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Direzione scientifica

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Tematiche privilegiate della collana sono quelle connesse alla sociologia generale; sociologia dei processi culturali e comunicativi; sociologia dei processi economici, del lavoro, dell'ambiente e del territorio; sociologia dei fenomeni politici e giuridici.

Proximity Violence in Migration Times

A Focus in some Regions of Italy, France and Spain

Edited by Ignazia Bartholini

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PROVIDE
PRoximity On Violence: Defence and Equity

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2. The phenomenology of proximity violence: relational strategies and modalities used against vulnerable migrants

by *Ignazia Bartholini*

2.1 Migration and segregation

Over the past few years a drastic reduction in flows of migrants to Europe from the African continent has taken place because of the recent restrictive policies governing the entry of asylum seekers promulgated and implemented by a number of European States (Lafleur & Stanek, 2017). Between 2017 and 2018, the general elections held in some EU member states[1] brought to power sovereigntist parties whose positions regarding immigration are restrictive and have led to vehement clashes in the European Council regarding the policies to adopt and to the adamantine refusal by some countries like Hungary and the Czech Republic to accept refugees in defiance of the Resolution regarding the placement of migrants adopted by the European Commission on the 13th of May 2015. The restoration of systematic checks at national borders and the suspension of the application of the Schengen rules[2] have produced unacceptable costs in terms of human lives as well as violation of fundamental rights, widely and repeatedly documented by humanitarian organisations (Human Rights Watch 2019). Reductions in the overall numbers of arrivals is not accompanied by a corresponding drop in the numbers of women and minors arriving here[3]. Some of the *ad hoc* resolutions[4] and norms[5] implemented by other EU member States have helped to define, alongside a general containment of the overall numbers of refugees, a clear picture of the migrants who reach the coasts of Europe: women, often

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[1] In 2018, the general elections held in Italy, Sweden and Hungary revealed a marked advance of right and extreme-right coalitions.

[2] The last time was 2015 when Germany, Austria, Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden imposed control of their frontiers (Cfr. Guild, Brouwer, Groenendijk and Carrera, 2015).

[3] Cfr. UNHCR Europe Monthly Report (December 2017).

[4] See the European Parliament's Resolution of the 3rd May 2018 on the protection of minors, in http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0201_IT.html.

[5] In Italy, for example, the Zampa Law, decree n. 47, 2017.

the victims of rape and unspeakable violence, as well as unaccompanied minors. Neither gender nor age appear to have acted as deterrents against human trafficking. The tortured, abused bodies of so many of migrants is a sign of an abomination that has become commonplace, played down even by the victims themselves as an ineliminable condition, the inevitable price they need to pay to save their lives. Unlike the most serious violations against women that we can recall, and which have recently led to the establishment of international courts, the violence that these bodies undergo is nearly always trivialised and normalised by the victims themselves, reduced by them to almost total insignificance. Reports by the IOM (2017) and other humanitarian organisations (UNHCR, 2018; Amnesty International, 2017; UNICEF, IOM, 2016, 2017) describe some of the unprecedented suffering undergone by refugees/asylum seekers. Alongside these sufferings, however, it is necessary to assert how and by what means the pain thus inflicted is transformed into acceptance and normalisation of violence, self-obligational subordination and reification of the victims' conscience.

The PROVIDE (PRoximity ON VIolence: Defence and Equity) Project[6], aims at focusing on the phenomenology of proximity violence, the relational strategies and modalities by means of which violence is perpetrated against women hosted by the refugee reception centres of Italy, France and Spain. It then discusses the good practices found within the hosting facilities and services of the countries involved in this research partnership, as well as the needs expressed by the operatives engaged in the management and accompaniment of victims of violence.

2.2 An amphibiolic terminology: "violence against women" and "gender violence"

For several decades now, the subject of violence against women stands at the intersection between social and cultural phenomena, an understanding of which permits us to intercept some of the extensive transformations late-modern scenarios are undergoing in Europe and, more generally, in the west. Although initially monopolised by feminist literature (De Beauvoir, 2008; Mitchell, 1984), the topic now traverses multiple fields of analysis. If, on the one hand, the phenomenon involves different sectors of society, such as the family, the workplace, systems of coexistence between groups belonging to different cultures etc., on the other, it is analysed from many dissimilar disciplinary perspectives.

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[6] Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) - REC-VAW-AG-2016-01-funded by EU.

These perspectives converge on the essential elements which characterise it: male domination, asymmetry of roles, but also the vulnerability of the victim and the proximity indicators of self-acceptance put into practice by the victims themselves: resistance and resilience.

These regard rapports between subjects involved in power relations which orient analyses of the phenomenon in two directions: the oppression men exert over women by means of the hierarchisation of difference (Bartky, 1990; Bimbi, 2013 and following; Bartholini, 2013 and following) within specific contexts; confirmation of the existence of rigid confines between gender identities (Connell, 2002; Lombardi, 2005) based on cultural prejudices and mental constructs rooted in and endorsed by the social groups in which they are evident. Even the expressions used are not univocal although *Violence Against Women* (VAW) or gender-based *Violence* are undoubtedly the linguistic periphrases which best describe the aspects peculiar to the phenomenon[7]. Despite their being interwoven, they need to be considered differently in relation to the variegated spectrum of situations and relationships which underscore the phenomenon both in the north-west and the rest of the world (Kapur, 2002)[8]. In the case of the first of these two – *violence against women* – the emphasis is placed almost by accident on the rhetoric of power based on male dominance within gender relations, the abuse of power exerted by men over women as an effect of the «androcentric role» they play (Bourdieu, 1998). The *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women*, the so-called *Istanbul Convention* (2011), besides defining it as a violation of human rights also indicated its range of action within the spheres of public and the private life alike. Violence against women is perpetrated by men "as the dominant group" in order to maintain the advantages they derive from being dominant (Romito, 2000) availing themselves of "naturalised" abuse of devices of power and bio-power (Foucault, 1976), which even go so far as to arrive at the dehumanisation of the victim. The expression *violence against women* refers, therefore, to ascertained historical subalternity, stable even in the tireless reproduction of its practices. As sanctioned by the Recommendations made by international bodies, it does not endorse neutral definitions referring to generic theoretical positions. Instead it is an effect of cultural representations sedimented over time, that originally served to «make the unusual customary» (Moscovici, 1984: 49) and turned into concrete experiences and modes

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[7] VAW (Violence Against Women) and gender-based Violence are terms commonly used to indicate how most gender violence is perpetrated by men against women and girls. Both terms refer to power due to the inequality existing between men and women (Eige website, http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/what- is-gender-based-violence).

[8] The view whereby we consider valid concepts belonging to western culture and which characterise the scientific production to which this volume refers, does not prevent their use in comparative terms.

of behaviour after a series of adjustments carried out to normalise and concretise what formerly seemed abstract. It identifies a macro-group of people vulnerable by definition – women – and outlines the binary and asymmetric dimension of *male domination* (Bourdieu, 1998), traceable back to customary norms and notions of morality and masculine values, as well as to religious beliefs, to practices passed down through history. It is a modus vivendi that knows no geographical boundaries and rests on beliefs which in Europe, by way of example, tolerated honour killings at length, while in large areas of the rest of the world female genital mutilation (BMBF, 2009; WHO, 2002), forced marriages, stoning (WHO, 2002, 2005) are still authorised. These are all forms of violence practised to the detriment of women by the ethnic group or state to which they belong, as well as by their families themselves, a fact bearing witness to widespread cultural legitimation of violence.

The second definition makes the positions of those who perpetrate violence and those who are oppressed by it, explicit also from a symbolic point of view.]It refers to violence exercised against "a" more vulnerable gender, where violence «is directed against a woman because she is a woman or […] affects women disproportionately» (*Istanbul Convention*) within a sex-gender system where the male occupies the predominant position (Rubin, 1997). Gender associated with the topic of violence becomes, primarily, an analytical category used to interpret social changes and differences between cultures. So, «firstly, the stereotypes, ideologies, behaviours and lifestyles conventionally associated with feminine and masculine vary considerably from one culture to another. Secondly, women and men are not universal and unalterable essences, but rather specific existences, changing far from uniform» (Fernandez-Alvarez, 2014: 48). Historically acknowledged gender segregation between masculinity and femininity, lies at the basis of practices leading to the violation of women, LGBTs and men in conditions of vulnerability. Gender and violence are a binomial defining the identity of the victims and the perpetrators, but which can be enlarged to cover the entire issue of gender violence, leaving the dominant role of the male intact, however. This causes views of gender to focus on roles perceived and played according to the expectations of scripts repeated over time and space, which denote the constant in the rapport between perpetrators and victims as «a fluctuating artifice, a ceaseless motion in action, a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint which does not deny the violence but rather presumes it» (Butler, 2004: 26), acting in a way to impose a representation as congenial as possible to the will of the perpetrator.

In both of the above-described semantic contexts, violence involves some form of social exclusion, public discrimination (Jaji, 2009; Crisp *et al.*, 2012) secondary victimisation (Pinelli, 2011; Corradi 2008, 2009; Tognetti & Rossi, 2016), exploitation of labour (Coin, 2004), human trafficking

(Krause-Vilmar, 2011; Peano, 2013; Gallagher, 2015) and sexual abuse (Crisp *et al.*, 2012).

Although recent literature defines gender violence as the exercise of physical and psychological dominance over a victim and foregrounds the various modalities (direct, indirect, physical, symbolic, cultural, instrumental, etc.), of which it avails itself explicitly, the problem remains confined within a cultural paradigm which tolerates gender inequality, even when it does not legitimate it. Gender violence not only acts *upon* bodies, but also *through* bodies, in a combination which is frequently complicit and consensual but also devoid of acknowledgement (Morgan & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2006;). In this sense, gender violence is a «modernist phenomenon» (Corradi, 2005), that is, one which is attributable to cultural models of the past that refer to codifications of inter-gender relationships availing themselves of stereotypes and representations of patriarchal inter-sex structures. However, while VAW incontrovertibly describes the exercise and abuse of the power of men over women, gender-based violence fails to conceal widespread gender subalternity to the male. In actual fact, it validates said subalternity by taking for granted that the diversities inherent to the gender subjected to violence are naturally associable to practices of segregation and labelling (Morgan & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2006; Arbel *et al.*, 2014). It finds legitimacy in the power relationship between genders where the disvalue consists in the fact of being different from, other than, the dominant male.

Even legal rulings have adopted this kind of division which polarises women or genders. In an incontrovertible way, Art.1 of the *General Recommendation* No. 19, of the 11th session of the United Nations, defined VAW as a form of "gender-based" discrimination, «seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men» (CEDAW, 1992). This article also included acts inflicting physical, mental or sexual damage or suffering, threats of similar action, coercion and other deprivation of liberty. The *Convention of Istanbul*, too, defined it as «shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately» (article 3) as gender-type violence.

2.3 Proximity violence

Proximity violence precedes gender violence and/or violence against women at both theoretical-reflection and extrinsic-phenomenic levels. It constitutes the architrave of the phenomenological spectrum which makes it possible to grasp its substantially different aspects while, at the same time, placing itself beyond the forms of violence examined in the preceding paragraphs. In the pages that follow, we shall sustain that the type of violence

found in acts against women is of a particular kind, made possible only because the perpetrator enjoys a special type of habitual proximity with the victim for reasons of *jus sanguinis* (a father or a close relative), because of being a *coniugo* (partner) or due to *causa simulandi* (that is simulation whereby the perpetrator "makes believe", "pretends"). Both the proximity violence perpetrated by right of blood or by conjugal right belong to the cultural bedrock of patriarchy and considered "a woman's destiny". Proximity violence perpetrated because of *causa simulandi*, is a degeneration of the former because it incorporates justifications typical of a patriarchal system accompanied by manipulation of the victims and pretence by means of which immunity and rights over the victim are acquired with the consensus of the victim herself. In these situations, the perpetrator is not either an extraneous or neutral subject, but contextually "the" person or "one of the" persons legitimised by the victim herself within whose sphere of influence and under whose dominion she places herself. This happens by virtue of the material and symbolic oppression experienced by the more vulnerable subject and which convinces her of the necessity/opportunity to delegate the very possibility of existing to another. This delegation is attenuated by the victim's trust in her persecutor, something which precedes the perpetration of violence and induces her to accept the situation. The hypothesis whereby trust is at the root of the perpetration of violence and its emergence as an action of coercion and domestication, appears reasonable to us, if accompanied by two corollaries:

1. *At times the vulnerability of victims borders on sentimental dependence which turns into resistance against acknowledgement of the abuse to which they are subjected.* Within relationships ensconced in the private and the sentimental, it is easier for the weaker subject to become the object of violence. She not only connotes the relationship but also provides the humus of the ordinary practice upon which the rules of play between the victim and perpetrator rest. The objective of its implementation is to weaken the victim, by working on her vulnerability, until preventive remission of any form of rebellion is achieved. Expectation of violence is part of the hot emotions which are at once rhythmic and strongly entraining and induce the victim to expose herself to them. It is therefore a matter of "forward panic" (Collins 2008), like that which spurs soldiers into battle, urging those whose lives are in danger to move forward and face danger directly, instead of fleeing.

2. *At times, hope in a better future is used as leverage by the perpetrator* to oblige the victim to accept present adverse conditions as a necessary part of a personal plan aimed at improving her material conditions. Furthermore, Illouz and Bernstein (2007) have provided ample proof of the progressive intrusion of the logic of commerce into sexual relations. This kind of logic becomes shareable only within dynamics managed by those who claim

property of the female body favoured by emotional dependence used as a cementing agent between the victim and the perpetrator.

The underlying theme is that of continuous "testing" of the "intimate contract" by passive resistance on the part of the victim and the consequent opportunity of continuous renewal of consent towards a modality of hetero-management of her very existence. The violence endured is itself the outcome of dependence/resistance by the victim, unable to sever the dynamic ties that make her the perpetrator's prey. Male domination and the way in which it is not only imposed but subjected to, is paradoxical subjection, the effect of what Bourdieu called symbolic violence.

We might define gender violence more analytically as a form of proximity violence found within interpersonal ties, where it is the Weberian-matrix-like affective action itself that constitutes the unreasonable justification of its implementation (Bartholini, 2013 and following).

As a phenomenon that is particularly adaptable within relations characterised by temporal continuity and spatial closeness, it substantiates behavioural dynamics based on oppression, claims of recognition of identity and attempts at ritualising violence itself.

Proximity violence is, therefore, the litmus test of a category whose defining criteria are provided by the various arenas into which we may divide public discourse. This is not only because of the problem that it represents in itself, but due to its priorities of legitimate consideration, its practical implications, its theoretical references and the side-issues upon which it borders or at times even crosses in its entirety. It traces its karstic sources back to a more artfully constructed patriarchal dimension and presents devices of power linked to a single kind of public discourse, supported also by globalised migrations which have led to co-influence – sometimes at a distance – of cultures based on substantial, original *Male Domination* (Bourdieu, 1998).

It is precisely migrations and the cultural "customs clearances" that accompany them, that normalise the violence experienced during the journey not only by migrant women but by minors, LGBTs and young men too, that highlight some biases. The first of these stems from the fact of having taken for granted the end of male hegemony as a result of female emancipation and having considered violent phenomena as mere regurgitations of pre-modern conditions that have no place in the present. The second is attributable to attempts at separating discourse on violence from the construction of norms in defence of the victimised female body and from scientific approaches to the care of relational distress. The third is found in the self-referential representation of the west as advanced, stable, pacified (Butler, 2008), and underestimation of the multiple forms used by symbolic violence to reproduce itself (Bourdieu, 1998).

The social phenomenon of proximity violence, in its gender displays (Goffman, 1976) and in its public representations, refers to narrative devices

capable of legitimising or contrasting political discourse and decisions within the ambit of policies concerning proximity gender violence.

Besides the matter of the size of the phenomenon in terms of prevalence and incidence, themes and issues remain open as regards the social construction of violence, its incorporation into the *habitus* of men and women, the persistence of mechanisms of domination expressed by the subjectivity of the victims, that is, through mental constructs such as their categories of perception and evaluation.

Furthermore, there exists a level of violence deemed unlawful that is perpetrated within a given society, and there is violence committed or carried out silently. The boundaries between them are not only difficult to plot but they also generate several interdependencies and procedural subterfuges capable of revealing and concealing them. Variables such as age, status, income, education, social background, self-perception and self-definition, even when considering composite incidences of sexual and gender elements that identify perpetrators and victims of violence within a specific reference context, are not sufficient to describe the multiple intersections that sustain gender violence. Above all, they lose sight of the implicit effects that derive from them when codifying gender relations. The data provided by the Italian statistics office, Istat's 2014 survey and the previous Urban project (Basaglia *et al.*, 2007) reveal the existence and persistence in Italy of value systems and social constructs that include levels of acceptance of violence by women who have experienced it. From this point of view, in-depth investigation of the modalities of perception and tolerance of violence acquires crucial significance. A recent report by the *European Commission* (Gracia & Lila, 2015) reveals that, among other things, a small though significant sector of interviewees (including young people and victims) tends to acknowledge the existence of violent behaviour, underlining the fact of how attitudes of acceptance and tolerance are still quite widespread (Gracia & Lila, 2015), transversal and persistent at inter-generational level. After the research Urban carried out over a decade ago (Basaglia *et al.*, 2007) into perception of violence against women using gender-culture oriented markers, involving both the general population (women and men) and operatives within dedicated sectors, no further research was carried out in Italy to document the cultural background which feeds proximity gender violence, the systems of social representations which structure and justify violent behaviour, the radicalisation of women-men role stereotypes. Furthermore, the investigations carried out over the past five years in Europe, with the exception of the abovementioned report, are still fragmentary, inhomogeneous and poorly developed, especially in Italy, something which denotes a lack of specific scientific investigations of questions of attitude (Ortensi, 2019).

It is not a matter, therefore, of defining a "one-size-fits-all" approach capable of dealing with such a multifaceted, complex and all-pervasive phenomenon. It is a question of loosening some of the knots and identifying the extreme ends of the cultural continuum existing between men and women. This, in order to show how the analytical category of explicit violence, differences in violent phenomenology, diverse representations addressed by vetero and neo-patriarchal cultures – indigenous and migrant – mutually reinforce each other as a result of migratory flows. It is also necessary to point out that violence is not exclusively about women but about "genders" and is associated with other indicators and, lastly, that proximity violence implies that "neighbours" are people who are close to the victim.

2.4 Domination over and segregation of the female body

One element that characterises the contemporary migratory phenomenon is proximity violence of which women, in particular, are victims. The normalisation of this kind of violence cannot be justified by the exceptionality of the migratory experience which cannot provide an exhaustive explanation of the dehumanisation process to which this type of victim is subjected. As stated above, the real issue is that of identifying its aetiology in a cultural male-and- patriarch-dominated regime. Individuals, whether knowingly or not, contribute to the production and reproduction of provisions and attitudes which actually normalise the violence which pervades their life cycles transversely, creating a "culture of violence" transmittable at intergenerational level (Siegel, 2013). As part of the legacy of a patriarchal culture, it has contributed to upholding «the established order, with its relationships of domination, its rights and abuses, its privileges and injustices" (Bourdieu, 1998: 7). Gender-based violence, in its symbolic makeup, is a phenomenon functional to the perpetuation of a system founded on "social constructs" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Corradi 2009) regarding the power relationships existing between men and women. That is, violence legitimised by a production of meaning that renders specific behavioural patterns and attitudes recognisable within situations or "domains of meaning", normalising them at the same time. In the "reciprocal game of structures of relevance" (Schütz, 1956) an object or an event becomes the theme or the topic of a common mode of thought within a context that justifies and shares its meaning. From this perspective, proximity violence is a mode of expression, a product of masculine power confounded with it, while gender is a criterion bestowing order on reality. The cultural paradigm of patriarchy brings together all the originally ill-negotiated, divergent forms of polyculturalism, legitimises male hegemony and justifies violence with a view to maintaining the balance within the family, intact.

For a long time, patriarchy was the maintenance-device of the symbolic violence «implicitly legitimised by traditions, beliefs and the mechanisms producing and reproducing the practices involved in the renegotiation of asymmetries and representations used to normalise and naturalise male domination» (Bartholini, 2016: 75). It should be seen as a survival of the archaic world, relegated to the past, yet, even today, traces of patriarchalism resurface (Garcia-Moreno, 2006; Bimbi, 2014) which, though common opinion attributes them to newcomers to Europe, actually re-exhume justifications of models that have not been totally dismissed from Mediterranean cultures.

In a patriarchal view of the dynamics of relationships, bodies are subjected to violence in that they are seen as bearers of shame and dishonour. As shame is the negative counterpart of honour, it is closely linked to ways in which different cultures interpret and evaluate honour (Herzfeld, 1980). The research on Kabila cosmology which first appeared in a volume by Peristiany and later taken up by Pierre Bourdieu in his *Masculine Domination* (1998), revolves around the issue of male honour and the link between the public reputation of men and the private virtue of women, to focus on the persistence of practices and meanings which place women and men in a specular position, and can be used today to interpret symbolic violence and maintain the illusion of claims of female emancipation and equal opportunities (Bimbi, 2014). The honour-shame dyad generally characterises premodern or archaic societies marked by a «bond of reason and emotion transforming the body of the victim into matter to be moulded» (Bimbi, 2014: 74).

As Bimbi wrote recently, the honour-and-shame paradigm has interpreted the Mediterranean area (Bimbi, 2015). Although it is deemed an archaic cultural residue, it continues to proliferate among groups of newcomers to Europe. It persists even in the most egalitarian European countries where women's self-determination is acknowledged as a legal given (Leira *et al.*, 2005; Lewis, 2009). «Inequality between genders is rooted in the structure of the patriarchal system, which continues to reserve the authority men require to dominate the life of the community by controlling its political, religious and social institutions» (Volpato, 2013: 7). Research carried out in Kabilia, the results of which first appeared in the volume by Peristiany, was taken up by Bourdieu , this time from a socio-historical paradigmatic perspective, in the book Masculine Domination (1998) which focussed on the persistence of practices and meanings which place women and men in a specular position. For Bourdieu the cosmology of Kabila, revolving around masculine honour, or the link between the public reputation of men and the private virtues of women, can be used today to read the symbolic violence by means of which the illusion of claims of female emancipation and equal opportunities is maintained (Bimbi, 2014).

The concept of patriarchy is indispensable, therefore, when attempting to analyse gender inequality: «the concept and theory of patriarchy is essential

to capture the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination, and can be developed in such a way as to take account of the different forms of gender inequality over time, class and ethnic group» (Walby, 1990: 2).

Patriarchy refers to a social system where power, authority and material goods are concentrated in the hands of older men and whose transmission takes place through the male line, generally for the benefit of the first-born male (patrilineal organisation: «patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women» (Walby, 1990).

Patriarchalism is not, therefore, only an interpretative category of violence referring to the economic, cultural or religious peculiarities of actors of the past (Edwards, 1987; Garcia-Moreno *et al.*, 2006). It is found today too in the cultural influence and multiplicity of denigrating and segregating practices that accompany migratory flows. Proof of this are honour crimes including so-called female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriages, early marriages, and, more recently, polygamy.

Separation of the discourse on violence from the normative and cultural constructs that justify it, would be tantamount to severing it from its classifications which would lead, in turn, to a sort of "racialisation" of behaviour patterns (Crenshaw, 1991; Razack *et al.*, 2011). If in actual fact the terms "honour" and "shame" do not appear in the everyday discourse of western societies, the view that family honour represents a cultural aspect operating only within given traditional contexts of immigration, is not credible. The decline in judgment criteria based on honour and chastity and replaced by those of human dignity and the inalienable rights of the person, are disproved by hard fact. On the contrary, honour and shame have re-emerged as social attitudes and sentiments to be fostered (Appiah, 2010; Turnaturi, 2012), even in modern ethics. Shame, in particular, seems to have assumed positive connotations for the formation of a public ethic of dignity, integrity, modesty, decency (Nussbaum, 1999).

In the European and international debate, honour and shame are considered the basis of patriarchy and typical of a late-archaic, as opposed to a modern, system of reputation, defined according to the following three contrary dyads:

1. patriarchal family and blood relations as opposed to family-by-choice and non-ascribed relational networks;

2. homogeneity between the vital worlds of private and public life as opposed to pluralisation and the individualisation of universes of meaning;

3. a propensity to preserve tradition as opposed to an inclination to anticipate change.

The representation of the irreconcilability of practices and meanings, related to different family models seen as entities incorporated in the cultures

of traditional groups, or typical of late-modern societies, emerges in particular today as a result of migration processes and within a framework of transition towards new geopolitical orders.

Bourdieu's paradigm itself ends up by favouring segregationist practices and contributing to some extent to the exoticisation of harmful practices, while "our" violence is seen as a residue of social pathologies that we are overcoming. The phenomena of marriage markets, child brides, the outdoor prostitution of Nigerian women (Peano, 2013), or genital mutilation are some of the aspects of a segregationist and patriarchal type of culture. The risk, however, is that they be reabsorbed within an everyday, destinal dimension of migratory cultures, placing vulnerability and resistance by the victims "other than us" on the same plane, without evaluating the power of suggestion and possible instances of cross-fertilisation implemented within host-country contexts.

This is because gender violence is, above all, structural (Farmer, 2003), characterised by norms, attitudes and stereotypes diffused within the ambits of the "world of life" and institutional environments.

Confronting definitions of violence means confronting European cultural models belonging to a past and as yet not dismissed, which resurface along with the migratory flows and which it is necessary to recognise starting from signs of the widespread dehumanisation of victims of gender violence.

2.5 Dehumanisation, objectification and reification of the migrant woman's body

Segregation is a practice typical of patriarchal systems, one which tends to place the weakest subject in a position of permanent subordination. One of its consequences is exposure of the segregated subjects to the possibility of being violated. In order for this to happen materially, a process of dehumanisation needs to be carried out by the perpetrator(s) in order to create in the victim a type of alienation based on an ineliminable sense of inferiority and powerlessness. In the 1960s, Fanon (1961) held that this condition of self-depreciation, self-immobilisation by the victim was a consequence of the colonial oppression of subordinates by hegemonic groups. However, the process to which we refer here is not definable in terms of groups but as an inherent aspect of interpersonal dynamics which spill over into broader contexts. It is a personal condition reflecting the disavowal of others by limiting the victim's chances of emancipating herself n from the perpetrator.

Tajfel used the more appropriate term "dehumanisation" (Tajfel, 1981) to indicate the preliminary practice required by the perpetrator to exploit the victim's body. This means that the perpetrator who does not consider the woman a person, but one of the many objects he avails himself of to exert

power which is actually wielded starting from the asymmetry of patriarchal cultures and grounded in the subordination of one gender to the other. We might, therefore, consider dehumanisation as one of the extreme consequences of the gender asymmetry present in patriarchal cultures.

Asymmetry between the victim and the perpetrator produces a gap between what, for the perpetrator, is human and what is not, a gap, therefore, between those endowed with the prototypical qualities of humanness and those believed to lack them. Dehumanisation posits, *a priori,* denial of humanity, gender humanity for example, thus permitting the exploitation of the victim by means of practices made possible by the physical proximity or occupation of the body in a common environment. Dehumanisation permits the objectifying subject to approach the objectified one, allowing the former to exploit or exert power over the latter, something that differentiates this form of violence from others, like rape, for example, which imply the non-permanence of the victim. In an attempt to define this process better, we might point out that objectification permits evaluation of the objectified person using parameters related to objects, commodities, denying the human traits of the person in question thus dehumanising her/him. "Objectifying" attitudes are oriented towards sexual or material functions as a source of labour separated from the other components of a person's identity and considered in isolation as if representing the whole person. In other words, it is a phenomenon which depersonalises the human being, appraising it on the basis of a part of the self alone, in this case, the sexual body or the body to be exploited for labour, ignoring every other aspect. The vulnerability of the victim (Kirby, 2006) if, on the one hand, it is a characterising aspect of gender segregation, on the other, it is a *conditio sine qua non* which permits the exploitation of another for personal or collective purposes. It precedes all forms of violence and is enhanced in conditions of abuse (Yanyi *et al.*, 2005). Violence perpetrated against a woman's body affects her vulnerability by disabling her very chances of self-defence.

The dehumanisation process is a particularly significant risk when it comes to the majority of migrants, precisely because of the interweave of exogenous and endogenous factors characterising their lives. It does not concern asymmetry of power alone but the social scene within which it is constructed. In the case of migrant women, there are three variables: their material living conditions which make them vulnerable in terms of everyday life; the subjective dimension which exposes some of them more readily to violence; situations of temporary difficulty which develop gradually, aggravating an already precarious condition.

If, historically speaking, denial of the humanity of others served exclusively to justify exploitation, degradation and violence, today the practices of dehumanisation testified by thousands of victims of migratory violence, imply that the victims themselves adhere to the very project which erodes

their humanity in a very subtle manner. Dehumanisation, accompanied by depersonalisation which ranks individuals according to their belongingness, ethnicity, village and gender, of course, facilitates this process. When several indicators, like being female, a foreigner and poor intersect when defining a person, the result of this process is, for the most part, taken for granted.

In cases of ethnic war or trafficking, the term that best describes the dynamics that produce dehumanisation, favouring prostitution for example, is de-individualisation (Fanon, 1961). According to Fanon the colonised experience a condition of alienation based on irreparable feelings of inferiority produced by devaluation of the culture to which they belong and the imposition of alien values. Thus, a progressive weakening of personal identity is brought about by practices and actions with which the colonised are not seen as specific, identifiable, responsible entities but as a confused, anonymous, amorphous aggregate (Volpato, 2011 and following). Dehumanisation, depersonalisation and de-individualisation converge to contribute to the process of objectification. The latter unites the previous processes to a point where the individual is thought of and treated as an object, a tool, a commodity. Martha Nussbaum (1999 and following) divides this process of objectification into seven parts:

1) instrumentality: the object is a tool exploited by others;

2) denial of autonomy: the object is an entity deprived of autonomy and self-determination;

3) inertia: the object is an entity lacking the ability to act and be active;

4) fungibility: the object is interchangeable with other objects belonging to the same category;

5) violability: the object is an entity devoid of boundaries capable of guaranteeing its integrity therefore it may be torn to pieces;

6) property: the object belongs to someone and can therefore be sold, bought or hired;

7) denial of subjectivity: the object is an entity whose experiences and feelings are negligible.

For MacKinnon «women live in sexual objectification like fish in water» (1989: 124). Objectification represents a reiterated experience in certain environments and contexts from which it is impossible to escape precisely because of the pervasiveness of its effects. Sexual exploitation is a product – perhaps the most common – of an objectification that stems from a successful dehumanisation procedure based on processes of social categorisation, sanctioning the segregation of individuals – the most vulnerable – from the human community.

In women who have passed through Hotspots, and then the CASs and SPRARs, prostration and obedience to the males they acknowledge as dominant is a direct representation of processes that have already sedimented and obtained the effects indicated above.

To consider violence as belonging to the "normality" of relationships marked by female submission, contributes to the perpetuation of male power within the realm of gender relations. The more representations legitimising the centuries-old exercise of control by men over women's bodies are shared socially, the more they relegate women to positions of subjugation and vulnerability.

2.6 Conclusions

In the previous pages, we indicated the differences beetwen the gender-based violence and proximity violence. In similar relationships, the perpetrator is not a "neutral subject", but the person most intimate and closest to the victim at emotional and life-plan level. Upon the emotional plane we find the dynamics of trust, sentimental closeness or psychological oppression which determine acceptance of violence on the part of the victim. The hope of a better future is used as a lever by the perpetrator to coerce the victim to accept the squalor of the present as a necessary part of a plan for improvement.

The abuse perpetrated as a result of a voluntary acceptance by the victim is subordinated to the degree of proximity violence that has been metabolized and normalized within the relationship between executioner and victim. Unlike gender-based violence, proximity violence is based on a pact made precisely within a relationship that opacifies instrumental rationality and blurs exploitation within fiduciary bonds. Proximity violence is constitutive of the relationship, self-sufficient self-immune and excludes conflict.

1. Violence is both a tool for regulating relationships and an autonomous social force capable of giving meaning to reality. As a structuring force in the relationship, it gives participants tasks and roles within a commercial pact that has essential emotional values in binding contractors.

2. Because violence – in different forms and in different ways – becomes the bond itself of the relationship, it assumes the characteristics of self-sufficiency. In other words, violence is "enough" to keep the relationship going.

3. The relationship based on violence excludes from inside any other form of resistance to violence, becoming the latter indispensable for maintaining the relationship, it is self-immune.

The persistence of the victim within a condition of subordination cannot be attributed solely to relationships based on domination, but rather to action based on different contexts and situations, which make the victim docile towards violence. In other words, the relationship with *that someone "proximus"* renders the victim resistant within the dynamics of proximity violence.

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