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*The Interplay between States
and Movements on Violence Against Women.
Comparative Perspectives in Sociology and Policy Analysis*

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Abstract

In the last 25 years, women's movements, governments and international bodies have been active in awareness-raising on and reduction of violence against women (VAW). The main aim of this issue is to provide an overview of comparative perspectives of policies and services, which offer an innovative point of view to evaluate action. A comparative outlook on VAW initiatives can show acceleration or deceleration in decision-making, proliferation or scarcity of regulations, high or low effectiveness of plans and services in reaching set goals, and reasons why this is the case.

The four articles of this issue present original research conducted on firearm policy on a global scale, comparative analysis of services in Italy, accessibility of VAW services in Israel and perceptions of VAW after film screening in Tunisia. The articles illustrate the level of interest that elicited by VAW, the complexities of the analysis and the local and global actors that play a role in action against this global problem.

Keywords: Violence against women, Gender violence, Women's movements, Feminist movements, Prevention policies, State policies.

In the last 25 years, in many regions of the world there has been a growing concern and debate on violence against women (henceforth VAW) as a social phenomenon. Grass-root movements, feminist and women's movements, public bodies, NGOs and international bodies such as the UN, the EU and more, have been very active in awareness-raising, prevention and reduction of VAW. Attention to this topic arose at the end of the 1960s, especially in the USA and some of the Western European countries where second-wave feminism began calling attention to VAW through their claims about women's subordinate position in society (Fraser, 1985; Moghadam, 2015; Hall 2015). Since that time, awareness has spread slowly but continually across the globe. In 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted the CEDAW-Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women, which includes relevant articles on VAW. In 1986, the European Parliament passed a Resolution on VAW, which became the first in a series of initiatives and positions. In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and, in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing took up and strongly relaunched this issue. In 1994, the UN Commission on Human Rights created the office of a Special Rapporteur with the mandate to collect information, recommend measures to eliminate VAW and work closely with other bodies in the framework of human rights.

Today, many countries of the world have deliberated provisions on VAW. This has now become a central theme on the women's international agenda, part of a strong discourse that, since the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, has shifted the issue of violence from the cognitive framework of women's dignity to the global discourse on human rights. Many demands by feminists and women condense around it: the criticism of male dominance, the expectation of equality, the protection of victims as vulnerable subjects, the expectation of empowerment.

The main aim of this issue is to provide an overview of comparative perspectives on VAW. More specifically, the issue offers innovative perspectives on research, analysis and policy on this global phenomenon, to be applied in contemporary multicultural societies. By VAW, we mean different kinds of individual action purposely meant to harm women and girls. Examples of VAW are, among others, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and femicide. By policies on VAW we mean laws, plans, services, shelters and any other form of collective initiative that aims at preventing and reducing this phenomenon. The four articles of this issue present original research conducted on firearm policy on a global scale, comparative analysis of services in different regions of Italy, accessibility of VAW services for minority group women in Israel and awareness raising media screening and perception of VAW in Tunisia. Taken together, these articles make up an original view that illustrates the level of interest that VAW elicits in the world, the complexities of the analysis and the many actors who act on the local and global setting and play a crucial role in the definition, awareness-raising, fight and prevention of the problem.

The comparative analysis of policies and services offers an innovative point of view to evaluate action to combat and prevent VAW (Corradi and

Stöckl, 2016). By comparative outlook we mean analysis which looks at similarities and differences in diverse social settings. A comparative outlook on VAW initiatives can show acceleration or deceleration in decision-making, proliferation or scarcity of regulations in different settings, high or low effectiveness of plans and services in reaching set goals, and reasons why this is the case. To date, while there is an extremely vast and growing literature on VAW, there are very good but still scarce examples of comparative studies assessing the existence of different policy regimes on VAW, i.e. different frameworks and actions to tackle this social problem (Balkmar et al., 2009; Eriksson et al., 2005; Hearn and McKie, 2010; Roggeband, 2012; Charles and Mackay, 2013). The comparative outlook on VAW policy is innovative also because it recognizes that there are a number of actors who play a role in the policymaking: public bodies (such as the nation-state or local administrations), civil society associations, women's movements and supra-national bodies all play a part in identifying needs, demanding and approving budget, drafting policies, implementing services. Potentially, governments have multiple resources available and are the strongest actor on stage, but they never act alone. They can introduce new criminal offenses in the penal code; they can assign public funding for advertising campaigns, and helplines; they are able to reorganize the welfare state structure and coordinate the activities of different agencies, like the courts, the police, public hospitals, and social services. As Stamatel, Ratajczak and Hoekstra show in their article, states are responsible for approving regulation of firearms. From the moment that VAW policy-making becomes an issue on the government agenda, long-term transformations are in place. However, governments act because they are pressured to do so by other important actors on stage (Abraham and Tastsoglou, 2016).

Policies on violence against women are the final result of processes of cultural change triggered by collective actors and social events that solicit and guide institutional action. In this special issue, the articles based on empirical research conducted in Italy, Israel and Tunisia are an excellent illustration of the interplay of collective actors and social events which produces long-term social change. Institutional action alone is not sufficient to enact policies on VAW, which must therefore be read in the light of the complex local context in which they are produced. The framework developed by Weldon (Weldon, 2002) and Mazur (Mazur 2009; Mazur et al.

2016) is one of the most interesting theoretical models that guides this reading; it places women's movements at the centre of the progression of policies on VAW. An extensive literature (Bumiller 2009; Creazzo 2008; Stewart 2002; Weldon 2002) highlights how women's movements were the first to build public discourse on VAW, in the United States, Western European countries and then internationally since the 1970s. Since that time, movements became the main providers of quantitative and qualitative knowledge on the subject (Hall, 2015). The movements were also the main actors of institutional pressure both at national and supranational level taking charge of the problem. To "build the discourse" means to perform cognitive operations of categorization, selection and exclusion: in this case, it means to subsume into the single category of VAW, a series of social facts (insult, verbal threat, physical offense, stalking, rape, homicide, etc.) in which the woman is a victim and the man the perpetrator; it means to give theoretical explanations to the phenomenon so categorized (i.e., bringing all of its forms back to the patriarchal culture), and to start under this category a series of practices and events (studies, publications, public discussions, legislative proposals, etc.). These have the effect of adding up further knowledge, modifying the perception of the public and institutions, attributing new symbolic meanings, intervening on the social acceptance and rejection of the phenomenon, and constituting a body of theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence which, with the reiteration of discourse and further sedimentation of knowledge, slowly comes to acquire the status of a widely accepted interpretive framework (Shepherd, 2019). These cognitive operations are always taking place - implicitly or explicitly - in the construction of discourses in the public sphere; since the mid 70s and until today, they have highlighted VAW as a category that was previously confined to the sphere of private actions.

A social movement is a form of collective mobilization based on demands for social justice. Women's movements are social movements that aim to improve the condition of women (Weldon, 2002, p. 62); they identify women as a group and self-define themselves as women representing women. Some of the movements' ideas may be feminist as they aim to challenge the subordination of women to men and the hierarchies that support them (Mazur et al., 2016).

L. Weldon examines 36 different democratic countries in terms of culture, religion and geographical location, and interrogates why some of them from 1974 to 1994 have implemented policies to counter the phenomenon of VAW and others have been insensitive to this issue. Weldon does not measure the effectiveness of policies but wants to identify the factors of responsiveness, or capacity to respond, of governments in tackling the phenomenon. The types of public intervention identified by the author are: laws on domestic violence and sexual violence; existence of shelters and emergency shelter services for victims; training programmes for professionals including police, judges and social workers; public awareness campaigns; existence of a public agency for national policy coordination (Weldon, 2002, p. 13). The comparison allows the scholar to conclude that some of the often-mentioned factors, such as the influence of a Church or women's inequality, are not sufficient to generate reaction capacities in governments.

The results of Weldon's research show that the necessary condition for a public response to the VAW phenomenon, understood as a course of action (e.g. political and civil servant positions, laws, decrees and other initiatives), is the existence of a women's movement which is strong and independent from political parties, trade unions or other organisations, acting to reinforce the interventions of public institutions responsible for promoting the status of women. Autonomy allows the movement to develop an original agenda, through the identification of a series of issues of common interest and their discussion in groups according to the personal experiences of the participants. The possibility to spread the identified priorities outside the movement is compromised when the women's movement is a subgroup of a larger entity (i.e. a trade union or political party), which has a main purpose different from the status of women. In this case the perspectives and objectives of the sub-group are secondary to the priorities of the organisation, which will tend to pursue only those issues that can fit its own broader and "neutral" agenda. In other words, the organisation will prefer to devote resources to achieving objectives that involve everyone rather than objectives that specifically concern women. The main mechanisms through which the women's movements, according to Weldon, influence the governmental response are lobbying to influence the way in which the social problem is defined and symbolically represented by the institutions, and creating public consensus

on a "women's agenda" which embraces several themes proposed as "women's issues", including VAW. As a result, the role of women's movements in determining governments' response is mainly to be agents of cultural change and discourse: these movements call into question the social values that make gender roles and practices normative or deviant, attribute public relevance to aspects that previously concerned the private sphere and propose a theoretical interpretation of the phenomenon that addresses the solution of the problem.

The work of A. Mazur (2009) integrates this perspective. She argues that women's movements have more chance of success not so much when they are united or when there are left-wing parties in government, but rather when there is a strategic partnership between the movements and those who sit in state institutions. The expression "femocrats" indicates this strategic partnership: women who are elected in public office or enter public administrations and support feminist causes through their action and in connection with women's movements and organisations. According to the research group coordinated by Mazur (Mazur et al., 2016), studying the different impact of movements on policies within different cultural systems and across historical periods means measuring the strength of movements with two dimensions: the capacity for mobilization or activism, and institutionalization. Mobilization refers to the accumulation of elements of advantage through the participation of women activists outside the structures of the state in order to advance the discourse and policy objectives of the movement in a wide variety of formal and informal structures (Mazur et al., 2016, p. 658). Institutionalization of the movement refers to elements of advantage that arise from the presence of representatives of women's movements in public institutions, national and regional parliaments, bureaucracies and public administration bodies, political parties, lobbying structures, trade unions, and more (Mazur et al., 2016, p. 658).

Finally, in analysing the role of the movements in the advancement of policies on VAW, it is important not to forget the weight of supranational political action and the centrality that the issue acquires through international conferences and conventions. In this field, supranational institutions such as the UN and the EU do not have the hard power to pass compulsory laws for nation-states, but they exercise a moral suasion on the latter in building discourses and suggesting best-case approaches to social

problems; at the same time, international conferences and conventions promote the development of VAW.

In the first article of this special issue, J. Stamatel, K. Ratajczak and R. Hoekstra examine the extent to which availability of and regulations on firearms affect lethal VAW. This is the first available study to empirically investigate whether firearm regulations specifically designed to protect women decrease the risk for lethal VAW globally.

The authors acknowledge that in the last two decades, there have been significant advances in data collection documenting the prevalence of VAW across a fairly large number of countries due to efforts by international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to improve the measurement and monitoring of this global social problem. With respect to lethal VAW, males face considerably higher risk of homicide than females, but the causes and contexts of female homicides are quite different than males. For example, firearms are the most frequent means of committing homicide globally and young males are the modal victims of firearm homicides. However, females' risk of lethal gun violence rises significantly in the context of intimate partner and family violence. Among documented homicide cases in the world that result from intimate partner or family conflict, 82% of victims in these cases are female.

One way to protect women from firearm violence within the private sphere is therefore to regulate access to guns based on the risk of family violence. As such, some countries include domestic violence offenses as part of background checks for gun licenses and deny or revoke licenses for applicants with domestic violence convictions. However, we do not know the effectiveness of gun regulations for reducing VAW on a global scale or whether or not geographic variations in levels of lethal VAW can be explained, in part, by differences in firearm policies across countries. To address this knowledge gap, Stamatel, Ratajczak and Hoekstra examine a relatively large sample of countries. Based on an extensive discussion on available literature, the authors posit and test six theoretical hypotheses concerning the *material* context of VAW (economic development and income inequality of the country), the *integrative* context (adoption of policies that mandate criminal history check on applicants for gun licenses in the country), the *situational* context (gender inequality and lethal VAW rates in

the country) and *cultural* context (countries with a history of persistent or severe violence).

The results from the quantitative analyses confirm three of the six hypotheses for this study. Notably, the *situational* and *cultural* contexts have the most influence on lethal VAW across countries. Greater gender inequality, more firearms, and living in Latin America were consistent predictors of high female homicide rates. There were mixed results for the *material* context, although the findings raise interesting questions for further research. In countries where women have longer life expectancies, more education, and higher standards of living relative to men, they are also at *greater* risk for violent victimization. In contrast, countries where women have more equality, as measured by more reproductive freedom, more political power, and more labor force participation, they have a *lower* risk for violent victimization. These seemingly contradictory findings are consistent with previous studies that have found support for both the backlash and amelioration hypotheses with respect to understanding VAW cross-nationally. Greater rewards for women from economic development could generate a backlash effect, whereas greater social status through gender equality may enable women to enact social protections against violence. As the authors admit, more refined measures of the different aspects of gender roles, status, equality, norms, and values are needed to adequately disentangle these complex relationships.

The key question of interest for this study that was situated in the *integrative context* was not well supported in this study. Criminal history background checks were not significant in any of the regression models. Similarly, domestic violence background checks were not significant in the main regression models. Although these findings are contrary to theoretical expectations, Stamatel, Ratajczak and Hoekstra suggest that it would be premature to conclude that firearm regulations are ineffective. This is the first study to examine the effects of these laws cross-nationally so additional research is warranted before any strong conclusions can be drawn. For example, further investigation suggested that legal protections against VAW might be relevant under certain social conditions. This is an area worthy of further research.

In the second article of this special issue, A. M. Toffanin, M. Pietrobelli, A. Gadda and M. Misiti investigate the connection between the process of integrating anti-violence centers (AVCs) in the Italian public welfare system

and changes incurred in the original, feminist approach which created these centers in the first place. The interplay between public action and the women's movement is a crucial part of the analysis.

In Italy, the evolution of state intervention to combat VAW is linked both to the activities of grassroots movements, namely feminist and women's groups, and to the role of international, supranational, and European conventions and agreements. VAW public policies only started in the mid 1990s, i.e. comparatively later than elsewhere in Europe. Country regulations - such as different forms of coordination (i.e. plans, protocols), regulatory frameworks (i.e. standards), and criteria for resource allocation - act at the regional level and they are fragmented and heterogeneous. In recent years, there has been a willingness to regulate the system of services supporting women, through adoption of the National Action Plans on VAW and, in 2014, approval of the so-called "Agreement between State and Regions on minimum requirements for anti-violence centers and shelters". By analyzing different Italian regional systems that support women experiencing violence, Toffanin, Pietrobelli, Gadda and Misiti aim to answer the following questions: what consequences does the bureaucratization of VAW policies have on the activities and practices of AVCs? To what extent has a policy that originated from the activities and practices of feminism ended up in very strict bureaucratization processes? Since many AVCs build their services on a "women's-relationship" methodology, which is based on respect of women's needs and confidentiality, do these policies affect the methodology? Three Italian Regions are identified for fieldwork: Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna in the north of the country, and Apulia in the south. They were selected in the light of their VAW policy development, since they all have been very active in implementing a system of support services, although with different strategies.

The authors conducted a comparative review of documents, laws, regional plans, and legislation from the selected Regions. At the same time, they also analyzed qualitative data collected from thirty-five AVCs and six shelters. The analysis reveals huge heterogeneity in terms of practices as well as the symbolic and political meaning of the interventions and sometimes tensions related to the role of the AVCs, and their relationships with public actors and the VAW victims.

Toffanin, Pietrobelli, Gadda and Misiti maintain that public institutions are crucial in defining and financing actions to combat VAW. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of methodologies and interventions in the anti-violence system seems to require evaluation of practices and results, as the public aim is to give all women, wherever they live, equal opportunity to access the anti-violence system both in terms of territorial availability and quality. For the anti-violence system, public administrations are proposing solutions by setting quantitative criteria and standards of evaluation. However, the authors also urge to pay attention to the regulating processes that may fail to recognize the specificity of VAW. They claim that the strong connection between VAW and welfare policies cannot result in framing anti-violence services and plans as social policies. In a time when bureaucratization processes of VAW policies seem to be in an advanced phase, and AVCs are called to sustain a great role in combining a technocratic approach typical of institutions, AVCs political action is still oriented to tackle gender unequal power relations. In the development of a national system of services against VAW, the challenge policies face will be to avoid as much as possible the de-politicization and de-genderization, thus guaranteeing AVCs' sustainability and continuity in order to improve the support to women experiencing violence.

In the third article of this special issue, T. Meler and M. Hisherik deal with domestic VAW (including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence) from the minority groups of Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel, which record far more cases than other populations. In the country, these women, who belong to patriarchal, collectivist societies undergoing changes influenced by global trends, suffer from poor civil status. The obligation of the state institutional resources (such as the welfare system, the judicial system, public housing, etc.) to these women and their right to protection is sometimes conceptualized as a struggle for women-human rights. However, until recently, academic and public discussion has not considered the possibility that the state maintains tools and services for violence victims, which are inaccessible to them. The debatable level of commitment of the state stems from the intersectionality of exclusion, which occurs on the political, economic, and social level and renders citizenship meaningless. In their daily lives, these women are exposed to "hollow citizenship", i.e. to the disparity between on the one hand the commitment to protection and legal entitlement to relevant

resources and services which are declared by public bodies, and on the other hand their vulnerability in practice, which is reflected in continuous exposure to domestic violence.

Meler and Hisherik held semi-structured interviews with widowed or divorced/separated Muslim and Christian Palestinian women with children, abused Ethiopian women and Israeli officials at all levels in the social services for domestic violence prevention. Findings show that official citizenship does not always imply stability and protection for women. The analysis revealed oppressive structures that prevent women from having full access to formal resources. State and welfare policies create stratified citizenship, where women are at the lowest level, especially if they belong to excluded groups, such as minority groups, immigrants, or women in low socio-economic status. Thus, authors distinguish between Palestinian women who suffer from partially exclusionary citizenship (as part of the Jewish majority) and Palestinian women who suffer from fully exclusionary, "hollow" citizenship. The interviewees who had already contacted the authorities had to deal with major social barriers. Attempting to receive appropriate care and guidance sometimes fails due to language barriers or concern about authoritative spaces such as welfare or legal authorities. Legal challenges include being unfamiliar with social services and criminal systems, as well as feelings of alienation and distrust.

Meler and Hisherik's study also shows that the state of Israel has dual governance, manifested in a discrepancy between the rhetorical level, in which the state declares a commitment to its citizens, and the practical level, which reveals abandonment. This discrepancy is reflected in the cultural bias of drafting regulations and laws and their unsuitability to women from certain ethnic-national-class positions, problem in decision making, budget allocation and sometimes removal of VAW from the agenda. Meler and Hisherik claim that such dual governance provides a partial solution that does not meet the needs of abused women and often relies on patriarchal mechanisms. In some cases, there is also a discrepancy between the scope of investment in solutions and the needs, which means that the allocated budgets are not realistic.

On the basis of their findings regarding the similarities emerging from the marginal status of Palestinian and Ethiopian women, authors conclude by listing concrete recommendations for Israeli policy makers in the prevention and treatment of VAW, including through legislation and the

establishment of a national agency that will review and monitor the prevention and treatment of violence over time.

In the last article of this special issue, J. Tchaïcha and K. Arfaoui focus on perceptions of gender violence in Tunisia, as triggered by K. Ben Hania's film, *The Beauty and the Dogs*.

Tunisia is known to be one of the most progressive countries in the Middle East and North Africa region in terms of women's legal rights. In 1957, the country adopted the Code of Personal Status, which recognized women's right to education and workplace opportunities. In 2014, it became the first country in the region to ratify the CEDAW without reservations, and it was one of two countries in the region to adopt its Optional Protocol on human trafficking thanks to women activists who lobbied the government demanding action. Across the years, Tunisian women groups and organizations have continued to advocate protection of these rights by monitoring the actions and policies that actually impeded access to these provisions. It was not until 2017, however, that the government amended the Tunisian Penal Code to align it with provisions addressing VAW to prosecute rapists and perpetrators of VAW. In present day Tunisia, more women appear more empowered to make their voices heard. Yet, still very few women pursue legal recourse to the end. What is behind this gap? What factors influence women's perception of gendered violence? Do they believe that Tunisian institutions and laws are effective in addressing VAW? To elicit some answers to these questions, Tchaïcha and Arfaoui present a year-long study centered on women's perception of gendered violence in post-revolutionary Tunisia. The research design encompassed Ben Hania's film screening in eight different locations in southern Tunisia which women and young female adolescents attended. Afterwards, the attendees to the screening completed a post-viewing survey and participated in focus group discussions.

Ben Hania's award-winning *Beauty and the Dogs*⁸⁵ addresses sexual violence on multiple levels. Ben Hania developed her fictional account from a real event that took place in Tunis in 2012. The storyline exposes female sexual and psychological violence, but the act of rape is never depicted on screen. In the film, Meriem is a young woman who meets Youssef at a student party. They are both physically attracted to each other and leave the crowd to enjoy a walk along the beach. A few hours later, the audience sees Meriem screaming, and in shock. A long night ensues during

which time she exposes her case to the police and medical staff, in the hope of being provided with the help she needed. She recounts how the “morality police” stopped the couple and interrogated Youssef, while she was dragged into the police vehicle and raped. The arrogance, viciousness, and inhumanity of the police is such that, instead of finding help, Meriem is accused of indecent exposure and moral turpitude –an archaic remnant of Tunisia’s social code law. And so, as it has long been the case for women globally, the accuser becomes the accused.

The 101 female participants voluntarily attended the film screening and responded to research protocols, assisted by members of local branches of women-focused non-governmental organizations who had extended the invitation by email and word of mouth to participate in the study. Participants were asked to complete the post-viewing survey, which was followed by their participation in small focus group discussions. Part one of the survey gathered general demographic information and background experience. Part two queried their individual reactions to the film and concluded with questions about their renewed personal agency to tackle gendered violence in their own communities. The focus groups began by eliciting general reactions to the film, which set the stage for more open-ended probes about the state of gendered violence in their communities and their opinions about the latest national efforts to curb the violence in the public sphere and at home, and the challenges in raising young girls and women’s awareness of their rights.

Almost all women recognized the positive impact of the reforms made to the *Penal Code*, but they also acknowledged that further work was needed in the field to protect women against all odds, particularly with regard to unchanged mentalities and patriarchal laws. The sense of female solidarity was ever present in each session. Women, young and old, believed that Meriem did not deserve what happened to her regardless of her behavior, and they were united in their opinion that people in positions of power who abuse their power are more reprehensible than any kind of behavior exhibited by a VAW victim, such as what was depicted in the film. There was also a clear sentiment that women must unite to fight against VAW; relying on men or the state (which many considered as dominated by a patriarchal mindset) to ask for change will not solve the problem. In conclusion, Tchaïcha and Arfaoui claim that VAW remains a

very real problem impacted by socio-cultural mores that remain a dominant influencer on the application of the changing laws.

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*Do Gun Policies Really Protect Women?
A Cross-national Test of the Relationship between Gun
Regulations and Female Homicide Victimization*

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Abstract

Globally, firearms are the most frequent means of committing homicide and young males are most likely to be victimized with guns. However, females' risk of lethal gun violence rises significantly within the context of intimate partner and family violence. Some countries have addressed the gendered nature of gun violence in the private sphere by regulating access to guns based on the risk of domestic or family violence. There has been little research conducted on the extent to which such policies have been adopted around the world and their effectiveness for protecting females against gun violence. This quantitative, cross-national study tested the effects of gun availability and gun policies on levels of lethal violence against women in a relatively large sample of countries, controlling for other structural and cultural predictors of macro-level homicide rates. We found that the civilian gun ownership rate was positively associated with lethal gun violence against women. However, the relationship between gun policies to protect against domestic and family violence did not have a direct effect on female homicide rates. Instead, domestic violence background checks for gun permits only had a moderate negative effect on female homicides in countries with large numbers of private firearms.

Keywords: Firearm, Gun, Domestic violence, Homicide, Law.

Introduction

In the last two decades, we have seen significant advances in data collections documenting the prevalence of violence against women (VAW) across a fairly large number of countries due to efforts by international organizations to improve the measurement and monitoring of this global social problem. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a comprehensive review of existing population-based studies of violence against women through 2011 and found that approximately one-third of women in the world were victims of intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence (García-Moreno et al., 2013). Additionally, the

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that 58% of all female homicides (87,000) documented around the world in 2017 were the result of intimate partner or family violence (“Global Study on Homicide,” 2019).

With respect to lethal violence, males face considerably higher risk of homicide than females, but the causes and contexts of female homicides are quite different than males. For example, firearms are the most frequent means of committing homicide globally (54%) and young males are the modal victims of firearm homicides (“Global Study of Homicide,” 2019). However, females’ risk of lethal gun violence rises significantly in the context of intimate partner and family violence. Among documented homicide cases in the world that result from intimate partner or family conflict, 82% of victims in these cases are female (“Global Study of Homicide,” 2019).

One way to protect women from firearm violence within the private sphere is to regulate access to guns based on the risk of family violence. As such, some countries include domestic violence offenses as part of background checks for gun licenses and deny or revoke licenses for applicants with domestic violence convictions. However, we do not know the effectiveness of gun regulations for reducing VAW on a global scale or whether or not geographic variations in levels of lethal VAW can be explained, in part, by differences in firearm policies across countries. To address this knowledge gap, this study examines the extent to which gun availability and gun regulations affect lethal violence against women in a relatively large sample of countries, controlling for other known predictors of macro-level homicide rates. It contributes to the modest literature on the relationship between civilians’ access to guns and homicide cross-nationally. Additionally, it is the first study to empirically investigate whether firearm regulations specifically designed to protect women decrease the risk for lethal VAW globally.

1. Theoretical Framework

Public health scholars studying gender-based violence contend that the etiology of VAW can be best understood through a multi-dimensional, multi-level model of interacting factors. Building on earlier work on family

and child violence, Heise (1998) proposed a four-tiered, integrated ecological model starting with personal history and expanding out to include the microsystem, exosystem (mesosystem), and macrosystem. Personal history includes individual-level factors that may predispose a person to violence, such as early exposure to violence or poor relationships with parents. The microsystem captures the proximal context of violence, such as family dynamics, level and types of conflict, or substance use. The mesosystem focuses on social institutions, such as work, neighborhood, or social groups. Finally, the macrosystem encompasses the larger structural and cultural forces shaping gender roles, norms, and values.

This model has been updated over time, particularly as more information about VAW globally has become available, but it is still the dominant perspective for studying causes and correlates of VAW (Heise, 2011; Fulu & Miedema, 2015). A recent review of population-based studies of VAW around the world found that this research “has largely ignored the role of macro-level factors in affecting a woman’s risk of violence and the geographical distribution of abuse” and that “violence research is dominated by studies from North America and other high-income settings and these have emphasized the role of personality and relationship dysfunction, childhood trauma and developmental adversity, and antisocial behavior as key risk factors for partner violence” (Heise & Kotsadam 2015, p. e333; see also Matias et al., 2020).

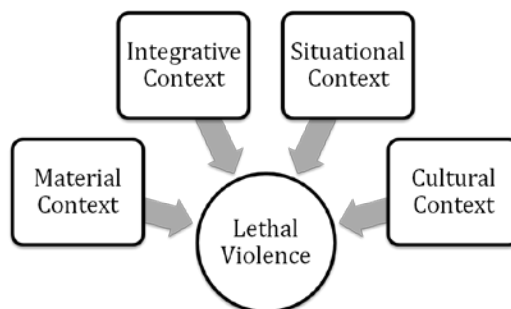
In particular, Heise (2011) noted a lack of research attention on the role of the legal system for reducing VAW. Advocates working to reduce VAW maintain that legal reforms are necessary for “holding the state accountable for protecting women’s human rights and ending the ‘culture of impunity’ around gender-based violence” (Heise, 2011, p. 6). They are an important part of the social construction of VAW as a social problem and provide formal tools of social control, and yet they are often overlooked in global research on correlates of VAW.

Criminologists also have not paid much attention to variations in legal responses to VAW cross-nationally. One of the most dominant theories to explain national differences in the prevalence of female homicide victimization is Gartner’s (1990) theory of macro-level contexts of violence (see Figure 1). The *material context* was derived from Durkheim’s theory of anomie (1951 [1897]) and subsequent developments of social strain theories (e.g., Merton, 1938; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007). This context captures how

a lack of economic resources creates social stressors that can encourage deviant behaviors, especially aggression. The *integrative context* focuses on the population characteristics that indicate social cohesion (e.g., low divorce rates or low ethnic heterogeneity), suggesting greater informal social controls on antisocial behaviors. The *situational context* considers population characteristics and social patterns that could increase the pool of potential offenders (e.g., high percentage of young males in a population) or increase opportunities for criminal activity in general (e.g., working outside of the home) or aggressive behaviors in particular (e.g., high rates of alcoholism). Finally, the *cultural context* considers broader norms and values that might promote violent conflict resolution (e.g., a history of wars or excessive extralegal violence).

Applying this model to VAW, Gartner, Baker, and Pampel (1990) argued that the situational context was most relevant for understanding lethal VAW because gender roles, status, and norms affect females' risk of exposure to potential offenders and opportunities for victimization. On the one hand, greater gender equality could increase VAW because women are more exposed to opportunities for victimization and there may also be a backlash effect against females if males feel threatened by women's rising status or changing roles (e.g., Renzetti, 2013; Russell, 2003 [1984]; Whaley, 2001). On the other hand, when women's higher social status becomes normalized and they have more power in the legal, employment, and domestic spheres, then they will have greater resources to combat the risks of violent victimization (MacKinnon, 1989; Renzetti, 2013; Whaley, 2001).

Fig. 1. Macro-Level Contexts of Violence



Source: Adapted from Gartner (1990)

Tests of Gartner's (1990) contextual model of violence have largely supported the importance of the material, integrative, and situational contexts on cross-national variations in total homicide rates, although some of the empirical results are mixed due to different measures of these contexts (see Nivette, 2011 and Pridemore & Trent, 2010 for extensive literature reviews). There has also been empirical support for the effect of gender roles on female homicide victimization (Cutright & Briggs, 1995; Gartner et al., 1990; Stamatel, 2014, 2015, 2016), although tests of female status on homicide rates have shown mixed results based on how status has been measured, as well as the size and composition of the samples (Chon, 2013; Stamatel 2014, 2016; Yodanis, 2004). Recent research in the U.S. and European nations suggests that this relationship may be curvilinear, with some gains in women's status decreasing lethal VAW, but high levels of female equality generating a backlash effect and increasing VAW (Whaley, 2001; Stamatel, 2016).

The theoretical insights and empirical tests of cross-national differences in VAW are sparse, leaving much room for additional research. Neither public health nor criminological research has paid sufficient attention to policy initiatives aimed to reduce lethal VAW or to the role of guns in perpetrating VAW, despite the large number of deaths caused by firearms. This study aims to address these gaps by adapting Gartner's (1990) model of the contexts of violence to include both of these factors.

2. Firearm Legislation to Protect Women

International laws, such as the 2001 United Nations Firearms Protocol to reduce illegal manufacturing and trafficking of weapons or the 1995 Beijing Declaration that raised concerns about the effect of the proliferation of weapons on VAW, have increased global awareness about the relationship between firearms and interpersonal violence and helped build consensus about the need to address this problem. However, there are obvious limitations to the effectiveness of international laws, as it is not clear how international guidelines are implemented at the national level and there are rarely penalties for noncompliance. Meaningful legislation to regulate firearms and/or reduce VAW occurs at the national level, but little has been

published about the motivations, provisions, implementation, or consequences of these laws.

The cases of Canada and the U.S. provide two examples of how and why gun regulations were passed at the national level specifically to protect women from lethal violence. In 1989 a mass shooting at an engineering school in Montreal, Canada resulted in the deaths of 14 women. The perpetrator stated that he intentionally targeted women studying in a male-dominated field because they were threatening employment opportunities for men. Survivors of the attack formed the Coalition for Gun Control that fought for the passage of a 1992 firearm regulation bill. In addition to restricting certain types of weapons, the law mandated better screening processes for applicants of gun licenses, including requiring references, instituting a waiting period, and adding medical and marital screenings to background checks.

The U.S. has passed three gun laws that specifically aim to reduce lethal domestic violence. The Gun Control Act of 1968 was initially passed in response to high-profile political assassinations at that time, but the law also made it illegal for people convicted of a felony domestic violence charge to own a firearm. The Domestic Violence Offender Gun Act of 1997 expanded the restriction against gun ownership to individuals with misdemeanor domestic violence convictions, which was important in the context of widespread plea bargaining in the U.S. Finally, in 2005 the Gun Control Act was modified to extend the prohibition to applicants named in a civil protection order so that a criminal conviction was no longer necessary to restrict access to guns.

According to the most recent data available about gun regulations around the world, 52 countries have legislation that stipulates that a firearm license should be denied or revoked for applicants with a documented history of domestic violence. Additionally, 150 countries perform general criminal history background checks on gun license applicants and 32 conduct background checks specifically for domestic violence ("GunPolicy.org," 2019). This paper examines whether countries with these legal provisions have lower rates of lethal VAW compared to countries without such laws.

3. Availability of Guns and Lethal Violence against Women

The small body of cross-national literature on the relationship between firearms and total homicide rates has focused mainly on the availability of guns and has generally found a positive relationship between high rates of civilian gun possession and high homicide rates. One of the earliest studies to examine this connection (Killias, 1993) found positive correlations between the percentage of households owning a gun in fourteen developed countries and different measures of lethal violence, including homicide, using data from the International Crime Victimization Survey. A subsequent study using multiple waves from the same data collection confirmed this finding for female homicides, but not male (Killias, et al., 2001). Other research using official records data found a positive relationship between gun availability and homicides in a sample of twenty-six developed nations (Hemenway & Miller, 2000).

These early studies were based on small samples of developed countries and only examined bivariate relationships. Hoskin (2001) employed multiple regressions on a sample of thirty-six countries and confirmed the positive effect of firearm availability on homicides, controlling for other factors. Altheimer and Boswell (2012) argued that the existence and strength of this relationship depends upon the socio-historical contexts of countries, with positive relationships between gun availability and gun homicides in Latin America and Western Europe, but not in Eastern Europe. Similarly, Stevens, et al. (2011) showed that the relationship between firearm availability and homicides was conditioned on drinking cultures. Finally, van Kesteren (2014) found that handgun ownership was positively related to serious violence across a sample of fifty countries, but not associated with less serious violent crimes. The only cross-national study that specifically examined the effect of firearm availability on females found that gun ownership rates in twenty-five populous, high-income countries were positively related to overall female homicide victimizations and female homicides committed with a firearm (Hemenway et al., 2002). This was a correlational analysis that did not include any control variables.

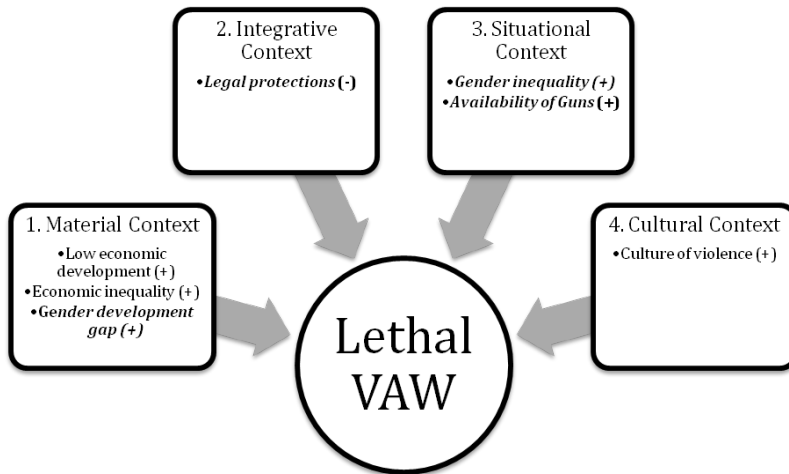
A few studies have looked beyond firearm possession rates to examine whether gun policies reduce lethal VAW. Of the studies in the U.S. that examined the effects of gun policies on intimate partner homicide (IPH),

four found that such laws reduced IPH (Goodyear et al., 2019; Sivaraman et al., 2019; Vigdor & Mercy, 2006; Zeoli & Webster, 2010; Zeoli et al., 2018) and one found no relationship (Bridge et al., 2008). A Canadian study did not find a relationship between stricter gun regulations and IPH (McPhedran & Mauser, 2013), but an Australian study found that stricter gun laws reduced female IPH, but not male IPH (McPhedran, 2018). Two cross-national studies have explored variations in policy content and adoption related to VAW, but have not empirically tested those relationships (Corradi & Stöckl 2014; Zeoli et al., 2017).

Hypotheses

To address these gaps in the literature, we expand upon Gartner's (1990) contextual model of violence in three important ways. First, we incorporate the gendered nature of the material and situational contexts. Previous studies have defined the material context in terms of economic development (absolute deprivation) and income inequality (relative deprivation), yet sociologists have documented the differential impacts of economic development on females and males (Moghadam, 2016). Additionally, Gartner's (1990) model has been expanded to include gendered aspects of the situational contexts, but the empirical research has not clearly established whether gender equality exacerbates or protects against lethal VAW. The mixed empirical results are due, in part, to single measures of gender equality (e.g., percentage of women in the labor force). In contrast, we employ a more robust index of gender equality that spans economic, political, and health domains. Second, we expand the situational context to include the availability of firearms as a factor that increases opportunities for VAW. Third, we incorporate Heise's (2011) call for a more serious treatment of legal interventions into the integrative context. The legal system has the authority to establish formal control of violent behaviors and also shapes the collective conscience regarding acceptable methods of conflict resolution. Figure 2 illustrates the theoretical model that is tested in this study and the directions of the expected relationships. The highlighted concepts are our adaptations to the model.

Fig. 2. Conceptual Model of National Contexts of Lethal Violence against Women



Source: Adapted from Gartner (1990) and Gartner et al. (1990)

Based on this model, this study measures the effects of these four contexts of violence on lethal violence against women in a large sample of countries. The following hypotheses will be tested.

H1A. Material Context: Countries with fewer economic resources (low economic development) and high economic inequality will have higher rates of lethal VAW than countries with more economic resources and lower levels of income inequality.

H1B. Material Context: Countries with a higher gender gap in development, indicating that females receive fewer of the benefits of economic development than males, will have higher rates of lethal VAW than countries with a lower gender gap in development.

H2. Integrative Context: Countries that have adopted legislation to mandate criminal history background checks and domestic violence background checks on applicants for gun licenses will have lower rates of lethal VAW than countries that have not adopted such policies, controlling for economic and political conditions and firearm availability.

H3A. Situational Context: Countries with greater gender inequality will have higher rates of lethal VAW than countries with less gender inequality.

H3B. Situational Context: Countries with more guns will have higher rates of lethal VAW than countries with fewer guns.

H4. Cultural Context: Countries with a history of persistent and/or severe violence will have higher rates of lethal VAW than countries with a weaker culture of violence.

Data and Methods

One of the reasons why there has been such limited research on the relationship between firearms and violence against women has been the lack of data for a large number of countries. The UNODC and WHO have made significant strides in compiling sex-specific homicide data globally. Additionally, the website GunPolicy.org has systematically assembled national-level data on firearms. This website is hosted by the Sydney School of Public Health at the University of Sydney. It provides over 200,000 pages of information about numbers and types of weapons, legal and illegal ownership, gun regulations, and gun-related violence. Information was collected from international agencies, such as UNODC, WHO, and the Small Arms Survey (SAS), in addition to country-specific sources from governments and academics.

The data are organized by country and the sources of information and number of references for each country are quite large. For example, the information compiled for Italy was based on 135 references. Given the comprehensive nature of this data collection and the large number of countries in our sample, we cannot cite the original sources for the statistics that we use in this study. As such, we indicate the most common source of data for our variables and encourage readers to visit GunPolicy.org for more details.

We extracted all of the data from this website using the Application Programming Interface (API) and then subsetted the data based on our variables of interest to facilitate data cleaning and analyses. Countries varied in terms of the number of years of data available for any given measure and the year of the most recent data point. In order to retain as many countries as possible for analysis, data were selected for the year 2018 or the closest available year.

Dependent Variables

The two dependent variables for this study are both measures of female homicide victimization, as provided by GunPolicy.org. The first is the overall female homicide victimization rate, including homicides by any

means. This is the most comprehensive measure of lethal violence against women for the largest number of countries. The primary original source for this variable is the UNODC. The second dependent variable is the female gun homicide victimization rate, counting only homicides with female victims and committed with a firearm. These data were primarily obtained from the WHO. The number of countries providing data for female gun homicides is roughly half of those providing overall female homicide victimization rates.

Table 1 lists the homicide rates for each of these indicators for the countries included in our analyses, as well as information about gun ownership and gun policies, which are the primary variables of interest for this study. The data were extracted from GunPolicy.org in 2019 and include the most recent year available on the website at that time (circa 2018). Homicide victimization rates were calculated as the number of completed, intentional homicides with female victims or female victims by firearm divided by the female population, times 100,000. The total female homicide victimization rate has an average of 2.12 homicides per 100,000 females across 132 countries. The female gun homicide victimization rate has an average of 0.60 homicides per 100,000 females for 70 countries.

Tab. 1. National Female Homicide and Female Gun Homicide Victimization Rates per 100,000 Population, circa 2018

Country	Female Homicide Rate	Female Gun Homicide Rate	% Gun Ownership	Criminal Checks	Domestic Violence Checks
Albania	1.03		12.0	Yes	No
Algeria	0.37		2.1	No	No
Angola	2.05		11.2	No	No
Argentina	1.38	0.55	7.4	Yes	No
Armenia	0.51	0.25	6.1	No	No
Australia	0.66	0.05	13.7	Yes	Yes
Austria	0.58	0.20	30.0	Yes	No
Azerbaijan	1.80		3.6	Yes	No
Bangladesh	1.05		0.4	No	No
Belarus	2.29		6.1	Yes	Yes
Belgium	0.94	0.17	12.7	Yes	No
Benin	2.39		0.3	No	No
Bhutan	1.07		0.8	No	No
Bolivia	4.06		2.0	Yes	No
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.83	0.10	31.2	No	No

Botswana	2.47		4.1	Yes	No
Brazil	4.45	2.20	8.3	Yes	No
Bulgaria	0.60	0.05	8.4	Yes	No
Burkina Faso*	(0.19)		0.9	Yes	Yes
Burundi	2.29		2.0	Yes	Yes
Cabo Verde*+	2.62	(0.75)	5.4	No	No
Cameroon	1.53		2.1	Yes	No
Canada	0.83	0.13	34.7	Yes	Yes
Central African Republic*	(10.38)		1.8	No	No
Chad	3.62		1.0	Yes	No
Chile	1.28	0.19	12.1	Yes	No
China	0.51		3.6	Yes	Yes
Colombia	4.41	2.52	10.1	Yes	No
Congo	4.51		2.4	Yes	No
Costa Rica	2.89	1.01	10.0	Yes	No
Croatia	0.94	0.27	13.7	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	0.85	0.34	34.0	Yes	Yes
Czech Republic	0.48	.04	12.5	Yes	No
Dem. Republic of Congo	5.14		1.2	Yes	No
Denmark	0.80	0.07	9.9	Yes	No
Dominican Republic	3.18	1.49	7.4	Yes	No
Ecuador	2.41	0.41	2.4	Yes	No
Egypt*+	(0.06)	(0.02)	4.1	Yes	Yes
El Salvador	8.84	6.74	12.0	Yes	No
Estonia	1.48	0.15	5.0	Yes	No
Ethiopia	3.86		0.4	No	No
Finland	0.86	0.07	32.4	Yes	No
France	1.04	0.06	19.6	Yes	No
Gabon	3.18		3.4	No	No
Gambia	1.79		6.5	No	No
Georgia	2.97	0.12	10.1	No	No
Germany	1.13	0.06	32.0	Yes	No
Ghana	0.99		8.0	No	No
Greece	0.46	0.11	17.6	Yes	Yes
Guatemala	6.83	4.98	12.1	Yes	No
Haiti	1.63		2.6	No	No
Honduras	8.40		14.1	No	No
Hungary	0.75	0.04	10.5	Yes	Yes
Iceland+	0.60	(0.60)	31.7	No	No
India	2.67		5.3	Yes	Yes
Indonesia	0.26		0	Yes	No
Iran	0.40	0.09	7.3	Yes	No
Iraq+	3.23	(2.09)	19.6	No	No
Ireland	0.21	0.04	7.2	Yes	No
Israel	0.67	0.20	6.7	Yes	No
Italy	0.49	0.09	12.9	Yes	No

Do Gun Policies Really Protect Women?

Ivory Coast	7.51		4.4	No	No
Jamaica	9.64	3.78	8.8	Yes	No
Japan	0.3	0	0.3	Yes	No
Jordan	0.80	0.20	18.7	No	No
Kazakhstan	2.45	0.9	2.8	Yes	No
Kenya	2.62		1.5	Yes	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	1.90	0.07	2.8	No	No
Laos	3.20		3.0	Yes	Yes
Latvia	2.80	0.28	10.5	Yes	No
Lebanon	1.23		31.9	Yes	No
Lesotho	8.90		4.8	Yes	No
Liberia	1.38		2.1	Yes	No
Lithuania	1.95	0.06	13.6	Yes	No
Luxembourg	0.70	0.35	18.9	Yes	No
Macedonia	0.96	0.19	29.8	Yes	Yes
Malawi	0.77		0.3	Yes	No
Malaysia*+	(0.10)	(0.01)	0.5	No	No
Maldives	0.34		6.2	No	No
Mali	5.10		1.1	Yes	No
Malta	0.46	0.48	28.3	Yes	Yes
Mauritania	5.17		2.8	Yes	No
Mauritius	1.31	0.15	8.3	No	No
Mexico	4.28	1.61	12.9	Yes	No
Moldova	2.28	0.05	3.0	Yes	No
Mongolia	2.72	0.13	7.9	No	No
Montenegro	0.94	1.27	39.1	Yes	No
Morocco+	0.55	(0.1)	4.8	No	No
Mozambique	1.10		4.5	Yes	No
Myanmar	0.76		1.6	No	No
Namibia	3.48		15.4	Yes	No
Nepal	0.89		1.5	No	No
Netherlands	0.37	0.03	2.6	Yes	No
Nicaragua	2.05	0.23	5.2	Yes	No
Niger*	(1.96)		0.5	No	No
Norway	0.42	0.04	28.8	Yes	No
Pakistan	2.35		22.3	No	No
Panama	1.85	1.54	10.8	Yes	No
Paraguay	1.80	0.81	16.7	Yes	No
Peru	12.26	0.01	2.0	Yes	No
Philippines+	2.26	(1.22)	3.1	Yes	No
Poland	0.35	0.2	2.5	Yes	Yes
Portugal	1.04	0.22	21.3	Yes	No
Romania	0.85	0.01	2.6	Yes	No
Russia	6.96		12.3	Yes	No
Rwanda	1.09		0.5	Yes	No
St. Lucia*	(0)	1.2	3.4	Yes	No
Sao Tome & Principe	1.54		3.4	No	No

Senegal	2.67		2.0	Yes	No
Serbia	0.91	0.49	39.1	Yes	No
Sierra Leone	0.75		0.5	No	No
Slovakia	0.72	0.25	6.5	Yes	No
Slovenia	0.19	0.47	15.6	Yes	Yes
South Africa*	(11.64)		9.7	Yes	Yes
South Korea	0.76	0.01	0.2	Yes	No
Spain	0.48	0.05	7.5	Yes	Yes
Sri Lanka	1.21		2.4	No	No
Sudan	2.38		6.6	Yes	No
Swaziland	4.51		4.8	No	No
Sweden	0.49	0.04	23.1	Yes	No
Switzerland	0.59	0.19	34.8	Yes	Yes
Syria	0.40	0.25	8.2	Yes	No
Tajikistan	0.41		0.4	No	No
Tanzania	2.46		0.8	No	No
Thailand	0.80	0.38	15.1	Yes	No
Togo	3.17		0.8	No	No
Tonga	1.91		8.0	Yes	No
Tunisia	1.03		1.1	Yes	No
Turkey	0.54	0.31	16.5	Yes	Yes
Uganda	4.31		0.8	Yes	No
Ukraine	2.45		9.9	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	0.87	0.01	5.0	Yes	No
United States*+	(2.39)	(1.40)	120.5	No	No
Uruguay	3.17	0.98	34.7	Yes	No
Uzbekistan	0.74	0.01	0.4	No	No
Venezuela	3.3	2.51	18.5	Yes	No
Vietnam	0.45		1.6	Yes	Yes
Yemen	2.97		52.8	Yes	No
Zambia	2.07		0.9	Yes	No
Zimbabwe	2.04		2.8	Yes	No

Source: All data in this table were obtained from GunPolicy.org in 2019¹.

Independent Variables

Independent variables to measure the four contexts of violence were selected based on previous cross-national homicide studies and the conceptual framework presented in Figure 2. Consistent with prior research, the *material context* was represented by gross domestic product per capita in

¹ Eight countries were identified as influential cases for the female homicide victimization analyses (*) and eight countries were influential cases for the female gun homicide analyses (+). These countries were not included in the final models presented in this paper. Their data are not included in any subsequent tables in this paper. They are included in this table for informational purposes only and to facilitate transparency of the data analyses.

US dollars (GDP/capita) as a measure of absolute wealth or deprivation and the Gini coefficient of income inequality was used as a measure of relative deprivation. The data for these two variables were extracted from the World Development Indicators for 2018, or the closest year available (World Bank Group, 2019). GDP/capita was not statistically significant in any of the preliminary models and was highly collinear with the gender-specific variables, so it was removed from the final results presented below.

We added another measure of relative deprivation to represent the gendered gap in economic development. For this concept, we used the Gender Development Index (GDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The index includes the same measures of wealth, education, and life expectancy as the Human Development Index (HDI), but instead calculates the gap in HDI between women and men. The GDI is the female development index as a percentage of the male development index. Scores greater than one indicate that women scored better than men on the human development measures. For example, Poland's GDI is 1.009 for 2018. Lower scores mean that women experienced fewer benefits of economic development compared to men. For example, Nigeria's GDI for 2018 is 0.298 (UNDP, 2019a). In other words, lower scores indicate a larger gap in development, which is hypothesized to increase female homicide victimization.

In prior research, the *integrative context* has been tested with measures of social cohesion (e.g., ethnic heterogeneity, rule of law) or family cohesion (e.g., divorce rate). These variables were either not available for a large number of countries, were not particularly relevant for understanding female homicides, or were highly collinear with other variables in the model so they were not included in this study. Instead, we used measures of legal responses to VAW to represent the integrative context. Two policy variables from GunPolicy.org were selected for this study based on their relationship to violence against women and their availability for the largest number of countries. We included a dichotomous measure of whether the country required any criminal background checks before a firearm license is issued or renewed. We also included a dichotomous measure of whether the country required a background check specifically for a history or risk of domestic violence. These variables capture the existence of these laws only at the national (federal) level. Missing data for the two background check variables were coded as 0 (i.e., no checks) to maximize sample size.

Sensitivity checks using these variables with missing data and with imputed data did not yield any substantive differences

The *situational context* was operationalized with two variables. First, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) from the UNDP was used to measure how gender roles and status affect female equality and thereby influence opportunities for or protections against VAW. The GII comprises three areas of inequality, which are health, politics and empowerment, and the labor market. Countries with low GII scores have less gender inequality than countries with high scores. For example, in 2018 the GII for Switzerland was 0.037, whereas it was 0.411 in Colombia (UNDP, 2019b).

Opportunities for lethal VAW are also expected to increase when firearms are easily accessible. Previous cross-national research has shown that the number of guns available to the public increases the risk for homicide in general and female homicide in particular. Consistent with prior research, we used the rate of civilian firearm possession per 100 people, which includes estimates of both legal and illegal firearms. The data were obtained from GunPolicy.org circa 2018. The original source for these numbers was most often the Small Arms Survey (SAS) of the Graduate Institute of International Development Studies in Geneva.

Finally, the *cultural context* was the most difficult to measure for this study, and that has been a persistent problem in quantitative cross-national studies of violence. Ideally we would have liked to include measures of social values and norms regarding gender. Such measures exist in cross-national survey datasets, but they are not available for a large number of countries included in this study. Instead we adopted an approach used by other scholars to capture broad cultural patterns through regional variables (e.g., Altheimer & Boswell, 2012; Cao & Zhang, 2015; Stamatel, 2015). For example, there is an extensive literature on how decades of civil wars, extrajudicial conflicts, and military dictatorships have had a long-term effect on violence in Latin America (see Fajnzylber et al., 2002a, 2002b). We included a dichotomous variable for Latin American countries to capture this culture of violence. We examined other regional indicators in preliminary analyses but they were not informative so they were removed from the final models to maintain a reasonable ratio between the number of independent variables in the statistical models and the number of cases (Long, 1997).

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables for the two different samples based on the different dependent variables. The larger sample size for the total female homicide rate allows for greater variation in gender development (GDI) and gender inequality (GII). The smaller sample has a greater percentage of countries in Latin America. While the majority of countries in both samples mandate criminal history background checks for gun licenses, regulations specifically for domestic violence offenses are less common.

Tab. 2. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables circa 2018

		Total Homicide Rate (n=132)				Total Gun Homicide Rate (n=70)			
		Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variables</i>	Total female homicide victimization rate	2.12	2.11	0.19	12.26				
	Female gun homicide victimization rate					0.60	1.16	0	6.74
<i>Material Context</i>	Gini index	37.68	7.55	25.0	59.10	36.33	7.19	25.4	53.30
	Gender development index	0.94	0.75	0.46	1.03	0.97	0.36	0.80	1.03
<i>Integrative Context</i>	Criminal background check (1=yes)	1= 73.5%		0	1	1= 88.6%		0	1
	Domestic violence background check (1=yes)	1= 15.9%		0	1	1= 18.6%		0	1
<i>Situational Context</i>	Gender inequality index	0.35	0.20	0.37	0.83	0.28	0.15	0.34	0.55
	Civilian gun ownership rate	10.22	10.65	0	52.80	13.96	10.61	0.20	39.10
<i>Cultural Context</i>	Latin America (1=yes)	1= 15.91%		0	1	1= 25.71%		0	1

Table 3 shows the zero-order correlations for all of the variables for both samples. The bivariate relationships do not indicate strong correlations between the two dependent variables and the gun measures. Some of the correlations between the control variables, particularly with Latin America, are relatively high indicating potential multicollinearity problems.

Variance inflation factors were calculated for all of the regression models to address this issue, as discussed in the results section.

Tab. 3. *Zero-Order Correlation Matrices*

	<i>Total fem. homicide rate</i>	<i>Gini index</i>	<i>Gender development index</i>	<i>Gender inequality index</i>	<i>Civilian gun ownership rate</i>	<i>Crim. checks</i>	<i>Domes tic viol. checks</i>	<i>Latin Am.</i>
Total female homicide victimization rate (n=132)	1.00							
Gini index	0.46	1.00						
Gender development index	-0.06	-0.00	1.00					
Gender inequality index	0.41	0.52	-0.61	1.00				
Civilian gun ownership rate	-0.15	-0.22	-0.01	-0.41	1.00			
Criminal background check (1=yes)	0.02	0.02	0.30	-0.34	0.18	1.00		
Domestic violence background check (1=yes)	-0.20	-0.22	0.17	-0.29	0.15	0.26	1.00	
Latin America (1=yes)	0.50	0.49	0.16	0.16	0.00	0.12	-0.19	1.00
	Total female gun homic. rate	Gini index	Gender development index	Gender inequality index	Civilian gun ownership rate	Criminal checks	Domestic violence.	Latin America
Total female gun homicide victimization rate	1.00							

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(n=70)								
Gini index	0.49	1.00						
Gender development index	0.04	-0.01	1.00					
Gender inequality index	0.46	0.67	-0.26	1.00				
Civilian gun ownership rate	-0.01	-0.16	-0.02	-0.34	1.00			
Criminal background check (1=yes)	0.15	0.12	0.19	-0.24	0.11	1.00		
Domestic violence background check (1=yes)	-0.16	-0.20	-0.01	-0.30	0.27	0.17	1.00	
Latin America (1=yes)	0.63	0.83	0.14	0.64	-0.18	0.21	-0.28	1.00

Analysis and Results

For each dependent variable, we ran an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with all of the independent variables. The dependent variables were logged to reduce heteroskedasticity. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were calculated to check for multi-collinearity. GDP per capita was originally included in the models as a measure of the material context, but the VIFs with this variable were greater than 3.5 and the variable was not statistically significant in any of the models so it was removed from the analyses presented below. We used Cook's D to identify influential cases (outliers) with a threshold of $4/n$ (Gordon, 2015). For the initial regression models with each dependent variable, we identified eight influential cases that affected overall model quality so they were excluded from the final models presented in Table 4. The effects of those cases on the models are discussed in more detail after the presentation of results.

Table 4 shows the unstandardized OLS regression estimates and standard errors for the full regression models (Model 1A and Model 1B) for each dependent variable. Importantly, Models 1A and 1B differ not only in terms

of their dependent variables, but also with respect to sample size and sample composition. Table 2 shows how each sample varies with respect to the independent variables. Representing the *material context*, the Gini coefficient was not significant in either version of Model 1. The gender development index was significant and positive for total female homicide rates only. Higher scores on this index mean better development outcomes for females relative to males. Contrary to expectations, greater gender development is associated with higher total homicide rates. The *integrative context* comprised two measures of gun policies, which were not statistically significant for either dependent variable, contrary to expectations. There was strong support for the *situational context*, as the gender inequality index was positive and significant for both dependent variables. Countries with greater gender inequality have higher female victimization rates. The rate of gun availability was also positively associated with female gun homicides. Finally, representing the *cultural context*, countries in Latin America had higher lethal VAW relative to other regions in the world.

Models 1A and 1B each had eight influential cases that were removed from the final regression results because they created heteroskedasticity and reduced the quality of the model fit. For Model 1A, the influential cases were Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Egypt, Niger, Malaysia, Saint Lucia, South Africa, and the United States. It is important to note that when these cases were included in the model, the R^2 was only 0.30 (compared to 0.47 in Table 4) and the rate of civilian gun ownership was positive and statistically significant. This is not surprising given that the gun ownership rate in the U.S. is excessively high at 120.5% of the population and South Africa is relatively high with 9.7%. For Model 1B, the influential cases were Cabo Verde, Egypt, Iceland, Iraq, Malaysia, Morocco, Philippines, and the United States. Removing these cases increased the R^2 from 0.55 to 0.65, but did not affect the significance or direction of the any of the predictors.

Tab. 4. OLS Regression Results for Two Measures of Lethal VAW²

		Total Female Homicide Victimization Rate unstandardized coefficients (b) (standard errors)			Female Gun Homicide Victimization Rate unstandardized coefficients (b) (standard errors)		
		Model 1A	Model 2A	Model 3A	Model 1B	Model 2B	Model 3B
Material Context	Gini index	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.05 ** (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)
	Gender development index	2.94 ** (1.26)	3.96 ** (1.73)	-1.22 (2.04)	4.21 (3.79)	4.04 (4.47)	3.99 (9.29)
Integrative Context	Criminal background check (1=yes)	0.20 (0.15)	0.27 (0.18)	-0.29 (0.24)	0.29 (0.44)	0.00 (0.52)	0.95 (1.01)
	Domestic violence background check (1=yes)	-0.18 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.25)	-0.37 * (0.19)	0.17 (0.33)	-0.64 (0.59)	0.41 (0.38)
Situational Context	Gender inequality index	3.13 *** (0.60)	3.55 *** (0.72)	0.52 (1.15)	3.87 *** (1.41)	2.84 * (1.65)	6.42 ** (2.51)
	Civilian gun ownership rate	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	(0.01) (0.01)	0.06 *** (0.01)	0.18 *** (0.04)	0.05 * (0.02)
Cultural Context	Latin America (1=yes)	0.66 *** (0.19)	0.65 *** (0.24)	0.61 * (0.35)	1.60 *** (0.57)	1.96 *** (0.71)	0.58 (0.97)
	n	132	98	34	70	43	27
	R ²	0.47	0.42	0.73	0.65	0.77	0.57

Although the insignificant findings for the integrative context comprised of the two legal reforms was contrary to expectations, it prompted further reflection about the social conditions under which such laws might be necessary and effective. Tables 1 and 2 showed that the average gun ownership rates across the sample countries is fairly low. This prompts consideration of causal ordering regarding whether laws reduce gun ownership or whether low gun ownership precludes the needs for greater gun restrictions. If the latter scenario were true, then perhaps it would not be surprising to find no significant effects of gun laws on lethal VAW across countries. In other words, countries that might benefit most from gun regulations may be those with the most guns. To investigate this

² * p <=.10, ** p <=.05, *** p <=.01

hypothesis, we divided our samples into two groups based on gun ownership rates. In Table 4, Models 3A and 3B are countries with the highest 25% of gun ownership in their respective samples, whereas Models 2A and 2B are the remaining countries. For both dependent variables, the results for Model 2 parallel Model 1. However, some interesting differences appear when we only analyze countries with high levels of civilian gun possession (Model 3). Most importantly, domestic violence background checks have a statistically significant, negative relationship with total female homicide victimization (Model 3A). Although this relationship is only significant at $p < .10$, Model 3 contains a small number of cases and high levels of multicollinearity, which makes finding statistical significance harder. Of the 34 countries in the top quartile of gun ownership in Model 3A, nine countries conduct domestic violence background checks for gun licenses. Those nine countries with domestic violence checks all have female homicide victimization rates under 1 per 100,000. Our approach to answer our research questions was designed to generalize across a large number of countries and is not well suited for analyses of small subsets. Nonetheless, these results suggest that there may be certain social conditions under which legal reforms to protect against VAW might be more effective than others.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results from the quantitative analyses confirm three of the six hypotheses for this study. Notably, the *situational* and *cultural* contexts have the most influence on lethal VAW across countries (Hypotheses 3A, 3B, 4). Greater gender inequality, more firearms, and living in Latin America were consistent predictors of high female homicide rates. There were mixed results for the *material* context, although the findings raise interesting questions for further research. Traditional measures of the material context, namely GDP per capita and the Gini coefficient, were not helpful predictors in this study (Hypothesis 1A). However, the gendered development measure was statistically significant for one of the dependent variables (Hypothesis 1B). Countries with higher GDI, meaning lower gender gaps in development, had higher rates of total female homicide rates than countries with lower GDI. In other words, in countries where

women have longer life expectancies, more education, and higher standards of living relative to men, they are also at *greater* risk for violent victimization. In contrast, countries where women have more equality, as measured by more reproductive freedom, more political power, and more labor force participation, they have a *lower* risk for violent victimization. These seemingly contradictory findings are consistent with previous studies that have found support for both the backlash and amelioration hypotheses with respect to understanding VAW cross-nationally. Greater rewards for women from economic development (i.e., high GDI) could generate a backlash effect, whereas greater social status through gender equality may enable women to enact social protections against violence. More refined measures of the different aspects of gender roles, status, equality, norms, and values are needed to adequately disentangle these complex relationships.

Importantly, the key question of interest for this study that was situated in the *integrative context* was not well supported (Hypothesis 2). Criminal history background checks were not significant in any of the regression models. Similarly, domestic violence background checks were not significant in the main regression models. Although these findings are contrary to our theoretical expectations, it would be premature to conclude that these laws are ineffective based on the results of this study given the limitations of the data and study design. This is the first study to examine the effects of these laws cross-nationally so additional research is warranted before any strong conclusions can be drawn. For example, further investigation suggested that legal protections against VAW might be relevant under certain social conditions. We found modest evidence that these laws reduced lethal VAW in countries that have high rates of gun ownership. This is an area worthy of further research.

The goal of this study was to contribute to the modest literature examining the effects of firearm availability and gun regulations on lethal VAW cross-nationally. Given the sparseness of existing literature, research design decisions were made to maximize sample size and sample composition to be as inclusive as possible. Such an approach meant that we had to rely on secondary data sources, which have inherent limits with respect to data availability across time and countries and the operationalization of theoretical concepts.

For example, in order to maximize sample size we chose a cross-sectional design using the most recent data available across our sources. Cross-sectional research cannot assess long-term effects of policy changes like the adoption of firearm regulation. Countries in this study adopted laws at various times, yet the outcome variables are measured at approximately the same time period. This static snapshot of the relationship may mask dynamic effects. It could also be the case that countries with historically lower rates of VAW do not consider firearm regulations to protect women because they would be superfluous. The historical contexts shaping both the adoption of laws and levels of violence are missing from the study design.

Additionally, all quantitative, cross-national research is sensitive to sample sizes and compositions. Although this study includes significantly more countries and more diverse countries than previous research, it is still far from the population census. As noted in the presentation of results, some of the differences between the regression results from the two dependent variables are likely due to changes in sample size and characteristics of the respective samples, instead of, or in addition to, changes in the dependent variable. As others have argued, the socio-historical contexts of countries and regions are important to understanding geographic variations in homicide rates, so we need to be mindful of the composition of our samples when interpreting results (Alzheimer & Boswell, 2012; Stamatel, 2006).

Finally, some of the variables were not ideal measures of the four context areas. We acknowledge this most importantly with respect to the cultural context. Regional variables are simply indicators and we infer a lot of meaning from simple dichotomies. We need better measures of cultural values, norms, and beliefs, particularly regarding gender and sexuality, across a large number of countries and over time. Additionally, this study only measured the presence or absence of two firearm regulations. Laws that are passed by legislative bodies are not always fully, or even partially, implemented for political, financial, or administrative reasons. Additionally, these data do not capture the extent to which these laws are enforced. Measuring law-on-the-books is not the same as law-in-action.

In summary, although both public health researchers and criminologists have acknowledged the need to understand macro-level correlates of lethal VAW, the research literature explaining cross-national differences in levels of violence against women is sparse. We adopted a theoretical framework from comparative criminology that identified four contexts of violence

(material, integrative, situation, and cultural) and adapted it to address some important research gaps. First, we considered the gendered nature of the material and situational contexts and included appropriate measures of gender development and gender inequality into our analyses. Second, we expanded the situational context to include the availability of firearms, which shape opportunities for lethal VAW. Third, we incorporated the legal system into the integrative context to recognize its important role for both exerting formal social control and shaping collective sentiments about violence.

We utilized a unique dataset developed by GunPolicy.org to measure the effects of gun availability and firearm regulations on lethal VAW, controlling for other known predictors of cross-national female homicide variation. Our results confirmed previous studies that have shown that high levels of gun ownership are positively related to high levels of lethal violence. We did not find strong support for the effect of gun policies on lethal VAW, although we found some evidence that domestic violence background checks for gun licenses may protect against lethal VAW in countries with high rates of gun ownership. This finding encourages further investigations into conditions under which different types of gun regulations might be most effective to reduce lethal VAW. One possible avenue is to consider other factors related to gun access and lethality, such as illegal weapons, different types of weapons, or ammunition controls. Another research track might consider cultural factors related to gun ownership, particularly as it affects perceptions of masculinity. A third approach might unpack the social conditions leading to firearm regulations that may already affect levels of VAW so that laws become more of a symbolic representation of other sociocultural factors rather than a direct determinant of risk of violence.

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VAW Policy Regimes in Italy: An Analysis Across Regional Governments and Women's Centres

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Abstract

The paper analyses the consequences of bureaucratisation processes in the context of violence against women (VAW) policies in Italy. Specifically, the paper proposes an analysis of VAW policies in three Regions (namely, Emilia-Romagna, Apulia, and Lombardy), with the aim to study anti-violence centre (AVC)'s activists and workers' representations of VAW policies in their daily practices. We will focus on the regulation processes of the selected regional administrations, while trying to answer the following questions: to what extent have policies that originated from feminist movement(s) activities and practices ended up in very strict bureaucratisation processes? What are bureaucratisation processes consequences on the activities and practices of AVCs, from the perspectives of the centres' activists and workers?

Keywords: VAW policies, Bureaucratisation processes, Anti-violence centres, Regional contexts.

Introduction

In Italy, the evolution of the State intervention to combat violence against women (VAW) has been linked both to the activities of grassroots movements, namely feminist and women's groups, and to the role of international, supranational, and European conventions and agreements. VAW public policies only started in the mid 1990s, comparatively later than many other European countries (Corradi & Stöckl, 2016). The process seems quite slow, with a few early stages of transformation and long periods of apparent inactivity (Cimagalli, 2014). One of the breakthrough years in terms of policies was 1996, when the law on sexual violence (law no. 66/1996) was adopted: VAW entered the State's political agenda mainly as a "securitarian" topic used to mobilise consensus (Pitch, 1998), but also as an international issue, following the Beijing Declaration (1995) and the

Istanbul Convention (2011). However, the country is still lacking an organic law on VAW at the national level, and the regulations at the regional levels are fragmented and heterogeneous (Virgilio, 2017). National laws¹ have been interpreted as highly referring to the criminal code, asking women to denounce, even forcing their self-determination or producing risks of secondary victimisation or over-victimisation, favouring the penal dimension in defining intervention to support women (Re, Rigo & Virgilio, 2019; GREVIO, 2019). Regulations at the local level do not always adopt a securitarian perspective, providing a framework of principles that supports different regional systems of law enforcement and VAW prevention.

The Italian legislative vacuum on tackling VAW is partly covered by the definition of policy-planning tools and the implementation of intervention programs at the national level. In the recent years, there has been a willingness to regulate the system of services supporting women, through the adoption of National Action Plans (as the current “National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women 2017-2020”²) and the approval of the so-called “Agreement between State and Regions on minimum requirements for anti-violence centres (AVCs) and shelters” in 2014³.

Well before the public administrations, in the 1970s, Italian women and feminist groups became active both in the public sphere and in daily interventions, by supporting women who were experiencing violence⁴. In particular, as of the late 1980s and in the early 1990s, AVCs grew up within women’s and feminist groups mainly in the central–northern Regions of the country (Creazzo, Pipitone & Vega, 2011). Totally or partially self-funded, these centres were both political actors, fighting for the public recognition of male VAW as a structural and cultural problem, and women-oriented counselling centres with their own telephone helplines, offering different activities: information provision, counselling, psychological and legal consultancy, employment advice, and, some of them, also shelters. They often shared a working methodology based on a

¹ See figure 1.

² Adopted in 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/testo-piano-diramato-conferenza.pdf>, April 16, 2020.

³ DPCM 27 November 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/02/18/15A01032/sg>, April 16, 2020.

⁴ In order to avoid secondary and over-victimisations, we do not use the term “victim” to refer to women experiencing VAW (Walker, 1979; Pederson, 2009).

trusting and empathetic relationship between women (Corradi & Bandelli, 2018). They usually avoided proactive interventions, meaning that most of the support was oriented towards aiding women to make their decisions by themselves. By laying their action on the recognition of VAW as a structural problem, their activities politically signify their action, as they are aimed at challenging the patriarchal culture and making power relations and gender inequalities more evident. In recent years, the system of support services for women experiencing violence has become increasingly heterogeneous: State and Regions' interventions, and the consequent allocation of new resources, have been joined by new social actors, both private (not-for-profit) and public. Not all of them have a feminist or, at least, a women-oriented background.

The international legal framework points out "public obligations at the core of action to combat VAW: if, on one hand, it calls on states to assume responsibility, on the other hand, it risks encouraging regulatory interventions that force and over-determine women's will and time" (Re et al., 2019). Following Abraham and Tastsoglou's (2016) conceptualisation, state intervention on VAW can mainly be analysed through two intertwined, yet clearly different practices: criminalisation of VAW or regulation through funding. In this article, we will analyse the latter, considering the national and local policies that regulate the activities and practices of the Italian system of anti-violence services. We will focus on those policies at the regional level that plan and regulate interventions to support women, by defining funding mechanisms as well as the intervention criteria and results to be achieved. Namely, by analysing different local systems that support women experiencing violence within the Italian context, we aim to answer the following questions: which consequences does the bureaucratisation of VAW policies have on the activities and practices of AVCs, from the perspective of the AVCs' workers? To what extent has a policy that originated from feminist movement(s) activities and practices ended up in very strict bureaucratisation processes? Since many AVCs build their services on a "women's-relationship" methodology, respecting women's desires, times and confidentiality, do these policies have an effect on this kind of methodology?

Due to the Italian administrative system⁵, VAW policies (as well as other policies) are implemented both at the national and regional level: therefore, regional governments and local authorities, following national rules and principles, reserve some autonomy to make decisions on, for instance, how to distribute funding as well as how to formally recognise women's centres and shelters. However, at the same time, they have the power to influence the policy-making debate at the national level. Therefore, Regions are the most appropriate level of observation for VAW policies. It is in fact at regional level that the governmental instruments are identified: mechanisms that bind or encourage different forms of coordination (e.g. plans, protocols), regulatory frameworks (e.g. standards), and criteria for resource allocation (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2004). In order to answer our research questions, we have identified three Regions, specifically Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna in the north of the country, and Apulia in the south. The three Regions have been selected in light of their VAW policy development, since they all have been very active in implementing, particularly in recent years, a system of support services, although with different strategies. Treating the qualitative study conducted in 2019 in thirty-five AVCs and six shelters during the ongoing ViVa project⁶, and a desk review on regional documents concerning the topic, we analyse and discuss the representations of the consequences of VAW policies on AVCs' practices.

In the next paragraphs, we will firstly discuss the theoretical approach and the methodology of this study. We will then describe the regional anti-violence policies. Finally, the AVCs workers' comments on anti-violence local networks' coordination and their own methodologies will be analysed in order to depict some of the consequences of VAW policies' bureaucratisation in Italy.

⁵ The Italian Constitution recognises twenty Regions and two autonomous provinces, which are territorial authorities with legislative and administrative power over specific areas.

⁶ The ViVa Project "Monitoring, Assessment and Analysis of the Measures to Prevent and Fight Violence against Women" is conducted by IRPPS-CNR in collaboration with the Italian Government Department for Equal Opportunities. The project aim is to gain in-depth knowledge on general and specialized anti-violence support services. It is programmed to last three years: from December 2017 to December 2020. More information available at <https://viva.cnr.it>.

1. Theoretical framework

Male VAW is recognised, even in international legislative documents⁷, as based on historically unequal power relationships between men and women. VAW is often experienced by a woman and is acted by a man close to her (Bartholini, 2013), because of the social, structural, and symbolic power connected to gender (Bimbi, 2014). It prevents the full affirmation of women's citizenship, affecting their freedom and self-determination. VAW impacts on many dimensions at social, economic, and political level; therefore, interventions against VAW require particular instruments (Walby, Towers and Francis, 2014) and solutions, such as jobs, housing, healthcare, and social support, part of, but not limited to, social policies.

The public and private services supporting women who experience VAW can be perceived as tools for empowerment. This term, according to Kabeer (2005), refers to the expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them: therefore, empowerment entails change and social transformation. The concept of empowerment, then, incorporates a political meaning, and Italian feminist and women-oriented AVCs often put women's empowerment at the heart of their practices.

For these reasons, we define VAW policies as gender-based and different from social welfare ones, since they cannot refer only to social issues and consequently to social policies. They also affect policies for equal opportunities, citizenship rights and health. Policies against VAW, indeed, involve different levels: combating and preventing the phenomenon, paying attention to both the women's and children's safety, addressing social representations, and working on the perpetrators, as well as different other actors. Therefore, VAW policies are not only wider than welfare ones, but also gender-based specific: they need a strong capability to understand

⁷At the international level, it is worth to mention: a) The General Recommendation no. 19 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women – CEDAW (1992), which interprets gender-based violence as a “a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men”; b) The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993), which recognises VAW as a human rights violation; c) The Istanbul Convention (2011), which recognises in its preamble “that the realisation of *de jure* and *de facto* equality between women and men is a key element in the prevention of violence against women”.

the complexities of the problem and multidimensional approaches in planning measures. There is the need to recognise the socio-cultural nature of VAW as well as its consequences on women and on society more in general.

According to Cimagalli (2014), several peculiarities come to light within traditional public policies, related to various aspects. First of all, the political action has to intervene on a social relationship in which many social actors are involved: women experiencing violence, male perpetrators, significant others (children, relatives, friends, colleagues), and institutions. In addition, the problem requires lengthy, non-emergency interventions, which make for a non-linear project involving different services. Moreover, women experiencing violence are often defined by social services as “difficult users”, “volatile”, or “not aware or determined” (Larrauri, 2008). Women are extremely heterogeneous, with different needs and requiring different services, long and complex paths, constantly adjusted if not interrupted, which are difficult to standardise and difficult to be framed within the organisational/technocratic logic of the social services, increasingly based on the reliability of beneficiaries, typical of “welfare-to-workmodels” (Mozzana, 2020).

Thus, analysing the VAW public policy-making process in Italy means taking into consideration, in an historical perspective, the various processes and practices that involve different actors, first of all those self-organised groups that have taken charge of VAW issues, such as women’s and feminist organisations.

International comparisons reveal different paths of VAW policy development across Europe, although general patterns can be identified (Corradi and Stöckl, 2016). Public intervention in supporting women experiencing violence, through both funding services and by adopting specific laws, is often connected to women’s and feminist movement(s) activities. Studies conducted in other countries (Abraham and Tastsoglou, 2016) have revealed that legislation and policies directed towards funding services may risk distancing AVCs practices from their women-oriented and feminist methodology. The rise in bureaucratisation and regulation processes, as well as the increase in competition for funding among programmes, have resulted in a standardisation of interventions and practices that have de-gendered and de-politicised the discourse on VAW, weakening women-oriented interventions (*ibid.*). Moreover, as the feminist

debate on bureaucratisation has pointed out, bureaucracy is often hostile to women (Martin, 2013). Without a doubt, a situated and contextualised analysis of each country is needed, combined to the study of related anti-violence policy system (Hearn, Strid, Husu and Verloo, 2016): nevertheless, these considerations seem valid for the Italian debate on the anti-violence system, too.

Furthermore, the distribution of services supporting women throughout the country still seems of great concern. The lack of an organic legislative and policy system in Italy and the VAW policies regionalization risk producing multiple systems of protection and support to escape violence, as a consequence of the fragmentation and heterogeneity of the measures undertaken. If, on one hand, those policies are closer and permeable to the needs of the territories, on the other hand, “risks emerge when, in the logic of decentralization, the rights that only the state’s regulatory capacity can guarantee, remain entangled” (Saraceno, 2005, p. 60).

Our analysis is driven by questions that relate to the consequences of “operationalisation” produced by VAW policies on women’s centre practices, as well as the relationship between bureaucratisation processes and the risk that AVCs will be merely confined to the role of service suppliers, weakening their goals of social change. In fact, many AVCs propose not only to give hospitality and support to women experiencing violence, but also to promote “the transformation of the cultural system from which violence is generated” (*Emilia-Romagna AVCs Network*, 2014)⁸. AVCs are not, neither they consider themselves, mere “services”, but they are political actors that try to build a world without asymmetries between women and men and with greater freedoms and opportunities for everyone, challenging the cultural causes of VAW.

As we will describe later, some AVCs believe that some governmental tools and measures risk of technicalizing the discourse, weakening their political action, triggering to re-signify contexts, practices and actors themselves. Despite numerous differences, the bureaucratisation of VAW recalls another bureaucratisation process which involved women’s family

⁸ “Dalle parole ai fatti”. Retrieved from <https://centriantiviolenzaer.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/com-stampa-25nov14.pdf>, April 16, 2020.

counselling, the other experience born within the Italian women's and feminist movement(s) in the 1970s (Bonichi and Trifiletti, 2018)⁹.

The tendency to deal with VAW issue in a de-politicised manner may therefore lead to de-gender anti-violence policies, where "de-gendering" does not only refer "to the practice of using ostensibly non-gendered terms to denote categories known to be gendered" (Hearn *et al.*, 2016, p. 556), but to something deeper that has to do with the primacy of patriarchal culture. Therefore, going back to Abraham and Tastsoglou's (2016) argument, there is a constant need to analyse and challenge the relationship between gender, violence, state and local authorities, and AVCs, bearing in mind the specificities of each context, being it national, regional or local, as we will try to do in the article.

2. Methodology

This analysis is conducted with data and reflections collected during the ViVa Project research activities.

For this article, we conducted a comparative desk review of documents, laws, regional plans, and legislation from the selected Regions. Simultaneously, we analysed qualitative data collected from thirty-five AVCs and six shelters selected among the 335 AVCs and 264 shelters, mapped in 2018 by IRPPS-CNR in collaboration with ISTAT (Misiti, 2019). These centres and shelters were selected from all over Italy, considering their experience (in terms of years of activities) and the type of management, either public or private non-profit. When they were managed by a private body, we also considered whether the "managing institution" worked exclusively on VAW or was also active in other fields. Through the interviews, we analysed AVCs daily practices and routines, as well as the symbolic representations under pinning their activities. For privacy

⁹ The family counselling, born as political places and territorial intervention services starting from the issue of sexual and reproductive health, but more broadly of women's liberation, seem to have been emptied of their task: if the national analyses evaluate positively the quantitative diffusion of services in the area by number of inhabitants, the budgets relating to the provision of services, the staff employed, and also the decrease in social inequalities in the national territory are seen negatively (Bonichi and Trifiletti, 2018).

reasons, the AVCs data are not recognisable, and their location is mentioned as “Region A, B and C”.

The analysis reveals huge heterogeneity in terms of practices as well as the symbolic and political meaning of the interventions and sometimes tensions related to the role of the AVCs, the relationships with public actors, and the women who have experienced violence.

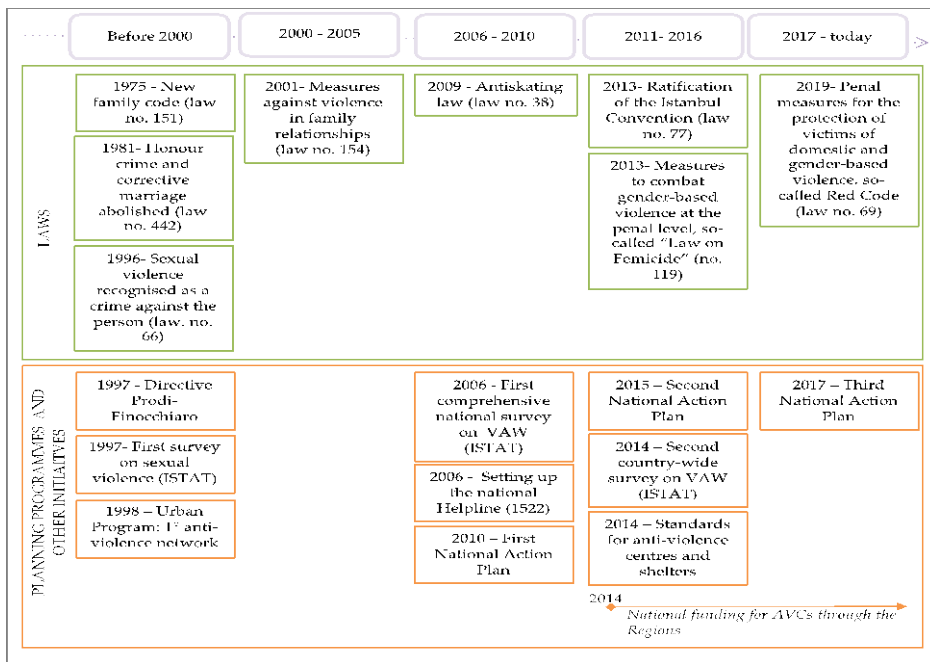
Public regulations and specialised services: national and regional insights

In the Italian evolution of anti-violence public policies, the relationship among women within the public institutions and the feminist movement(s) and AVCs has shifted from periods when there was a sort of “interpretive community” (Collins, 2010), and moments of harsh conflicts. Without a doubt, it is thanks to the women’s and feminist movement(s) that Italy made some progress in the decision-making system, both at the policy’s and at the legislative level. Over the years, institutions have developed a process, which has led to the definition of planning instruments and of interventions programmes oriented also at supporting women experiencing VAW. The following figure will present the main steps of the legislative and regulatory frameworks (Fig. 1).

In 1975, the approval of a new family code abolished “matrimonial authority”, the power of the husband to apply “means of correction and discipline towards his wife”. Subsequently, in 1981 the so-called crime of honour and the “corrective marriage” right were cancelled from the penal code. With the adoption of the law on sexual violence (law no. 66/1996) in 1996, seventeen years after the proposal of the citizens’ initiative law by women’s and feminist movement(s), sexual violence was recognised as a crime against the person and individual freedom: prior to that it had been placed in the broader category of crimes against morality. Furthermore, in 1998, after the 1997 Prodi-Finocchiaro Directive (7 March 1997), the first anti-violence network was established in eight cities, then extended to eighteen, under the framework of the Urban Programme (Basaglia, Lotti, Misiti and Tola, 2006). In 2001, law no. 154/2001 provided some measures against violence in family relationships. In 2006 and 2014 the Ministry for Equal Opportunities financed two country-wide surveys on VAW,

conducted by ISTAT¹⁰. In 2006 it funded the 1522 helpline for women experiencing VAW¹¹. In the following years, and until recently, the national government emphasised the criminal justice system as a response to VAW¹². At the same time, after the signing of the Istanbul Convention, ratified by Italy in 2013, the government started to put aside funding for specialised support services. Through these acts, as well as with the approval of national plans and laws on gender-based violence, the urge to prevent and combat VAW has become part of the Italian policy-making system discourse, both at the national and regional levels.

Fig.1 – Legislative and regulatory framework’s evolution at the national level: main steps



Source: ViVa project, 2017-2020.

Since 2010, Italy has adopted three National Action Plans (NAPs) to combat gender-based violence. Differently from the previous, the last NAP

¹⁰<https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/violenza-dentro-e-fuori-la-famiglia/numero-delle-vittime-e-forme-di-violenza> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

¹¹<https://www.1522.eu> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

¹²Law no. 38, on stalking, in 2009; law no. 119, the so-called "Femicide law", in 2013; law no. 69, the so-called "Red Code", in 2019.

(2017-2020) was defined through the involvement of several administrations, actors, and civil society organisations.

The funding allocated after 2013 by the State to support and promote specialised AVCs was not directly allocated to women's centres and shelters, but through the regional governments, according to the so-called "Agreement between State and Regions" signed in 2014, which established the standards for women's centres and shelters. When it was approved, it embroiled the anti-violence system in a huge debate, since, as already mentioned, some AVCs believed that it imposed unacceptable requirements and it undermined the political work of the centres, weakening their capacity to operate as actors of change within the society.

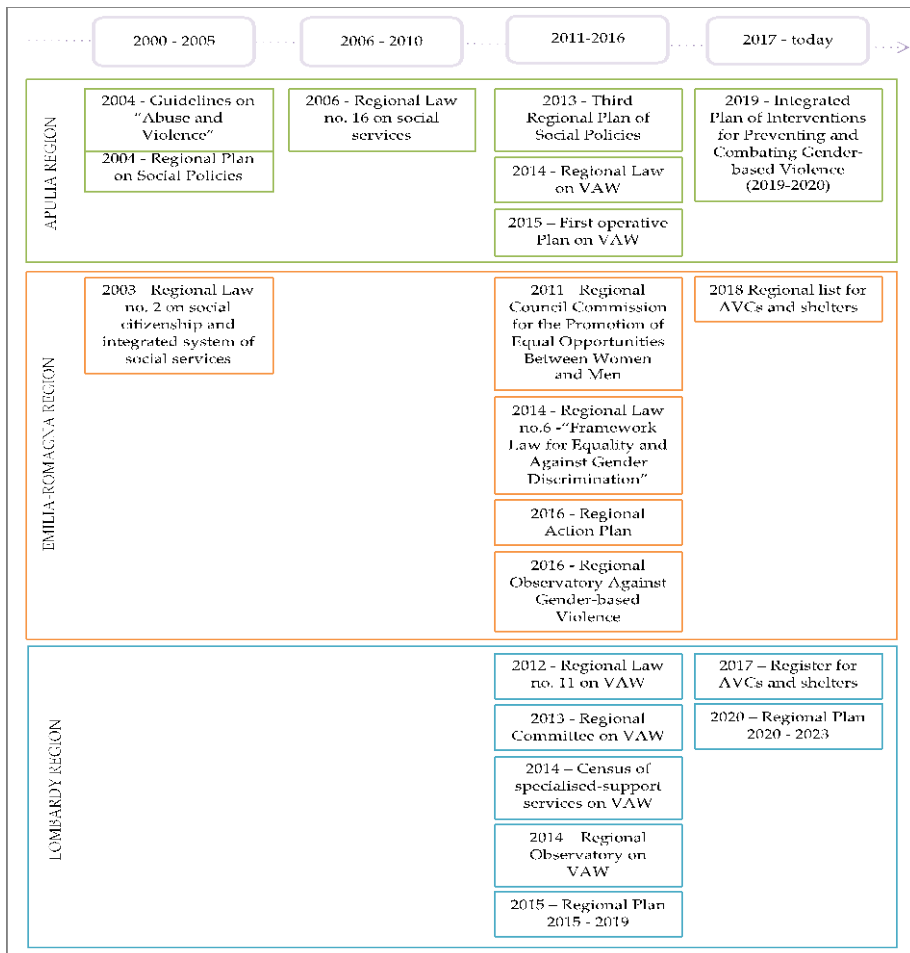
Despite the definition of three National Plans and standards for AVCs and shelters at the national level, we are facing a strongly fragmented and heterogeneous panorama. As already discussed, both the state and regional governments contribute to VAW decision-making and policy-making. It is worth mentioning that some regional administrations started to deal with the topic well before the state did: the first VAW law at the local level dates back to 1989, in the autonomous bilingual province of Bolzano, promulgated because of women's and the feminist lobby's activities. Over twenty-five years, all twenty Regions and two autonomous provinces have adopted either laws or regional documents on the topic. The three selected Regions are not an exception to this, although there are some differences among them.

Before moving on to the analysis of the regional institutional contexts, we present some data about the presence of anti-violence centres in the three Regions, collected during the ViVa project¹³. Out of the 335 AVCs mapped all over Italy, in 2017, 28 AVCs were working in Apulia (1,6 AVCs per 100.000 women above 14 years old); 21 in Emilia Romagna (1,0) and 47 in Lombardy (1,0) (Misiti, 2019). Considering the intertwining between regional policies and the opening of new AVCs at the local level, we can identify some differences in the three observed contexts. Indeed, while only two new AVCs have been opened in Emilia-Romagna since 2014 (out of a total of twenty-one), both driven by a public promoter, in Lombardy and

¹³ Although the data refer to 2017, very few differences have occurred in the last years in the three Regions involved in this study. Only in the Lombardy region the number of anti-violence centres increased from 47 in 2017 to 52 in 2019.

Apulia the definition of the regulatory framework and criteria related to funding has been supported by the opening of about one third of the currently active AVCs. Moreover, in all three Regions there is a greater diversification among actors that deal with violence, and many of new AVCs are promoted by actors that do not deal exclusively with VAW.

Fig. 2 – Main laws and regulatory measures at the regional level on VAW



Source: ViVa project, 2017-2020.

At the bureaucratic level, Apulia and Emilia-Romagna started to deal with the topic well before Lombardy did, in the early 2000s. Apulia and Emilia-Romagna have chosen to include the VAW policies among their

social policies, since the beginning, while Lombardy tries to keep them separate. Nevertheless, even in Lombardy, the design and implementation of these policies is largely borrowed from social provisions.

The figure below shows a summary of the development of VAW policies/law in the selected Regions, which will be discussed right after it.

Apulia Region

The regional government of Apulia has intervened several times at the legislative level to regulate the integrated system of welfare and gender policies, in the same way as Emilia-Romagna, recognising more than fifteen years ago the urgency and the need to activate effective tools to combat discrimination and violence. Since 2004, thanks to the “Regional Plan on Social Policies” and the following guidelines on “Abuse and Violence”¹⁴ there has been a call to have an AVC in all the main municipalities, including criteria for building multidisciplinary teams in each local district. In Apulia, as in Emilia-Romagna, the VAW policies were explicitly and strictly connected to social welfare policies: regional law no. 19/2006 on social services¹⁵ established, on the one hand, the types of structures and services to support the social inclusion of women experiencing violence, and, on the other, the “Regional Observatory of Social Policies”, including the “Permanent Observatory on Families and Family Policies”, which also dealt with violence-related situations within the family.

Although some more specific gender-related measures were adopted in the following years¹⁶, it was only in 2014 that the Region passed a law on preventing and combating VAW, with attention to women who experienced violence¹⁷.

¹⁴ Deliberation no. 1104/2004.

¹⁵ Retrieved from https://www.isfol.it/sistema-documentale/banche-dati/normative/archivio/legge-10-luglio-2006-n.19/Puglia_Leggen.19del100706.pdf (accessed on 14 January 2020).

¹⁶ Such as law no. 7/2007 on gender-based policies, retrieved from http://www.pariopportunita.regione.puglia.it/documents/10180/0/Legge+regionale+7_2007.pdf/451513ce-a746-4524-93c2-d82eb8c37db8

¹⁷ Law no. 29/2014, retrieved from <http://pariopportunita.regione.puglia.it/documents/10180/21256/LR+29+del+04.07.2014.pdf/e4e056bf-6702-4625-a48c-7dcaf33f4878> (accessed on 14 January 2020).

While implementing the regional law and the “Third Regional Plan of Social Policies”, the Region approved some guidelines¹⁸ to create a region-wide plan for the interventions and to consolidate the VAW services.

The “Third Regional Plan of Social Policies” (2013-2015) sets the basic operational objectives for planning local and concentrated resources, such as the signing of at least one agreement between the local district of municipalities and AVCs, which had to be authorised and registered in the regional register¹⁹.

The “Fourth Regional Plan of Social Policies” (2018-2020) provides the municipalities with operational guidelines for structuring territorial governance so that territorial anti-violence networks can operate in order to allow adequate and integrated support, and protection for women.

As already mentioned, the Apulian VAW policy design has been structured around the framework of social welfare policies, as confirmed by the last “Integrated Plan of Interventions for Preventing and Combating Gender-based Violence”(2019 – 2020)²⁰ approved in August 2019, as part of the Regional Plan of Social Policies. Following this approach, AVCs are authorised to work (and economically supported) if registered in the “Lists for public and private social welfare facilities and services”. Moreover, to be funded by the Region they need also to have an agreement with local territorial districts.

Emilia-Romagna Region

In 2003, earlier than the other two Regions analysed, the government of Emilia-Romagna adopted a regional law “for the promotion of social citizenship and the realisation of an integrated system of social services”²¹,

¹⁸ Deliberation no. 729/2015.

¹⁹ <http://www.pariopportunita.regione.puglia.it/documents/10180/21256/2019-Cav/672438a8-00c1-40ca-89ab-938e25dc7be4> (accessed on 14 January 2020).

²⁰ Deliberation no. 1556/2019, retrieved from http://www.pariopportunita.regione.puglia.it/documents/10180/994594/PianoIntegratoInterventi_Burp/c0edd49b-00f0-47cf-8c55-1ebc8f0906b1 (accessed on 14 January 2020). The 2019-2020 Regional Plan on gender-based violence clarifies that law no. 29/2014 establishes strict requirements for new AVCs and shelters, in addition to the requirements for social welfare services.

²¹ Regional Law no. 2/3003, retrieved from <http://salute.regione.emilia-romagna.it/normativa-e-documentazione/leggi/regionali/leggi/legge-regionale-2-2003> (accessed on 14 January 2020).

recognising the role of women's centres and shelters, and including them in the social welfare system. The relationship between institutions and women's centres and shelters appears to be ongoing, and has framed regulatory measures since the beginning: in 2011, regional law no. 8 established the "Regional Council Commission for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities Between Women and Men", which, among its first activities, during 2012-13, aimed to understand the work of the AVCs through a sort of "travelling consultation" which involved fourteen AVCs and started to monitor the data on women who accessed AVCs.

However, as is also the case for Apulia and Lombardy, we need to wait until 2013-2014 for specific measures and deliberations aimed at recognising women's centres and shelters, underlining the need for a network between public and not-for-profit institutions to introduce effective strategies against VAW and to spread a culture against gender stereotypes. These measures worked as a sort of guideline for the definition of law no. 6/2014, the "Framework Law for Equality and Against Gender Discrimination"²². The law takes into consideration some of the instances put forward by the AVCs in the Region, and called for the definition of a Regional Action Plan (article 17), approved in 2016²³. As for the law, the AVCs were audited, carrying on the participative approach to the law and policy-making activities that has characterised this Region. The plan sets out to strengthen the system of prevention, protection, and support services for women, calls for the establishment of the "Regional Observatory Against Gender Violence" and for the definition of a "regional list of women's centres and shelters". The list was drawn up in 2018 and it is constantly updated: as for Apulia and Lombardy, both having their own AVCs' list, only women's centres and shelters registered in this list can receive public national funding through the local authorities and entities. In 2018 minimum

²² Approved on 27 June 2014, retrieved from: <https://demetra.regione.emilia-romagna.it/al/articolo?urn=er:assemblealegislativa:legge:2014;6>(accessed on 14 January 2020).

²³ Deliberation n.69/2016, retrieved from: https://parita.regione.emilia-romagna.it/violenza/copy_of_norme-violenza/piano-regionale-contro-la-violenza-di-genere/@@download/file/Piano%20Regionale%20Violenza%20di%20Genere%202016.pdf(accessed on 14 January 2020).

regional standards²⁴ for AVCs and shelters were also defined, complementing and integrating the national ones.

Moreover, the ongoing relationship between the AVCs and institutions is consolidated at the local level too, as revealed by the 2015 agreement between the network of local municipalities (*ANCI* Emilia-Romagna) and the regional committee of AVCs, a further demonstration that gender-based violence policies can be strictly connected to social welfare provisions.

Lombardy Region

Unlike Apulia and Emilia-Romagna, the Lombardy Region only started to deal with VAW after it adopted a specific regional law on the topic in 2012 (law no. 11/2012)²⁵. It started out as a citizens' initiative law, thanks to the mobilisation of AVCs and women's groups. Since the Region latched onto the topic in 2012, the process has been relatively fast and consistent. In 2014, a census²⁶ was conducted on the AVCs in the Region, mapping twenty-one AVCs in order to allocate funding following national law no.119/2013. Since then, the regional government has aimed to promote collaboration between AVCs and other actors involved in supporting women, through local networks which are led by a local authority. Formally, these networks now cover the entire territory. In 2015 a regional plan defined the way that the system of support services had to work²⁷ and a new plan has been approved very recently (February 2020)²⁸.

²⁴ Measure no. 586/2018 on the creation of the regional list of women's anti-violence centres and shelters defines women's centres as "social welfare and cultural units".

²⁵ Retrieved from: <http://normelombardia.consiglio.regione.lombardia.it/NormeLombardia/Accessibile/main.aspx?view=showdoc&iddoc=lr002012070300011> (accessed on 14 January 2020).

²⁶ Study conducted by Éupolis Lombardia (2014), "*Supporto tecnico scientifico all'attivazione della l.r. 11/2012 'Interventi di prevenzione, contrasto e sostegno a favore delle donne vittime di violenza'*".

²⁷ Retrieved from: https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/f9d29d94-70ff-4f3b-80ad-e78c45337aaa/Dgc_894_10-11-2015_Piano_Antiviolenza.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-f9d29d94-70ff-4f3b-80ad-e78c45337aaa-meSrUJ (accessed on 14 January 2020).

²⁸ Retrieved from: https://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/wcm/connect/4717d7d6-ce0e-4af5-b878-4ec8e78472e0/DCR_XI_999+del+25.02.2020_Piano+Quadriennale+violenza+2020-2023.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-4717d7d6-ce0e-4af5-b878-4ec8e78472e0-n4Xt5Ed (accessed on 24 April 2020).

The involvement of AVCs was greater at the beginning of the policy-making activities. The cited regional law asked for the constitution of a “Regional Committee on VAW” (article 5 of law no.11/2012), which was then launched in 2013²⁹:50% of the participants in the committee had to belong to AVCs. Like Apulia and Emilia-Romagna, the Lombardy Region also wanted to regulate AVC standards, establishing a register for AVCs and shelters in 2017³⁰.

The involvement of and the relationships with AVCs have changed over recent years, producing some frictions that are still ongoing. The consequences of the implementation of these policies by the Lombardy Region appear clearly through an example. In 2014, the Region established a “Regional Observatory on VAW”³¹, which collects data on women from AVCs. The regional government asks data requirements allowing the identification of each woman (namely, taxpayer number). This decision created conflicts not only between the centres and the regional government, but also among AVCs that follow different methodologies. To make the request more coercive, the Region attributes economic resources to anti-violence networks in proportion to the number of women’s taxpayer numbers indicated: as a result, the AVCs that refuse to do this, in observation of women’s privacy and their own methodology, withdraw from the local networks, thus impacting on their resources.

Regional attempts of VAW system’s top-down coordination

As it emerges from the above description, all three Regions have demonstrated the willingness to build up a strong policy. In particular, the three selected Regions promoted actions to integrate a system of services and expertise driven by national actions³².

Specifically, Apulia and Emilia-Romagna have structured some instruments to integrate – yet “incorporate”- the local welfare system and the AVCs through strengthening the relationships between them. Similarly, Lombardy pushed for the integration of services, but through local anti-

²⁹ Established with decree no. 10741/2013.

³⁰ Deliberation no. 6526/2017 and decree no. 6712/2017.

³¹ Deliberation no. 2795/2014.

³² Both the Istanbul Convention (article 7) and the 2017-2020 “National Strategic Plan on Male Violence Against Women” (paragraph 5) call for an integrated approach to tackle VAW, asking for effective co-operation among all relevant actors.

violence networks driven by local authorities. In all three Regions, the instruments used could be summarised as it follows: a) regulatory frameworks with requirements for ACVs and shelters' registration in regional lists, in line with or even stricter than the national ones; b) mechanisms of coordination between different actors; c) requirements for the financing of AVCs, often aimed to support a) and b). For example, Emilia-Romagna asks for precise requirements for AVCs workers' training, interpreting the "Agreement between State and Regions on minimum requirements for AVCs and shelters" in a stricter way; Apulia economically supports only those centres that have a convention with a social territorial district; Lombardy finances only those AVCs that are formally part of a territorial local anti-violence network, guided by a local authority.

Therefore, we can detect that in all three Regions there is a top-down coordination, which take into consideration national measures with the simultaneous proposal of horizontal coordination through the establishment of anti-violence networks.

Even though in the Lombardy Region the conflict among AVCs and the government is more explicit than in the other two Regions, in the three contexts we can detect a sort of clash between AVCs practices, imbued with women's experiences and feminist group actions, and the organisational context that would result from the application of standards, protocols, and procedures, as we will discuss in the next section, by taking into consideration AVCs experiences and voices.

Consequences of government, intervention, and bureaucratisation mechanisms

The AVCs interviewed, in all the three Regions, recognise that collaboration with general services is necessary, as integrated interventions are needed for the implementation of the women's projects. The AVCs have always looked for these partnerships, often exploiting informal networks.

The network is crucial for the success of women's projects. Some collaboration among actors has always existed. We try to be the leaders of the network, to ensure that the woman, her will and objectives are at the core of the network and that all around her there will be the different professionals necessary for the success of a complicated project. However, there are always difficulties, also because each actor in the network has its own priorities and mission (AVC's activist, Region B).

One of the challenges in working within a local network with many actors consists in building a common language, a shared understating of violence, and, consequently, an agreed decision on possible support-services solutions.

We are part of networks with subjects that see things differently from our perspective and we often find ourselves managing complexities that seem insurmountable to me. For example, in the case of women with children, institutions tend to strictly follow rigid protocols, which are independent from reading the women's stories. But, in a woman's history, you cannot forget the violence (AVC's worker, Region A).

The issue of women-mothers victims of violence is paradigmatic, because while there is the need to protect both women and children, services tend to take women's place in decisions, justified by the rhetoric to protect minors. Therefore, women risk being further dispossessed of their role as mothers even by institutions, when they seek help in a situation of violence. Therefore, this representation is far from the idea of empowerment as entailing change, which tends to neglect the structural nature of VAW as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men. It follows that we are witnessing a reinterpretation of VAW policies in family and motherhood terms, as also recently pointed out in the GREVIO report on Italy (2019, p. 6). Vitale (2005) already highlighted that the strong connection between VAW and welfare policies risks defining the status of those women who experience violence on the basis of a "domestic" matrix of agency, which confines women to a network of dependencies and family responsibilities. One more chance to underline that VAW policies have to be framed as gender-based ones, since the nature of violence, and its consequences cannot be ignored.

The AVCs recognise the usefulness of formalising the relationships in the anti-violence local networks through specific protocols defining mutual tasks and making public institutions accountable, to keep each actor in its active role through women's projects, even when public institutions' hierarchies change. However, protocols and standardised procedures become "regulating tools" that risk overshadowing the women's needs, because, according to an ACV's worker, procedures seem to prefer professionalised routines for the workers and services over the women's times and desires.

Being part of a local network is helpful (...) If the network aims to offer opportunities to women, it is meaningful to share good practices. However, if we sign protocols that are too strict, bureaucratisation becomes a risk. Also, we collaborate with actors that have a different approach to VAW. The network and resources are at the core of the intervention: the women come after (AVC's worker, Region A).

Analysing the interviews, the risk that work processes will be more oriented towards keeping the procedure correct, rather than towards needs assessment, emerges. This is a challenge underlined by other research that studied the evolution of professional routines in public services, after standardisation processes (Wihlborg, Larsson and Hedström, 2016). AVCs workers fear that these processes may change their practices, which they represent as more focused on women's needs rather than those of other network's actors or professionals that may be driven by different objectives, missions, as well as other organisational and professional logics. Specifically, it is in emergency situations (those that are most often described and regulated by protocols) that the centrality of women seems to be dissolved, because of the urgent need (sometimes apparent, sometimes necessary) to find as soon as possible proper solutions to the situation. It follows that tensions lie on a symbolic level, and not only on a practical one, since the difficulties encountered in collaborating with others are not only related to the need to negotiate between different professional practices and routines, which often have specific objectives and constraints, but also to the potential clash between different conceptions of the problem and the solutions.

We need to keep working with social workers in order to maintain our own methodology (respecting women's times and decisions) towards workers and services that have different missions (AVC's coordinator, Region B).

Standardisation may be useful for workers to have clear references, to not get lost in the situation. However, our assumption is that each project is individualised and is done on the basis of the women's times and needs. If the woman is ready, she does it, otherwise she waits. The woman is always free to decide not to continue the project. The project is defined with her (AVC's worker, Region A).

Women's self-determination is the goal of our support (AVC's worker, Region C).

Protocols and procedures are often standardised according to how public services (such as social services, healthcare professionals, the law enforcement system, and so on) are usually structured and how the users are represented. Therefore, users, including women experiencing violence, are seen usually portrayed by public services as “clients”, “victims”, with a limited agency, and in need of support (thus controlled), as already mentioned.

3. AVC's methodology facing bureaucratisation

Many anti-violence centres, in particular those with a feminist history, support women through the so-called “women-to-women relationship” methodology: a woman manage to overcome the violent situation or the history of violence, thanks to the encounter with other women, who are experts in gender-based violence, either because they experienced it or because they have been trained and have been working on it. At the core of AVCs practices there are the desires, the needs and the particular times of women who ask for support. All of these must be respected even when they might conflict with the professional routines and the AVC's organisation³³. The methodology based on the women-to-women relationship, which may conflict, also at semantic level, with the “taking charge of users” approach used by social services.

This approach encounters some challenges while complying with standardised and financeable requests, such as a defined number of meetings, the obligation to report in order to start a support-path or the sharing of victims' personal data between services. These requirements are often part of the professional routines and procedures of social services, of the law enforcement and the health system, and they are taken for granted at the point that, many Regions ask for such requirements to better quantify resources, to assign funding and to tender's participations. But these same requirements seem conflicting with the traditional practices of historical and feminist centres. Therefore, some of the constitutive elements of these AVCs risk of being blanked out and not legitimised when the standards to

³³ AVCs that come from different histories and have different practices operationalise this methodology in very diverse ways, as we detected during the interviews conducted.

access funding are borrowed from the welfare system, reflecting the classification criteria and technicalities typical of social policies.

The point is that AVCs, as underlined above, are not merely “services”, where users/clients go to get support, also if they may be perceived as such, as the quote reveals.

The anti-violence centre is not a service (...) Nothing is standardised here. It all depends on the goal you set with the woman. It cannot be pre-defined. Every woman has her time, she has her questions (AVC’s worker, Region C).

The centre workers also highlight the extent to which the financing system, in itself and by itself, produces standardisation, which risks distorting the methodology of many AVCs, characterised by the recognition of women’s decision-making autonomy. In fact, resources are also distributed according to a performance logic that quantifies and monetises certain activities over others (such as psychological and legal support over awareness-raising activities or first-aid needs), with the identification of measurable objectives and indicators (e.g., number of women in care and number of services provided to women).

Furthermore, some tenders provide for highly standardised activities, with a set number of hours defined in the budget, which makes it difficult to maintain the personalisation that characterises our methodology. The results are assessed with quantitative criteria that often do not take into account either the specificity of the women’s experience, or the specificity of the territories or timeframe (such as the economic crisis). Often, these criteria are in conflict with the very same guidelines that that same authority has defined for interventions in this area (AVC’s worker, Region B).

Therefore, through standardisation, the AVCs’ methodology may not be encouraged, and the AVCs’ political action for transformation of the cultural system generating violence risks being disregarded.

4. Some final reflections: the complexities of VAW policies

In the last decade, Apulia, Emilia-Romagna, and Lombardy took up the call to develop a policy on VAW by adopting laws, regional plans, structuring a system of services, and developing these services on the ground. The choice and use of policy instruments are devices that both convey representations on

the interventions against VAW and structure relationships between actors. In this article we present some potential consequences of these interventions on the experiences and practices of AVCs.

On one hand, it is certainly crucial that public institutions define and finance actions to combat VAW and support women, since it is a public issue. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the actors' methodologies and interventions in the anti-violence system seems to require some kind of evaluation not only for funding purposes, but also as distributive equity: the aim is to give all women, wherever they live, equal opportunity to access the anti-violence system both in terms of territorial availability, and in terms of services and quality, keeping in mind that projects towards autonomy have to be linked to women's desires and empowerment, not only to bureaucratic logic and practices. Furthermore, inequality and discrimination may be caused among the AVCs, in light, for example, of the criteria on which funding depends. The topic of inequality among services provided is quite debated in Italy, in particular related to the health system (Tognetti, 2013). For the anti-violence system, public administrations seem to be proposing solutions to these inequalities by setting quantitative criteria and standards. One of the objectives of the ongoing ViVa project is to evaluate interventions in order to propose shared methodologies to monitor and evaluate them, and further analysis will be developed in this direction.

On the other hand, we need to pay attention to the regulating processes. Policies taken by authorities are self-depicted on the basis of technical motivations, schemes, and discursive mechanisms (De Leonardis, forthcoming); the technical and procedural dimensions of policy-making are seen as failing to recognise the specificity of the VAW issue, related to gender inequalities and their social-cultural causes, and connected to the risk of blanking out complexities, preventing understanding of the problem, and putting effective strategies in place to combat it. The risk is that this process may de-politicise AVCs' activities, confining them to be mere services-suppliers, similarly to the past experience of family counselling, as AVCs' activists interviews reveal. We are therefore facing instruments and tools that underline only the performative representation of AVCs, which are then deprived of their political dimension aimed at challenging and removing gender-based discrimination and inequalities.

The strong connection between VAW and welfare policies cannot result in framing anti-violence policies as social ones: they have to be understood and structured as gender-based ones, since the nature of violence, its consequences on women, and on society as well, cannot be ignored, but framed as structural.

To conclude, we need to recognise the great role of AVCs in stimulating institutions to deal with the topic. In such a complex time where bureaucratisation processes of VAW policies seem to be in an advanced phase and AVCs are called to sustain a great role in combining a technocratic approach typical of institutions, AVCs political action is still oriented to tackle gender unequal power relations. The challenge will be to avoid as much as possible the de-politicisation and de-genderisation of the politics and the policies, guaranteeing AVCs' sustainability and continuity in order to improve the support to women experiencing violence.

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Institutional Abandonment of Minority Women in Israel Who Are Violence Victims

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Abstract

The obligation of the establishment to protecting women against violence is non-consensus and is sometimes conceptualized as a struggle for women-human rights. The present article deals with domestic violence against women from the minority groups of Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel, both part of patriarchal, collectivist societies, who suffer from poor civil status. Semi-structured interviews were held with Palestinian and Ethiopian women, as well as professionals in the social services regarding violence against women, including physical and economic violence, and accessibility to resources for protection against violence. Our findings expose both patriarchal repressive practices and official public policies that exacerbate the situation of women violence victims, expressed as hollow citizenship among Palestinian women and partially exclusionary citizenship among Ethiopian women who are part of the Jewish majority. Thus, policymakers should consider adapting violence prevention and treatment programs to minority populations, to make these resources available to all citizens.

Keywords: Palestinian women citizen of Israel, Ethiopian women, Adequate housing, Violence, Hollow citizenship, Partially exclusionary citizenship.

Introduction

The present article deals with domestic violence (including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence) against women from the minority groups of Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel, with far more cases than other populations. Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel, both part of patriarchal, collectivist societies undergoing changes influenced by global trends, suffer from poor civil status (as a national minority or immigrants, respectively). The obligation of the state institutional resources (the welfare system, the judicial system, public housing, etc.) to such women and their right to protection is under debate and is sometimes conceptualized as a struggle for women-human rights.

However, until recently, academic and public discussion has not considered the possibility that the state maintains tools and services for violence victims, which are inaccessible to them.

The debatable level of commitment of the state stems from the discourse of exclusion. Exclusion processes occur according to Jamal (2007) on three levels: political, economic, and social. Such exclusion renders citizenship meaningless. The concepts of “hollow citizenship” (Jamal, 2007) or partially exclusionary citizenship (Hisherik, 2017) refer to the fact that citizens are entitled to equal rights according to law, yet are unable to realize even the most basic of social rights, such as safety, food, shelter, and education. In their daily lives, these women are exposed to the disparity between the stated commitment of the state to their protection and their legal entitlement to relevant resources and services on the one hand and their vulnerability in practice on the other hand, reflected in continuous exposure to domestic violence.

The populations of Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel will be used in the present study to illustrate different types of violence against women in marginalized populations from the institutional perspective. The current article focuses on economic violence against Palestinian women and spousal violence against Ethiopian women. Both communities are patriarchal, collectivist, where individuals maintain close ties with the extended family and, honor is a key value (Hisherik, 2017; Kamir, 2002; Meler, 2017). Relations within families are typified by demands to suppress personal needs and prioritize the family collective in exchange for assistance and support (Sa'ar, 2007). In addition, the trends of change among Palestinian women and Ethiopian women sometimes lead to the strengthening of conservative trends, including the reinforcement of violence against women. Indeed, in general, researchers (Hassan, 1999; Hisherik, 2017; Meler, 2016; Raj & Silverman, 2002) argue that women of minority populations suffer from high rates of spousal violence compared to women of the majority group, in addition to a racist attitude by the majority. This racist attitude limits their ability to integrate into the employment market and work toward promoting their social position and freeing themselves from oppressive family settings.

1. *Dual Governance Policy*

According to the liberal tradition, the role of the state is to protect the lives of citizens and their security by establishing a general policy to reduce violence against women. However, policy examination shows that while the discourse in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and its committees deals with the needs of women and the issue of violence against women, in the executive discourse, which consists of government decisions and programs, women and their unique needs are largely ignored (Hisherik, 2017; Meler, 2016; 2017). The partial response that women receive corresponds to global neoliberal trends in the welfare state model (Herbst-Debby, 2019; Sasson-Levy, et al., 2014; Katz & Safdie, 2010). Neoliberalism dictates policy-setting and priorities, primarily based on budgetary considerations and reducing the involvement of the state in various areas of life (implying meager welfare support to weakened populations), preferring to privatize public services. This results in the state renouncing its responsibility to its citizens, especially its disadvantaged citizens, the disintegration of social solidarity, the violation of human and socio-economic rights, and the trampling of workers and the social security of citizens.

Palestinian Women in Israel: Family Status and Gender Relations

Palestinians constitute a national minority in Israel (21% of the general population in Israel, ICBS, 2019a). They suffer discrimination and oppression by Jewish Israeli society and are deeply divided from it (Smootha, 2013). Palestinian Israeli women experience gender discrimination that permeates the patriarchal hegemony typical of Israeli and Palestinian societies in many aspects of life (Hassan, 1999; Herzog, 2010; Sa'ar, 2007).

Over the past three decades, familial, economic, educational, and sociocultural changes have been taking place within this group, for example, an increase in the age of marriage and in the rate of divorce, declining birth rates, greater participation of women in the work force, increased rates of higher education among women compared to men, and changes in traditional-patriarchal perceptions (Abu-Baker, 2016; Meler, 2017; Sa'ar, 2007). However, due to the collectivist ethos, Palestinian

society still does not encourage or approve of divorce. Several communities consider it unacceptable for a woman to live alone with her children. In the economic context as well, women frequently have to leave their husband's home penniless and receive no alimony. In addition, due to the neoliberal-related cutbacks in welfare, a substantial number of single-mothers face poverty, resulting in dependence on relatives and family networks (Meler, 2016; Herbst-Debby, 2019; Herbst-Debby, Meler., & Karkabi-Sabbah, 2019). In addition, the percentage of Palestinian women's participation in the labor force in Israel is lower than that of Jewish women.

According to the Financial Relations Law of 1973, whether the marriage ends due to divorce or the death of the spouse, each spouse is entitled to half the value of all the joint assets, excluding assets in their possession before the marriage or received by gift or inheritance during the marriage. However, while many Jewish couples in Israel buy their apartment during the course of the marriage, in Israeli-Palestinian society, it is an accepted practice of the man to build the house before marriage, and therefore it is considered his or his father's property. Thus, divorced or widowed Israeli-Palestinian women cannot benefit from the Financial Relations Law. Since joint property is not recognized in Islam (Layish, 1995), women are left defenseless under Islamic law as well as under Israeli law, which does not relate to gender or cultural rights to housing. When facing so many obstacles, the most common and accessible arrangement for divorcées is to live in the extended family household by returning to the family of origin.

Ethiopian Women in Israel: Family Status and Gender Relations

Immigration from Ethiopia to Israel began in the 1980s and continued in several waves. At the end of 2018, the population of Ethiopian origin in Israel numbered 151.8 thousand and constituted about 2% of the general population (ICBS, 2019b). In Ethiopian society, young women and girls undergo social processes to be submissive and cooperative, especially towards the man in the family (father/husband; Edelstein, 2011). In accordance, a woman's deviation from the behavior expected of her is interpreted as harming the honor of the man of the family, legitimizing violence against her as a means of education and a direct result of the woman's actions (Edelstein, 2011; Kasan et al., 2005a; Shoham, 2012). In fact, 71% of Ethiopian women have at some point in their lives suffered physical or sexual violence, the highest rate in the world (World Health

Organization, 2016). The community supports men's violence and often ostracizes the rogue woman (Haj-Yahai & Sadan, 2007), and only in extreme cases of violence, the woman can turn to the traditional institutions of the community leadership (the *Shmagaleh*), the family of origin, or extended family to receive support (Hisherik, 2017).

Further explanations for the high rate of violence are related to the difficulties experienced by Ethiopian immigrants upon and after immigrating to Israel. These difficulties stem from immigration-related stress (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006) and the disparity between cultures. Ethiopian immigrants have had to move from a developing country and a collectivist society to a developed country and to an individualistic society that operates according to very different standards and conventions, changes that make many feel helpless. In addition, they also deal with racism and paternalism in Israeli society (Dahan-Caleb, 2017; Herzog, 1999a), including by the state institutions, creating a dependence of the immigrants on institutional support.

Economically, the immigrants were required to find a living even though they did not have adequate training for the Israeli employment market. As a result, many experience poverty and unemployment. Poverty and inability to support the family, and with them a lack of education, are risk factors for violence (see, for example, Ben-Porat, 2010; Kasan & Keidar, 2006; Raj & Silverman, 2002; West, 1998). Some feel that these feelings may intensify violence toward migrant women (Raj & Silverman, 2002) and even prevent women from contacting the authorities for help (Ben-Porat, 2010). Immigration has also changed the family structures, and some argue that changing gender roles have contributed to violence against women. However, the official status of Ethiopian women who immigrated to Israel is that of a citizen entitled to be part of the collective.

2. The Present Study

The present article aimed to broaden the understanding of how public policy affects domestic violence victims by cooperation with mechanisms of patriarchal oppression. In addition, we aimed to examine the extent of the commitment of the state to the prevention and treatment

of violence against women in order to protect its citizens. The discussion of violence against women highlights the concept of citizenship and the rights granted to civilian women from minority or migrant groups. We examined the question exercising rights derived from citizenship with a focus on protection and treatment of partner violence, including economic violence, and if necessary, rescuing the victim from such a relationship.

Methodology

The current article was based on a field study conducted during 2007-2018 among Palestinian single mothers in Israel and during 2013-2017 among Ethiopian women and employees of the relevant social services.

Palestinian Women

Semi-structured interviews were held with 32 widowed or divorced/separated Muslim and Christian Palestinian women aged 30-64 with children recruited through mutual friends or snowball sampling. Some interviewees lived with their children while others had married and left the home (16 in urban localities, 16 in rural ones). The group was heterogeneous regarding economic status, occupation (working in low-paid temporary jobs, earning an adequate livelihood, and working in the free professions), religion, and educational background.

Some interviews were conducted in Hebrew by a Jewish researcher and several in Arabic by a Palestinian interviewer residing in Israel. Interview language was selected according to the interviewee's command of Hebrew as non-native speakers, taking into account the implications of conducting interviews in a language other than the participant's native one (Meler, 2017). The participants chose the interview venue. The interviews were at least 60 minutes in duration.

Ethiopian Women

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 abused Ethiopian women (married, separated, divorced, and widowed) and 23 officials at all levels in the social services for domestic violence prevention and treatment were interviewed. Some of the Ethiopian women did not master Hebrew, and many used both Amharic and Hebrew in their answers. Therefore, some interviews were conducted in Amharic with the help of an interpreter, a social worker from the community, with whom

they were familiar. Interview location was chosen according to the interviewee's preference and each interview lasted 90 minutes on average.

The study was conducted using a method of institutional ethnography, an innovative methodology allowing to examine how experiences of oppression are produced. The method requires the researcher to adopt the viewpoint of the margins of society, collect interviewee reports, and become aware of their experiences, and then examine the centers of power and control. The institutional ethnography approach has enabled gaining insight into the subjective perspective of victims of spousal violence in the Ethiopian community and mapping trends and processes in the institutional space dealing with the issue.

Additionally, we collected data from official publications and documents of the State of Israel: State Comptroller reports, minutes of Knesset committees on gender issues (including violence against women in 2005–2017) and government decisions, reports of the Knesset Research and Information Center, domestic violence prevention programs, and reviews of these programs. Analysis of these documents according to the principles of gender mainstreaming (Daly, 2005) reveals overt and covert discourse and rhetoric, which provide insight onto the way institutional power centers view disadvantaged populations and exclusion mechanisms.

Interview Analysis

The analysis employed a naive empiricist approach to the interview texts, in line with Grounded Theory as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), a method based on the discovery of inductive connections between the various units of textual meaning arising from the interviews. The content analysis deals with topics, words, phrases, and descriptions that emerged from the interviewees' statements and reflected their feelings and thoughts, especially those that they raised. This analysis involved the process of mapping content into basic categories and identifying the links between them. From a feminist perspective, through interviews with women, one can extract the limited resources available to them when violating the silencing imposed by their spouse on the domestic violence they suffer and the difficulties they face when seeking support for this violation. Thus, this study aims to allow the voices of violence victims to be heard (De Vault, 1999) and enhance the effectiveness of public policy in

various fields through the assimilation of gender-based thinking (Benjamin, 2014; Daly, 2005).

Findings

The interviews revealed that violence constitutes a major factor that contributes to divorce and accompanies married life. Evidence regarding violence on the part of husbands crossed social border and appeared in interviews with women who belonged to different social categories. In addition, as the interviews illustrate, the attitude of Israeli society as a whole and of disadvantaged women in particular regarding violence directed against women is still forgiving and illustrates the cultural impact of double morality vis-à-vis women. For women, this discourse defines the situations in which they may expect—or not expect—support, while establishing the limitation of its legitimacy.

Therefore, in this article, we sought to re-contextualize the crimes associated with so-called honor or tradition. The analysis of these crimes should not be based solely on cultural issues but should also examine the socio-economic and political context as well as legal forces and gender relations. Therefore, the present study focused on similarities and differences between the two populations of Palestinian women citizens of Israel and women of the Ethiopian Jewish immigrant community in Israel in terms of exposure to violence and their access to resources of protection against violence.

3. Palestinian Single Mothers Suffer Violence Related to Housing Shortage

In recent years an ever-increasing number of Palestinian women in Israel have been murdered, far surpassing their percentage in the population. In the popular press, almost all cases of murder of Palestinian women are labeled as honor killings. This term disregards the research typology according to which (Hasan, 1999) the murder of women by their partner or husband cannot be included in this analytical category. However, analysis of the data on Palestinian women murdered in Israel during 2011-2019 shows that 16 (~23%) of the 68 women murdered were divorced and 4 (25%) were murdered for their right to adequate housing (Haaretz, 2019).

However, murder is an extreme case of violence directed at women. Therefore, here, we focus on housing-related violence directed towards single women and divorced mothers as a representative form of violence. Gender analysis of the housing options available to them and their right to adequate housing is used as a prism to examine other areas of life (e.g., employment, spatial mobility, mobility processes, support and supervision relationships, security) concerning them and their children. Understanding the civil-socio-economic-cultural-family context enables to better understand processes that enable violence against women. Nur is a divorced mother who had to go back to her parents' home despite being a working woman. Her excerpt suggests that the demand for supervision often constitutes a life-threatening situation for a woman.

I am allowed to go out with girlfriends, but my brother has already told me, "If you sit in a cafe or restaurant with a man, I will break your skull and throw you out the window, and our parents will tell [everyone] that you have committed suicide." (Nur)

Nur's brother is younger than her, but once she has returned to her parents' home, he serves as a supervisory agent. In addition, Nur's excerpt indicates not only her brother's harsh attitude towards her and his status as a patriarch (in charge of her honor) but also that their parents are likely to cooperate with him against her.

Similarly, Zahara, who has been divorced for five years and moved back into her parents' home with her son, who was four at the time, described her situation:

I cannot stay in the family all the time. If, for example, my father gets angry, he vents his anger on my son. If my sister gets angry, I sense that my child is suffering. I also suffer when I come here [her parents' house], and vent my anger on my son, and he suffers. It is really hard, and sometimes I feel like I am about to collapse on the floor and die, and then I get up and give myself strength. Sometimes I feel infinite despair. (Zahara)

Zahara describes the extreme difficulties that arise from the circumstances of her living in her parents' house. The integration into her family of origin raises daily conflicts, that are sometimes unbearable. Her acute phrasing indicates that her conditions of living cause extreme suffering to her son and to her. Thus, in contrast to the ideal of a child growing up in an extended family where everyone takes part in raising

him, women like Zahara deal with a reality where the extended family does indeed take authority over the education of children, but it involves expropriating authority from their mother and exposing children to abuse and lack of maternal protection. Zahara's reference to death expresses her helplessness in the face of living in her family home that leads to difficult conflicts with her parents.

Widows are often exposed to economic violence, custody threats, and cultural and political dictates by the late husband's family:

I am not so involved in their lives [her late husband's family], and they take the children as they cook or go for a walk. They have also tried to take part in the children's education, but it did not suit me at all. On the contrary, it contradicted everything I wanted for my children. (Loraine, a 35-year-old Muslim mother of 2, a widow for 6 years, unemployed)

Loraine describes daily coping with her husband's family as an experience that combines support with supervision and intervention. However, she later adds that since she does not intend to remarry, she is not afraid to lose her children. As single parents, women with no academic and sustainable employment are forced to place themselves among the traditional-patriarchal structures, and often give up new relationships (at least in public) due to the tight supervision and fear of losing custody of their children.

Zaccia, a 64-year-old mother of 4 describes her struggles with her husband's family who wanted to forcefully marry her daughter to a man in the family to maintain the inheritance: "I refused and disagreed, and my daughters married whoever they wanted". Thus, women's experiences with family relationships of dependence and supervision, range from normative behavior to violence.

4. Ethiopian Women: The Journey to Liberation from the Cycle of Violence

The social implications of violence among immigrants are crucial for understanding the status of Ethiopian women. Because of community attitude, women are constrained by a deep fear of losing their social status and the support of their immigrant communities, often the only communities they know. They also fear various forms of violence, domination, and punishment by their husband and his family. All of these

are experienced in an atmosphere of racism, which increases their desire to hide the violence in order to prevent a negative image of their community. Some interviewees mentioned the saying “The belly is bigger than the entire world”, suggesting that the normative traditional view encourages women to hold back the pain. Those who approached the establishment had to face major social barriers. Only a few interviewees seemed to be familiar with available courses of action and have access to formal resources and relevant information.

The women interviewed in this study violated the code of silence. These women described contacting the authorities as a violation of the silencing code, but they said it was the beginning of a long and difficult process. Attempting to receive appropriate care and guidance may fail due to language barriers that cause inaccessibility or concern about authoritative spaces such as welfare or legal authorities. Similarly, legal challenges include being unfamiliar with social services and criminal justice systems. Even though the women took the first step and alerted the police, they did so with grave concern and tried to disguise the fact that they were the ones who called.

Many women described the beginning of the process with embarrassment and lack of knowledge. For example, Dalia, 37, mother of 4 children, violence survivor, said, “I needed help in filing for a divorce. I did not know anything about where to go. When I was new in the country, my neighbor told me where to go and brought me here [social services].”

Language barriers and a lack of Amharic-speaking professionals prevents women from receiving adequate service:

A month after [my husband's] death, I came to the [social services] center and asked for treatment continuation. I wanted support. I asked, “Who is substituting for Milly [the Amharic-speaking social worker]?” They said, “No one.” [...] My situation was really critical. This period could have been less difficult. (Simha, a 45-year-old widow, mother of six)

Language barriers have been noted as a major difficulty by most women and professionals. According to the social workers and welfare department managers interviewed, language accessibility and mental accessibility are part of cultural sensitivity.

[We] use the tools we have [...]. Can they cope [with their problems] in terms of language and accessibility? It is critical. Mental accessibility [is important] too, in terms of understanding. You can understand [what they say] but in a limited way. The language we learned to speak is different. They fail to convey their message clearly in terms of verbal choice and thinking [...]. When we speak in Amharic, I manage to connect with them and all the more when they describe violence. It requires a very complex process of shedding layers that is difficult for the general population and especially for women with a language barrier. (Ma'ayan, a social worker of Ethiopian descent)

Despite many women's language difficulties, there are no Amharic language information booklets with relevant and valid information on protection for victims of spousal violence for the target audience, and such booklets are available only in Hebrew. The Ministry of Welfare and Social Services has produced such booklets in 2007 and distributed them to the welfare agencies in the local authorities, but the information is not up to date. At the end of the State Comptroller's audit (Shapiro, 2013), an updated booklet has not yet been produced. Similar booklets in Arabic, Russian, and Amharic were produced in 2002 and have not been updated. The Women's Status Promotion Authority also produced similar booklets, the most recent ones printed in Hebrew in 2009 and in Arabic in 2011, and distributed to local authorities, family health clinics and other agencies without being updated. They included information on 68 of the 86 violence prevention centers that were active at the time of the audit (2012). At the end of 2016, booklets in Amharic had not yet been distributed and the Ministry of Welfare spokesperson said, "the matter will be re-examined in the hope that the budget will be found." In addition, the Inter-ministerial Committee on Coping with Murder and Violence Against Ethiopian Women Immigrants acknowledges that "the main difficulties in providing adequate services are language barriers, lack of professionals who speak the languages of the immigrants, lack of knowledge, ability, skills, and cultural competence" (The Inter-ministerial Committee on Coping with Murder and Violence Against Ethiopian Women Immigrants report, March 2013, p.8). Although the committee report was written in 2013, four years later, no resolution was taken to rectify the failures listed. These findings manifest dual governance: a declaration of intentions on the one hand and insufficient budget allocation on the other hand, for causes such as Information booklets in Amharic.

Ethiopian women, like Palestinian women, as single-mothers face poverty. Although economic growth continued in 2018, employment rates among single-mothers in Israel declined. Furthermore, their percentage of participation in the labor force in Israel is lower than that of native-born Jewish women. Furthermore, the women lack vocational training and work in part-time jobs, low-wage jobs (cleaning and care work) without job stability. Furthermore, in 2018, the welfare payments to single mothers were decreased, and the employment grant for working mothers was deducted in cases of women who increased their labor efforts. These findings suggest increased levels of permanent and more severe poverty among single-parent households (Endeweld, Gottlieb, Heller & Karady, 2019). As such, they and their children experience economic violence.

My son works and studies, buys clothes for himself. He wanted to quit school in order to work full-time and support us, he cares about me, but I do not want him to [quit school]. He is a good boy, thank goodness, and so are the little ones. When the little one wants me to buy her things her friends have, my eldest [...] explains to her that it is not possible right now [...] and she understands. It pains me. (Yael, in a divorce process, mother of three)

Discussion

In the present study, we examined domestic violence towards Palestinian and Ethiopian women in Israel in terms of socio-political status and government policies concerning women's protection against domestic violence, indicating the level of the state commitment to preventing violence against women.

Our findings show that official citizenship does not always imply stability and protection for women. The analysis revealed oppressive structures that prevent women from having full access to formal resources or challenging the socio-political structure and reshaping it, and thus, their citizenship is inherently exclusionary. According to Regev-Messalem (2015), the concept of citizenship is in line with feminist understanding of citizenship as a struggle to negotiate institutional definitions, pointing to the limitations of this struggle. The concept of citizenship excludes women in all discourses and defines characteristics of citizenship that leave parts of the population out of the collective. State and welfare policies create stratified citizenship, where women are at the lowest level, especially if

they belong to excluded groups, such as minority groups, immigrants, or women of low socio-economic status. Thus, our findings distinguish between Palestinian women, who suffer from partially exclusionary citizenship (as part of the Jewish majority) and Palestinian women, who suffer from fully exclusionary, “hollow” citizenship.

Realizing the rights derived from citizenship is dependent on various resources, and the literature distinguishes between informal resources (family, friends, community) and formal, institutional resources (welfare, the judicial system, etc.). However, this distinction does not necessarily reflect the range of resources abused women use (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2011), which is affected by their marginal position in society. In addition, responses to violence against women, at the family and community level as well as at the social institutions, contribute to the social organization of silencing (Clair, 1998). The interviewees who had already contacted the authorities had to deal with major social barriers. Attempting to receive appropriate care and guidance sometimes fails due to language barriers that create inaccessibility of information or concern about authoritative spaces such as welfare or legal authorities. Similarly, legal challenges include being unfamiliar with social services and criminal systems, as well as feelings of alienation and distrust.

The study shows that the State of Israel has dual governance, manifested in a discrepancy between the rhetorical level, in which the state declares a commitment to its citizens, and the practical level, which reveals abandonment. This discrepancy is reflected in the cultural bias of drafting regulations and laws and their unsuitability to women from certain ethnic-national-class positions, problem in decision making, budget allocation and utilization, and in some institutions in the removal of violence against women from the agenda. Such dual governance provides a partial solution that does not meet the needs of abused women and often relies on patriarchal mechanisms and empowers them. In some cases, there is also a discrepancy in the level of dedication among policymakers and between the scope of investment in solutions and the needs, which means that the allocated budgets are not realistic.

Regarding Palestinian women, in this paper, we take a critical view of Israel's conventional housing policies from a gender perspective, which takes into account the changes in Palestinian society in Israel, and especially the increase in single-parent families headed by a woman due to

divorce or widowhood. We present the analysis of these women, who belong to a social category that is subject to patriarchal cultural pressures and exclusion, alienation, inequality, and discrimination, due to their civil status. Focusing on the housing solutions they find due to the implications of Israel's public policies for these women, we show that these policies violate one of their basic human rights—the right to adequate housing (Meler, 2016).

This difficulty is unique to Palestinian women in Israel as part of their civilian and political status as belonging to the Palestinian minority. Despite being Israeli citizens, their institutional exclusion is explained by the fact that Palestinian nationalism leaves them outside the consensus of Jewish society (Herzog, 1999). However, as this article shows, Ethiopian women who are allegedly part of the Jewish national consensus, due to their gender-class ethnic marginality, have limited access to formal resources available to other Jewish citizens and experience discriminatory and racist attitudes. Therefore, while the state presents a neutral outlook, in practice it contributes to their exclusion.

The analysis reveals that although institutional structures present a neutral appearance, in practice, they contribute to excluding women through rhetoric and under the guise of a discourse purporting to promote equality principles. Women are underrepresented in both parliamentary debates and government decisions, which undermines their ability to represent their interests in asserting their social rights, leading to the exclusion of women from the discourse (Epstein, 2013).

When the state views the issue of violence against Ethiopian and Palestinian women as a matter of community, it attempts to solve a "community problem", not a problem of women suffering from violence and certainly not a problem of state citizens. Such a view may reinforce discrimination and the assumption that minority societies are failing societies and that women's oppression is part of culturally inherent patriarchal norms. Thus, the principle of multiculturalism allows the majority group to shirk responsibility for the women in minority groups. This view is consistent with Clarke's (2011) argument that addressing the issue of violence toward women in this way can also evoke hostile feelings towards that population (which already suffers from discrimination) and normalize violence among the majority group.

Our conclusions expose repressive practices and social structures that exacerbate the situation of women who already suffer from partially exclusionary citizenship, as established by official public policy, along with the patriarchal mechanisms of repression. Most of all, the importance of defining violence against women is a broad social problem that requires systemic treatment. On the basis of our findings regarding the similarities emerging from the marginal status of Palestinian and Ethiopian women, we list here concrete recommendations for policy makers in prevention and treatment of violence against women, including through legislation and enforcement. Prevention of violence should be done in educational frameworks, publicity in various languages, adult education programs, raising public awareness of violence against women as a non-normative action, and providing knowledge to women about their rights and opportunities to escape from violent frameworks. At the same time, the state needs to expand its services to protect civilians suffering from violence such as hotlines, women's shelters, increasing support for violence survivors, public housing, and vocational training that will enable women to integrate into the labor market and develop economic independence, while training professionals treating violence survivors of specific cultural needs. Regarding legislative and enforcement recommendations, we note the importance of expanding legislation prohibiting violence against women, including aspects of economic violence. In addition, it would be appropriate to establish a national agency that will review and monitor the prevention and treatment of violence over time.

To provide any substantive assistance to women who suffered violence, these conclusions and their practical recommendations should be adopted, thereby manifesting actual commitment to Palestinian and Ethiopian women and who suffer from the implications of partially exclusionary citizenship or hollow citizenship.

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Finding Voice through Film Viewing: Tunisian Women Interpret Gendered Violence in Post-revolutionary Tunisia

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Abstract

This paper reports on a 2019 study about female perception of violence against women (VAW) in post-revolutionary Tunisia triggered by their viewing of the Tunisian film, *The Beauty and the Dogs (La Belle et La Meute)*. The year-long study began with a one-time, in depth interview with the female filmmaker, Kaouther Ben Hania, followed by field research that included eight film screening sessions and post-viewing protocols with small audiences of Tunisian women and adolescents living outside of main metropolitan areas in the southern Tunisia. The filmmaker's interview elicited her thoughts about the motivation behind making the film and her ideas about the role of art in society. A post-viewing survey queried participants' background and their reactions to the film; the small focus group discussions expanded upon the broader themes of VAW to everyday life. Slightly more than 100 females participated in the study. The analyses of the surveys and focus group interviews suggest that they have very particular opinions about what actions constitute gendered violence; what women and young girls' behavior should be; and what kinds of initiatives are working to protect them from physical and sexual violence since the constitutional and legal reforms of 2014 and 2017.

Keywords: gender-based violence, Tunisia, post-revolution, audience reception theory, mixed methodology

Introduction

Tunisia has long been recognized as one of the most progressive countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in terms of women's legal rights (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2013; Gender Concerns International, n.d.). In 1957, the country adopted the *Code of Personal Status (CPS)*. This legislation, championed by its first president Habib Bourguiba, recognized women's right to education and workplace opportunities. Although historians point to the 1926 *Turkish Civil Code* as the very first example of legislation that promoted Muslim women's civil rights in the modern era, the Tunisian CPS was the first legislation of its kind to be

adopted by a modern Arab-Muslim state (El-Sanabary, 2014). Today, in 2020, it is still so. Built upon ground-breaking jurisprudence that echoed Tahar Haddad's philosophical thinking of gender fairness, the CPS presented the legal guidelines that would recognize women as full citizens in Tunisian society. Through the years, Tunisian women groups and organizations have continued to advocate for guarantees to protect these rights by monitoring the actions and policies that effectively impeded these rights (Moghadam & Arfaoui, 2016). One area that has been of continuous concern is the level of violence directed at women (VAW) despite such favorable historic legislation. A 2010 National Study revealed that 47.6% of Tunisian women between the ages of 18 and 62 reported having been victim of at least one form of violence: physical (31.7%); sexual (28.9%), psychological (15%), and economic (7%) (ONFP/AECID 2010). Most recently, amidst the backdrop of the 2011 revolution and the subsequent three transitional years, the campaign to guarantee women's rights and protections has yielded important legislative changes. The *2014 Tunisian Constitution*, Article 46, specifically addresses gender equality and guarantees for protections of those rights, including eliminating VAW.

The State commits to protecting women's achieved rights and seeks to support and develop them. The State guarantees equal opportunities between men and women in the bearing of all the various responsibilities in all the fields. The State seeks to achieve equal representation for women and men in elected councils (parity). The State takes the necessary measures to eliminate violence against women.

In 2011, Tunisia ratified *The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*.¹ In 2014, Tunisia became the first country in the region to ratify the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) without reservations² and was one of two countries in the region to adopt its Optional Protocol on human trafficking thanks to women activists who lobbied the government demanding action. Although Tunisia has yet to officially ratify the Council of Europe's *Istanbul Convention* on preventing and combatting VAW and domestic violence, the country

¹ The *Rome Statute* established four core international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

² In 1985, Tunisia ratified CEDAW but with reservations.

formally requested an invitation to sign the convention on September 30, 2019 (Council of Europe, 2019).

It was not until July 26, 2017, however, that the government amended the *Tunisian Penal Code* to align it with provisions addressing VAW in the new constitution and with these international conventions. Prior to 2017, Articles 236 and 227bis of the *Penal Code* called for imprisonment. It imposed a six-year prison term for convicted rapists of girls under 15 years old, and five years' imprisonment if the girl was older than 15 but younger than 20 years old. However, a legal loophole existed in Article 239, which granted immunity from prosecution for the accused rapists if they chose to marry their minor victim (13–20 years old). The 2017 Law no. 58 abolished this option. Furthermore, convicted rapists can now face a 20-year prison sentence, or a lifetime sentence if their victim, female or male, is under 16 years old or if they are related to or “*have an authority over*” their victim. This includes a spouse, ex-spouse, fiancé or ex-fiancé. The same law also mandates the State to engage in prevention efforts, prosecution of those involved in crimes of violence against women, and care for victims.

While the earlier version of the *Penal Code*, Article 236, also protected married women against spousal rape, a caveat in the CSP still exists that can protect the spouse. Under CPS Article 13, a husband who does not pay a dower cannot impose sexual relations on his spouse, which can be understood contrarily to mean that a husband who has paid the dower can impose his sexual will on his wife (Moghadam & Arfaoui, 2016; Tchaïcha & Arfaoui, 2017). Moreover, other legal ambiguities continue to circumvent protection against VAW. For example, Tunisia has not yet ratified the International Labor Organization's (ILO) *Conventions No. 189 and No. 190*. The former asks for decent work for domestic workers and the right to a healthy and safe working environment. The latter asks for a workplace free of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence, recognizing that such actions constitute human rights violations or abuse.³

As it is often the case with policy-making and the passage of legal reforms, application at the local and regional levels is difficult to achieve. According to a 2014 study investigating marital violence among 196

³ See the International Labor Organization website on updated listings of Conventions and Protocols not ratified by Tunisia.

women at a family planning center in Monastir, 56.9% reported that they had been victims of violence in marriage, at least once in their lives (Jellali, Jellali, Gataa, & Mechri, 2014). A 2016 study reported on VAW in public spaces between 2011 to 2015 based on the experiences of 3,000 women randomly selected from 200 urban and rural geographic areas across the country. Fifty-three percent reported experiencing psychological or physical violence at least once in public spaces (CREDIF, 2017). Most recently, six women shelters shared information about VAW incidents from around the country. In 2018, they received a total of 25,000 complaints; from 2018-2019 they received 40,000 complaints pertaining to marital violence (Blaise, 2019).

Disheartening as these numbers are about VAW, there is a positive side. More women appear more empowered to make their voices heard. Yet, far fewer women pursue legal recourse to the end. What is behind this gap? What factors influence women's perception of gendered violence? Do they believe that Tunisian institutions and laws are effective in addressing VAW? What other factors might contribute positively or negatively to the situation? The following study attempts to elicit some answers to these questions.

1. The Research Design and Methodology

This year-long study centers on women's perception of gendered violence in post-revolutionary Tunisia, specifically sexual violence, triggered by their viewing of Kaouther Ben Hania's 2014 Tunisian film, *The Beauty and the Dogs*. The research design encompassed a film screening in eight different locations in southern Tunisia which women and young female adolescents attended. Afterwards, they completed a post-viewing survey and participated in small focus group discussions.⁴ The decision to use film as a catalyst to elicit participation in the study was twofold. First, the film is one of the most popular and accessible media in Tunisia. Second,

⁴ All women were asked to sign an informed consent form, approved by Bentley University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and told that they could leave at any time during the film screening or research protocols. No one withdrew with the exception of one or two women in the discussion groups because of family obligations, thus accounting for about 5 % of the original number of participants.

given the sensitive nature associated with sexuality and sexual violence in Tunisia, using film was an indirect way to engage participants in reacting to this topic.⁵ The one-time, in depth SKYPE interview with the female filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania in July 2018 about film *Beauty and the Dogs* focused on her motivation for making the film, her involvement, if any, in the early years following the 2011 revolution, and her notions of what role art contributes to society. The information gleaned from this interview was used in developing the survey protocols.

2. The film

Ben Hania's award-winning film *Beauty and the Dogs*⁶ addresses sexual violence on multiple levels. Ben Hania developed her fictional account from a real event that took place in Tunis in 2012 and that was later chronicled in the book, *Coupable d'avoir été violée (Guilty of having been raped)* by Meriem Ben Mohamed (pseudonym for the young rape victim). The storyline exposes female sexual and psychological violence in Tunisia in nine scenes of which eight were filmed in black and white; the act of rape is never depicted on screen. In the film, Meriem meets the mysterious Youssef at a student party. They are both physically attracted to each other and leave the noisy crowd to enjoy a romantic walk along the beach. A few hours later, the audience sees her walking the streets, screaming, disheveled and in shock. A long night ensues during which time she exposes her case to the police and medical staff, in the hope of being understood, believed, and provided with the help she desperately needed. She recounts how the "morality police" stopped the couple and interrogated her young male companion, Youssef, while she is dragged into the police vehicle and viciously raped. The arrogance, viciousness, and inhumanity of the police is such that, instead of finding support and immediate help, Meriem is accused of indecent exposure and moral turpitude – an archaic, patriarchal remnant of Tunisia's social code law.

⁵ This important design decision was based on feedback from a 2018 pilot study, the authors' previous research experience in Tunisia, and extensive knowledge of Tunisian culture.

⁶ Prix Luminaire 2018 for best francophone film. Also selected for Cannes film competition 2017, and the Tunisian entry for pre-selection for best foreign film, Oscars 2019.

And so, as it has long been the case for women globally, the accuser becomes the accused.

Field research

The field research consisted of a three-step investigative process during the summer of 2019: a film screening, a post-viewing survey, and small focus group interviewing⁷ with women and young girls from the southern cities of Mahdia and Sfax, Tataouine, and the smaller towns of Chebba, Jbenyena, and Ghourmassen. The methodology that underpins this phase is grounded in audience reception theory (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003). First popularized in the 1970s and 1980s, audience reception studies emanated from the early work of Paul Lazerfield et al. (1944), Robert Merton (1946), and Cooper and Dinerman (1951). These early studies shifted the media research paradigm. Instead of focusing on the content and structure of media messages, they centered on audience's use and gratification of media during the viewing experience, having theorized that background experience among viewership influences interpretation of the message in ways that accentuate feelings towards the victim and/or the accused.

The 101 female participants voluntarily attended the film screening and responded to research protocols, assisted by members of local branches of women-focused non-governmental organizations who had extended the invitation by email and word of mouth to participate in the study.⁸ The decision to limit the study to only females was made based on our previous work with women-oriented NGOs whose experience has emphasized that sexual violence is an emotionally charged topic and difficult to approach even in a single-sex group environment; our goal was to create a setting that would encourage open discussion as much as possible. Participants were asked to complete the post-viewing survey and given the choice to complete it in French or Tunisian Arabic, which was followed by their participation in small focus group discussions. Each of the 14 groups was

⁷ Each protocol was field tested in July 2018 with the help of graduate students at the University of Sousse School of Law and Political Science. Thirty-six women participated in the pilot study and adjustments to language and types of questions were made.

⁸ The six NGOs included La Voix de la Femme and TheNational Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT) in Mahdia, UNFT-Chebba; Mouwatinet in Sfax; The Association for the Protection of Women and Children in Jbenyena; Nour and the Association of Human Rights Association in Tataouine; and Festival in Ghourmassen.

comprised of two to ten participants, who could join a focus group conducted in French, English, or Tunisian Arabic based on their language preference.⁹

Part one of the survey gathered general demographic information and background experience. Participants were asked if they self-identified as feminists, had any prior knowledge of the real story of Meriem, or had already seen the film. They were also asked about the state of gender-based violence post-2011 and if they agreed with the classification of the four dimensions of gender-based violence as defined by the United Nations.¹⁰ Part two of the survey queried their individual reactions to the film; specifically their reactions to the protagonists and staff of the institutions represented in the film; and concluded with questions about their renewed personal agency to tackle gendered violence in their own communities. The 45-60 minute, focus group interview sessions began by eliciting general reactions to the film, which set the stage for more open-ended probes about the state of gendered violence in their communities and their opinions about the latest national efforts to curb the violence in the public sphere and at home, and the challenges in raising young girls and women's awareness of their rights.

3. General Findings

Ben Hania Interview

Three important themes emerge from the interview with Kaouther Ben Hania: 1) storytelling as the principal driver of her creative processes as a

⁹ The few women who were illiterate were paired with a research assistant (RA) and completed the survey orally. The Tunisian Arabic groups were led by a trained research assistant whose native language was Tunisian Arabic, and the transcriptions later translated into English. Each RA also had to complete the online CITI course on Human Subject Research at <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/>

¹⁰ Based on the United Nations Assembly adoption of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (A/RES/48/104). The 1993 Declaration 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." Since then, there have been additional UN entities that have included economic framework to evaluate gender-based violence.

filmmaker; 2) film as an art form; and 3) fictional adaption of true events on screen.

Storytelling: Ben Hania considers herself, first and foremost, a storyteller. Although she self-identifies as a feminist saying, “After all *feminist* is not a bad word” and greatly appreciates the work feminists’ activism through the years, she was never part of a political group or women’s organization. She also underscores that her goal in making film is not purposefully political, it is about “creating characters who tell a story that evokes emotion.”

Film as art: According to Ben Hania, “A filmmaker cannot be hesitant when depicting especially controversial or difficult plots.” She says, “You cannot worry about the reaction from society. You have to believe in your movie; it takes up to three or four years of your time.” What she sees as a greater challenge to the creative process is doubt. You are often asking yourself, “Will I be able to finance this film? Is the scene good?” “Doubt,” she says, “is inherent in the creative process.” She believes that her talent lies in being capable of creating emotion on screen and has been particularly touched by the reactions of women during film screenings. She recounted, “At least one woman in every screening was seen crying, and often women approached me, telling me [about] their own life’s experience.”

Screen adaption of true events: She expressed her amazement at the strength and courage of the real Meriem after reading her book. However, Ben Hania was emphatic about the fictional nature of her film; the only aspect of the film resembling the original story was the crime of rape. Through her film and loyalty to her film making technique, she sought to evoke emotion by creating a story of “a superhero who is just an ordinary girl who had not much experience in life, and how this type of tragedy [rape] can change you and what you can discover inside.” Queried about the reason why she did not represent the actual rape scene in the film, she responded, “There are many rape-revenge movies, especially coming out of Hollywood. I was not interested in re-creating this type of violent spectacle. I am more interested in the subtler institutional violence. It is a question of taste and cinematic choice.” As she also points out, “No one witnesses the act of rape but for the victim and the rapist. When it comes to legal action, it is her word against the rapist’s, and the victim is always where the doubt lies.”

Post-viewing Survey

The age range of the survey sample (N=101) was from 11 to 63 years old, with an average age of 34.7 years, s.d.=12.6. Thirty percent were students; 46% reported working outside the home; 26% identified as housewives; and 4% identified as housewives or students and also working outside the home. Thirty-eight percent were married; 49% single; and 13% widowed or divorced. Seventy percent self-identified as feminist vs. non-feminist. When queried about what constitutes gendered violence, almost all participants identified physical attacks (hitting, beatings, slapping) (94%); sexual harassment and rape (97%); and verbal abuse and psychological manipulation (87%) as acts of gendered violence. However, only 48% of the sample considered economic manipulation (by family members or in the workplace) as gendered violence.

Participants were also asked if they thought that the situation regarding gendered violence in Tunisia had improved since the revolution; 76% thought that women were more vulnerable to acts of violence after the revolution; 15% did not, and 9% were unsure. Similarly, 62% thought that more women had been subjected to specific acts of violence post-2011, 17% did not, and 21% were unsure.

Part two of the survey probed participants' reactions to the film, and included questions about the individual behavior of the protagonists (Meriem and Youssef) and the medical and institutional actions of the police, the staff at the public hospital and private clinic. These questions were followed by others that queried the potential for this film to harm Tunisia's public image at home and abroad and to inspire their own activism.

More than 85% of the participants reported that neither Meriem nor Youssef was solely responsible for the situation in which they found themselves. That figure dropped slightly to 78% when asked if they thought that they were jointly responsible. Over 90% believed that Meriem was right in pursuing her press charges against the police. A greater number of participants reported that the institutions acted inappropriately; 99% reported that the police had overstepped their authority during the interrogations with Meriem, and slightly less (93%) with Youssef, the latter whom they felt was impacted by his prior activism (86%). Similarly, the participants indicated that the medical examiner should have reacted more

firmly against the intimidating actions of the police (90%), and the policewomen should have been more supportive to Meriem (93%).

Regarding the general impact of the film nationally and internationally, almost all participants (95%) reported that the film shed light on an important social problem that is often hidden or ignored by the population. Slightly fewer (78%) indicated that the film cast an unfavorable spotlight on the country, with a similar portion of the participants (72%) reporting that it left them frustrated after the screening. On the positive side, they reported having more sympathy for women who are victims of similar acts of violence (98%), becoming more aware of the different ways that individuals and public servants react to gendered violence (95%), and being more willing to participate in programs and/or actions that address gendered violence (89%).

Additional analyses were conducted to ascertain if significant differences existed between the participants based on their demographic information and background experience. It should be noted that since the distribution of the continuous variable *age* showed that participants fell within two distinct age ranges (11-34 years) and (35-63 years), we created two categorical *age group* variables, *younger* and *older*. Using Pearson's Chi-Square and Cramer's *V*, significance tests were conducted to reveal if age (*younger* or *older*) was associated with background experience and post-viewing reactions to the film and the strength of the relationship.¹¹ Likewise, significance testing was conducted to determine if any association existed between background experience and post-viewing responses. Background experience variables solicited *yes/no responses*. Affirmative statements about the film offered three response options: *agree*, *disagree*, and in some instances, a third choice, *I don't know*.

Important differences between demographic and background variables. There was no difference by age group for women who self-reported as feminist. However, for women who identified as non-feminist, there was a significant difference by age group. More younger women self-declared as non-feminist than the older cohort $\chi^2(1) = 4.123$ $p < .05$, Cramer's *V* = .208. There was no measurable difference between the younger vs. older cohorts

¹¹ Note that we set the significant level at $p < .05$. We designated the strength of the significance using Cramer's *V* as outlined in these values: $> -.2$ = weak; $-.2$ to $+.2$ = small to moderate; $+.2$ to $.3$ and above = strong.

with regard to the four dimensions of VAW but other background variables showed moderate significant differences in their views of gendered violence. Women who worked outside the home identified economic manipulation as a form of violence more than women who did not work outside the home $\chi^2 (1) = 6.182 p < .05$ Cramer's $V = 2.50$. Self-declared feminists tended to view post-revolutionary Tunisia less safe for women than non-feminists. The former group felt that the female population was subjected to more VAW post 2011 $\chi^2 (1) = 8.841 p < .05$ Cramer's $V = .303$. Civil status (married, single, widowed or divorced) showed no significant difference when tested against the four dimensions of violence.

Differences between demographics/background experience and film interpretation

There was no significant difference between the younger and older participants' reactions to the protagonists' responsibility for their circumstances. Neither age cohort felt that Meriem and Youssef were responsible either individually or jointly. Similarly, age was not a factor in participants' reactions to the medical examiner and the police. Both age cohorts felt that the police interrogators overstepped their authority and that the medical examiner should have acted more firmly against the intimidating actions of the police. There were also no significant differences among women who self-identified as *housewife, student, feminist or not*, with regard to these same film variables although our testing suggests that a larger sample may provide different results.¹²

Whether or not participants knew of someone who was a victim of physical, sexual, or psychological violence, did not show any significant differences in how they reacted to the protagonists. Overall, previous media exposure to Meriem's story, either through social media, television, or at the cinema, was not significantly associated to women's post-viewing reaction to the film's protagonists. However, there was some indication that the women who had not previously seen the film tended to support Meriem's right to press charges. Additionally, some participants who had

¹² In some of the tests 50% of cells showed less than expected cell size count, but reported p-values of $< .05$, particularly between women who work outside the home and those who do not and their reaction to the main protagonists; and students and non-students and the reaction to the medical examiner.

learned about the story through other media sources also felt that activism played a negative role in how the police treated Youssef, and police had abused their power when dealing with Meriem and Youssef.¹³

4. Focus Group Discussions

The discussions were initiated through three general thematic prompts: 1) reaction to the film, protagonists and institutions; 2) opinion about the state of VAW in pre- and post-revolutionary Tunisia; and 3) possible recommendations or suggestions for change.

All sessions were recorded, and transcriptions were generated and analyzed to categorize similar and/or contrasting reactions within the themes, which are reflecting in the following quotes by themes.

Reaction to the film

The general reaction to the film was positive:

“It delivered a message that I didn’t care about before or rather I didn’t even think about.”

“It spoke about something that is not spoken about in the media, which is rape. It has also an interesting message which is how a woman becomes strong and seizes upon her rights...it’s important to believe that, even if there are obstacles. You have to stand tall and face them yourself.”

At the same time, there was a feeling of frustration.

“I have no desire to see the film again. I was frustrated. It’s a film to see only once.”

“It was shocking to see this woman treated like an animal.”

“I was frustrated. I was disappointed in the reality. I was not really happy with the ending. I wanted to see something that would solve the problem.”

¹³ Small cell size prevented us from concluding that these findings were significant but suggest a trend that could be studied further based on Pearson’s Chi-square value < .05.

Reaction to the protagonists.

The reaction to rape victim was mixed. Comments on Meriem's dress and poor decision-making were raised in almost every session.

"I was frustrated by Meriem's personality. She could have been stronger, surer that it was the right thing to do [press charges]."

"She did not have the right to go out with a stranger. She should not have dressed as she did."

"I really blame Meriem since any normal person who will find her at night on the beach with such a sexy dress will take advantage of that [behavior] and rape her."

"She deserves what happened to her because she was wearing an indecent dress."

"I felt from the very beginning that she was controlled by her girlfriends in the way that she dressed, putting on make-up and all."

"Her clothes were disrespectful. She is a student who is supposed to go to Tunis to study, not to go out at night with her boyfriend. She is the reason for the entire problem."

Contrasting views, show more compassion and support for Meriem than for Youssef.

"I sympathize with her because she was violated by the police; true, she was dressed indecently, but she didn't deserve to be raped."

"Being decently dressed or not is not a good reason to rape a woman."

"She is a victim, not a criminal"

"I don't agree with xxx's opinion that blames Meriam for the way she was dressed. We are back to the old and narrow-minded thoughts that see women as عورة (sexual objects). She is a young lady who needs to be free to do whatever she wants."

Reactions to Youssef were more nuanced.

"Youssef mishandled the situation, but he tried to help. His fight was with the corrupted State. His background was as an activist...They were going to use everything in his police profile against him."

"He was defending a cause. He was promoting his personal activism."

“Youssef was so negative. He wasn’t strong enough to defend her.”

“I sympathize with Youssef because he stood by her until the end though he had a bad history with the authorities and until the last moment, he told her not to back down and pursue charges against rape.”

“Youssef seemed to have more experience than her [Meriem], a political experience as he had been an activist before the revolution. He is not women’s enemy and so I am happy to see that he resisted and had the rapists punished.”

Reaction to institutions and their representatives.

Stronger negative reactions targeted the State, the police, and the medical staff, but the harshest reaction appeared to be directed at the female characters other than Meriem.

“I was particularly shocked by the women in the film. The policewoman, and the nurse at the private clinic. They didn’t stick up for each other. They left her.”

“The women in the film were obstacles for her.”

“I can imagine the reaction of males in the movie in real life, but it’s hard to accept that women would act like that. I was shocked and frustrated...I cannot find any explanation for this behavior. At the very least, she would have expected this kind of support, like ‘we will protect you.’”

“All national institutions made me feel frustrated starting with the health institutions that did not stand by the victim’s side, and the security institutions. I felt like the indifference of the top authorities had filtered down to the behavior of the institutional staff.”

“This type of story is common; people who are appointed to posts of power arbitrarily without having the necessary qualifications.”

“The story of the film is depressing and sad especially when we see how the police acted and misused their authority. They never consider the woman [Meriem] as their mother, sister or daughter.”

“They deserve more [punishment] because they misused the authority given to them and they raped that girl. They are supposed to protect us not to harm us. They deserve 50 years not 15 years due to their job as police officers because they betrayed the country.”

Reflections on the state of VAW in pre- and post-revolutionary Tunisia

Two key points emerged during the interview sessions related to the effectiveness of Law 58 and the inherent patriarchal mindset in Tunisian society. Some women expressed frustration about the application of the new law, giving very specific personal stories, and examples of the obstacles that impede its application.

“I know that the relationship between police and citizens are better than in the past... but I know of incidents where the police stalk vulnerable women who want to make a complaint against their husband. They always start making her feel ill-at-ease by asking intimate questions concerning her sexual relationship with him.”

“One day at almost midnight, the police called me concerning a 12-year old girl whose father tried to rape her and they asked me to take her with me since we do not have any emergency shelter where she could stay. I was afraid because her family knows where I live so I took her to stay with my friend. That poor girl told me that the police had tried to silence her by offering her 10 dinars if she would back home and forget about the case.”

“The image of bad cops and how they hurt people and run with it was mainly dominant before 2011, but after what happened (actual rape incident), I think that there is more awareness since then. I am not saying that there are no bad cops anymore but I think people have started to ask for their rights and speak up.”

“Slowly but surely things [VAW] are getting better. It is always a problem of awareness and the way we deal with it. We made a revolution to make things better. It has been eight years and we are still struggling with the law [Law 58] and we are not prioritizing the resources to raise awareness.”

“People are not really aware of what is going on with the legislative branch and the new laws; they exist but they are not being applied out there. Violence should be a national cause just like terrorism. It needs to be addressed urgently.”

At the same time, there were comments that directly spoke to the patriarchal mindset and the social taboo of speaking about sex and sexuality generally.

“The thing about the laws is that on the ground, it is so different. ...Women usually feel so much pressure from their family, their husbands and society itself. Women should not be judged. The problem is not with the laws but with the people.”

“I think there is still work to be done about mentality. First of all, there was a lot of opposition to the new law...and there is even the moral taboo. Women do not want to talk about this [rape].”

“We are raised in a patriarchal society. Men have power and authority. They have the right to control women: how they should dress, when and where they may go. Society is responsible for this. Even those who have had a good education, who have been raised differently and who have lived abroad suffer from this mentally.”

“Society is unfair to her [women]. That is why men think that power is physical and they have access to it because of the social and religious norms.”

“In Tunisia, there is confusion between religion, tradition, and morality.”

“The question of female rape is true, but there is another story which is happening in other aspects of social life where the question of sexuality is taboo...we mishandle judging sexual crimes, and from my point of view [jurist] we have begun to normalize these crimes.”

Proposed solutions to VAW

Ideas ranged from sex education in schools and more awareness campaigns and listening centers in the communities.

“Violence needs to be a national cause just like terrorism. It needs to be addressed urgently. Raising awareness can happen mainly through TV shows and publicity because it is accessible and can easily catch individuals’ attention. Advertising must insist on women’s rights.”

“Denouncing violence against women should be a school subject that should be taught from primary school on, and it should be as important as other subjects such as mathematics or physics and with every session we need to dig deep into social behavior and discuss reality. We also need to create a police department that deals with violence like the new one that deals with the environment.”

“We mustn’t always prevent a girl from talking about rape or sexual relationships because it is *haram*, a sin.”

“We must create listening centers for these women to be listened to by other women in order to help and sensitize them.”

“We must raise girls and boys equally. But unfortunately, in our society children grow up under repression because parents fail to teach them honesty that comes from trust and honest discussion with their children. For example, had Meriem been brought up in that way, she would have called her father and asked him for the permission to go to her university party.”

Discussion

Film maker Ben Hania's capacity to create the story of "an ordinary girl" struggling to find justice resonated with the female audiences who participated in this study. Ben Hania's intent in making the film was not political, as she said. Nevertheless, the way in which these female audiences digested the plot accorded them the opportunity to express their opinions on a range of social and political issues about the state of VAW in their country. The survey responses to the fictional representation of Meriem's journey provided a snapshot into their initial reaction about the film and VAW generally; the focus group interviews revealed the source of these views and generated rich discussions.

At every session, the emotions provoked by the film were visibly evident. Participants were seen debating among themselves about their survey responses, which carried over to the focus group interactions. What has become evident in connecting the quantitative and qualitative investigations, is that women across all age groups, and of diverse political leanings, felt that people in power positions have a moral responsibility to protect women and are not doing a good job.

The sense of female solidarity was ever present in each session. Women, young and old, believed that Meriem did not deserve what happened to her regardless of her behavior. Furthermore, they were united in their opinion that people in positions of power who abuse their power are more reprehensible than any kind of behavior exhibited by a VAW victim, such as what was depicted in the film. There was also a clear sentiment that women must unite to fight against VAW; relying on men or the State (which many considered dominated by a patriarchal mindset) to make change will not resolve the problem. This reaction aligns with survey responses that showed the participants' disapproval of the way the policewoman and gynecologist treated Meriem.

The 70% of self-identified feminists who did not cast blame on Youssef might also have accounted for the mixed, nuanced views about his behavior during the interviewing sessions. Could their views about equality influence their reactions, or could their own proclivity for activism inspire a more sympathetic view because they know or appreciate men like Youssef? Or did this kinder view of Youssef resonate with women who clung to the traditional view that men are expected to protect women?

These questions cannot be answered from this study but could be part of a future research study that examines differing notions of feminism that may exist among Tunisian women, and what factors may influence those notions.

Almost all women acknowledged the positive impact of the reforms made to the *Penal Code*, but they also acknowledge that further work is needed in the field to protect women against all odds, particularly with regard to unchanged mentalities and patriarchal laws. How they envisioned the way forward reflected their socio-cultural proclivities. While almost all the participants wanted to see more education on sexual harassment, not all supported sex education in the schools. Sex education should be a family affair. The difficult irony was that the younger cohort who saw the film mentioned that talking about sex and sexuality was not a conversation that they could ever have with their mothers or other female family role models, and even less with their father or brothers, preferring to talk with their peers. Even then, it was not always an easy exchange. The same group felt that discussions about physical or sexual violence can happen more readily in a family setting, initiated as a result of seeing VAW in a TV program. So, there was an apparent consensus, especially among the younger cohort, that media can play an important role in raising awareness about VAW. One focus group suggested developing televised publicity campaigns. They also suggested distributing Ben Hania's film as a TV series in nine segments during Ramadan, when families are often at home and watching television together.

One of the most surprising findings from this study had to do with the perception of economic manipulation (at home or at work) as a type of gendered violence. Although so many women self-identified as feminists, more than half of the participants did not categorize economic manipulation as VAW, generally considered a major dimension of VAW by international agencies working on behalf of women. Is this gap another indicator of the differences in how Tunisian women perceive feminism? It is notable that many Tunisian researchers have repeatedly identified poverty and economic disempowerment as barriers to women's equality throughout their work. While this study was not designed to examine this gap, it does offer yet another avenue for research.

Conclusion

Efforts to address gendered violence in Tunisia did not begin with the real story of Meriem and her battle with the legal system to find justice. Nor did it begin with the public release of Ben Hania's film in Tunisia in 2014. Women's groups and civil society have been working for years to raise awareness and bring about more gender-sensitive legislation that would address this important societal reality. Unfortunately, President Ben Ali's politics of obfuscation in order to enhance a country's international image during his 30-year tenure undermined many of these efforts. The 2011 Revolution of Freedom and Dignity changed all that by making some of the more shocking socio-economic conditions of women, particularly in the rural regions of the country. At the same time, women activists and organizations seized upon the renewed hope that change could happen. Since 2014, progress has been made from the legislative perspective. However, the reality on the ground shows a disturbing picture. This study demonstrates through the voices of women, VAW remains a very real problem that is impacted by socio-cultural mores that remain a dominant influencer on the application of law. At the same time, we note the dynamic solidarity that unites women in their battle to eliminate VAW. While progress is slow, we have been witnessing some headway in recent months. Following an incident in Nabeul on October 10, 2019, when a high school student captured a well-known local politician Zouhair Makhoul on video, masturbating outside her high school and shared it on social media, she unknowingly unleashed Tunisia's "Me, too" movement #EnaZeda (Tunisian Arabic for Me, too). Today, more than 25,000 Tunisian women have joined the EnaZeda Facebook page. In early November 2019, the government agency CREDIF (The Centre de recherche, d'études, de documentation et d'information sur la femme), launched a public campaign to address sexual harassment in public transportation and encouraging witnesses to come forward ("Tunisie: des centaines de manifestantes," 2019). Given the history of women's activism in Tunisia, these kinds of very public initiatives will continue in an era when censorship no longer chokes the voices of women.

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Transnationalism and Universalism of the Memory Tourism of the Great War

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Abstract:

Thanks to the Centenary, a renewed interest has undoubtedly affected the landscapes of the memory of the First World War, moving away from the aims of past patriotic pilgrimages because it includes different perspectives. Over time, a broader and disenchanting view of the conflict has allowed a narrative of memory that also contains counter-memories and meets the different needs of visitors, in which the practices of commemoration and the duty of memory aspire to a universalist dimension. The article focuses on some findings of a field research aimed at analysing the existence of commemoration and remembrance practices in the memory tourism of the Great War in Friuli Venezia Giulia. One of the goals is also to explore how memory tourism can transform the collective memory of this war into a shared and participatory representation, overcoming national memory policies. The interviews highlighted general trends concerning the processes of individualisation of memory and growing post-national dimension, because a different awareness is present in memory mediators, influencing the same purposes of the memory tourism of the Great War, which is so anti-rhetorical and transnational.

Keywords: Collective memory, Identity, Memory tourism, Transnationalism, Great War.

1. Symbolised genealogies

Also called “emotion tourism”, memory tourism may be considered a sort of ethical tourism, rooted at the same time in collective sharing of the past and in individual emphatic attitude to understanding and remembrance. Places of memory embody the contemporary interpretations of the past, inspired by the loud universal call of “Lest we forget”, also leading to critical considerations on the responsibility to select, to include and exclude, to restore or destruct (Jansen-Verbeke, George, 2015). However, mass tourism has erased the distinction between visitors and possible descendants, forcing a critical rethinking about the valorisation and uses of places of memory, often difficult to interpret in their tragic

dimensions. In fact, the place of memory and memory tourism potentially make the tourist an heir in the “almost patrimonial sense” of who has a particular look at the places that refer to his relationship with past generations (Davallon, 2002).

The reflexions that follow focus on some findings of a field research¹ at analysing the existence of commemoration and remembrance practices in the memory tourism of the Great War in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italian region profoundly marked by this war event and characterised by its nature of crossroads of cultures. In detail, the research investigate the ways in which the memory of the Great War is today proposed and transmitted to tourists, and how the experience of the visit may be significant from the emotional, cultural, social exchange points of view. The qualitative technique of in-depth interview has been employed to collect the opinions of 21 local actors, belonging both to institutional organisations and to voluntary associations, actively engaged in memory tourism. These local actors have the strategic role of mediators and facilitators in the dissemination and transmission of collective memory, therefore it was important to detect any difference between the two approaches and their central themes.

One of the goals of the research is also to explore how memory tourism can transform the collective memory of the Great War into a shared and participatory representation, overcoming national memory policies. Many studies and researches have already been realised about memory tourism on the Western front, even assuming a paradigmatic significance in memory studies, while a similar approach is practically absent as regards symbolic places in the context of transnational narratives. Thanks to the Centenary, a renewed interest has undoubtedly affected the landscapes of the memory of the First World War, moving away from the aims of past patriotic pilgrimages because it includes different perspectives (“our part” and “the enemy”; soldiers and civilians, etc.). Over time, a broader and disenchanted view of the conflict has allowed a memory narrative that also contains counter-memories and meets the different needs of visitors, in

¹The research “The Memory of the Great War in the Tourism Experience in Friuli Venezia Giulia (MEMTOUR)” was funded in 2019 by the DILL Department of the University of Udine, and carried out by Antonella Pocecco and Monica Pascoli.

which the practices of commemoration and the duty of memory aspire to a universalist dimension.

Making a risky comparison, one can mention a place of memory like the 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York, which potentially attracts visitors from all over the world by its nature of memorial paradigm transcending any form of national and generational belonging, on the base of the so-called flashbulb memories². It was obviously unrealistic in our case study to refer to the individual experience to try to confirm the transnational and universal dimension of World War I memory tourism, rather the idea of symbolised genealogy (Candau, 1998) offers a useful interpretative tool.

The meaning that each individual attributes to the memories of previous generations allows him not only to conceive his own biography within a shared referential framework, but also to recognize himself in the cultural identity organized by this memory: “[...] safeguarding the memory of his ancestors, he becomes aware of himself” (*Ibidem*, p. 134). Collective memory does not progress in linear fashion, but can be disrupted, move back and forth across generations, and may be re-invented and re-actualised. Each generation remembers historical events from own perspective in order to satisfy own needs; collective memory may be interpreted with new meaning and according to different priorities by generations: it is the reconstruction of the past in the light of the present (Halbwachs, 1994; 1997). In the findings of the field research the concept of symbolised genealogy is confirmed, although with some specifications:

- Older tourists seem more interested in an in-depth discussion on the subject of conflict, the historical memory, because in some cases they still have links with the family memory of an ancestor who fought there;
- Younger visitors are more interested in a narrative that relates to contemporary reality, and therefore able to involve them.

To support our hypothesis about the transnationalism and universalism of memory tourism of the Great War there are also some contextual considerations inherent its collective memory in general, like territorial

² The concept of flashbulb memories refers to the precise memories of the situation in which the individual was when he became aware of a shocking and traumatic event, so this type of memory corresponds to a memory amalgam between personal circumstances and historical events (see for example Brown, Kulik, 1977).

extent of the conflict, the number of belligerent empires and nations and the total involvement of societies. The first modern conflict (because technological and mass) has not been only a crucial event from the military and geopolitical point of view, but also an “imaginative event” able of changing from then on the way of thinking war, and, more generally, social reality and culture (Hynes, 2011). Essential condition of Twentieth-century consciousness, the First World War remains a key event, both in terms of intellectual reworking and popular sensitivity: an immense storage of memory, studies and research, debates, conflicts and doubts that has lasted for over a hundred years and the search for a sense that for someone is not over yet (Fussell, 1984; Federici, 2015; Winter, 1998). As Young (2020) states, this conflict was less a catalyst for heroic memories than an occasion for controversial and critical memories - in the words of the poet “never such innocence again”.

2. Between remembrance and memory marketing

Memory tourism is a topic of increasing interest to scholars across the social sciences and humanities, producing wide-ranging work on the role heritage institutions and memoryscapes play in mediating processes of individual and collective memory and identity (Rapson, 2014). It is a global phenomenon marked by dissimilar nationwide evolutions and even strong controversial, like, for example, the opinion of the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut regarding a universal place of memory as Auschwitz, in his thought mortified by the drifts of mass tourism. On the one hand, it is undeniable that memory tourism is not always sober and respectful; on the other hand, visitors to a place with the exclusive purpose of an act of remembrance represent a minority: among the millions of visitors to Auschwitz, many take advantage of their stay in Poland to visit the camp. It is then understandable why Finkielkraut has asserted that respecting the memory of Auschwitz is equivalent to not going there (Remy, 2011).

The definition of memory tourism is rather complex given its multidimensional nature, which motivates different scientific approaches and involves concepts such as collective memory, identity, politics, local development, etc. By focusing on the sociological approach, the delimitation some notions can help to better understand its potentials and

contradictions. For example, the use of the expression “place of memory” is more restricted than can be commonly supposed, employed to evoke the memory of war events, especially the First and Second World Wars, and generally linked to a traumatic event in the background of an exceptional context. It corresponds to the patrimonialisation of negative and painful memories, so every place witnessing the traumatic history of the last century must be preserved as if memory should today be embodied only in its material dimension and no longer in the symbolic.

The conceptualization of Nora (1992) of place of memory has decidedly innovated the previous definition of high place of remembrance (*haut lieu du souvenir*), suitable to designate a site scene of significant events. In fact, he specifies the concept in terms of unit of material or ideal order, which human intentionality or the work of the time has transformed into a symbolic element for a community. The place of memory thus seems to coherently respond to the needs of societies in identity crisis, in which prevail the instant, the existential precariousness and the ontological uncertainty about future, and which turn to the past to find some references, recreate the sense of living together and of belonging gradually weakened, first of all, by globalisation processes. Identity, memory and heritage appear as the three key words of contemporary consciousness (Nora, 1992). As Martin (2000, p. 785) writes

The ‘disenchantment of the world’, the postmodernism, ‘the end of history’, the era of emptiness or insignificance have broken the pact: history is written for an unpredictable future in a present without reference points, while of the past, open to any rewriting, everything has become memorable and ‘capitalisable’, definitively upsetting any illusion about the power to change the world starting from a founding project.

The acknowledgement of social value to a place of memory implies the search for origins, identity roots, often according to a “principle of autochthony” which presupposes the finding traces of the past to anchor in a territory the individual’s filiation (Boursier, 2002). Sharing the thesis that the “memory-moment” we live reveals the uncertainties that weigh on memory and history more than it hides them, the visit to places of memory is by its nature a peculiar experience for the individual / tourist: a sort of alchemy among communication forms, relationship with history, issues related to memory and sharing of a social practice (Lavabre, 1994; Trouche, 2012).

A first attempt to a schematic definition of memory tourism highlights the critical mix between the purpose of an intellectual and civic enrichment (given by the exemplarity of the memorial narratives contained in places) and that of incentive / support for economic and cultural vitality of territories (considering the impact that this form of tourism can produce).

The coexistence of these functions originates at the factual level a dialectic without obvious outcomes, due to their changing balancing: they should not be seen as exclusionary, but rather in terms of transitory prevalence of one over the other according to the historical moment. It is reasonable to mention the probable loss of visibility and tourist attractiveness when the relevance of a place of memory is only perceived by small groups or minority ones, or when the spatialized memory is part of a cyclically recalled public and institutional narrative, assuming a predominant ritual character. Some interviewees stress that the visit to the Memorial of Redipuglia³ is for Italian tourists a visit to a “total site” because place-bridge of the nation’s memory, so that the identity dimension imposes itself, very often, on the narrative made by the mediator. On the other side, the prevalence of the tourist vocation can lead to a “memory marketing”, transforming references to the past into consumer products, gadgets and souvenirs, altering their meaning and giving rise to a fleeting and superficial fruition—to a Disneylandisation of the place (Naef, 2014). The panel placed at the entrance of the Douaumont Ossuary reveals the ambiguity of a memory-commemoration and a memory-object of consumption, since it states “Do not miss to visit this important place during your holidays”.

The effects of a 'possible commodification of memory clearly refer to the general dynamics of collective memory and it is likely that in memory tourism acquire visibility and emphasis. If the danger of amnesia is always latent when collective memory is not supported by multiple social practices and actions (as memory tourism), an objectification of it as a mere consumer product can lead to a total impoverishment of its meaning, as well to forms of mystification and exploitation. The risk of falsifications and manipulations of the past, more or less intentional, may never be

³ The remains of the 100,000 buried soldiers make the Memorial of Redipuglia (near Gorizia) as one of the largest European military memorials, with the Douaumont Ossuary, erected near Verdun in the French Department of the Mose, as well as one of the most impressive monumental complexes dedicated to the fallen of the First World War.

marginalized since it causes the spread of unilateral or at least partial narratives that distort the original symbolic content of the physical site.

3. Transnationalism and individualisation of collective memory

Thanks to memory tourism, history can be reinterpreted mainly as human history, even decades or centuries later, translating dates and statistics in terms of experience, imagined by the visitor because witnessed by the place. Based on the use of space in which memory materializes, and intimately linked to sensory perceptions and emotions experienced by the individual, the tourism of memory also provides the framework for a complementary creation of subjective memories. In other words, the memory of a place is accompanied by the experience of the place of memory, as an interaction of the individual with the symbols, references and physical signs impressed on the landscape.

An analysis on memory tourism must in fact focus on what and how is visited, considering the meaning attributed by visitors (Seaton, 2000), since alongside the narrative contained in the place there is the narrative that the individual himself build. In 2012, the World Heritage Tourism Research Network (WHTRN) has carried out an online survey with a sample of 2,472 individuals, of different nationalities, ages, educational level, etc., trying to identify the main reasons for memory tourism of the Great War, before the Centenary celebrations (Jansen-Verbeke, George, 2015). Among the different questions, one concerned the purpose of keeping alive the memory of the conflict, to which the subjects replied in majority indicating the understanding of events that have changed world history, the memory of the sacrifice of millions of individuals and the pedagogical action in order to prevent future wars. At the same time, the value recognised to memorial sites consisted, in the perception of the interviewees, in their specificity as places of memory, places for the acquisition of awareness about human suffering and places of reflexion. It is therefore evident that sharing the meaning of a place of memory is a dialectical synergy of the aspiration to transmit memory, of the related commemorative practices and of the subjective motivations that push the visitor to emphasize certain aspects of the past than others. The re-creation of the memorial landscapes of the First World War implies questioning the reasons why individuals

from different nations remember this war today and how they do it (Jansen-Verbeke, George, 2015).

The collective memory of the Great War holds a character of “alive memory” because even today, despite the elapsed time, it returns traces and material signs of that past, rekindling the attention and public interest. The melting of some glaciers in the Alps still allows the remains of soldiers and military posts to be found, and therefore the consequent reconstruction of symbolized genealogies. Verdun’s Zone Rouge has never stopped returning unexploded grenades, howitzers and ammunitions, periodically recalling the dramatic intensity of the battle; even in the “silent places of memory”, so defined because not publicly and institutionally valorised, it is not infrequent to find a corroded belt buckle or a spoon. Beyond the concreteness of these traces, the symbolic narrative of the conflict, more manifest in some territories, is substantiated in a sort of karst re-emergence of “what has been”, a materialisation of memory that does not so much appeal to rational understanding as to subjective empathic capability to identify oneself with other’s experience. As stated in an interview, some tourist guides use artefacts related to the feeding of soldiers (tins, water bottles, etc.), that is elements of daily life that “give a face” to anonymous soldiers: the highlighting of the human aspect allows a greater understanding and also forms of identification. On the other hand, some respondents claimed that most visitors wonder about the daily life of the fighters and only a few seem more fascinated by the technical aspects, such as war strategies, deployment of armies, firepower, etc.

Nowadays the elaboration processes of the collective memory of the Great War seem to move on at least two main lines, strictly interrelated:

- The clear and growing trend of transnational memory practices and memory tourism, which overlap and often become more significant than national memorial policies;
- The parallel process of individualisation of memory, which overturns the axiom of the sacralisation of collective death, although not immune to contradictory consequences.

A decisive change has occurred in world public opinion in conveying the narrative of this conflict, which has overcome the emphatic tones of nationalist rhetoric, celebrating the sacrifice of the nation’s collective body,

to reach an interpretation free from heroic indulgences and focused mainly on individual memories. The contemporary narrative of the Great War integrates in the collective imaginary some places of memory, places-witnesses of emblematic historical episodes, mainly in light of the existential experience of those who fought and lost their lives. It also affirms with the same strength the will to pass on to the new generations a warning for the future and a clear appeal to the duty of memory. This is undoubtedly due to the elapsed time, which gave to the First World War a sort of “peculiar status”, reason why its memory is viewed consensually, universally significant and producing integrative effects, unlike other wars (Antichan, Gensburger, Teboul, 2016).

The Centenary celebrations have highlighted how much this collective memory has acquired a noticeable transnational character, more than simply international or post-national. For example, on the anniversary of the outbreak of the conflict, a joint commemoration was held in the cemetery of Saint Symphorien, near Mons in Belgium, which collects the remains of British and German soldiers.

Overcoming the state framework, it integrates collateral but universal dimensions (such as the sufferings and losses suffered by the civilian population; social and ethnic conflicts; gender issues; war culture, etc.) and reveals a “memorial activism” that is present from some time (Dalisson, 2015; Offenstadt, 2014). This is attested by the several commemorative ceremonies carried out in common, because inspired by the deep intuition the conflict must necessarily be remembered in an interpretative key able of transcending the exclusivity of national memorial practices (Zimet, Gilles, Offenstadt, 2014). The process of negotiation among different national memories is the epilogue of a long phase of inevitable and difficult confrontation, also because the First World War left behind endemically extra-territorial and multinational places of memory - for example, Ypres, Verdun, Somme, Caporetto, Gallipoli. This is understandably the case in almost all places of war of memory, even if it is not assured: instead of promoting a policy of shared memory on the basis of mutual recognition, some sites become reason for renewed forms of nationalisation of memory⁴.

⁴ Among many cases, in the Croatian city of Vukovar a war played on memories seems to have taken the place of weapons: recognized as martyr city of the ex-Yugoslavia war, it has become the destination for national tourism, mirroring a memorial practice aimed to rebuild the local identity in opposition to the aggressor identity of Serbs.

Conclusions

In our case study, the interviews highlighted how a different awareness is present today in memory mediators, influencing the same purposes of the memory tourism of the Great War, which is so anti-rhetorical and transnational. This reflects a global change, such as in Flanders where the memory tourism has been renamed “peace tourism”, thanks to the synergetic action of the institutional actors of memorial policies and the tourism industry. Firstly commemorating the victims of a war presented as absurd, the Flemish authorities insist on the deadly nature of the conflict and on the peremptory need to avoid its repetition (Bouchat, Klein, Rosoux, 2016).

The symmetrical erosion of the epic-warrior declination of the war has had some contradictory consequences, because the transfiguration of the conflict in mass sacrifice for the “right cause”, firmly supported for decades by national memorial agendas, has fragmented into thousands of individual memories. As the Italian historian Isnenghi (2014, p. 5) writes “[...] to each one his own valley, his regiment, his fort, his battle”, stigmatizing the not too veiled contemporary agnosticism towards macro-concepts as homeland and nation, which however prevents an understanding of the civism and spirit of self-denial of the generations involved in the war. On another side, the individualisation of memory can arouse in the tourists forms of identification and empathy, thus making them participate in the construction of memory and its transmission:

To understand history and to understand territories, you have to think with your feet. [...] The only way we can avoid a rhetorical drift is to think with our feet, that is to walk on the places of the Great War and evoke these people, call them to tell this experience of people (statement of an interviewee).

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The Garden City and the American Dream

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Abstract

Howard's Garden city tradition is central in American urban planning and it has had great influence, also in its interpretations that were most distant from the original utopian model, on the ways in which the American city has grown. The approach defined by Howard rejected the English industrial city of the 19th century and proposed a model based on the values of local communities. The American translation of this approach has had great success and has brought after the second world war to the creation of suburbia, i.e. to a gradual process of suburbanization of the nation. This article sets out to investigate the evolution of the application of Howard's model, the ways in which this model has had an impact on the growth of the American city and the reasons that have determined its success among planners, architects and other decision-makers throughout the 20th century.

Keywords: Garden city, Howard, suburbia, American dream, Anti-urbanism.

1. Background

This article aims to investigate the evolution of the application of Howard's Garden city principles in American urban planning, the ways in which the American city has grown, and the reasons that determined the success of a model that, starting from the observation of the living conditions of the poor working-class Londoners at the end of the 19th century, proposed a repopulation of the countryside to curb the urban growth of the city (Grant, 2006). After the first virtuous applications, the Garden city model influenced the development of the suburbs of American cities and orthodox urban planning after the Second World War, creating isolation, standardization, homologation and in some cases social degradation (Piselli, 2009). Almost throughout the whole twentieth century, the garden city was at the basis of the theories of American urban planning, although the practice progressively distanced itself from the original ideal (Grant, 2006; Zuddas, 2019). The motivations behind Howard's utopia success in American culture can be traced back to the pressure of the Protestant culture, the American dream and the anti-urban

ideology that shaped the American city, that is the epitome, symbol and field of expression of that dream. Through a diachronic analysis of what is called American exceptionalism, or of the motivations that make the US city different from the old European world (Bergamini, 2012), and the role played in this evolutionary process by the success of the Garden City model, we want to show how the aspiration to a life in contact with nature, which initially coincided with a desire for differentiation from the mass reserved for the elite, already translates from the second half of the twentieth century into a suburbanization of the nation (Zukin, 1982). The consequence, which is arguably more visible today than it was in the past, was the homologation of individuals' lifestyles, aspirations and consumption, despite the fact that, for some decades, the first attempts by the new suburban inhabitants to negotiate and hybridize spaces are starting to be observed.

The suburb, in fact, is the landscape in which American dreams, promises and ambitions have progressively settled since the beginning of the 19th century with the first isolated experiments aimed at creating new communities, to then pass also through the real estate investments in systematic projects that have enjoyed first the support of local governments, and subsequently the role played by the federal government.

The American dream – defined for the first time by Truslow Adams in *American Dreams* (1933) – is rooted in the suburban development patterns and identified in the home – and not in the model neighbourhoods or in the ideal city –, in family values, in the ideology of female domesticity its main archetypes (Cullen, 2003). In the 1940s, General Electric in one of its commercials advertised the purchase of a house as “an adventure in happiness”. The promise that happiness could be found in the ideal home convinced millions of Americans to move to the suburbs in single-family houses, despite the fact that they were places that in most cases caused the physical and social isolation of those who lived there (Archer, 2005).

Indeed, already in 1945, Sartre, speaking of American cities, had highlighted the differences compared to European cities, observing that they were cities that constituted a

moving landscape for its inhabitants, whereas our [European] cities are our shells. [...] We Europeans change within changeless cities, and our houses and neighbourhoods outlive us; American cities change faster than their inhabitants do, and it is the inhabitants who outlive

the cities. [...] For us a city is, above all, a past, for them it is mainly a future; what they like in the city is everything it has not yet become and everything it can be(1971, pp. 197-205).

Sartre, although he did not share the country's socio-political reality, argued that American cities were a place of reinvention, of continuous experimentation in the ways in which a society can organize itself spatially. This tension shapes the American dream in its various forms – of life, of an upwardly mobile society, of the myth of home ownership, of the exaltation of romantic derivation of contact with nature – which still remains firm today in American culture although it has changed shape over time and has revealed all its limitations. Moreover, individuals have always used ways to identify themselves (for example, religion, language, collective memory, geography, etc.) and the United States has created a collective imaginary“ inspired by this to respond to this need, the existence of a purportedly New World, realized in a Revolution that began with an explicitly articulated Declaration, and consolidated in the writing of a durable Constitution”(Cullen, 2003, p. 6). In a country built on massive migratory flows from all over the world the American dream quickly became a lingua franca that everyone could understand.

Two main factors contributed to the construction of the American dream, namely: Rousseau's anti-urban and naturalistic ideology that saw the city as a chance of intellectual success, but also of moral corruption and degeneration of humanity, as well as the Puritan model through its ability to play not only a religious, but also a political and social role. Suffice it to think of the metaphor of the *City upon a Hill* mentioned by Winthrop in 1630, referring to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, urging the Puritan settlers to have the necessary courage to build a city governed by divine law that would represent a beacon for the rest of the world. The myth of the city on the hill represented an example of Christian charity and radical renewal of humanity and has shaped the American imaginary, becoming an essential cultural reference and one of the most long-lived American political rhetorics (Moschini, 2007). Moreover, at the centre of the radial structure of the Puritan urban model, inherited from the Baroque, the Church was located so that it could be seen by everyone, thus exercising its moralizing function and strengthening mutual social control within the community. The influence of the Puritan model has been a long-lived constant in American culture. Miller in *The crucible* will also talk about paranoia,

hysteria and rigid Puritan morality in the cities of New England in the seventeenth century, using the Salem witch trials as a metaphor against McCarthyism. The original model then lost its mystical religious dimension to become political strategy when Jefferson in the *Declaration of Independence* (1776) identified the inalienable human rights, inspired by Locke's thought, in life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. And it is precisely on the right to the pursuit of happiness that the myth of a society full of dreams and aspirations is based.

The house, or more generally the architectural plan, becomes the metaphor of a socio-political project based on an anti-urbanism deeply rooted in American culture (Rohe, Watson, 2007). Already Jefferson in 1784 had written a strong anti-urban invective in the *Notes on the States of Virginia* stressing that "the mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor" (1829, p. 173). An idea of society, government and cities that will shape American culture and will lead Gallup to note, about two hundred years later, that less than 20% of the American population expressed a desire to live in the city (Katz, 1994).

2. *The reasons for the success of the Garden-city style*

The Garden City, a utopia that closes the nineteenth century and influences much of the twentieth century, bases its success, as already anticipated, on the close relationship between Protestant culture, the American dream and anti-urban ideology, but also on its ability to reconcile the values of local communities with territorial governance strategies. Howard's utopia immediately showed his ability to translate into real design, and was to inspire generations of planners and architects (Hall and Ward, 2014). Mumford was also to move along this line, presenting the cities as a set of disasters that produced profoundly negative effects and suggesting the tradition of the Anglo-American Garden city and the thought of Howard and Geddes as the only alternative to the anti-city of the mass suburbs (Talen, 2005). At the same time, the strong interests of the real estate market towards the growing middle class led local governments, eager to regulate this slice of the market and to derive a political benefit

from it, to transform the principles of the Garden city into rules of urban and suburban development.

In fact, the United States was the place where most of the literary and real utopian cities found their space, probably also because of the strong symbolic charge that the creation of a new social structure possessed in the New World territories where there was no weight of the past, or of confrontation. The United States ended up becoming the *topos* par excellence of anti-urban utopias. Edward Bellamy would set his industrial utopia *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* in Boston in 2000, which expressed its greatest appeal in the bucolic part, and Jules Verne would choose the United States to build his own utopian city, Franceville de *Les 500 millions de la Bégum*, a thriving garden that prospers in harmony with nature.

The roots of anti-urban ideology in American culture are ancient and are based on the belief that the city is the place of evil, degradation and corruption. The Protestant derivation of this model is easily traceable in the sentiments it expressed (piety, charity, stereotyping of family values, etc.) and in the production of an imaginary of religious origin. In the nineteenth century the anti-urban ideology was also fuelled by the results of the research by Malthus, Engels and Booth on the conditions of the poor classes and on the unlivable nature of London. A catastrophic and crisis vision of the city that is based on a feeling of fear of modernity and to which Owen, Fourier and Howard will try to give a possible solution by proposing forms of alternative urban settlement, whose utopian message will also be collected in part by the subsequent Modern Movement (Sgroi, 2001).

The idea of a green city becomes one of the ideological cornerstones of 19th-century American urban planning. The cultural references of this model are found in the Park Movement which structured the urban space in connection with parks and parkways, in the City Beautiful ideology, introduced at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, which was based on the conviction of the superiority of the European archetypes and on their ability to affect American culture positively, and the influence of Howard's Garden City, which claimed the utopia of a city inspired by community values, the individual right to property of the house and collective spaces green and which would quickly take root in the first two decades of the 20th century.

Even though skyscrapers were built in the American metropolises and the processes of productive concentration and urban growth were very

rapid, the essence of American culture was already deeply anti-urban and the cities had become the field in which to place an abstract debate on the virtues of the nation and on the corruption that went through it. So while the American city in the nineteenth century feeds, and is in turn fed by, the American dream of wealth and success – above all through the real estate market – at the same time, it is the place where the original values of the nation are irreparably corrupted.

In the years following the Second World War, the paradox of economic growth emerges that is not accompanied by a golden age in American cities. The bias that characterizes American urban history was denounced in 1962 by Morton and Lucia White who in *The Intellectual versus the City* retraced the evolution of anti-urban ideas during the nineteenth and up to the mid-twentieth century. “The decay of the American City is now one of the most pressing concerns of the nation” (White, 1962, p. 11). This is how the White volume begins, revealing all the concerns related to the physical and social dimension of American cities in the 1960s, the failure of renewal programmes and the spread of demonstrations for civil and anti-war rights. The anti-urban tradition still lives on in American culture even in the contemporary era. According to Conn, anti-urbanism remains deeply rooted in American culture despite a renewed interest in city life. The motivation must be sought in the prevalence in American culture of feelings of individualism and self-sufficiency and in the rejection of the principle of responsibility towards common good which is instead the essence of urban culture (Conn, 2014). Clearly this statement does not exclude the presence of communitarian living experiments, but highlights what can be considered a general trend. At the same time, contemporary American culture expresses all its contradictions even in the suburbs that, if, on the one hand, they continue to represent the place where the aspirations of American life converge, on the other, they also begin to express the anxieties and disillusionment of those who have lived the betrayal of a dream. After all, the myth of the American dream was never founded on the assurance that every dream would necessarily become reality, but, rather, that the dream is always allowed and that, above all, it acts as a relevant motivational mass factor. One should also be mindful that the massive suburbanization and the mass production strategies applied to the real estate sector, that were typical of the post-2nd world war period, had their origin in Levittown, the project started by Levitt and Sons in 1947

in Long Island, that represents much more than a tribute to the American dream or to conformity and to the lack of identity that derived from them. The basic idea of the “General Motors of the housing industry”, as Levitt defined it, was to offer a housing solution to the young soldiers returning from the war who had got married and had kick started the baby boom in a nation that was severely lacking housing. Levitt’s project offered standardized products and materials as well an aesthetic uniformity that varied only in terms of colours or fittings. It was the inhabitants who then customized their homes according to the standards of Cape Cod design or following the subsequent models, Colonial Rancher and Country Clubber (Gans, 1967; Ippolito, 2009). Levittown was for decades a community with an exclusively white population (today the white population is still 75%, according to the 2017 US Census data). So while Levitt promoted his product as “the best house in the US”, Mumford described Levittown as a “uniform environment from which escape is impossible”, laying bare that it was a private housing project, that was later repeated with the same name in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Puerto Rico, that contributed to reducing the American cities in the second half of the 20th century to little more than office building conglomerates.

3. *Anti-urban Utopias: Howard’s Garden City*

In 1898 Howard published *Tomorrow. A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* – republished in 1902 with the title *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* – which represents the manifesto of a movement for planning a new town, influenced by Ruskin’s aesthetic and philosophical criticisms, and which would be the utopia that would close the 19th century (Parker, 2004). Howard’s idea certainly had a greater influence in the American experience than the City Beautiful movement that since 1893 promoted beauty as a catalyst that could promote moral and civic virtues in urban populations and more broadly improve quality of life. To its detractors, on the contrary, the movement seemed too preoccupied with aesthetics compared with social reforms. Even though Jane Jacobs defined it as the expression of the “cult of architectural design”, the pattern of the City Beautiful movement, inspired by the baroque city, could spread thanks to Burnham in San Francisco’s designs after the 1906 fire, those of Chicago

and many other cities (Columbus, Ohio, Philadelphia, etc.). If, then, the City Beautiful movement can rightly be considered one of the main urban design movements of the 20th century, the other certainly was the Garden city movement. Its theoretician Howard describes the Garden city in detail in its dimensions, in the form, in the location of the public buildings, in the avenues that cross the city and in the central park around which the Crystal Palace develops, a gallery that must welcome the inhabitants when the weather does not allow park attendance (Saragosa, 2011). A greenbelt surrounds the city, constituting the limit of the urban fabric and, at the same time, fulfilling the task of providing for food production (Belfiore, 2005). Howard's utopia aims not only to eliminate the evils of urban planning but tries to imagine a better society and a city inspired by community principles, but not collectivist. The city imagined by Howard quickly becomes the reference point of the new urban planning in the industrialized countries and, at the same time, in its realizations it loses the trait of the city – that is, the original principles and characteristics from which its ideological strength derived – and becomes suburban. This is also the case in the United States, which incorporates Howard's ideas through the design of suburban construction, of suburban neighbourhoods surrounded by greenery and with a degree of autonomy that varies according the centre, revolutionizing the way of conceiving the city-countryside relationship. The English heritage of the Garden city has strongly characterized American urban planning starting from Stein and Wright's plan for Radburn of 1926 which is also affected by Olmsted's experience in defining the construction of Riverside in 1898 and which marks, with its double paths for pedestrians and motorists, the beginning of the automobile age (Talen, 2005). Already Olmsted had summarized in the Riverside plan the needs of single-family homes with those of community services, the presence of nature and urban living, creating what is considered the most successful American suburb.

The ideology behind the Garden city maintains its strength even when the principle of high density emerges in the twentieth century and Coral Gables, New Venice, San Jose Estate and Jacksonville in Florida are born, characterized by an explicit European influence that seeks its regional identity in the replacement of the cottage with the Spanish-American home. Subsequently Greenbelt was created in Maryland, known for its crescent

moon shape, planned under the New Deal program, which becomes the symbol of the ideology of decentralization.

After the Second World War the Americans began to pursue urban planning policies that were dramatically far from the standards of liveability and quality of life, abandoning the original model of the Garden city. The period from 1945 to 1955 can be considered the dark age in American urban history since it witnessed the demolition of entire urban areas and the elimination of the small town from the landscape (Hanlon *et al.*, 2010). Areas that showed signs of decay, neighbourhoods still alive and full of character, historic buildings were swept away to be replaced by more modern buildings for technical and construction and design, highways, parking lots and lots that were then left empty. The resulting suburban sprawl although born as an alternative to urban life – now perceived as in irreversible decline – had quickly revealed itself “a landscape of scary place, the geography of nowhere, that has simply ceased to be a credible human habitat” (Kunstler, 1994, p. 15).

American intellectuals have contributed to fuelling the anti-urban ideology also by openly declaring anti-urban sentiments and enhancing the contrast between city and countryside through a narrative that saw the moral values of the countryside and the danger and threat to civilization represented by the city (Tafari, 1974). Artificial places so well described by Philip Dick in *Time out of Joint*, a novel set in a 1950s American suburb with its identical villas, middle class families, well-kept gardens, dual cars and television always on in the living room. It is the landscape of dreams, promises and aspirations of the Americans who have sought economic security and better living conditions and where the ideals of private property and freedom, as well as those of harmony and spirituality, have crystallized. A landscape that has become a distinctive feature of the suburb, rhetorically narrated by American cinema until the 1970s by the characters played by Doris Day, the typical suburban housewife that symbolized the white flight from the urban and industrial landscape that was eventually compromised. The power of the imaginary of the suburbs is well represented in *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* (Walters, 1960), in which Doris Day and David Niven leave their New York apartment to relocate in the suburbs. The notion is clearly manifested that New York is not a good place to live and raise one's children, showing one of the fundamental features of the suburban ideology of the contrast between the residential

suburbs female, the domestic realm in which women were raising children, and the city male, the city where the men continued to work (Robertson Wojcik, 2010). Commuting between the city and the suburbs is the price to pay to have a house with a garden and good schools. More recent films have also tried to narrate and represent the evolution of the neat and stereotypical society, always suspended between reality and fiction, as for example in *American Beauty*, in which Mendes represents the life of the middle-class American family that lives in quiet and unchangeable tree-lined suburbs, with the milk and newspapers delivered to the front door every morning. It is a film that denounces the failure of a society that is besieged by a deep sense of moral and spiritual confusion, and that launches a frontal attack on the celebration of the American lifestyle and of the “American beauty” that seems lost, but that is still shared heritage of the hopes and ideals of all Americans.

After all, referring to the suburbs of the post-2nd world war period, Mumford already argued that:

In the suburb one might live and die without marring the image of an innocent world, except when some shadow of evil fell over a column in the newspaper. Thus the suburb served as an asylum for the preservation of illusion. Here domesticity could prosper, oblivious of the pervasive regimentation beyond. This was not merely a child-centred environment; it was based on a childish view of the world, in which reality was sacrificed to the pleasure principle (1961,p. 464).

Kaplan offers a rich description of how the suburb responds to the American dream:

The dream of most Americans is an attractively packaged comfortable single-family home set off from its neighbours on a well-landscaped plot in an economically, socially, and racially homogeneous community of good schools and convenient shopping. It is a dream not of a challenging, involved life-style rich in excitement, of the possibility of fantasies like true, but rather of a leisurely life-style, of privacy, health, security, status, and few conflicts. [...] To the majority of Americans, it is suburbia that still offers the greatest hope of that dream(1976, pp. 1-2).

The awareness that suburbia was the antithesis of the community and that sprawl was not a place to live the relationships, vitality and experiences typical of urban life became increasingly present also among the residents themselves. This awareness inspired the New Urbanism

movement which, starting from the mid-80s, taking up Howard's ideas again, tried to define what American urbanism should have been, to understand the relationship between built-up environment and social life, but above all to enhance the symbolic component of distinctive architecture. Inevitably, the attention of New Urbanism focuses on the suburb, also because of its inhumanity and its pervasiveness in the American landscape. The basic idea is that the suburbs represent the ancient city and that as such it should be rethought and, above all, redesigned in such a way as to allow the re-creation of true communities. The architectural quality and the constant mention of the past in the forms of the buildings are the keys to this form of community revivalism. A classic example is certainly Celebration in Florida designed by a group of New York architects in a "fake antique" style. Founded in 1994 by Disney, it is the expression of a programmed access new urbanism. An exclusive community, therefore, which, at least on paper, is organized around a commercial core with shops, restaurants, offices and homes that try to recreate the quality of life of a small city where you can move on foot and where children can play on the street controlled by parents and by the community itself (Passell, 2013).

4. Analysing the dream

Is it therefore possible to narrate a city through its cultural values? Certainly, it is possible to reconstruct a continuity in the ideology that has shaped American cities since their foundation and which still remains today, albeit in a different way, one of the distinctive features of the culture and values that define the current American urban dimension. While the development of suburban sprawl is judged as the result of incompetent choices by planners and city politicians, who opposed the sense of community by fuelling isolation and alienation, Garden city suburbs, which had a refined and elegant shape and a distinctive design, have now become synonymous with livability and quality of life. In fact, suburbs such as Chesnut Hill in Philadelphia, Mariemont outside Cincinnati, Beverly Hills and Palos Verdes near Los Angeles or Forest Hills outside New York were built not only as real estate investments, but also to improve the quality of urban life of the residents. Seaside Village in

Connecticut, built in 1918, is now a community-oriented suburb that expresses a good level of quality of life. As well as Yorkship Village in New Jersey, now known as Fairview (Morris, 2005).

Despite the differences in terms of planning and design, both the garden city suburbs and the subsequent spread of the suburban sprawl are inspired, albeit with different methods and intensities, by Howard's idealism and narrate the evolution and mutation that occurred in the application of the original model. A component of this mutation is due to the need of local governments to build theoretical and practical bases to legitimize a strong intervention in the management of urban growth. In this sense, the Garden city offered an imagery that could be used to justify urban landscape policies and norms, and which recalled popular concepts that transferred interest and value. In particular, the reference to the Garden city responded to the promise of accessible living, efficient use of community resources and the presence of services and green spaces. It therefore seemed a perfect theory to respond to market needs and, at the same time, support growth in a manner consistent with the ideals of the American dream. The Garden city had a democratic charm and provided a perfect setting for the nuclear family and for the values and aspirations with which it was the bearer. The single-family suburban house thus becomes the symbol par excellence of a rich, optimistic and powerful nation (Rohe, Watson, 2007). Whether it was the independent Queens' cottage with its small garden and place for the car or the large and sumptuous home in Beverly Hills, the inspiring principle was the same, only the size and shape changed.

The suburbanization of the population was therefore a rapid transition that marked the American urban history of the second post-war period and transformed the United States into a suburban nation thanks also to the demand of the baby-boomers, but above all to a political will that flourished in the New Deal, strongly affirmed in the second post-war period and which has survived until today. Ownership of the house was facilitated by access to real estate mortgages with particular incentives for those who purchased in suburban areas. And thanks to the National Interstate Highways and Defense Act of 1956, the construction of thousands of kilometers of new highways was started which should have facilitated connections for a population increasingly eager to embrace an ideal life model and to access the American dream, homogeneous both

from a racial and social point of view. So two different ways of understanding urban planning which characterized different phases of American culture but which are united by an attempt to give an answer to the myth of the American dream representing, even in the 21st century, one of the main building blocks of the national identity, despite the uncertainty and fragmentation.

The evolution of the American suburb followed Tocqueville's intuitions in an almost prophetic way when, in the second volume of *Democracy in America* (1848), he spoke of "equality of conditions" referring in reality not so much to the ideal of egalitarian democracy that had inspired the Founding Fathers, but much, to use an expression of Adorno, to the massification of consumer taste. Equality in the sense that Tocqueville attributes to it, is equality of desires, aspirations, consumption – well expressed, for example, by the Hippodamian-inspired grid plan of New York – and certainly not the idea, which is otherwise illusory, "that income would become more equal in the American future, or that democracy would level power politics" (Sennett, 2018, p. 146). In this sense, the numerous criticisms of the single-nuclear-family house must be considered, many of which are severe, especially with regard to the most mass-produced and repetitive achievements. It is precisely this transition from an uncritical adherence to the American dream supported by the imperfect application of Howard's anti-urban ideology, to the denunciation of a standardized model that highlights the main features of the evolution of the suburb from the second post-war period to the present day and which recalls Tocqueville's vision.

The very evolution of the suburbs seems to be a perfect metaphor of American culture and of its weaknesses. From a symbol of the American dream in which the aspirations to and promises of a better life and the plans of antiurban utopias are settled, and in particular of the Garden city, which aspired to cure the evils of the city, the suburb has been progressively transformed into a massified and repetitive place that does not allow for distinction, the affirmation of identity, the valorization of diversity and of different lifestyles.

In fact, in the second half of the twentieth century the suburb, that is to say the characteristic form of housing in American metropolises, was transformed into suburbia, i.e. an ordinary, homologated and familiar extension of housing that does not have elements of distinction and can no

longer be approached to the utopia which in some way constituted its conceptual basis at the origin (Duany *et al.*, 2001). In this regard, Yi-Fu Tuan states that “Suburb is an ideal [...] on the other hand suburbia, a word of much more recent coinage, appears to mock this ideal” (1974, p. 225). And yet Kunstler with greater controversy denounces that

this nation’s suburban build out was an orgy of misspent energy and material resources that squandered our national wealth [and led to] cultural destruction [...] especially the loss of knowledge, tradition, skill, custom, and vernacular wisdom in the art of city-making that was thrown into the dumpster of history(2001, p. 11).

Part of this process was deliberate and guided by projects of planned urban expansion, while a large part was spontaneous and market-driven, pushing millions of people to move from the city to the suburbs that seemed the perfect answer to the ambitions and aspirations of the American dream (Monkkonen, 1990). After two centuries now of experience with the suburbs and their ways of growing, today the Americans face the consequences, in terms of space homologation and negation of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1970), of the biggest ever investment in private housing that the world has ever seen.

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The Mediterranean Question: Thinking with the Diver

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Abstract

How and why to interrupt and redirect our understanding of the histories and cultures of the Mediterranean? As a result of temporal and spatial relations, its geographies and histories are never neutral. They are the outcome of contestations, and are elaborated and practiced, above all, by those who have the power to impose their maps and chronologies. Reasoning with the historical and cultural impact of the mobile, migratory and mutable configurations of the Mediterranean, the prospects proposed here seek to dismantle the authority of the established archive. In its place the authors propose a series of interdisciplinary and transcultural considerations that would permit another Mediterranean – subaltern, repressed and negated – to emerge and interrogate the habitual narrative.

Keywords: Mediterranean, Archive, Migration, Temporality, Geography.

The Mediterranean question: clearly the reference is to Antonio Gramsci's incomplete essay of 1926, later known as "The Southern Question" (Gramsci, 2015)¹. In Gramsci's considerations, geography traces a system of power. The structural subordination of the south to the northern component of Italy, and its presumed distance from modern Europe, constituted a cartography in which the Mediterranean and the diverse "Souths" of the world have been rendered structurally inferior and subaltern. The presumed scientific neutrality deployed in measuring space confirms a distance that guarantees the hierarchy of powers and their location within modern spacetime. Gramsci's observations on the potentiality of geography to render explicit the spatiality of power propels us to comprehend how the Mediterranean is culturally and politically produced; it is never simply a geographical or historical 'fact'. The Mediterranean emerges historically from the terrestrial coordinates of thought (Ekers et. al., 2013). Seeking to respond to the Mediterranean

¹ This essay is the English translation of the Introduction to Chambers & Cariello (2019)

question means then to register the relations of power that require the Mediterranean to be narrated specifically and differently from other historical-cultural formations. Indeed, the fact that this body of water was named by those who thought they possessed it emerges in its very name: for whom is the Mediterranean the 'Mediterranean', and not *bahr al-Rum* (the sea of the Romans), or *al-Bahr al-Shami* (the Syrian Sea)?

The juxtaposition of the specific configurations of the different vectors of time makes it impossible to reduce time itself to an abstract, universal measure. Perhaps understanding historical time today cannot be isolated from considerations that have been developed in the field of modern physics. Space time is elastic, it is subject to the curvatures of differentiated forces, it is composed of distances and dynamics. Imposing an exemplary rule and a single narrative implies reducing the complexity of a constellation made up of open and never completely determined processes to a metaphysical cage. To put it in more obvious terms, it would mean accepting only the history of those who want to arrest (and thus refuse) history in order to impose their point of view as the only acceptable one. "The events of the world do not form an orderly queue, like the English. They crowd around chaotically, like Italians" (Rovelli, 2018).

Assembled materially in historical processes and analytical practices, the Mediterranean has been captured within contemporary European culture in a combination of judgments and geographies. Today, it is suspended between its presumed ancient roots now in ruins, and the leisure activities of modern vacations. The recent arrival of 'illegal' immigrants, accompanied by the ghosts of thousands of bodies strewn on the sea bed, has dramatically pierced this image of the Mediterranean, breaching the complacent surfaces of its history. Its repressed complexity now resurfaces in all its force. The non-authorized arrival of the modern migrant has reopened that archive, torn the maps that had once confined such strangers in precise locations – elsewhere, on the other side, certainly not in Europe – and has exposed the Mediterranean and modern Europe to a series of unexpected prospects and voices.

This present-day interruption overlaps and interconnects with other interrogations. The recent revolts against authoritarian regimes in the Arab world that have challenged the status quo, the deadly conflicts in the Balkans, and the colonial war of the State of Israel against the Palestinians, ongoing since 1948, all deepen questions arriving today from the renewed

and unexpected centrality of the Mediterranean. Such prospects insist not only in geopolitical terms, but also in definitions of citizenship and the rights of residence. It is precisely along these borders, with the emergence of other maps of belonging, that the constrictions of a preceding, strictly European frame fall apart. The cartography of our geopolitics, claiming to manage this complex formation and explain its development, now appears inadequate.

This is not simply about acknowledging the 'others', their histories and cultures; it is rather to register the limits of our own apparatuses of knowledge. Opposed to searching for yet another 'neutral' and detached academic explanation (which would inevitably reproduce the universal 'superiority' of its language), we want to try to draw from the Mediterranean, its narratives and its multiple archives, the imperative to receive a multitude of historical and cultural conditions that can take us on an innovative critical path. In the wake of the perspectives laid out by cultural, postcolonial and decolonial studies, the proposition is to reorient the question of the Mediterranean in a series of new registers. This re-mapping and re-narrating of the Mediterranean clearly evokes the plastic geographies of de-territorialization and re-territorialization; an uprooting and re-orienting of given interpretations. Posing the question of by whom, how and why the Mediterranean is explained leads to a critical evaluation of the current political economy of knowledge (and power). Listening to the languages used to narrate the Mediterranean, and crossing the spaces in which such languages are transmitted and translated, means folding and crumpling the received structure of sense (without erasing it), thus creating a historical and critical depth that proposes a different Mediterranean, one still to come.

Thinking with the diver. A male body, clearly dark skinned, defies the modern European version of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary and the Greek heroes: all white and Aryan. A body that two thousand five hundred years ago descended gracefully through air, eyes fixed on the future. This famous figure is painted on the inner side of the lid of a sarcophagus (the Tomb of the Diver) and was therefore destined to invisibility (Carter, 2015). It is, however, visible to us now, since it was unearthed and opened fifty years ago, and it sheds light on the present through an emerging reconfiguration of the past. The supple figure, in mid-flight, is surrounded on all four sides of the interior of the tomb by reclining men gathered in a symposium. It

comes from the Greek site of Poseidonia, better known by its Roman name, Paestum, situated on the Tyrrhenian coast south of Salerno, close to the mouth of the river Sele.

As a Greek colony, Paestum was part of the expansion of the city-states of the Peloponnese peninsula that extended across Homer's "wine-dark sea" to Asia Minor, north through the Black Sea to the steppes, and West through Sicily and southern Italy to the coasts of modern-day France and Spain. As with all colonialisms, there was the conquest, submission and enslavement of indigenous populations. The land was never empty. Control had to be wrought from local authorities; blood shed; lives arbitrarily terminated (Zuchtriegel 2017). This involved an uninvited political imposition on the territory, the import of foreign memory and culture. Today, most of these details disappear, lost in the myths of a European nostalgia for the presumed purity and nobility of its origins. The recall of this white-washed past in modern imperial ambitions is continually exposed in the architectural grammar of contemporary Occidental capitals: from London, Paris and Berlin to Washington and Rome. The authority of these neo-classical buildings proposes an invented past: the buildings of the Ancient World they seek to emulate were in fact decorated in vivid colours.

Such anachronisms also open up other possibilities: less about seeking to correct the record and rather to brush existing accounts against the grain. To open the tomb, to open the archive, is also to suggest a set of connections and coordinates with which we could choose to navigate the African-Asian-European matrix of the Mediterranean. While not abandoning the disciplinary competences that have brought this past to light, it means refusing to reduce this material to a single inventory of time. We can adopt a more ironic relation to origins. In a sort of archaeology of archaeology, the invitation is to try to unearth another genealogy, one that does not simply reflect a European will to power. Drawing from the heart of so-called 'European civilization', from its Greek and Mediterranean 'origins', while raising another set of questions, we encounter other geographies of comprehension, other lines of interpretation, that render that apparently distant past proximate and potentially disruptive. The flat taxonomy of time, in which everything is in its chronological and cultural place, is brusquely interrupted and fractured, ready for another assemblage of comprehension. Like the painting of the diver, executed for unseeing

eyes but now recovered and exposed, we too can take into consideration the hidden and sedimented elements that suggest other measurements of time and space. There are questions of entitlement: who has the right to narrate and why? According to what type of genealogy is memory possessed and authorized? Trying to answer these questions leads to shifting the very premises of the existing humanities and their rule on such questions and perspectives. In breaking apart the philological imperative to re-assemble its elements in another configuration, we assume a deeper responsibility. This is to acknowledge the precariousness and constant vulnerability of that language to a past we can never fully recover nor possess. A past that in still being assembled and registered traces and shapes our future.

This also implies returning objects to the thickness of their cultural lineage and to the resonance of their historical memories in archival connection to their possible future. The aim then is to return history itself to another history, and disband the automatic link with scientific neutrality as the guarantee of our language and knowledge. This, to repeat, is to take responsibility for both language and memory. If, for instance, we read Greek colonization in the Mediterranean not only as a thalassocracy, but also as evidence of the diasporas and migrations from the Greek cities that inaugurated the colonial enterprise, then a gap in time is opened up, rendering that past close to contemporary concerns. Establishing an emporium, practicing colonization, disciplining a territory according to a specific cultural order, experimenting, contesting and absorbing hybridisation: these were all central elements in the experience of Paestum some two and a half thousand years ago, just as they were to modernity. In this perspective, an archipelago is outlined which is not simply spatial and geographical, but also temporal. It allows us to jump across time. In the undeniable specificities of each history and locality, we can also acknowledge commonalities that compose a constellation, whereby the past becomes comprehensible to future projections.

If the diver in the tomb is proof of a migratory and hybrid culture – the Greek settlements of Magna Grecia bordering Tuscan, Roman and Lucan cultures – it also points us to a migrating Mediterranean. This sea has clearly offered hospitality to many peoples travelling in many different directions: Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Norman, Genovese, Catalan, Venetian, Ottoman... To think in such terms,

means, again, to open up the archive and insist on a fluidity that spills over the borders of what today is largely a collection of the national narratives of this complex geo-history. Furthermore, it implies bringing into today's symposium, inebriated by the deterministic liquor of neoliberalism, deeper debates that remove the question of modern migration from its frequent marginalization in socio-economic terms to its role as the driving force of Mediterranean cultures and modernity itself. More extensive claims of belonging here cross our legal, cultural and historical borders, and remain unanswered. The access to citizenship, the right to narrate, the right to have rights, disturb the existing political order (Arendt, 2017). The migrant becomes a cypher, a non-person whose practices and presence decodifies the asymmetric relations of power that orchestrate the arbitrary violence of the present (Dal Lago, 2005).

This approach is part of a critical perspective according to which the making and meaning of space is history (Carter, 1996). This does not simply mean that history happens in a specific place, but rather that the place itself bestows shape and substance to temporal processes. Chronology and scales of temporality are intersected by material ecologies: geography is history (Farinelli, 2016). Thinking of, and with, the historical and cultural formation of the Mediterranean, trying to define and configure it, we are struck by the necessity to overcome not only disciplinary and national borders (and here the challenge of cultural and postcolonial studies come forcibly into play), but also to disorient and reorient the epistemological coordinates that we are used to applying. In this manner, the study of the Mediterranean provokes the chance to experiment with a series of arguments that challenge the rationalising representation of reason as being capable of making the world fully transparent to its will. To insist on the historical and political valence of the forms of life and culture that escape the rational cage where everything is reduced to the grammar of a single mode of thinking means to propose both another Mediterranean, and another manner of operating in the world. Here, the visual, musical and literary arts teach us something. They offer different languages through which we can map and see a Mediterranean that escapes a monothematic definition, confined in an academic and disciplinary logic, to propose unexpected and innovative critical passages. Here the presumed dialectics of historical progress comes undone, not in an erasure of history, but in the interruption of its abstract linearity. It leads to reconfigurations

in the material and temporal stratifications that assemble the presence of history in the present. In this key, the Mediterranean becomes a laboratory, leading to new interpretation of modernity itself.

We are working with the material available to us – the historical evidence, concepts and definitions of the Mediterranean that we have inherited – within our specific linguistic and cultural limits. Here we find ourselves adopting a certain critical scepticism, fostered by the knowledge of the colonial construction and historical invention of the Mediterranean, in turn largely supported by the *mare nostrum* myth of a Latin imperial order. The question of the definition of the Mediterranean's historical, political and theoretical borders becomes almost always an exclusively European issue. In other words, the space that is geographically defined as 'Mediterranean' does not coincide with a historical or cultural unit; it is over determined by a European perspective. We think that this friction between a shared space and differentiated histories produces a significant problematic. Without seeking to close the gap, the Mediterranean then floats without immediate definition. It supports a critical horizon still to be fully acknowledged. If, given the current relations of power, the Mediterranean is an integral part of the modern European and Western order, it also exposes the profound colonial undercurrents of the current political arrangement. Recognising the crossing of the Mediterranean by subaltern histories and subordinated cultures we begin to plumb the darker depths of this geo-historical and critical constellation.

Elsewhere we have insisted on the disruptive heresy of the essay form as a necessary antidote to the stultifying premises of the scientific paper (Chambers 2017). A unique rationality ruling the world, cultivated and extended by Occidental hegemony across the globe, results in an absolutism that historically coincides with precise geo-philosophical and cultural coordinates. Against the claims of the universal Subject, and what Sylvia Winter calls the 'coloniality of being', the persistence and resistance of other bodies in diverse localities shatters such a metaphysical frame (Wynter, 2003). Reduced through a racialised hierarchisation to anthropological footnotes, the silenced histories of those other practices and lives nevertheless live on. They consistently return to interrogate the purported transparency and inevitability of modernity's 'progress', deviating and destabilising its premises (da Silva, 2007). Rather than fighting toe-to-toe with the scientific claims of the existing social and

human sciences, the choice is that of a deliberate detour through the languages of the arts. This means recognising and unpacking in the aesthetic attributes of the self-determination of Man and his sensibilities the 'regulative discourse of the human'; in other words, the very constitution of the Western subject (Lloyd, 2019). It is precisely what, sustained in music, the visual arts and the poetics of language, escapes capture by such reasoning that disseminates the dissonance of an alternative historical order and cultural score.

In such intervals and interruptions European 'historicity cannot dissipate its own effects of power; it cannot institute subjects that signify otherwise' (da Silva, 2007). Registering such limits and playing on the edges and in the interstices of authorised space time – what we call modernity – our inherited conceptual frame is robbed of its conclusions. Interrogating this regime of representation, and its presumed distance from the felt heterogeneity and differentiated materiality of the world that guarantees its neutrality and universality, challenges its will to categorise, classify and pathologize the rest of the planet. To reintroduce what in mapping the Mediterranean has been excluded, in order to permit a singular reason to conduct its historical and cultural explanations, is to query and, ultimately, snap the chains of causality that always confirm our hands on the wheel and our lines on the map. In the terrible world we inhabit something always breaks through and threatens to take us elsewhere. It is precisely here, in this political and cultural sublime that remains intractable and refuses to confirm me, us, them, as stable and formed, that we propose to develop our analyses and trace our critical discourse.

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The Issue of Violence Against Women in Algeria: Causes and Public Policies

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Abstract

This contribution deals with the topic of: violence against women in Algeria: causes and public policies on violence against women. The violence against women in Algeria has represented a social phenomenon that affects Algerian women of all ages, single and married, residing in cities or rural areas, working or non-working. This phenomenon is most often carried out within families by the husband against his wife. However, the Algerian authorities have adopted a range of policies in order to face this violence against women: persuasive measures of awareness and sensitization through the family, school and the media, as well as providing protection to women in centres. In addition, over the last twenty years, the Government of Algeria has promulgated policies, programs and a series of laws has been enacted to punish harassment of women. Finally, the government created a national committee whose aim is the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women.

Keywords: Violence Against Women, Algeria, Public Policies.

Introduction

The violence against women in Algeria has represented a social phenomenon that affects Algerian women of all ages, single and married, residing in cities or rural areas, working or non-working. Violence often happens within families, by the husband against his wife.

However, the Algerian authorities have adopted a range of policies in order to face the phenomenon, such a persuasive measures of awareness and sensitization through the family, school and the media, as well as protection in towns.

In addition, over the last twenty years, the Government of Algeria has promulgated policies and programmes and a series of laws has been enacted to punish harassment, and tighten the punishment for men, including husbands, who engage in physical and moral violence against women.

Nowadays, a husband who practices any form of coercion or intimidation on his wife, in order to dispose of her property or financial resources, will be punished by imprisonment from six months to two years; anyone who deliberately injures or beats his wife shall be punished by imprisonment from one to 20 years, depending on the severity of the injury, and in case of death, the penalty is life imprisonment.

Finally, the government created a national committee aimed at the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and in 2013 an action plan related to this area in has established the mechanisms for its evaluation.

In the following pages, I will try to analyse causes and statistics about the violence against women, as well as the different policies developed by the Algerian government to fight the phenomenon.

1. Evolution of violence against women in Algeria

In the contemporary era, the first widespread acts of violence against Algerian women occurred during Algerian revolution 1954-1962. In that occasion, many Algerian women were raped by the French military, as a response to the attacks committed by the Algerian combatants (mujahedeen), or for their participation in the anti-colonialist revolution.

However, very few women dared to speak of the rapes by French soldiers, like Louiza Iguilahriz, a former mujahedeen, who decided in 2001, despite her son's disapproval, to publish a book on the rapes she suffered during the torture sessions of French army (Belarouci, 2008, p.53).

After independence, in the 1970s Algerian women faced the first acts of violence in the public sphere by men, and later, in the 1980s, by the Islamist movement. Both adopted a conservative approach against women, who were physically assaulted in major cities for refusing to wear "attire conforming to Islamic standards"; some of them were sprayed with acid on the face or on their uncovered legs, and attacked on the beach (Iamarene-Djerbal, 103-142), particularly between 1988-1990.

More specifically, at the end of the 1970s, first signs of moralizing social tendency emerged, by limiting public space to women and imposing to them a type of attire (Matmati, 2017).

At that time, the aggressions on women were neither reported in the mass media, which was controlled by the public authorities, nor were a subject of denunciation¹. Since 1965, the woman speech was gradually reserved for mass organization UNFA, which was under the organic and ideological dependence of the FLN (Belhouari-Musette, pp. 177-192).

The aggressions, which represented a clear violation of individual freedoms and human rights, were not publicly condemned, as being practiced on a large scale by the authorities themselves. Hence, silence of mass media, One-party FLN, and the public authorities, during all the years 1980 to 1988: violence against women, attacks on the liberty of individuals, intimidation, threats, will be a constant in the recent history of Algerian society (Iamarene-Djerbal, 103-142).

In addition, during 1980s, women's associations considered that the 1984 family code, elaborated and enacted by the deputies of the FLN, was too conservative, because it imposed differentiated conditions on marriage and divorce: what it allows or prohibits, depends on whether one is a man or a woman; more in general, the code places women in an unequal relationship (Lalami, 2017, pp. 83-90).

During the 1980s, following the rise of Islamists, and the 1990s, with their radicalization, the violence against women increased (Matmati, 2017): segregationist speeches and calls for violence against women " mutabarijat ", large-scale physical violence against who did not respect the dress code; since 1991, even murders of women who did not respect this code, who were accused of supporting the authorities and were related to members of the security services.

In the same period, new dangerous forms of violence appeared: obligation for women and families to maintain armed groups; rapes through forced marriages, sometimes with the complicity of parents; multiplication of kidnappings of women, under the pretext of maintaining armed groups; rape and collective under cover of *zauadj el mut'a* throughout the country (Iamarene-Djerbal, 2006, pp. 103 -142).

However, according to a non-exhaustive official census, during the ten years of the conflict between armed Islamists and the national army, 10.000

¹ The only woman who spoke and denounced forced marriages and suicides of young girls, was Fadéla M'Rabet, as a result she was quickly exiled after the publication of her book *The Algerians* (Iamarene-Djerbal, 2006)

women were sold for marriage of enjoyment by their relatives, served as sex slaves in the Islamist *maquis* (Khelifi, 2008), and, according to the officially reported data, from 1993 to 1997 other 5000 women were raped by these groups and taken as spoils (Benoune, 2018) of war during attacks. Some of them were raped by the leader of the group, who “passed” them on to his men (Khelifi, 2008).

The number of the victims is still imprecise and the authorities gave an estimate of 700 for the year 2005. The survivors of the *maquis*, who managed to escape or were released by the army, live in shame, due to the social stigma (Khelifi, 2008) surrounding rape and the widespread impunity for abuse in the 1990s, so that very few victims have publicly spoken of their experiences (Benoune, 2018).

The systematic rape of women and girls was one of the strategies adopted by terrorists. Women were invested “as [a] battlefield where all blows are allowed: rape, mutilation, sexual slavery... as part of the strategies implemented by fundamentalists in order to humiliate and destroy the whole community considered as an enemy” (Belarouci, 2008, pp. 53-56).

The military defeat of the Islamists in the early 2000s did not reduce their pressure as soon as the religious practice has even developed (Matmati, 2017).

In that context of male domination and widespread violence against women, thanks to the influence of western values clandestine women’s associations emerged, such as Equality, Emancipation, Promotion, Israr and many others. Their activists will continuously stroll the sidewalks of Algerian cities still 1990s to fight against unequal rights and they asked to cancel the family code of 1984 (Daoud, 2004, pp. 345- 360).

2. Causes of violence against women

Violence against women in Algeria takes many forms:

1. Physical violence: Assaulting a woman’s body by punches, slaps, blows with objects (belt, stick...), knives... resulting in injuries, fractures, burns.

2. Sexual violence: trying to attack the woman’s body, such as rape or harassment.

3. Social violence: restricting the freedom and movement of women.

4. Psychological violence: turning to women for insults and verbal abuse, using obscene words, and calling woman with inappropriate names and attributes

In general, physical violence is always followed or preceded by insults and death threats. These acts leave psychological and negative effects on women.

Violence also breaks out “for nothing, under any pretext”, extra-marital relationships, drugs, alcohol, jealousy, hence violence can be a mode of family functioning (Bouatta, 2015, 85- 98).

Moreover, the lack of economic opportunities and increasing unemployment, as well as conflict and tension in the relationship between the spouses are considered as a major factors of violence against women in Algeria.

Also the prevailing culture of society is considered one of the most important reasons that lead to the emergence of violence against women: religion and patriarchy, which are linked to the process of social oppression

In fact, Patriarchate represents an important form of oppression in the Algerian society, which manifests itself at all levels of social life. Patriarchate is expressed by a system of rules in which social relations are determined according to sex, age and kinship in such a way that they confer special privileges on fathers, brothers and husbands.

This familial patriarchate constitutes the beginning of the subjugation of the women, insofar as the masculine dimension considers normal and ordinary the subservience of the women and nobody imagine of recognizing their rights.

Moreover, Algeria faces the existence of public patriarchy, which tends to deny women, to varying degrees, the enjoyment of human rights. This public patriarchy can be characterized by traits:

- A collective mentality that considers violence against women permissible and less severe than other forms of social violence.
- The official proclamation of the equality in front of the law turns to the opposite; by condemning women not to pretend to have access to the civil and political rights, which men enjoy (Chikhi, 2001, 189-191).

3. The Algerian strategy to fight violence against women:

Due to NGO's and international organisations' pressure, in last decades the Algerian authorities has taken many measures to protect the status of women, empower women's rights and reduce gender-based violence.

After the Beijing Conference in 1995, the Algerian government adopted policies that respond to the requirements of the program of work of the Beijing conference, through the ratification - with reservations - of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, hence the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing International Program for Women in 1995 (Benzine, 2012, pp. 13-38) (OHCHR, 1979) and the creation of institutional mechanisms favourable to gender equality, such as the Ministry of National Solidarity, the Family and Women (MSNFCF) and the National Council for the Family and Women (CNFF) (Secrétariat de la Fondation des Femmes de l'Euro – Méditerranée, 2019). Therefore, the Algerian state adopted the gender approach in preparing some government programs in order to guarantee women's rights in the workplace and women in difficult situations (Benzine, 2012, pp. 13-38).

Furthermore, the Algerian government has enacted many laws for the embodiment equality between men and women, like the criminalization of sexual harassment at work in 2004, through the penal code -Which stipulates the offense of sexual harassment and will be punished by imprisonment from two (2) months to one (1) year, and a fine of fifty thousand (50,000) DA to one hundred thousand (100,000) DA, for any person who abuses the authority conferred on him by his function or profession, by giving orders to others, making threats, imposing constraints or exerting pressure, in order to obtain favors of a sexual nature. In the event of recidivism, the penalty is doubled (Presidence de la Republique, 2012, p. 95) (Lalami, 2017, 83 – 90), and the amendment of family code in 2005 (Presidence de la Republique, 05-02 du 27 Février 2005, p. 2), that establishes the legal age for marriage to 19 years for men and women.

In 2005 also the nationality law was amended, allowing the transmission of nationality from mother to child and from wife to spouse (Presidence de la Republique, 27 Février 2005, p.14), whereas in previous code, only paternal ancestry allowed to obtain Algerian nationality.

However, the institutional response provided in 2005 remains below the expectations of women associations, which considered these amendments a balancing act between the demands of the feminist movement and those of the Islamist and nationalist conservative currents (Lalami, 2017, pp. 83 – 90)

New measures were taken in the following years. In October 2007, the Algerian government announced a national strategy to combat violence against women, which is based on three main axes:

1. Ensuring security and protection for women: by developing partnerships with the security services, government and civil society, as well as providing an appropriate reception space for women survivors of violence and finally establishing structures for listening, treatment and recording complaints (Ministère Délégué Chargé de la Famille et de la Condition Féminine, 2007, p. 17).

2. Ensuring appropriate sponsorship by health users; by including violence against women as a public health problem, as soon as the health sector according to its tasks is the first to resort to survivors of violence, so, it is required to provide primary treatment, detection and examination of acts of violence, as well as to ensure prevention and guidance jointly with security services and the justice sector (Lalami, 2017, pp. 83-90).

The strategic aims of the health sector are:

- a) The development of a national care and prevention program
- b) The integration of reception at the emergency level and the management of violence in the basic care services / systems and specialized services concerned, through the life cycle approach,
- c) Strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of the health sector for a coherent care of survivors of violence by a multidisciplinary team.
- d) Strengthening cooperation and coordination mechanisms with other government and civil society partners (Ministère Délégué Chargé de la Famille et de la Condition Féminine, 2007, p. 18).

3. Ensuring legal protection and legal assistance: by strengthening the technical capabilities of judicial institutions, including family affairs courts, and providing appropriate reception spaces for listening and legal advice to survivors of violence, as well as developing free and specialized legal

advice at all levels, especially needy groups (Ministère Délégué Chargé de la Famille et de la Condition Féminine, 2007, pp. 19-20) .

Among the most recent measures, the penal code was amended in 2015 by including criminalization of various forms of violence against women like; marital violence and any form of assault against the wife or verbal violence, as well the frequent psychological condition that puts the victim in a state that affects her dignity or affects her physical safety or psychological, and the practice of any form of coercion or intimidation on his wife in order to dispose of her property or financial resources (Présidence de la République, 30 Décembre 2015, pp. 3-4).

Finally, harassing women in public places, saying or signalling that she is offending her modesty with increasing the penalty if the victim is a minor.

Besides, strengthening the social protection of women according to Law No. 15-01 of January 4, 2015, which includes the establishment of the alimony fund, guarantees the divorced women who are custody children to receive the amount of alimony if the husband fails to pay for it (Présidence de la République, 7 Janvier 2015, p. 6).

Moreover, the status of women has been reinforced in the constitution of 2016, which emphasizes the principle of equality between men and women in the labour market.

In the political field, the representation of women has been eased through the inclusion of quotas, as a positive measure accordance to the constitution and organic law since 2012 (Présidence de la République, 14 Janvier 2012, p. 39). As a result the number of women represented in the parliament and in elected assemblies has increased, for example in the legislative elections of 2012, women won 145 seats, i. e. 31.38% of total, whereas in the legislative elections of 2017, the number decreased to 105 seats out of 462 (Sid Ali, 2017).

As a whole, these amendments were enacted thanks to the lobbying exerted by the women's movement towards female deputies, whose number quadrupled after the legislative elections of 2012 (Lalami, 2017, pp. 83-90).

What is the impact of this strategy on the violence on women? Let us examines the following data:

Tab. 1. Cases of violence

Years	Cases of violence
2007	8277 (Khelifi, 2008)
2014	6.983 (Samir Rabah, 2016)
2015	9.663 (Samir Rabah, 2016)
2016	
2017	7586 (Samir Rabah, 2016)
2018/19 (first months)	7061 (Ismain, 2018)

Data show the decline of violence against women since 2015, demonstrating that the strategy adopted by the Algerian government has having an impact on the protection of women.

Conclusion

Women in Algeria have faced the violence from men, provoked by many reasons, both political, with the influence of the conservative tendency of Algerian society, and social, due to the influence of patriarchy.

This situation has urged women in the cities to initiate a struggle to obtain rights, especially those related to equality with men.

Hence, after Algeria's signing international agreements and treaties related to the protection of women, the country has adopted a national strategy, which has contributed to reduce the cases of violence against women.

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Coping Italian Emergency COVID-19 through Smart working: From Necessity to Opportunity

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Abstract

Smart working is defined as a new managerial philosophy characterized by higher flexibility and autonomy in the choice of working spaces, time and tools in return for more accountability on results. The health emergency related to Covid-19 helped the spread of smart working and public administrations are experimenting a frequent and intensive use of smart working practices and technologies. Through a survey on 52 Italian municipalities and 26 other public administrations we have explored the level of adoption of smart working and explored its correlation with work-life balance, autonomy, and innovation. Findings show that: (1) before the spread of coronavirus and the consequent lockdown, workers used to work in the office just for half of their working time; (2) women are more likely than men to part-time work; (3) part-time work is an effective tool to promote work-life balance, which is easier for those who do not have relatives to take care for; (4) smart working adoption results in larger autonomy, which promotes confidence and so propensity towards innovation. The main contribution of this work is to draw a first overall picture of the effects of smart working on innovation in Italian municipalities. This work presents some first results of a research still in progress and can be the basis for further research, both as regards more extensive research and for more in-depth research. The work also provides some useful working ideas for setting the exit route from the health emergency.

Keywords: Smart working, Public Administration, Work-life balance.

Introduction

In Italy, in 2016 the discussion on smart working started in Parliament based on two different proposals¹, aiming to:

- Respond to the need of a flexible method of organizing employment relationship, in order to increase productivity and to facilitate work-life balance;

¹ DDL 2229 presented on February 3rd, 2016 by Maurizio Sacconi and DDL 2233 presented on February 8th, 2016 by Giuliano Poletti

- Provide employers and employees with an adequate legal framework to bring in a new idea about working and work organization that was gradually emerging.

This second proposal indicated that the forms of self-employment or employee work in this new mode were based on phases, cycles and objectives and do not have time or place constraints. Much of the parliamentary discussion focused on the definition of working time, on the freedom to choose smart working and on the role of the trade unions, on the purpose of smart working as a tool for better work-life balance (for the worker) or as a mean to manage personnel more flexibly, for the benefit of businesses, at the cost, however, of greater job insecurity. The discussion focused on the instrumental nature of smart working and on the fact that it could be beneficial to support cultural and technological change in working environments. The two original proposals have been integrated and the final version was approved by the Senate on May 10th, 2017. The law was promulgated by the Head of State on May 22nd, 2017. Smart working is defined by law 81/2017 as a method of executing subordinate employment relationship established by an agreement between the parties, in addition to some forms of organization by phases, cycles and objectives and without specific time or place of work restrictions, with the possible use of technological tools for carrying out the work activity. The articles that regulate the fundamental aspects go from number 18 to number 23; it should also be taken into account that law 145/2018 (Budget law 2019) integrated other aspects into smart working, further conceiving it as a tool for better work-life balance.

1. Smart working in the public sector

Law 81/2017 specifies that smart working is a way of working suitable for both the private and public sectors, but in the same years the reform of public employment, with law 124/2015, had laid the foundations for promoting smart working in the public sector, which was further fostered by the subsequent 3/2017 directive (so-called Madia directive). The objectives set by law 124/2015 are primarily aimed at ensuring work-life balance of public employees, promoting the use of different forms of part-time work, as well as the use of telework, experimenting with forms of co-working and smart working.

In line with law 81/2017, the Madia Directive confirms for the public sector as well that no category or type of worker is excluded a priori, and it is not allowed to discriminate employees based on their contract. It is also

necessary to encourage new mothers and parents of children with disabilities, as required by law 145/2018.

To facilitate smart working arrangements, the Madia directive confirms that work must be organized not based on physical presence, but on actual employee performance, identifying specific, measurable, compatible objectives that are coherent with the organizational context. Of course, priority must be provided to those in situations of personal, social or family disadvantage or those who are engaged in volunteering. The aim of the various interventions was to redesign spaces, favoring collaborative environments and promoting the usage of digital technologies. Moreover, smart working must be characterized by spatial flexibility, which makes it possible to work both within and outside the administration premises. If no fixed location is required outside (unlike teleworking), it is nevertheless advisable to identify the premises outside the usual workplace where the work will take place. However, this identification is not mandatory. Another element of flexibility concerns the schedule; in fact, the Directive asks to promote goal-oriented work culture.

This work presents some first results of a research still in progress about the impact of smart working adoption in Italian municipalities.

2. Objectives

The covid-19 health emergency required the identification of new ways of working to balance the continuity of administrative and economic activities and the protection of public health; smart working has been recognized suitable. As established by central government, until the end of the emergency, on the whole national territory and at any subordinate employment relationship, smart working can be activated just by sending the worker the safety information and uploading a file with the list of workers in smart working.

In the public sector, smart working saw the formal end of the experimental phase with the decree-law 9/2020. After being a test, it now becomes the norm. The circular 1/2020 of the Minister also highlights the importance of having recourse, as a matter of priority, to smart working as a more advanced form of flexibility in work performance.

In the context described, it is easy to imagine that Public Administrations, and particularly municipalities, are experimenting a situation in which a frequent and intensive use of technologies is needed. Moreover, working from home is currently compulsory for many workers in the public sector and probably it will be the new normal, according to the Ministry of Public Administration, who declared that “the challenge of

the public administration of tomorrow will be to make smart working a solid reality in the organization of public work"².

It is then interesting to inquire to what extent and for which aspects improvement can be reached. More in details, it is worth to inquire the level of adoption of smart working in municipalities before the emergency and the perception of workers in respect to confidence and autonomy, and how this results in fostering innovation. Moreover, it appears to be interesting to inquire about the opinion of different categories of workers (male or female, with or without children to care for, with or without elderly or disabled people to care for) about work-life balance as well, in order to differentiate interventions to consolidate the practices that are currently spreading and systematize them in a more organic way. This could make smart working a good way to promote work-life balance, autonomy and innovation in municipalities.

3. Data and methodology

Our data derive from a survey distributed to about 20,000 public administrations in Italy by Polytechnic University of Milan and Synergia s.r.l. Data regarding municipalities are presented here. The survey considers smart working because of working hour (temporal) flexibility (Scandura et al., 1997), a degree of digitization and the use of ICT tools (Lieke et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2018), layout and space flexibility (following the classic distinction between behavior, bytes, and bricks). It considers also work-life balance (Nam, 2014), autonomy (Tummers et al., 2018), confidence and the perception of a culture that fosters creativity and innovation. Each issue has been inquired through several items, and each item has been transposed into a statement. The level of agreement has been asked for each statement on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items have been aggregated via principal component factors analysis.

The survey collected information about gender, age, the presence of children, elderly and disabled people to care for, in order to have control

²"La sfida della PA di domani sarà quella di rendere lo smart working una solida realtà nell'organizzazione del lavoro pubblico. In queste settimane, per necessità, siamo stati costretti a intervenire massivamente e a velocizzare molti processi - ha dichiarato il Ministro - adattandoci alle esigenze imposte dal Covid, con ferma in mente l'idea che la PA non potesse fermarsi né arretrare. Abbiamo acquisito un bagaglio di conoscenze importanti che non possiamo far deperire. Con le sigle sindacali - ha sottolineato Dadone - stiamo individuando gli strumenti migliori per far sì che un cambiamento improvviso possa trasformarsi in una rivoluzione permanente". (Fabiana Dadone, April 23rd, 2020)

variables for the regressions. The distribution of working time in different places (office, home, means of transport, public spaces) before the beginning of the lockdown period has also been taken into consideration.

Tab. 1 - The sample considered

Median age (years old)	53
Median seniority (years)	22
<i>Gender of respondents</i>	%
Male	34,62
Female	65,38
<i>Children living at home</i>	%
Yes	36,54
No	63,46
<i>Elderly/disabled people living at home</i>	%
Yes	29,41
No	70,59
<i>Supervisory role</i>	%
Yes	63,46
No	36,54

Analysis through descriptive statistics and t-tests have been conducted as well.

The sample is composed of 52 respondents from municipalities distributed all over the Italian territory. 88% of respondents are full-time workers. Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the sample.

4. Results

First, it is interesting to notice that, before the beginning of the covid-19 emergency, municipalities workers did not work just only in their office. More in details, just half of their time was spent in the office, while more

than one out of three of it was spent working from home; public spaces are taken into consideration, too. Results are shown in table 2.

Tab. 2 - Time spent in each place

<i>Place</i>	<i>%</i>
Office	50,33
Home	35,00
Public spaces	9,73
Means of transport	2,80
Other offices	2,13

Looking at work-life balance, data confirms that women are more likely than men to part-time work, probably because the weight of care for non-self-sufficient relatives falls on them. It is also worth to notice that work-life balance shows higher results for respondents who have no children living at home and no elderly/disabled people living at home. Part-time works to favor work-life balance, as expected. Results are shown in table 3, differences are statistically significant at 95%.

Tab. 3 - The level of implementation of smart working

	<i>all</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>diff.</i>
part-time work	0,88	1	0,82	0,18
	<i>all</i>	<i>w/o children</i>	<i>with children</i>	<i>diff.</i>
work-life balance	0,00	0,20	-0,34	0,54
	<i>all</i>	<i>w/o elderly/ disabled</i>	<i>with elderly/ disabled</i>	<i>diff.</i>
work-life balance	0,04	0,22	-0,39	0,61
	<i>all</i>	<i>part-time workers</i>	<i>full-time workers</i>	<i>diff.</i>
work-life balance	0,00	0,91	-0,12	1,02

Then, through factor analysis and then using a simultaneous equations model the relations between smart working, confidence, autonomy and

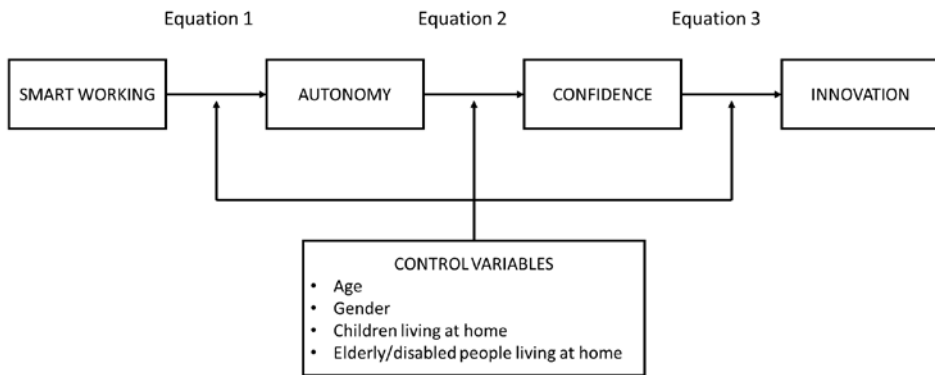
innovation have been inquired. Each relation depicted in figure 1 has been inquired through a linear regression. Results are shown in table 4.

Tab. 4 - Simultaneous equations model results

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>EQUATION 1 (innovation)</i>						
confidence	0.7005	0.1065	6.5800	0.0000	0.4917	0.9092
constant	- 1.5385	0.9280	- 1.6600	0.0970	- 3.3573	0.2803
<i>Control variables</i>						
age	0.0272	0.0162	1.6800	0.0930	- 0.0046	0.0591
gen	- 0.0095	0.2102	- 0.0500	0.9640	- 0.4214	0.4024
children	0.0582	0.2365	0.2500	0.8060	- 0.4053	0.5216
caregiver	0.2051	0.2171	0.9400	0.3450	- 0.2204	0.6306
<i>EQUATION 2 (confidence)</i>						
autonomy	0.3837	0.1348	2.8500	0.0040	0.1195	0.6478
constant	- 2.4002	1.1514	- 2.0800	0.0370	- 4.6569	- 0.1434
<i>Control variables</i>						
age	0.0408	0.0202	2.0200	0.0430	0.0012	0.0804
gen	- 0.0437	0.2745	- 0.1600	0.8730	- 0.5817	0.4942
children	0.6875	0.2946	2.3300	0.0200	0.1101	1.2649
caregiver	- 0.0231	0.2846	- 0.0800	0.9350	- 0.5810	0.5348
<i>EQUATION 3 (autonomy)</i>						
smart working	0.4103	0.1374	2.9900	0.0030	0.1410	0.6796
constant	- 0.0657	1.2082	- 0.0500	0.9570	- 2.4337	2.3023
<i>Control variables</i>						
age	0.0074	0.0212	0.3500	0.7260	- 0.0340	0.0489
gen	- 0.2991	0.2791	- 1.0700	0.2840	- 0.8460	0.2479
children	0.0168	0.3030	0.0600	0.9560	- 0.5771	0.6108
caregiver	- 0.3147	0.2873	- 1.1000	0.2730	- 0.8778	0.2484

Results in table 4 show that the adoption of smart working results in larger autonomy and this, via an increased level of confidence, can foster innovation. This has been verified also in general (not only for municipalities), and in general has been found that increasing autonomy job satisfaction increases as well.

Fig. 1 - The simultaneous equations model



Conclusion

The survey presented shows that in the sample of municipalities considered, before the spread of coronavirus and the consequent lockdown, workers used to work in the office just for half of their working time. In municipalities, women are more likely than men to part-time work; part-time work is an effective tool to promote work-life balance, that is easier for people with no children or other relatives to take care for.

Smart working adoption results in larger autonomy, that promotes confidence and so propensity towards innovation.

The lockdown has obliged workers and administrations to work from home, making necessary (and compulsory, to some extent) home working and the use of digital tools. The emergency made evident that working from places different than the office is possible and this practice must be consolidated.

If the emergency and the consequent lockdown will foster the adoption of smart working practices, workers in municipalities could gain in

autonomy and confidence. This could result in a larger propensity towards innovation in public administration.

The main contribution of this work is to draw a first overall picture of the effects of smart working on innovation in Italian municipalities. This work presents some first results of a research still in progress and can be the basis for further research, both as regards more extensive research and for more in-depth research. The work also provides some useful working ideas for setting the exit route from the health emergency. This research considers just a sample of Italian municipalities: it would be worth to analyze these issues in a more extensive way and not only looking at the period before the lockdown. It would be interesting to measure if and to what extent phenomena examined here saw an increase during the lockdown period.

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*Review of Mariella Nocenzi & Alessandra Sannella (eds.),
Perspectives for a New Social Theory of Sustainability,
Cham (Switzerland), Springer, 2020, pp. 123*

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Abstract:

Review of the collective book *Perspectives for a New Social Theory of Sustainability*, recently edited by Mariella Nocenzi and Alessandra Sannella.

Keywords: Sustainability, Social Theory, Contemporary Societies.

The collective book *Perspectives for a New Social Theory of Sustainability* (2020), edited by Mariella Nocenzi and Alessandra Sannella for the Springer publisher, has an ambitious goal which makes it particularly interesting both for scientific exchanges in the field of social sciences and for political debates in the public sphere. As often happens in work aiming at re-founding a paradigm thinking that orients new research methods and action programs it holds together a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens*. And this internal dialectic of overcoming, between negations and proposals, is present in all the essays, in those that focus on particular aspects as well as in those that elaborate a systematic framework.

So, what is the object of this cognitive and practical turning point?

In short, the book aims to provide a new perspective to describe and explain the constituent elements and reproduction mechanisms of contemporary societies. This is a complex project that integrates theoretical and methodological aspects and requires a step forward in the interdisciplinary collaboration of the social sciences. The aim is to generate a paradigm shift that defines in a new way which phenomena have to be studied, what questions have to be asked, how to carry out the problems and what rules have to be followed in interpreting the responses obtained. The systemic crisis that affects our age justifies the urgency of the challenge – a crisis that becomes

evident if we take a global viewpoint on ideological conceptions and implementation policies for the development models of social systems.

In recent decades, the exploitation of the planet's resources and the "time-space compression" of social relations have grown exponentially, with increasingly less governable structural effects on nature, communities and people's lives. This driving force of globalisation is moving along the tracks of a purely economic model that is indifferent to the principle of balance between man and the environment and the principle of social redistribution of wealth. To emphasize the human factor, many scientists call Anthropocene this geological era characterized by the destruction of natural and social ecosystems and the incapability to face a series of dysfunctional consequences – well documented by data on pollution and inequalities – without an evolutionary learning that focuses on unexpected aspects of modernization.

The inadequacy of the development model demands to rethink some principles of social theory equally shared by the different traditions of thought founded by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber and by the past century's revision. A first credit of the book edited by Nocenzi and Sannella is to underline how much the categories and analysis tools of contemporary researchers depend on the legacy of their "fathers" and how much there is a need for a deep cultural discontinuity.

The Archimedical point of this breakthrough is the concept of sustainability, indicated as humanity's goal for the human ecosystem balance (homeostasis). While the sustainable development question has become a central issue in the policies of nation-states and international organizations – as attested most recently by the "Agenda 2030" programme, signed in September 2015 by the governments of the 193 UN member states – on the other hand, sustainability has not yet been assumed as an effective knowledge paradigm for the exploration of social structures and processes, in order to revise the tools of analysis of the social sciences. As a logical consequence, the book has the ambition to make it starting from an epistemological perspective that introduces a "double hermeneutics" on the dialectic between human agency and non-human agency, and redefines the conceptual framework, first of all the most fundamental categories, such as time, space and social relation: «It is no longer possible to define time in a linear or circular way such as Nietzsche's (1964) assumption for Modernity, when it was compressed to the "now, the very soon." Thanks to the digital

revolution, projection to the future and the disintegration of the present fostered a rethinking of this basic sociological category, and also a re-interpretation of the other constituent concept, namely space. Subsequent to globalization and the coexistence of human and non-human actors, the compression and extension of time has affected the spatial dimension of the agency, position, and role of non-human actors, their shape and the dynamics of their relations. It was so effective that, taking into account temporal and spatial dimensions, we can now consider social relations as another essential element of society, probably the most strategic for the profile of a new social paradigm to adopt in an interpretation of current society» (Nocenzi & Sannella, 2020: 10).

To lead the world on a sustainable path, there must be a redesign of governance, but first and foremost a radical change in the mindset of individuals and collectives is needed. Without a real paradigm shift in the perception of problems, the choice of sustainability as a key criterion in development policies is inconceivable. The second credit of the book is to propose an integrated approach that considers sustainability as a permanent reference point, both avoiding the usual split between social theory and social research, that is between analytical frameworks and measurement techniques, and bridging the gap between the knowledge of social sciences and the strategic planning of public and private institutions. All specialist knowledge is involved, in order to overcome the restricted boundaries of the scientific-academic divisions and work according to innovative trans-disciplinary approaches. It is necessary to consider sustainability in the economic, social and environmental dimensions through a coherent theoretical and methodological model. It is for this reason that Enrico Giovannini highlights the importance of international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as an area in which to define a “holistic approach” to sustainable development. As Franco Ferrarotti points out, in the chapter *Social Research: On Participation and Critical Detachment*, first of all, this requires a reflective effort by sociologists, who must realize that the indispensable and irreplaceable research tool is their experience as social beings, totally involved in the reality under investigation: «This is certainly a sign of maturity, and indicates that sociological research, at least in certain fields, has progressed beyond the purely academic stage. The social scientist knows that he cannot take cover and keep discretely to one side. The process of research demands fieldwork, in direct contact with the

human reality that is under examination; it is based on the exchange of information; it is essentially a dialogue that cannot take place without leaving traces. The notion that the social scientist is not setting out to do anything, but is only trying to understand and to analyze, can no longer be regarded as acceptable. The questions that the investigation asks his interlocutor-subjects are not lost in the empty air; they become part of a situation of change, and are to some extent decisive in determining its course and further development» (2020: 100).

To understand this complex reality, a self-reflexive step concerns the fundamental theoretical frameworks of traditional sociology. The three essays in the first part of the book –*Theoretical Overview on Social Sciences and Sustainability*– in fact, examines their possibilities of adaptation to the changing new reality, considering the material and symbolic reproduction of global society. In *Sustainability and the Crisis of the Theoretical Functional Model*, Paolo De Nardis discusses the functionalist approach seeking to prove that the sustainability paradigm is grounded in that sociological tradition. By drawing on critical revision of Talcott Parsons' AGIL theoretical model, we could redesign the logic of intervention in the social systems organization that helps us to pursue the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and appeal to common ideals, and thus ensure the functional integration of social structures in the Agenda 2030 transition. In *Environmental Sustainability and the Evolution of Capitalism*, Uliano Conti compares traditional and contemporary capitalism, trying to actualize above all the sociological research of Alan Touraine. He argues that, thanks to technical progress and scientific research, under the pressure of collective movements on a global scale, social systems could redefine the idea of human life and the conditions of existence of human beings, while the capitalist system could co-evolve from the perspective of environmental awareness. Paolo Corvo's essay – *The Thought of Zygmunt Bauman as a Key for Introducing a New Social Theory* – explores the importance of Bauman's work in order to acquire a critical sociological imagination. This would make it possible to interpret in an innovative way the social transformations on the questions of freedom, justice and the suffering of human beings. And it would help us to understand how essential it is to realize that sustainability could transform both social systems and consumer lifestyles. The first part of the book thus proposes some sociological approaches that could find a social transferability of the

research results, in order to carry out analyses that are not detached from social reality.

The second part – “Methodological Paths and Perspectives for a New Social Theory of Sustainable Development” – aims to develop analytical paths for social research that can promote sustainability and sustainable development in three important fields: the definition of methodological and statistical tools, the detection of pathological phenomena in social reproduction and the planning of public policies.

In the international scientific literature and in the programmes of world organisations, sustainable development has been operationalised from three main dimensions: environmental, economic and social sustainability – although the definition of the concept of “threshold” and the related choice of measurement criteria for the latter dimension are still much debated. In the chapter *Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): From Moral Imperatives to Indicators and Indexes. A Methodology for Validating and Assessing SDGs* by Angela Delli Paoli, Felice Addeo and Emiliana Mangone, the assumption that sustainability is a multidimensional concept but not directly measurable (apart from indicators and indexes), allows precisely to introduce a more efficient methodology to assess the different moral dimensions of sustainability. As the Authors point out, this is done through three steps: «Firstly, we aimed to clarify the conceptual and normative framework that underpins SDGs. Secondly, we aimed to suggest a methodology for assessing SDGs that is able to go beyond single indicators, without losing the information on individual moral imperatives and their compatibility with each other. Thirdly, we aimed to validate such a framework, and through it, to assess the performance of European Union (EU) Member States with regard to SDGs» (2020: 49).

The following chapter – *Toward an Understanding of Psychopathological Syndromes Related to Social Environments* – by Paolo Cianconi, Federica Tomasi, Manuela Morello, and Luigi Janiri provides a psychological analysis of social change, looking at some of the most common effects and problems, from the collective macro-social level to the individual micro-social level. In this case, the sustainability paradigm offers a new form of social pathology criticism, giving useful perspectives and methodological tools and showing how psychopathologies react and expand through technological, political, communication and economic fields.

Finally, the chapter *Sustainability as a Key Imperative in Project Cycle Management: Sociological Considerations* by Maurizio Esposito analyzes the results of the implementation of Project Cycle Management strategies in Western societies, with particular attention to “sustainable welfare” programs. In this way, the social sciences can recommend a methodological path for an executive application phase.

Ultimately, the book can be interpreted as an attempt to renew the tasks of the social sciences, regarding: a) the clarification of cognitive, value and expressive models in the public sphere, in order to generate a cultural change; b) the rationalization of instrumental and strategic action in the reproduction of social systems, where knowledge is put at the service of decisions in economic and administrative organizations (social technology); c) the elaboration of a social theory able to reconstruct the structural components and mechanisms of change of social formations and evaluate pathological phenomena in the processes of material and symbolic reproduction. The paradigm of sustainability returns these tasks in an innovative way to the social sciences, in particular to sociology. And yet, not least, a reflexive dimension concerns the awareness of the limits of all forms of knowledge. For this reason it is good that the book contains the essay *Sustainability Through Unsustainability? Unintended Consequences and Emancipatory Catastrophism* by Carmelo Lombardo and Lorenzo Sabetta. The two Authors, in fact, use Robert K. Merton’s analyses of the undesirable and unforeseen effects of human actions within the framework of Ulrich Beck’s sociology of risk, to confront us with a warning. While it is true that the “positive” reform of thinking, lifestyles, law, economics, science and politics has also been triggered by something as negative as global climate change (“emancipatory catastrophe”), on the other hand, the sustainability paradigm could also conceal pitfalls. Rather, the lesson to be learned is to get used to ambivalence.