ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITA DI BOLOGNA

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, STALKING AND FEAR OF CRIME

Country Report Italy

EU-Project 2009-2011

WWW.GENDERCRIME.EU

Gender-based Violence, Stalking and Fear of Crime
EU-Project 2009-2011 – JLS/ 2007/ISEC/415

The project was financed by the EU Commission within the program „Prevention Of and Fight Against Crime“ – Direction – General Justice, Freedom and Security

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Contact details:

Augusto Balloni, V. S. Isaia 8, 40123 Bologna, Italy; tel. +39-051585709; e-mail: augustoballoni@virgilio.it
Roberta Bisi, Department of Sociology, Strada Maggiore 45, 40125 Bologna, Italy; tel. + 39 0512092890; e-mail: roberta.bisi@unibo.it
Raffaella Sette, Department of Sociology, Strada Maggiore 45, 40125 Bologna, Italy; tel. + 39 0512092902; e-mail: raffaella.sette@unibo.it

Published in January 2012, Bochum

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, STALKING AND FEAR OF CRIME

Country Report Italy

Authors:

Augusto Balloni
former professor of criminology at the University of Bologna, President of Italian Society of Victimology
Roberta Bisi,
professor of criminology, director of C.I.R.Vi.S. (Interdepartmental Center of Research on Victimology and Security), University of Bologna
Raffaella Sette
associate professor at the University of Bologna, Managing Editor of "Criminology, Victimology and Security Review"

Table of contents

Chapter one - Brief description of the tertiary education sector in Italy ... 5

1. Number of universities and other tertiary education institutions 5
2. Number of students enrolled in tertiary education 5
3. Female university students 5
4. Classification of universities in terms of student numbers 6
5. Types of universities, e.g. traditional campus-based, non-traditional campus-based, non campus-based, urban vs. rural universities, state vs. private 6

Chapter two - The legal environment in Italy regarding sexual harassment, stalking and sexual assault 7

Chapter three - Summary of research and policy on gender-based sexual violence against female university students in Italy 13

Chapter four - Description of how the research in Italy was conducted . 15

Chapter five - Key data findings from phases A and B 18

1. Prevalence and nature of violence – before and after university 18
2. Perpetrators and disclosure 20
3. Impact on victims 22
4. Fear/feeling of safety 24

Chapter six - Recommendations for improvements to prevention and response policies and practices in Italy 31

Chapter seven - Recommendations for further research on this topic in Italy including European scientific network building 34

Chapter one - Brief description of the tertiary education sector in Italy

1. Number of universities and other tertiary education institutions

Number of institutions in Italy (academic year 2009-2010)[1]

	Universities	Higher Education Institutions
Italy	89	6

Specifically, there are 32 universities in the North of Italy, 27 universities in the Centre, 24 universities in the South and 6 in the Islands.
Of the six higher education institutions, two are located in the North of Italy and four in the Centre.
In addition, Italy has 61 state universities (counting the three polytechnic universities in Milano, Torino, and Bari) and 28 private universities (counting the 11 online universities).

2. Number of students enrolled in tertiary education

In the 2007/2008 academic year, there were 1,975,546 students enrolled in tertiary education in Italy: (1,809,499 in universities and 166,047 in higher education institutions)[2].
The number of university students enrolled in Italy in the 2009/2010 academic year was 1,780.653[3]; the figure for higher education institutions is unavailable.

3. Female university students

In Italy, a higher proportion of female students (57 percent) than male students (43 percent) were studying for an undergraduate degree in 2009-2010. The total number of students enrolled was 1,780,653, with female students accounting for 1,014,972 and male students 765,681.
Female post-graduate students numbered 104,693 in the 2007/2008 academic year (the most recent figure available). In Italy, post-graduate studies include post-graduate specialisation programmes, research doctorates, doctoral studies, first and second level master's degrees and advanced training courses. In post-graduate schools, female students accounted for 67.7 percent of the total (47,005) and male students 32.3 percent (22,426), adding up to a total of 69,431 students. Of the 39,056 PhD students, 51.7 percent were female (20,192) and 48.3 percent male (18,864). Finally, the number of students enrolled in first and second level master's degree courses and

[1] Data from http://statistica.miur.it/
[2] Data from CENSIS, *Rapporto sulla situazione sociale del paese 2010*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2010. [*Report on the social situation in Italy 2010*].
[3] *Ibidem*.

specialisation programmes totalled 57,314: 37.496 women (65.4 percent) and 19,818 men (34.6 percent).

	Total	Number of female students
Academic year 2009-2010: enrolled in Italian universities	1,780,653	1,014,972 (57%)
Academic year 2007-2008: enrolled in post-graduate medical school programs (specialisation)	69,431	47,005 (67.7%)
Academic year 2007-2008: enrolled in Ph.D. studies	39,056	20,192 (51.7%)
Academic year 2007-2008: enrolled in first and second level master's degrees and advanced training courses	57,314	37,496 (65.4%)

4. Classification of universities in terms of student numbers

Universities in Italy vary widely in terms of size, range and student enrolment. The largest Italian university in terms of numbers is the La Sapienza University in Rome, which had 126,374 students enrolled for the 2009-2010 academic year. The smallest Italian University is the "Italian University Line" online university, based in Florence, which had 23 students enrolled in the 2009-2010 academic year[4].

Italian universities are classified by student size, and are divided up as follows:

1- *Atenei mega*: very large universities, with more than 40,000 students enrolled
2- *Atenei grandi*: large universities, with 20,000 – 40,000 students enrolled
3- *Atenei medi*: medium-sized universities, with 10,000 – 20,000 students enrolled.
4- *Atenei piccoli*: small universities, with fewer than 10,000 students enrolled.

5. Types of universities, e.g. traditional campus-based, non-traditional campus-based, non campus-based, urban vs. rural universities, state vs. private

Italian Universities are usually classified into 4 categories:

1- public universities: a public university is a university that is predominantly funded by public means through a national or regional government, as opposed to private universities. An example of a public university is the

[4] Data from http://statistica.miur.it/

University of Bologna "*Alma Mater Studiorum*", probably the first University in the western world, founded in 1088 B.C.

2- private universities: private universities are universities that are not operated by governments, although many receive public subsidies, especially in the form of tax breaks and public student loans and grants. These are comparable to the public universities. The leading private universities in Italy are the "Luigi Bocconi Business School" (*Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi*) in Milan, the "Catholic University of the Sacred Heart" (*Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*) in Milan, and the "Guido Carli Free International University of Social Sciences" (*Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali – LUISS*) in Rome.
3- higher learning institutions for university studies ("special" university institutions): this term is used to describe different kinds of universities called "special institutions", and includes, for instance, the universities for foreign students; university institutions devoted to advanced study (i.e. the "Italian Institution of Human Sciences" - *Istituto italiano di scienze umane SUM*, which makes use of a special network formed by the universities of Bologna, Florence, Milan, Naples, Rome and Siena); schools or institutions devoted to advanced studies.
4- online universities: this term is used to describe telematic universities through which students can obtain a university degree by means of television and the internet.

In Italy there are few examples of campus-based and collegiate universities. These include the "*cittadelle universitarie*" campuses of the University of Calabria, the University of Parma, the University of Salerno, the "Gabriele D'Annunzio" University of Chieti and Pescara and the "Tor Vergata" University in Rome.

Chapter two - The legal environment in Italy regarding sexual harassment, stalking and sexual assault

In the Italian criminal code, the crime of «*sexual assault*» («*violenza sessuale*») is defined under article 609 bis.
This article was introduced under Law no. 66 of 15.2.1996, entitled «*regulations for combatting sexual assault*», and its aim is to protect personal freedom with reference to the sexual sphere, i.e. the freedom of individuals to make sexual choices, and not, as in the past, to safeguard collective morality. The article moved this crime from the category of crimes against public morality to the category of crimes against the person.
The 1996 legal reform in Italy completely re-shaped the preceding legal framework, which distinguished rape («*violenza carnale*») (art. 519 of the Italian criminal code) from sexual intercourse aggravated by the perpetrator being a civil servant («*congiunzione carnale commessa con abuso della qualità di pubblico ufficiale*») (art. 520 of the Italian criminal code) and indecent assault («*atti di libidine violenti*») (art. 521 of the Italian criminal code). The 1996 law repealed the above three articles and defined a single crime of «*sexual assault*» («*violenza sessuale*»), punished according to art. 609 bis of the Italian criminal code.

The purpose of unifying the three offences under a single crime of sexual assault was also to defend victims to a greater extent, since in order to determine that a crime has been committed it is no longer necessary to conduct a thorough investigation in order to establish the precise dynamics of the act in question in order to verify, for instance, whether it should be considered as rape or indecent assault, because both are governed by the same article (609 bis of the Italian criminal code) and both are classified as the same kind of crime (named «sexual assault»). The way in which a sexual assault is perpetrated (for example, with or without sexual intercourse) is no longer relevant for the classification of the crime, but for the purposes of establishing the punishment applicable. In the most serious cases - for example those corresponding to the repealed offence of rape - the punishment may be more serious than for cases corresponding to what was previously considered indecent assault, although both cases are governed by the same article (609 bis of the Italian criminal code) on sexual assault.

Therefore, the unification of the different sexual crimes under the same definition requires investigations to be conducted for the purpose of ascertaining the severity of the punishment to be meted out to the perpetrator of the crime, according to the severity of the offence, rather than – as was the case previously – in order to determine if the crime was rape or indecent assault, although both were acts of assault against personal freedom in the sexual sphere.

However, a problem arises when it comes to defining «*sexual assault*», in that the crime comprises both rape and indecent assault, the latter being a less serious offence that does not lead to sexual intercourse.

In order to fully understand the concept of sexual assault, as it is determined under the Italian criminal code, we obviously need to start from the current definition of article 609 bis, which considers «sexual assault» as the crime committed «*whenever someone, by means of violence, threats or abuse of authority, forces someone else to participate in a sex act*». In this case, the penalty provided for by the law is one to ten years' imprisonment.

The same article also specifies that the same punishment is applicable to anyone who induces someone else to participate in a sex act «*by taking advantage of the condition of physical or mental inferiority of the person offended when the crime occurs*», or «*by deceiving the person offended by impersonating another person*».

The third paragraph of this article establishes that «*in less serious cases, the penalty may be reduced by no more than two thirds*». If invoked by defence counsel with the aim of obtaining a reduction of the penalty, an investigation is required in order to determine the severity of the offence.

A careful reading of this article shows that the expression «sexual assault» appears in the title thereof, but not in the content, which refers instead to the assumption that the victim is forced to perform or undergo a «sex act» - not necessarily by means of violence, but also by means of threats or abuse of authority, or else by taking advantage of other circumstances that reduce the victim's capacity to defend himself or herself or to put up resistance.

Therefore, in order to understand the concept of sexual assault in Italian law, it is necessary to examine the meaning assigned to «*sex acts*» («*atti sessuali*»), as referred to in article 609 bis.

Jurisprudence has offered a number of different interpretations.

One such interpretation is that the concept of sex acts is wider than that of rape and indecent assault, punished under the articles that have now been repealed, and the concept of «sex acts», as provided for by the reform, also comprises all acts of an

erotic nature, even those that refer merely to the subjective aspects of the relationship between the offender and the victim.
In this regard, case law has specified, in several sentences, that «*sexual assault*» does not necessarily imply physical contact between the offender and the victim; therefore, sexual assault may be deemed to have occurred even if a male physician induces a female patient to perform an act of self-masturbation, i.e. without the offender necessarily performing any sex acts on the victim (see the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, Criminal Section III, sentence dated 16-04-1999, in Riv. Pen., 1999, 967).
Another interpretation considers the expression «*sex acts*» in a more limited sense as compared to the concept of indecent assault, which before the 1996 reform was punished as a separated offence. Therefore, the behaviour of a man who caressed a woman's face, lowered her pants and kissed her leg against her will was deemed not to represent either the crime of indecent assault (before the reform), nor the crime of sexual violence (after the reform) (see the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, Criminal Section III, sentence dated 15-11-1996).
According to another interpretation, the concept of sex acts provided for by article 609 bis of the Italian criminal code regarding sexual assault is coincident with that of rape and indecent assault as previously provided for under two different articles and now unified under the same one, and that the definition of «sex acts» can be neither narrower nor wider than that provided for by the unification of the two previously existing crimes. However, what remains open to question is whether article 609 bis could have referred directly to sexual intercourse and indecent assault rather than to sex acts.
Variations in interpretation persist, however, in the opinions of the various judges called upon to determine whether the crime of sexual assault has occurred or not in borderline cases: for example when a person complains they have been a victim of sexual assault for being forced to receive a kiss on the lips or neck.
In any case, in order for the crime to be recognised as such, violence or threats must necessarily occur. Even though these terms are interpreted by judges in a very wide sense, something more than the mere absence of consent is required, unless the law establishes otherwise. This means that the absence of consent by the person forced to perform or undergo the sex act is not sufficient, and that other elements - i.e. violence or threats – are required.
However, it often happens that the victim decides to partially cooperate with the perpetrator in order to avoid more serious consequences, precisely because he/she has perceived a threat, and indeed the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation has clarified that, in order to recognise that a crime of sexual assault has occurred, account must be taken of the victim's refusal to perform or undergo the sex act (sexual intercourse or less serious sex act) at the moment the crime is initiated and not during the perpetration thereof (see, for example, the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, Criminal Section V, sentence dated 6-4-2005). It should also be noted that the concept of violence has been widened in case law, which has established that, for example, violence can occur in any act aimed at overcoming the opposition of the victim, especially when this takes place in an environmental context that makes it impossible for the victim to react (the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, Criminal Section III, sentence dated 28-11-1997).
An examination of the first paragraph of article 609 bis of the Italian criminal code shows that the crime of «*sexual assault*» can take place without violence and threats occurring in the performance of sex acts; and indeed the first paragraph provides for a different form of constraint of the other person's will: «*abuse of authority* », i.e. taking unfair advantage and making illicit use of the position held.

Abuse of authority can occur when, for example, a government officer takes advantage of his role and functions in order to force a victim to perform or undergo sex acts. However, the authority abused is not necessarily linked to the position of governmental officer, since the article does not specify this. Therefore, according to jurisprudence, the crime can occur when someone abuses of any kind of authority, both public or private, while according to case law it has to be public (for example, the abuse of authority was rejected by the Supreme Court of Cassation, United Sections, with sentence dated 31-05-2000, in the case of sex acts performed by a private teacher. In this case, the crime recognised was not that of sexual assault, as provided for in article 609 bis of the criminal code, but that of sex acts committed with a minor, since for sexual assault both violence and threats, as well as the abuse of authority in a public sense were considered to be absent. Had the teacher been employed in a state school, a different conclusion could have been reached).

Abuse of authority is an alternative to violence and threats. However, for this requisite, the presumption of violence or threats cannot be recognised, since both the abuse (of authority) and the constraint of the victim (to perform or undergo sex acts) must be ascertained. Therefore, in order for a crime of sexual assault by means abuse of authority to be recognised, the abuse of authority must be the instrument of constraint, which must be present for the recognition of the crime of sexual assault as provided for in the first paragraph of article 609 bis of the Italian criminal code.

It is worth noting, however, that - from the point of view of evidence - it is extremely difficult to prove that constraint to perform or undergo sex acts was applied by means of abuse of authority, without violence or threat; consequently, there is the risk that, in practice, the requisite of abuse of authority ends up being absorbed into the requisite of violence or threats, or into the cases provided for in the second paragraph, when the crime of sexual assault is committed not by «*constraint*», but by «*inducement*» to the performance of sex acts.

The second paragraph of article 609 bis of the Italian criminal code punishes anyone who, in particular circumstances, «*induces*» (not «*forces*») a victim to perform or undergo sex acts. Therefore, in the first paragraph, the crime of sexual assault occurs when the victim *is forced* to perform or undergo sex acts by use of violence (physical or psychological), threats, or abuse of authority, while in the second paragraph, the crime of sexual assault occurs when the victim *is induced* to perform or undergo sex acts, without violence (physical or psychological), threat or abuse of authority. In the latter case, sexual assault occurs only in two explicit instances, i.e. when the aggessor takes advantage of the victim's condition of physical or psychocological inferiority, or when he/she deceives the victim by impersonating another person.

Unlike constraint, inducement to sex acts occurs when the perpetrator of the sex acts exercises persuasion upon the victim – even in a subtle or covert manner - in order to convince him/her to perform or undergo acts that he/she otherwise would never have performed or undergone.

Persuasion to perform or undergo sex acts comes under the crime of sexual assault when it is accompanied by the abuse of the victim's physical or psychocological inferiority, i.e. when the offender takes advantage of the inferior physical or psychological conditions of the victim in order to access his/her sexual sphere. The offender, in this case, uses the inferior condition, either temporary or permanent, of the victim for his/her sexual satisfaction, thus reducing the victim to the role of a mere object for his/her sexual pleasure.

Inducement to perform sex acts also comes under the crime of sexual assault when the victim is deceived by impersonation. Therefore, deceit is exercised by the offender to his advantage in order to obtain consent, based on false assumptions, that the

victim would otherwise never have given. For the crime to have been committed, it is not sufficient for the offender to have deceived the victim to obtain his/her consent; the deceit must have occurred by impersonation.
We should now pose the question of what is meant by impersonation for the purpose of sexual assault.
Some guidelines indicate that the crime of sexual assault by impersonation is recognised only when the impersonation regards the person's identity, not his/her status or characteristics. In other words, according to this interpretation, the crime is recognised only when a person physically impersonates another person, taking on his/her identity.
Other guidelines indicate that, in order for a crime of sexual assault by impersonation to be recognised, it is sufficient for the victim to be deceived regarding the characteristics or status of the offender: for example, when a subject, in order to induce the victim to perform or undergo sex acts, pretends to have personal characteristics (e.g. wealth) or a status (e.g. single) that he/she does not in fact possess, provided that the victim is deceived into believing that these qualities or status are true and that this conviction is instrumental in obtaining the consent for the sex act, which would otherwise not have been granted.
While the last paragraph of article 609 bis provides for extenuating circumstances, granting a reduction of up to two-thirds of the penalty applied for cases deemed less serious, article 609 ter of the Italian criminal code also provides for aggravating circumstances: in accordance with said article «*the penalty is imprisonment from six to twelve years if the acts provided for in article 609-bis were committed:*
1) against a person under fourteen years of age;
2) by using arms or alcohol, drugs or narcotic substances or any other instrument or substance liable to cause severe harm to the health of the victim;
3) by someone in disguise or pretending to be a government officer or a person in charge of a public service;
4) against a person subject to restriction of his/her personal freedom;
5) against a person under sixteen years of age when the offender is an ascendant relative, natural or adoptive parent or tutor.
The punishment is imprisonment from seven to fourteen years if the act was committed against a person younger than ten years of age».
Additional articles of the Italian criminal code provide for the specific case of sex acts with a minor. With regard to this, see article 609 quater, which establishes that it is possible to apply the penalty provided for sexual assault as recognised in article 609 bis to *«anyone who, outside of the cases provided for in the above article, performs any sex act with a person who is, when the assault occurs:*
1) younger than fourteen years of age;
2) younger than sixteen years of age when the offender is an ascendant relative, natural or adoptive parent or cohabitant thereof, tutor or any other person to whom the minor is assigned for care, upbringing, education, vigilance or custody, or a cohabitant thereof».
However, article 609 quater itself, regarding sex acts with minors, maintains that «*a minor who, outside of the cases provided for in article 609 bis, engages in sex acts with another minor who is at least thirteen years old, if the age difference is not superior to three years (...) is not punishable*».
Moreover, a different article punishes group sexual assault, which occurs when «*several people together*» participate in a sexual assault. It should be noted that, with reference to this crime, provided for in article 609 octies of the Italian criminal code, «*the penalty is reduced for the participant whose action was of least significance in the preparation or execution of the crime (...)*».

In addition to sexual assault offences, which belong to «crimes against personal freedom», it is also important to take into consideration the new crime of «*stalking*» («*atti persecutori*»), introduced in the Italian criminal code in article 612 bis only when Law Decree no. 11 dated February 23 2009 - subsequently converted into law N. 38 dated April 23 2009 - became effective.
This crime, included in the section of the criminal code regarding «*crimes against moral freedom*», establishes that «*provided the act is not recognised as a more serious crime, it is a criminal offence, punishable with imprisonment ranging from six months up to four years, to continuously threaten or harass another person to such an extent as to cause a serious, continual state of anxiety or fear, or to instil in the victim(s) a motivated fear for his/her own safety or for the safety of relatives or other persons linked to the victim(s) by virtue of kinship or emotional relationship or to force the victim(s) to change his/her living habits.*
If the perpetrator of the offence is a former spouse (legally separated or divorced from the victim) or a subject who has in the past been involved in an emotional relationship with the victim, the penalty can be raised.
If the offence is perpetrated on a minor, a pregnant woman or a disabled person (...), or by using weapons or by a offender in disguise, the penalty may be doubled».
The innovation introduced by this crime is represented by the possibility to protect the victim even before the behaviour of the offender is able to degenerate into more serious episodes. However, it is exactly this objective that has attracted a measure of criticism regarding the difficulty of establishing clear boundaries for the crime, which would appear to imply rather time-consuming investigative work, regarding, for instance, the characteristics of a state of anxiety and fear.
The aim of the definition of the crime in question is first and foremost to protect the individual's moral freedom, together with his/her right to self-determination. It appears important for the crime of stalking to be recognised also when the perpatrator's behaviour forces the victim to change his or her everyday habits.
At the same time, the victim's personal safety is also protected, since threats and harassment are also considered in the event that they instil a «*continuous and serious state of anxiety and fear*» in the victim, resulting in damage to health and thus a condition that can be ascertained by medical science, or through a legal medical investigation, if necessary.
The crime of stalking has not been recognised as a dangerous crime, in the absence of damage to the victim, since this would have excessively widened the scope of application of the crime and, consequently seriously risked punishing acts that are in fact harmless.
Recently, on April 6 2009, the Court of Review («*Tribunale del Riesame*») of Bari issued a resolution on a case of stalking. This resolution appears significant, both because it is among the first to implement article 612 bis of the criminal code, and because the Court attempted to explain the origin and the scope of application of this new crime. Specifically, the resolution explained that, «*as appears clear from reading the parliamentary reports, and in particular the files by the Research Unit of the Department of Justice, the phenomenon of stalking – a term derived from the juridical experience of common-law countries and acknowledged by Italian law in the last few years – is insistent, invasive interference in the life of someone else, characterised by intrusive behaviour that may include phone calls, lying in wait, shadowing and, in the most serious cases, behaviours that are in themselves an integral part of a crime (threats, insults, damage, physical assault). Therefore, these are direct or indirect persecutory behaviours, repeated over a period of time, that create a state of subjection in the victim, causing him/her physical or psychological discomfort and a reasonable*

sense of fear. In order to better understand the new definition of the crime, a brief reference must be made to comparative law, and in particular to common-law countries, which have been regulating stalking from a legal point of view for some time now. In general, although there are differences among the different systems, the approach adopted in the common law countries can be summarised as follows: provision is made for a criminal regulation that offers a "minimal" definition of stalking, resulting in less severe penalties; when the crime is applicable (or can be assumed), the victim can request the authority to issue a restraining order (or injunction), by virtue of which the stalker is warned to desist from continuing the persecutory harassment; failure to comply with the restraining order is considered an aggravating factor in determining sanctions; the criminal measures are often accompanied by prohibitory or civil sanctions or by psychological treatment (which is not provided for in the Italian code). (...) Therefore, in order to fully and effectively protect victims from continuous, insistent behaviours that, while they do not represent more serious crimes against life or personal safety, are nonetheless liable to produce a justified fear (...) thereof, the definition reported in article 612 bis of the criminal code was introduced. Thus, in order for the crime to be recognised, it is necessary, first of all, for the behaviour to be repeated: the acts and behaviors intended to threaten or harass a victim must be reiterated. Moreover, the behaviours must be intentional and aimed at causing harassment, and must result in psychological discomfort, fear for the victim's safety and for the safety of his/her loved ones, change in his/her life habits. (...) What makes the crime recognisable as such and distinguishes it from abuse is, as already mentioned, the fact that the offender's behaviour is reiterated and instils in the victim a justified fear of more serious damage, though without including the crimes of injury or abuse».
It is obviously a very different crime from sexual assault. Moreover, in the case of stalking, the reference to the sexual sphere is merely possible and not inherent in the nature of the crime as such.

Chapter three - Summary of research and policy on gender-based sexual violence against female university students in Italy

Previous research on the population of Bologna University was conducted in 1991 by a self-administered questionnaire completed by 950 students of the University of Bologna. The faculties involved were: Political Science (250), Arts and Philosophy (250), Medicine (200) and Law (250)[5]. Women accounted for 50.8 percent of the total, men 49.2 percent. The respondents were aged between 18 and 23 years in 71.3 percent of cases, while 24.6 percent were in the 24-28 age group and 4 percent over 29 years. 96.1 percent of respondents had never been married.
The questionnaire, distributed in libraries, reading rooms and meeting places of the above-mentioned faculties, consisted of 48 questions, divided into five thematic areas a) image of violence, b) image of the victim of violence, c) prevention and recovery of victims of violence, d) four specific victim types - victims of kidnappings for extortion, women victims of sexual violence, children victims of abuse and non-EU victims of racism e) perception among young people of the subjective risk of victimisation. The forms of physical violence respondents considered most frequent were: activities of criminal organisations (35.2 percent), child abuse (23.9 percent), sexual violence (20.3

[5] R. Bisi e P. Faccioli (a cura di), *Con gli occhi della vittima*. Approccio interdisciplinare alla vittimologia, Franco Angeli, Milan, 1996.

percent) and racism-related violence (16.6 percent). The second part of the questionnaire was aimed at understanding the most important issues regarding how young people perceive victimisation. Broad consensus was evident regarding the perception of victims, with "children" and "women" most frequently mentioned in both first and second place, followed, with figures half as high, by "adolescents" and "the elderly". These two figures of victims were perfectly in keeping with a stereotype that identifies victims as helpless, passive individuals. The research also attempted to highlight the type of victim that struck young university students to the greatest extent.

Overall, the problem of child abuse came first (63.7 percent), followed, at a considerable distance, by the other options. The questionnaire subsequently tried to understand whether the students believed that the victim could somehow have an effect on the development of the criminal action. 64.1 percent of respondents believed this was the case. With regard to those crimes in which the victim was believed to have a role to play in the criminal action, drug trafficking topped the list, with scams close behind. Virtually no students believed victims bore any responsibility for crimes such as terrorist massacres or kidnapping. In third place, with lower figures, came sexual assault and domestic violence. If it is true, as claimed by social scientists[6], that the general public's views coincide with those of the jurist, since both are based on common sense, the findings of this research are very encouraging as regards the possibility of desirable changes being made in sexual violence trials, in which we still see in Italy – albeit less than in the past, before the advent of Law 15.2.1996 no. 66, "*rules against sexual violence*" – frequent evidence of the age-old stereotype that, together with the difficulty of providing evidence, attempts to shed an accusatory light on the behaviour of the victim, seeking reference to find any sort of provocative behaviour that shifts the weight of responsibility in their direction.

With particular reference to those aspects of sexual violence considered most serious by the respondents, 33.8 percent referred to the likelihood of such violence "seriously affecting future relationships" of the victim, and 32.4 percent to the possibility that the woman might be "suspected of being the instigator of the criminal act". 22.8 percent of respondents also highlighted the "insult to the dignity of women".

The answers given by male and female interviewees were analysed separately, and meaningful differences emerged. While for the men the fact that such an experience could "have a negative impact on the future relations" of women (38.8 percent) topped the list, followed by the "insult to the dignity of women" (28.4 percent), and the "suspicion that the woman was the instigator of the criminal action" (20.7 percent) was relegated to third place, the women indicated that the gravity of the criminal act lay not only in its impact on the victim's future relationships, (28.9 percent) but also, indeed much more so, in the humiliation of being seen as the instigator of the crime (43.8 percent).

This difference in the answers provided by the two sexes was also apparent when an opinion was requested on the role of the victim of sexual violence: while most women excluded any female responsibility in the determination of the dynamics of the crime (54.4 percent), 39.3 percent of men believed that a measure of responsibility could be attributed to the female victim. Finally, with regard to the best way to help victims of sexual violence, respondents mentioned the importance of "developing community structures to provide support and assistance" (37.1 percent), "providing harsher punishments for the offender" (33.2 percent) and "raising awareness among the public" (26.1 percent).

[6] G. Gulotta , *Trattato di psicologia giudiziaria*, Giuffré, Milan, 1987.

Chapter four - Description of how the research in Italy was conducted

The research was conducted using an integrated methodology that involved the use of qualitative and quantitative tools:

1) online questionnaire administered in two phases (A and B), respectively, to female students from the University of Bologna and female students from the universities of Naples Federico II, Perugia, Udine and Urbino;
2) focus group with female students from the University of Bologna and in-depth interviews with some of them;
3) in-depth interviews with stakeholders.

During the first semester of the 2009-2010 academic year, phase A was conducted through a questionnaire to be completed online. Specifically, the female students from the University of Bologna voluntarily compiled the questionnaire anonymously, by connecting to a specific Internet address from 21/10 – 24/11/2009, after receiving a letter prepared and sent via e-mail from the Office of Culture and Institutional Communication of the university.

29,918 e-mails were sent to female students (who represent 35.8 percent of the Bologna university population); of these, 3,999 (13.37 percent of the female student population) downloaded the questionnaire, 3,531 compiled part of it and 2,393 compiled it in full.

In order to introduce the research and to boost participation, each member of the Bologna team, during their lessons, illustrated the research and its objectives to the students, focusing attention on the importance of the subject. In addition, the team obtained the collaboration of the Italian Society of Victimology (S.I.V.), which publicised the research on the "News" page of its institutional website (www.vittimologia.it), posting the letter sent to the students together with some information on the research project. In the period during which the questionnaire was administered, some technical problems occurred, which meant that the Unipark database, which memorised the e-mail addresses of the students interested in taking part in the focus group, was down for a few days, causing inconvenience to some students, who had to email the members of the research team directly. This probably prevented a number of students from indicating their willingness to take part in the focus group.

In last two weeks of November 2009, thanks to the large number of students willing to take part, 9 focus groups were organised, in which a total of 63 women took part.

The subjects dealt with in the course of the focus group meetings were divided up into eight thematic areas: 1) Definition of violence/gender violence and regulations/legislation (*What and how many types of violence do you know? What are the characteristic elements of the violence? Can someone say what gender violence means*?); 2) Concept of the victim of violence (*What are the main characteristics of a woman victim of violence? Are there women at greater risk of becoming victims of violence?*); 3) Risk factors: lifestyles, habits, routine activities, living areas, places frequented (*What lifestyles do you believe can represent a risk factor? Which, if any, factors can lead to violence?*); 4) Perception of security/safety in the city during the day rather than the evening; 5) Typical aggressor/Profile of aggressor (*By whom is violence mainly perpetrated? Strangers, acquaintances? Difficulty in recognising violence as such when perpetrated by an acquaintance*); 6) Consequences for the victim; 7) Reporting the violence ("*Whom would you contact in the event of violence"? "Are you familiar with the procedure set in motion when a crime is reported? Are you able to*

express an opinion on it? What do you expect from the professionals/figures you contact? Do you have faith in the Institutions and in private/public services?"); 8) Actions taken to improve security (*What can be done in order to feel safer? Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the activities of the services that provide assistance? What type of assistance should be offered to the university students victimised? Do you prefer to turn to general or specialised services/agencies? What type of assistance should the training for the university staff provide for? Do you know any possible solutions to the problems (including mediation, conciliation, types of disciplinary responsibility, security and safety procedures?*).

During this phase of the research, both organisational and psychological problems emerged.

With reference to the organisation, since some students pulled out of the focus groups at the last minute, the schedule of the appointments had to be quickly adapted accordingly and notification of the changes sent to the other students who had confirmed their attendance.

As for the second aspect, during the focus groups some students became deeply involved from an emotional point of view and began to speak about their own actual experiences; therefore, the moderators had to shift these accounts to individual interviews that were carried out in the month of December 2009 and in which 8 students were involved.

During the focus groups, these eight students were sent a letter in which they were asked if they were willing to participate in individual interviews regarding their personal experiences of sexual harassment/stalking/sexual violence, specifying that, from the contents of the interviews - to be used exclusively for the purposes of research – it would not be possible to identify the individuals involved, with the obvious exception of the research group member who conducted the interview.

Subsequently, in the months of March-April 2010, ten stakeholders were interviewed, five of whom were institutional figures of the University of Bologna (the University Ombudsman, the coordinator of the University Commission against violence towards women, the president of the Equal Opportunities Committee, the coordinator of the organising committee of the Gender Studies and Education Centre, and the manager of the SAP, the Student Psychological Aid Service). The other five stakeholders were: an operator from the "House of Women for protection against violence" of Bologna, the coordinator of the social workers from the gynaecological First Aid department of a hospital in Bologna, a psychotherapist and two significant figures belonging to the State Police.

The subjects discussed during these interviews were divided up according to the interlocutor and, therefore, each interview comprised both common and individual elements.

Specifically, the subjects covered with all of stakeholders regarded: the problems encountered by students of the University of Bologna with regard to stalking, harassment or sexual violence; preventive measures and action taken to deal with such phenomena by the agency/institution/ association the stakeholders belong to; analysis of factors that influenced the way in which the agency/institution/association concerned respond to these events; the "best practices" for dealing with such situations and why they are effective.

The stakeholders from outside of the University of Bologna were also asked to reflect on the relationships their agency/institution/association maintains with the University of Bologna in the attempt to tackle these problems, while the stakeholders from the University of Bologna were called upon to deal with themes relating to the figures in the University that are largely responsible for preventive measures and action to

tackle such phenomena, to the procedures currently adopted and to the relationships the university maintains with agencies, institutions and associations in the Bologna area with a view to dealing with these problems.
Subsequently, in April-May 2011, a number of interviews were again conducted to discuss the results that emerged from the phase A questionnaire. These interviews involved the University Ombudsman, the president of the Equal Opportunities Committee and the manager of the SAP, the Student Psychological Aid Service.
Phase B of the compilation of the online questionnaire was conducted by each partner in their respective countries, by bringing in other universities, during the first semester of the 2010-2011 academic year. For the purposes of comparative analysis, the research envisaged the involvement of other Italian universities located throughout the country and selected based on a stratified sample that took a series of parameters into account.
Therefore, the University of Bologna team drew up a sampling plan by creating a probabilistic sample made up of 24 universities, using the stratification technique. Specifically, the population of the Italian university institutions was divided up into four strata based on a number of criteria (geographical location, size considering the number of students enrolled, public/private, traditional/online) and six units were extracted from each stratum.
Each administrative director and each Chancellor of these 24 universities was sent a letter in which permission was requested for their students to be contacted via e-mail to invite them to compile an online questionnaire already tested and completed by students of the University of Bologna.
Despite various reminders, only four universities accepted our request; the probabilistic sample thus became a non-probabilistic sample, so when processing and analysing the data, it was not possible to use the sampling theory because the final sample is not based on any kind of principle of causality.
The universities that make up our non-probabilistic sample are:

- University of Udine: a medium-size public university (between 10,000 and 20,000 students) in the north of Italy;
- University of Perugia: a large public university (between 20,000 and 40,000 students) in the centre of Italy;
- University of Urbino: a medium-size public university public in the centre of Italy;
- University of Naples “Federico II”: a very large public university (more than 40,000 students) in the south of Italy.

Every university then requested the active participation of its own female students through announcements published on their respective websites. The questionnaire was compiled anonymously, using a link to a specific Internet address, in the period from 25/10 to 7/12/2010.
The female population enrolled at the four universities amounts to 86,484, of whom 4,960 downloaded the questionnaire; 3,064 compiled part of it and 2,537 compiled it throughout.

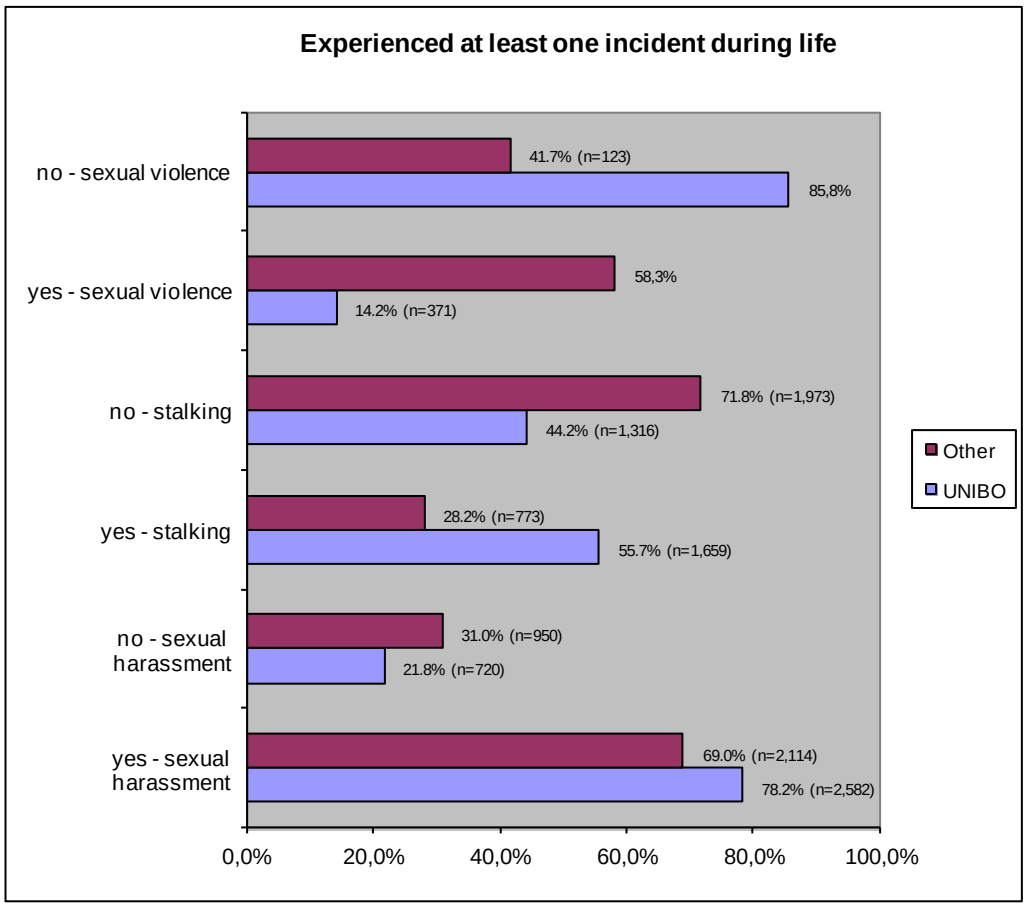
Chapter five - Key data findings from phases A and B

1. Prevalence and nature of violence – before and after university

The empirical reference set is made up of 6,595 students, 3,531 of them from the University of Bologna, 68 from the University Federico II of Naples, 2,418 from the University of Perugia, 365 from the University of Udine and 213 from the University of Urbino.

In order to find out the extent and types of victimisation linked to gender violence, the students were asked to report if in the past they had been personally subjected to unwanted sexual attention (the reference is to sexual harassment), to shadowing or other repeated behaviours that caused them to feel afraid or even terrified (the reference is to stalking), or to the imposition of sexual acts (the reference is to sexual violence).

The answers are summarised in the diagram below, which compares the data relating to the questionnaire administered, during phase A, to the students of the University of Bologna with the data collected in phase B, relating to the other 4 universities:

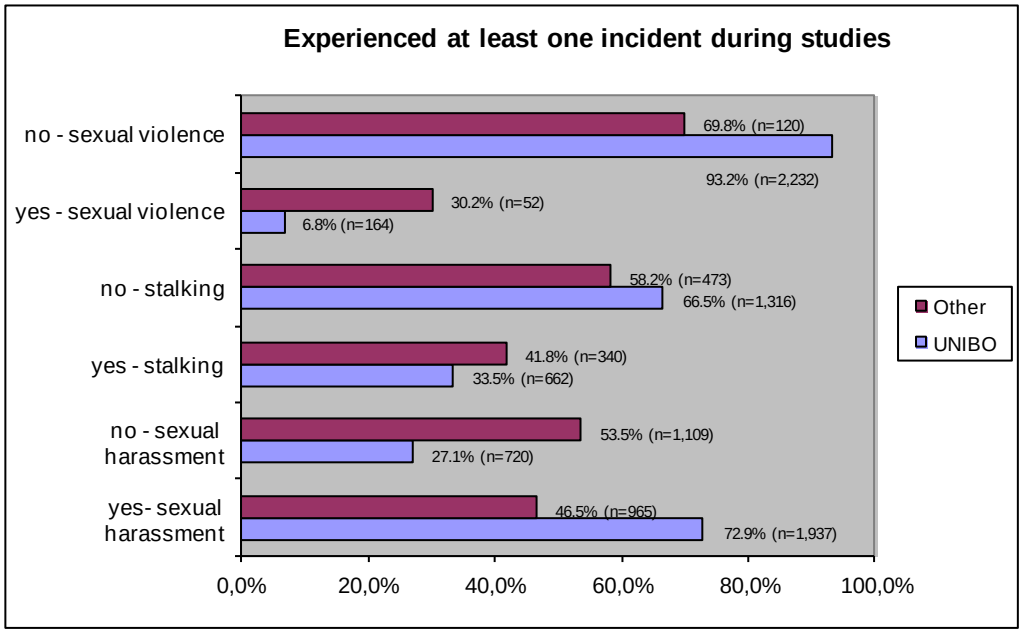


Graph 1 – Experienced at least one incident during life

It is important to note the high percentage of missing cases relating to episodes of sexual violence, which reaches 90.4 per cent for the Universities of Urbino, Udine, Perugia and Naples, while for the students of the University of Bologna the number is considerably lower (26 per cent). On the other hand, it should be highlighted that, with reference to sexual harassment, all the students of the other universities responded.

The data shows that 78.2 per cent of the female students of the University of Bologna who answered the question confessed to having suffered at least one episode of sexual harassment in the course of their life, 55.7 per cent at least one episode of stalking and 14.2 per cent at least one episode of sexual violence. In the other Italian universities in which the research was carried out, the figures show a situation that, at first glance, might appear worrisome (58.3 per cent of positive replies to the question

regarding experiences of sexual violence suffered); these figures must, however, be interpreted by taking account of the high percentage of missing cases.
The graph below outlines the data regarding the period of university studies:



Graph 2 – Experienced at least one incident during studies

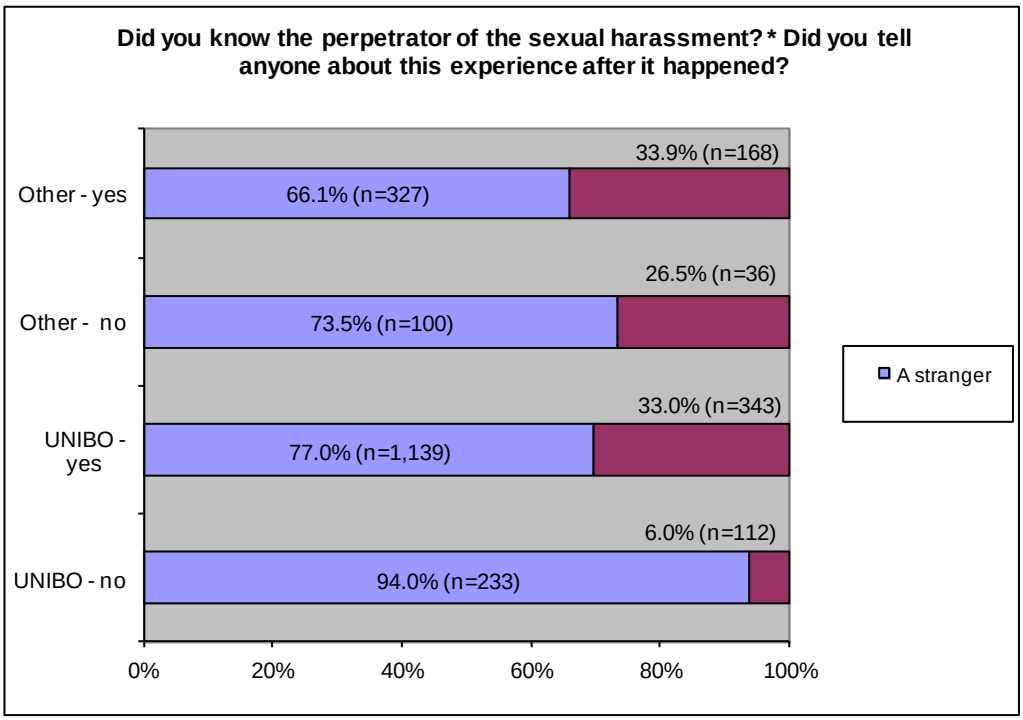
The number of students who did not answer this question (missing cases) is higher than for the previous question: for sexual harassment, the figure is 24.8 per cent for the University of Bologna and 32.3 per cent for the others; for sexual violence it is 32.1 per cent for University of Bologna and 94.4 per cent for the others.
This distribution of frequency (together with the previous one concerning episodes during the respondent's lifetime) is useful for verifying the research hypothesis that the risk of female students falling victim to episodes of gender violence should be lower during the period in which they attend University.
With reference to harassment and sexual violence, the empirical data confirm this hypothesis, while for stalking, this is the case for the students of Bologna University, but not for the others.
However, it must be noted that this type of questions brings with them some unresolved methodological problems associated with the fact that acts of violence endured may not necessarily be remembered and identified as having taken place in a precise period of a victim's life. This attitude may be more logical for "less traumatic" episodes that may be considered easier to forget (for example, an occasional obscene phone call). A different matter again is "unconscious repression" that can regard episodes of serious violence, after which the victim, feeling deeply hurt or guilty, forgets or tries to forget the episode and remove the memory[7].
Another problem to bear in mind here concerns woman's perception of violence. Are all women able to recognise the violence they endure? As we have been well aware for some time[8], this recognition is influenced by cultural values affecting the subjective perception of damage that determines whether the subject considers

[7] Adami C., "La violenza di genere. Alla ricerca di indicatori pertinenti", in Bimbi F., Differenze e diseguaglianze. Prospettive per gli studi di genere in Italia, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pag. 362.
[8] Adami C., "La violenza di genere. Alla ricerca di indicatori pertinenti", in Bimbi F., Differenze e diseguaglianze. Prospettive per gli studi di genere in Italia, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, pag. 362.

him/herself or not as a victim. One of the greatest obstacles, at least from the victim's point of view, to the recognition of the victimisation process in general, and especially in the case of gender violence, is often silence, public tolerance and the existence of a system of values, beliefs, traditions and laws that actively support, justify and legitimise victimisation phenomena.

2. Perpetrators and disclosure

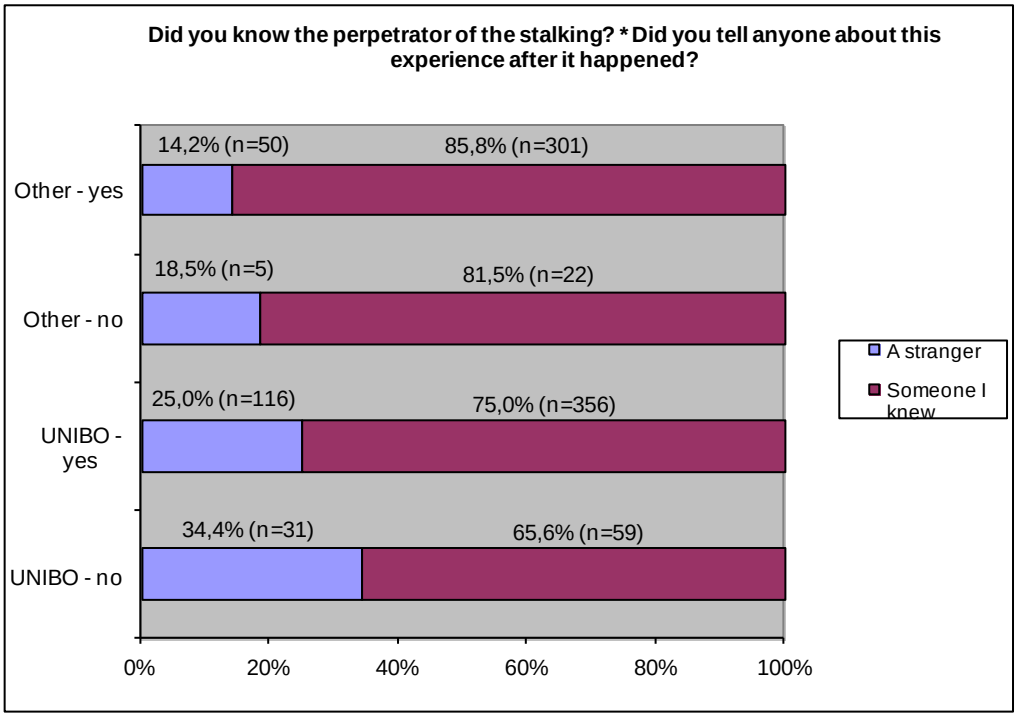
The perpetrators of sexual harassment, in 74.4 per cent (UNIBO) and 62 per cent (other universities) of cases, come from outside the university environment.
Specifically, with reference to the perpetrators from outside the university environment, the distributions outlined in the graphs below regard the tables of contingency of sexual harassment relating to the following questions: "Did you know the person from outside of the university environment with whom you experienced the situation?" and "Did you tell someone what happened to you?".



Graph 3 – Sexual harassment – perpetrator and disclosure

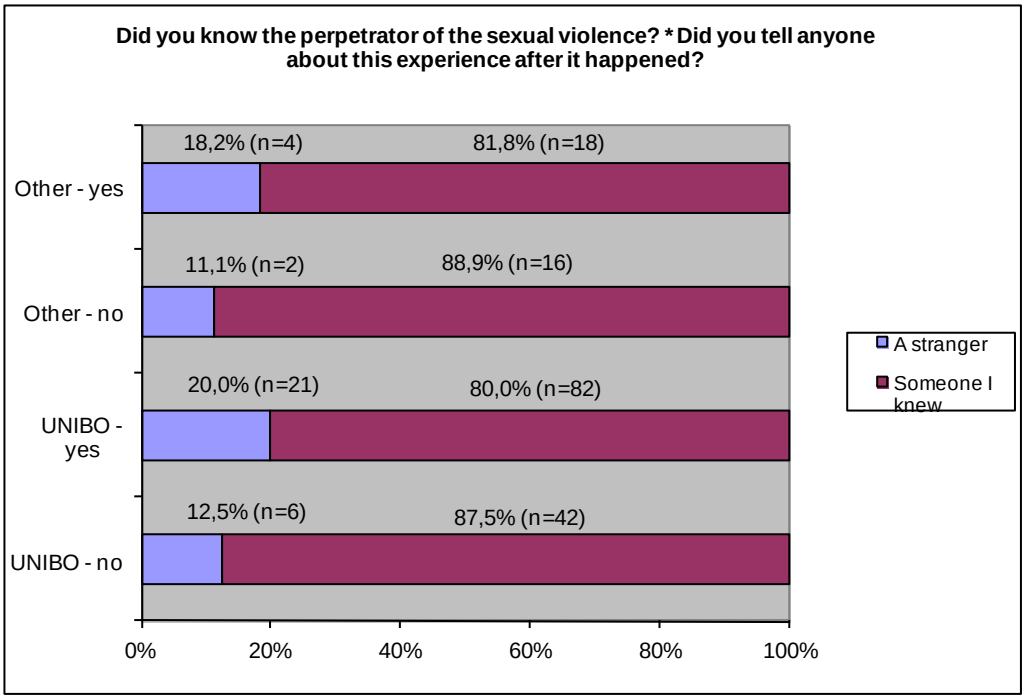
Stalkers, in 79.5 per cent (UNIBO) and 81 per cent (other universities) of cases, came from outside the university environment.

Specifically, with reference to the perpetrators from outside the university environment, the distributions outlined in the graphs below regard the tables of contingency of stalking relating to the following questions: "Did you know the person from outside of the university environment with whom you experienced the situation?" and "Did you tell someone what happened to you?".



Graph 4 – Stalking – perpetrator and disclosure

The perpetrators of sexual violence, in 83.1 per cent (UNIBO) and 84 per cent (other universities) of cases, came from outside the university environment.
Specifically, with reference to the perpetrators from outside the university environment, the distributions outlined in the graphs below regard the tables of contingency of sexual violence relating to the following questions: “Did you know the person from outside of the university environment with whom you experienced the situation?” and “Did you tell someone what happened to you?”.

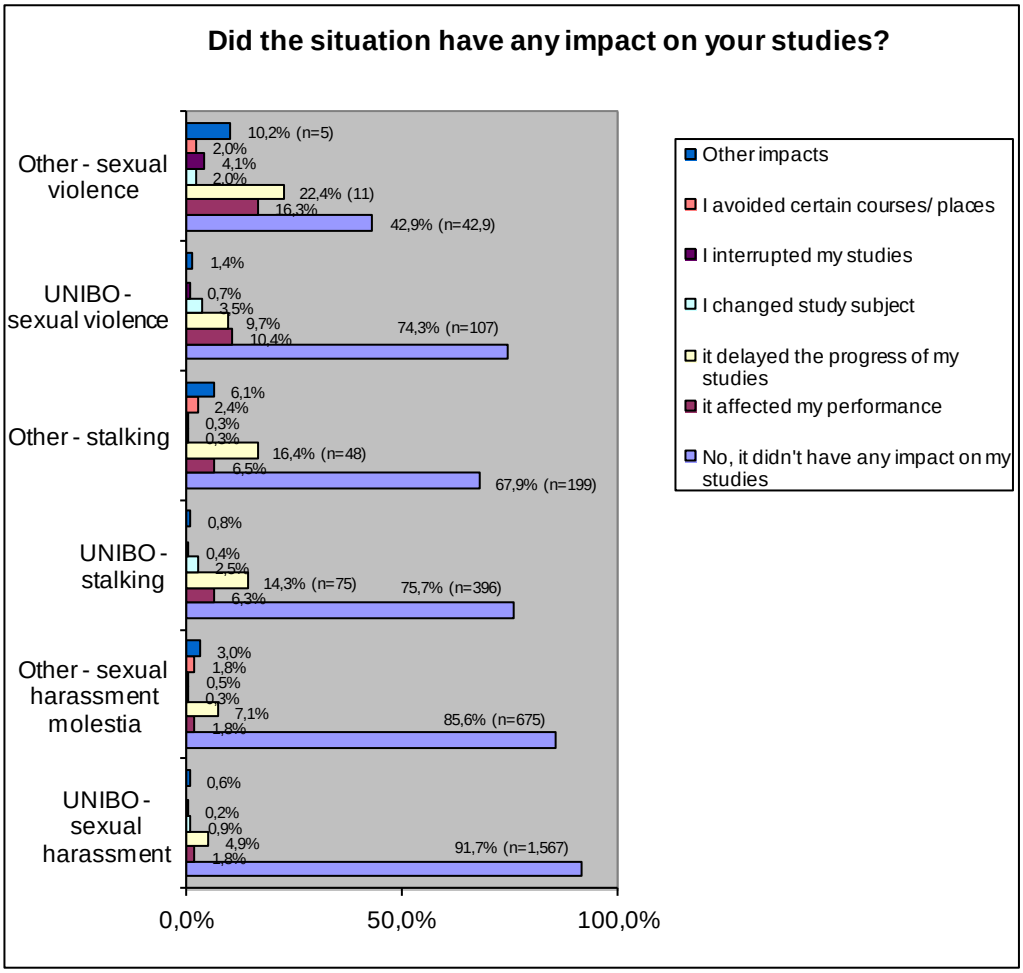


Graph 5 – Sexual violence – perpetrator and disclosure

The three graphs above show that - unlike in the harassment cases, most of which were perpetrated by a stranger – in the cases of stalking and sexual violence, the victim generally already knew her aggressor, although this did not prevent the students from talking to someone about what had happened to them.
In the case of stalking, this desire and decision to tell someone what happened may also have been encouraged by the fact that, in Italy, stalking has only recently been recognised as a crime (Law no. 38 of 23 April 2009). Aside from the considerations linked to the suffering experienced by the victim, to the potential need for psychotherapy and to the nature and quality thereof, heated discussions have developed with regard to the need to recognise the legal consequences deriving from this type of damaging conduct, encouraging reflection among the Italian general public on the damage liable to be caused by persistent persecutory behaviour, as well as on the difficulties involved in demonstrating the damage suffered by the victim and the legal framework such evidence is recognised within and considered significant for the purposes of redress.

3. Impact on victims

It is now common knowledge that the consequences of gender violence on the victim can be serious and long lasting. These consequences can be felt immediately after the crime, or can sometimes emerge after several years; furthermore, these consequences will vary from one person to another and from one crime to another one. Victimisation due to criminal acts usually causes a state of confusion that affects numerous areas of the psychological and somatic life and relationships of the individual. It must be made clear that a victim of crime will not necessarily experience all of these consequences. What it is important to emphasise is that some crimes, which at first glance appear objectively minor, can nevertheless cause serious trauma to the victim. As psychology teaches us, also in the case of exposure to traumatic circumstances, the individual response will vary widely, with the relevant literature showing relatively high percentages of individuals affected by more or less serious symptoms, contrasting with others left virtually unscathed. In other words, very intense psychopathological responses are sometimes observed to traumas that appear “objectively” less serious, while clearly serious episodes may trigger more modest reactions. With regard to stalking in particular, it is important to emphasise that victims of this type of crime experience fear and psychological suffering.
In this context, it is important to highlight, considering the type of interviewees, the consequences caused by what has happened during university studies.
Indeed, the questionnaire, after a general question pertaining to some situations that can represent the repercussions of the event on the woman’s life, contemplated a specific question designed to verify if her university studies had suffered or not as a result of the experience.



Graph 6 – Impact on studies

The graph shows that for all of the three acts considered (sexual harassment, stalking and sexual violence), the university studies of the female students did not suffer negative repercussions and that academic performance is not correlated to the victimisation experience (with the exception of female students enrolled in the universities of Naples, Perugia, Udine and Urbino, and with reference to sexual violence), although behaviours aimed at protecting self-image were identified. We must bear in mind that the essentially psychological connotation of identity also acquires a social dimension, because it places the individual within the framework of the rights and the obligations of the community.

It is common knowledge that the perception of personal identity, which corresponds to our very sense of reality, exists in relation to others, and that, at the same time, the process of differentiating ourselves from others is an equally necessary requisite for achieving self-experience. In this sense, the findings of this research stress that study performance is not correlated to the victimisation experience.

In this research, therefore, most of the findings that emerged from the questionnaire show a good ability, on the part of the students, not to allow the negative experience suffered to affect their everyday activities, in this case studies, and to draw strength from past experiences, the tenacious pursuit of their objectives and the desire to face up to the future with the conviction they will succeed, thanks to the strong identity their individual principles and values have allowed them to construct.

As regards those cases of sexual violence in which the duration of the studies – 22.4 per cent – or the performance of the student – 16.3 per cent - were adversely affected,

we can speak of rape trauma syndrome. This syndrome is characterised by two phases: the first, acute phase, immediately following the event, referred to as the disruptive phase, generally lasts from one to six weeks and involves a situation of dysfunctional alteration in the woman's life as a result of the violence suffered. During this period physical and psychosomatic symptoms prevail, characterised by a strong fear, a feeling of shock and a generalised sense of anxiety. Self-blame can encompass two aspects: behavioural and characterological. The first consists of the attribution of blame for what happened to one's own modifiable behaviour and it has adaptive value because it regards an attempt to exercise control over one's own conduct, in the conviction that similar episodes can be prevented from happening again in the future. The second "is connected to the significant loss of self-esteem and is associated with the conviction that the victim deserved the negative events that occurred"[9].

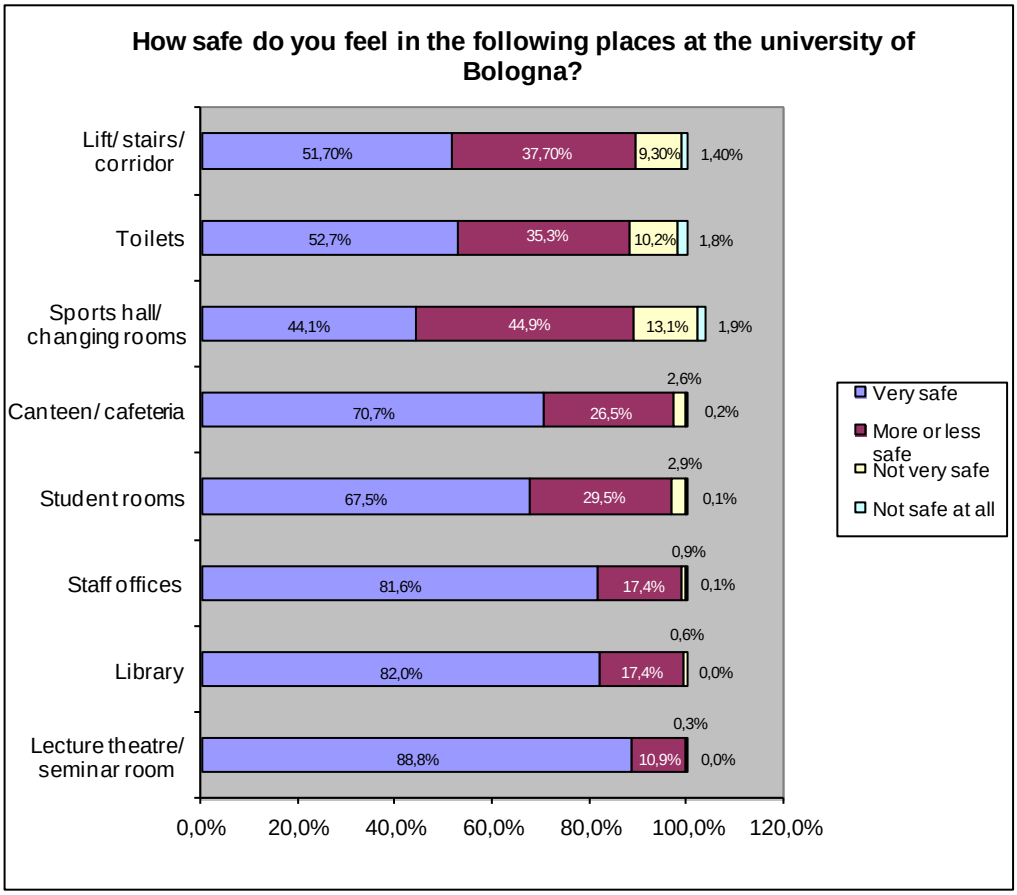
This initial disruptive phase is followed by a longer-term reaction, defined as the "reorganisation phase". This period begins at different times for each woman, with these time differences inevitably depending on characteristics and personal resources of the subject.

This is a period during which the victim must try, on the one hand, to understand what has happened and, on the other, learn to live with and manage the situations caused by the crime. In this regard, it is necessary to remember that the situations created as a consequence of a rape perpetrated by a person the victim had a date with can increase the likelihood of the victim blaming herself and undermine her trust in others.

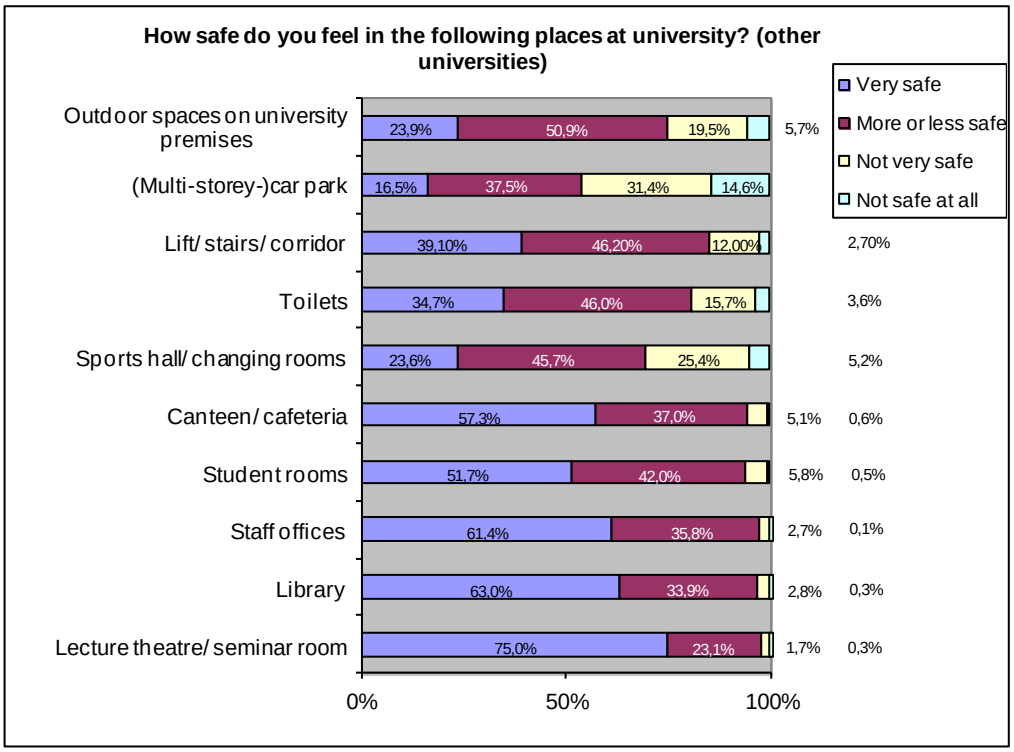
4. Fear/feeling of safety

The next two graphs represent the answers to the question aimed at verifying how safe the students felt in particular places at the university they attend:

[9] R. Catanesi, G.Troccoli, *Disturbo Post-Traumatico da Violenza Sessuale* in *Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia*, 1998, pp.85-113.



Graph 7 – Feelings of safety at the university of Bologna

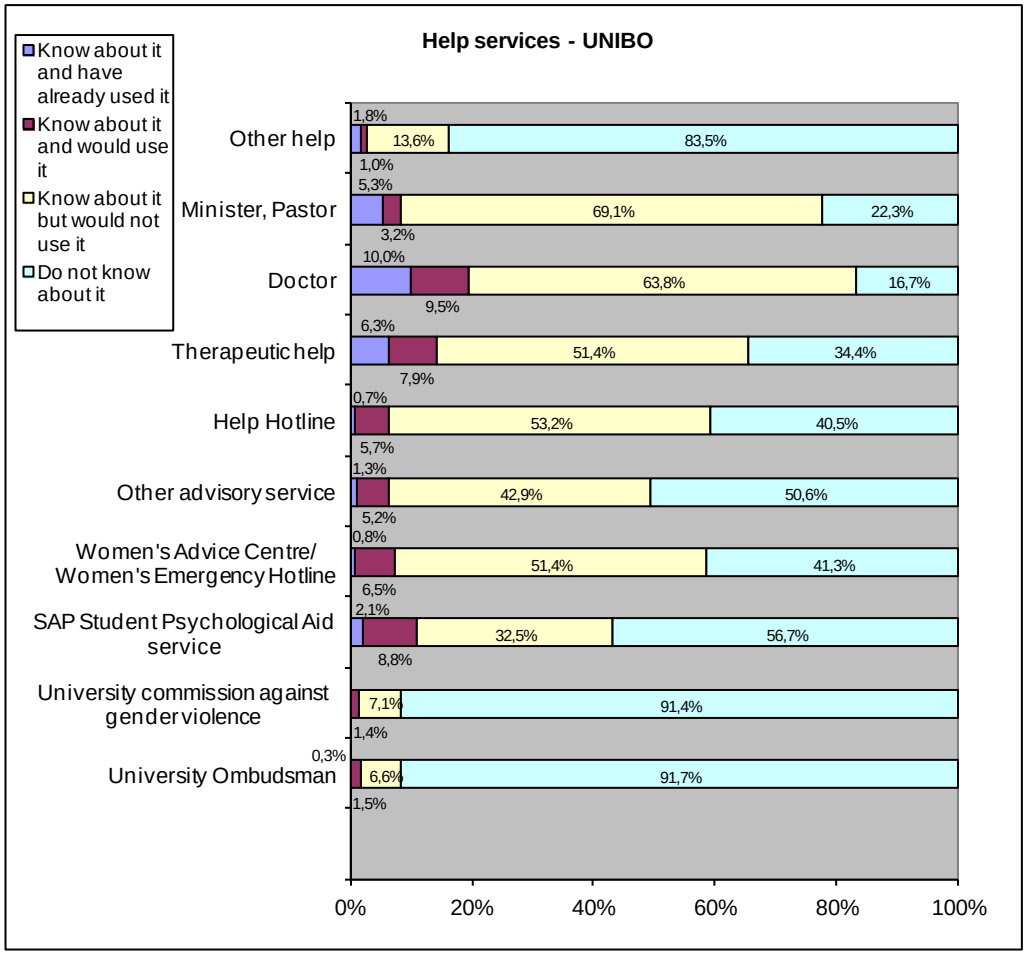


Graph 8 – Feelings of safety at university (other universities)

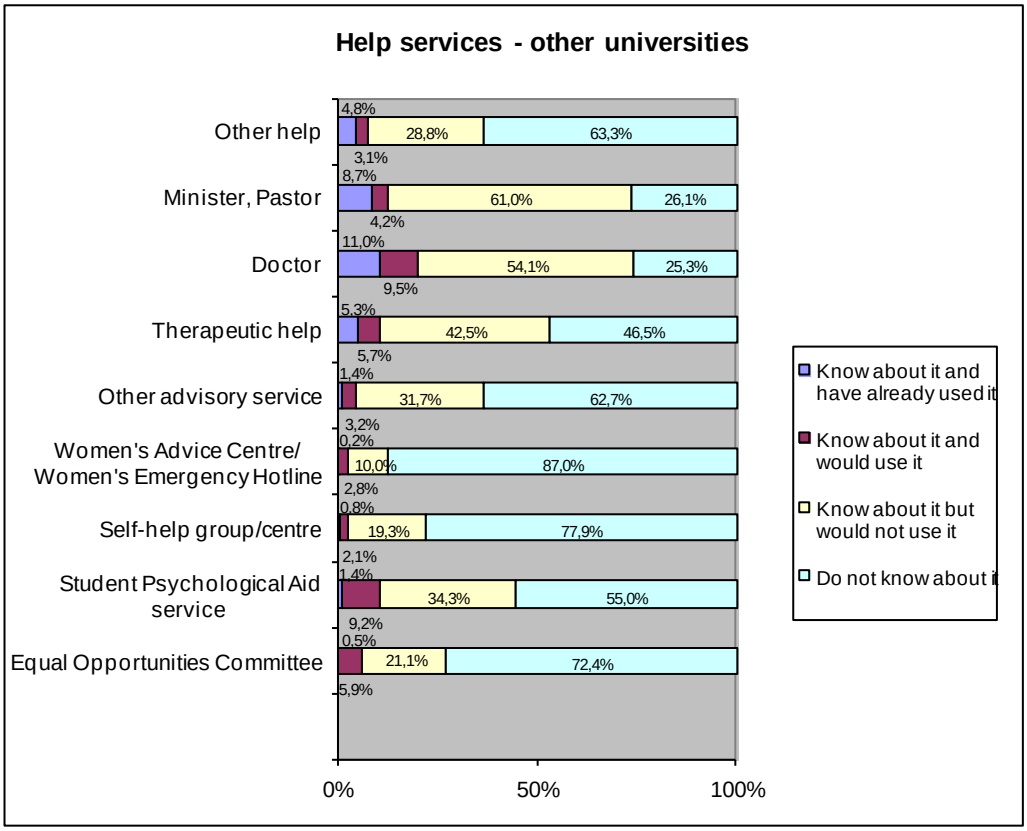
The distribution of frequency shows a good level of security perceived by the students in the places at the university they attend, despite some criticalities regarding bathrooms, sports halls/dressing rooms and lifts/stairs/corridors.

5. Perceptions of adequacy of services for victims

In order to verify the knowledge and the perceived adequacy of the services offered by the universities, as well as of those usually present locally, the questionnaire contemplated the following question: "This list contains various services offering help. For each service, please tell us whether you … know it and have already used it/ know it and would use it/ know it but would not use it/do not know it".
The results are outlined in the following two diagrams:



Graph 9 – Help services - UNIBO



Graph 10 – Help services – other universities

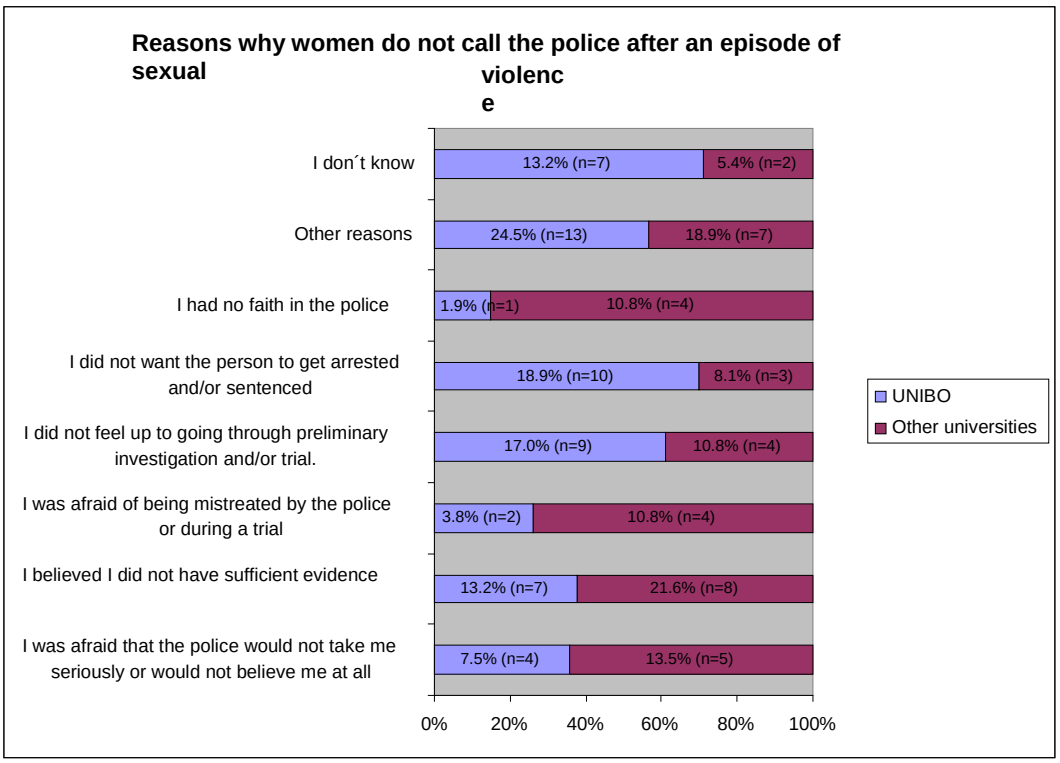
What emerges from these two distributions of frequency is a high level of ignorance regarding the services provided by the universities, especially among female students of the University of Bologna.

It is also surprising that a significant percentage of respondents are unaware or unconvinced of the importance of the assistance a doctor or a therapist can offer in the event of victimisation.

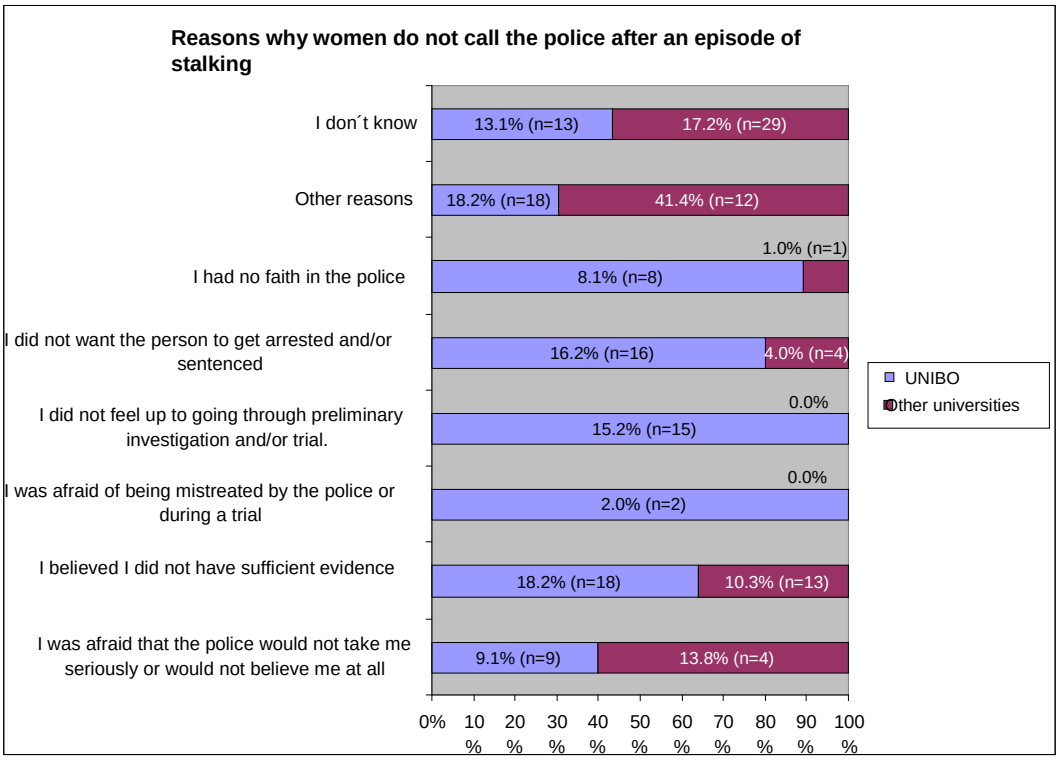
6. Perceptions of adequacy of existing policies and practices

Two questions in the questionnaire offer an opportunity to reflect on the interviewees' perception of the adequacy of policies and practices already implemented by the institutions to tackle the phenomenon of gender violence. These questions focused on the reasons why women do not call the police after having suffered victimisation as a result of stalking and sexual violence respectively.

The distributions of frequency are shown in the graphs below:



Graph 11 - Reasons why women do not call the police after an episode of sexual violence



Graph 12 - Reasons why women do not call the police after an episode of stalking

Secondary victimisation therefore regards the impact the reaction of formal social control agencies has on the victim, and is focused on the fact that the contact of the

victim with the legal system can be negative from an emotional point of view, or even have repercussions from a social point of view.
The theoretical movement that hypothesises secondary victimisation on the part of the action mechanisms of formal social control agencies stems from the pioneers of victimology, specifically from Mendelsohn, who, as early as the 1940s, had called for greater attention, greater assistance and greater protection for the victims of the crime caught up in the wheels of the legal system.
As we can clearly see once again from the findings of our research, there is a considerable negative impact on victims derived from the degree of dissatisfaction regarding their role and participation in the legal process. This is due to a series of factors, which we can assume include the lack of information, the indifference of the system, the lack of a real opportunity to play an active part in the judicial proceedings that concern her, rather than being relegated to a role of a mere "object" thereof.
In this regard, it is worth remembering that a Convention (7 April 2011) has recently been enacted by the Council of Europe (CM (2011)49) on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, article 15 of which is dedicated to training and awareness raising for professionals (figures operating at various levels of the legal system, law workers, law enforcement agencies, healthcare workers, social service and educational staff) as an effective tool to prevent and to combat this phenomenon.
The training, as the article states, not only makes it possible to raise awareness among operators on issues of violence against women and domestic violence, but also contributes to a change in the perspective and the behaviour of the operators themselves towards victims. In addition, training can significantly improve the nature and the quality of support provided to victims. Initial professional training and lifelong learning should enable operators to acquire and to master the tools they need to identify and deal with cases of violence, as well as to implement preventive measures.
Article 13 of this Convention focuses on raising awareness among the general public in order to help all members of society (which could include neighbours, friends, relatives or colleagues) recognise these forms of violence, to take a stand against them and, as far as possible, to support victims. The Convention obliges member states to periodically organise campaigns and awareness-raising programmes on these issues, including for explanatory purposes, taking into account the disparities between men and women. The awareness-raising activities must involve the disclosure of information on equality between men and women, non-stereotyped gender roles and non-violent resolution of conflict in interpersonal relationships, the negative consequences that violence against women and domestic violence can have on children and governmental and non-governmental measures available to prevent violence and help victims.
In this regard, in Italy, information campaigns on violence against women have recently been launched through television and public radio.
In 2009, two public service advertisements, shown all over Italy by the RAI Italian Radio and Television channels, were promoted by the Department for Equal Opportunities: one of these, broadcast in March 2009, concerned violence against women and its aim was to publicise the telephone support service for women victims of violence (toll-free number 1522), while the other focused on stalking.
The first advertisement, linked to the campaign "1522 – It's time to act", presented during the event "On the side of women, against all kinds of violence", on 8 March 2009[10], and lasting 30 seconds, opened with a drawing of an alarm clock that shows

[10] http://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/index.php/campagne-di-informazione/921-1522-e-lora-di-reagire

"00:00"; the time then begins to move inexorably forward. Meanwhile, in the background, the image of a woman appears, sitting in front of a closed window, in a dark room; a male voice-over says: "I saw a woman sleeping in broad daylight, I saw a woman keeping the windows closed so as not to see how much the world hurts her - but the world is not outside those windows, the world is inside". At this point, the timer reaches "15:22", the alarm goes off, the woman gets up and turns it off, while a female voice-over says: "It's time to react". The woman opens the window and the voice-over says: "Every day, every hour a woman is the victim of violence. Call 1522. I did" (figure 1 and figure 2).

(fig.1)	(fig. 2)

The second institutional advertisement (figure 3), lasting about 30 seconds and entitled "Stalking: when attention become persecution", was broadcast in July 2009. It showed a woman sitting on a sofa placed inside a cage-prison, while a female voice-over says: "It is a siege, an obsession … messages all the time … rambling letters … calls at all hours … his presence below your window… around you an invisible prison grows. All this is now a crime. It's called stalking". At this point the woman, who was at first sitting on the sofa, is now standing; she smiles, and behind her hangs an empty cage, while a male voice-over says: "Now there's a way out of this prison: report your perpetrator, take back your freedom".
This information campaign was also broadcast by RAI radio and published in the press in order to inform public opinion regarding the new Law no. 38 of 2009, which introduced the crime of "persecutory acts" into the Italian criminal code.

Fig. 3

To return to our survey, the frequency distribution (although here again, numbers are small: 99 for the University of Bologna and 29 for the others) regarding the reasons why women do not call the police after suffering a stalking victimisation highlights the fear of not being able to produce sufficient evidence and the reluctance to report the crime because they do not want their aggressor to undergo an investigation or be sentenced. Unlike for sexual abuse, as shown in the graph, for stalking the fear of being badly treated by the police or during the process decreases, while there is an increase in uncertainty regarding the reasons why women do not call the police.
Again with reference to stalking, Law no. 38/2009 introduced a new victim protection tool, the warning order (article 8), issued by the Police Commissioner in order to ensure prompt, effective action against stalking. This article states that, until a lawsuit is brought for the crime of stalking, the victim "may report the facts to the public security authorities, requesting that the Police Commissioner issue the perpetrator with a warning order. [...] The Police Commissioner, once he has collected, if necessary, information from the investigative bodies and listened to the people aware of the facts, if he considers the application to be founded, issues an oral warning to the person against whom the measure was requested, inviting him to behave in accordance with the law and drawing up the pertinent report".

Chapter six - Recommendations for improvements to prevention and response policies and practices in Italy

The results of this research, and especially the interviews with stakeholders within and outwith the universities, clearly reveal the difficulty of defining the nature and the extent of the phenomenon. The parties involved cannot say how often the University of Bologna's female students may have encountered problems with stalking, harassment or sexual violence, due to a lack of incontrovertible data on the phenomenon. There is no formal documentation regarding episodes or elements connected with the cases that have occurred within the university or requests for assistance on the part of students in difficulty. Indeed, many interviewees believe that the target, the reference sample, is too specific, in that it covers a sector of the population - female university students – that is not easy to identify, because even when a victim formally reports the crime to the police, detailed information on the victim is often not available. If the offence is not reported, and the victim decides instead to confide in family or friends, this information will be even more difficult to find; and even if the student turns to a specialised centre against gender violence, the fact she is a university student has little bearing on the collection of statistical data.
Policemen say that in Bologna that they do not have "*the impression (...) that the University of Bologna's female students have more problems than other categories of students or other universities, so it appears to be a situation common to all Italian universities*". According to the police, the phenomenon in Bologna is no different to the country-wide average. At the same time, the policemen interviewed highlighted a particular feature of Bologna: the massive presence of students from outside the city who live in Bologna more or less permanently during their studies.
These non-resident students appear to have different lifestyles and habits from the resident students, so they may be at greater risk of victimisation: "*the non-resident female students socialise differently from resident students, because they live in an apartment with other young people of both sexes, and tend to meet in places that are different to those frequented by people of the same age who live and work in Bologna,*

who were born and raised there. This is certainly something that may differentiate the two lifestyles and may also influence exposure to certain risks and crimes; in other words, there are these different paths that can make a female student more or less vulnerable, depending on the situation".

With regard to prevention and intervention, the majority of respondents underlined the importance and the value of information and education campaigns.

No respondents appeared to underestimate the importance of raising awareness regarding the problem of gender violence, and of extending the scope of training programmes. Opinions differ in this regard and there are many concrete proposals with a focus on prevention rather than on precise strategies for intervention.

There is the will, but often not the financial resources, to implement *ad hoc* measures to prevent victimisation phenomena. Risk awareness comes from knowledge, from the information necessary to recognise violence, especially when it occurs within emotional relationships.

Indeed, the risk of victimisation at the hands of a stranger is much lower than the possibility of a victim meeting the perpetrator of violence at home; this is borne out by the content of the interviews collected. Hence the importance of providing information through the organisation of seminars and conferences aimed at young people of both sexes, because "*prevention alone, without sexual re-education, will not work*".

It is important that children of both sexes are able to recognise violence, arrogant behaviours, and sexism. It is not enough for girls to be informed, responsible and aware, and it is profoundly wrong to focus attention exclusively on the responsibility of women and the potential dangers they face, thus forcing them to limit their freedom "*because at the root of violence perpetrated by men against women lie the wrong kind of cultural information and the wrong kind of education imparted to both boys and girls*".

One particularly important aspect regards the possibility of overcoming diffidence towards the police; this diffidence derives from the fear of secondary victimisation after reporting a crime. Trust in the police, according to some respondents, may be the right way to increase the number of complaints, which is an essential instrument of intervention in order to fight a particularly odious crime - violence against women - because "*everyone is terrified of reporting crime, yet is important to be aware that this is a duty they owe themselves and a right guaranteed by the State*".

In addition to these suggestions, which are largely theoretical, there are practical solutions that have already been or are about to be implemented by stakeholders in order to combat these phenomena and at the same time support victims of crime.

One example is the Counselling Centre promoted by the Equal Opportunities Committee of the University of Bologna, with the assistance of organisations and facilities present in the city. The aim of the Centre is to become a point of a reference for employees of the University in particular, and the service aims to extend access to the student population.

The intention is to link the structures within the University into a working network.

The desire to extend the use of this service to students is a good idea, because students, who are often victims of harassment or phenomena of violence, do not know who to turn to, are unaware of the facilities put in place to protect them, such as the University Ombudsman, or see such facilities as inaccessible because they are discouraged by the practical and bureaucratic procedures involved.

Another positive experience, which should be enhanced and extended to many other situations, is the creation of a specific gynaecological emergency service for women victims of violence "*in the acute phase, because it is then that there are specific, precise and timely measures to be taken, which can subsequently be useful for the process of*

legal action, so there is well-balanced, careful attention paid to the evidence necessary".
Another interesting aspect is the possibility of the University opening out towards other institutions in the city. In Bologna there are "*associations dealing with the phenomenon of violence (starting with the House of Women Against Violence) and the condition of women (starting with the Documentation Centre for Women, the Orlando Association and Arcigay), which are a crucial, indispensable resource: a link with the local area and a wealth of knowledge and actions that must be exploited*".
Bologna has a very lively, hardworking, dynamic social fabric, especially as regards community life and voluntary work experiences. This certainly facilitates the creation of relationships and exchanges among the various facilities in the city, even if, as the respondents say, these relationships could be further intensified and could also encourage the implementation of a network of knowledge and of common experiences, "*because we have experience, professional figures and help desks, but we need to have them linked up into a network, and this is more difficult than it might appear*".
For example, one woman interviewed believed that collaboration with external facilities is absolutely necessary, especially when there is the need to protect some particular categories of victims. The integrated activity of different professionals, engaged on a common front - violence against women - is undoubtedly a particularly effective way of combatting the phenomenon, because it allows for the creation of shared strategies to improve the service provided to users.
The lack of communication between different facilities, the difficulty of achieving common goals and, often, the lack of funding adversely affect the quality of the service offered; however, attempts are being made to overcome this *impasse*, such as the Equal Opportunities Committee's project for the creation of a "listening point" able to act as a filter when required: "*I try to imagine myself in the shoes of another person: there might be someone who's the type to say "yes, I'll go" and another one who says "but where's the Ombudsman?" They might be in a very particular psychological situation: that's why we thought of creating the "listening point*"".
Economic considerations have also arisen around this kind of issues. Since these services are not particularly profitable, they are often side-lined; on the other hand, social and cultural factors may also come into play: "*university was originally as a male institution and (...) Italian culture and tradition have never rewarded the emancipation of women in culture and in the workplace*". Therefore, the main problem, according to most respondents, is represented by *gender*, by the persistence in Italy, despite a measure of progress, of a tradition and a culture that is fundamentally sexist. This situation is an obstacle to the emergence of these phenomena. One of the axioms that should be well established by now regards the fact that it is vital to speak out against violence against women, against gender violence, and that above all, the victim has no reason to feel ashamed; despite this, "*victims of these crimes are deeply ashamed of talking about them, because they know they will be judged and so on. And the social community has certainly kept this problem under wraps for a long time, because there's the idea that it is a private problem and not a social problem*".
In this regard, once again, there is a need to create an inseparable combination of training and information. It is therefore essential that women *in primis* become aware of their rights, because very often "*they do not know that their body is sacred and that it must be kept so, in every sense, continuously".*
Therefore, society needs training and education, which must start from an early age if it is to become a "*real educational factor injected straight into the DNA of relational behaviour*". As regards the role of the university in promoting this culture of respect, it

is vital that professional experts in various fields (law enforcement, doctors, pharmacists, social workers) make their knowledge available to students.
As well as information, it appears necessary to identify suitable places within the university context where students can be welcomed. There is an urgent need for the proper creation of a more widespread network of points of reference that are closer to the students, in order to make it easier for them to turn to a teacher or other figure within the faculty or the department, i.e. a figure that is not so "distant" from the student.
Adopting logistical solutions means coming up with places reserved for women, who, with adequate advice at their disposal, must be able to choose who to talk to and where. Lastly, some respondents believe that we cannot speak of "best practices", of standardised procedures, because each case must be assessed individually, and it also depends on the type of offence, because "*it is clear that domestic violence is different from violence perpetrated in the street*".
In addition, the investment of resources - and not only economic resources - in widening access to information is considered an essential element in reaching out to the greatest number of people possible. Therefore, it is important for publicity to appear in particular places, so that it is able not only to reach the women who need it, but also to inform the general public of the existence of specific facilities or services set up with the primary aim of helping victims of these crimes.
As well as through Internet, information can reach people through more traditional channels, such as "*public events aimed at students (conferences, film club screenings, monthly seminars, events and debates organised for the day against violence, etc.)*".
Respondents believe the importance of dialogue, the importance of listening and the power of interpersonal communication must not be underestimated. These dimensions, through introspection and empathy towards others and their experiences, must be properly dealt with by competent professionals in a suitable environment, so that the victim is able to break *out of the solitude*, to be listened to and accepted.
Then there is the need to ask for information and to receive exhaustive answers about what steps to take next, about the concrete opportunities open to them, because it very often happens that women have difficulty recognising and expressing their own needs. During the meeting with the victim, it is important for the operator to accompany her in the decision, as an interviewee pointed out: "*One of our aims is to help women to express a need, because, at the beginning, it is not clear to them what they actually need. So the first thing to do is to let them talk and to listen to them, so as to understand what they actually want to do*".

Chapter seven - Recommendations for further research on this topic in Italy including European scientific network building

The first important recommendation, concerning the opportunity to conduct further research on this issue, is that local institutions, in agreement with the individual universities in their area, should play an important role in promoting and implementing local networks for the prevention of gender violence. The participation of local institutions renders the programming work more pertinent and exhaustive, by encouraging:

- accurate, exhaustive data collection;
- a careful analysis of good practices already implemented in the field of gender violence prevention;
- comparison between different opinions and points of view.

The experience gained during this research allows us to state, as a further important recommendation for the development of additional research on this issue, the importance of adopting strategies that prioritise networking and partnerships formed by services and social subjects from different environments. It is essential that the concrete activities implemented for the prevention of gender-based violence be based on:

- the expression of different types of knowledge;
- the enhancement of skills;
- the identification and promotion of adequate resources.

In this sense, there should first and foremost be a commitment to regularly carrying out victimisation surveys aimed at monitoring the phenomenon in general and gender violence in particular, and also referring to what happens in the university environment regarding incidents of gender violence. A clear resource for change is the willingness of new stakeholders to take action regarding questions pertinent to wellbeing and quality of life.

A deeper, more effective understanding of gender violence can be achieved by organising thought and action networks that link up different contexts, organisations and social stakeholders. It is this that can form the basis for identifying a process aimed at creating and improving those physical and social conditions and expanding those common resources able to facilitate the prevention of gender victimisation processes.

In this sense, the future actions that may be taken to promote concrete measures in this area should place particular importance on the relationship between the local dimension and the European dimension. Each European partner, as happened in this research, has had plenty of scope for local decision-making in order to achieve the objectives of the project, as well as the advantage of belonging to a higher unit that offers benefits in terms of guarantees of stability, circulation of information and the possibility of sharing.

The development of a common strategy requires the ability to combine action and scientific research. It requires, when research is focused on such a difficult issue, skill in observing the different aspects that regard both and the problems on which action is intended.

It is therefore necessary to identify best practices able to demonstrate a positive, tangible impact on the prevention of gender violence.

In this sense, the enforcement of law encounters other branches of knowledge on its path. The increased complexity of the phenomenon of gender violence requires not only legal workers, but also social workers, to be able to understand and handle knowledge and languages that are not part of their specific cultural baggage.

An aspect under discussion for some time now, and whose importance we emphasise here, is the need for an increasingly interdisciplinary approach to the training provided to all those people (magistrates, lawyers, experts, social workers, academics and administrative staff) who, for various reasons, may find themselves dealing with these problems.

On the one hand, it is important to preserve the culture and knowledge of law, in the sense of the protection of practical and procedural tools to guarantee a correct assessment of the legal truth; on the other hand, it is imperative that we broaden, at an interdisciplinary level, the knowledge of operators working within the law and with the law.

The treatment of sexual violence, incest, adultery and other sexual behaviours that gradually came to be considered illegal has, over the years, mirrored the rules, coded and otherwise, governing relationships between social classes, ethnic groups or genders. This has led to a continuous succession of moral, social and legal norms that on the one hand have rightly represented a response to illegal behaviour, but on the other have led to an excessive intrusion of the public sphere into the private lives of individuals. Therefore, we agree that gender-based violence can be considered a "total social fact", an "event, discourse, representation, sign and symbol, subject to change yet persistent, and therefore a potential indicator of the background to relations between sexes, generations, classes, ethnic groups"[11]. For this reason, we believe it is necessary to continue to investigate and to study a phenomenon with ancient roots, but which sadly remains very much a part of modern society, because it is a mirror of the social and cultural relations present in a given period, and it is highly indicative of and relevant to political choices regarding relations between the sexes and the concept of sexuality.

Specifically, it will be necessary, with reference to gender violence at university, to conduct further investigations aimed at examining: a) the construction of personal and social identity in a context of changing sexual roles; b) gender-based violence as an element that occurs in relation to changes in the concept of identity; c) the different socio-cultural profiles of aggressors and victims in Italy and in other European countries. Gender violence is a social phenomenon linked firstly to the personal and social identity of men and women, built over time and with specific reference to the roles and the spaces they occupy within society, and secondly, to power, in the sense of a set of expressive skills afforded by the identity and the socio-economic position of each. Therefore, it appears necessary to extend the research to male students in order to reflect on the male identity.

[11] T.Pitch, *Un diritto per due. La costruzione giuridica di sesso, genere e sessualità*, Milano, 1998, p.164.