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MANIPULATION AND CONTROL IN COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS. A STUDY OF YOUNG WOMEN

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The term gaslighting refers to a typology of psychological abuse that is expressed through acts of manipulation, which tend to control a partner's mental and affective state. The aim of the present study was to assess the presence of gaslighting behaviour as sustained by a group of young women in their relational experiences as a couple. Moreover, the associations between frequency of gaslighting behaviour and specific maladaptive personality traits, were evaluated. One hundred women, aged from 19 to 30 years ($M=22,5$; $ds=3,14$) participated in this research study. Manipulation and/or control behaviour were evaluated by administrating 25 descriptions of three typologies of gaslighter (glamour, good-guy and intimidator) and 20 descriptions of victim's reactions to manipulation and/or control attempts (Stern, 2007). In order to measure personality traits the Personality Inventory for DSM-5 (PID-5; Fossati, Borroni, 2015) was administrated, in brief form for participants and informant form for their partners. Results show that the three forms of gaslighting and the reactions to the controlling behaviour sustained are connected to dysfunctional domains of personality. In particular, it was possible to highlight the presence of an association between glamour gaslighting and the domains of negative affect, antagonism, disinhibition and psychoticism, whereas it seems there is no association between glamour gaslighting and the domain of detachment. Furthermore, it is possible to highlight an association between the victim's reaction to control and dysfunctional domains of personality. Preventive interventions of Intimate Partner Violence should, therefore, take into consideration the variable in personality traits both in abuser and victim.