

# Exploring the potential collaboration between Anti-Violence Centre and Perpetrator Programmes

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine potential collaborations between anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes. Anti-violence centres are specific places to welcome women victims of intra-family violence who want to break the cycle of violence and embark on a path of empowerment and independence. Perpetrators programmes are places that include men who have acted out intimate partner violence. These programmes accompany the man on a way of awareness and taking responsibility for his actions. After a phase of archival-based research concerning the role of the two organisations and texts on intersectionality, gender-based violence, and intimate partner violence, I collected specific data through interviews. First, I interviewed professionals from the two organisations taking as case studies the anti-violence centre La Nara and the Perpetrators Programme, Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti - CAM. These two organisations are located on the Tuscan territory and have had previous contacts. In addition, I interviewed three professionals from CAM and three from La Nara. Those interviews were subsequently analysed through Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis and the analysed data led to the emergence of two main themes: 'violence' and 'development', followed by seven sub-themes. Next, the theme analysis and sub-themes are presented and described with supporting theories. Finally, the discussion presents challenges and joint aspects that these two organisations face for possible synergies and collaborations.

The anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes have the same objective, the protection of women and the ending of violent relationships but they differ in how they approach the purpose. Both, however, are part of the large body for preventing and fighting gender-based violence. Through my analysis I could realise that harmonised and holistic work between the anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes would make the system more efficient by influencing positively the work of all the other actors in the common fight against gender-based violence.

*Keywords:* Anti-violence centre, perpetrators programmes, collaboration, synergies, IPV, GBV, intersectionality

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## 1. Introduction

Intimate relationships, in which a woman should feel the safest, can be the most dangerous for her. Sometimes, the woman cannot free herself from the emotional chains that bind her to her violent partner. Because of the danger and narrowness of such relationships, several services for victims of domestic abuse have been established. Anti-violence centres are places where women can free themselves from the burden of guilt and rediscover a new life free from violence.

Violence against women is a global, cross-cutting phenomenon recognised as violating human rights (Council of Europe, 2011). However, intimate partner violence is a more subtle and invisible form of gender-based violence. It requires a lot of motivation and willpower on the part of the woman to escape it and save herself.

Italy established the first anti-violence centres in the 1980s. These were specific places for women to share and discuss what was previously considered exclusive to the private and family dimension.

While the first anti-violence centres were emerging in Italy, the first perpetrators programmes were organised in America by feminist movements which understood domestic abuse as a characteristic of patriarchal and discriminatory culture (Merzagora Betsos, 2009). Underlying these programmes was the assumption that it is not enough to protect victims and warn them of what may be the alarm bells of future violent behaviour by their (ex-)partners. Nevertheless, it is possible to work with those who engage in such behaviour.

In Italy, perpetrators programmes are in their infancy; the first one, the *Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti*, was founded in Florence only in 2009.

Anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes have the common goal of protecting women and children from a situation of domestic violence, yet they achieve the purpose in different ways and with different approaches.

Thus, anti-violence centres welcome women victims of intimate partner violence and work together towards a path out of the violent situation through empowerment and independence. On the other hand, perpetrator programmes are centres that accept male perpetrators of intimate violence and work with the men on concepts of gender-based violence, anger management, emotions and taking responsibility for actions taken.

Both associations deal with a type of violence known as domestic violence or intimate partner violence that falls into the various facets of the big category: gender-based violence. Because it is related to a tight relationship in which the woman has emotional chains, this type of violence is sometimes the most difficult to break.

An integrated and holistic approach to intimate partner violence involves good cooperation between the organisations included in the anti-violence system (anti-violence centre, hospital, social services, tribunals, law enforcement), including perpetrators programmes.

The emphasis on working with synergies is highlighted especially in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the “Istanbul Convention” (2011). In this document, the Council calls on the member states to take legislative measures to establish and support centres for perpetrators of domestic violence. According to the Convention, the central objective must be to protect the victim also through the connection between programmes for abusers and anti-violence centres (Council of Europe, 2011). Italy ratified the Istanbul Convention on 1 August 2014. (LeNove S.r.l. Studi e ricerche sociali, 2012).

Perpetrators programmes are necessary for the extensive intervention system against domestic violence and should not work isolated. Instead, they should participate in an interagency alliance for an integrated approach to domestic violence, even though negotiating the establishment of a partnership with anti-violence centres can be complicated.

The Istanbul Convention reinforces the need for collaboration between these services, even if the path of trust and willingness to collaborate varies from country to country (WWP// EUROPEAN NETWORK, 2014).

The anti-violence centres still raise many mistrusts and criticisms towards the perpetrator programmes, concerning the danger of the men towards the women, but also on the effectiveness and recidivism and, finally, on the number of accesses to the service in proportion to the number of accesses of women to the protection centres.

## 1.1 Research Question

My research question is: *“How can convergences and differences between Anti-Violence Centre and Perpetrators Programmes contribute to overcoming gender-based violence? In the case of La Nara and Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti”.*

To answer this question, I used a case study of the anti-violence centre *La Nara* and the perpetrators programme *Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti*. Both are in Italy, as they previously had worked together. Through the reflexive thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke, I tried to highlight and emphasise the common elements and differences that these organisations have and what they could do better to work together to fight against gender-based violence.

## 1.2 Anti-Violence Centre & Perpetrators Programmes

This section will introduce Anti-Violence Centre and a Perpetrators Programme; in the methodology section, I will better describe my case studies.

### 1.2.1 Anti-Violence Centre

Anti-violence Centres (from now on, AVC) are places that welcome women who suffer male violence in their intimate relationships, where they can get away from violence to get autonomy and personal growth (Romito & Melato, 2017).

In Italy, the first centres date back to the 1980s: the first “women's house” was founded in 1989 in Bologna, and in 2019 there were 286 AVCs in Italy (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, 2021).

Soon emerged the need to draw up a shared political practice and networking platform (Romito & Melato, 2017). In 2008 was founded the association D.i.Re - Donne in Rete Contro La Violenza, the National Network of Anti-Violence Centres with the purpose to build political and national actions and promote measures to initiate a cultural change regarding the phenomenon of male violence against women (D.i.Re Donne in Rete contro la violenza, 2015).

The guiding principle of the work with women who have experienced violence is a solid commitment to support and promote women's rights and empowerment so that they can live free, independent, and dignified lives. It also takes a public role: its objectives include raising public awareness of the

problem of domestic violence, offering specific training programmes for professionals, organising, or participating in events and demonstrations and promoting prevention activities in schools (Romito & Melato, 2017).

Women who contact the AVC live in distress due to abuse that can be physical, psychological, sexual and economic. The goal is to welcome and believe their narrative, never judge, and never take decisions without them, define their basic needs by examining the dangerousness of the situation and valuing them as women. It is about reconstructing their history and recovering the ability to project themselves into the future by constantly evaluating the women's expectations.

AVC's objective is to contribute to social change by implementing projects, conferences, and courses to encourage the elimination of prejudices, attitudes, and behaviours in society that cause the continuation of violence.

Another essential point is that every woman can overcome the feeling of powerlessness by making her own decisions about her life based on self-determination. Furthermore each woman can decide how long she wants to stay in the centre and whether she wants to separate from her partner.

To protect women's rights and integrity, they must be empowered to decide on the release of information so that no data is released without her consent.

The work at the AVC is based on the relationship between the women and is not therapeutic: it consists of meetings at regular intervals and varying duration, depending on the woman's needs, aimed at achieving stable goals together with her, in stages to be agreed upon.

The counselling sessions work to give the woman space to talk about herself, process her violent experience, and overcome the trauma. The woman is not offered ready-made solutions but specific support and appropriate information to find the solution that suits her situation. The centres then provide counselling and accompaniment to other local services, legal help, psychological support and employment counselling to gain autonomy. In addition, in high-risk situations, meaning life-threatening conditions for the women and possible children, AVCs can offer a reception in secret shelters, furthermore centres provide prevention and outreach activities (Romito & Melato, 2017).

The professional working in the AVC is trained in violence against women, feminism, empowerment and gender politics. The working methodology employed by the centres involves overcoming standardised technical approaches in favour of a method that recognise the woman's story and the trust built in the relationship. The methodology used by AVCs is a survivor-centred approach

(UNFPA, 2012). This methodology is based on strengthening the woman's identity and the relationship between women (Romito & Melato, 2017). It provides that any intervention is carried out only with the woman's consent and that the work is always done for her benefit, giving her the opportunity to talk about herself while respecting the basic rules of confidentiality and non-judgement on the part of the staff (de Concini, 2007).

Women who turn to the centres are the acting subjects, the protagonists on their way out of violence, a process that leads them to take their existence back into their own hands. The AVCs help women to find the courage and strength to develop a concrete life project for the future. The path to female empowerment begins, away from gender-based violence (Romito & Melato, 2017).

### 1.2.2 Perpetrators Programme

Perpetrator programmes are places for men who have perpetrated physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence against their (ex-)partners, who are interested and motivated to change and are welcomed and listened to. These are places where the relationship between masculinity and violence is explored, where men accept the definition of "abusers" and "perpetrators" of violence to describe themselves and their behaviours (Fidolini, 2019).

Perpetrators programmes were first founded in the United States in the 1970s and did not appear in Europe until later: first in Northern Europe, England and Germany; then in the rest of Europe (Puchert, 2016).

Programmes working with perpetrators of abuse aim to empower the perpetrator while focusing on the victim to interrupt violent behaviour.

Several international and European documents mention the need to address perpetrators of violence as part of a broader integrated action to combat violence against women. We can see an example of it in the final report of the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing, in the "Declaration and Platform for Action" among the measures to be implemented to combat violence against women (United Nations, 1995). Same thing in the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Women against Violence in 2002 (REC, 2002) or in the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, which, in addition to the need for programmes targeting perpetrators of domestic violence

and sexual offences, states that programmes should be implemented in close coordination with specialised victim support services (Council of Europe, 2011).

The European network "Work with Perpetrators - WWP" outlined the methodological working features of programmes for perpetrators of abuse. This project was concerned with investigating and researching the treatments for men who have perpetrated violence in intimate relationships. The main objectives were to increase victims' safety and promote a European exchange on best practices in networking with abusive men.

This kind of work goes in two directions: the safety of the victims and the attribution of responsibility for the violent behaviour of the perpetrator, who should be able to acknowledge and take responsibility for his actions, understanding that committing violence is a choice and a crime, and finally realise that violence is based on power and control (Centro per Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.).

The offender programme can be accessed in two ways: voluntarily or through referral by a judicial decision. Intake of offenders should not be considered an alternative to court proceedings but as part of the sentence. Intake is initially done by telephone: the man calls the programme and asks to come to the centre. Following the call, usually four, one-to-one interviews held by a professional, help the man to talk openly about his situation and behaviour and what he wants to do to change.

Unlike in AVC, where the women's path is individual, in most offender programmes, men work in groups.

Group work is a crucial tool for men to change. Therefore, participation in the psycho-educational group is preceded by individual interviews in which specific entry criteria, including motivation, substance dependence, psychiatric disorders and risk assessment, are assessed (WWP EN, 2018).

Most programmes include contact with the (ex-)partner. Communication with the partner can occur at different stages of the programme for several reasons but it is a primary measure that benefits both the woman and the man himself. It is essential to ask the partner what she expects from the programme and clarify that participation in the programme cannot guarantee that the man will stop his violent behaviour. Through the contact with the partner, the professional can direct the woman to the nearest local AVC if she feels the need for specific help (WWP EN, 2018).

Perpetrator programmes involve differentiated and multidisciplinary interventions that must be part of a comprehensive social responsibility to end violence against women (Grifoni, 2016).

Italy established the first perpetrators programme in 2009 in Florence. Since then, different centres have been founded, and now there are almost 30 perpetrators programmes in Italy which are brought together by the RELIVE association to exchange experiences, increase training, and increase the effectiveness of programmes, always with a view to constructive confrontation and safeguarding the quality of work (Chi Siamo, n.d.).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will explain the theoretical framework, theories, and concepts that helped me support my analysis to answer the research question.

### 2.1 Intersectionality

The term intersectionality is attributed to American activist and jurist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. In an article from 1989, Crenshaw challenged the singularity of feminist and anti-racist struggles, the tendency to treat gender and race as mutually exclusive categories of analysis whereas, they were and still are rooted in complex experiences that do not move linearly along a single line (Crenshaw, 1989).

Thus, when analysing how a person suffers discrimination and injustice in contemporary society, one cannot only consider their gender, skin colour, or at least both (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw explains that intersectionality is like *“a prism for seeing the way various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other”*: *“we tend to talk about racial inequality as separate from gender, class, sexuality, or immigrant status inequality. What is often missing is how some people are subjected to all this”* (Steinmetz, 2020)

The Combahee River collective (CrC) anticipated Crenshaw, one of the first American collectives of African American, feminist, socialist women. In 1977, the CrC wrote a political manifesto, *“The Combahee River Collective Statement”*, which had a significant influence on subsequent struggles: *“We are actively engaged in the battle against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analyses and practices based on the fact that the major systems of oppression are interconnected”* (CrC, 1977).

The members of the collective contested the marginalisation that, in the late 1960s and 1970s, black women experienced both within the women's movement, which focused on white women, and within the anti-racist and socialist movements, which instead revolved around the demands of black men and white proletarian men (Crc, 1977). In addition, the Crc manifesto indicated two political points that were also fundamental for future declinations of feminism: that each discrimination did not affect different people in the same way (the racism experienced by black women was different from that experienced by black men) and that intersectionality did not consist of a sum of oppressions (Crc, 1977).

It is possible to relate another example to the woman's figure; being a woman leads to sexist oppression but is experienced differently at the level of social positioning or identity. Intersectional feminism recognises that the same form of oppression may differ depending on the context in which it is exercised; there is no hierarchy between oppressions that intersect while also emphasising the recognition of one's privilege.

Central to intersectional thinking is the notion of “social categories”, categories such as culture, religion, class, race, and gender, which divide people into groups according to the social context in which they live.

Professor Nira Yuval-Davis explains social categories as elements in how people subjectively experience inclusion and exclusion, discrimination and disadvantage, specific aspirations and specific identities in their daily lives. According to Yuval-Davis, social categories also exist on the level of representations where they are expressed in images and symbols, texts and ideologies, including those relating to legislation (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 198).

From the intersectional point of view, one can say that each person “belongs” to several social categories. These interact with each other both at the personal level and at the level of groups and institutions. To speak of intersectionality, however, it is not enough to list these categories; it is necessary to consider their relationship.

The focus thus shifts to what intersectional thinkers call “intersections” or “intersections between axes of power” created by the interweaving of those categories that are most meaningful depending on the context (Crenshaw, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006). According to Yuval-Davis, it is impossible to conceive individual behaviour except by placing it within a collectively, culture, or religion (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is undeniable, for Yuval-Davis, that each individual has their socio-political place in a

group, characterised differently depending on the historical moment and existing power relations. On the contrary, it is precisely the relationship between the individual and 'his' group that is the most fertile ground for analysis of intersectionality. The categories to which one 'belongs' are individually experienced differently, and, depending on one's personal experiences, one may have a more robust emotional investment in one rather than the other.

The professor of sociology and political science, Leslie McCall, in her article "The Complexity of Intersectionality", writes of different applications of intersectionality based on how the categories are understood and analysed (2005). McCall distinguishes between three approaches regarding how intersectionality acts: intercategorical, intracategorical and anticategorical (McCall, 2005).

For sociologist Patricia Hill Collins, it is central not to lose sight of power relations rather than individual behaviour (Hill Collins, 2006). Like Crenshaw, this convinced Hill Collins that this could not achieve a good reading of the phenomenon of female oppression without taking into account the interrelationships between class, gender, sexual orientation and race. These interrelationships are called the "matrix of domination" (Hill Collins, 1990).

In my thesis, I analyse two organisations that deal with gender-based violence, specifically intimate partner violence, also known as domestic violence. The phenomenon of violence against women is a broad phenomenon that touches all walks of life and all cultures. There is no 'typical' aggressor, and there is no identikit of the violent man, such as a man from a low social class, unemployed, alcoholic. What characterises an abuser is the idea of the woman as an inferior being who has no right to autonomy or freedom and thinks of himself as a person entitled to control, dominate, possess and possibly punish the woman. Violence is intersectional, and it does not follow a specific and fixed standard; it moves in several directions and environments.

From an intersectional point of view, belonging to more than one category puts a woman in a more difficult situation when she decides to leave a violent relationship. The analysis will show that a migrant woman on a path out of violence without a support network can be more complex than an Italian woman who accesses the anti-violence centre.

## 2.2 Gender Theory

The academic Allyson Jule defines gender theory as “*fundamentally concerned with disrupting sexist systems and stereotypes and exploring new ways of being human concerning any gendered representation of the self*” (2014:2464). Hence, it investigates gender identities, meaning understanding masculine, feminine and queer behaviour in any context, such as the community, society, or academic field (Jule, 2014).

When addressing the topic of gender theory, it is crucial to distinguish between sex and gender. Sex is a person's biological characteristics or anatomy while gender refers to the socially constructed system around gender identity, meaning each person's perception of self and how they manifest it (Jule, 2014:2464).

Currently, gender is conceptualised as a complex, multicultural construct that determines the meaning of male or female in different reference systems (Anderson, 2005; Deaux & Major, 1987; Frable, 1997).

In Western society, gender is generally organised by assigning biological sex at birth, which can be defined anatomically or genetically (Russo & Pirlot, 2006). It can be understood as a complex set of interconnected traits: emotions, values, expectations, norms, roles, environments and institutions that change and evolve across cultures, between cultures and over time.

Gender, therefore, refers to those social and cultural categories which do not have natural characteristics but are influenced by a person's context. Hence, the concept of gender varies between cultures (Gender in Culture, n.d.). For example, in Western cultures, it is mainly recognised that there are only two genders (male and female), the so-called gender binarism. However, other cultures, such as in South Asia, recognise a broader spectrum of gender in which gender is less descriptive.

Male traits are associated with power and are often valued more highly than female traits. Everyday social interactions reflect and contribute to reinforcing gender roles. By focusing on the micro, we miss the broader pattern of gender inequality. Therefore, we need gender conflict theory: gender is a structural system that distributes power and privileges to some and disadvantages to others. Specifically, this structural system is patriarchy, a social organisation where men have more control and dominate other genders.

How patriarchy privileges some people over others is not as simple as saying that all men are at the top of the power distribution, but that is why there is a greater focus on intersectionality in the analysis of the interaction between race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other identities, which often results in a multiple dimension of disadvantage. While it is true that all women are disadvantaged based on gender, some women experience more weaknesses than others. As for men who benefit from living in a society that privileges masculinity, but some benefit more than others.

Sociologist Talcott Parsons (Conway et al., 1987) argued that boys and girls were socialised to assume complementary traits to make it easier to maintain stable, productive family units. For example, boys were taught instrumental qualities such as security and competitiveness, which prepared them for the workforce. In contrast, girls were taught expressive qualities such as empathy and sensitivity, which qualified them to care for the family.

Gender was a way of restricting these skills. Societies, in turn, encouraged this gender conformity by making people feel that they had to conform to these ways if they wanted to be romantically desirable and by teaching them to reject those who went against these gender norms.

But Parson's idea was based his theory on a division of labour that was specific to white, middle-class America in the 1940s and took a heteronormative, Western perspective on what a family is, but not all families have nullified units with a man and a woman with a group of children, if one expands the definition of family to include same-sex couples, single parents, multigender families, it is less evident that one should assume that the man works outside the home and the woman inside (Macionis, 2013)

Second, thinking that gender is complementary is a Western perspective because the idea that gender is binary is not universal and ignores all those identities that do not conform to the two-gender system. Thirdly, Parson's theory emphasises the personal and social cost of maintaining rigid gender roles. Gender roles are how a society defines how women and men should think and behave (Macionis, 2013).

According to lecturer Judith Butler, gender is performative; we act somehow, and role-playing is crucial to the gender; people are the gender they present to the world (Butler, 1990). To say that gender is performative produces a series of effects; individuals act and speak in ways that consolidate the impression of being male/female. A phenomenon continuously prompted and re-

presented, no one is gender from the beginning (Butler, 1990). Therefore, if gender is performative, gender is 'doing', and 'doing' can be deconstructed.

Gender theory from a feminist perspective analyses patriarchal culture and its effects on women and society. In this perspective, men perpetrate violence to maintain or re-establish control over women.

Feminism is the advocacy of social equality for all genders in opposition to patriarchy and sexism. Feminism advocates the elimination of gender stratification, the expansion of the choices that women, men and other genders can make, the end of gender-based violence and the promotion of sexual freedom.

Even though gender cannot be considered bound to a specific context but permeates our whole life, it finds in the family a peculiar set of “social construction” in which the processes of confirmation and change are consolidated are shaped through the particular community of practices (Wenger, 2006) that can be considered the family. In everyday practice, people rework the categories of male and female and their attribution (Procentese, 2009).

As lecturer Judith Butler points out, gender is performative, and gender identities are constituted *by* and *in* the language (1999). Family at any rate, the parents are the first social agency a child encounters. They are also the first instrument of interaction and relationship with society, and how gender roles are presented and acted upon influences minors from an early age. Within violent relationships, minors are victims; in turn, the trauma and physical and psychic discomfort that a child suffers can have repercussions on their future, their way of relating to others, and their future intimate relationships.

In the Western society in which we are immersed, gender expression is perceived as binary, meaning two genders are represented, the male and the female; this can also be seen in the family sphere and in parenting that permeates male and female gender roles, which recalls toxic and patriarchal masculinity and weak and submissive femininity.

### 2.3 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (from now on GBV) includes violence directed toward a person based on their gender and disproportionately affects people of a particular gender.

The United Nations defines GBV as *“any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”* (UN General Assembly, 1993).

GBV against women and girls is one of the vastest human rights violations in the world (United Nations Population Fund, 2016). Today, men's violence against women is globally recognised as a health, economic development and human rights issue. Violence can be physical, sexual, psychological or a combination of two or more of these forms; it includes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, physical violence, harmful practices, cyberharassment, stalking, forced marriage, forced sterilisation, forced abortion and genital mutilation (Council of Europe, 2011). Moreover, GBV is intersectional, and it occurs in every country and across the entire spectrum of society (European Union, 2016).

Gender roles and the circumstances shape such violence reflected in GBV. GBV does not imply all acts of violence to which a woman will be subjected in her lifetime; it concerns a complex set of cultural values related to gender, beliefs, norms, and social institutions that implicitly and sometimes explicitly promote gender expectations on gender roles, discrepancies in power and status quo that legitimise, sexualise and cause invisible male violence against women (Koss, Bailey, Yuan, Herrera, & Lichter, 2003).

## 2.4 Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Violence

The WHO defines Intimate Partner Violence (from now on IPV) as *“a behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviour”* (World Health Organization, 2012).

IPV is recognised as a public health problem with significant implications for individuals' and families' psychological and physical well-being (World Health Organization, 2012).

IPV comes in different forms of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual and economic (Golding, 1999; Black, 2011; European Union, 2006), often in combination. Within this context, violence against women is understood as a social and historical problem that requires an integrated multidisciplinary approach involving all actors.

Domestic violence (from now on DV) consists of behaviours to establish and maintain control over the partner within the relationship (Dobash, Dobash, 1998). It involves strategies to exert power over the woman using various methods such as devaluation and denigration, the threat of physical violence, destruction of objects, and isolation from relatives and friends. The result is a climate of constant tension, fear and danger in which physical violence may be sporadic and yet practical because it is present in terms of risk and empowerment (Grimaldi, 2017)

The Istanbul Convention (2011), in Article 3b, defines DV as: *“all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence occurring within the family or household or between current or former spouses or partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”*.

DV does not involve strangers, but men and women who know each other, united by a bond conceived as “loving”. The relationship between the parties is commonly understood to be based on trust, shared planning, care, shared management of the home and education of the offspring, physical proximity and sexual intimacy.

In such a sphere, violent attitudes are often difficult to recognise and identify, even more so to denounce, since they are lost in viscous and ambivalent power relations, fuelled and justified by clichés about love and passion. The core of violence in intimate relationships originates in the structural inequality between men and women, the hierarchy of value between males and females, and heteronormativity, the set of cultural constructions that acts on individual identity choice (Oddone, 2020). DV is a transversal issue that affects all social classes and geographical areas.

Mistreatment within an emotional relationship is a systematic and repeated mode of physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological violence. It is not a sequence of independent acts but a process by which the abuser establishes and maintains power and control over his partner.

DV and abuse have an enormous negative impact on the lives of women and children who suffer it. It affects their health and well-being, sense of freedom, human rights, identity and self-esteem, and their ability to participate in public and social life in almost every aspect of their existence. Domestic violence and abuse also hurt the men who perpetrate it.

IPV and DV have very similar meanings. However, the two terms must be considered separately for some, such as the YWCA Spokane organisation, which works to combat racism and violence against

women. For the YWCA, IPV occurs regardless of whether the man and woman live under the same roof, whereas DV refers to violence within the home in the literal sense, as the two live together (Intimate Partner Violence vs Domestic Violence - YWCA Spokane, 2021). However, the United Nations report that one can use the two terms as synonymous (United Nations, n.d.).

I have chosen to adopt the United Nations approach and use the two terms as synonyms for this thesis, as I consider the intimate relationship rather than the shared or non-shared home between the two partners central. Abusive behaviour in IPV and DV is realised as a set of abusive behaviours directed at a person with whom one has an intimate or familial relationship.

#### 2.4.1 The cycle of violence

Within the context of IPV and DV and their vicious impact on the woman's personal life, the American psychologist Lenore Walker theorised the concept of "the cycle of violence." Walker highlights a cyclical dimension of violence described in an abusive and continuous process of conflict, aggression, reconciliation, and new aggression in an intimate relationship.

Walker defines the cycle of violence as "*the progressive and ruinous vortex in which the woman is swallowed by continuous, systematic, and therefore cyclical violence by her partner*" (1979). At each stage, she identifies a typical behaviour pattern of the victim and the perpetrator.

The three phases that characterised the "cycle of violence" are:

1. The establishment of tension: the abuser uses various control tactics (isolation from the family and friendship network, prohibition of going out alone, control of movements), psychological denigration and threats to use physical violence begin.
2. The explosion of violence may be physical aggression or a powerful episode of verbal and psychological violence (destruction of some object the woman cares a lot about, very violent verbal aggression, death threats). In these circumstances, the woman suffers a strong shock, which may lead her to think about leaving her partner because of the seriousness of what has happened.

3. The “honeymoon”: after a severe episode of violence, the man usually apologises, promises not to do it again, and becomes more affectionate (Walker, 1989).

The cycle is likely to repeat itself over time and lead to increasingly severe forms of abuse that are commonly referred to as “the cycle of violence” (Walker, 1979). Devised as part of the Duluth Model in 1982, the “wheel of power and control” summarises some basic patterns of behaviour of abusive men at each of these stages (Pence; Paymar, 1993).

At the end of the final phase, the cycle resumes, and with time the quiet phases last less.

The “honeymoon” phase prevents the woman from immediately understanding the mechanism in which she is involved: experiencing violence occasionally makes her think that what happened was due to a momentary loss of control and hopes that it will not happen again. This is one of the many reasons why years may pass before the woman realises that the exercise of violence by the partner is determined by a desire for control and domination (Walker, 1989).

The “explosion” phase of violence does not necessarily correspond to an episode of physical violence. In some cases, other forms of violence are used that are equally effective in maintaining control over one's partner.

The types of violence are:

- Physical violence: aggression involving the use of force. It may also include neglectful behaviour such as food deprivation and medical care.
- Psychological violence: behaviours that damage the woman's identity and self-esteem, such as intimidation, shouting, insults, scolding, continuous threats directed at children, family members, friends or animals, and coercion to behave contrary to the woman's beliefs. It is also expressed by isolating the woman from friends and family and depriving her of emotional ties.
- Sexual violence: any sexual act imposed against the woman's will, such as rape, sexual exploitation, coercion into sexual practices, or control of reproductive choices.

- Economic violence: behaviour aimed at producing economic dependence or imposing unwanted financial commitments, such as controlling the woman's salary or family income, prohibiting her from working or forcing her to leave her job, and forcing her to undertake economic initiatives against her will.

Together with the “cycle of violence”, Walker argues the concept of the “Battered Woman Syndrome” (2009). With this Walker describes the symptomatology that sets in when a woman has suffered violence from her partner.

There are six criteria for identifying the syndrome: intrusive memories of traumatic events, high anxiety levels, avoidant behaviour, disruption of personal relationships, distorted body image, and problems with the intimate and sexual sphere.

The concepts of IPV/DM, the cycle of violence, and “Battered Woman Syndrome” are fundamental because they are unique and specific to cases of intra-family violence when a man and a woman know each other and are in an intimate relationship. Therefore, referring to my research question, the AVC and perpetrators programmes are crucial because they deal with intra-family abuse. Furthermore, if organisations work cooperatively, working with the abusive man and the woman victim makes it possible to tackle gender-based violence and social and cultural change.

### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, I will focus on the methodology of this thesis, “the means through which we acquire knowledge”, and it is crucial to consider it since all research and research questions are guided by methodological frameworks (Lamont, 2015:24).

The methodology adopted for this study combines several techniques such as desk research and analysis, interviews, and meetings with colleagues who are experts in anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes. I will begin by addressing the philosophy of science and the epistemological and ontological instances that answer the questions of “how, why, and for what purpose” the research is conducted (Lamont, 2015; Bryman, 2016).

Next, I will describe "research design" which refers to the action plan that directs the entire research process by considering case studies and methods from data collection and analysis. Finally, I will conclude with explaining the limitations and positionality of this project.

The research design is qualitative and uses interviews with practitioners from the AVC La Nara and the perpetrators programme CAM, on which I conducted a thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke's approach (2006, 2012, 2019). Thematic analysis (from now on, TA) is an approach to explore the significance of certain elements in-depth and allows relevant data to emerge. The TA proposed by Braun and Clarke is a reflexive process in which at the centre of the analysis is the researcher, who is configured as a participatory and active agent who has a deep engagement with the data set and from which they will make emerge themes that are not pre-existing but elaborated by the researcher.

### 3.1 Philosophy of science

The first part of this methodology chapter refers to the philosophy of science, meaning the questions "how, why, and what purpose" that guide me throughout the research process: methodology and research cannot be considered separately (Lamont, 2015; Bryman, 2016). Two approaches influence the research process: the ontological and epistemological paradigms.

By ontology, "the study of being" "the nature of reality" it frames the object of study (Bryman, 2016; Lamont, 2015; Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Ontology refers to how humans shape the world and what meaning they give to it. At the heart of the discussion are different positions for which social entities exist independently of the presence of humans or whether they are instead subjectively constructed and created by individuals depending on their actions and perceptions (Bryman, 2016).

For this thesis, I draw on the ontological procedure of constructivism. The constructions of the experience of the world derive from how individuals construct and interact with reality; the meaning humans give to the world depends on how they perceive and shape it. Thus, there are no plastic and defined situations, but everything is in flux and revision (Bryman, 2016). In this case, I, as a researcher, also construct and give meaning to reality based on my perceptions and interpretations (Bryman, 2016).

The second paradigm is that of epistemology which refers to the "study of knowledge" and is accompanied by the questions "how is knowledge produced and collected?" and "how do we know?" (Lamont, 2015; Della Porta & Keating, 2008; Bryman, 2016). For this thesis, I follow the epistemological approach of interpretivism that turns attention toward individuals' experiences and personal interrelationships (Lamont, 2015) and means understanding and reflecting on ideas, identity, and knowledge (Lamont, 2015). As with constructivism, I, as a researcher, shape and modify commands based on how I perceive them (Lamont, 2015, Della Porta and Keating, 2008).

### 3.2 Research Strategy

This chapter introduces the research strategy I applied in this thesis. The research method is a "general orientation to the conduct of the research" and can be qualitative, quantitative or mix-methods and allows for the classification of different social research methods (Bryman, 2016). For this thesis project, the qualitative approach focuses on words rather than the quantity of data (Bryman, 2016).

This research strategy dovetails nicely with the paradigms of ontology and epistemology as they focus on individuals and how individuals shape the world and the meaning they attribute to it (Bryman, 2016; Lamont, 2015).

This research thesis focuses on analysing two services that deal with the prevention and elimination of violence against women, specifically intimate partner violence. First, I will introduce the services in general, Perpetrator Program and Anti-Violence Centre; I will then describe the two services I decided to take into the analysis: CAM and La Nara. I used both document-based research and qualitative data obtained through interviews I conducted with service workers for this thesis.

The choice of a qualitative methodology was deemed most suitable for the type of research in question as this approach allows us to understand and explore the lived experience and inner world of the participants, discover their representations and the meanings they attribute and construct around the phenomena, going on to probe the individual, relational and social aspects related to the context they belong.

For this thesis, I go back and forth between data and theories. I was flexible in the analysis and coding phase and tried to be inductive. However, I also looked for words and elements related to

commonalities and significant differences. I want to give space for analysis and understanding of what emerges from the interview data (Bryman, 2016).

### 3.3 Research Design

This section will offer an overview of the research design and the plan I used to answer my research question; in particular, I will specify the methods and procedures I used to collect and analyse data (Bryman, 2016).

Here, I will outline the tools I used to analyse the data I collected through archival and documentary research supported by interviewing practitioners of my case study: the Anti-Violence Centre La Nara and the perpetrator program Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti (CAM).

Following a phase of study of documents, and literature on the topic, I realised that to get a more in-depth and comprehensive view of it, I needed to hear the voices and opinions of the people directly involved in the organisations I was studying.

Therefore, the case study approach and interviews seemed to be excellent tools for a complete picture. This research aimed to present and collect documents and literature on anti-violence and perpetrators programmes, focusing on La Nara and CAM to identify common and different approaches. The documents and archival based research phase were conducted through literature review and included both academic literature and other published reports, academic journal articles, papers, grey literature (including online publications), media articles and relevant websites.

The interviews, conducted face-to-face, by phone, or via Zoom, allowed me to gather in-depth information on facilities and collaboration. I used semi-structured interviews to detect crucial inputs on the main challenges and success factors.

#### 3.3.1 Case Study

A case study is an approach that allows an in-depth and varied understanding of a phenomenon placed in its social context.

Social scientist Robert K Yin defines a case study as "*The all-encompassing feature of a case study is its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context...[Case studies are] research situations where the number of variables of interest far exceeds the number of data points.*" (2009:13).

A case study for this thesis lets me understand how relationships and collaborations between anti-violence centres and perpetrators programmes can be created or implemented practically. I use only two cases, one for an anti-violence centre and one for a perpetrator program.

Using a case study does not intend to give a unique and decisive representation of the current situation. Instead, it is designed to be a generic example of how it can find commonalities and synergies between these two.

As Yin writes, my case studies aim to "*capture the circumstances and conditions of a daily or common situation*" (2009) concerning the work of anti-violence centres and perpetrators programs. Moreover, the Italian condition is somewhat atypical because the first perpetrators program was founded in 2009, almost 13 years after the rest of Europe (Puchert, 2016).

"*La Nara*" Anti-Violence Centre and the "*Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti*" (CAM) are my case study because of a matter of territoriality and previous relationships between them. The two services are both in Tuscany: CAM is based in Florence, while La Nara, is in Prato, a city 20 km from Florence.

Case studies, like many approaches, are subject to several criticisms. The first one is mainly related to the fact that "*general, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge*" (Flyvbjerg, 2006), according to which a theory-only context is much more reliable and realistic than a more practical context of knowledge, according to the Danish scholar Bent Flyvbjerg this criticism is not acceptable since both contexts of learning are valuable.

Furthermore, the research aims to create knowledge that "*impacts wider theory-oriented debates*" (Lamont, 2015: 125). Although it cannot be said that a case study is used for complete generalisation, it is still possible that it may contribute to the collective learning process of a given study area (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Still, at the same time, case study design includes an idiographic aspect that enables the researcher to detect characteristic elements of a particular item rather than trying to create general universal knowledge (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, an important aspect to consider

when conducting research is validity, meaning "How can a case study reveal unique features be illustrative for other cases?" (Bryman, 2016).

The synergies and relationships that CAM and La Nara have and will put in place are not unique and specific to their situation. Instead, they can be reflected in other services and contexts but decline in different ways and at different times. The case study may create a general pattern related to relational mechanisms between other protection services for women victims of violence and social key processes related to combating gender-based violence enacted in different contexts and spaces (Lamont, 2015; Bryman, 2016).

A further misunderstanding that Flyvbjerg dismantles relates to the fact that case studies are more suitable for generating hypotheses; according to the professor, however, case studies can either generate hypotheses or build theories and go beyond these two goals. These misunderstandings can also be applied to my case study presented in this thesis. Like many perpetrators programs, CAM has been subject to various criticisms and scepticism for a long time. At the theoretical level, perpetrators programmes' methodology is very defined and determined thanks to work done by the European Network Work With Perpetrators in writing guidelines regarding the role and importance of perpetrators programs. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the fact that, in practice, many criticisms and challenges are addressed to CAM and other programs. Moreover, the implementation of programs is supported by good synergies and collaborations between perpetrators programmes and AVCs at the theoretical level. However, there are still several hiccups and slowdowns.

In no way do my two case studies want to become unique and replicable models; I am aware that these two services have their limitations and complexities. I have no intention of oversimplifying and generalising different contexts and situations in which various elements and aspects act that are not reported here.

I will briefly present the specific cases because the introduction section describes the role and activities of the Anti-violence Centre and Perpetrators Programmes.

#### *Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti - CAM*

Il *Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti* (from now on CAM) is a non-profit association that was founded in Florence on November 17, 2009. It was developed as an experimental project promoted

by the Artemisia Anti-Violence Centre of Florence in collaboration with the local health authority of Florence (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.). It is a place of reference for those men who want to embark on a change path and take responsibility for their physical and psychological mistreatment, sexual, economic, and stalking behaviour.

The CAM deals with combating violence against women and children at multiple levels through paths of change aimed at men perpetrators of violence in emotional relationships, public awareness, training of operators, and prevention interventions with children in schools or other non-formal education settings. At CAM, a multidisciplinary team comprises educators, psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists, with specific training on domestic violence issues.

The CAM aims to eliminate male violence against women by promoting programs for abusers and a commitment to promoting social and cultural change. The CAM offers groups for men who have been violent and controlling toward family members and now want to change. Participants talk, share information, confront and support each other to be better men, partners and fathers. These groups can help men change their behaviours and end family violence.

The abuser is seen as an individual who is part of a community, and the violence acted out is placed within a social issue related to gender inequality. This issue becomes central as it is believed that to change, the abuser must first take responsibility for his behaviour and realise that acting violence is a choice and a crime and that violence is based on power and control.

CAM adopts the cognitive-behavioural approach and the experiential and narrative methodology. The mechanism of group work allows for the better deconstruction of the vision and social constructs related to domestic violence. Maximising the support system provides a confrontation of violence and attitudes toward women without becoming adversaries. In addition, group recognition of privately enacted violence reduces the mechanisms of denial and minimisation. The course lasts about a year usually, and physical violence ceases in a short time. At the same time, psychological abuse has more complex interlocks and is more difficult to eradicate, so it continues for a long time (Centro per Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.).

The psycho-educational group consists of a small group that meets once a week for an hour and a half (M.d.M., 20.04.2022). During the meetings, a variety of content is covered, including the topic of masculinity, processes of denial and minimisation of acted violence, acceptance of one's

responsibility and awareness of one's feelings and emotions. In the groups, there are two operators, a man and a woman, who lead the group during the discussion. The proposed contents are always presented in a dynamic and participatory way through role-play and theatre of the Oppressed modes (S.A., 02.05.2022).

The main aim of the psycho-education group is that the man has to take responsibility for his behaviours and discomfort and identify strategies for interrupting violent behaviours (such as recognising anticipatory cues, self-talk, and timeouts). This can happen through exercise in managing negative emotions (anger, aggression, anxiety) and trying to build alternative models of relationship with a partner. Also, in the group, men reflect on parenting models and their possible enrichment. They try to develop empathic skills and modify beliefs and values about masculinity (Centro per Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.)

The meetings with the psycho-educational group last nine months (M.d.M., 20.04. 2022), following which the man has finished his path at CAM. However, if the man wants to continue a track within the Center and the operators consider it possible, the man can access a therapeutic group lasting six months. In the therapeutic group, the men work more thoughtfully, and they try to dig deeper on a personal level on the issues presented.

Since 2012, CAM has opened four more branches in the national territory and regional territorial units. In addition, it maintains an ongoing exchange with Italian and European organisations dealing with gender-based violence and IPV. The president of CAM is also the Executive Director of the European Association on perpetrators programme, the European Network Work With Perpetrators. CAM is also leading the national association, RELIVE, which oversees coordinating and evaluating the effectiveness of national programs for taking care of men perpetrators of violence (Centro per Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.).

The CAM is committed to establishing collaborative relationships with anti-violence centres operating in the area to ensure support, information and shelter for victims, develop collaborative relationships with sending services: social-health services, courts, police headquarters, and to provide training and help in the development of guidelines and work to increase public awareness concerning violence, including intervening with targeted sensitisation. It is essential to emphasise my research question that programs for abusers represent one link in a set of differentiated and multidisciplinary interventions that must be part of an overall social responsibility to end violence

against women. For this reason, CAM must establish collaborative relationships with the AVCs operating in the area to ensure support, information and shelter for victims. Also, to develop collaborative relationships with the sending services such as social-health services and courts and raise public awareness in the community by intervening with targeted sensitisations.

### *La Nara*

La Nara Anti-Violence Center has been active since 1997 and is based in Prato. Alice Cooperativa Sociale manages the Center in agreement with the local health authority. La Nara is a social and political project: it intends to provoke a process of change to the problem of physical, psychological, economic, sexual, and stalking violence exercised on women and their children of any origin, age, profession, or religion.

It collaborates with multidisciplinary agencies and practitioners in the province of Prato to protect women and minors and prevent and combat discrimination and gender-based violence.

La Nara's office is organised with a space where women come and have their appointment and counselling. Moreover, in cases of particular seriousness and after a careful risk assessment, the woman is guaranteed protection by hosting her in house, with a secret address, for the securing of women and their possible minor children who have the temporary need to move away from their home. It is a secret, anonymous and safe place where women are protected and supported by caseworkers to enable them to embark on new paths of autonomy, empowerment and reintegration. There is also a second shelter home, a home for women when they are no longer in danger but may not have the economic possibility or the relational support to find their place. It can be challenging for the woman to redesign her life and for the woman to get back into the world of work because of the difficulty of finding rent and employment.

Since its opening to date, La Nara has welcomed and accompanied almost 4,000 women at challenging times in their lives. It has hosted more than 300 women with their children in the refuge house and the second shelter house, supporting them in a path of protection and safety, building together a concrete way out of violence through a personalised project. Secrecy and anonymity are

always guaranteed. Nara also has territorial listening desks in all the municipalities of the province of Prato (Centro anti violenza “La Nara,” n.d.).

Access to the centre is initially through telephone contact by the woman. Following the call, an initial appointment is made for an individual interview to assess and better understand the woman's situation and needs. After three interviews with the woman, the Center's workers conduct a risk assessment, called SARA, in which they evaluated several factors regarding the severity of the woman's situation. In addition, based on the woman's wishes and needs, they work out, together, the best course of action for her.

At La Nara, as in all anti-violence centres, only women workers work there; there are 11 employees, and the professionalisation of the workers is varied, from social workers to psychologists, philosophers and educators. The team divides the work into three macro-categories: women's reception, individual interviews, accompaniment to services in the area, reception in refuge house or second shelter houses, parenting and child support and support in the path of personal autonomy, the second macro-category is related to design and implementation of prevention activities within schools of all levels in the area to promote a new gender culture based on equality, on rights, overcoming stereotypes and gender differences, against all types of discrimination, and finally, the third category is related to the aspect of participation in territorial, national and European projects.

The centre also offers legal advice and support during the legal process, both civil and criminal, and in the procedures for requesting legal aid, information on territorial services regarding health, labour, education, training, leisure, training and awareness activities aimed at network subjects through courses, conferences, workshops, seminars, promotion of awareness campaigns and events, and the management of the documentation centre and library loan (Centro anti violenza “La Nara,” n.d.).

### 3.4 Data Collection

This section will overview the methods used for data collection and why I chose them. For this research, I chose an archival- and document-based research method (Lamont, 2015). This is considered one of the most used methods within International Relations and related disciplines (Lamont, 2015). In this case, documents refer to guidelines, protocols, legislation, official reports, and articles (Lamont, 2015; Bryman, 2016). My data for the analysis mainly consists of primary

sources: documents produced by people who directly access the information (Lamont, 2015). For this thesis, my primary resource refers to papers published by the services I relate to, CAM and La Nara.

Furthermore, I referred to *RELIVE* (Relazioni Libere dalle Violenze), the national association of perpetrators programmes, and *Di.R.E.* (Donne in Rete contro la Violenza), the Italian association that brings together all the AVCs. Then, from the European level, I referred to organisations that deal with perpetrators programmes and AVCs, such as the Work With Perpetrators network and Women Against Violence Europe NGO. Moreover, I related to official European documents such as the Council of Europe Convention and other papers that analyse the European situation regarding violence against women and commit the signatory states to act accordingly. In addition, to better interpret and contextualise the data, I also used secondary sources, such as already repurposed documents (Lamont, 2015). Secondary resources consist of academic research, in this case, relevant theories.

I also collected data through interviews I administered with the services' employees, CAM and La Nara. I conducted six interviews, three with La Nara workers and three with CAM workers. I executed all the interviews in the native language, Italian, and they are added in Appendix A. Quotes added in the analysis are translated by me. Although it is not a very large number for a dataset, having the opportunity to interview three people from CAM and three from La Nara still allowed me to bring out differences, convergences, and nuances in the work of these two organisations. The CAM staff consists of five people, and that of La Nara of nine women. Overall, given the time available, I could get relatively broad pictures of both organisations.

The interview is one of the most widely used and practical tools for data collection in qualitative research. Interviews are effective in qualitative research because they allow to explain better and understand a given phenomenon and explore interviewees' behaviours, opinions, and experiences.

It is possible to distinguish three types of interviews:

- **Structured Interviews:** this type is very rigorous; interviewees must answer only the questions asked. The goal is to collect standardised responses, and the questions are closed-ended. This type of interview leaves little room for narrative and free expression by the interviewee.

- Semi-structured Interviews: this type presents a guideline, combining rigour in the themes and topics covered and flexibility in the exchange. In this way, the researcher can explore specific points in depth and opinions and comments can be gathered that may not even be considered at the question-writing stage.
- Unstructured Interviews: characteristic of this type is the complete absence of a structure. The goal is to have a broad overview of a given topic (Merriam & Merriam, 1998).

I chose to submit open-ended questions following a semi-structured interview style for my thesis. Previously I had prepared eleven questions to offer to the operators, but then the conversation was very fluid; if the interviewees wanted to add something or talk about something else, they were free to do so. The semi-structured interviews were submitted in two modes: face-to-face and telephone. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with my colleagues at the La Nara; being all together in the office facilitated the process. On the other hand, I interviewed the CAM staff, one time on an online platform and the other two via telephone; the timelines and COVID-19 restrictions, although loosened but still present, did not allow for in-person meetings.

Phone interviews have disadvantages; the main one is not seeing the interviewee physically or by the camera and not seeing the mimics, undermining the chances of analysing behaviour, attitude and facial expressions.

I conducted interviews from March through May. I formulated the questions based on wanting to know the workplace, how services work and possible interests for collaborations and prospects. For example, after an initial introduction on who am I and the purpose of the interview, the interviewees were asked to introduce themselves and their role in the organisation. Then, questions were related to the specific organisation, accesses of annual men and women, duration of the path, way of accessing the centres, then asked if there have been collaborations between them, personal opinions about possible team meetings and perspectives about future synergies.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The input collected from the interviews was organised and systematised through thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is defined as a method of identifying, analysing, and

reporting prevalent themes for a given body of data. The themes presented are intended to capture something important in the data about the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke's definition is "*Thematic Analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data in detail. However, it frequently goes further and interprets various aspects of the research topic*" (2006:79).

Thematic analysis (from now on, TA) has many different meanings. There are three different approaches to TA; each has other procedures and processes underpinned by philosophical assumptions of research values. First, the reliability approach is oriented toward creating reliable and accurate codes. The reflexive approach is based on the more organic and fluid approach to coding. Braun and Clarke's approach is an example of a reflexive approach. Then, the third one is an approach based on a conjunction of structured codebook in common with coding reliability approaches and qualitative philosophy in common with reflexive approaches. The TA approach that I decided to use in this project follows the reflexive approach, as the Braun and Clarke approach to thematic analysis. Characteristics of the reflexive TA: fluidity, flexibility and researcher-centredness seemed to be the best characteristics for analysing the interviews. The interviews allowed me to have immediate and direct contact with the data.

Indeed, the reflexive approach is characterised by theoretical flexibility and an organic process of coding and theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this approach, the researcher's subjectivity is considered integral to the analysis process; the researcher is engaged and immersed with the data. The analysis starts with familiarisation with the data set. Coding then is viewed as an organic and flexible process. Themes, moreover, are built from code, so the process does not start with themes; instead, themes are the output or the endpoint of the analytic process and are created through coding. The researcher is encouraged to reflect on their strategy and assumption through all analysis processes. The focus is on acknowledging the coding process as subjective and interpretive.

In reflexive TA, themes are elements that the researcher actively creates through their interpretative engagement with the data, and they do not pre-exist before the analysis.

TA is uniquely flexible, and the researcher uses it to analyse most types of qualitative data, from interviews and focus groups to surveys, secondary sources such as media and visual and creative methods. Moreover, TA is flexible, mainly regarding data type and data size. Therefore, the research can use TA both for small and big data sets and the homogenous and heterogeneous constitution of data. On the other hand, TA is still a relatively recent and advancing approach to analysis; there is little reference literature, making the researcher insecure about using this type of analysis. Likewise, its main characteristic, flexibility, can lead to inconsistency and lack of coherence when developing themes (Holloway & Todies, 2003).

As Braun and Clarke say, TA is more a method than a methodology because it is not tied to a particular theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke2019). The researcher can conduct reflexive TA in three different ways, but the focal point is on the researcher and their active role in all the procedures; nevertheless, these are flexible and can contaminate each other. These are the possible ways of conducting the analysis:

- Inductive or deductive, inductive focuses on the meaning while deductive is more data-oriented.
- Experiential or critical orientation of data, in this process, the question is more on capturing people's lives and a more interrogative approach with a questioning approach.
- (critical) Realist, contextualist or constructionist theoretical perspective, this procedure is more philosophical.

My way of conducting reflexive TA can be considered mainly inductive because I am focusing on the in-depth meaning of the data and letting the theme guide me. Codes and themes emerged from the interviews I conducted, though, I wrote the questions submitted to answer my research question, after studying documents related to GBV, IPV, and AVCs and perpetrators programme.

Hence now, I will explain why I chose to use the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006,2019); this decision was guided by the fact that Braun and Clarke's reflexive TA leaves significant room for interpretation of the data set and what emerges from the available texts. For Braun and Clarke, reflexive TA is a flexible type of analysis in which the figure of the researcher assumes fundamental importance and an active role in the construction of meaning and significance. On the other hand, thematic analysis can report on participants' experiences and realities as a contextualised method that recognises how subjects make meaning of their

experiences and how the social context impacts the same intentions. Thus, the researcher's judgment in determining and choosing one type of subject over another becomes essential, and it is in this aspect, that the flexibility of the method is delineated. TA is also not tied to any pre-existing theoretical framework and thus can be used within different theoretical frameworks.

TA also offers a range of analytical possibilities: from the straightforward to the most complex. The straightforward TA tends to be applied in a professional context; realist experimental approaches fall into this category. In this case, TA is used to describe, summarise, and interpret data.

While in reflexive TA, researchers are the focal point and actively engage in the analysis process. As the lecturers point out, themes do not emerge passively from the data, but it is the researcher who actively generates them; they are the result of the analysis and are not pre-existing (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The analysis of the data that emerged from the interviews was conducted following the six stages outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). However, these phases are not fixed they have a blurry nature as it is possible for them to merge into each other, or step back and then move forward. Here a brief description of the six phases:

- Familiarisation: this phase is the most common of all forms of TA. During this phase, the researcher gets to know the data and starts to engage with them.
- Coding: In this phase, the researcher assigns codes/labels to the data. The researcher highlights parts of the text that focus on the data. It is an organic and fluid process.
- Generating initial themes: the researcher begins to assemble the codes, create themes, and briefly describe them.
- Reviewing and developing themes: at this stage, the researcher examines how the themes support the data and the general theoretical perspective.
- Refining, defining and naming theme: in this phase, the researcher refines and finalises the selected themes.
- Producing report: finally, the researcher writes a final analysis paper.

Regarding my data set, which consisted of the unwinds of the interviews, the analysis started with rewriting the interviews. I conducted the interviews partly in person and partially online; in all situations, I recorded the interview to focus entirely on the persons as they were speaking, and

occasionally I took notes. My attention wanted to be on the interviewer. Then, on a first stage I debunked and transcribed all the interviews, and after that, I read and reread them. Subsequently, I identified and highlighted some relevant elements related to the research question. Finally, I began to aggregate the various aspects into potential themes. I created a map, an outline that would allow me to understand the link between codes and themes better. The process of selecting and choosing a theme's name was long and complex, and I changed the labels many times, I went back to the codes several times and moved and modified them to ensure internal consistency. Eventually, I was able to identify and bring back the categories most appealing to me. The process was not easy, at the beginning the transcripts revealed little, the interviewees seem to have answered all differently. So, I decided to analyse all the answers to a single question; thus, repetitions emerged. In their replies, almost all the interviewees used the exact words or synonyms; this redundancy let me to identify themes and common threads between the interviews.

At the end I identified two themes: "violence" and "development", and seven sub-themes.

- Theme 1: "Violence"
  - Cultural factors
  - Risk assessment
  - Minors
  - Prevention
  
- Theme 2: "Development "
  - Motivation
  - Path
  - Network

I have schematically presented the themes and sub-themes that emerged; I will describe them separately in the analysis chapter. The themes and sub-themes have as their common thread the desire to understand commonalities and differences between La Nara and CAM for potential collaboration.

### 3.6 Limitation and Positionality

Although I have chosen a methodology and theories concepts that convince me and apply generously to my research question, I am aware that every methodology has drawbacks that I will reflect on in this section. First, the topic of collaboration and synergy between the perpetrators program and the anti-violence centre in Italy is still relatively in its infancy. The first perpetrators program was founded in 2009 (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.). Although it was established in cooperation with an anti-violence centre, the potential relationship and contact between these services are still in their beginning.

On one hand, with little trust and awareness, the perpetrators program still struggles to emerge as an organisation doing its part in the anti-violence system. Still, the topic has several disadvantages, such as the lack of literature and academic articles to consult about practical aspects. Nevertheless, at the theoretical level, several documents, in the first place the Istanbul Convention (2011) and its article 16, but also several other reports, including national ones, extol and emphasise the importance of working in synergy.

On the other hand, the fact that the topic related to the collaboration between these two organisations is still little-known offers positive aspects, including my wanting to contribute to increasing awareness.

The second limitation is related to data collection. I am aware that interviewing only six practitioners does not provide a detailed and specific picture related to the topic. For more extensive and in-depth projects, perhaps a more hands-on field phase would be helpful. A field experience would have allowed for a more complete and thorough understanding and immersion. In addition, another suitable alternative for data collection could be triangulation, that is, combining different methods of data collection to receive more nuanced and saturated data, such combining interviews, primary sources and field experience (Bryman, 2016).

## 4. Analysis

Through reflexive TA presented in the previous chapter, I analysed and processed my data set consisting of the six interviews I submitted to CAM and La Nara employees. This analysis aimed to identify themes in the interviews data. Therefore, I read the interviews and identified codes and themes to highlight the commonalities and differences between the two facilities to identify potential collaboration and challenges to overcome. The coding phase was mainly inductive, I let the data “speak” to me and emerge during the reading and analysis. However, keeping in mind my research question, I composed the interviews aware how what would eventually be response using targeted questions that would lead to the topics I was interested in.

I have identified two themes: 'violence' and 'development'. The first theme is divided into four sub-themes: 'cultural roots', 'risk assessment', 'minors' and 'prevention'. The main concepts of this theme and sub-themes are IPV, awareness-raising and the safety of the victims and their children. The second theme, 'development', is divided into three sub-themes: 'motivation', 'path' and 'network'. The main concepts revolving around this theme are, the motivation that push to access to AVC and perpetrators programmes, synergy work between organisations and future perspectives. I will analyse them below to highlight similarities and differences between of La Nara and CAM. Thanks to the theories and concepts I explained in the chapter above, I will also be able to contextualise and understand the results of the interviews.

Firstly, my thesis is about answering the research question about possible synergies between AVCs, and perpetrators programmes based on the case studies of La Nara and CAM. The interviews conducted aimed to explore this possibility and to find out the opinion of the interviewees. *“The path out of violence is a procedure made in a network. Everybody does their little piece,”* (31.03.2022) was the reply of D.P., from La Nara, when asked if she considers possible cooperation and synergies between the two organisations. The main goal of these two organisations is to safeguard and protect the woman victim of violence and any children, which was underlined several times by all interviewed. The importance of creating a network is a prerogative of all associations and is well understood by all professionals. As CAM psychologist S.A. highlights, *“The Istanbul Convention emphasises the importance of networking regarding violence and leads to the circularity of information. A competent network of care”* (02.05.2022). So, interacting and joining forces between the various organisations is a matter of will and is also stated in several documents to which Italy is a signatory. For example, article 16 of the Istanbul Convention refers to programs for

perpetrators of violence as strategies that are part of the wheel of institutions that work to protect women victims of sexual and gender-based violence (Council of Europe, 2011).

Moreover, the Convention emphasises the importance of measures to promote changes in men's social and cultural behaviour patterns to eradicate prejudices, customs, traditions, and other practices based on concepts of women's inferiority or stereotyped gender roles for women and men. It also recommends improving the training of professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators of all types of violence and prevention interventions and treatment programmes (Council of Europe, 2011).

The National Strategic Plan on Male Violence against Women 2021-2023 envisages the activation of re-education paths for perpetrators of violence against women. Furthermore, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, as recommended in Article 16 of the Istanbul Convention, reserves specific resources for the support of prevention, recovery, and treatment programs for male perpetrators to prevent recidivism and to encourage the adoption of non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relations (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri – Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, 2021).

The relationship with specialised support services for women victims of violence is an essential requirement in the work of programs dealing with abusers (Kelly, 2008; Hester & Lilley, 2014). Also, among the minimum standards defined in the Guidelines elaborated by the Work With Perpetrators-European Network (2018) and taken up by the National Guidelines of the Relive network, the collaboration of all actors on the ground for the safety of women and children is defined as “vital” (Associazione Relive, 2017).

Adherence to a coordinated response system to violence against women, organised on a territorial basis, is considered one of the leading quality criteria of perpetrators programs (Oddone, 2021). In the relevant territorial areas, these collaborations guarantee the operational connection and communication between all general and specialised services working in prevention, protection, and counteracting male violence against women to effectively protect women victims of violence and their children (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, 2021).

Cooperation between perpetrators programmes and specialised victim support services, while

being a prerequisite, is considered a challenging topic in the debate on interventions to prevent and protect victims of violence (Hester & Lilley, 2014; WWP, 2018). However, as reported in a study published by the European network WWP (2018), the underlying mistrustful attitude of some AVCs towards the work of perpetrators programs are of concern. In particular, the doubt that working with perpetrators of violence may increase the risks for the victims, whose safety cannot be completely guaranteed, or that programmes may instil in women a false sense of security, leading them to give a second chance to their violent partner. Another concern is that the programmes could be instrumentalised by perpetrators of violence to reunite with victims or their children. On the other hand, cooperation with support services for women victims of violence is considered extremely important by the Council of Europe and the guidelines promoted by the WWP Network at European level, as mentioned above (Council of Europe, 2011; WWP – Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Europe, 2008).

#### 4.1 Violence

During the interviews and when rewriting, I noticed that the term and the word violence were often repeated, although they were never mentioned in the questions. IPV is undoubtedly the common thread running through the work of both organisations. Getting out of IPV is why women make the first call and are subsequently accepted into the centre. Understanding and taking responsibility for their violent actions towards their partner is why abusive men join the perpetrator programme. IPV affects women regardless of ethnicity, age or socio-economic status (Messinger, 2011; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Women from diverse backgrounds may be more vulnerable and at higher risk of IPV. They may have language difficulties that prevent them from reporting to the authorities. A culturally sensitive approach would better reach women from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Both services aim to prevent and address GBV, especially IPV. However, violence against women has a cultural and social foundation for both. L.B., a psychologist at CAM, explains, "*If I only address the context and not the root, it is difficult to work on it: to prevent or interrupt. We have to get to the root of the problem if we want to change the phenomenon of violence.*" (05.04.2022). F.C. of La Nara, also goes in the same direction: "*...the intention and the goal are to protect and escape from violence.*" (31.03.2022).

For a long time, IPV was considered a private phenomenon. However, thanks to women's movements the social and cultural dimension of the phenomenon is being highlighted and fought in the public sphere and legislation.

- 4.1.1 Cultural roots

All interviewees recognise and emphasise the cultural and structural elements of violence. When asked why it is important to work with abusers, L.B. of CAM replied that it is a “*process of change in the phenomenon of violence*” (5.04.2022). Violence is part of an effective strategy to create and maintain power and control from the men over the woman. Mistreatment is part of a continuum of violence against women, including sexism, sexual harassment, sexual violence, incest, pornography, and stalking (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.). Domestic violence is part of social and cultural customs and is often considered normal and acceptable (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.).

The core of violence in the sphere of intimate relationships originates in the structural inequality between men and women, in the hierarchy of value between male and female, in heteronormativity, understood as the set of cultural constraints that act on individual identity choice, considering the couple as consisting of man and woman and favouring the former to the detriment of the latter, as emphasised, and referred to by gender theory (Oddone, 2020). The roots of behaviour are related to the cultural tradition of belonging, to the social structure, to the gender of the person - which determines the different female and male subcultures - and to the concrete process that the person experiences through the different instances of socialisation such as family, school, media, and peer groups. (Oddone, 2020). All these acts become a set of sensations, emotions, thoughts, and ways of behaving and relating, which generates the personality structure. Moreover, at a social level, the man/woman relationship has always been conceived as the only one possible, that is, that set of behaviours whose purpose is to make (or 'maintain') the norm of those behaviours and social expectations linked to the assumption that heterosexuality - understood as a binary system of roles, expressions and expectations - is the only valid and legitimate orientation. This orientation creates a hierarchical scale at the top to find the representation of the (white) heterosexual, cisgender man and, at the bottom, all those with unconventional gender expressions. This hierarchical power scale also perpetuates abuses, even unconscious ones (Ball, 2013).

Roots of violent acts are intimately linked to male and female behaviour expectations in relationships and accord with gender theory, from which men has a dominant role on the woman. Historically, love relationships have been institutionalised through a clear division of roles.

The work carried out at CAM is work on cultural and social change. Men work on their toxic masculinity, which has cultural and social origins that perpetuate patriarchal gender relations (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). According to Professor Michael Moller, masculinity is socially constructed like femininity, so there are conditions in which it can change (2007). As S.A. recalls, *"it is important to involve men because they are an active part of the violence and at the same time they can be an active part of the change; they also promote a social change by working with men and promoting a new masculinity"* (02.05.2022), and also the employee F.C. *"... and if I do a work with an abuser it is a citizen who comes back to me in a more aware and non-violent way in society, and he, his children and the woman are well"* (31.03.2022). Men who start the program at CAM do a personal work of revising the concepts of gender and (hegemonic/toxic) masculinity. They work on their own emotions and relationships, allowing themselves to feel and be who they are and understanding the weight of their cultural and social heritage that pushes them toward a model of a strong, powerful, and violent man.

Cultural and social factors make it clear that gender is an indispensable but not an independent analytical category in the study of asymmetries in relationships. Intersectionality plays an important role in considering cultural and social factors in relation to violence and IPV. IPV does not discriminate based on race, gender, religion, and socio-economic status. Although domestic violence itself does not involve this sort of discrimination, it still happens that society treats IPV survivors differently. Biases and stereotypes still greatly influence and differentiate how IPV survivors are perceived and treated based on their country of origin, ethnicity, and religion. This can create obstacles to their care and protection.

Cultural and social factors shape and influence our perception of gender, societal roles, and how violence is somehow legitimised. At the same time, intersectionality allows understanding of how different characteristics, apart from gender, intersect and complement each other. Therefore, this leads the professional to focus not only on the single aspect of gender roles but on the total complexity of a person's characteristics and how certain factors further advantage or disadvantage a person.

As F.C. echoes, *“if we do not work on culture, we do not get to the root of the problem”* (31.03.2022); GBV is deconstructed by starting with a cultural change, decoding stereotypes, understanding what gender discrimination is and how it is enacted, working on violence as a concept of domination, aggression, and prevarication.

- 4.1.2 Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a tool that employs a series of questions to identify the risk factors that lead to cases of domestic violence (Kropp & Hart, 2000). By 'risk factors' is meant characteristics and circumstances whose presence increases the likelihood of the perpetration of violence.

Consequently, risk assessment involves risk management, determining the most appropriate intervention for the case. The purpose of risk assessment is not to "predict" who is most at risk of perpetrating violence again but to prevent the recurrence and escalation of domestic violence. Identifying risk factors enables effective deterrence strategies, methods and plans to protect victims from being implemented, decisions to be made in the justice system, and restrictive measures to be taken when crimes occur that predict the risk of femicide. Prevent the reoccurrence of violence by identifying risk factors and taking steps to prevent it. The principle on which the risk assessment is based, rooted in gender theory and the GBV concept, is that violence within a couple is a decision that can be influenced by social, cultural, and individual factors.

Both organisations carry out the risk assessment: while La Nara and AVC generally conduct a risk assessment for the woman based on her history and experience, the risk assessment refers to the perpetrator at the CAM and perpetrator programmes. For AVC, the risk assessment is called SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment). One of the perpetrators programmes is ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment). The two tools have similar screening items, such as the presence of violent acts or threats by the man, the man's criminal record and whether he is addicted to drugs. Risk assessment is about understanding how offenders behave and how dangerous the situation is for the woman. Both instruments refer to a numerical scale used to “read” the dangerousness of the situation. Risk assessments are tools that do not consider the personal characteristics and circumstances of the person; this should be considered when writing the document.

- SARA

The Spousal Assault Risk Assessment, SARA, was developed in Canada by experts and assessed the risk of interpersonal violence between partners. This instrument helps to identify if and how much a man, who has acted violence towards his (ex-)partner, is at risk of using violence again (Kropp & Hart, 2000). The method was brought to Italy by the Association *Differenza Donna* in Rome (Sei a rischio? Come capirlo – Differenzadonna.org, 2016).

The SARA was created to be accessible and usable by different professionals and practitioners (magistrates, law enforcement agencies, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers) working with domestic violence cases. It is based on twenty risk factors reflecting various aspects such as criminal background, history of violence, social functioning, and mental health. Each question is scored 0 (not at all) to 5 (totally). This method aims not to provide an absolute score on the risk or dangerousness of the subject but to give a psycho-social assessment of the case and the variables surrounding the offender and the relationship.

- *ODARA*

Canadian researchers created the risk assessment scale regarding the abuser (Hilton et al., 2010). This instrument is called ODARA, the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment.

This instrument results from a collaboration between the Mental Health Centre in Penetanguishene and the Ontario Provincial Police (Pauncz & Cutini, 2016). It consists of thirteen dichotomous items that investigate static variables such as behaviour, history, and the context in which the offender is placed. Each question is scored 0 (not present) to 1 (present). The questionnaire is a quick and easy-to-use tool suitable for use in those contexts where there is a need for fast evaluations that translate into application decisions, such as police stations. It is currently being adapted into Italian by the CAM (Pauncz & Cutini, 2016).

The interviews show that both organisations do the risk assessment, La Nara for women and CAM for men. The risk assessment, as mentioned earlier, is a tool to determine the dangerousness of the woman's situation and the risk of violence and the possibility of recidivism in the man. The professionals update the instrument from time to time based on the goals achieved and future perspectives, so it is not a fixed instrument.

One of the interview questions was about the risk assessment tools and the possibility of sharing these tools between facilities. Both La Nara and CAM staff answered that sharing the result is not essential and should not be done in every case. D.P. from La Nara replied, "*It can be useful to know what risk assessment they do, but it does not question our risk assessment. They did a risk assessment that alerted us once and it was important for us to have that feedback. It is positive that we are doing an assessment and they are doing theirs*" (31.03.2022). The ODARA is a valuable tool for trying to understand future violence cases against women. If the risk assessment is a high-risk situation represented by a sum of values for specific expressions, sharing it with the AVC that the woman had access can enable the development of specific strategies. For example, a woman could tell a different situation about her situation because she is not yet fully aware of her condition and having the ODARA shared could help to put in perspectives. La Nara received very few cases of a high-risk situation through CAM, perhaps because very few women had a partner who used the service. D.P. notes that women who had a partner who used CAM are "*very few, 4 in a year, compared to the ones I follow*" (31.03.2022).

AVC's methodology is to always believe women because they are the only protagonist of the story; the professionals are there to support them but never to replace or supersede them: they are the only one who make decisions.

The woman's story is never questioned, even when the risk assessment from the perpetrator programmes is shared. "*If I get the impression that the woman is afraid, I do not deal with the man. Here we work on the woman's fear and perception of fear. However, there are situations where physical violence is past and present. There is psychological violence, and then in these cases, it seems that a joint risk assessment makes sense*" (M.B., 15.04.2022).

Both La Nara and CAM reported a specific case where the offender's risk assessment was at a dangerous level. CAM knew that the woman was at La Nara, and they got in touch, contacting the woman's protection service and shared the man's risk assessment.

D.P. from La Nara reported the experience of being reached by CAM "*to explain the personality of the abuser, and this allowed us to protect the woman more.*" (31.03.2022). According to a CAM psychologist, M.d.M., sharing the risk assessments "*might be desirable, especially when both access the service. I contacted an AVC for specific cases. The man's story can be sweetened. Knowing then that the woman is at the AVC allows the perpetrator program to work more safely.*" (20.04.2022)

When filling a risk assessment, it is important to consider the aspect of intersectionality, as gender also intersects with other characteristics such as ethnicity, religion and skin colour. When these intersections are linked to social discrimination, women's and children's access to protection and support can be further limited.

Therefore, it is crucial to understand and address the needs of survivors and apply a process of inclusion in risk assessment procedures. In addition, the risk assessment needs to be flexible and dynamic, understanding and considering the threats that minorities such as migrant women, refugees, LGBT+ and persons with disabilities may face. Professionals deliver risk assessments to identify and develop path for women and men.

Although it is not clear from the interviews that services always take a culturally and socially sensitive approach, La Nara and CAM provide a cultural mediation service for all who need it.

An intersectional approach to risk assessment allows for the development and planning of woman specific risk management, allowing for preventive measures that take into account all the peculiarities that make some women more vulnerable to IPV. In addition, understanding and applying intersectionality provides for a more effective response to IPV (Risk Assessment Principles and Steps, n.d.).

Similarly, a risk assessment must consider the unequal balanced relationship between gender and how this shape the woman experience of IPV. A gender-specific approach allows for appropriate responses and rethinking of an equal relationship between men and women. This provides an in-depth understanding of the gender dynamics involved in IPV and then analytically reports on risk factors (Risk Assessment Principles and Steps, n.d.).

#### ○ 4.1.3 Minors

Another important aspect that arose during the interviews is the element of children within violent relationships and how this affects parenthood. Minors are often invisible and unrecognised victims, and only recently, In Italy, the subject of witnessing violence came up. CISMAI, the Italian Coordination of Services against Child Maltreatment and Abuse, defines witnessing violence *“as the child's experience of ill-treatment through active physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, and economic violence against reference figures or other affectively significant adults or minors. The*

*child may experience this directly, indirectly and by perceiving its effects. This includes witnessing violence by minors against other minors and other family members and abandonment and mistreatment of pets.*"(C.I.S.M.A.I., 2005).

Working on parenthood, especially for women victims of IPV, is a significant need. Women who access the Centre often say that they were not or are still not ready to leave their partner because this could adversely affect their children.

Women on the path have been in a state of survival as the situation of violence was so long that they do not consider themselves excellent parental figures. Above all, they are afraid that they might lose their children in the event of a complaint or separation. The parenting of a woman victim of DV is often compromised by the trauma of abuse and mistreatment she has suffered.

An abused mother is a traumatised one: violence, if protracted over time, can produce many symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder. These strongly affect the relationship with the children and the ability to care for and attend to their needs. Persistent maltreatment over time leads the victim to isolation and lack of resources at all levels and produces a condition of powerlessness that also affects aspects of parenting (C.I.S.M.A.I., 2005).

The parenting support path for women and minors who are victims of violence makes possible to support the woman in her parental role while re-elaborating her personal history and rethinking a new life alternative. However, for a mother to fully support the well-being of her children, she must be in a safe, and empowered situation. Sometimes, when there are minors, protected meetings with the father are organised; these take place in a safe and neutral environment.

Protected meetings, generally ordered by the Juvenile Court, the Ordinary Civil Court, or the Social Services, are aimed at bringing together, in a supervised manner, parents and children removed from presumably traumatic and violent separation conditions. These moments mainly involve the meeting between the father and the children removed from the violent relationship (A.S.P. CARLO SARTORI Public Personal Services Company, 2019).

Minors came up several times by both organisations as topic during the interviews when speaking about team meetings, even though none of the questions were related to children or parenthood. Team meetings are not essential, according to the interviewees, because the aim of the organisations is not to bring the couple back together. For example, AVC and a perpetrators program do not work for couple mediation; otherwise, it would be couple therapy. In their working

methodologies, La Nara and CAM are aware that their work is to prevent and combat violence against women, and this does not take the form of keeping the couple together.

However, the professionals answered those team meetings could be helpful in case there are children in the relationship and “protected meetings” should be arranged. For example, L.B., a CAM psychologist, says, *“there were team meetings, especially when there are children.”* (05.04.2022).

D.P., an AVC worker, although expressed perplexity about these team meetings, said that she *“not think it is useful to confront each other in the path, the two must go their way, they are two different paths. Maybe in “protected meetings”, but it never happened, it might be useful to meet with child and woman protection workers.”* (31.03.2022).

In an abusive relationship, gender roles and dominance are highly emphasised. Power and violence are clear and marked and acted upon by the man while the woman is in a situation of inferiority, fear and difficulty. Many women accessing AVC complain that they are not good mothers, but in an IPV relationship, the role of the mother may take second place as the survival of the self is at the forefront. In AVC, much work is done with women and children to rebuild their relationship based on serenity and personal well-being.

CAM also offers a working group that works on specific aspects of parenting which is a powerful motivation for these men. While reminding them that they are good fathers, the workers try to make them understand that they cannot be good fathers without being good partners because a good partner allow the mother to take care of and meet her child's needs (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.).

Children witnessing DV is a very contemporary and challenging issue. The two agencies are committed to parenting on both sides. Bi-parenting and parental alienation are topics that cannot have space here but deserve a very in-depth discussion. To be a parent is not easy, especially if you are in a violent relationship. The children's experience and dealing with trauma are immense and not always accessible to process.

CAM works a lot on the theme of parenthood, particularly in the father's figure and how this was represented during the violence and later during the self-consciousness process. The colleagues at La Nara are not very supportive of secret meetings, perhaps because they are not yet legislatively well defined, or because when the court determines them, they are often at the request of the man

and do not take into consideration the wishes of the woman and of the children who may not want to see the father. In separation procedures, children are very often instrumentalised.

#### ○ 4.1.4 Prevention

An integrated approach within local authorities to combat violence against women cannot do without a commitment at the cultural and social level, to be achieved through training and awareness-raising activities that contribute to building a culture of respect and balanced relations between women and men.

This sub-theme refers to the work done by both organisations to raise awareness, especially in schools. In addition, both La Nara and CAM engage in outreach and prevention work in schools to influence gender-based violence's cultural and structural features over a longer time. The prevention work is essential because if the goal is to GBV, working on the "before" is crucial.

The paths of women and men in organisations are what prevention aims to avoid. Working upstream and with the youngest to sensitise and sharpen them should reduce access. Considering that the aim of the AVC and perpetrator programme is to break the cycle of violence prevention by giving a new definition of culture and society, deconstructing binarism and gender roles and remembering that individuals shape culture and society, to a change towards a better partnership between individuals, even if it is not a quick and painless process.

Both organisations deal with prevention, F.C. *"I have been working in La Nara in a school-based prevention group since 2014"* (31.03.2022) and M.d.M. *"I am involved in training."* (20.04.2022). Through working groups, videos and debates, the youngsters can confront and reflect on gender stereotypes and discrimination. For example, by looking at and analysing advertisements, they are encouraged to think about and question what the world and society suggest about gender and its representation.

The projects are based on the emergence of concepts such as gender discrimination, stereotype, equality and alternative models, emphasising that the culture's mentality leads to the definition of certain concepts.

It is also the culture that brings about change and progress. The concept of culture also reflects gender theory, according to which male and female gender is precisely constituted and learned

through social and cultural constructs. Overcoming certain constructs, would enable the achievement of an equal society and less GBV.

About collaboration between the two organisations, F.C. from La Nara, expressed herself as follows: *"For me, a collaboration between CAM and CAV makes sense from the point of view of prevention, a theme inseparable from contrast, if we do not work on the culture we do not go to the root of the problem, going to school together, deconstructing stereotypes, working on widespread violence at the cultural level (domination, aggression, prevarication)"* (31.03.2022).

The desire to create relations between the two organisations thus goes beyond practical work. The outcome is upstream for the worker, and cooperation must come before a violent relationship.

As L.B. says: *"If I only act on the context and not on the root, it is difficult to work on it: to prevent or interrupt. Act on the root of the problem. Process of changing the phenomenon of violence"* (05.04.2022). GBV is tackled by addressing issues of gender discrimination, stereotyping and the difference between sex and gender.

Prevention unravels the roots of gender theory and shows how gender is a social and cultural construct that is passed on and results from the mentality and culture of the context. Gender changes in space and time, the idea of gender is not the same as it was a few years ago, but at the same time, it is not the same in all parts of the world.

The crucial aspect of the prevention project is reflecting on gender roles, intersectionality, review of stereotypes, and the gender binarism characterising western society and the gender discrimination that emerges. Measuring the prevalence of gender role stereotypes and attitudes towards violent behaviour becomes a key to understand the cultural context that legitimises an inequality in which violent relationships find their genesis.

A gender and intersectional approach from the perspective of prevention shows how important it is to invest in training and in the new generations to break down stereotypes of gender roles and those that tend to attribute responsibility for sexual violence suffered to women.

This first theme wanted to focus on the issue of GBV and its various forms and representations. Therefore, it is possible to summarise this first theme by emphasising that the common thread of the work between the two services is to tackle IPV.

This first topic wanted to focus on GBV and its various forms and representations. Therefore, this first theme can be summarised by highlighting that the common denominator of the work of the two services is to combat violence against women. This is done through working methods that have similarities, such as the prevention work that La Nara and CAM carry out mainly in schools with young people or sometimes adults. Prevention starts with the cultural and social aspects that influence and shape people's gender.

Through cultural and social work, CAM and La Nara engage with independent projects on gender, its meaning, how it changes, and how gender also intersects with other characteristics that bring advantages and disadvantages. The critical issue of witnessing violence and parenting emerges as a concept addressed by both organisations. It needs to be cultivated with a gendered approach related to roles and manifestations.

Risk assessment remains a knot that is somewhat more difficult to untangle. Although it is a fundamental tool for a deep understanding of the violent situation, La Nara remains relatively rigid when sharing it. In an anti-violence centre, the focus is always on the woman, her story and her needs. The professionals will never doubt the woman's story, *"there is a pact of trust; it should be made clear to the woman that her experiences are not on display, but stay in here, protected by privacy, this is a space for her, she can trust the operators"* (F.C., 31.03.2022). Furthermore, by adopting an intersectional perspective, risk assessment and subsequent risk management should consider the vulnerabilities and needs of the person.

Another common point is the central issue of parenthood. In this complex and sensitive issue, La Nara is committed to reclaiming and strengthening the mother-child relationship while the psycho-educational group CAM discusses and addresses the issue of parenthood. Related to this is how gender is presented within the violent relationship and after it has ended.

## 4.2 Development

The second theme refers to aspects of women's and men's paths within the institutions and the network. As sub-themes, there is motivation connected to the reasons and awareness that drives

the person to access the organisations, the path concerning the duration of the individual courses and their implementation, and the network, a fundamental aspect that the interviewees continually reiterate for an integrated and specific work against gender-based violence.

#### ○ 4.2.1 Motivation

Motivation is an essential ingredient to begin a path out of violence. The element of motivation is a solid impetus for the woman who turns to the AVC and for the man who turns to the perpetrator programme.

The motivation to start a path out of violence is the same for all, but the access to it is not the same for women and men.

*“What there is in common is the motivation; one enters the Centre because there is a motivation to undertaking a path of change; for CAM, however, there is also the referral by the services/judge, unlike an anti-violence Centre, where even if there is a situation for which the ordinary court or the juvenile court defines the protection for the woman, there is no obligation to go to the anti-violence centre.”(D.P., 2022).*

Also, for M.B., motivation is a push for change “everything is about motivation because if a woman victim of violence may have an interest in stopping the violent relationship because she is in an asymmetrical position of power in which she is disadvantaged, the abuser is in an asymmetrical position of power in which he is advantaged, and nothing makes him get out of this situation. So, working in a group at CAM has a role as a motivator and social control” (2022).

As M.B. reports, motivation reveals cultural and social components of men's forms of control, domination, and authority over women. In addition, these elements are linked to the conception of gender roles and how men and women should act, especially regarding how society influences individuals and their perception of their gender.

During the psycho-educational group, men deal with various topics, including unequal power relations between men and women in our society, the prevalence of violence as a way of dealing with conflict in our cultures and beliefs and positions regarding gender relations and gender roles, but also expectations regarding relationships (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.). Usually, professionals suggest the topics to the group. The men elaborate and reflect upon them; the abusers

then reflect on how gender perspectives and intersectional approaches mirror themselves and their relationships.

Motivation is often taken up during the interviews, especially regarding the man's access to CAM. The aspect of motivation and accountability for the violence perpetrated are fundamental parts of accessing CAM. The abuser starts his path with individual meetings where, together with a professional, try to assess what is behind his request for help and his motivation, knowledge of responsibility, awareness of the violent behaviour, and risk factors. The man is introduced to the psycho-educational group when this initial phase is completed (Centro Uomini Maltrattanti, n.d.). Motivation is a factor which pushes the woman and the man to access the organisations, especially for men being motivated to help the unknowledge and the understanding of their actions. Together with motivation being aware of his responsibilities is crucial for the good outcome of the programme.

The recommendations of the Council of Europe emphasise the importance of work aimed at empowering perpetrators of the violence acted and improving their family and social relationships (Kelly, 2008; Hester & Lilley, 2014). In this sense, the primary objectives of perpetrator programs are to achieve full accountability and awareness of the consequences that acted violence has on victims and reduce the risk of reoffending. However, this can be done only if the man accessing the perpetrator's programme is fully motivated to work on himself and challenge himself.

#### ○ 4.2.2 Path

As seen before, both services move toward protecting and safeguarding women victims of violence. In doing so, AVC and perpetrators programs offer individual and group paths aimed at social and cultural change. The duration of women's and men's courses depends on the organisations and the needs expressed by the individuals.

At the AVC, the woman's path has a variable duration, *"it is a variability inherent in the question the woman asks and from her needs"* (M.B., 05.05.2022). *"It is impossible to quantify in time, and each situation is a situation on its own. To evaluate the resources that the woman can have and draw on, it is necessary to evaluate the objective that the woman wants to achieve, not for all there is the same objective"* (D.P., 31.03.2022). However, the underlying desire is to get out of a violent relationship, but the reasons and needs that push a woman to access the AVC are various; it is

therefore not possible, as the Centre's professionals report, to define from the beginning clearly and decisively the duration of a woman's path. There are cases in which women only come for a meeting and then return after several years because, initially, they are not ready to make decisions. The duration varies even if the woman needs to be put into protection, meaning placed in a shelter; the process then becomes even longer. During the meeting with the woman, *"Goals are set, which are re-evaluated every so often"* (D.P., 31.03.2022). On average, professionals notice that if there are no high-risk situations requiring protection, the path at the Centre lasts one year.

On the other hand, about the CAM, the perpetrator program, the duration of the path undertaken by man is much more defined. The path at CAM is more structured than the one at La Nara. First, there is an initial interview phase, about 4-5 individual assessment interviews. It assesses the level of understanding of the action, responsibility and motivation to change. Then the man joined the psycho-educational group, which lasted *"9 months, one hour and half hours each week, each session deals with a theme (parenthood, GBV, male sexuality)"* (M.d.M., 20.04.2022).

Another feature is related to the development of the organisation's path. For example, a woman's path at the AVCs is an individual path built together with the employee, where the woman is at the centre; she is always the author of her own decisions and choices. On the other hand, in the perpetrator program, after the initial phase, the man always works in a group, with four/five other men, in plenary sessions led by two operators, one male and one female (S.A., 02.05.2022).

For S.A., a CAM psychologist and co-leader of psycho-educational groups, the choice to work in groups is linked to several motives: *"Resource management, reaching more men by working in groups than by working 1:1. Within the group men would establish and develop contacts that reveal how they behave when they enter into relations with others, something that would not be possible in an individual course. By creating a moment of mirroring with others, working in group can lead to the assumption of responsibility and greater awareness regarding the act. Finally, the group works on contents and life skills such as communication, relational aspects, the possibility of empathising; during the groups, I use techniques related to the Theatre of the Oppressed and role-play"* (02.05.2022). As much as role-play may seem like a playful moment, it is an opportunity to trigger deep emotional reactions in those involved. The man, therefore, who is confronted with other men, will be more prone to be self-conscious and aware of his actions.

Moreover, the man will feel more inclined to listen to a peer than a stranger. Finally, the groups are conducted simultaneously by men and women, an aspect that should not be underestimated as co-

leading makes it possible to present a healthy model of gender relations, with equality and, above all, based on mutual respect.

However, behavioural changes require time while discussion and confrontation are essential.

In a psychoeducational group, men share, confide and expose, mirror each other and understand that violence is transversal, there is no "type" of a violent man and acknowledging that violence has cultural and social aspects. Working together makes men think about how they are gendered and to what extent their privilege allows them to be violent, it allows them to reflect on each other, recognise their role, be vulnerable as they are and grow consciousness about the aspects they want to reformulate or change in the culture and society.

Regarding La Nara, the only one that talked about working with women in the group is F.C., who said, *"Initially also in the AVCs there was group work, pre-AVC, they were the self-consciousness groups, where the circle, the confrontation of personal experience among the women brought the women out of the private dimension into the public. So we often wondered whether it would be useful and possible to return to a circle because we recognise the power of the circle and the group, for various reasons (non-methodological time) for now we work 1:1"* (31.03.2022). So also, for La Nara, the work with the woman, in this case, individual, is linked to resource reasons and relatively time management.

In the AVCs, women are welcomed and start a process at the counselling Centre, and the meetings with the staff are weekly. Otherwise, women can also be included in the secret shelter or another house when the woman's life is no longer in danger. The percentage of women who go only to the counselling at La Nara is 70% Italian and the rest foreign; in the case of women in facilities, the percentage is almost reversed (Centro anti violenza "La Nara," n.d.). This is a clear example of how several intersecting characteristics lead a person to experience a more or less advantageous situation. From an intersectional point of view, this demonstrates how women, victims of IPV, who are foreigners or without work and a network that can support them, find themselves in a more difficult and complex situation that leads them to ask for hospitality in the structures offered by the AVC. This can be unlike an Italian woman, who is also a victim of IPV but may have more economic possibilities and can more easily turn to a more solid network of family and friendship relations.

Women's and men's work within their respective organisations are very personal and introspective. Whether done individually or in a group, the topics dealt with will work on one's personality, past, cultural and social preconceptions and beliefs.

Furthermore, the paths have the necessity of respecting culturally competent practices and understanding women and men in the context of their life experiences and cultural origins.

The approach adopted by professionals considers the intersectional presence of multiple factors that characterise an individual's life. Therefore, an intersectional approach considers people's cultural and social sensitivities without forgetting that underpinning it all must be a work of awareness, deconstruction of gender roles, and from which power imbalances between genders emerge that can result in IPV.

#### o 4.2.3 Network - Multi agencies' response

The system matters: the response to domestic violence must be coordinated and multidisciplinary. Cooperation must embed specialised institutions for victims and perpetrators, for abusers to be held accountable, and for victims to be safe and empowered in a network of relations between the various agencies involved. The psychologist M.B., from La Nara, during the interview, underlined this element *"I think it should be created, it is an important professional goal. If services are not used to collaborating, to being in a professional climate of mutual esteem, we will get nowhere"* (15.04.2022). The whole service system must respond to domestic violence appropriately.

Moreover, other institutions should also work to push CAM, perpetrators programme, to be more involved. D.P. says, *"How many social workers send or know that they can send abusers to CAM? How many laws enforcement officers who interrupt violent situations tell the abuser - look, what you are doing is an offence, and you have to go to CAM - this does not happen often. It is a work in progress, but it should lead to results"* (31.03.2022). Referrals to perpetrator programs should not be used to avoid criminal charges or convictions or simplify procedures that need to be put in place to ensure the safety of victims, and it should be part of the conviction. Law institutions providing referrals to offender programs should always be directly or indirectly connected to victim support services. In all cases where an abuser enters a program, there should be the possibility for the victim to access services to ensure a safety plan.

The network is crucial for creating a service system that tackles IVP and gender-based violence in an integrated and holistic way by adopting an intersectional and gender role aware approach. If violence is a structural problem, only a unified and comprehensive procedure can lead to dismantling traditional gender roles characterised by power relations in favour of men. Getting out of a violent relationship does not correspond to a precise moment. Instead, it takes the form of a more or less long journey in which only an ecological model of violence characterised by multi-actor and multi-disciplinary can present itself as the answer (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

This second theme focuses more on how the path between the two institutions is developed. Motivation is a denominator factor in accessing the services that push to stop the violent situation. The woman accesses La Nara driven by an internal push to break and get out of the IPV condition. The man enters CAM either voluntarily or upon invitation by the judge. However, in any case, at the beginning of the program, a professional investigates the motivation that led him to participate in the program. The two organisations then differ in how the paths are developed; women are individual, focused on themselves and their needs. For men, the awareness work is done in a group through comparison and reflection with the participants.

Nara and CAM are, nevertheless, two fundamental elements in the fight against GBV. Therefore, each organisation must do its part and work in a synergetic and shared way to reach the goal more effectively and efficiently.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter will examine the results that emerged during the analysis to answer the research question: *"How can convergences and differences between Anti-Violence Centre and Perpetrators Programmes contribute to overcoming gender-based violence? In the case of La Nara and Centro di Ascolto per Uomini Maltrattanti"*.

The themes can be seen as interconnected; the theme 'development' is seen as the woman's and man's journey in organisations, as motivation and as a network that could not exist if not for a situation of violence. Furthermore, risk assessment and work on parenting are not possible if the woman or man is not on a path.

As the analysis shows, La Nara and CAM have several elements in common that they could deepen and expand for cooperation. Prevention can be the easiest and quickest way to work together. Both La Nara and CAM independently organise prevention workshops in schools or for adults. Prevention is addressed through group work, debates and critical thinking about gender roles and stereotypes. Drawing on gender theory, prevention is developed based on the idea that gender refers to social and cultural categories that affect the persons depending on the context in which they live. As GBV and gender theory show, cultural and social elements influence and perpetuate gender stereotypes that promote unequal power relations between men and women.

As reported above by F.C. from La Nara, it would then be a good idea to create a collaboration between CAM and La Nara to develop and conduct prevention workshops. There is a need for a revolution in masculinity and femininity, which can only be achieved by working with the young generations.

Similarly, the two organisations could better cultivate their synergy by implementing the sharing of the risk assessment carried out by CAM when there is a high-risk situation. Thus, response strategies need to be developed that provide good protection for women. As the analysis shows, an intersectional approach to risk assessment would enable the development of planning strategies that are sensitive and appropriate to women's needs and take into account their vulnerabilities and opportunities.

The analysis also shows an opening to possible team meetings when kids are involved. Managing and organising protected meetings between fathers and children could be helpful if organisations work together. Parenting is a sensitive and delicate issue that touches gender roles and how these are portrayed during the violent situation and afterwards, and in the phase of restoration and recovery of the parent-child relationship.

However, there remains some mistrust from La Nara about the work and efficacy of CAM; D.P., La Nara, expressed: *"So far, in my experience and that of the women I support, these paths have not brought continuity in the abuser, I am not suspicious, having a place where these men are welcomed and approached to become aware of their deeds is essential, hence to say that accessing CAM will lead to change, I am afraid I cannot say"* (31.03.2022). CAM should contact the woman if her (ex-)partner starts a programme with them but, as stated by the professionals of La Nara, CAM reached very few women. Again, D.P. estimates that CAM contacted only four women among those she follows, and for M.B., it was zero in one year.

As can be seen from the analysis, access to the two facilities is often different. The access to La Nara, and all AVCs in general, is always a voluntary and autonomous decision made by women. In contrast, for men, the access to the offender programme is both an uncoerced decision and a decision on the judge's advice. In Tuscany, after the adoption of the “*Codice Rosso*” law - an emergency procedure established by a 2019 law to combat crimes related to gender and family violence - the number of those accessing CAM increased because there were more referrals from law enforcement agencies (L.B. 05.04.2022; Deputati, 2018).

In addition, the data suggest another difference in the way the path is conducted within the two organisations. Nara conducts the individual approach and one-to-one meetings between the woman and the professionals. For the woman, the process is individual as she is at the centre of the process. The staff are there to support her, but it is the woman who expresses her wants and needs and makes all the decisions about her life.

At the same time, CAM offers group work to the men as part of the psycho-educational course. The group for the men is a tool to reflect on their masculinity, actions, peer awareness and responsibilities. Both services respond that they have developed the pathway in this way because they have the resources.

However, the analysis highlights the desire and willingness to deepen collaboration between these two organisations since a synergistic partnership would allow for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

## 6. Conclusions

My thesis focused on studying and analysing potential collaborations between AVCs and perpetrators programmes through synergies and challenges. To do so, I used thematic analysis and interviews from my case studies, La Nara and CAM, to answer my research question. Intersectionality, gender theory, and GBV and IPV concepts helped me create a better framework for understanding the joint commonalities and differences between the organisations.

Potential collaborations are possible because the two organisations have many characteristics that can be implemented and deepened while respecting and maintaining their peculiarities, such as psycho-educational group work for CAM and the individual paths for La Nara.

Although international documents and local protocols suggest implementing collaboration from a theoretical point of view, there are still many mistrust and criticalities that perpetrators programmes face. After having for a long time focused exclusively on women, the survivors of the IPV, shading light also on the abuser, could raise objections and suspicions, *“Often it can pass as a message that we help the abuser, but that is a prejudice, that is not it, our work is rather to make the perpetrator take responsibility. Violence is scary, especially DV. There is a strong cultural heritage”* (S.A., 02.05.2022).

AVCs and programmes for perpetrators of violence work on pushing and changing personalities, behaviours, and cultural legacies deeply rooted in people: *“Just as women are asked to do work on themselves, so in the same way the perpetrator must be asked to take his share of responsibility and do work on himself.”* (M.B., 05.05.2022).

I am convinced that La Nara and CAM's most remarkable work is related to prevention programmes which deal with younger generations to give perspective to their growing and developing minds and personalities, allowing them to become more conscious and equal citizens thanks to a broader set of values.

The goal of the AVCs and perpetrators programme is to combat and prevent gender-based violence, and this can only happen by meeting and talking to each other and promoting a fair and equal culture among human beings. Therefore, enhancing these collaborations is nothing but strengthening and refining the whole network to combat and prevent gender-based violence.

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## ANNEX A

### Intervista per operatori e operatrici del CAM

1. Introduciti, nome e cognome, che lavoro fai e da quanti ricopri il tuo ruolo al CAM
2. Quanti uomini accedono al CAM annualmente?
3. Quanto è lungo in media il percorso di un uomo al CAM?
4. Da dove riceve i suoi fondi il CAM?
5. Perché il CAM (o comunque principalmente tutti i programmi per autori di violenza) lavora con gli uomini in gruppo e non ha un percorso individuale, 1:1, come i Centri Antiviolenza?
6. Perché pensi sia importante lavorare con i maltrattanti?
7. Perché c'è ancora sfiducia e poca fiducia nel ruolo dei Programmi per autori di violenza e perché è importante investire in loro?
8. Il tema centrale della mia tesi è una possibile collaborazione tra Programmi per autori e Centri Antiviolenza, come vedi questa possibile sinergia?
9. Se entrambi gli (ex)partner seguono un percorso, potrebbe essere utile organizzare incontri tra il personale del Programma per autori e del Centro Antiviolenza per condividere gli aspetti del percorso, il livello di consapevolezza del maltrattante, il livello di empowerment della donna?
10. La valutazione del rischio (ODARA) che viene fatta sull'autore di violenza viene condivisa con il Centro Antiviolenza a cui la donna si rivolge? - nel caso in cui la donna si rivolga al servizio
11. Non esiste una metodologia formalizzata a livello istituzionale per la cooperazione tra i servizi, né protocolli o leggi. pensate che sarebbe utile formalizzare questa cooperazione anche a livello regionale/nazionale?

Intervista a L.B., CAM, 5 Aprile 2022

1. Dal 2016 nel CAM, psicologa
2. 130/150

3. 9 mesi il percorso standard. Colloqui individuali + 9 mesi di gruppo psico-educativo. Almeno 1 anno, 1 anno e mezzo ( accesso gruppo terapeutico).
4. Convenzione ASL Toscana centro, progettazione europea (commissione europea), fondi pubblici con progetto regionale, fondi privati.
5. Lavoro in termini in assunzione di responsabilità, con il gruppo c'è effetto "specchio". l'uomo sminuisce e manipolazione.
6. Lavorare sullo stereotipo del maltrattante, condannare e basta funziona fino ad un certo punto.
7. Attenzione esclusiva alla vittima, aiuto e supporto per uscire dalla situazione di violenza. Se agisco solo sul contesto non sulla basa è difficile lavorarci: prevenire o interrompere. Agire alla base del problema. Processo di cambiamento del fenomeno della violenza.
8. Un lavoro ancora più efficace. Progetto sperimentale con Artemisa, operatrice dedicata con contatto partner che poi è collegata al CAV. Prato e Pistoia, confronto su situazioni ad alto rischio.
9. Su Pistoia, incontri di equipe, soprattutto quando ci sono i bambini. Più attori della rete ci sono meglio è
10. Dipende dalle realtà
11. Propensione da parte di tutti i servizi. Confronto con i servizi sociali e società della salute. Codice rosso.

Intervista a M.d.M., CAM, 20 Aprile 2022

1. Psicologo e psicoterapeuta, vicepresidente del Cam, mi occupo dello sportello CAM di Prato, ho lavorato in carcere e mi occupo di formazione.
2. 10/11 al mese a Firenze.
3. Prima fase di valutazione individuale, un mesetto, creazione di una relazione. Poi il gruppo standard, 9 mesi, 1 ora e mezza ogni settimana, sessioni a tema (genitorialità, GBV, sessualità maschile).
4. ASL, Progetti Europei e bandi

5. Questione di risorse, ma anche è efficace perché gli uomini si specchiano e si possono valutare i tipi di relazione che si instaurano tra di loro, si hanno fenomeni riguardanti le relazioni che possono essere analizzati.
6. Sono gli uomini che agiscono la violenza, per molto tempo ci siamo impegnati nel supporto alle vittime di violenza ma un intervento diretto sugli uomini è più auspicabile. Importante perché gli uomini possono cambiare e anche quelli che non cambiano è importante venga detto che non cambiano, soprattutto in presenza di minori.
7. Sono stati accolti sia con scetticismo che con entusiasmo. Ci sono dei dubbi legittimi ma che possono essere sciolti con incontri, incentivare i rapporti tra CAM e CAV aiuta a sciogliere criticità che possono emergere.
8. Sì, auspicabili e possibili, entrambi lavorano con utenze collegate, fare rete è obiettivo di tutela delle vittime, agiscono su uomini che poi smettono di fare violenza
9. Sentire Letizia
10. Auspicabile soprattutto quando entrambi accedono al servizio, lui ha contattato CAV per casi specifici, il racconto dell'uomo può essere edulcorato, sapere poi che la donna è al CAV permette a lui di lavorare in più sicurezza.
11. I sistemi sono già abbastanza rodati, sentire RELIVE

Intervista S.A., CAM, 2 Maggio 2022

1. Psicologa, lavoro dal 2018, co-conduco il gruppo psico-educativo e faccio la valutazione nei colloqui iniziale, mi occupo di progettazione europea e seguo lo sportello di Empoli.
2. Dipende, post Covid gli accessi sono aumentati, circa 200
3. 1 anno circa
4. ASL e progettazione
5. Più motivi:
  - a. Gestione delle risorse, raggiungo più uomini lavorando nel gruppo

- b. All'interno del gruppo ci sono dinamiche/movimenti che gli uomini non farebbero individualmente - vi è un rispecchiamento assunzione della responsabilità - una maggiore consapevolezza
- c. Gruppo come palestra, la violenza si sviluppa e avviene in relazione con un altro, la violenza è legata ad una mancata maturazione delle life skills - il gruppo lavora su contenuti ma anche su life skills: comunicazione, aspetti relazionali, possibilità di empatizzare - uso del Teatro dell'Oppresso e role play
6. La nostra missione è la protezione della donna e dei bambini tramite un lavoro con gli autori, è importante coinvolgere gli uomini perché sono parte attiva nella violenza e allo stesso tempo possono essere parte attiva nel cambiamento, promuovono anche un cambiamento sociale lavorando con gli uomini e promuovendo una nuova mascolinità.
7. Spesso può passare come messaggio che si aiuta il maltrattante - è un pregiudizio ma non è questo e anzi il far assumere la responsabilità. La violenza fa paura, specialmente la violenza domestica, c'è un forte retaggio culturale e false credenze.
8. Sì, relazioni sono da promuovere e facilitare anche se non è così facile - Progetto CAM e il Centro Antiviolenza Artemisia. La Convenzione di Istanbul sottolinea l'importanza di lavorare in RETE quando si parla di violenza e porta ad una circolarità di informazioni. Una rete competente di cura
9. Sì
10. Sì
11. Il più efficace è quello che nasce sul campo/pratica e poi definito un documento ma anche delle indicazioni nero su bianco potrebbero aiutare, fare da linee guida

#### Intervista operatrici La Nara

1. Introduciti, nome e cognome, che lavoro fai e da quanto ricopri il tuo ruolo a La Nara?
2. Quante donne fanno accesso al centro mediamente in un anno?
3. Quanto dura in media un percorso di una donna che accede al centro?
4. Perché i CAV lavorano 1:1 mentre i CAM lavorano in gruppo?

5. Quante donne hanno avuto un partner o ex partner che si è rivolto al CAM?
6. Quante donne sono state contattate dal CAM?
7. CAV e CAM condividono gli stessi fondi?
8. Perché c'è ancora sfiducia e poca fiducia nel ruolo dei Programmi per autori di violenza e perché è importante investire in loro?
9. Il tema centrale della mia tesi è una possibile collaborazione tra Programmi per autori e Centri Antiviolenza, come vede questa possibile sinergia?
10. Se entrambi gli (ex)partner seguono un percorso, potrebbe essere utile organizzare incontri tra il personale del Programma per autori e del Centro Antiviolenza per condividere gli aspetti del percorso, il livello di consapevolezza del maltrattante, il livello di empowerment della donna?
11. La valutazione del rischio (ODARA) che viene fatta sull'autore di violenza viene condivisa con il Centro Antiviolenza a cui la donna si rivolge? - nel caso in cui la donna si rivolga al servizio
12. Non esiste una metodologia formalizzata a livello istituzionale per la cooperazione tra i servizi, né protocolli o leggi. pensate che sarebbe utile formalizzare questa cooperazione anche a livello regionale/nazionale?

Intervista a D.P., Centro La Nara, 31 Marzo 2022

1. Donatella Pugi, operatrice di accoglienza dal 2008 a La Nara, accoglienza di percorsi di uscita, strutture di accoglienza e raccolta dati sia del centro sia a livello regionale (TOSCA)
2. Mediamente 200
3. Non è possibile quantificare in tempi, ogni situazione è una situazione a sé, da valutare le risorse che la donna può avere e può attingere, poi bisogna valutare l'obiettivo che la donna vuole raggiungere, non per tutte c'è lo stesso obiettivo, es. venire al centro, buttare fuori la storia e acquisire capacità per tornare a casa e sopportare la situazione, donne che arrivano che hanno bisogno di protezione, quindi il percorso diventa molto lungo (lavoro, gestione figli). Ci si dà degli obiettivi che ogni tot vengono rivalutare, PIR.
4. La responsabilità va condivisa dal punto di vista degli uomini, fattore culturale. Le donne spesso quando raccontano un maltrattamento dicono che il maltrattante non riconosce mai di

avere un comportamento sbagliato/aggressivo/violento, attribuisce la responsabilità alla donna. Per il CAM l'ottica del gruppo serve per prendere consapevolezza al maltrattante, di non essere l'unico ma all'interno di un gruppo che condivide certe modalità che sono poi le modalità del maltrattamento. Quello che c'è in comune è la motivazione, si accede al centro perché c'è motivazione di intraprendere un percorso di cambiamento, per il CAM però c'è anche l'invio da parte dei servizi/giudice a differenza di un centro antiviolenza, in cui anche se c'è una situazione per cui il tribunale ordinario o il tribunale dei minori definisce la protezione per la donna, non c'è obbligo di percorso al centro antiviolenza.

5. Pochissime, in un anno 4, rispetto a quelle che seguo io

6. Stesso numero

7. Non saprei, non sono informata, non so se i finanziamenti che prendiamo noi (regione) arrivano dallo stesso capitolo di spesa.

8. Ad oggi, sulla base della mia esperienza e delle donne, questi percorsi non hanno portato continuità nel maltrattante, non sono sfiduciata, avere un luogo in cui questi uomini vengono accolti e indirizzati a prendere coscienza di quello che hanno fatto è importante, da lì a dire che andare al CAM porta ad un cambiamento questo purtroppo non lo posso dire. Quando c'è una collaborazione, in situazioni ad alto rischio, si possono fare delle buone cose. Operatori CAM ci hanno contattato per spiegarci personalità del maltrattante e questo ci ha permesso di tutelare maggiormente la donna. Dire che gli uomini fanno cambiamento effettivo non mi è capitato.

9. Tra noi succede, in un'ottica di servizi, il percorso di fuoriuscita è un percorso fatto in una rete, se ognuno fa il suo pezzettino. c'è molto scetticismo

10. Può essere utile sapere che rischio fanno loro, ma non mette in dubbio al rischio che facciamo loro. È capitato che loro facessero val del rischio che ci ha messo in allarme una volta condiviso, riscontro per noi è importante. Penso sia positiva, noi facciamo una valutazione e loro la loro.

11. Non credo sia utile confrontarsi nel percorso, le due cose devono andare ognuna per la sua strada, sono due percorsi diversi. Magri negli incontri protetti, ma mai successo, potrebbe essere utile incontro con operatori per tutela bambini e donna.

12. Spesso dal protocollo nascono i servizi, (anche se spesso è il contrario ma non vengono definite azioni e linee guida), ma il CAM è un servizio che sta nascendo ora, ha molta forza ai tavoli, a livello politico centralizzato, perché si vuole capire la parte del maltrattante. Credo sia importante che questa cosa sia definita di più, che siano più chiare le azioni, quanti AS inviano o sanno che possono inviare uomini maltrattanti al CAM? Quanti FFOO che vanno a interrompere situazione dicono al maltrattante guarda che quello che stai facendo è un reato e ti devi rivolgere al CAM, questo è ancora molto basso. È un lavoro in costruzioni, che dovrebbe però portare a dei risultati.

Intervista a F.C., Centro La Nara, 31 Marzo 2022

1. Francesca Cuccarese, lavoro a La Nara come operatrice di accoglienza da poco più di un anno, mentre lavoro a La Nara come gruppo di prevenzione scuole dal 2014.
2. Non saprei.
3. Per la mia breve esperienza non te lo so dire, la durata è molto variabile, ci sono dei percorsi che vanno sul lungo termine, nonostante gli obiettivi, per la donna venire al centro è anche un modo per continuare un percorso su di sé, noi non facciamo psicoterapia ma il CAV diventa un luogo di confronto in merito al suo vissuto violento e attuali e future relazioni.
4. Inizialmente anche nei CAV c'era un lavoro di gruppo, preCAV, erano i gruppi autocoscienza, dove il cerchio, il confronto del vissuto personale tra le donne faceva uscire le donne dalla dimensione privata al pubblico. Spesso ci siamo domandate se fosse utile e possibile tornare ad un cerchio, perché riconosciamo il potere del cerchio e del gruppo, per motivi vari (tempo non metodologico) per ora lavoriamo 1:1.
5. Data il mio fresco ingresso nei colloqui, nemmeno una.
6. Non saprei
7. Non saprei
8. Quando parli di violenza ci si schiera subito dalla parte della donna, vittima, colei che ha subito agito violento, questo è un primo impatto. Poi c'è un discorso dello storico dei movimenti femministi in Italia dove c'è stato il femminismo della differenza, questione maschile questione femminile da tenere ben distinte, diritti delle donne e a volte c'è stato un donne vs uomini, poi nel tempo la cosa è evoluta ma nei CAV un po' rimane, partigiane dalla parte delle donne, bisogna

vedere se questo preclude un discorso di apertura ad altre realtà, o che ti metta in una condizione di dialogo/ascolto.

9. Tutte le volte che crei chiusura c'è sempre solo da perdere. Per me ha senso CAM+CAV nell'ottica della prevenzione, tema inscindibile dal contrasto, se non lavoriamo sulla cultura non andiamo alla radice del problema, andare insieme a scuola, decostruzione stereotipi, lavorare sulla violenza diffusa a livello culturale (dominio, aggressività, prevaricazione).

10. Sì

11. Domanda complessa, da una parte, a livello metodologico ti direi di sì, perché potrebbe dare una visione a 360 di come si stanno muovendo queste due entità, senza intento di far convergere i percorsi, potrebbe fornirci degli elementi interessanti anche nella comprensione del vissuto che ci riporta la donna, a volte non ci racconta tutto, le cose vengono "romanzate", dall'altra però c'è il patto di fiducia, bisognerebbe far capire alla donna quindi che il suo vissuto non è alla mercé di, rimane qui dentro, protetto dalla privacy, questo è uno spazio per lei, si può fidare della operatrici.

12. Bisogna lavorare su due fronti, uno più formale, mettere nero su bianco, un impianto legislativo è sempre un buon riferimento, dall'altra bisogna lavorare sulle relazioni, finché ci si vede come nemici, risorse contese, il CAV che sono dalla parte del giusto dice questo piatto me lo mangio io. Bisogna lavorare su entrambi i piani, più fondi, così non vedersi come antagonisti ma co-protagonisti. La questione è proprio legata al giudizio che c'è nei confronti della violenza, se questo percorso impone la sospensione del giudizio nei confronti della donna, bisognerebbe portare la sospensione del giudizio a 360, tenendo bene in chiaro quale è l'intento e obiettivo: la salvaguardia e la fuoriuscita dalla violenza. E se faccio un percorso con un maltrattante è un cittadino che mi torna in maniera più consapevole e non violenta nella società e sta bene lui, i figli e la donna e evita tutte le ripercussioni (allontanamento ma riverbero della violenza continua perché non c'è un lavoro di consapevolezza e la violenza continua in altre forme con altri strumenti ma continua).

Intervista a M.B., Centro La Nara, 15 Aprile 2022

1. Ho una formazione come psicologa. Sono alla Nara dalla fine 2017 inizio 2018, entrata come tirocinante, tirocinio curriculare dell'università e poi ci sono rimasta come volontaria, poi sono subentrata con tirocini retribuiti tramite GiovaniSì e poi sono diventata dipendente dal 2020,

operatrice di accoglienza. Alla nara svolgo op. di accoglienza presso il centro ascolto, mi occupo di prendere le telefonate e fare i colloqui di accoglienza con le donne e seguire i percorsi di autonomia e/o uscita dalla violenza. Poi mi sono occupata del servizio dello spazio gioco con i minori accolti nelle strutture, poi mi occupo di gestire i social media e sono all'interno del gruppo prevenzione quindi attività di sensibilizzazione e attività strutturate per gruppi quali scuole.

2. 200

3. Molto variabile, è una variabilità insita nella domanda che pone la donna e dal suo bisogno, sapere che ci siamo, interrompere la relazione, imparare strategie per stare nella situazione e poi dipende dal suo ciclo di vita, dal suo momento storico. Donne che vengono dopo cinque anni, donne che ritornano, presentano un cambio del loro sentire, sono pronte a fare delle scelte che prima non sarebbero state disponibili/pronte a fare. In media, nei percorsi in cui le donne hanno obiettivi chiari, un anno. Ci sono percorsi che durano un colloquio.

4. Penso abbia molto a che fare con il giudizio, per un maltrattante andare al CAM e quindi ammettere di essere un autore di violenza implica un forte giudizio da parte della società. Se essere vittima porta comunque un forte giudizio sociale (te la sei cercata/ci hai fatto un figlio/sei stata 20 anni con lui) però ammettere di essere autore di violenza che va al CAM ha di per se un giudizio. Lavorando in gruppo ci possa essere un dire "si tu sei autore ma come te anche altri" + ha a che fare con la motivazione perché se una donna vittima di violenza può avere interesse a stoppare la relazione violenta perché lei è in una posizione asimmetrica di potere in cui lei è svantaggiata, il maltrattante è in una relazione asimmetrica di potere in cui è avvantaggiato e chi glielo fa fare di togliersi da questa situazione. Quindi il gruppo ha un ruolo di motivatore e controllo sociale.

5. 0

6. Quindi anche di queste sono state contattate, 0. una gli era stato fatto un invio al CIPM ma lui non ci è andato.

7. Non ne ho idea, non penso. I servizi sono a gara.

8. Molto a che fare con la motivazione. Gli autori in tante situazioni, anche parlando con colleghi che ci hanno lavorato. Il percorso è caldeggiato da tribunali/carceri, è ovvio che se la motivazione non parte dalla persona stessa, noi lo vediamo con le donne, quando una donna viene qui perché spinta, in alcuni casi può andare bene però se non è un bisogno suo non si va da

nessuna parte, a maggior ragione l'autore di violenza, che non solo deve riconoscere di essere stato in una relazione violenta ma deve anche riconoscere di essere il maltrattante. Ha a che fare con l'utenza e con la motivazione, anche perché ammettere di essere maltrattante vuol dire venire meno a quell'idea di mascolinità alla propria personalità, non è robetta, bisogna ristrutturarsi completamente, per rimettersi insieme si sta male.

9. Penso si dovrebbe, obiettivo professionale importante. Come si richiede alle donne di fare un lavoro su di sé così allo stesso modo deve essere chiesto all'autore di prendersi la sua parte di responsabilità e fare un lavoro su di sé. Se i servizi non sono abituati a collaborare, a stare in un clima professionale di stima reciproca buona notte al secchio.

10. Non sempre, io penso che la valutazione vada fatta viavia. Situazioni in cui non ha senso, ad una certa anche che me frega, se ho la percezione che la donna ha paura non mi interessa ODARA dell'uomo, qui si lavora sulla paura e percezione della paura della donna. Ci sono situazioni però in cui la violenza fisica sta nel passato e nel presente c'è grande violenza psicologica, allora in questi casi condividere la valutazione del rischio mi sembra intelligente.

11. Solo se ci sono minori di mezzo - genitorialità da salvare.

12. C'è già, ultimo protocollo di intesa con Forze dell'Ordine c'è già il CAM. Nero su bianco c'è già. Sono sinergie che si creano anche nel momento in cui c'è un nucleo condiviso. Non vedrei l'ora di lavorare con il CAM.