



www.link-italia.net

Associazione di Promozione Sociale

info@link-italia.net

This is Chapter II of the 2012 LINK I Manual, of which the update Italian version of may 2019 will be published soon.

Francesca Sorcinelli

LINK

I

Crudeltà su Animali
e
Pericolosità Sociale

Introduzione alla Zooantropologia della Devianza

II EDIZIONE - MARZO 2019

CHAPTER II

THE LINK'S HISTORY IN ITALY

*“And in the end, it's not the **years** in your life that count; it's the life in your **years**.”*

Abraham Lincoln

Since 2009, I had various treatments for the phobias that for years made me reliant upon my husband who has always used this psychological weakness of mine as his source of control. After a few years of treatment, since I found a fantastic balance, my husband lived my transformation as a threat towards his power, used for years towards me.

On January 2010, he started to show a series of unexplainable behaviours like rude language and rowdy behaviours at home – despite everybody regarded him as a very peaceful person –, verbal abuse – he even called me a prostitute once –, until he threatened to kill my animals.

Until he insults me, I do not care, I do not consider it necessary since I do not believe he can hurt me, but when he gets to the point to threaten my animals, I realise that something serious is happening and I have to save myself. He started gambling again, and things are spiralling out of control.

The first time he threatens to kill my pets, seeing my shocked reaction, he starts laughing, thinking that I do not believe he can carry it out. I am only a paralysed spectator by unexplainable, unreasonable and dangerous behaviours.

One night, he leaves the following message on my voicemail: “I do not know who you are anymore, I want my Betty back, I wait until you get out of the house to have you as you were before”. Since he is drunk, while I am exasperated and scared, I locked him out of the house, asking him to come back only once he was sober again.

In May, exhausted by this behaviour, I inform him that I want to end our marriage.

Since then, the situation dangerously degenerates until the 22nd of June, when he comes home fuming for losing at gambling, after threatening me, he hits my cat.

I lock myself in my bedroom with my cat, and I immediately call the police who does not intervene since he is “only” beating up my cat and I am safe in their opinion.

The next day I go to report him to the police where the deputy commander remarks what they told me the day before: “Madam if he beats the cat, it is a good sign, since it means he will not take it out on you!! You can relax.” Feeling seriously in danger and being extremely worried for my animals – a cat and two rabbits – I get in touch with some charities who support victims of domestic abuse and the social services, who suggest me to move in a hotel that they recommend. “And my animals?”, the social services do not know what to tell me, a silence that forces me to refuse the offer since I could not face leaving my animals behind with my husband who was becoming more and more violent.

My friend suggests me LINK-ITALIA (APS), who allows me to put my animals in a “Rifugio-LINK” within some time allowing me to escape my husband who at today does not know where I leave, but he is still trying to punish me despite a restraining order.

Since July 2010 in fact, the judge has issued my husband a warning, because of his threatening behaviour which has forced me to go to the Persecutory Acts and Stalking Office which cooperates with LINK-ITALIA (APS), who guided and supported me in the reporting process. Nowadays, my animals and I are ok, and we are back living together after a long time when we were apart while my pets were in the kennels.

I have always wondered how I could thank for the help received and how I could reciprocate it. This witness is the hope that it can contribute to making people understand how women in conditions similar to the one I experienced need trained staff who is concerned of the pets as well as of the victim involved. For me, telling this story is the chance of doing precisely this: being able, with few words to return the help I received.

Elisabetta P.

2. From 1997 to March 2019

*“Believing in **progress** does not mean believing that any **progress** has yet been made.*

Franz Kafka¹

LINK means “connection”, while in some fields’ jargon, such as psychology, psychiatry, criminology and investigation science, it is a “*strict correlation between animal abuse, interpersonal violence, and any other antisocial or criminal behaviour – homicide, rape, stalking, domestic violence on women, children and elderlies, robbery, drug dealing, theft, fraud, ritual crimes, predatory crimes, gaslighting, etc*”². I am talking of “any other” since animal abuse and killing – a part in their legalised forms – are already recognised as being a deviant, antisocial and criminal behaviour.

Indeed, despite what is believed, the definition of animal cruelty does not come from fields which naturally work on the animals’ welfare such as veterinary medicine, biology, but from schools of the social science, like psychology, psychiatry and criminology. For the field of criminology, I am specifically referring to the work done by the Behavioral Analysis Unit (B.A.U.), previously known as the Behavioral Science Unit (B.S.U.).

In other words, since the beginning – end of 19th century –, researchers while studying human nature, and particularly interpersonal violence, they continuously come across animal cruelty, too. Indeed, they must observe, describe, explore, understand, define and treat it to defeat the phenomenon of interpersonal violence, concluding that animal cruelty can never be regarded as an isolated issue, but a connection, an integrating part of the force and any other antisocial and criminal behaviour. Hence, contrasting and preventing animal cruelty, **in addition to the fact that we ought to do so**³, is an optimal tool to prevent other crimes such as: vandalism, arson, drug offences, domestic violence on women, children and elderlies, stalking, threatening behaviour, petty theft, robberies, rape, kidnapping, assaults most of all in case of Spree Killer and Serial Killers.

I am a social worker who after having worked in various sectors, such as rehabilitation of minors from, rehab centres for drug addicts, eight years in a residential facility for juveniles taken away from their family because of abuse or maltreatment of various origin. I have participated in the historical course of the LINK in our country. Moreover, I am the founder of the Link-Italia project in 2006 and the president of the same Social promotion Association since 2012. Currently, I work in a daily residential facility for minors for 'Azienda Servizi alla Persona' of Modena.

On this matter, I can confirm strong parallelism between the Link-Italia’s project and the first international scientific papers around the LINK phenomenon.

As previously mentioned, from the beginning to now researchers while studying the human being and its interpersonal violence come across animal cruelty and its correlation with intra-specific violence so commonly that they have to keep animal cruelty into account.

I have lived this research journey as the first-person experience, most of all the one coming from the American researchers.

In fact, before working with the youth, I worked for years in rehab for drug addicts.

¹ F. Kafka. Available online <http://it.wikiquote.org/wiki/Progresso>

² P. Arkow, *The Link Between Violence to People and Violence to Animals*, National Link Coalition, The National Resource Center on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence, 2008,

(<http://nationallinkcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/LinkSummaryBooklet-16pp.pdf>)

P. Arkow, *Understanding The Link between Violence to Animals and People: A Guidebook for Criminal Justice Professionals*, National District Attorneys Association and American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) 2014.

(<http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/The%20Link%20Monograph-2014.pdf>).

³ A point which I regard as fundamental.

Working with people addicted to drugs does not mean working with people who “simply” have a drug problem. But it means working with all the sides of the deviance since the drug addict tends to be also a thief, a pick-pocket, the previously abused child, the abuser, the rapist, the pimp, the abused woman, a prostitute, somebody belonging to a criminal gang, etc.

These people are a type of patients who take you on the stage of violence at 360° making it a privileged observation point and treatment.

It is in this environment, studying about deviant and antisocial behaviour that I started, as the first British researchers did, to come across to animal cruelty as well, so much so that I had to deepen my knowledge on the topic and understand its involvement in the psychosocial dynamics.

In 2002, while working in rehab and while studying my final year of Education Science at the School of Education of Bologna, I decided to focus my dissertation project on this topic.

At today, I believe that that one was the first Italian dissertation project written about the LINK, a project which was extremely challenging at that time. First of all, it was not easy finding a suitable supervisor. I knocked at four different doors, being answered: “very interesting topic Miss, but...” in other words: “I know nothing about it, and I have never heard of it, it seems a bit of a gamble writing a dissertation on a topic for which I am not aware of any bibliographic reference, it is better if you ask somebody else”.

But on the fifth door, the answer was different. This door belonged to the office of Prof Alessandra Farneti, a lecturer in developmental psychology. With a lot of honesty, courage and sensitivity towards the topic, she decided to support me despite admitting that she also did not know the phenomenon or any bibliographic reference and that she was aware that this topic was a big challenge in an Italian environment where nobody was aware of it.

I will always be grateful to Prof Farneti and to the vital role that she had in the birth of the Link – Italia project. I will also be thankful to Dr Camilla Pagani.

Let’s rewind a bit. After the round table held in Rome on the 22nd of October 1996 at the Fondazione Lelio e Lisli Basso titled “Psychosocial aspects of youth violence”, another congress followed under the UNESCO’s supervision: “Violence in modern society” which was held in Rome on the 13th and 14th of March 1997. The main aim of the Congress, which had as a point of reference the declaration of Seville, was to start a debate between the scientific world and the government institutions to produce practical suggestion, most of all from an educational point of view to face the increase in violence in our country and the rest of the world. During the conference, Prof Francesco Robustelli proposed the formation of a working group made of representatives of the Institute of Psychology of the National Research Council (CNR) and of representatives of some ministries to face the topic of violence in the Italian social context.

For this project, they organised two seminars. One by Prof Frank Ascione from the Utah State University (Department of Psychology) titled “*When violence strike at home, the abuse of children, women and animals*”. The other one by Dr Brown from the Utah State University (Department of Family and Human Development) titled “*Current trends in child abuse and neglect in the United States*”. They were held in Rome on the 17th September 1998 at the Institute of Psychology of the National Research Council (CNR). One of the aspects of global violence treated with particular interest by the CNR was about animal cruelty.

In addition to the articles and presentations to the congresses of Prof Robustelli and of Dr Pagani on this topic, I need to report the manuscript: “Children and circus animals: a psychologist point of view” presented on the 23rd of September 1998 during a consult of Senato to propose a law that banned the use of animals in circus. For this project, they organised two seminars: one by Prof Frank Ascione from the Utah State University (Department of Psychology) titled “*When violence strike at home, the abuse of children, women and animals*” and the other one by Dr Brown from the Utah State University (Department of Family and Human Development) titled “*Current trends in child abuse and neglect in the United States*” held in Rome on the 17th Septmber 1998 at the Istituto di Psicologia del CNR. One of the aspect of global violence treated with particular interest by the CNR was about animal cruelty.

In addition to the articles and presentations to the congresses of Prof Robustelli and of Dr Pagani on this topic, I need to report the manuscript: “*Children and circus animals: a psychologist point of view*” presented on the 23rd of September 1998 during a consult of the Senate to propose a law that banned the use of animals in circus.

The group project of the CNR against violence, implying violence against animals too, wanted that in addition to the institutions. Also, various animal rights associations like LAV should have been included in the network.

On this matter, I can affirm that if on the one hand, my main trigger for my interest in the LINK was my professional knowledge, on the other side my dissertation project, titled “*Education within a biocentric point of view*”⁴, was my first volunteer position.

Since I was 15 years old, I have been volunteering for various humanitarian and animal rights activists. The group project of the CNR against violence, implying violence against animals too, wanted that in addition to the institutions, also various animal rights associations like LAV should have been included in the network⁵.

In the early 2000s, I was corroborating my theories about the LINK through direct observation. Meanwhile, I had been volunteering for years for animal charities, and I was teaching humane education on behalf of LAV to primary, secondary and high school students and afterwards on behalf of the Animal Rights Office of Modena. Moreover, I was volunteering in a post-war Sarajevo, where I was involved in educational projects for children and adolescents. It was while I was working for the rehab in my final year of university that I read an article dedicated to the work of Dr Pagani and Prof Ascione in the Associazione Animalista’s magazine, that I learnt about the CNR’s project.

The CNR project was so important and so unique, and at that time it was only known by a few researchers.

With the enthusiasm of a newbie who had just discovered a treasure, I phoned Dr Pagani showing her all my admiration and availability to possible unpaid cooperation.

During this phone conversation, Dr Pagani was extremely kind, and she promised to send me the American literature review that she had. However, she also told me shocking news.

The project which was supposed to provide a 30 hours CPD titled “*Education against violence*”, held mainly during the years 1997 - 98 - 99 aimed at secondary school teachers was going to be closed due to the lack of funding. This rumour was sadly confirmed after a first important data collection about “children and animals”.

- ANSA

IS THE CHILD MEAN TO THE DOG? HE WILL CRUEL ONCE ADULT, TOO /ANSA CNR; ITALIAN YOUTH, 90,75% IS AGAINST LEATHER AND FUR

By Redazione (1st October 2004)

Instead of a ball, they use a cat to play football or as a target to throw stones. Somebody goes as far as killing them, others, more innocent, behead lizards or cut them their tail. Today is an animal the target of so much violence, but tomorrow it could be their classmate.

This scenario is what has emerged from the “Children and animals: empathy and cruelty” congress, during this conference the Istc-Cnr of Rome presented research which explores the relationship between children and the animal world. “We should be wary of animal cruelty: animal abuse carried out by children – explains a famous international expert on the topic, Frank Ascione – can indeed represent a valuable clue to prevent potential antisocial behaviours”. If in the USA there is a lot of research which studies this link, in Italy we are at the first steps, and the study conducted by the CNR opens the way to a new path. Particularly, the answers given by some of the students from the most deprived areas have highlighted this relationship between animal cruelty and potential antisocial behaviour. “In these areas, there are a lot of animal abuse cases towards cats, dogs and birds” Dr Pagani, one of the investigators, says. Hence, to prevent potential escalations that “in these cases collaborations between the academic environment, education and institution can be useful” claims Dr Pagani. Of the 300 kids interviewed by researchers, 4.26% has

⁴ Two out of four of these chapters were dedicated to the link. F. Sorcinelli, *L’educazione in una prospettiva biocentrica*, Tesi di Laurea in Psicologia dello Sviluppo, Relatore Prof.ssa Alessandra Farneti. Alma Mater Studiorum – Università degli Studi di Bologna, Facoltà di Scienze dell’Educazione, Sessione II, Anno Accademico 2002/2003.

⁵ Lega Anti Vivisezione – www.lav.it

caused the death of a warm-blooded animal, like a bird or a mammal. 25.53% have thrown stones, arrows, balls and shoes towards cats, mice, birds, fish, lizards and ants. Teenagers between 13 and 14 years old are the cruellest, followed by the ones who are a couple of years younger. These episodes are not always kept hidden. Half of the perpetrators report the abuse to their schoolmates or their parents. The cat is the animal mainly targeted, followed by the dog, insects and lizards. The majority of these animals have their tail cut. Acts of cruelty range from taunting the cat, pulling its tail, making it spin in the air, but somebody goes as far as throwing it out of the window. What are the reasons behind these episodes of cruelty? 41 cases out of 300 claims they do it "just for fun". The children know how to scare a dog or other animals. However, sometimes they are scared of them, too. Spiders, snakes, belonging to the venomous group, insects, large breed dogs and mice are within the top ten of the Italian children's nightmares. Moreover, 70% of children have witnessed animal abuse. The majority of the perpetrators are male (93.55%), mainly strangers and in the 33.5% of the cases, the child is the pet's owner. Emotions are well known to be complex and conflicting, so surprisingly according to scientists, the ones who have shown some episode of animal abuse, actually find more support from an animal than from their peers. It is not surprising that in front of general questions, and more for an adult mind, the children have answered as animal lovers. 90.75% is against the use of fur and leather, 82.43% is against hunting, 77.58% against the use of animals in the circus, 58.91% would close zoos, mainly the youngest children whose 86.38% is against them. The researchers have no doubts: the solution to ban animal cruelty is old, and this study confirms its validity. "What makes a difference is the existence of an emotional relationship between the animal and the child. It is not enough that there is a dog in the household, the family must love it, too," says Dr Pagani

Hence in 2006, after few years studying and translating the American literature, I decided to found a *professional project* dedicated to the LINK and exclusively based on volunteers and on a currency that was not depending on any "fund", a money like: the energy, the tenacity, the strength, the dedication, the study, my collaborators and my will power.

In contrast with the first American researchers, I could rely on a vast international literature on the topic and already put into practice in the United Kingdom. Hence, although this topic was unknown in Italy, I had a theoretical model I could use to start planning the project.

Finished in 2009, as we know it now, although I was working on its creation since 2006, the project was created to fill in the scientific, professional, social and cultural gaps about the LINK applying the global knowledge to our culture.

Defend a topic as vast as the LINK, which ranges from sociology, developmental psychology, criminology, victimology, to law, veterinary medicine and human health, hence a zooanthropological theme with a multidisciplinary approach, forced me to assume the right attitude for the task.

Hence, I worked to build a scientific team of professionals who is able not only to study the phenomenon with the most advanced techniques, but also a group who is able who approach the topic in a practical manner, like the processing of some LINK cases and the formation of professionals who work within the juridical, educational and health system.

Although it has a professional set up, the association LINK-ITALIA has always been on a voluntary base.

To collect some Italian data, we have defined some 'link cases' where animal abuse is:

- Perpetuated by someone who is also currently showing another deviant, antisocial and/or criminal behaviours, or he/she performed them in the past;
- A complementary part of another crime, like homicide, rape, stalking, threatening behaviour, domestic violence, paedophilia, gang crime, ritual crimes, predator behaviour, bullism, drug supply, etc.;
- Included in the DSM IV (A.P.A.) and the ICD-10 (O.M.S.) erotic zoophilia and bestiality;
- Performed by a minor who is or is not involved in other criminal behaviours;
- Witnessed by a child.

Going back to my dissertation, since 2008, its chapters about the LINK are part of the first part of the book: “(Dis)education to violence. Violence with an entertaining purpose. Circuses with animals and country fair festivals”⁶.

In the academic year 2009-2010 the book was highlighted by Prof Ivana Ettorina Lombardini within the recommended textbooks for the course “social deviance” within the degree of primary school education at the school of education of Urbino titled “*When the love nest becomes the boogieman cave. Gender violence as a social emergency*”⁷.

In the last four years, I have noticed an exponential increase in the number of education, psychology and veterinary medicine students as well as professional courses or master degrees' coordinators that get in touch with us to receive the educational material, like manuals, articles, etc., about the LINK so they can complete their dissertations or assignment. This event is an immense personal satisfaction if I think from where we started since it shows how years of hard work of sensitisation on the topic have been worthy.

We have conducted the first scientific study which allowed us to define this phenomenon in Italy using data collected on the field and from the news.

For the first data collection, we created a database inspired by the best 12 databases in the world, through which we analysed 278 LINK cases where a violent crime followed one or more episodes of animal abuse⁸

Afterwards, this study was deepened by a second data collection on 364 LINK cases, whose results were published in 2014. Followed by a third study on 537 prisoners and 942 LINK cases. This research was presented on the 26th of May 2016 by the State Forestry Corps and LINK-ITALIA (APS) during a conference held at the Public relations office - General Inspectorate of the State Forestry Corps, and by a fourth study which analyses data collected in various prisons (n = 682) and the total of the link cases (n = 1087) in 2016. These data are permanent.

Since October 2015 LINK-ITALIA (APS) and the State Forestry Corps, as previously mentioned have performed the first retrospective study about the LINK in the Italian prisons and partnership with the Department of Penitentiary Administration (D.A.P.) they have presented a document titled “*REPORT 2016. A zooanthropological and criminal behaviour profile of the animal killer and abuser. A classifying manual for crimes involving animals*”.

Various questionnaires can be found in the *DATABASE LINK* like the one downloadable at <https://www.link-italia.net/database-link-italia/>.

This questionnaire can be given to witnesses or anybody aware of a LINK case and returned to the LINK-ITALIA (APS) following the provided instructions. All the data collections have been published.

In addition to scientific articles and posters, to articles on various news magazines and radio interviews about the LINK, during the past years, we produced marketing material, - brochures and fliers – and technical manuals always updated to the current knowledge.

Since the beginning, the hard work of collecting data and developing specific tools for investigating and evaluating the public danger towards the animals has been used in the Italian criminal juridical system as **a vital tool for the judge to produce sentences** – although still too mild compared to the crime committed.

⁶ M. Bertini, F. Sorcinelli, M. Tettamanti, *(Dis)Educazione alla violenza. La violenza a scopo ludico. Il circo con animali e le fiere ornitologico venatorie*, Edizioni Cosmopolis 2008.

⁷ Facoltà degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, Vademecum 2009-2010.

⁸ F. Sorcinelli, Alberto Manganaro, Massimo Tettamanti, *Abusi su Umani e Abusi su Animali: Complici del Crimine*. Published on the issue IV 2012 della Rassegna Italiana della Società Italiana di Criminologia (SIC).

The use of these evaluation tools is a fundamental and historic step not only in the right application of the law on the topic of animal abuse and/or killing but also regarding the implementation of the institution of probation, notwithstanding the suspended sentence.

Criminal proceedings where a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals has been presented:

1. The cat serial killer in Trescore Balneario (BG)

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE – CRIMINAL COURT OF BERGAMO.

Trescore Balneario (Bergamo). The verdict of the 1st of March 2017.

The defendant was sentenced to 3 years and six months of imprisonment, to 2 years of probation under penalty atonement and compensation for the civil parties' associations.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the 'Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus'.

2. The killing of a dog named Angelo

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE – CRIMINAL COURT OF PAOLA.

Sanginetto (Cosenza). The verdict of the 26th of May 2017.

The four defendants were sentenced to 1 year and four months of imprisonment with a suspended sentence converted to 6 months of social works and compensation for the civil parties' associations.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the 'Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus'.

3. The killing of a seagull through a firework attached to its

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF NUORO

Siniscola (Nuoro). The verdict of the 31st of July 2017.

The defendant was sentenced to 1-year e four months of imprisonment and one year and six months of probation and compensation for the civil parties' associations.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the 'Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus'.

4. The Perugia cat serial killer

APPEAL SENTENCE - CRIMINAL COURT OF PERUGIA

Perugia. Defendant acquitted in first instance sentence.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the 'Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus'.

Prosecutor asked for an appeal

5. The killing of a dog named Snoopy

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF LIVORNO

Livorno. The defendant was given a suspended sentence, and he had to compensate the family owning the killed dog.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* within the criminal proceeding n. 3506/15 at the criminal court of Livorno, upon request from the lawyer De Pasquale on behalf of the Vincenzoni - Lucisano family and shared in the memoirs of the animal rights associations who were part of the civil parties.

- 6. A dog raped, kicked and stumped upon by the ex-boyfriend of the owner while he was recording the abuse.**

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF PISTOIA

The sentence is currently pending, and we are part of the civil parties.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the ‘Organizzazione Internazionale Protezione Animali’ (OIPA Italia Onlus) and the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’.

- 7. A dog kicked and stumped upon by the owner’s boyfriend.**

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF PESCARA

Pescara. The sentence is currently pending, and we are part of the civil parties.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request of the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’.

- 8. A cat killed by a shotgun**

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF REGGIO EMILIA

Montecchio Emilia (Reggio Emilia). Sentence pending (not yet a member of the civil parties), probation requested.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’.

- 9. A goat bitten and lifted by a man’s mouth with a video recording the scene circulating**

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF PALMI

Anoia (Palmi). Sentence pending (not yet a member of the civil parties).

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’.

- 10. A little dog thrown out of the window by the father while the son was watching**

REPORTED - PROSECUTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF ROME

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’.

- 11. A dog was beaten up allegedly for training purposes within domestic walls**

FIRST INSTANCE SENTENCE– CRIMINAL COURT OF LODI

The defendant got a suspended sentence and probation, compensation for the civil parties’ associations, like OIPA Italia, refund the expenses and to sign over the animal to the authorities

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the Organizzazione Internazionale Protezione Animali (OIPA Italia Onlus).

- 12. A fox killed with a pitchfork. Circulation of the footage**

REPORTED - PROSECUTOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF NUORO

LINK-ITALIA (APS) provided *a tool for investigating and evaluating the social danger towards the animals* upon request from the ‘Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali Onlus’ (ENPA).

At another level, these evaluation tools are a fundamental historical step not only in the right application of the law regarding animal abuse and/or unlawful killing but also in the merit of the thought that the law has to be urgently revised through an adjustment and tightening of the sentences. To train operators and to sensitise the public, in 2011 we ran 13 days of training in various Italian city in partnership with the ‘Azienda Servizi alla Persona’ of the Modena Council, the lawyers’

professional association of Genoa, the social workers professional organisation of Basilicata, the association 'Avvocati e Diritto di Famiglia', the 'Osservatorio Nazionale sul Diritto di famiglia' – Genoa section, in addition to various police stations of various councils.

The LINK has also been the subject of a proclamation for the 'ASL' sponsored by the region Lombardia in support to the families. This announcement has kept us busy for the whole year through public sensitisation projects, thanks to the support of some professionals Como, supported by the Como council, the 'Plesso Scolastico Como Nord', 'Ciao Como Radio' and various local animal rights associations.

On the 23rd of June 2011, I was a guest speaker at the 'Facultad de Filosofia y Humanidades de la Universidad Nacional' of the Comahue in the city of Neuquén (Argentina) for a presentation of the LINK which was hugely successful among the local humane societies.

On the 23rd of May 2011 for the first time, a CPD about the LINK was sponsored by an OAS namely the Italian social workers' professional organisation. On the 7th of June 2013, the course was accredited by a CROAS, namely the regional council of the professional organisation of the social workers, for the first time. This event marks two crucial antecedents during our ongoing work against the resistances that we sometimes find to get **our courses accredited for the professionals since sometimes the society or organisation is not aware yet of the social implication that animal abuse and/or unlawful killing have in their social work.**

In other words, getting a course accredited for social workers is never immediate nor obvious. Often it involves a lot of work behind the scenes with the various professional organisations to make them understand how the topic is pertinent to the profession.

At the same time, social workers participating in our courses become spokespeople spontaneously to their professional organisations about the importance of the course content since it is close to their day-to-day job and are currently unknown.

To make an example, a social worker from the prefecture of Savona who, after having participated in a LINK-ITALIA (APS) at the SIUA⁹, organised the same course in Savona¹⁰.

Fundings, sponsorships and accreditations of the LINK-ITALIA training courses gained up to today at the CROAS/OAS of Basilicata, Toscana, Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Puglia, Liguria, have contributed to creating another antecedent to allow CROAS Marche to give accreditation as well to the training courses.

Specifically, I refer to the events of the 14th of February 2018 at Grottammare di Ascoli Piceno and of the 21st of April 2018 at Senigallia (AN):

- Training course *LINK – Correlation between animal abuse and unlawful killings, interpersonal violence and antisocial and/or criminal behaviour* organised by the 'Associazione L'Amico Fedele Onlus' in partnership with 'Associazione UNIVOL' and 'Associazione Cambiamente'. Taught by the LINK-ITALIA (ASP). Sponsored by the council of Grottammare, the council of Acquaviva Picena, 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi' – Marche division, Vision. Free CPD hours for sociologist belonging to the organisation ANS and seven free CPD hours for the social workers belonging to CROAS Marche. Grottammare (Ascoli Piceno) 24th of February 2018.
- Training course *Deviant zooanthropology. Link - Correlation between animal abuse and unlawful killings, interpersonal violence and antisocial and/or criminal behaviour*, organised by 'Cambiamente Evolution' in partnership with 'Biblioteca Antonelliana', taught by LINK-ITALIA (APS). Sponsored by the social workers' professional

⁹ Seminario Formativo *Zooantropologia della devianza*, organizzato da S.I.U.A. – Istituto di Formazione Zooantropologica a cura di LINK-ITALIA (APS), presso NATURAMA Centro Nazionale Siua, Galliera 6 ottobre 2017.

¹⁰ Corso Formativo *Zooantropologia della Devianza. Link - Correlazione fra Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*, organizzato da Progetto Animana, a cura di LINK-ITALIA (APS). Patrocinato da Provincia di Savona, Associazione Nazionale Sociologi (ANS), Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION), Scuola di Interazione Uomo Animale (SIUA), Savona 24 marzo 2018.

organisation of Marche, 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi (ANS)', Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION). Recognised free 7 CPD hours for the social workers belonging CROAS Marche, recognised free 4 CPD hours for the solicitors belonging to the lawyers' professional association of Ancona', accredited for sociologist as per ANS rules. Senigallia (AN) 21st of April 2018.

Then, two animal charities have organised CPDs for social workers.

The course was held in Senigallia, and it marked an attendance record with 39 enrollments and 30 attendees in relationship to the Italian attendance of social workers to a LINK training course.

Sometimes we have witnessed a paradoxical situation where the accreditation was given at by the CROAS/OAS at first because they considered it pertinent to the profession, but subsequently, they revoked the certification, claiming that it was not any longer relevant to the job.

Specifically, I am referring to what happened with 'OASER' - Ordine Assistenti Sociali Emilia Romagna and with 'CROAS Puglia', you can check the accreditation for the 2014 and 2015 on the CNOAS (Consiglio Nazionale Ordine Assistenti Sociali) website. I want to highlight that the training course held in Lecce is the first one where an animal rights association requires accreditation in Italy.

ID 3608 LINK – Animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

Accredited 27 Jan 2014

organised by: LINK-ITALIA

Location: Modena

CPD: 3

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Emilia_Romagna_1451_1500.html

ID 9257 Animal abuse and social danger

Congress accredited 03 Jun 2015

organised by: A.N.P.A.N.A. Onlus

Starting date: 13 giu 2015 (durata: 9 ore)

location: Lecce

expected hours: 9

CPD: 4

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Puglia_551_600.html

After we gained accreditation in 2014 and 2015, in 2015 'OASER' declined the validation for the same training course organised by the council of Maranello (MO) (26th and 27th of November 2015)¹¹ classifying the course irrelevant for the profession. During this course, the LINK-ITALIA signed an agreement about the link between the council of Maranello, Formigine, Sassuolo.

When we asked for an explanation, they reply with the following email:

"Although we acknowledge an intellectual interest for the topic you discuss, we reiterate that there is not a direct specific interest for the social workers for animal cruelty and social danger (...)" – we received this email on 1st of December 2015 from CROAS Emilia Romagna –.

We received a similar answer from the 'Lega Per la Difesa del Cane Vieste - Sez. Orta Nova' for our training course about the LINK (Foggia, 14th of April 2018), from the CROAS Puglia we received the following reply:

(...),

On the 9th of March 2018 you requested the accreditation for this event:

¹¹ Corso Formativo *LINK- Maltrattamento di Animali e Pericolosità Sociale*, organizzato da Comuni di Maranello Formigine, Sassuolo, in collaborazione con la Provincia di Modena, a cura di LINK-ITALIA e Corpo Forestale dello Stato. Accreditato 17 ECM dal Provider FOR.MED S.r.l (per medici di medicina generale, ginecologi, pediatri, neuropsichiatri infantili, psicologi, psichiatri, logopedisti, educatori, veterinari). Presso Auditorium Enzo Ferrari, Maranello 26 e 27 novembre 2015.

“Link – Correlation between animal abuse and unlawful killings, interpersonal violence and antisocial and criminal behaviour.”

We assigned the ID 25316. On the 30th of March 2018, the social workers' association of the region Puglia had evaluated your request. The outcome is the following:

Accredited event: NO

Reason: the topic is irrelevant

Thank you for your attention

The social workers' association of the region Puglia.

On the other hand, the Foggia Training Course holds an essential historical record as for the first time the LINK theme is "accredited" by the Ministry of Justice, specifically by the Department of Juvenile Justice and Community Local Office of External Criminal Execution of Foggia that sponsors the Event.

These experiences are indicative of how much work is still required, so the Italian social workers understand how the LINK is pertinent to their profession.

Moreover, they show how much effort is still needed to ensure that the topic is acknowledged, even where we started to sensitise the people like it is underlined by the second part of the reply from OASER in 2015: “(...) *We acknowledge that other councillors and working groups have come to a different conclusion, but this is because councils are autonomous in their decisions. In light of analysis your website and institution and of the contents of your training courses, we confirm our decision.*”

Here there is the list of the accreditation we have received to today by the CROAS/OAS:

1) Prot. 803/2013 Animal cruelty and social danger

Accredited by the decision n°48 of 10/06/2013

Organised by: **LINK-ITALIA (APS)**

Location: **Pisa**

Speaker: **Francesca Sorcinelli**

CPD: **3**

OAS Toscana

2) ID 3608 LINK – Animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

Accredited **27 Jan 2014**

Organised by: **LINK-ITALIA**

Location: **Modena**

CPD: **3**

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Emilia_Romagna_1451_1500.html

3) ID 8013 Animal abuse and social danger

Accredited **16 Mar 2015**

Organised by: **Associazione di Promozione Sociale LINK-ITALIA**

Starting date: **27 Apr 2015** (duration: 2 days)

location: **Bergamo**

CPD: **15**

Event organised together with **CROAS Lombardia**

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Lombardia_3051_3100.html

4) ID 9257 Animal abuse and social danger

Accredited **03 Jun 2015**

Organised by: **A.N.P.A.N.A. Onlus**

Starting date: **13 Jun 2015** (duration: 9 hours)

Location: **Lecce**

expected hours: **9**

CPD: **4**

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Puglia_601_650.html

5) ID 9256 Animal abuse and social danger

Congress accredited 03 Jun 2015

Organised by: **A.N.P.A.N.A. Onlus**

Starting date: **12 Jun 2015** (duration: 9 hours)

location: **Lecce**

expected hours: **9**

CPD: **4**

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Puglia_601_650.html

6) ID 10912 LINK: Animal abuse and social danger

Course accredited 04 Nov 2015

Organised by: **ASSOCIAZIONE DI PROMOZIONE SOCIALE LINK-ITALIA**

Starting date: **11 Dec 2015** (duration: 8 hours)

location: **Seriate (BG)**

themes: **Abnormal pedagogy and sociology - victimology - criminology - investigation sciences – Zooanthropology**

target audience: **Social workers -Doctors – Psychologists – Veterinary Surgeons – Lawyers – police enforcements –**

Teachers

to enrol: **corsi@formedsrl.com; convegnolinkbg@gmail.com**

learning material: **brochures**

final test: **no**

teachers: **Francesca Sorcinelli - Amerigo Filippi - Giovanna Troja Martinazzoli**

expected hours: **8**

CPD: **7**

available free spaces

free enrollment

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Lombardia_2501_2550.html

7) ID 13364 Link, the correlation between animal abuse, interpersonal violence, abnormal conduct, antisocial behaviour, violent crime

Course accredited 11 Mar 2016

Organised by: **ASSOCIAZIONE DI PROMOZIONE SOCIALE LINK ITALIA**

Starting date: **10 Feb 2016** (duration: 11/02/2016)

location: **CENTRO DI FORMAZIONE, CULTURA, ATTIVITA' FORENSI GE**

topic: **social workers**

target audience: **MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONALS**

expected hours: **13**

CPD: **13**

Free spaces available

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Liguria_351_400.html

8) ID 17489 Correlation between animal abuse and/or unlawful killing, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and/or behaviour.

Course accredited 20 Feb 2017

Organised by: **Link Italia**

Starting date: **26 gen 2017** (duration: 2 days)

location: **Seriate (Bergamo), Sala Consiliare del Comune di Seriate, Piazza Alebardi 1**

topics: **social hardship – interpersonal violence – antisocial and criminal behaviour**

target audience: **professionals**

limitations: **police enforcement, social workers, teachers, lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists, child**

neuropsychiatrists, gynaecologists, veterinary surgeons

to enrol: **email convegnolinkbg@gmail.com**

learning materials: **brochures**

final test: **no**

teachers: **Francesca Sorcinelli- Rossano Tozzi - Silva Rubini - Giovanna Troja Martinazzoli - Ramona Soli -**

Alessandra Zaccherini

expected hours: **16**

CPD: **16**

Available free spaces

free enrolment

Already accredited for the years 2015/2016

www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Lombardia_1301_1350.html

9) ID 25289 Link: Correlation between animal abuse and/or unlawful killing, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and/or criminal behaviour

Course accredited 09 Mar 2018

Organised by: **Comune di Sabaudia**

Starting date: **17 Mar 2018** (duration: 2 days)

location: **Sabaudia**

topic: **methodological and professional area**

target audience: **Social workers and other professionals**

limitations: **Professionals and people interested in the topic**

how to enrol: **email m.camuglia@comune.sabaudia.latina.it**

materials: **slides, 12-pages brochure, references.**

final test: **no**

teachers: **Francesca Sorcinelli, Rossano Tozzi, Marco Strano, Alberto Mosca, Silva Rubini, Ramona Soli**

expected hours: **13**

CPD: **14**

free spaces available

http://www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Lazio_1_50.html

10) ID 24471 Correlation between Animal Cruelty, Interpersonal Violence and any other Antisocial and/or Criminal

Course accredited 19 Feb 2018

Organised by: **Associazione L'amico fedele onlus**

Starting date: **24 Feb 2018** (duration: 1 day)

location: **Sala consiliare Grottammare**

topics: **Ethics and deontology**

target audience: **Social workers and other professionals**

to enrol: **send filled and signed form**

final test: **No**

Teachers: **Francesca Sorcinelli**

expected hours: **8**

CPD: **7**

Free enrollment

www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Marche_1_50.html

11) ID 24471 LINK – Correlation between animal abuse and unlawful killing, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and criminal behaviour

Course accredited 19 Feb 2018

Organised by: **Canbiamente Evolution A.S.D.**

Starting date: **21 Apr 2018** (durata: 1 day)

location: **c/o Biblioteca Antonelliana, via dei Macelli 1, Senigallia**

topics: **methodological and professional area**

target audience: **Social workers and other professionals**

limitations: **Professionals and people interested on the topic**

to enrol: **email canbiamente@gmail.com**

materials: **slides, 12-pages brochure, references**

final test: **no**

teachers: **Francesca Sorcinelli**

expected hours: **8**

CPD: **7**

free spaces available

Free enrollment

www.cnoas.it/Corsi_accreditati/Marche_1_50.html

12) ID 30879 Animal abuse and unlawful killing, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and/or criminal behaviour

On the 21st of January 2019 you have requested the accreditation for the following event:

“Animal abuse and unlawful killing, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and/or criminal behaviour” to which we have assigned the ID 30879.

On the 15th of February 2019 the social workers' professional association of region Veneto has examined your request

The outcome is as follow:

Accredited event: **yes**

CPD: **16**

Deontological accreditation points: **0**

If on the one hand, after an initial opposition, the CROAS of Marche shows an opening to discussion, allowing the accreditation of 7 CPD hours to the previously mentioned events, on the other hand the professional organisations of the lawyers of Ascoli Piceno and Fermo will not give certification to the course held in Grottammare, something that has never happened before¹².

Indeed, we have never had a problem with the lawyers' professional organisations to recognise free CPD hours to our events.

The lawyers' professional organisation of Sabaudia, for example, recognises 14 CPD hours for the Link course¹³ planned a month after the one held in Grottammare, praising the organising council for the interesting and new topic of the event. The lawyers' professional organisation of Ancona recognises 4 CPD hours for the same program of the first day presented in Senigallia two months after¹⁴.

It is only since 2017 that we have started to request the free accreditation to the journalists' professional organisation, which has never been allowed until a journalist, who attended the Rimini's training course on the 25th and 26th of November 2017¹⁵, became a spokesperson to the journalists' professional body of Emilia Romagna. We hope that thanks to this action, we will organise the first accredited event for journalists.

To date, 2018, the commitment of the 'Associazione di Promozione Sociale LINK-ITALIA', from an educational point of view, it is more and more requested.

The training courses are in the majority of the cases accredited as CPDs for the social and health professions and in agreement with the regional or provincial professional organisations of solicitors, social workers, sociologists, and hopefully soon journalists¹⁶.

The training activity has been completed with the 'N.I.R.D.A.' of the State Forestry Corps until December 2016, the police force of (MO) and since October 2017 together with the 'ANS – Associazione Nazionale Sociologi'.

On the 28th and 29th of May 2014, it was held the first training course: *LINK: Animal cruelty and public danger* with accredited CPD for veterinary surgeons in Italy – organised by the A.USL of Modena supervised by LINK-ITALIA (APS). This course was joined by social workers, police officers, the Animal Rights Office of Modena, on top of all the other people interested in the topic.

On the 13th of November 2014, the LINK was presented for the first time during an accredited training course for doctors and nurses organised by the 'ASL OLBIA2'. Since April 2015 the training

¹² Training course *LINK – Correlazione fra Maltrattamento e Uccisione di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*, organised by 'Associazione L'Amico Fedele Onlus' in partnership with the 'Associazione UNIVOL' and the 'Associazione Cambiamente'. Organised by LINK-ITALIA (ASP). Sponsored by the council of Grottammare and Acquaviva Picena, 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi – Marche division, Vision'. Free CPDs for sociologists recognised ANS and 7 free CPDs for social workers recognised by CROAS Marche. Grottammare (Ascoli Piceno) 24th of February 2018.

¹³ Training course *Zooantropologia della Devianza. Link - Correlazione fra Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*, organised by the council of Sabaudia, taught by LINK-ITALIA (APS). Sponsored by the 'ASL Latina', 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi (ANS)', Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION). Free CPDs for sociologists, free 14 CPD recognised by the professional organisation of the lawyers of Latina, CROAS Lazio, accredited 21 CPD by the 'Provider For.Med.', 17th and 18th of March 2018, Sabaudia.

¹⁴ Training course in 'Zooantropologia della Devianza: *Link – Correlazione fra Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*' organised by 'CambiaMente Evolution' together with 'Biblioteca Antonelliana', taught by LINK-ITALIA (APS). Sponsored by the professional body of the social worker of Marche, 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi (ANS)', Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION). CROAS recognised free 7 CPDs for the social workers, the professional body of the solicitors of Ancona recognised 4 CPD, accredited for sociologists as per ANS rules. Senigallia (AN) 21st of April 2018.

¹⁵ Training course *Link - Correlazione fra Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*, organised by 'Guardie Ecozoofile FareAmbiente', taught by LINK-ITALIA (APS). Sponsored by the province of Rimini, the professional organisations of the veterinary surgeons of Rimini and Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION). Expected 16 CPDs for the lawyers, free CPD for social workers, accredited 21.3 CPD by the 'Provider FOR.MED S.r.l.' (for general practitioners, gynaecologists, paediatricians, child psychiatrists, nurses, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, neuro and psychomotricist therapist, speech therapists, teachers, veterinary surgeons). 25th and 26th of November 2017.

¹⁶ Professional seminar *La Pericolosità Sociale del Maltrattamento di Animali*, organised by the professional body of the journalists of Emilia Romagna, together with LINK-ITALIA (APS) and sponsored by 'Guardie Ecozoofile Fare Ambiente'. To be confirmed 2019, Bologna.

program about the LINK has always been certified with 17 or 21.3 CPDs for the health professionals – general practitioners, psychologists, psychiatrists, child psychiatrists, gynaecologists, paediatricians, speech therapists, nurses, paediatric nurses, teachers, neuro and psychometrician therapists, psychiatric nurses, veterinary surgeons.

On the 7th of April 2017, the LINK was presented for the first time during a postgraduate course on veterinary forensic pathology. The seminar was organised by the veterinary medicine and food production department of the University of Naples Federico II.

These events followed a meeting on the 27th of January 2017 where the LINK was introduced at the FNOVI base. At the meeting there were the FNOVI's president Mr Penocchio, the vice-president Ms Bernasconi, the councillor Mr Pierbattisti, the representatives of the referral centre of forensic veterinary medicine of the 'IZL LT' of the veterinary medicine department of Parma and Naples, the 'Associazione Melefovet' and LINK-ITALIA (APS), whose representative was the only one not belonging to the veterinary profession.

The participation to the postgraduate course in veterinary forensic pathology meant that the module of *Abnormal anthrozoology* became part of the syllabus of the 'Master Universitario di Secondo Livello' in *veterinary forensic science* of the University Federico II of Naples, the first one in Europe.

The Master aims to train qualified personnel through a theoretical and practical approach within the management of the investigation in crimes against animals. Prof Orlando Paciello supervises the master.

"I am proud that this master's degree in forensic veterinary science has been realised within our department. The modern reality required veterinary surgeons to be involved together with the police during the detection and the fight against the 'eco and zoomafia'. Hence, there was the need for a specialised professional figure in a field which is underestimated, but that deserves greater attention" Prof Gaetano Oliva (2018).¹⁷

One of the aims of the master created by Prof Paciello e Prof Fico is to create a 'check-list' of lesions recognisable on the animals that could guide the vet towards a potential crime *"(...) It is a matter of standardising a procedure that will improve the job of vets, psychologists psychiatrists and police enforcement"* Prof Gaetano Oliva (2018).¹⁸

Twenty-five veterinary surgeons have attended the master, and it lasts one year. Vets who visit this master will be able to work as expert witnesses for the prosecution.

"This is a 'Master di Secondo Livello', that is a high professional qualification which that university Federico II of Naples has created to satisfy a need of society to protect animals as sentient beings. The criminal law regulates animal cruelty'. However, there are not professional figures who can be an expert witness for the prosecution. The master, as its name defines "veterinary forensic science", wants to create a network to collect the knowledge of a vast topic like the one of forensic science.

It is only with a multidisciplinary approach that we could define a detailed picture which will allow incriminating a criminal. There is a need to evidence-based knowledge, with a multidisciplinary input from biology, toxicology, veterinary pathology, clinical and educational psychology to ensure a criminal to justice. In addition to this, there are lawyers, magistrates and judges among the master's teachers to ensure that it creates a veterinary professional figure who is highly trained in supporting the police enforcement." **Prof Paciello** (2018)¹⁹

"An objective of the Link-Italia project is to ensure that veterinary surgeons play a role in the prevention and prosecution of animal abuse since this could prevent domestic violence, homicides, rapes, etc. This goal will only be achieved if the Link cases are treated by a multidisciplinary team

¹⁷ Gaetano Oliva, Direttore Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria e Produzioni Animali, Università Federico II di Napoli, intervista rilasciata a *Convegni in Campania, La Salute in TV*, 14 settembre 2018.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Professor Orlando Paciello Coordinatore del Master in Scienze Forensi Veterinarie presso Medicina Veterinaria e Produzioni Animali, Università Federico II di Napoli, intervista rilasciata a *Convegni in Campania, La Salute in TV*, 14 settembre 2018.

where the roles of the vets, the social workers and of the psychologists can be interchanged.”
Francesca Sorcinelli (2018)²⁰

On the 22nd of March 2019, there was the first graduation.

Two dissertation projects were dedicated to the LINK:

- *From animal abuse to gender violence*, ‘Master Universitario di II Livello’ in veterinary forensic science, student Dr Ylenia Abbate, supervisor Dr Francesca Sorcinelli, University of Naples “Federico II”.
- *The role of a veterinary surgeon in the LINK cases*, ‘Master Universitario di II Livello’ in veterinary forensic science, student Dr Raffaella Di Carlo, supervisor Dr Francesca Sorcinelli, University of Naples “Federico II”.

On the 21st of April 2017 the LINK is presented for the first time within a social science university department during the conference: “*animal violence tells who are the ‘men’*” organised by the department of social science of the University of Bergamo in Bergamo through the dissertation: “*abnormal zooanthropology, correlation between animal abuse and social danger*”.

On the 4th of February 2018, a statue in memory of the dog named Snoopy, killed with a rifle shot while he was on his house balcony was revealed in the very central ‘Villa Fabbricotti’ in Livorno.

A conference titled: “*Animal violence propaedeutics to human violence*” organised by the council of Livorno²¹ in partnership with ‘Animalisti Italiani Onlus’ preceded the event. Among the speakers, there was me as representative of the LINK-ITALIA (APS) as well as Laura Adorni Pallini for the ‘Uff. Servizi Sociali, Non Autosufficienti e Disabili USL Nord Ovest di Livorno’ to show how the hard work of the last few years has made the LINK a more and more multidisciplinary topic.

Training about the LINK also gains for the first time the sponsorship of the ‘Ministero dell’Interno’ during the course held in Rimini on the 25th and 26th of November 2017. Instead, the ministry for the environment did not agree to sponsor it, since the event was irrelevant to the topics of their ministry.

These latter episodes reflect the Italian situation where any recognition by an institution is a step forward, and it is not guaranteed. This recognition is usually achieved after a hard work of cultural, social and professional sensitisation. Every rejection proves how the involvement of the institutions is a target and not a beginning in developing effective practices to support the professionals who work with the victims and the perpetrators of violent crimes.

In this sense, another historical recognition is the sponsorship by a psychologists’ professional organisation [l’Ordine degli Psicologi della Sardegna (OPS)] and by a CAM (Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti Nord Sardegna) of a training course about the LINK.²² Cagliari, 26th of May 2018.

Noteworthy it is the significant participation of the institutions to the already mentioned course held in Foggia.

Specifically, the course has been sponsored by institutions like:

- Ministry of justice – ‘Dipartimento per la Giustizia Minorile e di Comunità Ufficio Locale di Esecuzione Penale Esterna’ of Foggia.
- Province of Foggia.
- Veterinary surgeons’ professional body of Foggia.

²⁰ Francesca Sorcinelli Presidente LINK-ITALIA (APS), intervista rilasciata a *Convegni in Campania, La Salute in TV*, 14 settembre 2018.

²¹ Conferenza *La Violenza sugli Animali, Propedeutica alla Violenza sugli Umani*, organizzato da Comune di Livorno in collaborazione con Animalisti Italiani Onlus. Relatori LINK-ITALIA (APS) e Uff. Servizi Sociali, Non Autosufficienza, e Disabilità USL Nord Ovest, Moderatore Assessore alla Tutela degli Animali, Volontariato e Sport del Comune di Livorno. 4 febbraio 2018 Livorno.

²² Corso Formativo *Zooantropologia della Devianza. Link - Correlazione fra Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Antisociale e/o Criminale*, organizzato da Together APS-ASD a cura di LINK-ITALIA (APS). Patrocinato da Ordine degli Psicologi della Sardegna, Associazione Nazionale Sociologi (ANS), Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION), Studio Clinico Spazio Famiglia, Guardie Ecozoofile FareAmbiente Provincia di Cagliari, Scuola di Interazione Uomo Animale (SIUA), Associazione Regionale Guardie Ecologiche Zoofile (ARGEZ). Accreditato per Sociologi da ANS Dipartimento della Sardegna. Cagliari 26 maggio 2018.

- Council of Vieste.
- Council of Monte Sant'Angelo.
- 'Associazione Nazionale Sociologi' (ANS).

The course has been sponsored also by association such as:

- 'Associazione Bambini di Antonio Gallo'.
- Victimology Support International Observatory and Network (ViSION).

At the opening ceremony, in addition to the presidents of the various organising associations there were:

- Dr Biagio Di Lasio – Director of Confcommercio Foggia.
- Dr Giuseppe di Leo - Funzionario Ufficio Esecuzione Penale Esterna Foggia.
- Dr Luigi Urbano (Benessere Animale) e Dr Franco Fini (Randagismo) - Direttori ASL Veterinari.
- Dr Grazia Maria Starace - Assessore ai Servizi Sociali del Comune di Vieste.

Another province worth a mention is Bergamo where within a few years the charity '*Diritti Animali Bergamo*', has organised four courses about the LINK of which three were accredited for social workers, lawyers and health professionals

The opening ceremony for this course was a very heartfelt speech by the mayor Giorgio Gori on the 27th and 28th of April 2015.

During June 2018, Italy was the European capital for research on forensic youth psychology.

The university IUSVE hosted the VI Edition of the international congress "*European Association for Forensic Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychology & other involved professions*". For the first time, Italy was the centre of such an important scientific event.

The main topics discussed during the congress were: prevention of psycho-social deprivation, victimology, youth crime, an alternative to prison to perpetrators who are minors, evaluation of the witness of youngsters in alleged sexual and domestic abuse, multi-problem families, foreign children without parents, conflictual separations and dual parenthood.

Upon direct request by the scientific committee, LINK-ITALIA (APS) was among the congress mentioned above sponsor "*Young Victim and Young Offenders*", taking part to a lecture of the Italian session of the Link-Italia project and with a scientific "*Psychosocial Implication of Children's Exposure to Animal Cruelty*" during the international session.

Abstract

In technical areas such as the psychological, psychiatric, criminological and investigative sciences, the term "LINK" indicates the close connection between animal abuse and interpersonal violence or any other anti-social, criminal and deviant behavior such as murder, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, robbery, drug-dealing, fraud, psychological manipulation, etc. Animal abuse and/or killing is not only a blameful act to be condemned but is also evidence of a symptom of a potentially pathological state of mind – specifically when children are victims of mistreatment, neglect and/or psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse and a predictor of current and/or future deviant, antisocial or criminal behaviors of escalating violence. In other words, crimes such as those above indicated often represent the escalation of an initially deviant, antisocial and criminal behavior: animal abuse.

It must be highlighted that cruelty to animals is statistically one of the major symptoms of Conduct Disorder that young children display and can be defined as a symptom of a pathological condition and a serious indicator of social dangerousness, as it result from statistical data, studies, researches mainly conducted in USA and as it emerge also from the 1087 Link Cases collected and examined by LINK- ITALIA (APS) and N.I.R.D.A. (Investigative Unit for Crimes against Animals) of the Corpo Forestale dello Stato, with the support of the Department of Penitentiary Administration. These 1087 Link Cases include inmates who abused and/or killed animals and/or were exposed to animal cruelty in their childhood or adulthood.

Animal cruelty can be definitely defined as a symptom of a pathological condition and a serious indicator of social dangerousness. Cruelty to animals in general should never be considered as an isolated episode but as an integral, pathological and predictive part of a whole cycle of violence.

Another important participation is the presentation of a talk titled Crimes against animals and psychopathology by Dr Marco Strano²³ during the EUROCRIME 2018²⁴ of the European Society of Criminology, in Sarajevo. I was the co-author of this scientific content on behalf of the LINK-ITALIA (APS)²⁵.

Abstract

Crimes against animals are the types of crimes that are often underestimated. The contribution that Psychologists, criminologists and forensic scientists can make in the study of crimes against animals is very important. This scientific work describes a research and intervention project started in 2012 by a multidisciplinary team of the Study Center for Legality, Security and Justice aimed at collecting technical and scientific data on animal abuse, analyzing the cases and describing from the point of clinical-criminological view of the authors of these crimes. The tools used are a psycho-social questionnaire that measures the social perception of crime, a grid for observing crimes against animals (for systematically gathering a series of cases) and a descriptive grid of offenders. In this research, in addition to crimes with economic motivation, particular attention is also paid to crimes against animals that have psychopathological dimensions in the author: animal serial killer, juvenile zoosadism, zoophilia and animal hoarding. In fact, this type of crime requires specific interpretative categories and complex inter-disciplinary intervention procedures such as investigative, medical-veterinary and clinical-criminological. The objective of the study is to provide scientific data useful for designing effective prevention campaigns and for improving investigative strategies for the detection and reporting of these offenses.

On the 30th of October 2018 in the council of Cento in the province of Ferrara, it was introduced the '*PROGETTO DO.MIN.A. - Donne, Minori e Animali: Dare Voce alla Violenza Silente*' (*DO.MIN.A project: women, minors and animals: giving voice to silent violence*) whose the representative of the project is the 'Nucleo Anti Violenza - N.A.V.' of the police of Cento (FE).

On the 21st of March 2014 in Bologna LINK-ITALIA (APS) presented "*LINK between animal cruelty, interpersonal violence and any other antisocial and criminal behaviour*" during the first local police convention.

This event was highlighted by a crucial meeting between the 'ispettore Superiore' of the Cento (FE) police, Massimo Perrone, the 'Assistente' Michela Bosi and me.

Perrone and Bose decided to prevent, treat and fight the LINK after they learnt about it.

With a lot of pride, we announce the birth of the *DO.MIN.A project: women, minors and animals: giving voice to silent violence*, the first police project in Italy which is publicly funded – Regione Emilia Romagna – which treats violence against women, minors and animals with the LINK approach.

The news together with the revision of the chapter LINK I, was also published in the October 2018 newsletter²⁶ of the National Link Coalition - USA:

"LINK-ITALIA Preparing Book, Launching Project.

Our Link affiliate in Italy, Link Italia, is about to publish what is believed to be the first Italian-language book about the intersections of animal and human violence. The book will describe The Link in the context of the mandate of the World Health Organization, and trace the history of Link work in Italy from 1997 to the present including the publication of several major academic papers (See the January 2018 and June 2017 LINK-Letters). A series of chapters by contributing authors will discuss such issues as the context and issues of gender violence, animal cruelty and interpersonal

²³ Chief psychologist of the 'Polizia di Stato', Criminologist, President 'Centro Studi per la Legalità, Sicurezza e Giustizia'. Funder of the 'Progetto alla Radice della Violenza di Specie'.

²⁴ European Society of Criminology, *Eurocrime 2018*, 18th Annual Conference, from 29 August to 1 September 2018, Sarajevo, Bosnia.

²⁵ Marco Strano, Dirigente della Polizia di Stato (ruolo degli Psicologi), Presidente dello Study Center of Legality Security and Justice.

²⁶ National Link Coalition, *The Link Letter*, Vol 11, No 10 October 2018.

psychological violence, the “zooanthropology of violence,” erotic zoophilia and bestiality, the impact on children who witness animal cruelty, and pilot projects underway in Italy. A series of appendices will review international Link activities.

Meanwhile, what is believed to be the first publicly-funded Link project in Italy to be carried out by a law enforcement agency will be unveiled on Oct. 30. The police force in Cento, in the province of Ferrara, will launch the DO.MIN.A PROJECT – Women, Children and Animals: Giving a Voice to Silent Violence. The project traces its roots to a Link Italia conference in 2014 where two Cento police officials chose to be on the front line to prevent and fight the intersecting forms of family violence. Link Italia President Francesca Sorcinelli says, <<We are writing the history of The Link in Italy thanks to the first heroic professionals who have been brave enough to challenge the dangerous, outdated but still widespread mentality that ‘after all, they are just animals’>>.”

Other historically essential steps in the diffusion of the LINK are the following:

- In 2018, we presented the project LINK-UEPE “*Snoopy’s angel*” to the ‘Ufficio Interdistrettuale di Esecuzione Penale Esterna per la Puglia e la Basilicata’. This project meant a targeted training about the LINK to the ‘Operatori dell’Ufficio Locale di Esecuzione Penale Esterna – ULEPE Foggia’, ‘dell’Ufficio Servizi Sociali per i Minori – USSM Foggia’ and the teachers of the schools of Foggia. Moreover, it created cooperation to the operational point of view in the creation of an alternative rehabilitation sentence for perpetrators who abuse or kill animals.
- In 2018, during a dedicated meeting, we presented “*The social danger of animal abuse*”, the first Guidelines on the topic of sentence determination, conditional suspension of the sentence, testing in criminal proceedings for crime against animals or animal abuse and/or unlawful killing. Convening of LINK-ITALIA (APS) by the Parliamentary Intergroup on Animal Rights. Rome, Senate of the Republic, Palazzo Madama - Sala della Barberia, 18 July 2018.
- Since 2018 LINK- ITALIA (APS) has been added as a training centre for the teaching about the link for the Judiciary, Order Forces, Social Assistants, Veterinarians, in the Zero Cani in Canile Project;
- From 2018 LINK-ITALIA (APS) collaborates in the Project "At the Root of Species Violence" promoted by the Study Center for Legality, Security and Justice - whose President is Dr Marco Strano.
- The project aims at training seminars of analysis, prevention and contrast of crimes on animals for the Order's Forces, Magistrates, Volunteers of Animal Protection and Projects for raising awareness of pupils in schools and citizens in general (Appendix 7).
- From September 2017, the Zooanthropology of deviance is a curricular discipline of the TrainingSenzaConfini project of the Interregional Association of Local and Municipal Police ASSINTER.
- We have provided our elaborations and informative images for the realisation of the e-learning module "Link for the activities of the Police" used by the State Police for the training of its personnel. Active since August 2017. This activity constitutes the first official recognition of the phenomenon by the State Police.
- From 2016 the Zooanthropology of Devianza is a curriculum discipline of advanced courses of Assistant Zooanthropology at the Institute of Zooanthropological Training SIUA.

In general, the LINK-ITALIA Training Events (APS) all envisage a strategic joint transversal training among the various professional skills.

I would like to reiterate that every activity carried out on the LINK in Italy represents a historical achievement constituting the foundation on which to develop a new culture - social, legal, pedagogical, investigative, health, civil - in which the mistreatment and killing of animals are interpreted as conduct to be condemned in itself and with serious social implications.

The goal pursued leads us to collaborate with a wide range of partners by promoting an active, scientific and global approach. Violence is often predictable and avoidable. Many of the factors that increase the risk of interpersonal violence are present in the different modes of abuse and can be modified.

For the development of a transdisciplinary approach to the Link Cases have therefore been activated Protocols of Understanding Link in the subject of Maltreatment and / or Killing of Animals and every other form of Violence, Deviance and Crime among which five unique.

The **first protocol** was signed by LINK-ITALIA (APS) and by the 'Azienda Servizi alla Persona' of the Municipality of Modena in 2009. This protocol engaged us for nine years together with the Professional Educators belonging to the three 'Comunità Semiresidenziali per Minori del Patronato Pei Figli del Popolo e Fondazione San Paolo e San Geminiano'. We prepared the training and the refresher courses in *Zooanthropology of Deviance*, in the observation, analysis and treatment of cases that involve the exposure of minors to violence against animals and in the creation of some *Assistance Zooanthropology* paths with groups minors attending the Socio-educational Centers in question.

The **second protocol** signed on June 18, 2013, with the Municipal Police Command of the Municipality of Sassuolo (MO) involved the creation in Italy of the First Section of the Municipal Police Link with the representative of Agent Ramona Soli (see Chapter VI). The core activity led to the birth of the first Facebook page dedicated to local police activities on animal welfare in Italy with a LINK approach.

The **third protocol** was signed in Rome on 18 September 2014 at the General Inspectorate of the C.F.S. between LINK-ITALY (APS) and State Forestry Corps, constituting the first Protocol approved in our country by a State Police body with a Social Promotion Association.

This protocol ensured:

- a close partnership between the signatories;
- the specific commitment of N.I.R.D.A. transdisciplinary in the study, treatment and contrast of the crimes related to the LINK;
- the inclusion of data relating to the Link Cases, verified by the Forestry Personnel, in the Criminal Report on Crimes of Animal Maltreatment (F.A.R.M.A.);
- the establishment of the first institutional team to study the Behavioral and Criminal Zooantropological Profile of the abuser and / or killer of animals.

The **fourth protocol** was signed on 27 November 2015, by the three Municipalities of the Ceramic District - Formigine, Maranello, Sassuolo -, the Order of Veterinarians of Modena, the Provincial Command of the State Forestry Corps and LINK-ITALIA (APS). This protocol established the first Multidisciplinary Technical Table for the prevention and treatment of Link Cases also consisting of the Municipal Police Commands and the Animal Rights and Environment Offices of the Municipalities that have joined.

The **fifth protocol** agreement was signed with the Order of Veterinary Physicians of Salerno ²⁷.

On March 20, 2018, I was convened by the Temporary Animal Protection Commission of the Municipality of Verona for a hearing on the following agenda "Link Project - Animal Maltreatment and Social Hazard" to which they were invited to participate:

²⁷ Protocollo d'Intesa Protocollo d'Intesa in materia di *Maltrattamento di Animali, Violenza Interpersonale e ogni altra Condotta Deviante, Antisociale e Criminale* firmato il 5 febbraio 2018 da Orlando Paciello Presidente Ordine dei Medici Veterinari di Salerno e Francesca Sorcinelli LINK-ITALIA (APS).

- Board leaders;
- President of the First Council Commission;
- Councillor for Security, Civil Protection, Municipal Police, Demographic and Statistical Services, Companies and Participating Bodies, Information Technology;
- Councillor for Social Services, Social Tourism, Work, Education;
- President of the Circumscriptions;
- Presidents of the Commissions delegated to the Environment of the Circumscriptions;
- Area Manager Territory Management and Environment Direction;
- Commander Municipal Police Corps;
- Environmental Management Officer;
- Officer of the Office for Protection and Animal Affairs;
- President and Vice President of the City Council;
- Mayor;
- General Secretary.

The meeting unveiled an interest of the Municipality for the possible signing of a Link Protocol, precisely as it is happening in other Municipalities. In this sense, a Training Course on the LINK organised by the Municipality on 9 and 10 February 2019 and a data collection with the Maltreating Men Office and the Casa Sicura Center P.E.T.R.A. Municipality of Verona.

On October 4, 2018, the last meeting of the Working Table took place. The minutes were to decide a **Link Protocol within mistreatment and / or killing of animals, violence, interpersonal and any other deviant, antisocial and / or criminal conducts cases**. The Prefecture, Municipality, Municipal Police, USL Company Department of Integrated Mental Health and Pathological Dependencies, Center for Listening to Mice, USL Veterinary Area, Order of Veterinarians of the City of Ferrara were present to the meeting.

The value of this last Protocol for the authority of the Institutions and Entities that subscribe to it has no precedent in Italy.

*The fact that the organisations agreed and adhered to a **protocol on the LINK**, is a proud example of an Italy wants to be outstanding in fighting the violence against animals. Hence, Italy wants also to prevent interpersonal violence and child poverty and crime in general in opposition to the retrograde and socially dangerous mentality of the ... “so? They are only animals”...*

I also want to highlight that since the genesis of the scientific recognition and contrast to the LINK in our country is different from that of the United States, the protocols have been conceived as the main instrument of institutional acceptance of the phenomenon for Italy and the translation of awareness scientific practices in operational practices.

If in the United States scientific awareness develops from the institutions and university researchers, in Italy the acquired knowledge has a different origin since a voluntary, although with a professional approach, association extends it, the institutions do not recognise it.

Hence the urgency of the involvement of the Institutions in recognising, studying, treating and contrasting the phenomenon through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding Link.

For the same reason, we signed a pact with Associations that deal with perpetrators and / or Victims of violent conducts and / or that deal with the defence of the vulnerable in general as well as a partnership with Associations that deal with Animals Victims of violent behaviour and / or with associations that generally deal with their Protection and Defence.

Currently, the Associations that deal with Authors and / or Human Victims of violent conduct and / or in general of the defense of weak categories are:

ANS – Associazione Nazionale Sociologi / MPVI - Mai Più Violenza Infinita / Prometeo ONLUS/ Belluno Donna / Wall of Dolls / ARCI Lombardia / ARCI Bergamo / Associazione V.E.R.I.

The Associations dealing with Animal Victims of violent conduct and / or in general of their protection and defense are:

Animal Law (APS) / OIPA ONLUS - Organizzazione Internazionale per la Protezione Animali / LEAL – Lega Antivivisezionista / Effetto Palla Onlus / #UNITIPERLORO / IAPL ONLUS – International Animal Protection League Italia / Associazione Culturale Mondo Animali / Fondazione Valle Vegan / Centro Soccorso Animali / Guardie EcooZoofile Fare Ambiente / Together APS & ASD / Diritti Animali Bergamo / Nucleo Cinofilo Sansone Genova Onlus / APACA ONLUS Belluno / Associazione L'Amico Fedele Onlus / Associazione Di Versi & Voci / ASSOVEGAN / VEAGAN OK / Sansone ASD / Animalisti Onlus / Associazione Cambiamente Evolution/ Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali / ATA PC Lecce / LIDA Sezione di Olbia / Animalisti Italiani Onlus / LAC – Associazione per l'Abolizione della Caccia / Noirandagi Onlus / Animali in Movimento / VITADACANI Onlus / Guardie Zoofile NORSAA / Associazione ARGO / Associazione Culturale Mondo Animali / Associazione Argo / Corpo Guardie Ambientali Metropolitane (BO) / ANTA ONLUS SAVA.

The first *foster families and link shelters* projects were also created for animals victims of domestic violence and / or victims of domestic violence.

The objective of the **Link Victim Protection Program** is to develop cultural and operational practices in our country. Methods that involve the intervention either from the public and the private realities which deal with women victims of domestic violence and stalking who own pets through the creation of shelters and in particular foster family networks dedicated explicitly to the temporary reception of animals belonging to the Link Cases. In other words, we are working hard to ensure that the Municipal Administrations - kennels, shelters etc. - and private associations organise themselves to face the problem by accepting in temporary custody in their structures and in particular in foster families of the animal victims.

Heads of Refuges or Families who wish to join the Link Victim Protection Program can contact us at info@link-italia.net.

For reasons of privacy and security, no list of Shelters and Families that have joined the project will be disclosed and the latter are required to maintain their secret membership.

LINK-ITALIA (APS) website is www.link-italia.net., the organisation also has a facebook, twitter and Instagram account.

THE LINK CASES COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRES can be downloaded online and are in an editable pdf version, they can be filled in by anyone with useful information for data collection that is always in progress for the DATABASE section of the website www.link-italia.net.

Starting from the assumption that the questionnaire is anonymous, the shipping method to the LINK-ITALIA Association - in pdf format by e-mail or paper by postal address - is at the discretion of the sender who can decide the level of protection of his / her anonymity. The data collected are inserted into the database later which, for security reasons, is neither on the internet nor located in Italy.

I further highlight that the 'LINK I' and 'LINK III' Manuals will be part of the teaching material of a Training Course that will deliver 50 CMs in Distance Education (F.A.D.) for the related medical disciplines.

The LINK-ITALIA F.A.D. arises from the increasingly urgent national need to offer training opportunities to the professionals. These training courses should range from residential courses to distance learning materials, which could be accessible on dedicated intranet categories for the Order Forces and Local Police and in the dedicated E.C.M. for Medical Health Professions. The LINK is a phenomenon as widespread as submerged and socially still unknown or dangerously undervalued.

The Manual can be purchased on AMAZON in an e-book and paper version from May 2019.