Anti-violence Interventions: Welfare Or Engendered Social Policy? Some Reflections.

Angela M. Toffanin, Marta Pietrobelli, Maura Misiti
University of Padova and IRPPS-CNR (Italy)

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PROGETTO DI MONITORAGGIO, VALUTAZIONE E ANALISI DEGLI INTERVENTI DI PREVENZIONE E CONTRASTO ALLA VIOLENZA CONTRO LE DONNE

IRPPS Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità

2017-2020 NAP & ViVa project: Monitoring, Evaluation and Analysis of actions to combat VAW

2
areas of work

4
objectives

6
working package

1° WORK AREA: **Mapping** support services for women victims of violence and Treatment programmes for Perpetrators

2° WORK AREA: **Supporting policies** to prevent and fight VAW, through:-
ex-ante and in itinere analyses of the national plan on VAW (2017–2020)
- ex post evaluation of the previous national plan (2015-17)

WP3: Research design

Case studies

Units of analysis	35 Anti-violence women's centres 6 Shelters 6 (+4) Perpetrators programmes 5 local networks: general services (health sector, welfare and social services, security sector) and specialised sectors
Research methods	Case study with in-depth interviews in each centres with 2+ workers Focus groups

Starting points and research purposes /1

Focus on:

- The practices of anti-violence centres and shelters
- The effects of the on-going regulatory processes at national and local level

Framework:

- The debate on «recognition» as an example of conflict between different "policies of interpretation of the need" (Fraser, 2013)
- The debate on the several transformations that characterized the sectors characterized by the role of interpersonal relationship (social work system, educational sector, healthcare one, …) well before the covid-19 pandemic both at organizational, workers', users' level (Payne and Askeland 2008; Bruni 2013, Beck, 2011; Bertin et al., 2015; Giullari et al. 2019)

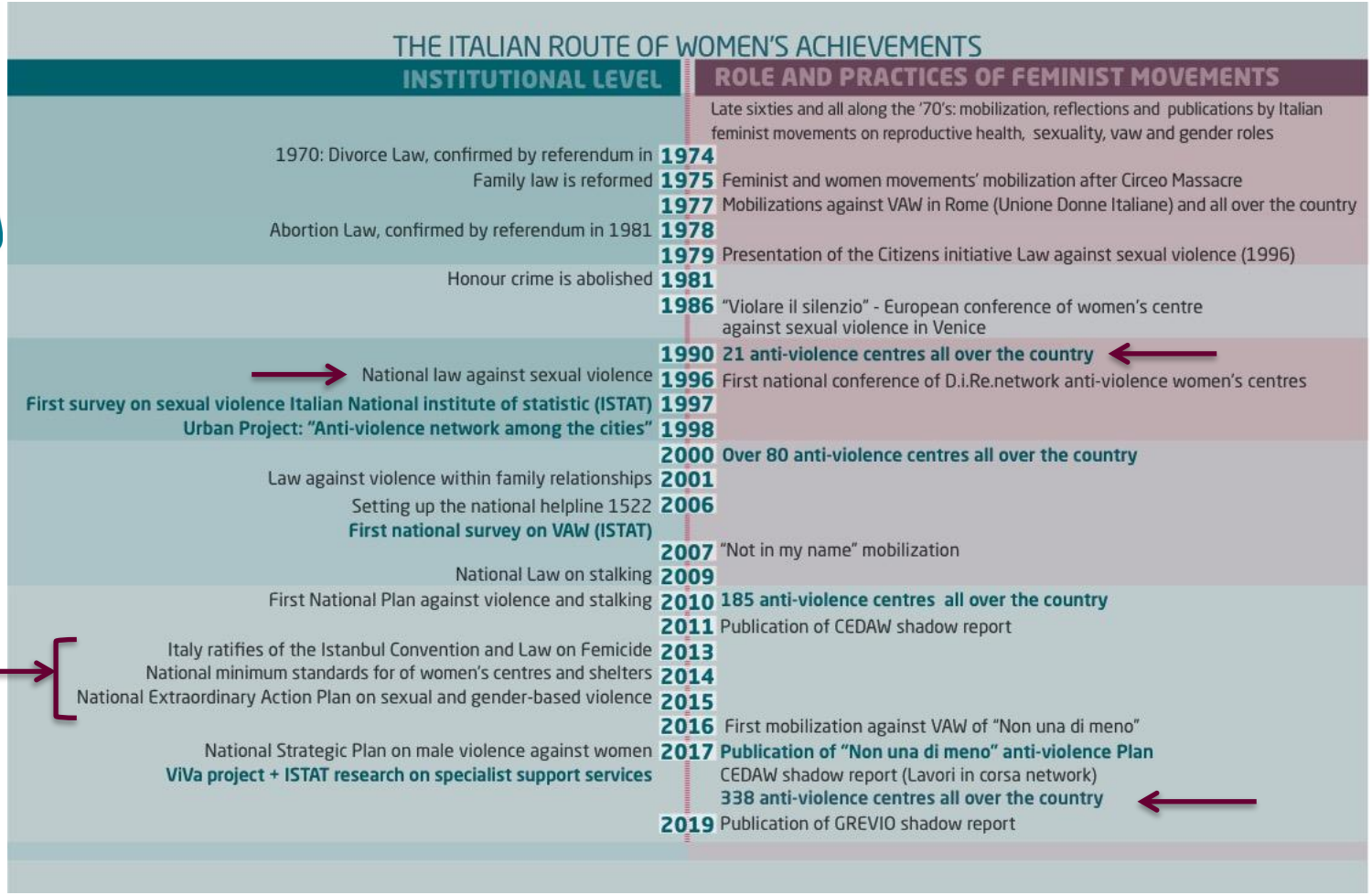
Starting points and research purposes /2
How to engender social policies?

The Italian anti-violence system context as a privileged observation's point for analysing regulatory and standardization processes' effects.

"The traditional world of social policy (or administration) was peopled by ungendered subjects and objects of analysis; women and their concerns were marginalized" (Lister, 2000)

→ Policies and interventions that are able to keep the "users" needs and voices at the core of services, following a multiagency approach able to include diversity

The work in progress of antiviolence policies in Italy: movements' achievements and legislation



Regulatory or bureaucratization processes in the anti-violence system

Tensions between standardization and personalization: an on-going debate

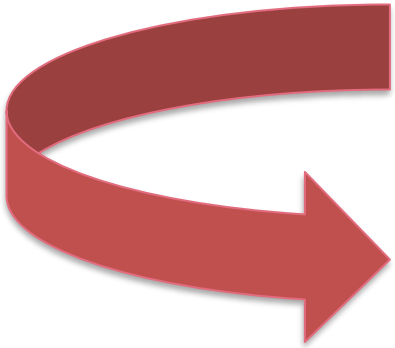
Ambivalences related to:

- Multidimensionality of the problem
- Different subjects involved: women, their sons and daughters, perpetrators…
- Several actors: specialized services, health services, law enforcement, social and welfare services, schools, educational and job services, trade unions, judicial system…= juxtaposition of professional practices and routines

Standardization | Personalization of services

General services' approach:
"they 'take over' women who experienced violence through standardized interventions"

Anti-violence centres' methodology:
- personalization: co-construction of interventions with women
- women's needs and interests at the core of support
- attention to women's confidentiality and anonymity



To engender social policies:

Protagonism of women

+

A coordinated and multi-agency approach

Protagonism of women

Voices from anti-violence centres

An anti-violence centre is not a [standardised, ed.] service (…) Everything depends on the woman's aim, which cannot be established in advance. Each woman has her own time, her own needs. Our goal is women's self-determination (Anti-violence centre, July 2019).

Standardisation is useful for workers. They know how to act and how to behave. However, we think that every intervention has to be individualised, based on each woman's time and desires. They can decide to stop, to go back at any time. We build the intervention with them (Anti-violence centre, July 2019).

We are a women's centre, not just an anti-violence centre. This means that we will listen to every woman who comes here. We will listen to all the women's problems. (...) The anti-violence centre is a laboratory of thoughts. (...) We are still leading in the direction of stimulating the world outside the women's centre to change the cultural representation of gender relationships. A laboratory that is constantly evolving and constantly checking what we do, what we are interested in (Anti-violence centre, July 2019).

Co-ordinated and multi-agency approach - Institutional level

Italian National Strategic Plan (2017-2020) → Multi-agency approach

Guidelines on sexual violence for the health sector (2017) → Health local services and hospitals have to develop protocols with local networks to protect women

Italian Agreement on women's centres and shelters standards (2014) → Women's centres and shelters have to participate in local networks (art. 7)

Strengths of a multi-agency approach

Policies' development (national, regional and local levels)

- Recognition of women's centres role (at the national, regional and local levels)
- Feminist contributions to VAW policies, mainstreaming a gender approach, with women at the core of interventions
- Different administrations sharing commitments in protecting and supporting women

Support-services' development through local networks

- Holistic response to women subjected to violence
- Anti-violence centres call institutions to their roles and responsibilities
- Different institutions may speak the "same language"
- Women re-victimization can be avoided
- Formalised networks through protocols may avoid gaps in the systems, procedures and operators turn-over

Weaknesses / challenges of a multi-agency approach

Policies' development (national, regional and local levels)

- Not all institutions/agencies may share the same view on VAW (e.g.: securitarian vs gender-based approach)
- The operationalization of the NAP is a slow and complex process *(funding, governance, changes in administrations*)

Support -services' development through local networks

- Difficulties in coordinating different bodies/institutions
- Risk of lack of operationalization of local networks' agreements
- Risk of excessive bureaucratization: women's needs and choices may not be at the centre of the multi-agency approach
- Political and operational levels within local networks may clash on timing, approaches and procedures

Some final remarks

- The experience of anti-violence centres and shelters can represent an experimental model for the development of new “engendered policies” oriented by an intersectional and multidisciplinary approach

- In the Italian context, the anti-violence centres and shelters are in an edge position, between remaining a political subject acting in a radical social transformation and becoming a specialized subject of the private social sector providing an “essential” public service and a space to change the current social policies through their experience

Thank you!