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RESEARCH AND SURVEY GROUP D.I.RE ASSOCIATION
“STATISTICS FOR 2010: 3RD NATIONAL SURVEY”

13.696 women victims of violence, both within and outside their homes, asked for help in the 2010 solar year from 56 of the 58 Anti-Violence Centres (Women run Counselling Centres for women victims of violence, often connected to a Women's shelter) or Women's Shelters, which belong to the D.i.Re National Association, and were the subjects of the statistics survey.

13.696 women, a remarkable number, considering that the "new cases", i.e. Women not classified by the structures in preceding years, made up 78% of the cases accepted by the Centres

Women, who belonged to a submerged reality, emerged as "numbers" in relation to other women, together with the women operating in the Centres, as "stories": "stories" told and defined in 62.323 interviews organised by women, who in their reports competently and professionally support self-reliance processes of "conscious and secure exiting progress from violence".

Italian citizens, like the perpetrators of violence against them, in 71% of the cases, possessing names, surnames and native, local dialects or inflections if one wants, once again, to contradict the myth which defines such cases pertaining to immigrants, culturally and socially remote from the customs and habits of our own Country.

Common-place or stereotypes which are at the base of female socialisation, upholding the necessity of being on one's guard in the presence of unknown people, dark alleys, or public places, and pledge safety where in fact, according to statistics, danger lurks most frequently: the greatest number of the attacks against the women who came to the Anti-violence Centres were -de facto- committed within their homes, by men with whom the woman has or had a very meaningful relationship.

In this light analysis (table 1) of the relationship existing between the authors of the acts of violence and the women who came for assistance to the Anti-Violence Centres appears most significant: 84% of the cases were husbands, partners, fiancés or ex-partners: it is being a “wife” which seems to exponentially increase the risk for women of being victims of violence.

A wife or companion viewed and considered as “property” available and to be used as he pleases by the man. An inalienable property: 20% of the cases followed by the Anti-Violence Centres demonstrate that neither the end of the relationship nor divorce guarantee the certain end of violence (table 1).

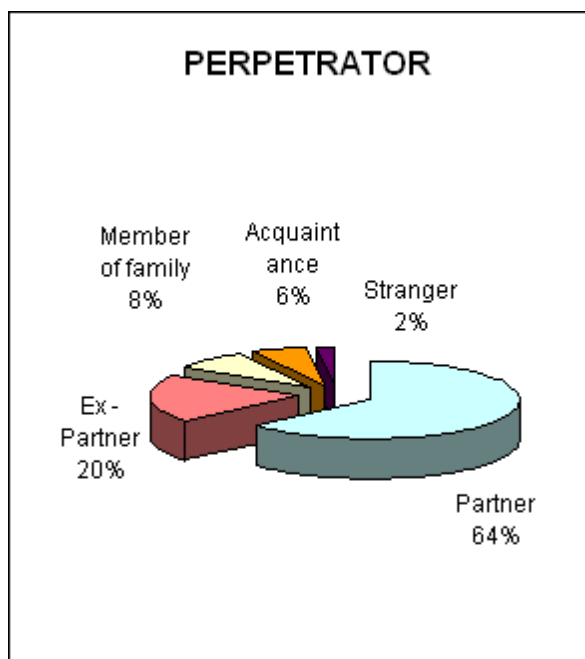
The date relative to violence perpetrated by ex-partners enables us to identify the moment in which women distance themselves from their male companions as a very complex time, so that it seems of fundamental importance to evaluate the risk of recurrent violence in a competent manner.

Tab. 1

Women given shelter: 13.696
 Not ascertained: 3.177
 Ascertained: 10.519

Perpetrator *	%
Partner	64
Ex - Partner	20
Member of family	8
Acquaintance	6
Stranger	2

*: Multiple answers



Enslavement, power and control over the women partner or ex partner seem to be exercised by means of all the kinds of violence that can be practiced in intimate situations (table 2).

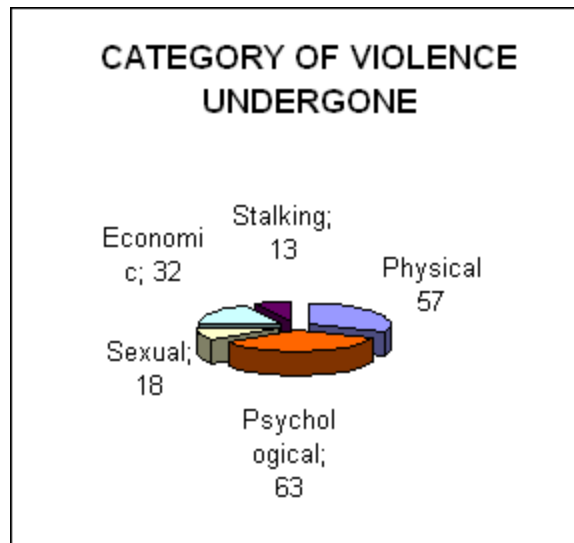
Physicals and/or sexual violence is practiced mostly in conjunction with other forms of abuse: various types of violent behaviour (subdivided into major categories in the survey carried out) tend to take place simultaneously, further increasing the effects of each violent behavioural aspect.

7.246 women (57%) who asked for assistance from the Centres have been the victims of at least one kind of physical abuse (kicking, slapping, knifing, attempted murder...), 2.888 (18%) have undergone at least one type of sexual abuse (rape, forced sexual intercourse...), 8.808 (63%) have been subjected to at least one type of psychological violence (denigration, humiliation, threats of violence and/or death, isolation...) and 4.068 (32%) have suffered at least one type of economic violence (being deprived of or having their salary taken away or being controlled, imposed economic and/or legal obligations, being left without economic support...), 1.653 women (13%) have been the objects of stalking (carried out with reiterated threats, abuse and persecuting behavioural patterns).

Tab. 2

Women given shelter: 13.696
 Not ascertained: 984
 Ascertained: 12.712

Category of violence undergone *	Women %
Physical	57
Psychological	63
Sexual	18
Economic	32
Stalking	13



*: Multiple answers

The exercise of violence can lead to situations in which the physical and/or psycho-physical integrity of the women and of their children can be subject to grave danger. In such cases removing the woman and children to a protected, sheltered address, as an alternative to the family home, seems the only viable solution to effectively prevent further violence.

This possibility is offered by 34 (61%) of the Anti-violence Centres which were the objects of the survey and which all together gave shelter to 435 women and 396 minors in the solar year of 2010, although the actual beds present in the facilities are only 395 -which is a significant figure and provides some understanding of such a heavily under-estimated social phenomenon as well as stressing the hopelessly inadequate capacity of existing shelter structures to cope with the real need caused by the phenomenon.

The analysis of opportunity of placing a series of "green" (gratuitous) numbers and a 24 hour telephone answering service to be used by women victims of abuse proves just how exiguous the resources are. 76% (41) of the Anti-violence Centres which were subjects of the survey do not have the economic resources to offer a gratuitous telephonic service and 63% (34) could not guarantee the staffing of a 24 hour answering service.

In the absence of a national legislative scheme of reference and of financial support, the Anti-violence Centres are in effect responsible for negotiations with the local institutions and Associations and not only for the type of services that the Centres can offer (lodging, free telephone numbers by day and night, the presence of paid staff...), but for the very existence of a woman run counselling centre for women victims of violence on the local territory.

79% (42) of the 53 Anti-violence Centres which were the subjects of the survey indicated that the local Public Institution (municipality, Provincial Administration, Region) is the main financial source, for 13% (7) the financial contribution of the Institutional organisation is secondary compared with parallel contributions from private charities or from self-financing. 8% (4) of the Centres included in the survey cannot count on any economic assistance from public institutions, wherefore their existence relies exclusively on what the members of the association can provide and on fund-raising activities organised by the members.

The limits or the favourable attitude of local public institutions to supporting women's associations is also highly visible in the study of Italian Anti-violence Centres which are associated with D.i.Re

In 5 of the 21 Italian regions there are no Counselling Centres (valle d'Aosta, Piemont, Umbria, Molise and Basilicata) and in 4 Regions and in one autonomous Province (Marche, Abruzzo, Puglia, Calabria and the Autonomous Province of Trento), the Counselling Centres are unable to offer temporary lodging to women victims and their children/minors in sheltered housing.

Such realities are in direct contradiction with territories where there is a significant and consolidated (numerical as well) presence of Counselling Centres: 12 in Lombardy (of which 4 also have Shelters), 10 Anti-Violence Centres in Emilia-Romagna (all provided with Shelters), 8 Anti-Violence Centres in Tuscany (5 which offer Shelters), 5 centres in Friuli Venezia Giulia (all of which provide Shelters) and 5 in Lazio (of which 2 with Shelters).

The remaining 6 Italian Regions offer fairly hybrid situations: there are 3 Anti-Violence Centres in Campania (all of which offer Shelters), 3 Anti-violence Centres in Sicily (one of which offers a Shelter), whilst there is one Anti-violence centre providing a Shelter in each of the Veneto, Liguria and Sardinia Regions.

A fragmented Nation seems to emerge from our survey, full of forgotten areas in which silences, resistances, evasion and ambiguity demonstrated by the public administration obstruct coping with the problem of men's violence perpetrated against women, which seem to reflect the silences, resistances, evasions and ambiguity that seem to fill most public speeches and the private knowledge of this problem.

The picture however also includes the tenacious work that Women's Counselling Centres run by women to help women victims of violence, carry out every day, supported by local administration, as well as the hospitality offered by the Shelters which attempts to produce knowledge, culture and change.