the social life of the nation is the threat and fear of being exposed to scandalous situations. Families may find themselves and their reputation damaged irreparably, and their mere survival in the community in peril. Furthermore, the wrath of the rulings and the laws is a continuum; it is felt by women at different levels, from an angry argument in the family on how to dress in public, to fierce fighting or beating over issues such as attending specific occasions such as a wedding, exercising in the park or visiting a football stadium.[17] The image-making function of the rulings and laws regarding the safeguard of honour is reflected in the life of the nation and its social interactions, mainly through subliminal messages imprinted in people's selfhood to view women as a source of danger and chaos with all its ensuing ramifications. The effect of codes of honour and chastity is not reflected in the statistics of honour killing, but in everyday restrictions imposed on women's lives, labour and language. It heavily sexualises women's beings and society's gender relations. MacKinnon held the idea that, "[Gender] is...a question of power, specifically of male supremacy and female subordination" (1987, p.40). The orthodox formulation of marriage offers women a specific place in the social order. This positioning is further justified and supported by a set of discourses, including the discourse of

[17] Women and girls are not allowed into a football stadium; see *Zanan* magazine, vol. 129, March 2006.

gender difference, naturalising and essentialising gender relations and the division of labour enshrined in the orthodox formulation of marriage. Mr P. (the clergyman along with other male judges in this study) constructed his argument along these lines. He had come to the conclusion that women's roles are inherently different from men's. In theory, we are equal; in practice, we are different, with different roles. A woman's main task is to create peace and tranquillity for her husband and children. Being a cleric, Mr P. strongly supported the orthodox discourse, and vehemently opposed feminism and westernisation. Overall, he blamed feminist movements and the westernisation of society, and expressed his regret that people are under the influence of these ideas, and have forgotten their roots:

> The unpleasant odour of the feminist movement spread here as well. People lost their way. That isn't good for our society. Religion should clarify everything and put a stop to any wrong influences. Islamic feminism is a paradox. Feminists are basically protesting ...against the creation of women and men by God, in general. They protest against the structural constitution of female creation. Now they are asking why God had to create women like this.

Mr P. was referring to the conventional discourse of gender difference, which attempts to safeguard the concept of inequality by placing it in the immutable ground of God's will. According to this perspective, God's commands are the manifestation of His will, and believers are obliged to submit to them whether they understand the reasons behind them or not. The place of women as enshrined in the set of rights and obligations is determined by God. Furthermore, we may not know their multi-layered mysterious reasons, as God the omniscient, the compassionate and the merciful, set his immutable will according to his divine logic not entirely comprehensible to us. If one is a believer and looks for eternal rewards, one must accept them, even if one's earthly mind sees no sense in them, or sees them as unjust and discriminatory. This theory is the ultimate refuge for many adherents of the orthodox jurisprudence, who see providing the modern pleasant

justifications for Islamic jurisprudence rulings as a futile exercise, since the plausible discourse changes constantly. Therefore, they must master modern and postmodern discourses in order to be able to reformulate their arguments in defence of the orthodox jurisprudence. This approach is seen as ultimately inconsistent with the logic of traditionalists, who pay little attention to time and place, and whose mode of argumentation is authoritative and rhetorical (Mir-Hosseini, 2003).

In this view, God is the ultimate benevolent patriarch who knows what is best for his creatures. Before the almighty patriarchal God, what is deemed appropriate is submission and obedience, and not questioning, objection and demands for explanation. The position of women in the divine order is the convention set by God, and to follow His will and commandments we do not need to know the reasons behind them. What we do know is that He is compassionate and merciful; thus it is good for women, for the family, and for the Islamic community (ummah), and it is expedient to follow His will and free oneself from one's own nagging short-sighted, myopic reason-thirsty mind. Take the leap of faith and transcend the boundaries of your limited, earthly-bound rationality, and your future eternal life in prosperity and happiness is guaranteed. This logic has a long precedent in the history of Muslim thought. The essence of this argument regarding the root causes of violence may be summarised in the following propositions:

1. Women's delicate constitution dictates a certain delicate way of being, and offers a set of delicate roles and positions. In this essentialist discourse, in which femininity and masculinity are constructed as two opposite poles embodying fixed characteristics, women are designed to occupy a certain set of positions and perform a set of specific functions.
2. Philosophies and lifestyles imported from the West tempt women to stray from submitting to this divine design.
3. The West (and its cultural onslaught) breeds un-Islamic lifestyles and mindsets. This in turn brings about a variety of social calamities for Muslims, including violence against women. In this formulation, Mr P.

is heavily under the influence of Motahari's philosophy of gender difference[18].

The next section will deal with another important component of the orthodox formulation of marriage, *mahrieh* (bride price), which emerge in the participants' accounts.

The issue of *mahrieh* will be discussed in the next section.

"Mahrieh" and its relation to domestic violence: the views of judges and others

What is the underlying assumption for the stipulation of *mahrieh* in orthodox marriage? How can it cause or prevent domestic violence against women? Judge H explained the nature of *mahrieh*:

In marriage we have the issue of *mahrieh*. The woman can say to her husband, "If you want me to submit to you, I must first have my *mahrieh*." But once she submits (even without her *mahrieh* being paid to her), she can't bring any excuse for not submitting thereafter.

There are many arguments surrounding *mahrieh*. Those in favour of the practice argue that it was a progressive idea in the past (1,400 years ago) and is still so today; it is a kind of insurance policy for women. Others argue that its existence has a profound impact on women's lives, and could trigger violence against them. One of the judges, Judge A, admitted:

Sometimes the man puts the woman in a dire position. There's a risk that he will beat or even kill her. So she prefers to give up her *mahrieh*....

[18]Motahari (2001), a very influential cleric, now deceased, argued that the physical, psychological and sexual differences between men and women inevitably translate into different obligations and rights, including different systems of sanctions and punishment. Motahari maintains that men's nature is totally different from women's.

Many women are severely beaten or psychologically abused by their husbands, or by male relatives, in an attempt to coerce them to disregard their rights in this regard. In most cases, they find it difficult to get hold of their *mahrieh*. There is a famous saying: "Nobody has ever given it, and nobody has ever received it". One of the female lawyers I interviewed, Ms M., believed that *mahrieh* causes a great deal of trouble between men and women at the very beginning, when the families wish to agree the amount to be paid. The woman's family has high demands, and the future husband's family are reluctant to sign up. If it goes wrong, as generally happens, this will always affect the fragile relationship between the bride and her husband's family, and possibly her relationship with her husband too. He will always remind her that he has paid a high price, so she must do as he wishes. She can always threaten him by asking for her *mahrieh* at once (while she is still married), or by filing for divorce; however she is then unlikely ever to receive it. Ms M. acknowledged that her experience led her to the conclusion that *mahrieh* is a major source of problems in marriage, and causes much suffering in both men and women, especially in women. Her solution was to eliminate it. Instead of *mahrieh*, she believed that it would be more practical "to divide the wealth at the time of divorce for all women"[19].

In line with this argument, one of the male lawyers and university lecturers in law (Mr R.) admitted that *mahrieh* damages both men and women, although his approach, as a married man himself, differed slightly from that of my female participant. Ms M. and another female consultant tended to view women as victims who are "the real losers" in this system. Ms M. did admit that she knew of some cases in which women who had the power to ask for *mahrieh* used it to ruin a man's life financially. They did this by employing highly qualified lawyers who could defend them skilfully. Nevertheless, she admitted that these cases were rare, and most women are not

[19] It is worth mentioning that most Iranian families expect the future groom to offer a higher price as a sign of his love and affection; the higher the price, the greater the love shown. The symbolic value of *mahrieh* as a gesture and token of validation is very important for the families involved.

fully aware of their rights, or their husbands' predisposition to violence prevents further action.

Mr R., who also opposed *mahrieh*, he believed that the system needs to change, since the current system "could lead to more violence against women, as it gives men more power", but the change should not be only in one component. He stressed that:

> In Islam we have *nafagheh* and *mahrieh* for women, but on the other hand the right of divorce and the permission right are preserved for men. In addition, men's inheritance and blood money are twice as much of women. It's like a solar system. The elements of the system match each other – if one of them has to change, everything else should change with it. We cannot say inheritance should be equal, but *nafagheh* should remain intact.

His approach was very similar to the female lawyers', but he presented it in a different way. In his view, a couple's wealth should be divided after the divorce, but women should not receive *mahrieh*. He found it ludicrous that a man who pays 500 gold coins may not claim the authority and headship of the family (he said it with laughter). This view was shared by another judge. Mr R., however, suggested resolving the problem by considering the Western model of marriage:

> We should think of 1,400 years ago when this kind of contract was set up. In my opinion, it was logical in that time....The only way is to have a mutual contract like western countries where there is no *mahrieh* at all...

The model Mr R. and the other lawyers were suggesting, a mutual and equal relationship, is reflected in Saidzadeh's (2002), a reformist clergyman viewpoints, and supported by Mojtahed-Shabestari (2000), an influential reformist cleric. Gender equality is established as a principle of inference of God's Rulings.

The theory of mutual protection, as my participants stated, will change the basic definition of marriage as an exchange of sexual obedience for fi-

nancial protection. The implication of the theory of mutual protection is that unilateralism will be dropped from the heart of marriage in all its forms. Unilateral provision of sexual services by the wife as a duty will logically change to mutual provision of sexual services; and unilateral provision of financial protection will be replaced by mutual attempts to satisfy the couple's financial needs. The full extension of this logic will yield a mutual ownership regime of the wealth created by the couple during the marriage period. It will generate mutual custody right or at least no priority is given to one to the disadvantage of the other.

Furthermore, this approach will produce mutual permission rights and mutual headship, and will affect the rulings on blood money and honour killing in cases of adultery. This could in turn debase the violence against women in a drastic way. In short, introducing mutual protection into marriage contracts will change the whole traditional model of marriage dramatically, and will generate a marriage model based on partnership.

Conclusion

The orthodox jurisprudence and its associated discourses, as a structure of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980), have profound impacts on gender relation and in particular domestic violence against women in Iran. Orthodox formulation and definition of marriage as a contract and its implications and relation to domestic violence has been investigated. The core of orthodox marriage (an exclusive exchange of sex on demand for financial provision) presented by orthodox jurisprudence offers unlimited power to men by bestowing on them the headship of the family and formulating a sexual relationship based not on reciprocity but on submission of one to the other. This seems to establish and maintain the power and control of men over their wives through the term of *tamkin* and through women's subordination. This conclusion was drawn from the accounts of the participants. Gender difference discourse was largely employed to justify this relationship. On the basis of this discourse, men were defined as more rational and experienced, and as having better access to resources, and women were defined as emotional, inexperienced, and suited to housework and caring for the family.

Moreover, male and female needs are believed to be different from each other, as defined by their God-given nature.

The structure of orthodox marriage leads to a Japanese-style full-time and lifetime labour contract which culminates in potential control being exerted over all aspects of women's lives, from dress to work and from sexual to social relations. This functions through two conditions of exclusivity and promptness (in the context of *tamkin*), having the potential to produce violence against women when it comes into conflict with the process of modernisation, which requires the active participation of women in social life. When couples and their close associates, family members and related societal institutions do not share the same fundamental model of proper marital and gender relations, their interaction becomes problematic.

One of the underlying themes identifiable from the analysis of the themes repeated throughout the interviews as the root causes of domestic violence was the conflict between religious orthodoxy, modernity and social reality.

These are reflected in the judges' and lawyers' accounts: "However, this is only in Sharia, and in courts they may not act accordingly", or "It might be better if Sharia did not intervene in the law", or "In practice, the system is more open to women's rights". This reflects the tensions between orthodox jurisprudence, law and social reality, which in turn may result in selectively highlighting some of the laws regarding women, while ignoring others. For instance, as one of the judges stated, having the rulings in Sharia (theory) is different from applying them in reality (practice).

One of the main problems in the judiciary in general, and specifically regarding family relations, is the ambiguity between orthodox jurisprudence's rulings, the law and social norms and reality. For example, in relation to a woman's sexual obedience to her husband, orthodox jurisprudence does not specify the details. According to the rulings, a woman must obey her husband everywhere and at any time, but when the matter reaches court, other social considerations may come to play important roles, culminating in similar cases in the courts being dealt with differently, depending on the intensity of the allegiance of the judges to the rulings in the jurisprudential texts

and the law, or their degree of consideration for the social reality. The judges in the Iranian judicial system are overwhelmingly male, and their gender often affects their decision-making in relation to women's lives. This is also central to the problem of domestic violence in Iran.

From the accounts of the eight participants in this study, it can be concluded that the focus of law in relation to domestic violence is on observable, physical injuries and bodily harm, while marginalising or disregarding emotional, psychological and sexual abuse. It is clear that beating and using physical violence against women in marital contexts is against the law, and will be punished if any bruises or marks can be detected. However, according to the jurisprudence texts, a man has the right to beat his wife if she disobeys him. This also has some implications in relation to sexual violence, as the law stays silent on rape within marital relationship, as the concept of *tamkin* or obedience in sexual matters is inherent in the orthodox formulation of marriage.

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