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The cost of masculinity.

The subtitle of the book is quite revealing: what Italy would save if men behaved like women.

Ginevra Bersani Franceschetti is an economist with a degree in finance from the Institute of Political Studies in Paris and has been a feminist since her teens. She has adapted to the Italian context the work that Lucile Peytavin, an economic historian specialising in the history of women's work, published in France for Éditions Anne Carrière in the spring of 2021.

What is the cost of masculinity? The authors wonder why this question is never at the centre of public debate. Yet it is clear to everyone that men are responsible for most of the anti-social behaviour that occurs in Italy, as in France.

The Italian data. According to Istat, in Italy in 2018, men made up 82 percent of the 500,000 perpetrators of crimes for which criminal proceedings were initiated. They make up 85 per cent of those convicted, 92 per cent of those accused of murder and almost 99 per cent of those accused of rape. The last figure is the most alarming: in Italy, the prison population is 95.7 per cent male.

How do you calculate the cost of masculinity? The difference between the money spent on combating anti-social behaviour in men and the money spent on combating anti-social behaviour in women. The calculation of the cost of masculinity is nothing more than the mathematical difference between these two costs, i.e. what Italy would save in terms of public expenditure if men behaved like women.

The answer: egalitarian education. At the end of a detailed analysis of the costs of masculinity, understood as the set of behaviours that hint at violence and oppression, the authors conclude that only through a profoundly egalitarian education can we think of tackling and solving the problem.

In a society that minimises violent behaviour and condemns as innocent attitudes that convey masculine values, accepting the definition of masculinity given in this context, both men and women end up as victims.

The "Mend the Gap" project works to close the gender gap.