

Violence against Women: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Violence against women is prevalent at levels which make any ideals of ours as a civilised society difficult to reconcile with the reality.— Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England

Violence against women is one of the world's global problems: according to the United Nations, about 35% of women in the world have experienced at least once in their life physical or sexual violence. Violence against women causes physical, sexual, reproductive and mental ill health and in some cases leads to the victim's death. According to the statistics, 102 women were killed in Italy in 2012.¹ According to the Italian National Statistics Institute' survey conducted in 2015, at least 6,788,000 women in Italy became victims of physical or sexual violence. To deal with this problem effectively, it is necessary to understand the main factors contributing to such a high violence rate, diminish them, as well as to elaborate specific measures for victims' support and rehabilitation. In other words, a complex interdisciplinary approach is necessary in order to change public opinion, legislation, economics, medical assistance, etc. In this respect, the exchange of positive experience in combatting the violence against women on the international level is very important. It means both greater visibility for survivors of gendered violence as well as governments and legislators discussing resources and their varied approaches to decrease the rates of violence against women.

The present paper analyses some of the specific factors contributing to the violence against women in Italy (with special focus on the Southern regions) and reviews some measures and proposals aimed at combatting the latter in all its forms, particularly physical, sexual, economical, and psychological.

Striking regional differences are common in many countries in the world but Italy's socioeconomic discrepancy between North and South is peculiar because of its longevity. This

¹ Maria Izzinosa, "Combattere il femminicidio con il metodo Scotland." www.unimib/open/news. Last consulted 30.11.2016.

division is also manifested in the term coined to refer to the South of Italy: Mezzogiorno (south), which comprises eight regions: Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Calabria, Puglia, Basilicata, Sardinia, and Sicily. The differences in the economic development of Northern and Southern Italy allow some economists to speak about the existence of two economies in Italy, the former based mainly on industry and the latter based mainly on tourism and much less developed.² The economic development in the South is also hampered by its deteriorating infrastructures: many roads are in very poor condition, and “[r]ailways in the South include Italy’s oldest, opened in 1839.”³ Also, “Most of Italy lags behind Europe in terms of digital infrastructure, but the South is especially backward.”⁴ Needless to say, that infrastructures are extremely important for the development of the touristic sector, the only one which keeps the economy in the South afloat. However, the funds reserved for the development of the local infrastructures are often misused due to the high level of corruption and infiltration of mafia elements.

The low economic development in the South inevitably influences negatively the local labour market. Indeed, “Employment in the South is much lower than in any country in the European Union: at 40%; in the north, it is 64%. Female employment in the Southern Italy is just 33%, compared with 50% nationally [...]”.⁵ The situation is aggravated by the negative demographic trends such as lower birth rate in the south (1.4 children per woman against 1.5 in the north) and emigration northward and abroad. According to Istat, over the next 50 years the south could lose over 4.2 million residents, a fifth of its population, to the north or abroad.⁶

The striking differences between the north and south refer not only to the economic development but to the cultural differences as well. One should not also forget about criminality and organised mafia in the south, especially in Calabria, Sicily, Campania, and the penetration of the

² “A Tale of Two Economies,” *The Economist*, May 16th 2015, on www.economist.com. Last consulted 10.01.2017.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

mafia-type behaviour into all spheres of daily life, a fact which influences the culture and mentality in the south and is exported as well.

Violence against women is closely connected to inequality of sexes and gender discrimination. Strikingly enough, it seems that the feminist movement, which started in the United Kingdom and the United States of America almost a century ago, still hasn't arrived yet to Italy, especially to the South where the inequality of women compared to men is evident in all spheres of life: social, economic, political, familial, etc. From the economic point of view: in Italy the unemployment rate is much higher among women and reaches its maximum in the South, as it is demonstrated above. In the private sector, women are paid less for the same job done by men; the average salary among men is 1556€, and among women it is 1192€. ⁷ While the current UK Prime Minister Teresa May (known for her feminist positions) raised the issue of the equal salary for men and women as far back as 2008, no initiatives of this kind can be observed in Italy. As far as illegal employment is concerned, which is currently flourishing in Italy, again, the highest rate is among women. In the political sphere, it is possible to speak about the exclusion of women from the social and political life. According to the statistics, only 14% of mayors in Italy are women, mainly in the small communities. ⁸ The discrimination of women is most obvious in the government: the representation of women in the Italian government is very low. Only recently ex-Prime Minister Matteo Renzi appointed at least several women ministers—a good progressive tradition to follow.

In the most obvious way, the inequality of women is manifested in the family life, again, especially in the South. According to the long lasting cultural tradition in the South, a woman should stay at home and take care of husband and children. While this tendency, rather common in many countries before the Second World War, changed in the second half of the 20th century, in the Southern Italy it is still actual nowadays. Indeed,

⁷ S. Barone, "Occupazione femminile: l'Italia non è un Paese per donne che vogliono carriera e famiglia." URBANLIFE, on www.urbanpost.it/occupazione. Last consulted 10.01.2017.

⁸ Ibid.

it is still a widely spread conviction among Italian men that a woman or a mother cannot be ambitious and make her career, she must divide these two spheres. This explains unjust and precarious conditions of women in Italy. About 2.3 m of women cannot work due to the family reasons, 40% of them have a high school education or a university degree, 45% live in the South.⁹

Needless to say, a woman who stays at home and takes care of her family is completely economically dependent on her husband, and hence, very vulnerable. She is more apt to suffer in silence from physical, sexual or psychological violence simply because she is not able to leave her husband due to her lack of economic independence. In the South, it is the sign of a men's social prestige if his wife does not need to work. Therefore, men try to encourage their wives to stay at home and take care of the family. However, here the double standard comes into play. First of all, a housewife is very dependent economically, and hence much easier to control and manipulate. She easily becomes a victim of psychological violence: her work about the house is constantly criticized; she is accused of being a bad mother or bad wife. It is a well-known fact that many Southern Italian men are much too attached to their mothers; they are in fact called "mammoni."¹⁰ Hence, whatever his wife does, his mother always does it better. Also, a wife can be accused of living on her husband's money, of managing the money improperly, etc. It is hardly possible to repair the situation by going to work because then a women can easily be accused of being unfaithful (Southern Italians have a reputation for being very jealous) or of abandoning her children and that again causes psychological violence against her.

The discrimination against women and double moral standards applied to them in society are even more explicit in the Italian legislation, which until recently used to punish (or promote?) the "murder of honour" with an illusory imprisonment of 3-7 years:

Anyone who causes death of his wife, daughter or sister when discovers an illegal flesh relation and in the state of affect, caused by the insult to him directly or the honour of his

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ little mother sons (*Italian*).

family, is subject to the imprisonment for 3-7 years. The same punishment is applied to anyone who kills a person which is involved in the illegal flesh relation with his wife, daughter or sister. Art. 587, Penal Code.

The imprisonment for 3-7 years in reality was even shorter due to the fact that Italian prisons are always overcrowded so prisoners can be released by amnesty.

This law with a medieval flavour confirms and reflects a long-standing view of a woman as a second-rate being. It demonstrates clearly that a life of a woman in Italy has very little value compared not even to a life of a man, but even to his illusory “honour.” This double moral standard and discrimination against women becomes even more obvious if one remembers the international fame of Italian men as unfaithful women hunters. (e.g. Casanova, Don Giovanni, Latin lover, etc.) One cannot help thinking of brilliant French comedies with legendary Luis de Funes, “Gendarmes in New York.” While the Italian gendarme is trying to court a woman on the ship, he says: “Everybody says that we are ladies’ men...and it is true.” He is smiling and obviously is very proud of being considered a Casanova.” The hypocrisy and cynicism of the double standard lies in the fact that while an Italian man is proud of his extra-conjugal relations, he thinks he has a moral right to kill or injure his wife, daughter or sister even in a case even of a slight suspicion of infidelity. Moreover, to further comprehend the gender discrimination implied by Art. 587, one should not forget that usually it was not applied to women. Upon discovering the infidelity, an Italian woman could do nothing but, at most, commit suicide to protect her honour.

A legitimate question in this case is what are the remaining consequences of this law, abolished more than thirty years ago. Antonela Massaro, a Professor of Criminal Law at the University Roma Tre, observes that this law was abolished because it

didn’t correspond anymore to the sociocultural model which was widely spread over the territory of Italy. Obviously, the signature of a legislator alone cannot put an end or modify

the reality deeply rooted, first of all, (I do not want to fall into general stereotypes) in the South of Italy.¹¹

Indeed, even if the article 587 was abolished in 1981, it is not so easy to eliminate and eradicate the consequences of this legislative practice. It is easier to eliminate the law than the idea, which still abides in the minds of (especially Southern) Italian men who believe they have a moral right to kill or injure a woman if they manage to justify it with her (even illusory) infidelity. For this reason in the Southern Italian men (or men from the South of Italy who have emigrated to the north or abroad) are constantly accusing women of infidelity, which apart from being offensive, still has an intimidating connotation, since until recently such accusations would signify death with little consequence for a man. Interestingly enough, as a rudiment of this discriminating law, when the cases of domestic violence and violence against women are presented in the court in Italy, the accused and their lawyers are still accusing women of infidelity in the attempt to justify their acts of violence.

However, even a brief analysis of the Italian legislative system reveals that even after the abrogation of Article 587, a man committing an act of violence against women still has a big chance to get an illusory punishment or to avoid it altogether. There are several reasons for that. First is the high level of bureaucracy and corruption in the Italian legislative system. Second is the court case processing times in Italy are too long; for example, a simple divorce case in general lasts between 10 and 15 years. In case the judge assigns the house temporarily to a victim of violence, it is a general practice in Italy that the man in most cases accuses her of damaging the house and property, thus continuing the acts of psychological and economical pressure on the victim and children.

Given that the majority of violence acts against women occur at home, it is very difficult to prove these acts altogether. However, even if the case of violence or femicide is finally proven, the court decisions can be rather unanticipated, as in the recent case of an Italian Army soldier

¹¹ Christiano Malacrino, "Delitto d'onore: superato o no?", in www.PoliziaeDemocrazia.it, Dic. 2016. Last consulted on 01.12.2016.

Salvatore Parolisi, who killed his wife in 2011 by stabbing her 35(!) times. Interestingly enough, in 2016 the court did not consider 35 stabs to be cruelty and rejected it as an aggravation motive.¹²

Almost a year ago, following the international experience in the field, a law on stalking and on femicide was introduced in Italy. Hopefully, it will help to further reduce the number of victims of violence among women.

A female victim of violence faces problems already at the early stage of reporting the case of violence to the police; in Italy the main reasons could be the pressure of the family and the lack of women's economic autonomy. Since the majority of violence acts are performed by husbands and companions,¹³ it means that a victim must leave the house and be able to maintain herself and children. This task becomes very difficult if not impossible considering the employment rates for women cited earlier in the paper. In general, in 2015 in the age group 20-64, six persons out of ten are employed and again, these figures demonstrate gender inequality: 70.6% of men are employed and only 50.6% of women.¹⁴ The public funds reserved to support women victims of violence are next to non-existent. The same goes for asylums, where in some countries like Germany and Sweden, a woman can ask refuge together with her children after experiencing a violence act. In such a situation, when an escape seems hardly possible, a woman prefers not to report acts of violence. One may add to it that everywhere in Italy, but especially in the South, police officers in charge of accepting such violence reports are not cooperative due to sociocultural models adopted in that region (and others). Rather often, after submitting a report of the act of violence, a woman is forced to withdraw it due to the threats and pressure from her husband/companion and his family, which in the South of Italy are very numerous and miraculously get united in such cases.

The issue of medical assistance to victims of violence against women is another important matter in Italy. The waiting time in the emergency rooms is too long: it can take up to 24 hours, and

¹² www.CronacaQui.it, 02.09.2016, last consulted on 30.11.2016.

¹³ Maria Izzinosa, "Combattere il femminicidio con il metodo Scotland." www.unimib/open/news. Last consulted on 30.11.2016.

¹⁴ www.istat.it. Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), Annual report 2015. Last consulted on 10.01.2017.

for some further medical appointments the waiting time can even reach 6 months! Taking into consideration that women more often speak about the violence act to the doctors than to the police officers, the necessity to improve the accessibility of medical assistance to the victims of violence becomes obvious. In this respect, it is useful to borrow the experience of other countries dealing with this problem, e.g. the United Kingdom, where the public health system is seeking to meet the demands of violence victims. Dame Sally Davies admits that “This violence impacts on the mental and physical health of women and also their children. In England, violence against women must be considered as a determinant of health by those planning and delivering healthcare.”¹⁵ Maybe it is high time to think about whether violence against women in Italy is sufficiently addressed by mainstream healthcare provisions and how to improve the healthcare services that seek to address this issue. This should place public health policy-makers and practitioners at the forefront of an integrated approach to combatting violence against women. For example, in the UK it is already a general concern in the health and education system as to how undergraduate and postgraduate health workers can be effectively taught about violence against women so they will consider it and act upon it as a determinant of health.

In Italy, it is also necessary to work out a program aimed at general improvement of medical services for the victims of gender violence and at special and/or additional education of family doctors on violence issues, since women are likely to address them rather than police in case of gender violence, as explained above. Such a program could be one of the potential solutions to the gender violence problem.

Up to now, we analysed some factors contributing to the high violence rate against women in Italy. Now let us analyse some proposals on how to reduce this rate, reviewing the ongoing debates on this issue.

¹⁵ Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England, “Violence Against Women: A Determinant of Health”, at www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk last consulted 20.11.2016.

Marina Calloni, a member of the inter-ministerial committee on the human rights of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, suggests implementing the anti-violence plan proposed in the UK by Patricia Scotland, a member of the Chamber of Lords at the UK Parliament and the founder of the *Global Foundation for the Elimination of Domestic Violence*. This plan aims at reducing the number of victims of violence against women, reducing the suffering in the family as well as labour losses caused by the absence of women from work due to violence acts. The key measures of this plan are to cooperate with the employers, to educate and to sensitize them, emphasizing that for a woman victim of violence it is very important to maintain her job. Calloni explains that this plan is based on three main elements: functional services, i.e. interconnection between legislative system, police, public health system, social services, legal protection and assistance to victims; economic results obtained due to the reduction of absence from work caused by violence acts; and promotion of social policies *ad hoc*.¹⁶

According to Calloni, this anti-violence plan could also work in Italy, “however, taking into consideration some differences in socio-demographical and economical aspects of these two countries.”¹⁷ Calloni speaks about different employment rates of women, but we should definitely add as an important aspect a substantial difference in the level of education among women in two countries. A big part of female population in Italy has no university education, especially in the age group over 40. In fact, ex-Prime Minister Matteo Renzi emphasized that today in Italy the young people constitute, probably, the first generation that brings home a university degree. With its 25% of university graduates in the age group 30-34,¹⁸ Italy lags behind many EU countries, especially taking into consideration that the EU strategic program Horizons 2020 fixed the average rate of university graduates at 40% as the goal. In the South of the country, many women have hardly completed even a compulsory school education. In the south of Italy, the problem of compulsory

¹⁶ Maria Izzinosa, “Combattere il femminicidio con il metodo Scotland,” on www.unimib/open/news. Last consulted 30.11.2016.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ Laura Antonelli, “Non è un paese per giovani. Sud Italia. Disoccupazione fino al 60%.” 07.04. 2016, on www.wallstreetitalia, last consulted 4.01.2017.

school attendance is very acute; many young people simply leave the school due to various reasons: to join the gang, to help the family, disillusionment, etc. Indeed, according to the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), more than 2.3 million of young people (24.7%) aged 15-19 neither work nor attend schools; in Sicily and Calabria this rate is even higher and reaches 40%.¹⁹ Needless to say, that the education level also influences the level of gender awareness, and as such, must be raised constantly.

Many researchers indicate the importance of education in reducing the violence against women. For example, Calloni emphasizes that the problem of violence cannot be approached only from one side, but rather a complex approach and the participation of everyone are both needed. Research and education are of great importance to this issue.²⁰

Valeria Valente argues along the same lines with respect to the school education in Italy as effective means to deal with issues of violence against women. She observes that today very little is done at schools to prevent violence against women. She admits that only in the last scholastic reform in Italy have some initial steps been taken to affirm the concept and necessity to sensitize schoolchildren against any form of discrimination and gender inequality. Apart from giving sex education, it is also necessary to teach respect for other persons and their feelings. According to Valente, it is evident that the violence is caused by the discrepancies and lacks in these fields of education; hence, the latter is the first antidote to use if we do not want to arrive at such dramatic consequences as violence.²¹ Valente also emphasizes the importance of educating schoolteachers about these important issues.

Given the importance of education for the prevention of violence, let us analyse what models of gender roles and relations are taught and disseminated in printed and internet media, with special focus on the southern regions of Italy.

¹⁹ Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), Annual report 2015, on www.istat.it, last consulted 10.01.2017.

²⁰ Maria Izzinosa, "Combattere il femminicidio con il metodo Scotland," on www.unimib/open/news, last consulted 30.11.2016.

²¹ Maria Avitabile, "Lavoro ed educazione scolastica: ecco come prevenire la violenza sulle donne," Nov. 25, 2015, last consulted 30.11.2016.

In Calabria, we come across a local “maestro di Calabresita,” which literally means “a teacher of Calabrian way of life.” Let us analyse what exactly he is teaching and in what way his teaching reflects the southern Italy’s gender inequality, unequal distribution of gender roles, and the connection of such ideas to the violence against women. Apart from collaborating with “Gazetta del Sud” (The Newspaper of the South) and with ANSA, he wrote a 100-page book “Rimembranze di un Ottuagenario,”²² which was published at his own expenses by a small publishing company. Though this book has no artistic or literary value, it provides an interesting primary resource for understanding the distinct cultural values and gender norms of Southern Italy and allows a deeper insight into the nature of double moral standards with regards to family, and women, gender equality in the South, and which definitely doesn’t help to “sensibilize [...] against any form of discrimination and gender equality [...], to educate respect for other persons and their feelings.”²³ It is exactly because the author had been referred to as a “maestro di Calabresità” by his friend, it is necessary to warn the public against such teachings both in print and on internet.

One can expect from such a book of memories a collection of touchstone events and turning points from the author’s life. The contents of the book suggests, however, that the author’s marriage, wife, children, and family in general are excluded from the list of important events. Also D. Lanciano, who earlier called the author “maestro di Calabresita”, writes that the book comprises “the main values and most memorable events of the life [of Pitingolo] lived in personal, family, professional and social spheres.”²⁴ If so, the book of “values and main events” does not contain even a name of the author’s wife, or even the fact that he had one. Does this mean that the wife and family are not among his values and important events? Usually for a person a birth of a child is an important event; one expects it should be mentioned in the “memoirs”. Pitingolo mentioned the name of only one child, and even in that case with a negative connotation because little Alberto was asking whether his dad would also work and be constantly absent even after his death. (This is

²² Memoirs of an eighty-years-old (*Italian*).

²³ Maria Avitabile, “Lavoro ed educazione scolastica: ecco come prevenire la violenza sulle donne,” Nov. 25, 2015, last consulted 30.11.2016.

²⁴ Domenico Lanciano, “Lettere a Tito,” (109) 11.03.2015, www.CostaIonicaWeb.it , last consulted 30.11.2016.

because instead of dedicating at least some time to his kids and family, the author dedicated all his time to his “economic empire”, i.e. acquisition of land and apartments by all means. He was proud of his property but not of his wife and children.) To summarize, these facts imply that for Pitingolo, the “teacher of Calabrian way of life,” wife, children, and family in general are not among his main values and important events of life. Other events, like the encounter of nymphomaniac lover in his youth, a sexual relation with a friend’s wife, etc., are more important and worth mentioning in the book, according to him. Interestingly enough, that Pitingolo blames the former woman for his inability to pursue the university studies. It becomes obvious, however, that it was a mere excuse since he never got a university degree. He also did not encourage his children to pursue a university education either. Only one of his sons, in his fifties, took a degree from one of the third-rate online universities in order not to be dismissed from his job. In the same way, Pitingolo later blamed his wife for being unintelligent and for “ruining his children.” If the wife is not even worth mentioning among the important life events, the same goes for children. The idea that one gets from the book is that it looks like that women are only good to blame for all the misfortunes in one’s life and are not worth of being praised for anything they did for the author. It seems that the author did not have much respect for women, for their role in the family, and for his own family in particular. Such lack of respect for women perceived at all levels of his writing (and no doubts in oral communication as well) could not but influence the behaviouristic model of his sons. One of the sons was divorced by his wife because of domestic violence, and he is again under trial for the domestic violence against his ex-companion. This is an immediate example of how socio-cultural models promoted in the South of Italy by men (by demonstrating lack of respect to women) can favour violence against women. This book gives a better insight into the reality and customs deeply rooted in the South, to which Antonella Massara referred above. It is clear that similar writings from the South cannot teach respect in general and to women in particular, gender equality and equal distribution of gender roles are indispensable to prevent and diminish violence against women. Obviously, Italy needs

other, better writers to promote real values and morality in order to improve the society and reduce violence.

The paper under consideration presents an interdisciplinary approach to the problem of gendered violence in Italy; it carefully considers a full spectrum of issues at stake in the service of actively combatting such violence. The advantage of an interdisciplinary approach to gender violence is that it analyses the problem as well as its possible causes and consequences from different points of view and hence, can put forward various proposals to diminish gender violence rate in Italy.

Several factors were considered, which contribute to the high rate of violence against women in the South of Italy: gender inequality, legislation, low employment rates among women and lower salaries and as a consequence, their economic dependence on men, lack of education on the issues of mutual respect, gender equality, equal distribution of gender roles in the family, etc. Some of the possible solutions could be: giving much more emphasis on the school education, teaching respect, gender equality, sensitizing students to any manifestation of violence in general, and gender violence in particular. In addition, special preparation of schoolteachers is necessary to teach these issues. As far as public health service is concerned, a possible solution could be the creation of a complex programme aimed at providing wider access to medical services, offering timely medical assistance to the victims of gender violence, as well as educating health workers, especially family doctors, to deal with the consequences of domestic and gender violence. In the economic sphere, it is important to raise the employment rate among women and to ensure equal salaries for the same job done by men and women. Also, a brief insight into the local customs in the South was taken; the necessity to promote moral values, family values, respect for women, and gender equality both in print and on the internet was emphasized. In fact, taking great cultural differences between North and South of Italy into consideration, a cultural programme for the South is necessary, aimed at eradicating the cultural roots of violence there. To sum up: the paper reviewed several proposals to

diminish and prevent gender and domestic violence, as well as estimated the adaptability of international experience in the field with respect to the Italian realities.

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Abstract

Violence against women is a global problem: according to the UN, about 35% of women in the world have experienced at least once in their life physical or sexual violence. Violence against women causes physical, sexual, reproductive and mental ill health and in some cases leads to the victim's death. According to the statistics, 102 women were killed in Italy in 2012.²⁵ According to the Italian National Statistics Institute' survey conducted in 2015, at least 6,788,000 women in Italy became victims of physical or sexual violence. To deal with this problem effectively, it is necessary to understand the main factors contributing to such a high violence rate and diminish them, as well as to elaborate specific measures of victims' support and rehabilitation. In other words, a complex interdisciplinary approach is necessary in order to change public opinion, legislation, economics, medical assistance, etc. In this respect, the exchange of positive experience in combatting the violence against women on the international level is very important. Using an interdisciplinary approach, the present paper analyses some of the specific factors contributing to the violence against women in Italy (with special focus on the Southern regions) and reviews some measures and proposals aimed at combatting the latter in all its forms—especially physical, sexual, economical, psychological.

I am doing my last year at the University of Rome, specializing in English Literature.

²⁵ Maria Izzinosa, "Combattere il femminicidio con il metodo Scotland." www.unimib/open/news. Last consulted 30.11.2016.

Coming from abroad and having a rich working and travelling experience in the European countries, I could immediately observe that the situation and treatment of women in Italy is less favourable compared to the rest of Europe, especially compared to the Northern Europe. One may speak about greater gender inequality here manifested in all spheres, as well as high gender violence rates. I was interested to discover the reasons for that and the article under consideration presents the results of this survey.

The paper is addressed to everyone interested in issues related to preventing and combatting gender and domestic violence, as well as in gender studies, feminism, and cultural studies. It analyses cultural, social, and economic reasons for gender violence in Italy with the special focus on the South and reviews several proposals to diminish and prevent gender and domestic violence, as well as estimates the adaptability of international experience in the field with respect to the Italian realities.

The goal of the paper is to study the various reasons that lead to high gender violence rates in Italy, especially in the South of it, using the interdisciplinary approach. Analysing the problem of violence from various viewpoints, the paper proposes several measures in different spheres to prevent and diminish gender and domestic violence rates.

Key words: gender violence, Italy.