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Editorial

Gender violence: the actions of the University of Messina

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The main purposes of this public publishing service are centred on the dissemination of research, so that we all should remember that the three academic missions are inseparable. One of the main themes we learned in terms of clinical definitions can be related to Devereux (1953) definition of culture, meant as interiorization of experience, subject’s development in terms of differentiation, plasticity and variety of behaviour.

What the above-mentioned author expresses is still current and in line with recent neuroscientific contributions (Groothuis & Taborsky, 2015; Kolb & Gibb, 2011; Van Buskirk, 2012; Wells, 2021). In these terms, institutions’ training must assume, with regard to complex phenomena, integrated attitudes including didactic, research and dissemination of research (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020; Frisone & Micali, 2020; Krücken, 2020; Laredo, 2007; Loi & Di Guardo, 2015; Montonen et al., 2021).

For the present contribution we choose to interview Professor Giovanna Spatari, Prorector of Welfare and Gender Policies at the University of Messina, Italy. Nowadays, research about gender policies is attracting attention (Foddìs et al., 2017; García-Holgado, 2020; Giuri et al., 2020; Marra, 2020; Mazzotta et al., 2020; Profeta, 2020; Rosa et al., 2020; Scapellato et al., 2017).

Moreover, serious difficulties due to pandemic issues, emerged in all fields including psychopathological terms (Di Giuseppe et al., 2021; Marzilli et al., 2021; Merlo et al., 2021; Moroianu et al., 2021; Musetti et al., 2021; Schimmenti et al., 2021; Somer et al., 2021; Tambelli et al., 2021), have been overcome through new technologies. The third mission thus provided for a certain continuity, so that the contents were quickly disclosed and extensible to the public.

The authoritativeness of the interview is also underlined by the pro tempore role of President of the Italian Society of Occupational Medicine. During the interview with Professor Spatari few questions were asked, obtaining meaningful answers for the search for ways to go both in the educational and research sense.

Questions and answers are reported as follows.

“Recently our University organized a multidisciplinary focus on gender-based violence, what motivations, needs, and strategies of the university motivated this choice?”

Professor Spatari: *“For years our university has focused on investing in gender policies. Three editions of a series of seminars on the theme of violence have been held since 2015. These structured training courses are divided into about ten meetings and address the four fundamental aspects of violence, namely knowledge, recognition, prevention and contrast, however, remained niche events, especially with students enrolled. Following the femicide of Lorena Quaranta, our academic community was significantly shaken and after a few months we organized, in July 2020, a seminar that aroused the interest of students on the subject, thus also capturing a student demand and need. to involve the entire student population as well, as participation was generally of women. Taking advantage of the possibility of the new technologies made available and developed during the pandemic, we wanted to make specific focuses that looked at the various faces of violence and that could be of interest to students who attended various degree courses who could be interested in the different fields of study. The recognition of CFU demonstrates the university's interest in these issues ”.*

Clinical psychology has dealt with the problem in order to highlight the different qualities in gender-based violence. An example is the work of Sorrentino et al. (2018) which emphasized the possible repercussions on the lack of knowledge in this field.

“Do you think there are substantial gender differences between male and female violence?”

Professor Spatari: *“Crimes of a sexual nature are generally characterized as perpetrated by male subjects. Based on the data available to the prosecutors, it is clear that in the couple relationship, especially following separations, women mostly commit stalking crimes, men especially kill.”*

“Attention to the environments in which violence takes place is meant as a search for the aggressiveness risk factors following your experience strongly linked to the workplace, as an Occupational Doctor this phenomenon of violence as it is experienced compared to that of family environments?”

Professor Spatari: *“In the workplace there are substantially two types of violence: that committed by external users, which is striking violence, characterized by unique episodes (typical of those work activities that take place in solitude, generally at night as happens for example on medical guard) and then those perpetrated by colleagues, superiors and therefore those that mature within the dynamics of the company. Meanwhile, the characteristics with which the violence is perpetrated are different, it is almost never physical violence, therefore it generally does not require access to the emergency room. It is a moral, subtle violence that hardly emerges. In fact, the ISTAT data is estimated that 1404,000 (8.9%) women have suffered physical harassment or sexual blackmail in the workplace: 425,000 (2.7%) in the last three years; in the course of their working life, 1173000 women (7.5%) were victims to be employed; 268,000 received a proposal to keep their jobs or achieve career advancements; only 15.8% of those who suffer blackmail in the course of their life told their experience and spoke about it mainly with colleagues (8.2%), much less with the employer (4.1%), with managers or workplace administration (3.3%). Almost no one has reported to the police. The perpetrators of sexual harassment are largely men: 97% of the victims are women and 85.4% of the victims are men (OIL convention of January 15, 2021).*

States are asked for an integrated and multilevel intervention, including gender, for the prevention and repression of the phenomenon of violence and harassment, also with the contribution of the social partners. The regulations and actions of the State adhering to the Convention must ensure: explicit policies against violence and harassment to be adopted in all public and private companies with the contribution of male and female workers, including through their own representatives; the inclusion of violence and harassment and related psychosocial risks in occupational health and safety regulations and therefore in the risk assessment and consequent measures; information and training activities, awareness campaigns; victim-friendly reporting procedures; legal and health support for victims; the right to stop work in the event of imminent danger of violence and harassment; adequate inspection activity and proportional penalties; anti-discrimination and migration policies legislation that addresses the issue of violence and harassment; actions to identify the sectors and groups most at risk.”

One of the aims of the third mission of the universities is to offer rigorous information more faithful to the objectivity than to the emotionalism of the readers.

“What should the attention of social communication and mass communication media correct in the communication style for adequate and credible information?”

Professor Spatari: *“The principle is: always talk about it, never interrupt the communication, don't let the attention on this topic diminish, don't let "not talk about it". And of course, there is no perfect formula. Social*

communication has different forms, as different forms of expression have the means of communication (newspapers, websites, TV, ...) and so it must continue to be because they have to reach such a vast audience, made up of people who each have a way of perceive different. There is no single, perfect formula that can be good for everyone, because sensitivity is something different in each of us, it is how we perceive things or events also based on our experience, our culture, trivially how we are been raised, educated and evolved. But always telling is fundamental. And the story will always manage to move something in the conscience of someone, even if only one person.

A story, a complaint, a set of words, a video, manages to penetrate "culture", understood as a common feeling on an issue. Because the absorption by the community of certain concepts is a long, infinite process.

Communication is changing, he is trying to correct some unconscious distortions, for example the term was used was "seized by a raptus because he could not bear the idea of being left" or "he scarred her with acid because she was dating a other "or describe how the victim was dressed, this is not to be done because focusing attention on contextual factors is like trying to find a justification for a conduct. Violence is always and in any case violence and attention must focus on this ".

During these ten years of MJCP experience we have noticed the students' interest in extracurricular activities and interest in our edition as a journal. We therefore believe that they are fascinated by an education that, however specifically dedicated, must expand for an appropriate knowledge, capable of facing the unexpected and with the ternary ethical characteristics of the human race (individual, species and society)."

"In the educational and training fields of the University, what should be strengthened in programs to stem and contain the phenomenon of gender-based violence?"

Professor Spatari: "The issue of violence is not an emergency issue but it is a structural issue, therefore it is necessary to dedicate specific focuses, according to the age of the children, according to the specific learning skills but it is necessary to start talking about it very early, in order to be able to unbinge immediately stereotypes, stimulate the culture of non-violence, also in consideration of some drifts linked to sexual and racial orientation, the culture of respect for the other, of acceptance, untying the concept of stereotype from normality. "

"Considering that the causes of violence are generated by a complexity derived from social, economic, religious, ethnic elements, etc., what support should be implemented in favour of the victims of violence in general?"

Professor Spatari: "On the phenomenon of violence, especially in the domestic environment, the anti-violence centers that carry out underground work but also very important for the reception and legal assistance phase need to be mentioned. These houses also welcome children and, depending on the resources they have available, organize paths, alongside the provision of modest checks to support women who have reported episodes of violence and who

are not in the economic conditions to detach themselves from the family. from. These realities are also present in Messina.”

“Returning to the activities of the University, are further developments expected after the multidisciplinary focus on gender-based violence?”

Professor Spatari: *“With respect to the theme of violence, the interdisciplinary focuses were a basis from which to start; the seminar is happy in its duration and is clearly a moment of reflection and now we are organizing structured paths within each degree course, also implementing the possibility that our students do specific internships on practical topics, for example, correctly making a report in the in the event that there have been violence, deal with the specific aspects of the Pink Code, the study of the subject in the courts. In this way we want to demonstrate that it is possible to organize an internship activity focused on the theme of violence because violence is transversal to many other themes. The University also has an information function in relation to the territory and therefore we think of a dissemination for local operators, for social workers, for lawyers and for all those who want to deepen the issues of violence. We hope that this can be a good practice, a good procedure that can also be disseminated throughout the territory with respect to the theme of violence.”*

Thanks to Professor Giovanna Spatari, recently included among the hundred Italian excellences, we want to underline how the universities still represent a testimony for the renewal of the individual and the community.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any potential conflict of interest.

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